

# **Full Council**

## **26 February 2019**

### **Adoption of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024**

#### **For Decision**

#### **Portfolio Holder**

Cllr Ian Gardner, Planning

#### **Senior Leadership Team Contact:**

S Hill, Strategic Director

#### **Report Author:**

H Jordan, Corporate Manager, Planning (Community & Policy Development)

#### **Statutory Authority**

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 To enable the statutory review of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan to be completed

#### **Recommendations**

- 2 That the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan, included as Appendix 1 of this report, be adopted

#### **Reason for Decision**

- 3 To ensure that the statutory responsibilities in relation to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are met.

#### **Background and Reason Decision Needed**

- 4 The preparation and review of a Management Plan for each Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a statutory requirement for local authorities. Plans must be reviewed every five years and this is the fourth edition of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan. The Plan is the key governance document for the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, steering the work of the staff team and partner organisations and helping to support bids for external funding.

- 5 The revised Plan was approved by the Partnership Board on 15 November 2018 but must be taken to all the constituent local authorities for formal adoption.
- 6 The review process, originally agreed by the Board in May 2017, has taken twelve months and has included engagement with expert stakeholders, partner organisations, community representatives and members of the public. The process began with a series of workshops with 'expert review groups', involving over 50 people, followed by the AONB Forum which was attended largely by parish and town councils and other community groups and partnerships. This was followed by a twelve-week formal consultation period which was widely advertised online and through social media channels. All county and district councillors in the area were directly informed, as were all parish clerks. Copies of the document were available in public libraries and at council offices.
- 7 During the formal consultation period there were 174 responses to the online questionnaire and 31 detailed responses making around 350 separate points of support, comment or proposed amendment. The responses demonstrated a large degree of support for the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and also included a range of suggested changes many of which have been made to the final draft document. These changes included strengthening the definition of 'natural beauty'; giving greater emphasis in the Chairman's foreword to the scale of the challenge of conserving and enhancing this landscape; including a list of key partners in each policy section; and setting out the Partnership's priorities for action over the lifetime of this management plan.
- 8 The final plan now needs to be adopted by the full Councils of all five local authorities covering the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Dorset County Council; North Dorset District Council; Purbeck District Council; West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council.

## **Implications**

### **Corporate Plan**

The Management Plan contributes towards the Corporate Plan objective of improving quality of life, including enhancing the quality of life of people living and working in the district, and safeguarding and providing opportunities to enjoy the natural and built environment now and in the future.

### **Financial**

The Management Plan has been prepared by the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Team, which is overseen by a Partnership Board including member representatives of all the councils. Over 75% of the funding for the staff unit is from Defra: the remainder comes from the five local authorities. West Dorset currently contributes £19,795 annually. From the 2019/20 financial year, the local authority proportion will come entirely from the new Dorset Council.

£10,000 of the AONB Partnership budget was made available to fund the development and publication of the revised plan.

The plan has the potential to be used as the key support document for attracting funds for AONB management: the 2014-19 Management Plan has helped to achieve over £7.5 million value of delivery coordinated by the AONB Partnership to date.

### **Equalities**

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken during the preparation of the management plan, and amendments made as a result.

### **Environmental**

The plan sets out policies and proposals to protect and enhance the environmental quality of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including its natural beauty, biodiversity and heritage.

### **Economic Development**

The plan encourages appropriate rural economic development and helps to promote the area, which is of benefit for tourism and other rural businesses. Local research has shown the significant economic benefit of the designation, and projects such as the Dorset Food and Drink initiative help to support and promote local businesses.

### **Risk Management (including Health & Safety)**

Reputational risk if the management plan is not adopted in the required timescale, as preparing and reviewing the management plan is part of the council's statutory duties.

### **Human Resources**

The plan has been prepared by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Team, which is funded by Defra and the local councils, as referred to above. A member and an officer attend the Partnership Board meetings to represent this Council. Officers have also contributed to the Management Plan Review Group and Annual Forum.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

The Plan has been subject to public and stakeholder consultation, overseen by an appointed Management Plan Review Group, and has been approved by the Partnership Board.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024, as agreed by the Partnership Board.

### **Background Papers**

The final Management Plan and consultation responses are available to download at <https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/the-dorset-aonb/management-plan>

## Footnote

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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