



**QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

**2.15pm, Spaxton Village Hall, Spaxton**

To: The members of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

For further information about the meeting, please contact the Quantock Hills AONB Communications and Support Officer Amanda Sampson on email [quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk)

Guidance about procedures at the meeting is given on page 2.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

<b>Agenda:</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of interest</b> - Members of the JAC to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter being considered at this meeting (see Sc 5 page 2).
<b>3.</b>	<b>Accuracy of the previous minutes</b> (copy appended) <b>and to consider any matters arising.</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Public question time</b> - The Chairman will allow members of the public to ask questions or make statements about any matter on the agenda for this meeting or present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit.
<b>5.</b>	<b>Paper A – Partnership Update</b> (Iain Porter)
<b>6.</b>	<b>Paper B – Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)</b> (Katie Read)
<b>7.</b>	<b>Paper C – Landscape Recovery Fund</b> (Iain Porter)
<b>8.</b>	<b>Paper D – Nature Recovery Plan Update</b> (Mark Baker)
<b>9.</b>	<b>Paper E - National Landscape Rebrand</b> (Iain Porter)
<b>10.</b>	<b>Paper F – Quantock Hills Business Plan 2023/24</b> (Iain Porter)
<b>11.</b>	<b>AOB</b>
	<p><b>Future JAC meeting dates:</b></p> <p>Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023  Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024  Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024  Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024</p> <p>(All start at 2.00pm venues TBC)</p>
	<p><b>Note:</b></p> <p>Further information about any of the reports for this meeting may be obtained from the report authors based at the Quantock Hills AONB Service, The Quantock Office, Fyne Court, Broomfield, Bridgwater, TA5 2EQ.  Tel: 01823 451884 or Email: <a href="mailto:quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk">quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>Meeting Guidance Notes:</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Inspection of Papers</b></p> <p>Any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact the Quantock Hills AONB Communication and Support Officer Amanda Sampson at <a href="mailto:quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk">quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Notes of the Meeting</b></p> <p>Details of the issues discussed, and decisions taken at the meeting will be set out in the Minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. In the meantime, details of the decisions taken can be obtained from the Quantock Hills AONB Communication and Support Officer Amanda Sampson at <a href="mailto:quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk">quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Public Question Time</b></p> <p>At the Chairman's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about <b>any matter on the Committee's agenda</b>. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. <b>The length of public question time will be no more than 20 minutes in total.</b></p> <p>A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been signed. If you wish to speak, please tell Amanda Sampson, the committee administrator, <b>before the meeting</b>.</p> <p>You must direct your questions and comments through the Chairman. You may not take direct part in the debate.</p> <p>The Chairman will decide when public participation is to finish. If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely. If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.</p> <p>An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting. <b>Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, normally to two minutes only.</b></p>
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Substitutions</b></p> <p>Committee members can appoint substitutes if they are unable to attend the meeting.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>It is a member of the JACs responsibility to declare a personal or prejudicial interest at all meetings where matters being discussed or to be discussed affect their interests. Full guidance can be found in appendix 3 of the JAC Constitution.</p>

## **QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (JAC)**

Minutes of a meeting of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee held on:

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 2.15pm**

Crowcombe Hall, Crowcombe

### **Present:**

#### **Members:**

Fran Smith (FS)	- Somerset Council
Mike Rigby (MR) (Sub for Bill Revans)	- Somerset Council
Mike Caswell (MC)	- Somerset Council
Philip Comer (PC)	- Friends of Quantock
Hugh Warmington (HW)	- Country Land & Business Association
Nickey Sampson (NS)	- Natural England
Emily Heckscher (EH)	- Holford Parish Council
Mark Philipson (MP)	- West Quantoxhead Parish Council
Alicia Aras (AA)	- Somerset Local Access Forum
Tommy Muncie (TM)	- National Trust
Mike Rawle (MR)	- Quantock Commoners Association

#### **Officers:**

Iain Porter (IP)	- Quantock Hills AONB Service
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#### **Also present:**

Amanda Sampson (AS) Quantock Hills AONB, Bill Jenman (BJ) Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme, David Stripp (DS) Kingston St Mary Parish Council, Jon Doyle (JD) Somerset Council, Lucinda Spelman-Ives (LSI) Wilstock Hub, John Andrews (JA) Friends of the Quantocks, Debbie Salvidge (DSA) Quantock Commoners Association, Paul Trolley (PT) Quantock Hills AONB Volunteer, Viv Sellick (VS), Chair Quantock Commons Management Group

### **1. Annual Election of the JAC Chair and Vice Chair**

Due to meeting not being quorate it was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair would be elected at this meeting and ratified at the next JAC meeting in July.

