



Business Plan for 2016-17

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1.0 Introduction and Review of 2015/16

During 2015 the North Devon Coast AONB (NDAONB) Partnership has continued its work to deliver the 2014 – 2019 Management Plan objectives. Key staff changes during the year included the recruitment of new manager Jenny Carey-Wood in April 2015, following the departure of manager Elaine Hayes at the end of 2014 and the departure of Clean Marine project officer Natalie Gibb in November as the project's FLAG funding came to an end. Dave Edgcombe (Projects Officer) and Chrissie Ingle (Development Officer) took on project management roles during these changes.

Review of the AONB Management Plan Delivery (2014-19)

The year has seen good progress in delivering a range of the Plan's policies and objectives both through the efforts of the team and of Partnership members. These are summarised in the following table:

| Management Plan Theme | Policy | Activity in 2015/16 | Key Partners |
|--------------------------------|--------|---|---|
| 1. Landscape | A3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seascape Character Assessment | NT, NDC, TDC, ENPA, NE Team Beaford Arts /Team |
| | A1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed post photography | |
| | A6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDF – Character of our Coast - photo Archives | |
| 2. Biodiversity & Geodiversity | B6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project – Braunton priority area | DWT & 18 others DWT |
| | B7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDF - Devon GHB Project – bat detector and iPad for North Devon bat beacon | |
| | B8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDF – Combe Martin Sea School – equipment for analysing and recording | Combe Martin Sea School Team Team MBND, team |
| | C3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HLF funding bids in preparation for 2016 – Coastal Creatures and Geodiversity | |
| | J1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combe Martin Geology Walk | |
| | C3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photography competition – wildlife focus | |
| 3. Historic environment | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDF – Saunton Sands D-Day | Private |
| 4. Coast | D6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean Marine Project | Team Seafish, IFCA, BR, fishers IFCA, fishers |
| | G4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Devon Aquaculture Centre Feasibility Study | |
| | D1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Devon Rays Monitoring | |
| | D5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two MCZ designations in North Devon | |
| 5. Farming and land management | F6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catchment Partnership projects | DWT, WRT, BR Orchards Live DWT/BR Team |
| | F3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDF – Orchards Restoration | |
| | F1/2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitation Fund bid for GHB area – Braunton and Caen Valley | |
| 6. Planning and development | I2/3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32 planning applications considered | Contractor Team & Chair Planning Panel |
| | I4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route 39 Academy Public Inquiry | |
| | I1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy – wind energy strategy, estuary consultation | |
| | I4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major developments in the AONB setting – housing and wind turbines | Planning Panel |
| 7. Transport and highways | I8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Down End, Croyde - telegraph pole removal | WPD, DCC, Parish Council, |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|
| | | | landowners |
| 8. Access, recreation and health | H5/6 H1 H5/6 H3 H3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Devon AONB Marathon • Guided walks & beach cleans • SDF- Hartland Bike Racks • SDF – SW Coast Path improvements • SDF – Northam Burrows Welcome Signs | Team & Hospice Team Hartland Parish NT NBCP/TDC |
| 9. Rural economy and tourism | G4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDF – Marine Wildlife Code | BR, Lundy, TTEF |
| 10. Community | J1 J1 J2/3 J1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stands at 5 local festivals • Clean Marine Project • SDF – Hartland Post • SDF – Braunton Countryside Centre – new branding and website | Team Team Private North Devon Environmental Trust |

Priority Annual Themes

These were agreed as a way to ensure delivery of key management plan themes and to focus the limited resources of the AONB as shown below:

1. Farming and Land Management 2014/15
2. The Coast 2015/16
3. Biodiversity and Geodiversity 2016/17
4. Historic Environment 2017/18

The annual theme for 2015/16 of “The Coast” was successfully set up by Elaine Hayes and Dave Edgcombe. This was assisted by the funding opportunities offered by the Northern Devon FLAG programme (EFF/Defra) and the under spend from 2014/15 due to staff changes. The main pieces of work delivered over the year with a range of partners, communities and external funding included:-

1. Clean Marine Project – delivered by project officer Natalie Gibb
2. Seascape Character Assessment – coordinated by Dave Edgcombe, hosted by National Trust
3. North Devon Aquaculture Centre Feasibility Study – led by Chrissie Ingle with APB Mer
4. North Devon Rays Monitoring – supported by Chrissie Ingle with Devon & Severn IFCA
5. Coastal and Marine Tourism - development study supported by Jenny Carey-Wood and led by North Devon+

Thanks are extended to key partners, communities and funders for their support in these achievements.

