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**The National Association for  
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
Business Plan 2018 – 2020**

**Registered Office**

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Company number 4729800

Charity number 1158871

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## 1. The National Association for AONBs

### 1.1. Charitable Objectives

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) is a Charitable Company limited by guarantee. It has three objects:

- to promote the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty including the physical, natural, cultural and built environment in and around Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, other Protected Areas, and those areas for which such designation might be pursued,
- to advance the education, understanding and appreciation of the public in relation to the conservation and enhancement natural beauty including the physical, natural, cultural and built environment of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, other Protected Areas and those areas for which such designation might be pursued, and
- to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of those organisations promoting or representing Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, other Protected Areas and those areas for which such designation might be pursued.

### 1.2. Membership

Members are those involved in the planning and management of 8000 square miles of the UK's most beautiful and cherished landscapes. Membership includes most of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) partnerships<sup>1</sup> in England and Wales, as well as some of those Local Authorities with statutory responsibility for AONBs, and a number of voluntary bodies and individuals with an interest in the future of these iconic landscapes.

### 1.3. Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan 2016-2020 reaffirms the Vision for the NAAONB as being ***the natural beauty of AONBs is valued and secure***. It sets out the context within which this business plan will be delivered and the high level strategic objectives of the charity:

- To support policies for conserving and enhancing natural beauty,
- To develop an understanding of AONBs and the issues they face,
- To improve the way in which AONB Partnerships, Conservation Boards, and the NAAONB work together, and
- To secure and manage resources.

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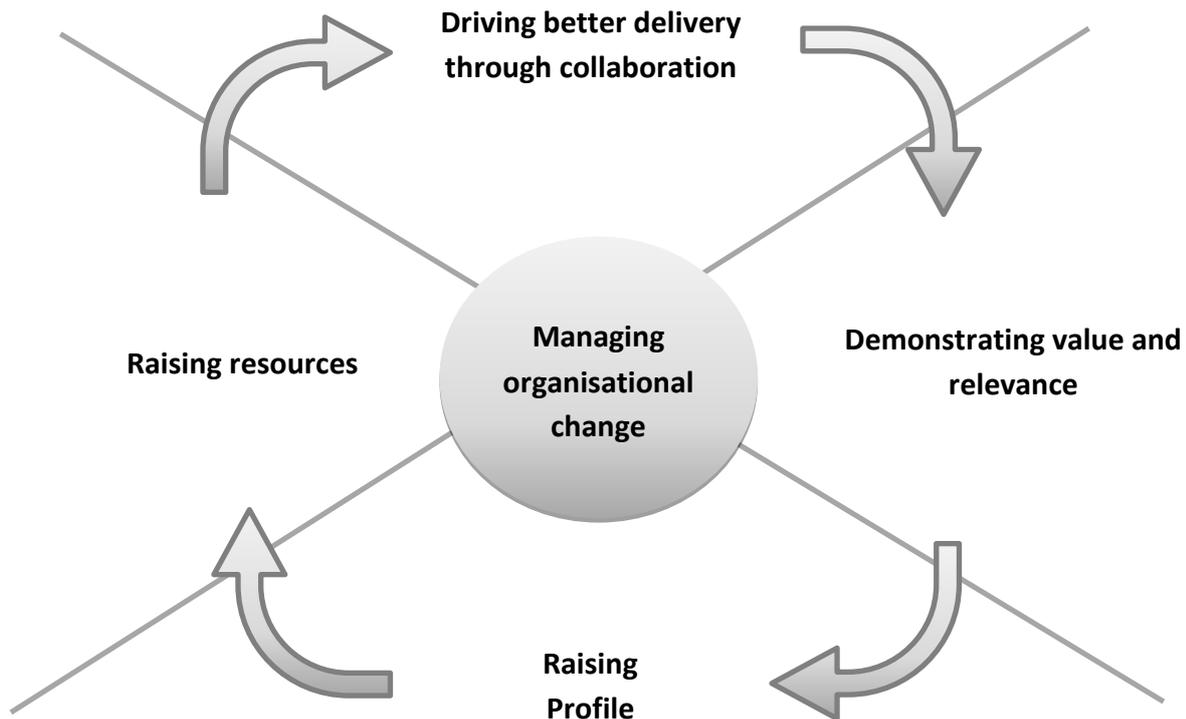
<sup>1</sup> AONB partnership in this instance includes any management Partnership, Conservation Board, Joint Advisory Committee or Joint Committee.