Nominations for position of Chairman.

- Hugh Warmington – proposed by Dixie Darch, seconded by Alan Bradford. In favour -MR, FS, MC, AA, MR, PC and NS. Against - none.

IP welcomed HW as the chair.

Nominations for position of Vice-Chair

- Dixie Darch – Proposed by Alan Bradford, seconded by Emily Hecksher. In favour - MR, FS, MC, HW, AA, EH, MR, PC and NS. Against - none.

## **2. Apologies for absence**

Dixie Darch (Somerset Council), Bill Revans (Somerset Council), Laura Daniels (Natural England), Alan Bradford (Somerset Council) and Julian Taylor (North Petherton Town Council).

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

HW declared himself as a Quantock Hills landowner, a member of the Friends of the Quantocks, Falcon and Rural Housing, Somerset Local Access Forum, CLA (Country Land & Business Association) and the Quantock Deer Management & Conservation Group. No other declarations were given.

Due to the number of new members HW suggested that members in attendance briefly introduce themselves.

## **4. Accuracy and matters arising from the previous minutes**

The minutes of Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were agreed as a true representation of the meeting. There were no matters arising.

## **5. Public Question Time**

Paul Trolley, an AONB volunteer and Broomfield parishioner wanted to thank the QLPS team for the work they have been doing at Broomfield Common. Broomfield have been extremely lucky with the support for doing works in Broomfield. It has allowed management with clearance of laurels and ash – affected by dieback - and new planting. Broomfield is a small parish in terms of numbers and is hopeful that other volunteers will come forward from other parishes. Any other parishes with ideas should contact the QLPS team for more information on funding opportunities.

## **6. Presentation – Wilstock Hub**

The Committee received a presentation from Lucinda Spellman-Ives about Wilstock Hub and their work with the QLPS team. Lucinda thanked the QLPS for all of their work and support with the community. IP praised the work of the QLPS team and the great linkages that have been achieved into neighbouring communities. BJ commented that the Wilstock Community are lovely to work with and it's great to see such a variety of nationalities all coming together as a community and that LSI and her team work very well together.

There were no further comments or questions.

## **7. Paper A – Constitution, Roles & Responsibilities** (Iain Porter)

MR – raised the high quorate number as for other Somerset Council committees this number is lower. IP will go back to Democratic Service and see if it is possible to reduce the number for quorate for future meetings.

IP gave a brief overview of the constitution as per paper A. HW – is the steering group the OWG? IP confirmed that the name had just been changed to bring it into line with similar partnerships. IP will be running introductory sessions in June for JAC members and will be sending potential dates to committee members in the near future. Will be an opportunity for people to meet the team and get a better understanding of what we are and what we do.

DS – would it be an idea to have a Local Community Network (LCN) representative on the JAC to represent the local parishes. IP – happy to take some guidance on this, currently believe LCNs will be a partnership and that it will be difficult to get single member from LCN to attend. Suggest waiting until LCNs more developed to understand role between JAC and LCNs.

There were no further comments or questions.

### **Paper A Recommendation(s):**

#### **1) The JAC noted the report.**

## **8. Paper B – Partnership Update** (Iain Porter)

IP referred everyone to Paper B. Defra funding grant has been extended for a further year at the same level. Currently negotiating to secure a 3-year grant agreement from 2024/25. Defra have asked protected landscapes if they would require additional FiPL funding. QHAONB requested approx. additional £100,000 (total £255,000) per year and should know outcome by end of April. HW – what about Somerset Council funding. JD – expecting no change in AONB contribution from Somerset Council with the funding from the district and county authorities being amalgamated.

There were no further comments or questions.

### **Paper B Recommendation(s):**

#### **1) The JAC noted the report**

## **9. Paper C – National Landscape Rebrand** (Iain Porter)

IP introduced the National Landscape rebranding including the change of name, tone of voice, key messages and visual identity.

IP asked for thoughts on the name, National Landscapes, meaning that the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will become Quantock Hills National Landscape.

AA – shame to be missing the 'beauty' and the 'outstanding' of the current name and suggested "Outstanding National Landscapes".

