

64th MEETING OF THE NAAONB MANAGEMENT BOARD AGENDA

Thursday 26th June 2014 11.00am
Victory Services Club, 63/79 Seymour Street, London W2 2HF
Tel: 07969 888823 (Jill's mobile), 07576 321614 (Howard's mobile)

Invitees - Board Members: Philip Hygate, Sarah Jackson, Rose Day, Helen Noble, Michael Sydney, Ray Woolmore, Michael Mounde, Peter Foulkes, John Hague, Chris Woodley-Stewart, Nick Holiday, David Hill

Invitees - Staff: Howard Davies - CEO, Jill Smith - Communications & Events Manager, Richard Clarke - Policy & Development Manager, David Dixon - Collaboration & Learning Manager, Amber Livingston - Office & Membership Manager

Invitees - Observers: Liza Tomos - NRW, Liz Newton - NE, Claire Mason - Defra

1. **Apologies**
2. **Minutes and matters arising** (PH) - for agreement (5 mins)
3. **Conference** (CWS/JS) - for information (15 mins)
4. **Business Plan** (HD) - discussion & agreement (15 mins)
5. **LUC Report** (RC) - discussion & agreement (10 mins)
6. **Chairman's Conference** - (JS) - discussion & agreement (10 mins)
7. **Office address options** (HD/AL) - discussion & agreement (5 mins)
8. **Board member corporate presentation** (RD) - discussion & agreement (10 mins)
9. **Budget 2014/15** (HD) - (verbal) - for information (5 mins)
10. **Management Accounts** (JS) - for information (5 mins)
11. **NAAONB Portfolio & Staff Activity Report** (Portfolio holders & staff) - for information (10 mins)
12. **Defra Report** (CM) - for information (10 mins)
13. **Natural England Report** (LN) - for information (10 mins)
14. **Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru - Natural Resources Wales Report** (LT) - for information (10 mins)

AOB - subjects should be submitted to and agreed by the Chairman prior to the meeting. The Chairman will advise the Board at the start of the meeting of any additional papers that are to be tabled.

Dates of next meetings for information

Thursday 26th June

Thursday 16th October

Post AGM 20th November (to welcome new members and elect a Chair and Vice Chair)

Thursday 5th March

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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Northleach
Gloucestershire GL54 3JH
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Item 2 - Minutes and matters arising

Item 2 - Minutes and matters arising

Report to: The Board of the National Association for AONBs
Subject: Minutes of the 63rd meeting of the NAAONB Management Board
Date: 29th June 2014
Purpose: For agreement

**63rd MEETING OF THE NAAONB MANAGEMENT BOARD
HELD AT 11.00AM AT CARRS LANE CHURCH, BIRMINGHAM
HELD ON 5 MARCH 2014**

Present: Philip Hygate, Sarah Jackson, Rose Day, Helen Noble (in attendance via skype), Ray Woolmore, Michael Mounde, Peter Foulkes, Nick Holiday

In attendance: Howard Davies - CEO, Jill Smith - Communications & Events Manager, David Dixon - Collaboration & Learning Manager, Amber Livingston - Office & Membership Manager, Liza Tomos - CNC, David Henshilwood - NE

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Michael Sydney, Chris Woodley-Stewart, John Hague, David Hill and Richard Clarke.

2. Welcome and Introductions

The Board members, observers and staff introduced themselves.

3. Minutes and matters arising

The Chairman called for any errata in the minutes of the previous meetings.

P6 Chairman rather than Chairmen

P8 There was a brief discussion around using the abbreviation L4L. It was agreed that in documents or other written material on first use the full version should be used with the abbreviation in brackets. Vocally L4L should only be used for knowledgeable internal audiences. It was noted that #L4L was already used widely for social media.

P8 Smyllie rather than Smilie

Resolved that with amendments, the minutes be accepted as a true report.

Agreed: Unanimously

Matters arising:

The Chairman was pleased to report that progress has been made on decisions made during the last meeting regarding an employment issue.

The Chairman called for the meeting to go in camera. Jill Smith and David Dixon left the room while this was under discussion.

There was then an in camera discussion on these matters, once this was concluded Jill Smith and David Dixon were welcomed back to the meeting.

Jill Smith and David Dixon were welcomed back to the meeting at this point.

Item 2 - Minutes and matters arising

The CEO reported that he had written to Richard Benyon thanking him for his support and Richard had responded saying that he would like to continue to support AONBs wherever possible. The CEO has since met with him and with the Chairman is now working with Richard to identify his future role. A meeting has also been arranged with the Permanent Secretary, Bronwyn Hill in May.

A Board member queried whether there is any indication that the seemingly dormant All Party Parliamentary Group for AONBs could be resurrected.

The CEO responded that this is not considered a priority by the Board as it is difficult to establish how valuable the Group is as we do not know which parliamentarians have attended and how often.

4. Portfolios

This report was introduced by the Vice Chairman who suggested a review of the relevance of some of the portfolios.

There was a discussion on the matter during which it was decided that the Conference and Training portfolios did not need to be standalone portfolios but the work could all sit under the Collaborative Working portfolio.

It was also suggested small sub groups for specific tasks could be formed where necessary to assist portfolio work.

The following portfolio allocations were decided

Advocacy and Policy - Michael Mounde assisted by Peter Foulkes

Communications - Sarah Jackson

Collaborative Working - Chris Woodley-Stewart

Securing and Managing Resources - Rose Day assisted by Michael Sydney and Nick Holiday
(NB: A vote was called between interested volunteers: Rose Day and Michael Sydney.

The Board voted Rose Day as lead unanimously).

Planning - Ray Woolmore

Finance - Helen Noble

Governance - Helen Noble assisted by Philip Hygate and Sarah Jackson. Chris Woodley Stewart offered assistance with their work on the Governance Handbook.

The **Business Plan subgroup**, (formed during item matters arising - Nick Holiday, Rose Day, Michael Mounde) will liaise closely with the Governance portfolio holder.

Resolved that the portfolios be revised as set out above.

Proposed: Rose Day

Seconded: Michael Mounde

Agreed: Unanimously

Item 2 - Minutes and matters arising

5. Travel & Subs Guidelines

This report was introduced by the Vice-chair.

Resolved that the amendments as laid out in this paper be agreed.

Proposed: Michael Mounde

Seconded: Rose Day

Agreed: Unanimously

6. Political Activity

This report was introduced by the CEO

A Board member expressed that she is pleased that the Business Plan is to be revised and another Board member added that he is pleased that the guidance is very clear and Howard was thanked for this clarity.

Resolved that the paper be noted.

Proposed: Ray Woolmore

Seconded: Michael Mounde

Agreed: Unanimously

7. Conference

This report was introduced by Jill Smith. Special mention was made to Helen Hambleton at North Pennines AONB Partnership for her work on the sponsorship documentation.

A Board member highlighted that despite a previous request, a particular NAAONB member organisation, Friends of the Lake District, has not been contacted to seek their input to conference. Jill Smith responded that the membership has not **yet** been contacted but there are plans to ask them how they would like to contribute by the end of the month.

The CEO commented that this raises a further question to be considered in the future: How will we inform decision making when the membership extends beyond the AONB partnerships?

A Board member added that she concurs entirely there are proactive members who wish to engage and be a part of it. We should look more externally more often and let someone else challenge us for once.

Nick Holiday commended the idea of having a national protected landscapes conference and offered his assistance to its organisation working with the Chairman of National Parks England and UKANPA.

The CEO welcomed this offer.

Resolved that the paper be noted.

Proposed: Michael Mounde

Seconded: Rose Day

Agreed: Unanimously

Item 2 - Minutes and matters arising

8. Memorandum & Articles of Association

This report was introduced by the Vice Chairman.

There was an extensive discussion around the wording on the application to the Charitable Commission in particular the wording of 4.3 (P40). Whether or not the wording “in their charitable activities” or take it out was discussed. It was agreed to take it out.

A Board member added that 4.2 is lacking a cultural element, this was then discussed by the Board. The CEO suggested the wording ‘physical, natural, cultural and built environment’. This was agreed.

A Board member added that she is regretful that the name had been reverted back to National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty but she understands the comments made. The CEO responded that we can register under National Association for AONBs and operate under another name as we do now with Landscapes for Life.

A Board member asked for clarity on the wording in Section 8 - trustees “reduced to five, not more than nine”. It was also asked if the whole Board is to be revamped and not become the Charities Trustees.

The Vice Chair responded that it is the intention that all the Board members, if wishing to take on the roles to be set out in the new Governance Handbook for the charitable company, should stand for election in November. Reducing the size of the Board from 12 to a maximum of nine trustees is to ensure it is an affordable number and is appropriate to the size of the company in terms of budget and staffing. The suggestion of having a transition Board for an initial period was agreed to ensure continuity and retain experience.

A time frame was discussed to include an EGM at the July conference.

Resolved that the suggested changes in wording be investigated and instigated for consultation with the membership with a deadline of 30th April.

Proposed: Michael Mounde

Seconded: Nick Holiday

Agreed: Unanimously

The Chairman thanked Sarah and Chris for their work on this.

9. South West Water Application for membership

This report was introduced by Jill Smith.

The Chairman declared a conflict of interest and he left the room for the duration of this discussion. Details of the pros and cons of accepting such an application were discussed during which it was suggested that accepting applications could be deferred until the NAAONB is up and running as a charitable body. This suggestion was dismissed as there was a general consensus that the benefits will outweigh the risks and that the system can and will be revised once charitable status is realised.

ACTION CEO to write letter to South West Water outlining watertight conditions of membership.

Resolved to approve the attached application from South West Water subject to review as we move to a charitable company and consider introducing a corporate membership scheme.

Proposed: Michael Mounde

Seconded: Ray Woolmore

Agreed: six with one abstention.

Item 2 - Minutes and matters arising

10. Budget 2014/15

This report was introduced by the CEO.

The budget lines: Community Renewables and Peer to Peer Mentoring were clarified, as requested, to the Board.

A Board member suggested a budget line for the work being carried out on reworking the Business Plan and MoA. He also highlighted that the money expended by the NAAONB becoming a charity should be properly budgeted and therefore traceable as potentially an application could then be made for funding to cover it. This was discussed.

ACTION Howard Davies to set up a meeting to discuss this with Nick Holiday.

Resolved to agree the budget

Proposed: Rose Day

Seconded: Michael Mounde

Agreed: Unanimously

11. Management Accounts 2013/14

This report was introduced by Jill Smith.