#### 1.4. Mission

*Our mission is to develop a network of ambitious AONB partnerships<sup>1</sup> with a strong collective voice, working collaboratively to deliver shared objectives.*

#### 1.5. Areas of work

The five broad areas of work required to deliver the strategic objectives



#### 1.6. Delivery

Delivery of the Strategic Plan is articulated through a work programme agreed by the membership. This is outlined in Annex 1.

## 2. The operating context

### 2.1. Positioning of the NAAONB

The NAAONB has established itself as the voice of the AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards by working closely with them, and with Local Authorities, statutory agencies, central governments and other interested bodies. By doing so it furthers the work of AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards, and helps them deliver their statutory responsibilities. The NAAONB sees itself being

- an influential, trusted organisation that is accepted as the mouthpiece for the AONB Family,
- an organisation that encourages and harnesses the collective experience, enthusiasm and goodwill of the AONB Family,
- an organisation that brings the AONB Family together as a cohesive and coherent entity,
- an organisation that celebrates the unique identity of its individual members,
- an organisation that works with others to achieve shared objectives, and
- the single point of contact with the AONB Family for governments.

## **2.2. Managing change**

The NAAONB is operating within a period of continued public-sector reform and enhanced devolution. Over the period of this business plan the UK will leave the European Union.

It is widely acknowledged<sup>2</sup> that the central skill sets now required to underpin the success of environmental organisations are based on behavioural science, strategic communications, framing expertise, economics, and political acumen.

These skillsets underpin better advocacy work and stronger communications, a better understanding of the impact of attitudes, behaviours and values on environmental outcomes; more effective collaboration across organisations, and an increased capacity for self-reflection to ensure organisations are flexible and responsive in the face of unexpected developments and open to new ways of accomplishing their objectives.

Over the next two years the NAAONB will concentrate its attention on meeting the needs of the AONB Family in England and Wales. It will focus on targeted advocacy particularly around post Brexit agri-environment delivery, highlighting the value and relevance of the AONB designation to contemporary societal needs, and supporting positive planning. To do this effectively we will be gathering data and evidence to make our case, sharing knowledge and learning, and collaborating effectively with others. We will continue to develop the skills, knowledge and expertise for AONB staff to meet current and future challenges.

The NAAONB will work flexibly, using a mix of approaches to delivery. It will maintain a small team to deliver its core work programme, continue to support and co-ordinate AONB staff working on national issues, collaborate with others on the delivery of shared objectives, and buy in external support where this is most cost-effective.

The NAAONB supports enhanced devolution and tailors its approach to suit the specific needs of the membership in each of the devolved nations.

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<sup>2</sup> What the Green Groups Said, *Insights from the UK Environment Sector*, Environmental Funders Network, July 2017

### **2.3. Corporate Risk**

The NAAONB prepares a risk register and reviews this periodically. This allows the charity to assess and monitor potential and possible risks in its day-to-day activities, project work and within the wider context of the AONB Family.

To maximise flexibility around income levels, the budget for the delivery of this plan incorporates a 1.3% annual contingency around grant aid, and a 3.8% annual contingency around membership income.

## **3. Monitoring and review**

### **3.1. The review cycle**

In light of a rapidly changing context the NAAONB Board of Trustees will undertake its Business Plan review on a two year cycle. It reviews its performance annually against the Business Plan thereby allowing the Board to assess the efficacy of actions taken and to review annual work programmes in light of changing circumstances.

The Business Plan identifies expected income and expenditure over a three year period. The first year is the one budgeted for, agreed by the Board and presented to the AGM for agreement by the full membership. The succeeding two years are indicative, being subject naturally to greater potential variation, but they serve to provide reassurance that the direction of travel is sustainable and financially affordable.

### **3.2. Monitoring and review of the plan**

Progress on this plan will be reported to the NAAONB Board at each meeting. Papers and minutes of all meetings will be freely available to both members and the public on the Landscapes for Life website's Board page. An annual review of progress will be reported to the full membership at the AGM.

## **4. Funding the 2018 – 2020 Business Plan**

The three year budget summary is at Annex 2. Expenditure has been forecast against implementing the Work Plan at Annex 1. The summary shows that

- the work programme as outlined is affordable,
- the uncertainties of the near future around income have been taken into account so far as is possible and reasonable, and
- against current assumptions, a prudent level of reserves will be maintained. The NAAONB Reserves Policy is set out separately and currently under review.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Reserves Policy dated 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015

## **5. Corporate Governance**

The NAAONB became a Charitable Company limited by guarantee on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014 having previously operated as an incorporated controlled company limited by guarantee. As a charitable company, the NAAONB is required to apply Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) for accounting and reporting – including reporting on public benefit with regards its charity Objects.

