

CABINET – 3 MARCH 2004

CRANBORNE CHASE AND WEST WILTSHIRE DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY MANAGEMENT PLAN

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the final version of the Management Plan for the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (CC&WWD AONB). It recommends that Cabinet adopt the Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On August 5th 2002 the Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder took the decision to commit the Council to join the AONB Partnership and engage in the preparation of the Management Plan. As part of the partnership agreement an AONB Team was formed with the responsibility for putting together the Management Plan.
- 2.2 The AONB Management Plan has been prepared in accordance with the CROW Act 2000 which places a statutory duty on the constituent local authorities of AONBs to prepare and publish an AONB management plan by April 1st 2004 and to review it at five yearly intervals.
- 2.3 The CC&WWD AONB covers the Downlands area of this District and includes the villages of Damerham, Martin, Rockbourne and Whitsbury. The local Member for the Downlands Ward together with officers from this Council have been involved in the process of drawing up the Plan through a variety of forums including the annual Partnership Forum and the Member / Officer Steering Group.

3.0 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 One of the main strengths of the Management Plan has been the high level of consultation with local communities and stakeholders. This included two rounds of participation events in eight village locations throughout the AONB, including Damerham within this District. Each event focused on drawing out the main issues needing to be addressed by the Plan. In addition, two rounds of questionnaires went to every household in the AONB area seeking views on various issues within the AONB and how to maintain and improve the area. Consultations undertaken as part of the Management Plan process will also feed into the process of formulating this Council's Community Plan.
- 3.2 Results of the public participation were reported to Working Groups comprised of statutory, specialist and community representatives and charged with debating the outcomes of the public participation process, as well as formulating aims, objectives and actions for the Plan. A Draft Management Plan was published in September 2003 for consultation. A total of 117 representations were made to the Draft Plan. Officers of this Council made a number of comments regarding the content and layout of the Draft Plan. The Plan has been revised to take account of these comments.

4.0 THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 4.1 The final text of the Management Plan is included in the Appendix to this report. Due to the limited time following consultation for redrafting, only a text version of the Plan is available. The Plan will be published in full, with illustrations and photographs, following its approval by all the statutory authorities, which involves 11 local authorities across Hampshire, Dorset, Wiltshire and Somerset together with the Countryside Agency and English Nature.
- 4.2 The Plan is presented around three themes of Environment, Rural Economy, and Community. Under each theme there are a number of sections dealing with relevant topics. These include landscape, biodiversity, agriculture and forestry, planning and development, historic and built environment, recreation tourism and access, and sustainable rural communities. Each topic lists a set of objectives and policies.
- 4.3 The Plan also contains a set of Action Plans covering the next five years based around the policies within each section. Actions set out specific tasks to be undertaken with targets, and lead bodies and key players also identified. An AONB Partnership Business Plan will be produced each year setting out the agreed action plan for each year. Policies and actions are currently expressed at a very general level, with no detailed or site specific proposals. There is no conflict with current Local Plan policies.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As a signatory to the Partnership Agreement this District makes a financial contribution to the work of the AONB. The Countryside Agency has funded 75% of the costs of preparing the Management Plan and also contributes 50% of the costs of projects. The remaining costs are shared between the local authorities and are apportioned according to the percentage geographical area covered by each authority. About 6.8% of the AONB falls within New Forest District and Hampshire County, which is also a funding partner. Therefore our share of the cost is relatively small at 3.4%. The total proposed contribution from New Forest District for the financial year 2004/5 is £1,997. Increased contributions may be sought in future in order to implement the Plan. Members will be advised accordingly.

6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL AND CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Management Plan contains aims, objectives and actions intended to maintain and improve the environment within the AONB set within the statutory requirement of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area.
- 6.2 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from the Management Plan.

7.0 PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENTS

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder supports the recommendation contained in this report.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Management Plan for the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty be adopted.

Further Information:

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Background Papers:

CC&WWD AONB
Management Plan (text)

**PLEASE CONTACT JANE BATEMAN,
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