Resolved that the management accounts be agreed

Proposed: Nick Holiday

Seconded: Michael Mounde

Agreed: Unanimously

12. NAAONB Portfolio & Staff Activity Report

This report was introduced by the CEO.

A Board member reported that he has not received AONB News or received consultation on a particular matter and a request was made for access to other areas of Basecamp

ACTION Jill Smith to check distribution lists for Ray Woolmore and increase Rose Day's Basecamp access.

13. Defra Report

None received.

14. Natural England Report

This report was delivered by David Henshilwood and questions were taken.

The CEO added that as a collective, the AONB Family welcome the discussions being had at the moment and welcome the interest in Landscape.

The Chairman asked that thanks be passed onto Maddy Jago for all her work with us.

Item 2 - Minutes and matters arising

15. Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru - Natural Resources Wales Report

This report was delivered by Liza Tomas and questions were taken.

A Board member suggested that there may be too much emphasis on catchment approach rather than landscape.

The CEO asked a question about the future of grant aid from NRW.

The response was that it is all up in the air with the partnership review that is expected to conclude at end of March.

The CEO asked for clarification about the dissolving of CNP Cymru and how NAAONB should respond to this as an organisation regarding the protected landscape approach in Wales. Lisa agreed to work with Howard on this.

AOB

Chairmen congratulated Rose Day on her recent MBE for services to the environment.

The dates for the next meeting were discussed and the preferred choices were as follow

Thursday 26th June

Thursday 16th October

Thursday 20th November (Post AGM - to welcome new members and elect a Chair and Vice Chair)

Thursday 5th March

Meeting closed at 14.55pm

Item 3 - Conference

Item 3 - Conference

Report to: The Board of the National Association for AONBs
Subject: Landscapes for Life Conference 2014 - Briefing for Board Members
Date: 26th June 2014
Report by: Jill Smith (Communications and Events Manager)
Chris Woodley-Stewart (Conference portfolio holder)
Purpose: To brief Board members of the theme, activities and key messages of Landscapes for Life Conference 2014 and Board member roles

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that The Board

- note this paper
- considers and discusses any further requirements

Background

Landscapes for Life Conference 2014 has the theme of “Sharing, Learning, Inspiring” and is being held at Newton Rigg Agricultural College from 8th – 10th July. The programme and booking details for the Conference were circulated in May and to date (11th June) 111 people have registered for this important annual event. The Board has details of the content and timetables for the event and these are not reproduced here.

The Bowland Award has in recent years been given on the basis of a call for nominations for projects recipients and a vote by the Membership. This is continuing this year, on the theme of “Sharing, Learning, Inspiring”. In addition to the paperwork submitted with the nomination, we have also asked that each nominee gives a “final pitch” as part of the conference programme on the afternoon of Day One before voting takes place. This is in response to the membership’s request to hear more about the projects and people nominated.

Key messages

The Communications Strategy, recently agreed by the AONB Family has key messages to promote

1. our AONBs
2. our AONB partnerships , and
3. the NAAONB

The Board is asked to read the strategy and use the messages in any influential situations. It is important to use the language provided to ensure consistency of message and brand.

In addition to these key messages, there are a series of key messages associated with this conference and it is important that Board members understand them and communicate them clearly to delegates. These messages are

- The landscape-scale approach taken by AONB partnerships and National Park Authorities locally makes the Protected Landscape Family, as a whole, a strategic national asset.
- Landscape-scale working is and always has been central to the work of AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards
- There are a wealth of successful projects led by AONB partnerships across England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Item 3 - Conference

- AONBs and National Parks are vibrant, dynamic, functioning landscapes that help underpin the economy and the health and wellbeing of society
- AONBs and National Parks are locally managed, nationally important, and deal with global issues
- **AONBs are Landscapes for Life.**

The role of Board members

Board members will be readily identifiable to delegates through the colour coding on conference badges. Board members should wear their badges at all times during the conference please.

Board members will be allocated certain tasks, namely

- meet and greet specific guest speakers
- host a table at the formal dinner on Tuesday 8th
- ensure that delegates who need help at any stage can be pointed towards Jill Smith or Amber Livingston

The Minister, Lord de Mauley, will present at the conference on the final morning.

The Bowland Award

This year, the NAAONB is seeking nominees for the Bowland Award who for a “best project, best practice or for outstanding contribution to the wellbeing of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty deserve to be recognized for Sharing, Learning and Inspiring. Information on this year’s award and a call for nominations was sent out on 28th May, with a closing date for nominations of 17th June. In change from tradition, voting will take place at Landscapes for Life Conference 2014 after a “final pitch” is heard as part of the first day’s proceedings. And also in a change from tradition the Award will be made by the previous year’s recipient, The Chilterns Conservation Board.

Item 4 - Business Plan

Item 4 - Business Plan

Report to: The Board of the National Association for AONBs
 Subject: Review of Strategic and Business Plan
 Date: 26th June 2014
 Report by: Howard Davies (CEO)
 Purpose: To update the Board on progress with the Strategic and Business Plan review and set out a process and timetable for bringing draft revised plans to the Board in October 2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board

- notes progress to date on Strategic and Business Plan review,
- confirms support for the 'direction of travel' of the review process set out by the Board Sub –Group, and
- approves the forward work plan and timetable set out by the Board Sub Group for completing the review process

Background

Work has been on-going to review the NAAONB Business Plan 2010-2015. The core team completed a review of existing work streams and activities in October 2013.

At the March 2014 Board Meeting it was agreed to set up a Sub–Group to undertake dedicated work on the review of the Strategic and Business Plan. The Group met on May 30th 2014 and this paper sets out the key questions addressed by the group, the business 'canvas' the group will use to develop the revised plan and the timetable for completion proposed by the group.

Key Questions

Under the guidance of the Chief Executive the Sub Group addressed a number of key questions that underpin progress with business plan review.

KEY QUESTIONS	RESPONSE
Do the existing vision, mission and objectives of the NAAONB need to be reviewed for the Business Plan 2015-2020?	The Memorandum and Articles of Association for the NAAONB has been re drafted and been out for consultation across the membership. The M&A wording needs to be cross referenced with the vision, mission and objectives to ensure consistency and clarity.
Should the Business Plan mission stress that the NAAONB role is to work across all protected landscapes?	Working across all protected landscapes should be identified as a work stream for the NAAONB.
Does the existing Business Plan make enough of the leadership role of the NAAONB?	The mission statement should be revised to include articulation of the leadership role of the NAAONB.
Does the Business Plan fully reflect the balance of work activities mapped out by the core team?	No It needs to ensure that work to facilitate the Board's activities is captured and that there is explicit recognition of the demands placed on the core team to react to fast moving agendas
Does the Business Plan fully reflect the demands on staff time presented by devolution in Wales?	No It needs to explicitly recognise demands on staff time resulting from the devolution agenda in Wales. Also, it needs to ensure linkage between Welsh govt funding and staff resources deployed – ideally Welsh funding would cover staff resources demanded to address Welsh issues.

Item 4 - Business Plan

Developing a Business ‘Canvas’ for the NAAONB

The Sub Group agreed that the Business Plan review demands a systematic approach and one that can be easily communicated to members and stakeholders. The Sub Group agreed to adopt a simplified business ‘canvas’ to guide plan development and consultation.

A business canvas provides a simple and clear tool for setting out the inputs, activities and outputs of our business and poses questions about objectives, assumptions, resource streams and customers (see attached draft Business canvas)

The Sub Group will undertake more work to build content into the business ‘canvas’ and then use the ‘canvas’ to undertake consultation with Board members and key ‘customers’ and stakeholders.

Process and Timetable for Business Plan review

The Sub Group agreed the following process and timetable for completing Business Plan review and bringing a revised plan to the October Board Meeting.

What	When
Business canvas further developed by the Board Sub –Group in consultation with Board members.	18 July 2014
Business canvas used by Sub Group to undertake consultation with membership and key stakeholders	August / September 2014
Sub Group Meeting to assemble draft plans	Tbc September 2014
Final draft of both plans to full board	16 October 2014
Final plans to membership for sign off at AGM	20 November 2014

Annex 1 - NAAONB Business Plan Review Workshop 1

KEY QUESTIONS	RESPONSE
Do the existing vision, mission and objectives of the NAAONB need to be reviewed for the Business Plan 2015-2020?	The Memorandum and Articles of Association for the NAAONB has been re drafted and been out for consultation across the membership. The M&A wording needs to be cross referenced with the vision, mission and objectives to ensure consistency and clarity.
Should the business plan mission stress that the NAAONB role is to work across all protected landscapes?	Working across all protected landscapes should be identified as a work stream for the NAAONB
Does the existing business plan make enough of the leadership role of the NAAONB?	The mission statement should be revised to include articulation of the leadership role of the NAAONB.
Does the business plan fully reflect the balance of work activities mapped out by the staff team?	No It needs to ensure that work to facilitate the Board's activities is captured and that there is explicit recognition of the demands placed on staff to react to fast moving agendas
Does the Business plan fully reflect the demands on staff time presented by devolution in wales?	No It needs to explicitly recognise demands on staff time resulting from the devolution agenda in wales. Also, need to ensure linkage between Welsh govt funding and staff resources deployed – ideally Welsh funding covers employing staff to deal with Welsh issues.