2.0 Staffing

The budget proposed for 2016-2017 maintains the core staff of full time manager and projects officer, with a part time administrator (totalling 2.4 FTE's). Additional contract work in relation to planning, communications and project development will continue although adjusted to reflect annual priorities. Partnership working locally and regionally will be used to complement our activities and support delivery of Management Plan priorities.

External funding will be sought to support specialist and project staffing, either contracted through our host authority, Devon County Council or seconded through our arrangement with North Devon+.

3.0 Funding for 2016/17

Following Defra's commitment of funding for the four years of this parliament, the budget for the financial year 2016/17 is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Funding contributions

| Funder | For core costs | For projects |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| DEFRA (75%) | 136,075 | |
| Devon County Council | 13,132 | |
| North Devon District Council | 16,000 | 770 |
| Torrige District Council | 16,226 | 774 |
| Total | £181,433 | £1,544 |

Following Defra's withdrawal from the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between the funding partners, a new MoA has been drawn up and signed by the three local partners to clarify roles, responsibilities and liabilities for the AONB Partnership and team going forward. An update will be made of the funding appendix and Partnership members each year.

4.0 Delivering the 2014 – 2019 Management Plan

a) Monitoring and reporting on progress against NDAONB Management Plan targets

The monitoring framework will be reported on every other year to reflect budget constraints and availability of new reporting data from external agencies and organisations. This will be conducted in 2016 working with Devon Biodiversity Records Centre and other partners. An AONB annual forum will be re-introduced in the autumn of 2016 which will provide a public report, as well as a review included in each annual business plan.

b) Monitoring AONB landscape condition

We will maintain local monitoring of key sites through fixed point photographic surveys. The Seascape Character Assessment has provided detailed visual imagery of the coastal areas of the AONB, which will be used for ongoing monitoring.

c) Promoting the NDAONB vision, Management Plan and its delivery.

The communications plan will be reviewed before the new financial year to meet annual priorities, particularly in relation to new projects and available resources. A single website will bring together the existing sites, with a new approach to sharing digital content. Increased engagement with business, community and third sector organisations will be used to raise the profile of the AONB and delivery of key priorities.

d) Advising upon, facilitating and co-ordinating implementation by others of the Management Plan.

The Management Plan has a Delivery Plan that is broken down into priority areas and core themes. It highlights key partners for delivery and identifies whether the AONB team acts as a lead, partner or advocate on each objective.

A key priority for the team is strengthening the membership and support provided by the Partnership and other delivery partners. This is important given the time and resource constraints on public sector bodies and partner agencies. The manager's review of the Partnership membership and operation in 2015 through meeting with most members, has led to a few changes in the membership and operation of the Partnership in 2016. The Partnership

will continue to meet three times a year and contribute to the regular monitoring of the Plan's implementation and impact.

e) Accessing resources for delivering Plan objectives

We will seek funds for new projects of benefit to the AONB through a range of sources and with key local partners. Some of these are highlighted elsewhere in this plan.

f) Working with and contributing to the NAAONB activities, sharing advice and best practice at a regional and national level

The manager and chair will attend NAAONB events and participate in networking and communications, supported by the NDAONB Partnership member who is a trustee of the National Association. We will work with other AONB's and protected landscapes to develop joint funding bids, contribute to policy and participate in the South West Protected Landscapes Forum.

g) Developing an involvement by the community in the management of the AONB

The Partnership has been strengthened by new and additional 'community' members to reach new groups and areas. The SDF and outreach activities encourage community participation and engagement with the AONB, as will new projects proposed for 2016. We will support a diverse and active events schedule across the AONB, by the whole team.

h) Providing landscape related planning advice to the Local Planning Authorities

The AONB continues to work closely with the three local planning authorities, with input to the Local Plan consultations through 2015 and 2016. The Projects Officer and contracted Landscape Architect working with the Planning Panel will review planning applications within the AONB and its setting. Pre-planning application advice will be offered to the LPAs to meet NPPF recommendations.

