



6. Achieving the Vision - Implementation

6. Achieving the Vision - Implementation

Overriding Themes and Issues for Implementation

6.1 The policy framework in chapter 5 has been divided into subject areas for ease of reference. In reality, all topics are interrelated and require an integrated 'joined up' approach to maximise opportunities for the AONB and its communities. A number of overriding themes and issues have been identified which link to the core functions of the AONB staff unit, and which will be central to the future role of both the unit and the Dorset AONB Partnership. These themes are:

- **Integration**

Throughout the introductory sections of this Plan and the policy framework, there are many references to the existing policies, initiatives and activities that influence the AONB. A major task for the AONB Partnership and unit is to integrate AONB management into this wider existing and developing framework. This Management Plan is not intended to override any existing strategies, but must link with them to ensure a consistent, joined up approach across the area.



A joined up approach is needed to integrate AONB management into wider policies and strategies.

- **Influence**

Many of the policies in this plan can only be achieved through partnership working – they depend on many organisations and individuals. Implementation will require the Partnership and unit to influence policy and activity. The development of a landscape character-based approach to management will be key to success, generating an open and transparent assessment methodology that will help to guide activity and ensure that the

special qualities of the AONB and conserved and enhanced.

- **Information**

Information is central to understanding the AONB and guiding decisions that will influence its future. There is a need to collate as much information as possible and to make this widely available. A core function of the AONB unit will be to develop a rural AONB information point or 'exchange' to inform, 'sign post' and advise.



Raising understanding and pride in the AONB among local communities is a major task.

- **Communication**

As the proportion of people who are employed in the traditional countryside industries continues to decline, understanding of land management and food production declines as well. This has implications for the whole countryside and people's enjoyment of it. A major task will be to promote the AONB as a working landscape, to raise understanding and awareness of its special qualities and to generate a sense of pride and ownership of this nationally important asset.

- **Resourcing**

The resources available for the breadth of activity relating to AONB management are widely dispersed and disparately held. A key task for the management plan is to provide a sound framework for expenditure, to encourage flexibility of funding streams to target actions identified and to encourage further investment. It will be an important action to identify real costs, generate and find resources, explore pay back schemes and make better use of resources available.

6. Achieving the Vision - Implementation

- **Local Voice**

The Dorset AONB management plan process has set out from the beginning to bring together the top down with the bottom up to ensure an agreed approach to which people are committed. The assimilation of AONB management with management at the local level requires links to be made at each stage from management structure and administration to the forming of policy and strategy to delivery of action on the ground. Close liaison and participation with the Dorset Strategic Partnership, the Heritage Committees and North Dorset Countryside Panel, Parish Plans and Village Design Statements will be required.



AONB management will need to link with Parish and Community plans.

- **Demonstrating Best Practice for Rural Dorset**

Dorset is an attractive rural county and most of it could arguably be considered to boast outstanding natural beauty. The AONB boundary is therefore contentious and there is concern that the designation may lead to a two-tier landscape, with non-AONB areas facing greater development pressure as a result of the designation. It is important that this does not occur and that decisions are made sensitively throughout Dorset's countryside. The AONB is of national importance and we have a statutory duty to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. This should be seen as an opportunity to develop best practice and explore innovative solutions that can then be applied across the county.

- **Monitoring**

A major initial task is to establish baselines against which to monitor future change. Monitoring the AONB will include both monitoring effort and action against the targets set in the action plan, but also to monitor their effect in conserving and enhancing the AONB. This subject is further explored in chapter 7.

The Dorset AONB Action Plan

- 6.3 Like the Management Plan, the Action Plan is for the AONB rather than for the AONB Unit or any single organisation. The Action Plan covers the period from 2004-2009, but will be reviewed more frequently than the Management Plan as a whole.



The Action Plan includes a number of new initiatives.

6. Achieving the Vision - Implementation

6.4 The Plan has been developed following an extensive consultation exercise intended to develop initiatives that fill existing gaps in delivery and add value to existing work. Many of the actions relate to the core functions as set out by the Countryside Agency and the overriding issues outlined above.

6.5 Priority actions for the AONB have been discussed throughout the consultation period. The four local workshops held in the summer of 2003 generated many ideas directly from local groups and Parish Councils. These ideas were further explored at the summer conference, where delegates prioritised the policy aims and identified existing gaps in delivery. This process was further developed through a series of meetings with key partners during the autumn.

6.6 Given that this is the first Action Plan to be developed for the AONB, there are a number of actions relating to gathering information, assessing the condition of the AONB and establishing baselines for monitoring. These tasks are an essential first step and will provide an initial focus. However, a number of exciting new initiatives have also been identified that will deliver real benefits on the ground, such as a new initiative to improve management and understanding of the South Dorset Ridgeway, the creation of a tree and woodland programme and the development of an initiative for winterbourne streams.

6.7 The Action Plan can be found at the back of this Management Plan in Appendix 2.

How Will Implementation be Achieved?