Item 4 - Business Plan

ACTIVITY	OUTPUT	OUTCOME: LEARNING (SHORT TERM)	OUTCOME: BEHAVIOURAL (MEDIUM TERM)	OUTCOME: CONDITION (LONG TERM)
<p>Supporting the effective operation of 46 AONB partnerships across England, Wales and Northern Ireland</p> <p>Developing and maintaining a landscape knowledge development and sharing programme</p>	<p>Conference and training events for members</p> <p>L4L Website and Knowledge Platform</p> <p>Guidance documents</p> <p>Responses to govt consultations</p> <p>Case studies of good practice</p>	<p>Increased awareness & understanding of the landscape approach (defined as holistic, integrated and collaborative)</p>	<p>Increased understanding of the value of AONB designation and the benefits functional landscapes can deliver for people – (explicit recognition of recreation/ education and health benefits)</p>	<p>Healthy and resilient AONB designated landscapes</p>
<p>Champion the landscape approach</p> <p>Champion the AONB partnership model across all stakeholders but in particular government minister, departments and national agencies/ NGOs</p> <p>Re negotiate the ‘tripartite’ agreement NAAONB/Defra/NE to reflect full cost recovery model</p>	<p>Meetings, events and conversations with government, national agencies and relevant NGOs</p> <p>Profile building / brand development</p>	<p>A learning and knowledge sharing network for landscape practitioners working across protected areas</p>	<p>A growing number of large scale collaborative projects delivering AONB Family objectives</p>	<p>Viable AONB Staff Units producing statutory Management Plans and driving project delivery</p> <p>A respected and influential organisation representing the interests of AONB designated landscapes</p>
<p>Collaboration across all protected landscapes to be ‘tested’ as part of responses to the devolution agenda in Wales</p>	<p>Recognising a set of activities for NAAONB specifically linked to the transition of the NAAONB business model: wales/ the board activities and business model</p>	<p>Consistent and clear communication of the value and needs of AONB designated landscapes</p> <p>Landscape proofing of Government programmes and policies</p>	<p>Development of quality standards for AONB landscape management</p> <p>Increased resources for landscape protection from government and non-government sources</p>	

Item 4 - Business Plan

INPUTS	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>Staff - additional staff resource funded through Welsh Govt to deliver NAAONB devolution response</p> <p>Board members – reduced numbers – linked to providing specialised input/ expertise that align with outcomes required by Business Plan</p> <p>Specialist skills</p> <p>Networking connections</p> <p><i>15-20% head room to deal with “reactive” workload</i></p> <p><i>Specific identification of facilitating board activity as important draw on staff time</i></p>	<p>That the standard third sector model of income generation through full cost recovery and project management be adopted by the NAAONB</p> <p>That the NAAONB business model is in transition and that the process needs to be completed – probably beyond this timeframe of this business plan review.</p> <p>Landscape Approach involves stakeholders in mapping and understanding the ecological and cultural assets that constitute landscape character and developing appropriate land and business models that deliver effective conservation and enhancement of defined landscape units</p> <p>The AONB partnership model brings together local and national stakeholders around the production and delivery of the statutory AONB management plan – It is a tried and tested approach to holistic, integrated and joined up delivery of landscape management</p> <p>That the challenges to national organisations presented by devolution should be explicitly recognised in the business plan whilst recognising that impacts are fast moving and fluid.</p>
REVENUE STREAMS	CUSTOMERS
<p>Govt Funding – Defra/NE/NRW grants costed against workloads demands generated by these bodies (full cost recovery model to apply)</p> <p>Membership fee</p> <p>Grant income</p> <p>Sponsorship</p> <p>Initiate an exploration of how earned income through consultancy activity might be incorporated into the NAAONB business model should be a defined piece of work (a discussion with Europarc and AONB Chairs as a start point)</p> <p>Welsh Govt/ NRW resources linked to testing collaboration approach as consequence of devolution</p>	<p>38 AONB partnerships</p> <p>Others to be identified and engaged in consultation process for the NAAONB Business Plan</p>

Item 5 - LUC Report

Report to: The Board of the National Association for AONBs
Subject: Maximizing Protected Landscape Revenues Report
Date: 26th June 2013
Report by: Richard Clarke
Purpose: To seek guidance from the Board on responding to the LUC Report on Maximizing Protected Landscape Revenues

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board

- considers the draft responses to the LUC report on Maximizing Protected Landscape Revenues and
- discusses how these responses should be taken forward.

Background

At the end of 2013 Defra contracted Land Use Consultants (LUC), supported by economic consultants SQW, to undertake a study into Maximizing Protected Landscape Revenues. This work was funded, in part, by the Cabinet from the Contestable Policy Fund and therefore will not only be scrutinised by Defra ministers but also Cabinet Office ministers.

In compiling the report, the consultants worked with the individual Protected Landscape organisations, the NAAONB and National Parks England. The final report was completed in March 2014 and has since been released on a restricted basis (circulated separately to this Board paper).

Introduction

It is proposed that the NAAONB Board formally responds to this report in two ways; a strategic comment to Lord de Mauley, the Defra minister with responsibility for Protected Landscapes and a more detailed response to officials in Defra, setting out technical comments and the actions proposed by the NAAONB in response to the recommendations.

The NAAONB core team has started to draft both the strategic and technical responses to the LUC report and these early drafts are attached to this Board paper in Annexes 1 and 2 respectively. It should be noted that these are early draft responses and that more work is needed. In particular, the technical response needs to address findings set out in Chapter 4 of the LUC report and consider carefully the recommendations made.

These draft responses are being brought to the NAAONB Board meeting to ask for guidance from the Board. Specifically, in responding to the LUC report, should the NAAONB be highlighting the disparity between the funding regimes for AONB Partnerships/Conservation Boards and National Park Authorities and should the NAAONB be asking Defra to review the funding arrangements in the light of the LUC report?

Annex 1 - A Draft Strategic Comment from the NAAONB Board to the Defra Minister

Setting the Story Straight

A Response by the Board of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) to the Land Use Consulting (LUC) Report on Maximising Revenues for Protected landscapes.

The NAAONB regrets the failure of the Final LUC Report to adequately reflect the inequitable funding crisis facing England's 34 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty partnerships¹. This response seeks to address some of the inaccuracies and misinterpretations that have arisen.

It was expected that the Report would clearly reflect the successful changes made by AONB partnerships over the last four years to adapt to the changing fiscal context and highlight the critical situation AONB partnerships currently face. This expectation was not met.

The report highlights the relative levels of grant aid from Defra to the AONB partnerships and National Park authorities (NPAs). The decision to exclude the SQW data gathered during the early stages of report preparation resulted in the full extent of the disparity of funding between AONB partnerships and NPAs remaining hidden.

Defra allocates £59.2 million to support the core costs associated with managing AONBs and National Parks but despite the landscapes being of the same landscape quality, attracting the same statutory protection, and delivering the same public service per unit area, only 11% (£6.7 million) of this budget is directed towards funding the larger 65% of this land that is designated AONB, whereas 89% (£54.9 million) is directed towards funding the smaller 35% designated National Park.

This disparity of funding has far reaching implications for the ability for AONB partnerships to secure additional non-exchequer funding. The cumulative impact over years of this funding disparity has been exacerbated by more recent reductions in local authority spending, and is now forcing AONB partnerships to consider their future.

The recent in-year cut to AONB partnerships of a further 1.9% is highly damaging as it has reduced, and in some cases destroyed, the ability of the AONB teams to continue the transformation they have been making, often very effectively, over the last four years. This additional cut has also sent a very strong signal to local authority partners that Defra does not value AONB partnerships highly enough to protect their funding.

The Report discusses Local Authority funding to AONB partnerships. This funding stream is vitally important but the Report fails to highlight just how precarious this funding is in some areas of the country. Because of the lean structures adopted by AONB partnerships to deliver, they are especially vulnerable to local authority cuts or, in some cases, the almost complete withdrawal of funding.

The NAAONB welcomes the recognition that the funding and spending profiles of the two designations are substantially different, with AONB partnerships having much smaller budgets, a lower proportion of central government core funding to total income and being more reliant on project-based funding than NPAs.

¹ AONB partnerships, with a lower case p, is the generic term used by the NAAONB to refer to AONB Partnerships, Conservation Boards and any other organisation recognised as the lead governance body for an AONB.

Item 5 - LUC Report

The NAAONB welcomes government's interest in exploring ways to maximise revenue for protected landscapes. It has always been our intention to adopt a protected landscape approach to landscape issues in England, working in partnership with the National Park organisations to achieve shared outcomes.

AONBs and National Parks are equal in status. We do not believe, however, that government treats them equally. Consequently many AONB partnerships find themselves at a crisis point. The AONB Family had expected this Report to reflect the current reality accurately in order to propose a sensible way forward. The NAAONB does not believe that the Report adequately reflects the current situation and would like to work with government in order to address this.

Annex 2 - A draft detailed technical response from the NAAONB Board to Defra

Setting the Story Straight

A Response by the Board of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) to the Land Use Consulting (LUC) Report on Maximising Revenues for Protected landscapes.

The NAAONB regrets the failure of the Final LUC Report to adequately reflect the inequitable funding crisis facing England's 34 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty partnerships². As a result, this response seeks to address some of the inaccuracies and misinterpretations that have arisen.

Our response is on behalf of the AONB Family, and is in two parts. The first part reflects our collective thoughts on the report as a whole and the second comprises detailed comments on the key findings and recommendations.

The status and objectives of the report

The Maximising Revenues for Protected Landscapes work was funded in part by the Cabinet Office from the Contestable Policy Fund. The work was intended to be both wide ranging and provide guidance beyond that given by the civil service.

Given its provenance, this Report represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to understand and plan a course forward for how Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks might be funded into the future.

Part 1

The reality

There was a high level of expectation around the report from within AONB partnerships. Following detailed and wide ranging input from AONB lead officers and the NAAONB, it was expected that the report would clearly reflect the changes made by AONB partnerships over the last four years to adapt to the changing fiscal context and highlight the critical situation AONB partnerships currently face. This expectation was not met.

In Section 2, the report seeks to set down the reality of the situation faced by Protected Landscapes in 2014 after 4 years of the government's deficit reduction measures. It is very important that the report presents an accurate and comprehensive picture of the current reality. The NAAONB feel that this part of the report contains a number of inaccuracies or misrepresentations that require addressing.

Section 2 of the report discusses the current situation in terms of the total public funding coming to Protected Landscapes and how this is used to attract funding from other sources. Here the aggregated figures are presented for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks together.

In presenting this information for Protected Landscapes as a whole the significant disparity between levels of funding for AONB partnerships and National Park authorities (NPAs) is not made clear. In addition, figure 2.1 of the report not only obscures the real situation but it distorts the message. In figure 2.1 there is a change in the scale along the X axis in order to accommodate the funding

² AONB partnerships, with a lower case p, is the generic term used by the NAAONB to refer to AONB Partnerships, Conservation Boards and any other organisation recognised as the lead governance body for an AONB.

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received for AONB partnerships and NPAs on the same graph. This gives a graphical representation of the frequency distribution of income to Protected Landscapes that provides little purpose other than to obscure the significant disparity between AONB partnership and NPA funding.