## Annex 1. Work programme

### A. Raising profile - Telling others what we do and why we do it

On behalf of the AONB Family we lead on

- supporting policy making processes and decisions at international, UK wide, and national levels by
  - instigating regular standing meetings with Ministers and other senior figures of Governments and opposition parties
  - using the wide range of expertise within the AONB Family to respond to Government consultation papers and development of Government policies affecting AONBs including funding arrangements
  - contributing to research initiatives
- exploring and developing mechanisms for closer working with organisations with shared objectives
- providing technical support to AONB partnerships/conservation boards, government agencies, and the public when required
- working with governments and their statutory advisers on landscape on the development of a vision and strategic framework for the AONB Family

Priorities	Action	Key milestones	By when
Articulate the value of AONBs, AONB Partnerships, and Conservation Boards	<i>Work with the AONB Family and Defra to develop a set of performance metrics linked to the AONB purpose(s) and the 25 Year Environment Plan</i>	<i>Key metrics agreed</i>	<i>May 2018</i>
	<i>Website development and information management</i>	<i>Case studies of exemplary work in place</i>	<i>May 2018</i>
		<i>Technical development complete</i>	<i>July 2018</i>

	<i>Provide an annual report for Defra, based on key metrics, showcasing positive outcomes from AONB Partnership and Conservation Board work</i>	<i>Annual Report published</i>	<i>March annually</i>
	<i>Instigate regular meetings with Ministers, Cabinet Secretaries, and civil servants to highlight the value of the AONB designation, AONB partnerships and Conservation Boards to society</i>	<i>See advocacy action plans</i>	<i>As required</i>
	<i>Respond to government consultations, drawing on the evidence and experience of the NAAONB and across the AONB Family</i>	<i>Consultation responses agreed, submitted and uploaded to L4L website</i>	<i>As required</i>
	<i>Explore options with Defra around an AONB offer for place-based agri-environment delivery post-Brexit</i>	<i>Iterative development complete – final offer submitted to Minister</i>	<i>April 2018</i>
	<i>Provide guidance on management plan content to AONB partnerships in England to reflect changed need associated with the above</i>	<i>Presentation at regional meetings</i>	<i>June 2018</i>

## B. Demonstrating value and relevance - Encouraging others to speak out on our behalf

On behalf of the AONB Family we lead on

- using the wide range of expertise within the AONB Family to help improve decision making and secure the future of AONBs
- providing advice to Defra, Natural England, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales on all aspects of AONBs as appropriate
- offering access to advice and information on AONB issues
- delivering a programme of learning and development on Designated Landscape issues
- developing the AONB Family Advocacy Strategy for England and Wales
- developing [www.landscapesforlife.org.uk](http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk)
- maintaining and developing the AONB Family's public profile at conferences and seminars
- producing a regular e-newsletter with topical news, learning and career opportunities for dissemination to AONB Partnerships, Conservation Boards and wider audiences

Priorities	Actions	Key milestones	By when
Strengthen advocacy and communications	<i>Produce an Advocacy Strategy for England and Wales</i>	<i>Strategy in place</i>	<i>Oct 2018</i>
	<i>Produce and lead on the delivery of advocacy action plans for England and Wales</i>	<i>Action plans in place</i>	<i>Oct 2018</i>

	<i>Lead on the delivery of a national communications action plan to support effective advocacy across England and Wales</i>		<i>Ongoing</i>
	<i>Lead on the design, planning, and execution of innovative national campaigns to support the delivery of key messages</i>		<i>Sept 2018</i>
	<i>Actively engage with the press, radio and other media to further the key messages of the AONB Family</i>		<i>Ongoing</i>
Build on existing dialogue and continue to grow trust and support by liaison/direct contact with national bodies.	<i>Keep under review the Defra/NE/NAAONB tripartite agreement</i>	<i>Review actions</i>	<i>Annually</i>
	<i>High level meetings with Natural Resources Wales</i>	<i>Bilateral meeting with Chair and CEO of NRW</i>	<i>Oct annually</i>
	<i>High level meetings with Natural England</i>	<i>Bilateral meeting with Chair and CEO of NE</i>	<i>Oct annually</i>
		<i>Provide input on behalf of the AONB Family to Natural England's landscape advisory group</i>	<i>Biannually</i>
	<i>Represent the AONB Family in discussions around the Framework for Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes (FMEOPL)</i>	<i>Engagement in management board meetings</i>	<i>Annually</i>