5.0 Annual Priority – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The focus for 2016-2017 will be biodiversity and geodiversity. Key objectives to be addressed this year from the Management Plan are detailed below:

| Biodiversity | AONB role |
|---|------------------|
| Link habitat types to create ecological networks that enhance biodiversity (e.g. Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project) | Partner |
| Promote the awareness and implementation of the North Devon Biosphere Reserve Action Plan | Partner |
| Target action for the recovery of priority species whose conservation is not delivered through wider habitat-based ecosystem measures | Partner |
| Encourage the control and eradication of non-native invasive species | Partner |
| Support the creation of marine protected areas | Partner |
| Engage more people, particularly the young, in outdoor activities that promote an understanding and enjoyment of wildlife within the AONB | Lead |
| Encourage greater voluntary participation in biodiversity work within the AONB | Lead |
| Geodiversity | |

| | |
|---|------|
| Develop and provide educational resources that interpret, utilise and widen understanding of our geodiversity | Lead |
| Interpret the geodiversity of the AONB for a range of audiences and communities | Lead |

6.0 Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)

A sum of £25,000 will be allocated for 2016-17 and publicity will highlight the annual focus of biodiversity and geodiversity, as well as the full management plan priorities. Decisions on projects to be funded will continue to be made by the SDF Panel in conjunction with the ND AONB Manager.

7.0 Projects and Activities

Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project (GHB)

This Heritage Lottery Fund supported project started in October 2015 with 19 partners led by Devon Wildlife Trust. With a total value of £2m over 5 years, one of the 12 target areas is the GHB population around Braunton and the Caen Valley. ND AONB is the lead partner in North Devon, working closely with key partners to support delivery of the biodiversity, land management and community elements. 2016 will see the establishment of a mobile bat beacon for Braunton and a range of events throughout the year.

North Devon Catchment Partnership

The NDAONB is a partner in the North Devon Catchment Partnership looking to deliver the wider benefits of the catchment based approach to communities and land managers.

Clean Marine – beach cleans and marine litter

The Clean Marine Project's funding and officer finished in November 2015, however the AONB team and a range of local partners aim to support local communities to continue caring for their beaches and monitoring marine litter. This includes liaising with SAS, Tidy Britain Group and local beach owners to organise beach cleans after major storms and during key national MCS/SAS coordinated beach cleaning events in spring and autumn. The Fishing for Litter scheme in Clovelly and Ilfracombe is to be continued by North Devon Council and Clovelly Estates to support fishers to remove floating marine litter.

Seascape Character Assessment

The final report produced by LUC in October 2015 for the partners (NT, NDAONB, NDC, TDC, DCC, ENPA and Natural England) has been publicised and circulated, with workshops organised for councillors and officers, to understand and use the findings. The SCA was adopted by the NDAONB Partnership and North Devon Council in January 2016 as part of the material considerations for planning decisions in the AONB. An information programme on the SCA over 2016 will strengthen its contribution to planning decisions locally.

Biodiversity – recording, education and engagement

The **Coastal Creatures** project has been in development in 2015 to provide resources, activities and results to meet key biodiversity priorities in the Management Plan focussed on the beaches and rocky foreshores of the AONB. A funding bid to HLF in early 2016 is for a two year project to provide an education and interpretation officer, species and habitats training and monitoring, citizen science, sea school training, volunteer engagement, interpretation and wildlife trails. In addition to increased biodiversity monitoring, the aim is

to increase access to and understanding of the AONB for a wide range of people and visitors through wildlife. Key partners are the National Trust, Coastwise North Devon, Combe Martin Primary School, Northam Burrows Country Park and North Devon+.

Geodiversity - interpretation

A project is in development to identify a range of methods to engage schools, local people and visitors with the geodiversity of the AONB. Primarily focussed on interpretation (hard copy and digital) and materials for activities in local schools and museums, funding bids will be made in spring 2016 to provide resources. Key partners: Devon RIGS, North Devon museums, tourism businesses and schools.

8.0 Expenditure Summary and key Milestones for the year

Table 2: Expenditure – core costs and project activity

| Expenditure item | Amount (£) | Notes |
|---|-----------------|--|
| Staff incl. training & project development | 115,061 | Assumes 1% inflation |
| Accommodation and support | 10,841 | Slight increase - insurance |
| PR, website and print | 6,293 | Reduction with PR brought in house |
| Partnership, NAAONB & Plan monitoring | 5,905 | Increase to reflect actual costs |
| Planning contractors | 10,000 | 1.25 days/month and increased reserve for conflicts of interest and appeals |
| SDF grants | 25,000 | Increased |
| Projects match funding for bids in progress | 8,333 | Biodiversity & Geodiversity projects (plus local match for projects of £1,544) |
| Total | £181,433 | |

Table 3: Key milestones

| Activity | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEPT | OCT | NOV | DEC | JAN | FEB | MAR |
|-----------------------------------|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Partnership Meetings | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Annual Forum | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SDF Launch & Panels | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| GHB project | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| HLF bid decisions | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Management Plan Monitoring/Review | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| New website | Live | | Final | | | | | | | | | |
| Publicity & events | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Beach Cleans with partners | | | | | | | | | | | | |