At the Steering group In January 2014, figures from SQW were presented that clearly demonstrated the total relative incomes to both AONB partnerships and NPAs and the sources of income. This was a clear and easily understood representation, but omitted from the final report (Fig 1).³

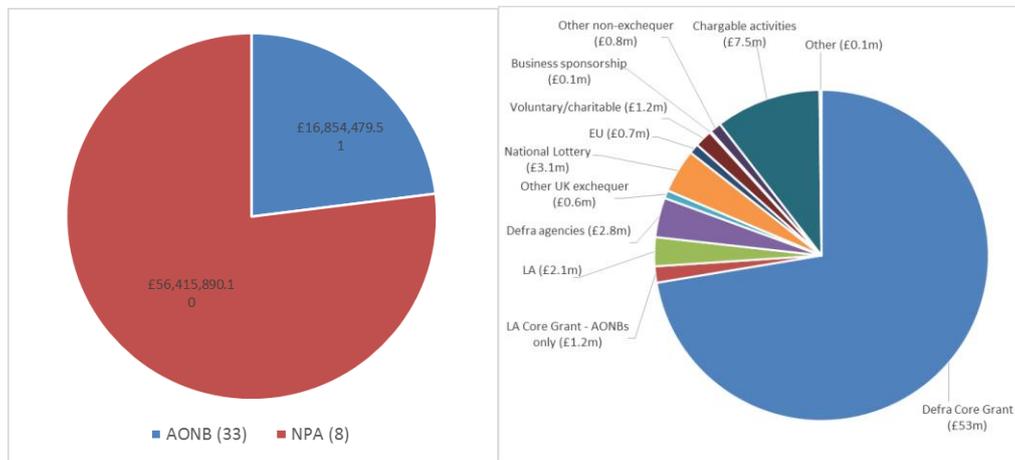


Figure 1 Total amount of Income during the last financial year and by source.

Paragraph 2.26 of the report highlights the relative levels of grant aid from Defra to the AONB partnerships and NPAs. Without the data shown in Figure 1 (above) the full extent of the disparity of funding between AONB partnerships and NPAs remains hidden.

Defra allocates £59.2 million to support the core costs associated with managing AONBs and NPs but despite the landscapes being of the same landscape quality, attracting the same statutory protection, and delivering the same public service per unit area, only 11% (£6.7 million) of this budget is directed towards funding the larger 65% of this land that is designated AONB, whereas 89% (£54.9 million) is directed towards funding the smaller 35% designated National Park. The NAAONB feels that the figure we present here is an accurate representation (Fig 2).

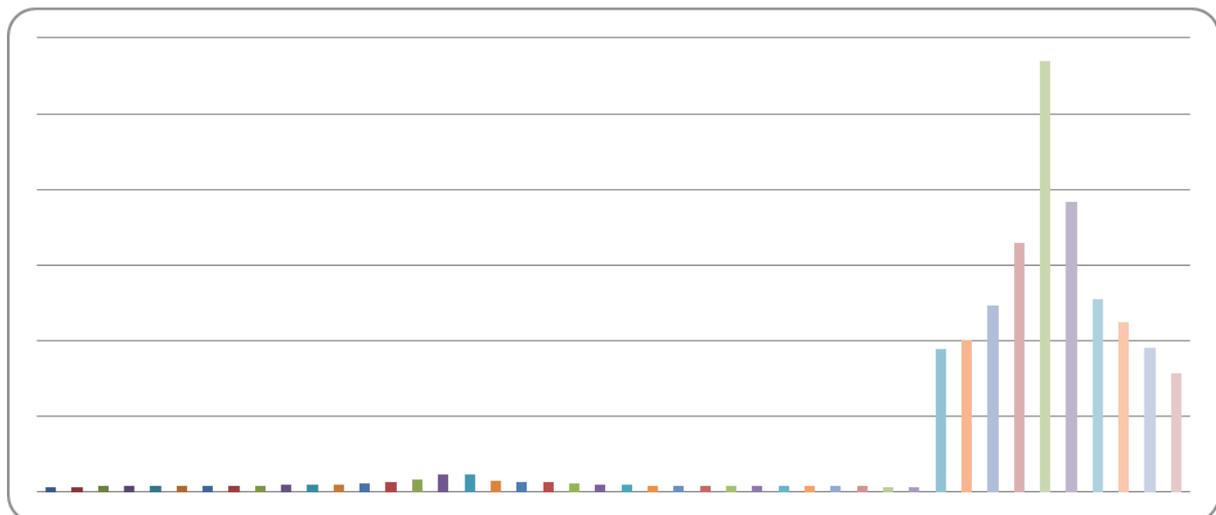


Figure 2 Distribution of total income across AONBs and National Parks in England (not all labels represented)

³ SQW findings presented to the project steering group 22nd January 2014.

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Not only is it extremely difficult to justify this disparity of funding but it has far reaching implications for the ability for AONB partnerships to secure additional non-exchequer funding. The cumulative impact over years of this funding disparity has been exacerbated by more recent reductions in local authority spending, and is now forcing AONB partnerships to consider their future.

The historical argument made to justify the disparity between NPA and AONB partnership funding centres on the additional statutory duties that NPAs have. The NAAONB accepts this in principle, but challenges the actual impact that this has on grant aid. One AONB lead officer in responding to the report has tested this argument against his own funding arrangements.

Direct financial comparisons are not straight forward because of the extra functions undertaken by NPAs - so for my own understanding of the situation, I took a look at the 2011-2012 accounts for a neighboring NPA - being the recipient of one of the smaller Defra grants (among NPAs). If you exclude the costs of development control, forward planning and corporate/democratic services and those attributed to recreation, understanding and rangers (even though some AONBs deliver on those fronts too), the 2011-12 Defra allocation to carry out the same functions as are expected of AONBs totals £1.1M (a £500k/£600k split between conservation & enhancement of natural environment and cultural heritage respectively). It is half the area of the AONB for which I am responsible which received c£230k in the same period.

The recent in-year cut to AONB partnerships of a further 1.9% is highly damaging as it has reduced, and in some cases destroyed, the ability of the AONB teams to continue the transformation they have been making, often very effectively, over the last four years. This additional cut has also sent a very strong signal to local authority partners that Defra does not value AONB partnerships highly enough to protect their funding. The fact that some NPAs have been recipients of additional grant aid over the same period has strengthened the argument around inequality.

Paragraph 2.26 also makes reference to AONB partnerships receiving funding from their constituent local authorities and the report suggests that NPAs do not receive local authority funding. This is inconsistent with the findings of earlier work by SQW, that indicates that the NPAs receive £1.8 million of local authority funding in comparison to £1.4 million received by AONB partnerships.⁴

Paragraph 2.29 discusses Local Authority funding to AONB partnerships. This funding stream is vitally important but the report fails to highlight just how precarious this funding is in some areas of the country. Because of the lean structures employed by AONB partnerships to deliver, they are especially vulnerable to local authority cuts and in some cases the almost complete withdrawal of funding. Significant AONB staff resources each year are required to keep local authority partners involved and committed as Statements of Intent/Memoranda of Agreement are only honoured if there is the political will to do so.

Paragraphs 2.33 -2.35 identified National Lottery Fund as a source of funding that AONB partnerships have been utilising for years. Up to 2011, 36% of all HLF Landscape Partnership Schemes had been in AONBs in contrast to only 10% being in NPAs. NP authorities are now clearly in competition with AONB partnerships for HLF funding, but as NPAs have far greater capacity to prepare bids, find match funding and provide greater levels of security to the HLF they have a distinct market advantage. One AONB lead officer described the situation as AONB partnerships being “completely outgunned in this competition”. This has further exacerbated the inequality of the situation.

⁴SQW findings presented to the project steering group 22nd January 2014.

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Paragraph 2.46 highlights the potential for protected landscapes to secure limited funding from providing pre-application planning advice. This has been trialed by some AONB teams but local authority partners have objected on grounds that a) this is seen to compete with the local authority's approach to charging for advice and b) they are already funding the AONB team to provide advice so there is no basis for charging.

Paragraphs 2.53 – 2.58 set out a discussion around a distinction between core and project funding, which is becoming a progressively esoteric concept to the AONB Family. As budgets to AONB partnerships are cut, project budgets have almost completely disappeared. This is a significant lost opportunity given the success AONB partnerships have had in past in attracting significant additional non-exchequer funding to match monies additional to that needed to run core activities. This ability of AONB partnerships to “multiply” funds is briefly mentioned in paragraph 2.54, but to understand its true significance it should be given further consideration.

The ratio of the multiplier in AONBs varies between areas and over time, but the mean multiplier for AONBs as a whole is around 3 with an AONB partnership in 2013/14 achieving a multiplier of 8.8 therefore for every £1 of exchequer funding they were able to lever in a further £8.80.

The increasing necessity to multiply funds is directly correlated with decreasing grants from the public purse. The figures for AONB partnerships contrast favorably with figures estimated for the NPAs which are not, by necessity, of the same order of magnitude.

Paragraphs 2.61 – 2.65 It is difficult to see how the lessons in funding models from the arts and culture sector can be easily applied to AONBs as AONB partnerships on the whole do not have assets e.g. own buildings/land to earn income.

The NAAONB welcomes statements made in the “Key findings” section 2.66. In particular

“The funding and spending profiles of the two designations are substantially different, with AONB partnerships having much smaller budgets, a lower proportion of central government core funding to total income and being more reliant on project-based funding than NPAs.”

“By far the largest source of income received by protected landscape bodies comes from Defra's annual grant-in-aid settlement. For AONB partnerships this is matched (roughly in the ratio 3:1) by core funding from the constituent local authorities.”

“All protected landscape bodies, and particularly many AONB partnerships, have been effective at using their core public funding to lever funding from a variety of sources to deliver projects.”

The NAAONB feels that these important statements would have benefited from greater elucidation in the main body of the chapter and they appear to be somewhat “buried” at the end of the chapter. With reference to the discussion regarding HLF funding, it is important to repeat the warning that up until recently AONB partnerships have been very successful at securing Landscape Partnership Awards. However, recent evidence suggests that the reduced capacity of AONB partnerships means that it will be difficult for them to compete with other organisations without a level playing field in the future.

The Chapter 3 discussion on “Using existing resources more effectively” though important to include by way of encouraging any authorities who have not already consider the options to do so, is for AONB partnerships an activity that has been undertaken some time ago. All AONB partnerships given they are under the intense scrutiny of local authority partners, have had to justify expenditure to the last penny. Efficiency savings and joint working as set out in this Chapter have been considered and where possible adopted.

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In the AONB Family, we have even reached the point where two separate AONBs are managed by a single AONB team. The NAAONB considers that this may be a saving too far as the distinct identities of each of the separate areas may suffer.