	<i>Evaluate and review/refresh national accords with other bodies</i>		<i>Biennially</i>
Grow our influence in local and central governments (including, at a UK, level with Health, Transport, Local Government departments, and Treasury) and with major NGOs.	<i>Foster and support relations with government departments</i>	<i>See advocacy action plans</i>	<i>Reported annually</i>
	<i>Foster and support relations with CPRE</i>	<i>meetings with the CEO of CPRE</i>	<i>As required</i>
	<i>Foster and support relations with CPRW</i>	<i>meetings with the CEO of CPRW</i>	<i>As required</i>
	<i>Foster and support relations with CNP</i>	<i>meetings with the CEO of CNP</i>	<i>As required</i>
	<i>High level meetings with the Landscape Institute to further develop a learning pathway for landscape professionals</i>	<i>meetings with the CEO of the LI</i>	<i>As required</i>
	<i>Actively engage with Wildlife and Countryside Link to ensure landscape and supporting data is considered in all areas of policy development</i>	<i>Engagement with policy groups as appropriate</i>	<i>As required</i>
Support to individual members on technical, policy, and advocacy matters	<i>Determined by the membership, as and when required</i>		

### C. Driving better delivery through collaboration - Working together and with others to achieve better outcomes

On behalf of the AONB Family we lead on

- promoting the principles of collaboration across landscape work – participation, collective action, transparency, interdependence, persistence, and emergence
- using the wide range of expertise within the AONB Family to foster innovation and collective action
- developing accords with organisations around shared objectives and develop work with those we are already aligned
- Develop thinking around Natural Capital accounting, ecosystem services, and SMNR

Priorities	Actions	Key milestones	By when
Support sub-UK groupings of designated landscape staff with national intelligence and insight	<i>Attend meetings in the South West, South, North, and in Wales</i>		<i>Annually</i>
Develop thinking around protected area management at an international, UK, and national level	<i>Engage with external bodies (IUCN, NE, NRW, EAI etc) and actively contribute to thinking and discussion</i>		<i>Ongoing</i>
Support and advise the national planning sub-group	<i>Attend meetings as and when appropriate</i>		<i>Annually</i>
Connect ideas, people, and resources through further development of communication platforms	<i>Improve Basecamp and its use</i>	<i>Assess Basecamp use and efficacy</i>	<i>April 2018</i>
		<i>Make recommendations for improvement</i>	<i>May 2018</i>

		<i>Implement recommendations</i>	<i>July 2018</i>
	<i>Co-ordinate, organise, and market national events to explore issues relating to designated landscapes</i>	<i>National Conference</i>	<i>July annually</i>
		<i>Chairman's meeting</i>	<i>Nov annually</i>
		<i>Lead Officer's meeting</i>	<i>Feb annually</i>
Further develop our relationship with the sustainability unit of NHS England	<i>Develop a joint bid for funding around promoting the value of natural beauty to health and wellbeing</i>	<i>Bid agreed and submitted</i>	<i>Sept 2018</i>
Foster selective links with the private sector where achieving social and environmental objectives are key.	<i>Refresh Corporate Relationship programme</i>	<i>Clear productive relationships developed with two strategic corporate partners</i>	<i>May 2020</i>
	<i>Maintain links with Defra LEP round table</i>	<i>meetings annually</i>	<i>Mar annually</i>
Foster our relationships with the National Park Authorities	<i>Participate in NPA conference</i>		<i>Annually</i>
	<i>Instigate regular meetings with NPE</i>	<i>Meetings with the Director of NPE</i>	<i>Annually</i>
	<i>Participate in Welsh Members' seminar</i>		<i>Annually</i>

Further the principles of collaboration, building on the Future Landscapes Programme.	<i>Provide input on behalf of the AONB Family to high level collaboration programmes in Wales</i>	<i>Regular input to meetings</i>	<i>As required</i>
		<i>Explore options around a designated landscape offer for place-based agri-environment delivery post-Brexit</i>	<i>Oct 2018</i>
		<i>Provide guidance on management plan content to AONB partnerships in Wales to reflect changed need associated with the above</i>	<i>Dec 2018</i>
		<i>Develop the principle of a hub approach to working beyond boundaries</i>	<i>Dec 2019</i>
		<i>Explore a 'whole Wales' approach to nature conservation delivery</i>	