TM – will the Quantock Hills still be the AONB. IP – technically Quantock Hills will remain an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but publicly will be 'Quantock Hills National Landscape'.

DS – does the AONB need to differentiate itself from the National Parks, IP – will be for the National Landscapes to promote themselves differently to National Parks.

AA – National Landscape sounds boring. IP – will need to be very clear on the understanding locally.

HW – whether you refer to it as an AONB or a National Landscape, people come to the 'Quantock Hills' because it is the Quantock Hills and not because of the designation.

BJ – the term AONB has close to zero recognition from the general public, many people do not know what it means.

IP asked the group for any thoughts on the colour pallets.

HW – where will the colours appear. IP – proposal is that each AONB would have one colour pallet to use. TM – the logo colour will probably be changed to black and white anyway.

AA – the colours are not great for the visually impaired, why can signage not just be black and white.

FS – how long will the signage last before it fades.

AA – the Quantock Hills original signage has aged very well over the past 56 years.

JD – the proposed designs are very modern and might age quickly. NS – son currently studying graphics and she is very familiar with the graphics and does understand the concept.

BJ – somewhat shares the general opinion and reservations on the colour scheme, but the idea of a collective style is valuable and the experience from other organisations proves this.

IP – a collective move forward is good but just needs to be right.

HW – this isn't a brand per say as every AONB will have its own individual design.

BJ – they are similar enough for them to look like a national identity. IP – hopefully over the years people will get used to the new National Landscape name.

IP asked for anyone to feedback any more comments to him via email please.

## **Paper C Recommendation(s):**

### **1) The JAC noted the report**

## **10. Paper D – Planning Report** (Iain Porter on behalf of Alex Meletiou)

IP referred people to paper D and asked for any questions. HW – asked what the 4 power generation applications were in the report. IP to get confirmation from Alex Meletiou.

MP – raised an issue about light pollution from the Williton area and the spill towards the Quantock Hills, can the AONB do anything about this. IP – the management plan has an objective (DP1) that is appropriate along with a Management Policy (DPIP7) though these

will be strengthened during the next review of the Management Plan. DS – dark skies policy. IP – Quantock Hills does not have a separate policy but is looking to put together a Position Statement, which can be adopted by the JAC and will form the foundations of a dark skies policy in the next Management Plan. IP to put MP in touch with Alex Meletiou.

There were no further comments or questions.

**Paper D Recommendation(s):**

**1) The JAC noted the report**

**11. Paper E – Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme** (Bill Jenman)

BJ gave an update including a presentation based on his report paper E which was sent out to everyone prior to the meeting.

Always looking for smaller jobs for the apprentices so if anyone has any contacts who may be interested in their help or skills. Also looking for any fencers who may be interested in teaching the skill to the apprentices at no expense to them but would appreciate the labour please get in touch.

There were no further comments or questions.

**Paper E Recommendation(s):**

**1) The JAC noted the report**

**12. Paper F – Quantock Hills Business Plan** (Iain Porter)

IP referred everyone to paper F which was sent out prior to the meeting and gave a brief update on the paper.

There were no further comments or questions.

**Paper F Recommendation(s):**

**1) The JAC Noted the report.**

**13. AOB**

DS - commended the work that the QLPS team have been doing. IP – the work the QLPS team are doing is bringing people together and getting them out to the Quantock Hills where they wouldn't have done otherwise and is invaluable.

Date of next meeting: 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023. Spaxton Village Hall

**Meeting was closed at 4.20pm.**



To	Quantock Hills JAC	<b>PAPER</b> <b>A</b>
Subject	Team and Partnership Update	
Author	Iain Porter, AONB Manager	
Date	18/07/2023	