Part 2

Comments on the Key Findings, our detail comments regarding the individual recommendations are set in Annex 1.

The NAAONB applauds the principles stated in paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5, but fears that for some of the smaller AONBs where the local authorities have not been able to be supportive, that point may have passed. There will be some AONB partnerships, albeit a few, where the funding they receive is only sufficient to deliver the core responsibilities. For those, investing in securing new funding streams is not an option.

For some AONB partnerships, the risks associated in investing time and money into a speculative bid or application are too great. Bid failure could lead to partnership failure. For example, it is estimated that the cost of properly preparing a bid to an HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme is at least £20k and for a moderate size bid, the cost is around £40k. On a similar line, bids invariably require match funding of a minimum of 5%. If the bid is for a £1M over 3 years that will require match of £15-20k per annum. If the total core budget for all the AONB partnership's activity is £200k, to make a Landscape Partnership Bid means risking 20% of your total annual budget and then allocating 10% for the next three years. The scale of funding in NPAs, being so much greater, places the NPAs at a distinct advantage when competing with AONB partnerships to secure grants to protect these nationally important landscapes.

In some AONB partnerships, Sustainable Development Fund budgets are now non-existent.

The NAAONB strongly disagrees with the statement in Paragraph 5.8 in relation to AONB partnerships, for reasons already outlined.

The NAAONB welcomes the statement made in Paragraphs 5.10-5.15. In Paragraph 5.16, it is important to note that the current trend is for funding providers not to permit full cost recovery in applications. A further development of this theme is that AONB partnerships and the NAAONB when engaging with or advising government are expected to meet the costs involved (staff time etc.) regardless of the complexity and frequency of the requests.

Perversely, initiatives developed by government departments to improve policy or engagement with protected landscapes can become heavy drains on the limited resources of the AONB partnerships and the NAAONB. When a new initiative or activity is proposed that will require engagement with AONB partnerships or the NAAONB resources need to be identified to enable that engagement. The NAAONB feels strongly that this should be developed as a standalone recommendation.

In Summary

The NAAONB welcomes government's interest in exploring ways to maximise revenue for protected landscapes. It has always been our intention to adopt a protected landscape approach to landscape issues in England, working in partnership with the National Park organisations to achieve shared outcomes.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks are equal in status. We do not believe, however, that government treats them equally. Consequently many AONB partnerships find themselves at a crisis point. The AONB Family had expected this Report to reflect the current reality accurately in order to propose a sensible way forward. The NAAONB does not believe that the Report adequately reflects the current situation and would like to work with government in order to address this.

Item 6 - Chairmen's Conference

Item 6 - Chairmen's Conference

Report to: The Board of the National Association for AONBs
Subject: Chairmen's Conference 2014
Date: 26th June 2014
Report by: Jill Smith (Communications and Events Manager)
Purpose: To brief Board members on proposal for Chairmen's Conference 2014

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that The Board

- note this paper,
- considers and discusses any further requirements, and
- agrees the theme of the Chairmen's Conference and mandate the core team to take preparations forward.

Following the success of last year's Chairmen's Conference, the Board agreed a work programme which included a further one day conference in Autumn this year.

It is proposed that Chairmen's Conference 2014

- takes place on Thursday 20th November 2014 in London,
- has as its theme, the LUC Report "Maximising Revenues for Protected Areas",
- invites Lord de Mauley as English keynote speaker and Alun Davies AM as Wales keynote speaker and LUC as a facilitation speaker,
- invites both AONB Chairmen and National Park Chairmen as the audience,
- incorporates the NAAONB AGM, and
- makes a charge of £75.00 pp to cover costs

The LUC Report remains unpublished but has been circulated on a restricted basis to both the AONB and National Park Families. The NAAONB Board response to this will be presented as a separate agenda item, but we propose to use it as a catalyst for discussion at the Chairmen's Conference as it highlights the critical issue facing all protected landscapes in the next few years. The future funding of both Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks is the main focus of the LUC study, but the study does not necessarily consider all the options. The Chairman's Conference 2014 provides a timely and valuable opportunity to take thinking forward.

Item 7 - Office address options

Item 7 - Office address options

Report to: The Board of the National Association for AONBs
Subject: Office address options
Date: 26th June 2014
Report by: Amber Livingston (Office and Membership Manager)
Purpose: For discussion and agreement

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board

- review the options laid out below, and
- agree a suitable plan for NAAONB future address

Background

The NAAONB has rented desk and storage space from the Cotswolds Conservation Board (formerly Cotswolds AONB Partnership) since February 2000.

The address is
NAAONB,
Fosse Way,
Northleach,
Gloucestershire,
GL54 3JH

It has been our Companies House registered address since the NAAONB became a company limited by guarantee in 2004.

As it may no longer be appropriate for the NAAONB to use the address at the Cotswolds Conservation Board, we have been investigating alternative options. These are listed in Annex 1 with alternatives for telephone, IT, and storage.

The Board is asked to discuss the options and, if appropriate, form a small sub group to make a decision on how to go forward.

Annex 1 - Alternative Options

Currently post sent to the above address is redirected by Royal Mail to the Office Manager's home address. The NAAONB has been using this service for two and a half years and have come to the end of the timeframe allowable by Royal Mail (there is a two year limit which was extended by special agreement by six months in January - mail will be redirected until July 2014). The redirection service has been costing the NAAONB approximately £120/year.

Options

- a) New address SLA with another AONB partnership(annex 1)
 - Possible AONB partnerships: Cranborne Chase, Wye Valley, North Wessex Downs
- b) A contract with an organisation offering a postal address, forwarding service and Companies House registration.
 - Research into this has shown that such contracts cost in the region of £140/year and can be cheaper if post is picked up rather than forwarded. The address can be located in central London but this attracts premium rates.
The postal forwarding on many of these schemes seems complicated as they charge a flat rate up to a number of items but then extra if post is unusually shaped/heavy or the monthly limit is exceeded.
- c) Use our current bookkeeper's address and mail forwarding at approximately £30/month. However, as we hope to draw the finances back in house as much as possible, this might not be the best option at the current time.
- d) SLA with another friendly organisation with similar requirements as option a.

IT services

The NAAONB have many issues with the current IT system including: no out of office functionality, a high quantity of SPAM emails, software/hardware incompatibility across the team, barely portable laptops and instances of use of personal IT equipment to overcome these and other issues. There are several old email addresses in operation and also the defunct www.aonb.org.uk. These are hosted through Cotswolds Conservation Board by Cheltenham Computer Company. No communication with this company appears to be acted upon including several requests to discontinue the old email addresses (these email addresses seem to be a high source of SPAM).

The [landscapesforlife](http://landscapesforlife.com) email addresses are currently run by our web designers Generate UK. The service is very basic, has limitations (such as no functioning out of office) and IT support is not provided within the annual hosting cost.

In order to have a better running email system, an exchange server may be necessary – this could be arranged through an arrangement with an AONB partnership.

Office 365 provides a number of services including a smoother running email system, accessible from many devices, higher spam protection, a shared calendar, and a space to share documents and a messenger similar to Skype for team calls. The cheapest business rate is £47.52/user per year (£4.68/user per month). For the team it would cost £237.60 per year. The possibility of having all this for free is currently being looked into as there is a special dispensation available for not-for-profit companies.

Landline phone number

The landline at Cotswolds may be discontinued, and if so there will no longer be a voicemail message redirecting callers to call the office manager's mobile. Alternatives to this are

- dispensing with a landline number
- unmanned landline at an AONB partnership with an automatic redirect
- pay for a Skype phone number

Item 7 - Office address options

Storage space

There are a number of boxes containing paperwork in the office space which NAAONB rent from Cotswolds Conservation Board. These will need to be relocated or put in storage. Alternatives for this are

- this could be included in an SLA with an AONB/other organisation,
- 9 square foot (a large locker) at Big Yellow Storage Co. would cost approximately £75/year inc. VAT.

Annex 2 - DRAFT Service Level Agreement (SLA)

For: [Organisation/AONB name]

By: National Association for AONBs

Effective Date: [July 2014]

Version: [1]

[Approval signatures]

Agreement to be reviewed annually, next review date [June 2015]

Agreement Overview

This Agreement represents a Service Level Agreement between the National Association for AONBs and [Organisation/AONB name] for the provisioning of an office address, mail forwarding and phone line.

Agreement Details

Use of address for NAAONB “central/head office address”, as provided publically on websites, email signatures, business cards, and any documents produced (this list is not exhaustive). The address will be registered with Companies House and it will also provide a postal location to receive all NAAONB post. No physical office is necessary as all NAAONB staff work from home offices.

Mail forwarding should occur once or twice a week depending on volume of post. There will be an agreed reimbursement for envelopes, labels, postage and staff time [annual figure to be worked out but can be subject to review after an initial period of 3 months].

A small amount of storage space will also be required for archive files. This can be in the form of shelves or cupboards and may require occasional access by NAAONB staff.

A standalone landline for redirecting calls – line and installation fee covered by NAAONB.

Possible integration of NAAONB into current IT system.

Item 8 - Board member corporate presentation

Item 8 - Board member corporate presentation

Report to:	The Board of the National Association for AONBs
Subject:	Board member corporate presentation
Date:	26 th June 2014
Report by:	Rose Day (Portfolio Holder for Securing and Managing Resources) and Richard Clarke (Policy and Development Manager)
Purpose:	To present for discussion a paper in preparation for the Board's new role in seeking Corporate Sponsorship

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board

- notes the background to this paper
- confirms the objectives as set out in this paper
- sanctions the resources required to action these objectives from the NAAONB's reserves

Background

In the challenging economic climate, it is important that the NAAONB explores new and innovative ways of securing sponsorship.

To meet this challenge, following attendance at the 8th International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Manchester in May, a meeting has been secured with the CEO of VisitEngland, and meetings with a national tourism operator and the Heritage Lottery Fund are also being arranged.

In addition, the NAAONB now has its first corporate member, and the Board will be looking to extend corporate membership opportunities in the future.

The Board needs to be prepared to meet these, and new, challenges.