## D. Raising Resources - Ensuring we can do what we want to do

On behalf of the AONB Family we lead on

- maintaining engagement with existing funding partners and work to establish additional funding partnerships
- proactive development of large scale funding bids with partners
- growing opportunities for diversifying funding streams

Priorities	Actions	Key milestones	By when
Develop new ways to generate income for NAAONB and the AONB Family	<i>Devise a resourcing strategy for the NAAONB</i>	<i>Agree strategy</i>	<i>Oct 2018</i>
	<i>Proactive national funding bids to charitable trust to build further resilience within the NAAONB and AONB Family</i>	<i>Scope opportunities</i>	<i>June 2018</i>
		<i>Develop fully supported major bids</i>	<i>July 2018 and Jan 2019</i>
		<i>Applications submitted</i>	<i>Aug 2018 and Feb 2019</i>
Strengthen relationships with national funding organisations and trusts	<i>Maintain high level relationships with the Heritage Lottery Fund</i>	<i>Input to strategic planning</i>	<i>Annually</i>

	<i>Foster relationships with other trusts and funding bodies to explore shared agendas</i>	<i>High level meetings with CEOs/trustees/chairs</i>	<i>Annually</i>
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<b>E. Managing organisational change</b>			
<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Key milestones</b>	<b>By when</b>
Support effective governance and management	<i>Organise and support Board meetings</i>		<i>as and when required</i>
	<i>Work with lead officers to scope capacity building for the NAAONB</i>		
	<i>Organise and support AGM</i>		<i>Nov annually</i>
	<i>Trustee induction and training</i>		<i>April annually</i>
	<i>Develop Trustee recruitment process</i>		<i>July annually</i>
	<i>Training and development programme for staff agreed</i>		<i>April annually</i>
	<i>Maintain internal IT and communications systems</i>		<i>Ongoing</i>

	<i>Ensure the NAAONB remains compliant with H&amp;S and business legislation</i>		<i>Ongoing</i>
	<i>Work with AONB lead officers to develop a national staff induction and development programme</i>		

## Annex 2. 3 Year budget prediction

	18/19 For adoption	19/20 Indicative	20/21 Indicative
<b>Core Expenditure</b>			
Staff salaries, NIC, and pensions	215,909	219,148	222,435
Staff travel and subsistence, telephone and training	13,300	13,633	13,973
Basecamp development	2,000	2,000	2,000
Bid development	2,000	3,000	3,000
Board expenses	7,400	7,585	7,775
Staff meeting room hire	700	718	735
	<b>241,309</b>	<b>246,083</b>	<b>249,918</b>
<b>Administration</b>			
Miscellaneous	5,571	5,710	5,853
Auditor & accountants	4,500	4,613	4,728
Peninsula & HR support	3,168	3,247	3,328
IT upgrade & website development	4,500	0	0
	<b>17,739</b>	<b>13,570</b>	<b>13,909</b>
<b>Total Core Expenditure</b>	<b>259,048</b>	<b>259,653</b>	<b>263,828</b>
<b>Core Income</b>			
AONB partnerships, Conservation Boards England	84,564	86,678	88,845
AONB partnerships Wales	10,250	10,506	10,769
AONB partnerships NI	0	0	0
Corporate	769	788	808
Local Authorities	7,350	7,534	7,722
Associate members	1,333	1,366	1,400
Contingency	-4,000	-4,100	-4,203
	<b>100,266</b>	<b>102,772</b>	<b>105,341</b>
Defra	130,508	130,508	130,508
NRW	20,000	20,000	20,000
Contingency	-2,000	-4,000	-4,000
	<b>148,508</b>	<b>146,508</b>	<b>146,508</b>
<b>Project surpluses/deficits</b>			
National Conference	13,000	13,325	13,658
Chairmen's Conference	995	1,020	1,045
Management Plan support	-2,000	0	0
Lead Officer meeting	500	513	525
Communications Officer meeting	500	513	525
MLWW	0	0	0
	<b>12,995</b>	<b>15,370</b>	<b>15,754</b>
Total core and non-core income	<b>261,769</b>	<b>264,650</b>	<b>267,604</b>
Annual budget surplus/deficit	<b>2,720</b>	<b>4,997</b>	<b>3,776</b>
Transfer to reserve	<b>2,720</b>	<b>4,997</b>	<b>3,776</b>
Cumulative reserve	<b>82,425</b>	<b>87,423</b>	<b>91,199</b>