6.8 AONB management requires the integration of many varied areas of work and the development of strong partnerships. The policies and actions will be achieved by a number of organisations and means:

- The Dorset AONB Partnership Board, through its staff unit, will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the plan. In some cases the unit may lead on particular actions, whilst in many cases they will facilitate delivery through others.
- National, regional and local government have a key role in that they together set the policy framework and make monies available and thereby can directly affect AONB management. Local authorities, as the bodies of local government, are able to **directly** influence the AONB in carrying out their many

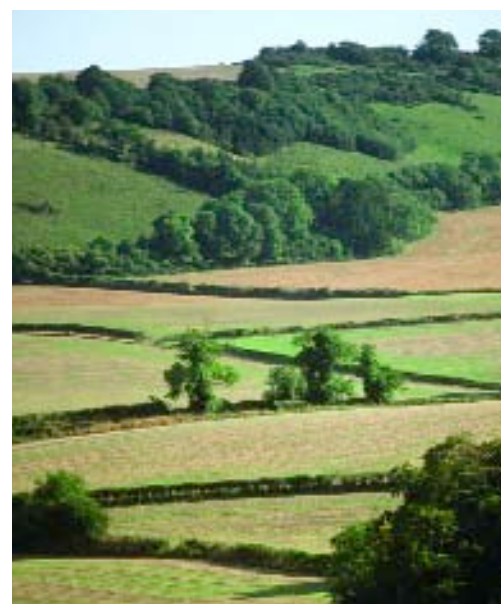
and diverse duties such as development control or highways management and **indirectly** by influencing others.

- Statutory Agencies such as the Countryside Agency, English Nature, Environment Agency and English Heritage have the remit to take forward programmes of activity to meet objectives and can fund and resource activity.



Landowners and farmers manage much of the landscape.

- The planning and development process has a direct effect on the AONB. A fundamental task for the AONB Partnership and unit is to establish an agreed mechanism for linking with the local planning process, in order to ensure that a consistent approach is taken to AONB policy and that the purposes of the AONB designation are considered in all relevant planning and development control decisions.



CAP reform presents opportunities for the AONB.

- The West Dorset and Purbeck Heritage Committees, North Dorset Countryside and Heritage Panel and the Dorset Strategic Partnership are in a key position to help integrate community strategies and AONB management and ensure liaison with local

6. Achieving the Vision - Implementation

communities to achieve aims and objectives. They will be an important aspect of co-ordination and delivery.

- Landowners and farmers manage much of the landscape of the AONB. This is heavily influenced by the Common Agricultural Policy which is in the process of review and reform. In future direct subsidies for agricultural production will cease and a higher proportion of subsidies will be made available to achieve environmental and rural benefits. This represents an opportunity for landscape character and quality to be represented in agricultural / environmental schemes and for additional money to find its way into the wider rural economy.
- Companies undertaking essential services, for example, water, electricity and telecommunication companies also have a role. The scale and importance of the actions of these companies (sometimes called statutory undertakers because they deliver a statutory requirement) is such that they can have a massive impact upon the environment. The Management Plan should act as a guide and reference for their additional duty arising from the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 - "to have due regard to the purposes of the AONB in carrying out their functions".



Building partnerships will be important in delivering the Action Plan.

- Partnerships of organisations will be required to bring the many diverse interests and organisational perspectives together to take action to achieve an objective. This process of partnership building, resourcing and project management will be an essential part of the delivery mechanism required to achieve aims and objectives.
- The Dorset AONB abuts several other Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs and East Devon. Liaison with these AONB units will be important for consistency of approach and joint working may be appropriate in some cases.



Some projects, such as landscape-scale habitat initiatives, will require working with many organisations and landowners.

Resourcing

6.9 **Human resources.** There are a number of organisations and people involved in conservation, environmental management, initiatives and projects and rural well being within the AONB. A primary task is to find ways for this current effort to be better harnessed and focused to overall improvements within the AONB. This will entail that we continue to find ways of working together to make sure there is concerted effort on priorities and to avoid duplication. An example of this would be the bringing together of people and skills within a project group, to achieve a particular purpose.

6.10 **Allocation and targeting of funds.** The funding currently allocated by European, national, regional and local organisations, is often tightly targeted and compartmentalised and does not take full account of other activity, sometimes leading to a duplication of effort. A primary task is to ensure that all funding is as efficient as possible in achieving the goals for which it is allocated. The Management Plan and Action Plan will act as a framework for funding and the compilation of an AONB action reference guide would allow for all involved to assess activity at a glance.



Statutory undertakers are required to 'have regard' for the primary purpose of the AONB.

6. Achieving the Vision - Implementation

- 6.11 **Encouraging investment.** The Management Plan will provide a framework with which many organisations will be able to bid for funds. The Management Plan and management structure representing a broad partnership will increase the confidence of the funding agencies and encourage new and increased investment of resources into the AONB.



The Management Plan will provide a framework for funding bids.