Objectives

In order to compete in the highly competitive corporate world, it is essential that Board members and officers have the necessary business tools to showcase the importance of the NAAONB, in order to be able to champion the NAAONB/AONB Family wherever possible and appropriate

This would entail

- the preparation of targeted promotional literature prepared to a high professional standard for specific corporate sectors, setting out the special qualities of AONBs, what advantages the NAAONB and AONB Family can offer to corporate organisations, and what the corporate organisations can offer us
- the provision of NAAONB/Landscapes for Life lapel badges to be worn by Board members to promote the NAAONB and AONB Family
- the provision of NAAONB ID badges on lanyards to be worn by NAAONB Board members and officers when attending meetings, conferences, etc.
- the provision of quality NAAONB/Landscapes for Life business cards for key portfolio holders and officers

Item 8 - Board member corporate presentation

Conclusion

In order to raise the awareness of the NAAONB/Landscapes for Life brand in a corporate and funding context, it is essential that the NAAONB portrays a strong business image. Not only are we competing with commercial and other environmental organisations, we are also in competition with other landscape designations.

The objectives set out above are the minimal, and most cost-effective, measures to allow the NAAONB to compete and raise awareness in the corporate world.

It is anticipated that Board members would wish to wear their lapel and ID badges with pride, in order to promote wider awareness of the NAAONB/Landscapes for Life brand. It is also anticipated that they will, wherever appropriate, register their membership of the NAAONB Board at meetings and conferences, and actively seek to encourage new corporate sponsors.

Item 10 - Management Accounts

Item 10 - Management Accounts

Report to: The Board of the National Association for AONBs

Subject: Management Accounts

Date: 26th June 2014

Report by: Jill Smith (Communications and Events Manager)

Purpose: To provide an account of income/expenditure of the NAAONB for the FY 2014/15 to date.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board

- notes the background to this paper approves the Management Accounts set out as Appendix 1 to this paper.

Background

Management Accounts are considered and approved by the Board at their quarterly meetings.

Updates are made before each meeting reflecting additional income/expenditure since the previous meeting. A number of estimates have been provided for items for which we await invoices.

Objectives

- To provide a realistic account of income/expenditure of the NAAONB for the FY 2014/15 to date.
- To provide financial clarity and transparency to staff, Board members and grant aiding bodies.

Conclusion

Subject to the estimates of outstanding income/expenditure being realistic, the figures show that a deficit of £13329.00 will be carried forward to 2015/2016.

Item 10 - Management accounts

Annex 1 - Management Accounts: Year 1st April 2014 to 31 March 2015

Account	Budget	Income / Expenditure to date as at 30/05/14	Further contracted commitments: 01/06/14 - 31/03/15	Further estimated commitments: 01/06/14 - 31/03/15	Total predicted spend - 01/04/14- 31/03/15	Variance
Expenditure						
<u>Admin and Finance</u>	(21,167.00)	(1,193.70)	0.00	(19,973.30)	(21,167.00)	0.00
<u>Core</u>	(255,168.00)	(21,968.69)	(84,231.03)	(148,968.28)	(255,168.00)	0.00
<u>Projects</u>						
Big Lottery	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
CEPM	(42,260.00)	0.00	(7,500.00)	(34,760.00)	(42,260.00)	0.00
Chairman's Conference	(2,700.00)	0.00	0.00	(2,700.00)	(2,700.00)	0.00
Communications	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Consultancy	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Down Stream Thinking	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Future Landscapes	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
HLF	(15,360.00)	0.00	(3,353.90)	(12,006.10)	(15,360.00)	0.00
Landscapes for Life Conference	(26,102.00)	(1,500.00)	0.00	(24,602.00)	(26,102.00)	0.00
Press Cuttings	(4,000.00)	(587.40)	0.00	(5.50)	(592.90)	3,407.10
Sustainable Tourism	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wales Landscape Partnership	(1,000.00)	0.00	0.00	(1,000.00)	(1,000.00)	0.00
Welsh Member Training	(4,635.00)	0.00	0.00	(4,635.00)	(4,635.00)	0.00
Misc Expenditure	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sub total – Expenditure	(372,392.00)	(25,249.79)	(95,084.93)	(248,650.18)	(368,984.90)	3,407.10
Income						
<u>Core income</u>						
<u>Membership Core Funding</u>						
England	82,500.00	0.00	82,500.00	0.00	82,500.00	0.00
Wales	4,560.00	0.00	4,560.00	0.00	4,560.00	0.00
Northern Ireland	1,140.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(1,140.00)
Local Authorities	7,800.00	0.00	9,000.00	0.00	9,000.00	1,200.00
Associates	3,000.00	0.00	1,100.00	0.00	1,100.00	(1,900.00)
<u>Defra Main</u>	64,976.00	0.00	64,976.00	0.00	64,976.00	0.00
<u>Defra Regional 1</u>	30,748.00	0.00	30,748.00	0.00	30,748.00	0.00
<u>Defra Regional 2</u>	33,276.00	0.00	33,276.00	0.00	33,276.00	0.00
<u>NRW</u>	12,687.00	0.00	12,687.00	0.00	12,687.00	0.00
<u>Other Project Grants</u>	15,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(15,000.00)
<u>Projects</u>						
Big Lottery	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
CEPM	54,486.00	0.00	0.00	54,486.00	54,486.00	0.00
Chairman's Conference	3,750.00	0.00	0.00	3,750.00	3,750.00	0.00
Communications	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Consultancy	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Down Stream Thinking	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Future Landscapes	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
HLF	15,370.00	0.00	600.00	14,770.00	15,370.00	0.00
Landscapes for Life Conference	36,102.00	0.00	0.00	36,102.00	36,102.00	0.00
Press Cuttings	5,000.00	0.00	0.00	450.00	450.00	(4,550.00)
Sustainable Tourism	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wales Landscape Partnership	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
Welsh Member Training	5,650.00	0.00	0.00	5,650.00	5,650.00	0.00
Misc Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sub total – income	377,045.00	0.00	239,447.00	116,208.00	355,655.00	(21,390.00)
total this year	4,653.00	(25,249.79)	144,362.07	(132,442.18)	(13,329.90)	(17,982.90)

Item 11 - NAAONB Portfolio & Staff Activity Report

Item 11 - NAAONB Portfolio & Staff Activity Report

Report to: The Board of the National Association for AONBs
Subject: NAAONB Portfolio and Staff Activity Report
Date: 26th June 2014
Report by: Portfolio holders and staff
Purpose: To update on operational activity that has taken place since the last Board meeting.

Background

This report reflects those activities undertaken by officers and Board members working on operational issues for the NAAONB since the last Board meeting. It highlights those activities directly linked to the delivery of business plan objectives but does not include the organisational activity that underpins them. The report highlights, in a RAG (red, amber, green) format progress to date.

Objectives

- To inform Board members and membership of activities taking place in order to deliver the NAAONB Business Plan
- To highlight progress towards objectives

Conclusion

This is a report of activities for information only.

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Objective 1 - support policies for conserving and enhancing natural beauty - Portfolio Holder: Michael Mounde, Lead Officer: Howard Davies				
Action	Milestone	By when/whom		NARRATIVE
1.1 Seek regular meetings with Ministers and other senior figures of Government and Opposition parties	Advocacy and engagement programme agreed by Board	March 2014/CEO	●	<p>Meeting with John Griffiths AM on the recommendations of the Williams Commission.</p> <p>Accompanied a visit by Lord de Mauley to the Dedham Vale AONB and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB</p> <p>Meeting with Karen Bradley MP on the interest in designating the Churnet Valley an AONB</p> <p>Worked with the Wye Valley AONB and NRW to host a visit to the Wye Valley of Peter Matthews, Chair NRW</p> <p>Input to working groups, chaired by Dave Webster NE CEO on NE's new way of working and their approach to protected landscapes.</p>
1.2 Provide briefings and support to the AONB Family on issues that are of national importance	Minimum of 3 briefings produced annually	On-going CEO/RC	●	
1.3 Support the All Party Parliamentary Group on AONBs	1 scoping meeting with chair of All Party Parliamentary Group on AONBs	March 2013 Chairman	●	Agreement that this is not a priority.
1.4 Use the wide range of expertise within the AONB Family to prepare responses to all Government consultations judged to be particularly relevant to AONBs	Develop prioritisation mechanism for consultations	March 2014/DD	●	<p>Re convening a technical group of planning specialists to assist with identifying and responding to national consultations.</p> <p>Evidence presented to WG on the value of AONB partnerships ins supporting rural tourism.</p> <p>Presented a comprehensive response to the Williams Commission on</p>

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				public service delivery in Wales Input to consultation on Marine Planning through the Alliance of National Parks Cymru
	<i>Pilot migrated to new site</i>	<i>July 2013/DD</i>	●	Completed. Updates on relevant national consultations posted to Basecamp at least monthly.
	<i>Responses as and when required</i>	<i>On-going/DD/JS</i>	●	The following responses have been made since the last Board meeting and can be found in the Reference Library of www.aonb.org.uk NAAONB Responses to Defra Proposal for Co-operation element of NELMS NAAONB Response to Commons Select Committee - NPPF Two Years On NAAONB Response to DECC Oli & Gas Licensing NAAONB Response to NE Draft template for Planning Protocols with AONB partnerships Response to Welsh Assembly request for evidence concerning the Assembly's support for the development of Tourism in Wales.
<i>1.5 Build and maintain alliances with other organisations</i>	<i>Draft accords / agreement with English Heritage / CADW presented to Board</i>	<i>End 2013/CEO/JS</i>	●	Completed. Will be signed and launched at Landscapes for Life Conference 2014
	<i>Wildlife Trusts Accord adopted</i>	<i>July 2012/CWS/JS</i>	●	Completed.
	<i>Wildlife Trusts adopted</i>	<i>July 2012/DD/JS</i>	●	Completed.
	<i>English National Park Authorities Association agreement adopted</i>	<i>End 2012/CEO</i>	●	Completed.