## 1. Staffing

- a. As reported last quarter the Landscape Planner post has increased from 2 days per week to 2 ½ days per week. This is allowing Alex to follow up on more of the reactive development management work. In time it is hoped that there will be more resource to be able to actively engage in Local Plan development as well as AONB specific guidance.
- b. The mid-point review of the Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme recommended increasing the resource to deliver engagement activities and ensure good practice can be built into the core work of the AONB and other partners. To achieve this a new part-time post has been created, 2/3 funded by the QLPS and 1/3 funded from core AONB funds. The post will sit in within the core AONB team and work closely with the Community Engagement Ranger and the Community Engagement & Volunteering Officer in the QLPS Team. The post is currently being advertised.
- c. To ensure engagement activity is embedded in the core work of the AONB I am also looking to amend the QLPS Community Engagement & Volunteering Officer role to include more development responsibilities. This will allow the post holder to work across both the QLPS and AONB core team. Somerset Council HR teams are very busy at present, but I am pushing for a quick solution to ensure that we utilise the last 18 months of the QLPS.
- d. I have had approval for 2 retention allowances –
  - i. Landscape Projects Officer. In the period January – April 2023 there were four jobs advertised that were very similar to the Landscape Projects Officer, two of these were neighbouring protected landscapes. The salary ranges were approximately £8,000 above the evaluated grade from Somerset Council. Aware of the disruption of losing the postholder would be to the FiPL Programme I requested a retention allowance be paid of £4,000 per annum. This is fundable through the FiPL allocation and has been approved.
  - ii. QLPS – Community Engagement & Volunteering Officer. In the period January – April 2023 three jobs were advertised that were very similar to the QLPS Community Engagement post. Bill is very aware of the impact of the loss of this postholder, especially with only 2 years left for the QLPS. The salary ranges were approximately £3,000 above the Somerset Council grade, though a similar Somerset Council post recently advertised was 2 grades higher. I requested a retention allowance be paid of £2,000 per annum. This is fundable through the QLPS budget.
- e. As discussed at the last meeting we are currently looking at the legacy of the Somerset Nature Connections Project, which is due to end in October 2023. The project is a partnership between the 3 main Somerset AONBs and Somerset Wildlife Trust with the project team hosted by Somerset Wildlife Trust. Since the last

meeting SWT have indicated they may be looking to take some aspects of the SNC project forward, as there appears to be underspend in the project that can be used to extend the protect timeline. We have requested that SWT confirm what they will be doing to allow the AONBs to plan accordingly. Longer term I am keen that delivery resource is brought back into the core team as there have been significant concerns about the promotion and recognition of the project with SWT downplaying the role of the AONBs.

- f. Vickie Sellick, who covers two positions in the team – QLPS Project Support Officer (0.6FTE) and Landscape Projects Communication & Support Officer (0.32FTE) – has successfully applied for a FiPL Project Support Officer with Exmoor National Park Authority. This is a great opportunity for Vickie allowing her to develop her skill set and enthusiasm for the FiPL Programme and she will be taking up the post around the beginning of August. We are currently assessing the role requirements for both posts but will look to recruit promptly. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Vickie for her dedication to both her roles and we will greatly miss her can do attitude, flexibly managing the two roles and immense capability.

## 2. Defra Grant Agreement

- a. Defra have confirmed grant amount for 2023/24 through a change control notice (CCN). This has extended the 2022/23 grant agreement to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and confirmed our core grant at £190,604.46 – same level as 2022/23.
- b. As reported at the last meeting Defra have extended the FiPL Programme to March 2025 and have confirmed an increase in allocation. We requested £225,000 per year and have been awarded £250,980 (2023/24) and £254,153 (2024/25). Included within this allocation Defra have confirmed that the allowance for administration and advice and guidance has increased to allow us the resources to deliver the programme. The team are working very hard to promote and support applicants to ensure full allocation. This shows the value Defra have placed on the scheme and is a credit to the team.
- c. There is no Capital Access Grant for 2023/24 but we will be developing projects for 2024/25 when the second tranche of funding is available.

## 3. Landscape Review response.

- a. In 2018 Defra are hoping to publish the Government's response soon, though have been saying this for a significant period now. Some elements of the review are already being taken forward (below), while others such as statutory consultee status are still being assessed as to the best vehicle to deliver.

## 4. Protected Landscapes Partnership (formerly called the Landscapes Parks and Trails Partnership).

- a. In January the business case was approved for the Protected Landscapes Partnership including a budget of £1.5m for 2023/24 and approximately £1.4m for 2023/25. The funding will be used to cover:
  - i. Partnership administration, including costs for the chair, EDI champion and partnership manager

- ii. Development of workstreams for nature recovery and EDI (this includes a programme of training on EDI for staff and partnerships in protected landscapes).
    - iii. Evaluating activity.
  - b. The NAAONB is pushing for allocation towards the Big Chalk (landscape scale nature recovery) and Art in the Landscape national programme. They have also – with strong direction from lead officers – started discussions with Defra to ensure any underspend can be allocated to AONBs.
  - c. The partnership will be hosted by Natural England who have recently recruited Madeleine Lundholm as Partnership Manager.
- 5. Targets & Outcome Framework
  - a. No progress / update from Defra
- 6. Quantock Hills AONB Partnership Constitution
  - a. The new Constitution came into effect 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. At the April JAC meeting there was concern that decisions could not be taken due to the meeting not being quorate.
  - b. Members from Somerset Council suggested lowering the quorate requirement. Advice was sought from Somerset Council democratic services who recommended reducing the number to be quorate from 11 to 8, which would be in line with other similar committees within the authority.

