

Date: 16th July 2008

Report: Review of Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan

Written by: Rob Fairbanks

Purpose of Report

To agree arrangements for consulting on the formal review of the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan.

Summary

The review and adoption of the AONB Management Plan at intervals of no more than 5 years is a statutory requirement for local authorities. This paper outlines progress with the review following Expert Panels that have met during June and July. The report of consultation and a report detailing its production and promotion will be presented to the next Board meeting on 29th September.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- o note the Pre-Consultation Document and provide comments on the Policy (Section 3) and the Delivery Plan (Section 4).
 - o delegate to the Surrey Hills Officers Working Group to determine the detailed arrangements for managing the consultation process.
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Background papers: Management Plan Review Paper, Surrey Hills Board 19th March 2008, Agenda Item 5

Attached: Pre-Consultation Draft (by post)

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Introduction

1. Sections 89 and 90 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) require local authorities and conservation boards to produce AONB Management Plans and to review adopted and published plans at intervals of not more than five years. A new Plan will therefore need to be adopted by local authorities in 2009. At its meeting on 19th March 2008 the Board agreed the outline programme for the Review of the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan.

Expert Panels

2. One of the key delivery mechanisms for the review has been through small Expert Panels. The role of the panels has been to review the relevant sections of the existing AONB Management Plan in order to formulate the management plan policies, identify the issues and key actions for each of the topic areas. The Panels met in June and early July and were led by Members of the Board, as follows:

o	Farming	Mike Giffin
o	Woodland	Michael Sydney
o	Nature Conservation	Nigel Davenport
o	Historic and Cultural Heritage	Mike More-Molyneux
o	Recreation and Tourism	Steve Walker
o	Land Use Planning	David Wright
o	Traffic and Transport	David Harmer
o	Community Development and the Local Economy	Chris Howard

Consultation Document

3. The outputs of the workshops has now been fed back to the Panel members and comments have been requested by 21st July. The AONB Director will review the feedback with the respective Panel Chairs as well as the feedback from the Surrey Hills Board Management Plan workshop on 16th July morning. The pre-consultation document includes the main sections for the consultation document includes the outcomes of the Expert Panel and highlights where additional work is required before the document can be released for consultation. One area is to highlight progress in implementing the 2004 Plan together with research findings about how the landscape has changed over the past 50 years.
4. The Surrey Hills Officers Working Group is meeting on 24th July and will advise the AONB Director on arrangements for consultation and to ensure that the issues raised in the Strategic Environmental Assessment have been appropriately covered, particularly relating to monitoring. Monitoring the state and condition of the AONB, as well as the implementation of the AONB Management Plan, are recognised as weak areas.
5. It is planned to release the Consultation Document by the end of July for widespread consultation. The consultation period will last until 8th September.

The Director will prepare a Report of Consultation for the Board's AGM on 29th September, recommending amendments to the consultation draft. Advice in this process will be sort from the respective Panel Chairmen as to whether a meeting of the Panel will need to be convened but it is anticipated that this will achieved through email correspondence. The detailed timetable is set out on the spreadsheet in Annex 1.

Resource implications

6. A budget of £2.5k has been allocated out of 2008/09 core budget for Tom Jones to help prepare the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environment Report, which is a requirement of the process. Further funding of £3k is required to develop the evidence base for the AONB Management Plan, including the supply of maps for publication in the final document. It is planned that this cost and any consultation and printing costs can be covered through underspend allocated to the employment of the Planning Adviser.
7. A report with detailed costings and options for the publishing the reviewed Management Plan, including the use of the website will be taken to the Surrey Hills Board meeting on 29th September.