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	<i>Working with Defra, and Visit England to agree an Accord for Sustainable Tourism in England</i>	<i>May 2014/RC</i>	●	NAAONB attended the Responsible Tourism and Destinations conference in April. This was the first time that this International Conference had been in the UK. Important contacts were made across the private/public sector and with academics working in Responsible Tourism. NAAONB participated in the Visit England - England House debate as part of International Festival for Business in Liverpool. The debate focused on the role of rural tourism and will feed into the National Tourism Strategy.
	<i>Defra Roundtable LEP meetings and Tourism Sub group.</i>	<i>Ongoing/RC</i>	●	NAAONB is working with the Chilterns Conservation Board and Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP to develop a pilot project on Sustainable Tourism and Access. It is hoped to involve the Ramblers Association.
<i>1.6 Maintain a close and supportive working relationship with Local Authorities, the Local Government Association and Welsh Local Government Association</i>	<i>1 scoping meeting with Local Government Association / Welsh Local Government Association</i>	<i>End 2012/CEO</i>	●	
	<i>Programme of Chair and lead officer meetings</i>	<i>On-going/JS</i>	●	The regional meetings have been replaced by a single Chairmen's Conference in London in November.
<i>1.7 Periodically collate high level feedback on AONB partnership performance monitoring for Defra</i>	<i>Tbc</i>	<i>On-going/CEO</i>	●	
<i>1.8 Explore mechanisms for closer working with National Park Authorities to increase effectiveness and improve environmental outcomes</i>	<i>Agreed collaboration programme with English National Park Authorities Association presented to Board</i>	<i>Mid 2014 CEO/DD/RC/JS</i>	●	Close working with the Alliance of National Parks Cymru, and maintained dialogue with CNP throughout the process, including input to the drafting of the ToR and protocols.
	<i>2 meetings with English National Park Authorities Association /Natural England</i>	<i>Annually/CEO /DD/RC</i>	●	

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	<i>2 meetings with National Parks Wales/Natural Resources Wales</i>	<i>Annually/CEO/DD/RC/JS</i>	●	NAAONB has met with the Welsh AONBs to review the progressive impact of further devolution.
<i>1.9 Disseminate advice on the discharge of duty to have regard to the AONB purpose</i>	<i>Scoping of circular</i>	<i>Early 2012/RC</i>	●	
	<i>Co-ordinated AONB Family consensus reached on circular</i>	<i>End 2012/CEO</i>	●	
	<i>Provide clear leadership and consistency in our response</i>	<i>End 2012/CEO</i>	●	
<i>1.10 Provide technical support to government agencies as and when required</i>	<i>Reports</i>	<i>On-going/CEO</i>	●	Representation of AONB Family on Defra Agri-Environment Stakeholders Group with report backs to Basecamp March & May 2014 Representation of AONB Family on Defra Terrestrial Biodiversity Delivery Group incl report backs and webinar programme April & June 2014 The Maximizing Revenue for Protected Landscapes report has been finalized and the NAAONB along with a number of AONB partnerships have met with the Minister to review some of the recommendations. The NAAONB will be formally responding to the report.
	<i>Defra Rural Tourism Programme.</i>	<i>May2014/RC</i>	●	Baseline, Performance Management and Evaluation Framework has been finalized, with input from NAAONB. The baseline work highlighted some important facets of tourism in AONBs along with some important opportunities. The emphasis of monitoring element of this work will be on the delivery of the Tourism Accord.
	<i>Defra contract to evaluate “The Economic Contribution of Protected Landscapes”</i>	<i>May 2014</i>	●	The NAAONB provided input to this study, sat on the steering group and took part in the concluding workshop. It will work with Defra to consider how it can be taken forward.

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1.11 Actively engage in policy making processes and decisions at international, national and regional levels	Agreed way forward re IUCN categorisation	Early 2012/CEO	●	Complete.
	Resources gained for co-ordinated response if required	Mid 2012/CEO	●	Complete.
	Completion of re-categorisation	End 2012/HD/JS	●	Complete.
1.12 Continue to support Natural England in the development and future implementation of the protected landscape environmental outcome monitoring framework.	Agreed approach to coordinated and robust monitoring framework for AONBs	End 2013/RC	●	Complete.
	Timely reporting on AONB input to monitoring	On-going /RC	●	
1.13 Work with Natural England and Defra on the development of a vision and strategic framework for AONBs and the wider protected landscape family	Strategic Plan fully developed	End 2012/CEO	●	
Objective 2 - Develop understanding of AONB Partnerships and the issues they face - Portfolio Holder: Sarah Jackson, Lead Officer: Jill Smith				
2.1 Support the Communications sub-group in developing a communication strategy around key messages	Meeting of Communications Working Group	April 2014/FL ALS	●	Complete.
	Draft Communication Strategy produced	April 2014/FL ALS	●	Complete.
	Communication Strategy agreed by	Summer 2014/FL ALS	●	Strategy complete and agreed. Development of Action Plan is part of the "briefing" sessions at Landscapes for Life Conference 2014

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	<i>membership</i>			
<i>2.2 Develop and manage the Landscapes for Life brand</i>	<i>Scope brand strategy</i>	<i>Summer 2014/JS</i>	●	Now that the Communications Strategy has been completed a brand strategy will be developed as an appendix to it. An audit of current usage will be undertaken before scoping takes place. It is intended to set up a sub group to lead on this at Landscapes for Life Conference 2014
	<i>Draft Branding Strategy produced</i>	<i>Summer 2014/JS</i>	●	See above.
	<i>Branding Strategy agreed by membership</i>		●	See above.
<i>2.3 Develop www.landscapesforlife.org</i>	<i>Architecture in place – new site up and running</i>	<i>April 2014/JS/DD</i>	●	The recent successful HLF catalyst fund bid is funding the development of a Knowledge Platform to incorporate information and documents from the HLF work, www.aonb.org.uk Reference Library and SWPL Forum archive
<i>2.4 Maintain public profile through presence at targeted national events and activities</i>	<i>1 x targeted national public event representing the AONB Family</i>	<i>Annually/JS/CEO</i>	●	Twitter – a new account @AONBFamily has been set up to compliment @NAAONB. @AONBFamily will concentrate on promoting events and happenings within the 46 AONBs and @NAAONB will continue to be the more policy and strategy directed twitter feed. An audit undertaken recently to gather figures for AONB Family Twitter followers and Facebook Likes showed followers of over 60,000. This information was fed into sponsorship package that the NAAONB put together for conference and which has so far resulted in £8500 of sponsorship for Landscapes for Life Conference 2014 Attended and provided input to a Seascales and Marine Planning seminar hosted by CPRW
<i>2.5 Provide advice to Defra on all aspects of AONB Partnerships as appropriate</i>	<i>Coordinated responses</i>	<i>On-going/CEO</i>	●	Focus on the impact of local authority funding cuts, specifically regarding the situation in Somerset Feedback on the impact of the proposed additional in-year 1.9% budget cut
<i>2.6 Organise annual Landscapes for Life Conference</i>	<i>Establishment of team</i>	<i>January 2014 JS/CWS</i>	●	L4L2014 is being organised by the Conference Portfolio Holder and Communications and Events Manager

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	<i>Preparatory meetings</i>	<i>on going</i>	●	
	<i>Conference event</i>	<i>July 2014/JS/CWS</i>	●	
<i>2.7 Organise schedule of possible Ministerial visits</i>	<i>Paper tabled at tripartite board</i>	<i>March 2014/CEO</i>	●	Ongoing, although the role of the NAAONB is now to provide advice rather than organise a schedule
<i>2.8 Deliver a national programme of training and development, focusing on AONB Units and Joint Advisory Committee members but also seeking to involve appropriate people from other organisations</i>	<i>2 x training meetings</i>	<i>April 2015/DD/RC/JS</i>	●	The bid submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund Catalyst Fund to support NAAONB training / development of staff, members and volunteers with regard to raising non exchequer sources of funding was successful.
	<i>3 'regional' events</i>	<i>April 2015/DD/RC/JS</i>	●	SW Workshop with Western Power Distribution on identifying candidate sites for undergrounding 2015 -2023 June 2014
	<i>2 national training events</i>	<i>April 2015/DD</i>	●	Developing programmes for 2 NAAONB training events for Autumn 2014 on Lottery Funding and Working with Friends Groups Launched CEPF funded study visit programme; 3 study visits during July/August to woodlands in Dorset, Shropshire Hills and Arnside & Silverdale AONBs
	<i>4 lead officer and chairman meetings.</i>	<i>Nov2014/JS</i>	●	The usual regional Chairmen's meetings format was replaced by the AONB Chairmen's Conference in November.
<i>2.9 Use the wide range of expertise within the AONB Family to produce national position statements</i>	<i>Draft position statements presented to Board</i>	<i>On going/CEO/All</i>	●	A comprehensive listing of Position Statements and Planning Guidance available from the AONB Family are published on NAAONB website and Basecamp. These have now been transferred to the new Knowledge Platform which will go live and be launched at Landscapes for Life Conference 2014.

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Objective 3 -Improve the way AONB Partnerships and the NAAONB work - Portfolio Holder: Chris Woodley-Stewart, Lead Officer: David Dixon				
<i>3.1 Produce regular E-newsletters to highlight and share good practice</i>	<i>Planned programme of newsletters agreed</i>	<i>April 2014/JS</i>	●	AONB News is produced as an e-news and a word document 6 times a year. It is disseminated nationally by the Communications and Events Manager and AONB Communications Officers are encouraged to disseminate it more locally. Good practice and experience is also highlighted and shared on Basecamp. L4L Conference presentations and other events are shared via www.landscapesforlifeconference.org.uk
<i>3.2 Work with Defra, Protected Landscape Fora, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, and Northern Ireland Environment Agency to review working arrangements for regional co-ordinator posts</i>	<i>Co-ordinated views of AONBs in Wales sought</i>	<i>Early 2012/CEO</i>	●	Complete.
	<i>Full integration of working arrangements complete in England</i>	<i>April 2012/CEO</i>	●	Complete.
<i>3.3 Provide national overview to AONB Family direction and shared objectives</i>	<i>Annual review to AGM</i>	<i>Nov 2013 Chairman/CEO/JS</i>	●	The Chairman and CEO reported to the membership at the AGM in November. The Communications and Events Manager produced a brief annual report in pdf format which was available at the AGM and a subsequent pair of documents showing “What we did with your support” and “How you could benefit” as part of the membership recruitment campaign in April 2014.
<i>3.4 Advise on development of management plan guidance</i>	<i>Co-ordinated advice to Natural England/ Defra</i>	<i>Early 2012/CEO</i>	●	Complete.
<i>3.5 Conduct an annual review and evaluation of the business plan to assess the effectiveness of the NAAONB and fine tune as appropriate</i>	<i>Progress reports to NAAONB Board and annual report to AGM</i>	<i>October annually and Board meetings/CEO</i>	●	NAAONB staff working with a board sub-group to produce strategic and business plans for the period 2015-18