**Recommendation(s):**

- 1) The JAC notes the report
- 2) Members approve the change in the Constitution / Terms of Reference to reduce the number of members required for the JAC to be quorate from eleven to eight.

To	Quantock Hills JAC	<b>PAPER B</b>
Subject	Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)	
Author	Katie Read, Landscape Projects Officer	
Date	18/07/2023	

**Farming in Protected Landscapes**  
**Quantock Hills AONB 2021- 2023**

**£260,561** allocated  
**£179,554** claimed  
**£398,686** total project value

**31** projects supported  
**21** projects completed  
**2,241** ha of land supported  
**59** farmers engaged with the programme  
**27** farmers with no previous agri-environment scheme  
**30** farmers without previous engagement with the AONB

**26** projects delivering for **climate**

- 738 ha of land managed with regenerative farming
- 8 projects to improve soil quality
- 6 projects helping to reduce flood risk
- 9 projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- 5 projects to improve understanding of carbon storage, emissions and climate change impacts
- 7 projects to reduce reliance on inputs

**28** projects delivering for **nature**

- 1.3 km of hedgerows planted
- 1.1 km of hedgerows managed
- 1,587 ha of positive management on SSSIs
- 5 projects to manage invasive species
- 210 m of stone-faced-banks restored
- 122.6 ha of species-rich grassland created, restored or enhanced

**14** projects delivering for **people**

- 5 projects to support public engagement in land management
- 19 volunteers engaged through the programme
- 3.3 ha of new permissive open access
- 4 new visitor attractions created

**31** projects delivering for **place**

- 6 historic structures and features conserved, enhanced or interpreted more effectively
- 18 projects increasing the resilience of nature friendly sustainable farm businesses
- 2 SHINE features maintained or improved
- 3 new farm products introduced to local economy

**QH2028 - £2,456.30**  
Support to adapt direct drill to apply compost tea simultaneously with seed drilling. Trialling the use of compost teas to reduce synthetic fertiliser use and tractor passes, while promoting biological soil activity

**QH2024 - £9,746.40**  
Support for new agroforestry micro-dairy business selling high-welfare unpasteurised milk at the farm gate. Cattle will rotationally graze species-rich grassland sectioned into small grazing parcels with lines of trees

**QH2025 - £3,525.70**  
Woodland mushroom farm engaging volunteers in fungal inoculation of logs, woodland management, and butterfly and moth surveys

**QH2023 - £48,457.96**  
Establishing a demonstration site for restoration of beech hedgebanks. Trialling various approaches to conservation of landscape character feature and veteran tree surgery

**Recommendation(s):**  
**1. The JAC notes the report.**

To	Quantock Hills JAC	<b>PAPER</b> <b>C</b>
Subject	Landscapes Recovery Fund	
Author	Iain Porter, AONB Manager	
Date	18/07/2023	

### 1. What is the Landscape Recovery Fund

- a. The Landscape Recovery Fund is one of the components of the new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMs) sitting alongside the Sustainable Farming Initiative (SFI) and Countryside Stewardship +. The first pilots were released in 2022 and in May 2023 Defra opened the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of pilots.
- b. Landscape Recovery is a landscape scale scheme that will develop bespoke agreements where farmers and landowners co-design a project delivering a range of outcomes focusing on net zero, biodiversity and water quality. There are two phases, a development phase lasting up to two years which is publicly funded and an implementation phase which will be twenty years plus and will be funded through a blended public and private finance model.
- c. During the pilot phases applications are competitive

### 2. The criteria for Landscape Recovery Projects

- a. The main criteria for projects is that they must be landscape scale. There is a minimum area of 500Ha, but the expectation is that the majority of projects will significantly exceed this.
- b. The project area needs to be largely contiguous and any areas that are separate from the main project will need to have actions increase the connectivity in terms of habitat and other outcomes. Projects can have some gaps, but the applicants will need to show how these will not compromise the project's environmental outcomes.
- c. Applications / projects can be made by private land managers / landowners including charities and collaborative groups. Public bodies can apply but only in collaboration with private land managers. AONB Partnership can apply – be the lead applicant – on behalf of other land managers.
- d. Land that is included can already be in another land management scheme e.g. Countryside Stewardship, Farming in Protected Landscapes though you would not be paid for any works / activities that are already being funded through the existing schemes.

