

Report to: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 6 February 2019
Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None
Review date for release: None



Agenda item: 18

Subject: Adoption of the East Devon AONB Management Plan

Purpose of report: East Devon District Council, together with other local authorities, authorised the East Devon and Blackdown Hills AONB Partnerships to undertake reviews of the Management Plans for both AONBs by April 2019, as required under Section IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Public consultation on the reviews took place across the summer and autumn 2018, followed by endorsement by the AONB Partnership's respectively and final approval from the statutory consultee, Natural England. Adoption of the AONB Management Plans by East Devon District Council and the other local authorities for each AONB is required before lodging the Plans with Defra.

Recommendation: Formal Adoption of the East Devon AONB Management Plan

Reason for recommendation: Under Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 the relevant local authorities are required to review the AONB Management Plans for the East Devon and Blackdown Hills AONBs at intervals of not more than 5 years. The review for the 2014 - 19 Plans needs to be completed by April 2019.

East Devon District with other local authorities has authorised East Devon and the Blackdown Hills AONB Partnerships to review the AONB Management Plans on their behalf.

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Financial implications: Any financial implications are included within the AONB budget, with is subject to securing the necessary funding agreements (see note 1.8 of the report)

Legal implications: The legal position is detailed in the report and no further comment is required.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk

There are no risks associated with this decision

Links to background information:

- [East Devon AONB Management Strategy 2014-19](#)
- [East Devon AONB Partnership Plan 2019-24](#)

- [Adoption Report - East Devon AONB Partnership Plan 2019-24](#)

Link to Council Plan: Key priority: Delivering and promoting our Outstanding Environment

Report in full

1.1 Under Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, East Devon District, together with other local authorities is required to produce Management Plans for the East Devon and Blackdown Hills AONBs by 1 April 2004 and review them at intervals of not more than five years. Along with all other relevant local authorities, East Devon District has authorised the East Devon and Blackdown Hills AONB Partnerships to carry out this duty on its behalf; this work has been co-ordinated by the AONB teams.

1.2 The CROW Act 2000 and guidance from Natural England /Defra provides advice on the scale, nature and content of Management Plans. A Management Plan should serve to highlight a vision for the AONB and contain objectives, policies and targets for the delivery of the Plan. The Plan should be reviewed every five years. The delivery of the Plan is subject to availability of funding from the Local Authorities, Defra and other parties.

1.3 The review of both the East Devon and Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan followed former guidance to ensure a broadly consistent approach both nationally and locally. Both Partnerships agreed that the reviews should be conducted with as light a touch as possible given the current status of the UKs relationship with the EU and potential changes over the next five-year period, particularly in environmental policy and programmes, including the current Government review of National Parks and AONBs (the Glover review).

1.4 To identify key matters and considerations, an initial review with key partners and Partnership members was undertaken by both AONB teams, in advance of a wider public consultation on the draft/review.

1.5 In addition, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessments ran in parallel to the review for Plans and serve to ensure policies in the Plans meet these assessment requirements.

1.6 Public consultation was carried out between July-September (East Devon) and September-November (Blackdown Hills) 2018 for the Draft Plans. Accordingly, the Draft Plans have been revised. The final version of the plans and assessments are required to undergo formal consultation with the statutory consultee, Natural England before local authority adoption.

1.7 Formal confirmation of the Management Plan has now been received from Natural England for the East Devon plan (**renamed Partnership Plan**), confirming that it meets the legislative requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The East Devon AONB Partnership Plan is recommended by the AONB Partnership for adoption by East Devon District Council as delivery plan for the AONB for the period 2019-2024. The AONB Partnership Plan will be formally confirmed to Defra following local authority adoption.

1.8 Delivery of the Plan will be coordinated through the AONB Partnership/Team and subject to securing funding through the Defra/local authority funding agreement.