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3.6 Facilitate opportunities for collaborative working	Joint annual outcome agreement agreed with English National Park Authorities Association	July annually/CEO	●	Accepted funding from Cabinet Office/DECC for NAAONB led Community Energy Peer to Peer Mentoring partnership. CEPM partnerships will deliver a programme of study visits, training events and practical tools to support social action that drive active woodland management April 2014 to April 2015
	Joint annual outcome agreement agreed with National Parks Wales	July annually/CEO	●	Not required in this form, but a clear outline of shared objectives likely to fall out of the recommendations of the William's Commission
3.7 Establish a programme and means of mentoring and mutual support between AONBs		May 2014/RC	●	Launched NAAONB HLF funded Peer to Peer Mentoring programme on April 30th in Birmingham. AONB staff from 8 AONBs will be working together for 8 months to develop AONB Family understanding about working relationships with the private sector.
3.8 Review NAAONB Board member portfolios in line with strategic plan requirements	Any recommended changes implemented	March 2014/Chairman/CEO	●	Portfolios were reviewed at the Board meeting on 5 th March 2014.
Objective 4 –Secure and manage resources – Portfolio Holder: Rose Day, Lead Officer: Richard Clarke				
4.1 Co-ordinate views of AONB partnerships on the review of the AONB funding formula, contribute overview and offer evidence to Defra	Publication of Defra paper on funding model	Early 2012/RC	●	Not required.
	Scope of review of funding	May 2012/RC	●	The Value of AONB partnerships work has been completed see section 1.7
4.2 Maintain engagement with existing funding partners, work to establish additional funding partnerships	Regular meetings with Defra, Natural England, Natural	On going/CEO	●	

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	<i>Resources Wales, and Northern Ireland Environment Agency</i>			
	<i>Targeted work with the private sector</i>	<i>May 2013</i>	●	
<i>4.3 Lead on large scale external funding bids</i>	<i>Scope opportunities</i>	<i>Early 2012/CEO/RC/DD</i>	●	Exploring options for NAAONB bids into LIFE +, ERASMUS + and INTERREG V Through the HLF funded P2P work hosting a meeting of private sector supporters in June 23 to better understand business needs from relationships with 3rd sector/ AONB partnerships
	<i>Develop bid</i>	<i>Mid 2012/CEO/RC/DD</i>	●	Date no longer relevant
	<i>Application submitted</i>	<i>Dec 2014 CEO/RC/DD</i>	●	Developed and submitted a bid to Big Lottery with the Plunkett Foundation to provide further support to AONB partnerships involved in social forestry projects - Decision August 2014
<i>4.4 Rolling review of governance arrangements for the NAAONB</i>	<i>Draft handbook to Board</i>	<i>July 2012/Chairman</i>	●	
	<i>Publication of handbook</i>	<i>October 2012</i>	●	
	<i>Review</i>	<i>annually/Chairman</i>	●	
<i>4.5 Further scope reduction in operating costs to include alternative office accommodation, use of electronic publishing, advertising and sponsorship</i>	<i>Initial review</i>	<i>April 2012/CEO</i>	●	Ongoing movement to a more electronic approach to working through teleconference, Skype, and digital signatures etc. Alternative accommodation has been discussed internally with prices for a virtual office address sought.
	<i>Report</i>	<i>July 2012/CEO</i>	●	

Item 12 - Defra Report

Report to: The Board of the National Association for AONBs
Subject: Defra Report
Date: 26th June 2014
Report by: Claire Mason
Purpose: For information

Defra R&D

We have worked closely with representatives from AONBs and NPAs on two recent reports which will be published shortly. The constructive feedback and dialogue has been much- appreciated by Defra and its consultants.

(1) Maximising External Funding for Protected Landscapes by Land Use Consultants made 24 recommendations. We are following up on these with both NAAONB and National Parks England, informed by your responses. There is considerable Ministerial interest in this work. As a first step, a workshop was held on the 16th June to look at unique selling points, branding and work with corporates by Protected Landscapes bodies. This proved to be a useful event in developing some key messages and stressing the need for protected landscape approaches.

(2) We have also conducted research into the Economics of Protected Landscapes which assessed various studies, data sources and techniques which might be used to determine 1) what happens in protected landscapes; 2) the effect of the designation on activity and 3) the role of the managing bodies in the economics of the areas.

This work was undertaken by Cumulus Consultants who have previously undertaken work in the Cotswolds and National Parks. The report reaches a number of conclusions and has recommendations on obtaining new and better evidence. Again we are looking to follow up the recommendations with key partners. Improved economic information will be helpful in demonstrating the benefits of the AONBs and AONB partnerships in delivering, and being seen to deliver, sustainable rural growth.

Defra Visits

Lord de Mauley has now visited five AONBs – Shropshire Hills, Cotswolds, North Wessex Downs, Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast and Heaths. All of these have been very useful and many of our partners have been involved. The Minister has appreciated the strength and depth of partnership working. To quote from Suffolk:

“I have had a really wonderful day today seeing how committed everybody is and how passionate they all are about the AONB, as well as seeing some pretty good cross-sections of examples of what is going on”

More detail at:

http://www.eadt.co.uk/news/politics/essex_suffolk_minister_visits_areas_of_outstanding_natural_beauty_1_3631125?usurv=skip

A wide range of issues, as well as some common themes such as funding and planning, have been covered on the visits so far.

Item 12 - Defra Report

Bronwyn Hill, the Defra Permanent Secretary, was to visit the Chilterns at the end of the month but that has had to be postponed. Tom Surrey is arranging another visit with Howard.

Funding in 14/15 and 15/16

The 14/15 funding for AONBs was communicated in December 2013. Defra wrote to all the bodies it sponsors in April to urge prudence in 2014 /15 by only committing 98.1% of planned expenditure. The position will be reviewed in quarter 2 and bodies will be notified of the final budget position as soon as possible.

An analysis by Defra of the business plans for 14/15 suggests that the turnover for AONBs will be about £17.1m from a Defra grant of £6.1m.

We await the finalisation of the NAAONB's next Business Plan and look forward to continued partnership working with the Board.

We discussed funding arrangements within the Tri-partite Meeting on 17 June.

Item 13 - Natural England Report

Report to: The Board of the National Association for AONBs
Subject: Natural England Report
Date: 26th June 2014
Report by: David Henshilwood and Liz Newton
Purpose: For information

Relationship management

Natural England will be represented at the forthcoming NAAONB conference by Liz Newton, Director for Landscape and Geodiversity, David Henshilwood and colleagues from national and area teams. On 17 July Jim Smyllie, Exec Director and Liz Newton will host a forum in Exeter to explore joint working with our Protected landscape partners. This is an additional forum to those held in February, when bad weather prevented south-western representatives from attending.

Natural England's Strategy refresh

Our new Area and national teams are now well-established, and developing their relationships with their local AONB partners. The overall responsibility for our relationship with the NAAONB and the AONB Family rests with Liz Newton's Landscape and Geodiversity team, with David Henshilwood managing the relationship. Any particular questions about our joint work and national relationship should be directed to him.

AONB Boundary variations

We will be working closely with the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Partnership over the coming months to progress assessment of the case for boundary variations. A small project team, led by David Vose from Landscape and Geodiversity team, is working alongside area team colleagues. This work is being progressed in parallel with implementing the Minister's decision regarding the Lakes-Dales National Park extension, as a joint landscape designation project. We will need to complete the outstanding work on Lakes- Dales NP before considering when to commence work on Surrey Hills AONB extension case.

Our work on reviewing the 'long list' of potential AONB designation/variation cases is progressing on schedule, and we hope to have completed the assessment of these cases by early July. The priority short-list of possible cases will then need to be referred to our Board for consideration. We will share the findings with the NAAONB as soon as the Board's consideration has been completed. This is likely to be in the late autumn.

It remains the case that we presently do not have sufficient resources to progress any further cases apart from those of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths and Surrey Hills AONBs, and that these two cases will take at least three years to complete.

Housing developments affecting AONBs

Natural England has received the contract report, presenting the findings from a survey of local authorities to determine the potential impact of housing developments affecting AONBs. The report shows that just over 11000 housing units have been allocated in 92 developments in AONBs, with a further 19,600 units in 33 developments adjoining AONB boundaries.

We hope to share the main findings from the report when we have discussed them further with the relevant Government departments.

Item 14 - Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru - Natural Resources Wales Report

Report to: The Board of the National Association for AONBs
Subject: Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru - Natural Resources Wales Report
Date: 26th June 2014
Report by: Lisa Tomos
Purpose: For information

NRW 2014-17 **Corporate Plan** has been produced with the emphasis very much on natural resources, flooding and plantations. There is scant but significant reference to landscapes. Clearly protected landscapes are crucial natural resource planning units. Future Corporate Plans will be for 5 years

A **Business Plan** has been being produced which sets out one year priorities and delivery. Limited references to landscape enhancement, ELC and sustainable land management are included.

Partnership and Funding Review has reported internally and an announcement is to be made at the Royal Welsh Show in July. Our main messages to partners in the meantime are

- we will be a funding organisation with a modest budget for the next three years,
- partnership funding will be delivered in two ways – via strategic joint working and via competitive rounds along the lines of the Welsh Government’s Nature Fund and CAN,
- we will take a risk based approach to the funding process and we will aim to streamline the process where we can,
- we will have a minimum funding level of £10k,
- there will be an expectation that the funded organisation will match fund Natural Resources Wales contribution,
- we will only provide project or direct delivery funding. We will encourage Welsh Government to provide core funding to relevant organisations where appropriate, and
- two engagement events for partners are to be held on 17 and 18 July.

Management Planning Support for AONBs

NRW has commissioned a report on how the ecosystems approach and natural resource planning can be integrated into the review of management plans. A workshop to follow up the report will be held for PL staff in early July, following other events on data and ecosystem services.

Update on NRW Planning advice

NRW is reviewing how and on what we provide advice by autumn this year. There will be discussions with WG and the WLGA on this, including how we can assist in improving capacity in LAs. Two new landscape casework officers will be in post by the autumn, one for each North and South Wales also new guidance on single and small scale wind turbines in the landscape.

Item 14 - Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru - Natural Resources Wales Report

Profile of AONBs within NRW. We are very grateful to the Wye Valley AONB Partnership, Howard Davies and Philip Hygate of the NAAONB for facilitating the visit on Tuesday by NRW Chairman Peter Matthews (with Carole Rothwell NRW) to the WVAONB. The feedback is excellent and can only help raise the profile of our AONBs.

Work continues within NRW on the three pilot areas for **natural resource planning**: the catchments of the Dyfi, Tawe and Rhondda with draft reports due towards the end of this year.

Our total estimated **funding position** is £180m in 2014/15 and £178m in 2015/16.