### 3. Round 2

- a. The round 2 pilot opened at the end of May 2023 with a deadline of 21 September for applications. The priorities for round 2 include projects that support net zero, are on protected sites and create / enhance wildlife rich habitat.
- b. All projects should provide extra benefits such as
  - i. Improved water quality
  - ii. Helping threatened species to recover

- iii. Improve soil health
- iv. Increasing resilience to natural hazards, e.g. flooding, fire, drought
- v. Social benefits such as access, engagement with nature

#### 4. Potential Landscape Recovery on the Quantock Hills

- a. Due to the round 2 priorities it is felt that an application based on the core area of the Quantock Hills AONB would be valuable to develop. The suitability of the Quantock Hills includes;
  - i. A large contiguous area of designated site (Quantock Common SSSI / Exmoor & Quantock oakwoods SAC)
  - ii. Relatively few landowners / land managers
  - iii. Existing experience / history of cooperative working
  - iv. Potential of AONB Team to assist with the application process
- b. Rationale for developing a project include:
  - i. Development of management plan for the core area of the Quantock Hills AONB delivering outcomes for nature recovery, carbon sequestration, flood, fire and drought management.
  - ii. Development of long-term finance / funding models.
  - iii. Potential to increase funding and develop public / private (blended) funding to add value to existing work being undertaken.
  - iv. Land managers / landowners do not need to put whole farm holdings into the project. This will allow land owners to include less productive land – from food production perspective – into project while retaining food production economic activity.
  - v. Landowners / land managers are not obliged to entering into the implementation phase if the management plans / financial packages are not sustainable.
  - vi. Development phase is fully funded up to £750,000.
- c. Process in developing an application:
  - i. Liaison with land managers / landowners. This can occur during July – August. During this period refinement can be made to the land contained within the project and understanding the landowners aims and objectives from that land.
  - ii. Development of project proposal (application document), completion of land manager support forms, development of Development Phase budget and completion of mapping. TO occur during August and September.
  - iii. Application evaluation – this will take around 10 weeks. 25 of the highest scoring projects will then be offered places.
  - iv. Enrolment – this will take 10-14 weeks with Natural England and Environment Agency undertaking further checks. If successful applicants will be offered a project development grant.
- d. There will be resource implications with developing an application, mainly staff resource to undertake the significant engagement and liaison needed as well as draw up the required plans and documents. However with the potential benefit in terms of having a long-term project with enhanced funding streams and financial package I

believe it will be valuable to the Partnership to take the lead and resource the development of an application.

**Recommendation(s):**

- 1) The JAC notes the report.**
- 2) Members approve development of an application with land manager / landowner support.**



To	Quantock Hills JAC	<b>PAPER</b> <b>D</b>
Subject	Nature Recovery Plan Update	
Author	Mark Baker, Landscape Project Manager	
Date	18/07/2023	

1) Introduction

- a. As reported in January 2023 the Quantock Hills, along with other AONBs, have pledged through the Colchester Declaration to set out how they will work towards the government’s targets for nature recovery. Part of this is the production of a Nature Recovery Plan, which will set out the current state of nature in the AONB, the opportunities for increasing nature richness and how this will deliver on the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan targets.

2) JAC Consultation

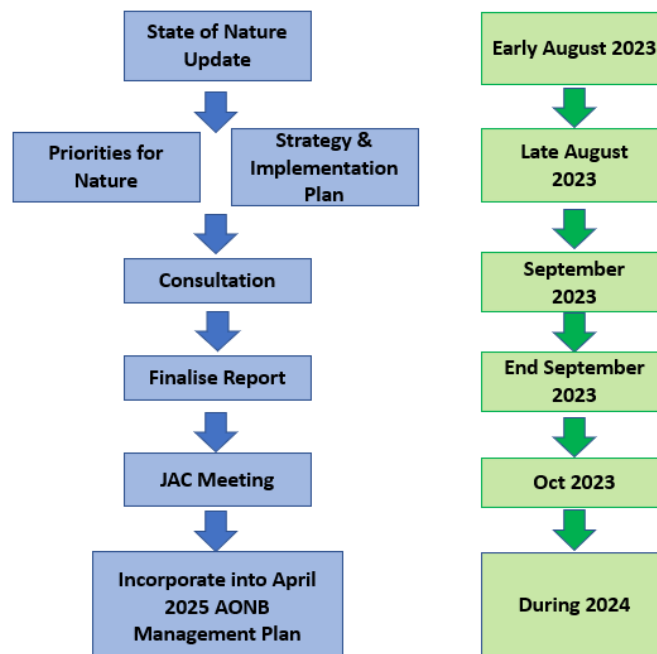
- a. Two consultation workshops were set up to inform JAC members of the key parts of the planning process and to provide forums for clarification, discussion and feedback. These workshops proved successful with significant exchange of information, views and feedback. The main topics are outlined below:
- b. Workshop 1 (March 2023)
  - The national context - (Laura Daniells, Natural England)
  - Background, local context and fit - (Iain Porter, QH AONB)
  - State of Nature, Priority Habitats & species - (Mark Baker, Projects Manager QHAONB)
- c. Workshop 2 (May 2023)
  - Visualisations for the AONB and wider landscape
  - Nature recovery opportunity mapping
  - Priorities for the AONB’s different Landscape Character Areas
  - Champion Species
- d. Champion Species are a range of species that occur within the AONB, which are typically in decline, are charismatic and have potential to provide a valuable tool for public engagement with nature recovery. JAC members were provided a range of candidate species under the broad categories of woodland species, heathland species and farmland species. JAC members were invited to vote online for their preferred Champion Species. The two species receiving significant votes in each category are as follows:

<b>Woodland species</b>	Barbastelle bat	Lesser-spotted woodpecker
<b>Heathland species</b>	Adder	Glowworm
<b>Farmland species</b>	Brown Hairstreak	Hedgehog



3) Next Steps

- a. State of Nature. The 'State of Nature' for each Landscape Character Area is in the process of being compiled. This will include:
  - Designated areas – statutory and non-statutory
  - Use of a range of datasets and maps from statutory and non-statutory organisations
  - Priority habitats - range, distribution, cover, condition, connectivity and fragmentation
  - Priority species – range, distribution, population viability and resilience, population isolation/connectivity
  - Network opportunity mapping
  - Threats to nature and key trends
- b. Priorities for Nature. The 'Priorities for Nature' are likely to include:
  - Overarching objectives
  - Our targets
  - Public goods
  - Priority species and habitats
  - Community engagement
  - Collaborations and partnerships
- c. The sections on *State of Nature* and *Priorities for Nature* will inform the strategic, implementation and delivery aspects of the nature recovery plan.
- d. Timescales. The approximate timescales are shown below:



**Recommendation(s):**

- 1) **The JAC notes the report.**

To	Quantock Hills JAC	<b>PAPER E</b>
Subject	National Landscapes Rebrand	
Author	Iain Porter, AONB Manager	
Date	18/07/2023	

1. The NAAONB has been driving the National Landscape rebranding work with refinement of the brand guidelines, acquiring the default font (Effra) and further versions of logo's for AONBs.
2. The rebranding was a recommendation from the 2019 Landscapes Review, which the Quantock Hills AONB and other AONBs supported. Defra are wanting to see a cohesive national brand and supported this through provision of funding to the NAAONB to deliver the rebrand.
3. The rebrand includes:
  - a. Renaming Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty as National Landscapes
  - b. Production of a strategic approach including
    - i. Vision – Beautiful, thriving landscapes that all people feel part of
    - ii. Mission – Protect and regenerate our landscapes and make sure everyone can enjoy them
    - iii. Principals – (1) bring people together (2) Embrace the journey (3) Keep moving forwards (4) Listen and amplify
    - iv. Proposition – Landscapes shape people, people shape landscapes
    - v. Story - Brings the strategy together into a single coherent narrative
  - c. Development of the visual identity including logo's, agreed colour palettes, typography, 'system', iconography, photography,
4. Reasons to be supportive of the rebranding
  - a. Builds on successes of the network of AONBs
  - b. Will raise the profile of what we (collectively) do and helps people understand our values
  - c. Unified identity better able to show collective size, ambition and potential impact of the network
  - d. Opportunity to make our brand more accessible and inclusive.
5. Visuals. As with any rebrand the item that is most debated will be the visuals. After the JAC meeting in April I feedback to the NAAONB our comments, thoughts and concerns. I requested that the logo include the buzzard, as this has been associated with the Quantock Hill for at least 30 years and that it also be provided in the woodland colour palette. A second version of the logo has been provided but serious concerns were raised by the Team so we requested a slightly amended version, which will hopefully be available at the meeting.
6. At the JAC I would like to explore the visuals to be able to feedback to the NAAONB.

7. Defra have allocated in-year funding to enable individual AONBs / NLs to rebrand. The funding is being administered by the NAAONB. We have been informed that the allocation will allow approximately £5,000 per AONB / NL. Having done a quick assessment for the Quantock Hills we estimate the cost of priority branding (uniforms, vehicles, website, letterhead etc) comes to £10,500. To rebrand all existing materials would cost a further £10,300 and if we included the village gateway signs a further £55,000. I have also pointed out to the NAAONB that this does not include the additional burden to take the rebranding forward when staff resources are already stretched.
8. While the NAAONB have set no firm launch date it is widely believed to be in September to link with the National Conference.

**Recommendation(s):**

- 1) The JAC notes the report.**
- 2) The JAC feedback on the visuals associated with the rebrand to allow officers to respond to the NAAONB.**

To	Quantock Hills JAC	<b>PAPER</b> <b>F</b>
Subject	Quantock Hills AONB Business Plan 2023/24	
Author	Iain Porter, AONB Manager	
Date	18/07/2023	

## 1. 2023/24 Business Plan.

- a. The 2023/24 Business Plan will be presented slightly differently to allow clearer reporting to Defra. Current; plans have been presented based on the AONB Management Plan themes, of which there are ten. The 2023/24 business plan will show delivery for (i) Nature Recovery (ii) Climate (iii) Improving access to protected landscapes (iv) Supporting communities (v) Place (heritage) (vi) Core
- b. Hosted and project partners will be delivering outcomes across a range of themes. The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme will be delivering significantly on engagement and heritage with nature recovery, mainly being delivered through woodland management. The scheme will be in its fourth year and will be building on the hugely successful work achieved as well starting to embed legacy elements. The Somerset Nature Connections Project is in its final year with continuing delivery of wellbeing sessions for individuals and training for groups. The project is currently due to end in October 2023 and project partners have been investigating potential extension and which legacy elements to continue and appropriateness for further projects.
- c. The 2023/24 Business Plan (v1.5) accompanies the JAC papers and includes the following updates:
  - i. Confirmation of the increased FiPL budget
  - ii. Inclusion of new Community Engagement and Volunteering Officer in the core budget
  - iii. Increased engagement activities
  - iv. Engagement in the NAAONB Conference being held in Bath and Quantock Hills being one of the host AONBs.
  - v. Embedding the National Landscape branding

## 2. 2023/24 Budget

- a. Detailed budgets can be found in the business plan included as a separate attachment.
- b. Due to the change of financial systems associated with the local government reorganisation it has not been possible to download spend associated with the AONB budgets. A new module went live at the end of June and we have been assured by finance colleagues that financial reports will be available later in July.
- c. While this is not an ideal situation, monitoring of purchase orders being raised has allowed some degree of checks on spend.

**Table 4: 2023/24 Quantock Hills AONB summary budget**

<b>Budget Heading</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Balance</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Core	297,700	-287,800	9,900	Includes new Community Engagement & Volunteering Officer (p/t) for full year. Likely to be less and will be updated once post is recruited.
Projects	55,400	-55,400	0	Final year of Land Management Skills Scheme.
Landscape Projects	450,200	-250,200	0	Ringfenced with income from S106 HPC funding & Defra (FiPL), includes increased allocation for FiPL.
Quantock Landscape Ptn Scheme	572,500	-572,500	0	Ringfenced. Currently realigning budget as part of mid-point review. To be included once agreed by QLPS board.
Land Management	7,000	-7,000	0	Ringfenced for land management activities on SWHT land holdings within the Quantock Hills.
RIA	24,500	-86,900	-62,400	Expenditure associated with allocated carry forward for projects.
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,407,300</b>	<b>-1,459,800</b>	<b>-52,500</b>	
	<i>Earmarked reserves</i>		<i>16,000</i>	50% of whole core team redundancy costs (SCC HR)
	<i>Surplus / deficit at 31/03/2024</i>		<i>-36,500</i>	AONB will be surplus at March 2024.

**Recommendation(s):**

**1) The JAC notes the report.**