



Business Plan for 2018-19

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction and Review of 2017/18
- 2.0 Staffing
- 3.0 Funding for 2018 - 2019
- 4.0 Delivering the Management Plan
- 5.0 Annual Priorities – Historic Environment and Health and Wellbeing
- 6.0 The Sustainable Development Fund
- 7.0 Projects and Activities
- 8.0 Expenditure Summary and Milestones for the year



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1.0 Introduction and Review of 2017/18

During the year the North Devon Coast AONB (NDC AONB) Partnership has continued its work to deliver the 2014–2019 Management Plan objectives. A new Chairman of the Partnership, Steve Mulberry was elected in September 2017, with Steve Pitcher as interim acting Vice Chairman until February 2018. Staff changes included the resignation of AONB Administrator Gigha Klinkenborg after 9 years in the role in December 2017. This led to a job re-evaluation and agreement to refocus on a Communications and Support Officer position to be recruited in early 2018. Due to a higher level of planning activity over the year, additional support was brought in for the first quarter of 2018.

Following publication in January 2018 of the policy paper ‘**A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment**’, there is more clarity on the priorities relating to the environment and land management as we move towards leaving the European Union. With a focus on connecting people to nature and adopting a Natural Capital approach to improving the environment, North Devon is specifically mentioned in relation to the Pioneer programmes covering the Biosphere area. Alongside a review of all protected landscapes, discussions are ongoing regarding the role of AONB Partnerships in policy development and implementation.

Review of Delivery of the AONB Management Plan Objectives (2014-19)

The year has seen progress in delivering a range of the Plan’s policies and objectives both through the efforts of the team, the use of the SDF grants and the work of Partnership members. These are summarised in the following table:

Management Plan Theme	Policy	Activity in 2017/18	Key Partners
1. Landscape	A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergrounding power lines in Croyde and Morteheo 	Western Power/NT/team
	A3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed post photography 	Team
	A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal Change talks to 10 groups 	Team
	A6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defra Landscape Pioneer – development phase 	BR Partnership / Team
2. Biodiversity	B6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project – Braunton priority area 	DWT & 18 others / Team
	B8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDF – Love the Verge – Biosphere – community management of verges 	Tarka Country Trust / BR / DCC
	B7/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal Creatures HLF 2 year project – Citizen science on coastal species, bioblitzes, beach cleans, 14 species surveys, training and interpretation 	Team / NT / Coastwise ND / NBCP / CM Sea School
	B7/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lee Bay 24-hour Bioblitz National Trust Wildlife monitoring SDF – Chough nesting boxes installed SDF – Bat Habitat improvements - Croyde 	CC/ Coastwise/ NT/MBA NT/RSPB Parkin Estate
3. Historic environment	E2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wreckers, Railways and Rockpools – circular heritage walk in Ilfracombe and Lee Bay 	Team
	E2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDF – The Story of North Devon’s Churches (2nd year of HLF project) 	Seize the Moment / team
	E1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDF - Clovelly Dykes Southern Extension 	NDAS

	E1	<p>GeoPhysical survey - Phase 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New SAM designations – 2 wrecks at Westward Ho!; Saunton Terraces and Northam Radar Decoy sites 	Historic England
4. Coast	D6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal Creatures – beach cleans with HLF and Tesco Bags of Help funding 	Team /NT /NBCP /Coastwise ND / CM Primary School LPAs Biosphere Partnership One Ilfracombe
	D2/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of the Seascape Character Assessment for planning responses 	
	D4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations on SW Marine Plan and participation in Defra Marine Pioneer 	
	D6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDF – 2 Minute beach clean boards for Wildersmouth & Ilfracombe harbour 	
5. Farming and land management	F6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catchment Partnership projects – Caen, estuary, Combe Martin 	DWT, WRT, BR, EA, NE DWT/BR Team
	F1/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund for GHB area – Braunton and Caen Valley 	
	F1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Forum – focus on farming and tourism in the AONB landscape 	
6. Planning and development	I2/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 52 planning applications considered, 3 appeals, 17 pre-application advice 	Contractor/team Chair/NE TDC, NDC, DCC Planning Panel
	I4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Local Plan consultations 	
7. Transport and highways	I8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of old signage at Saunton 	Business Hartland Parish C Berrynarbor Parish Council NT NT
	I7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDF – restoration of Hartland’s wooden signposts 	
	I7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDF - Berrynarbor village entrance signs SDF – Brownsham Car Park extension SDF – Electric vehicle charging points 	
8. Access, recreation and health	H5/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Devon AONB Marathon 	Team & Hospice Team & Partners Commissioned TorrAGE/NBCP
	H1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24 Beach Cleans 	
	H6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Naturally Healthy Activities Report 	
	H7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDF – Art and Amble – Ageing Well group activities on Northam Burrows 	
	H6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	
9. Rural economy and tourism	G3/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDF – Braunton Burrows Leaflet of walks and spotter guide AONB heritage walks and cultural trails leaflets updated 	Tim Lay Team
	J1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Events – 27 events (including Coastal Creatures) 	Team
10. Community	J1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal Creatures – 20 school/college workshops and 9 training courses 	Team
	J4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDF – Woolacombe School Community Outreach Room 	Woolacombe School
	J2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDF - Meddon Green LNR tools 	Hartland PC

Priority Annual Themes

These were agreed as a way to ensure delivery of key management plan themes and to focus the limited resources of the AONB. The themes in 2017/18 were **‘Historic Environment’** and **‘Health and**

Wellbeing. These were addressed through partnership working, externally funded projects and the contribution of the SDF grants. The main pieces of work delivered over the year included:-

1. Naturally Healthy Activities in the AONB – local research and community consultation report commissioned through the SDF Panel
2. ‘Art and Amble’ – SDF grant supported project through TorrAGE’s Ageing Well group targeting older people and engaging them with Northam Burrows and Westward Ho! beach.
3. ‘Connecting Actively with Nature’ – a partner with this Devon Local Nature Partnership project led by Active Devon with Sports England funding. Project is targeting inactive people over 55 and engaging them with protected landscapes in Devon.
4. Braunton Burrows Leaflet – SDF grant supported new wildlife and heritage walks leaflet
5. ‘Wreckers, Railways and Rockpools – self-guided circular walk around Ilfracombe and Lee Bay’ - leaflet and download covering landscape, heritage and social history.
6. Coastal Heritage project development work for a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for restoration, interpretation and community archaeology on hillforts and WW2 heritage (initially unsuccessful but resubmitted to HLF in January 2018 and approved grant of £49,900 in April).
7. Clovelly Dykes Hillfort – Phase 2 Survey by North Devon Archaeological Society with an SDF grant to understand more about the non- scheduled section of this site

Thanks are extended to key partners, communities and funders for their support in these achievements. The two themes are to be continued into 2018/19.

2.0 Staffing

The budget proposed for 2018-2019 maintains the core staff of full time manager and projects officer, with a part time communications and support officer (totalling 2.6 FTE’s) recruited in April 2018. Additional contract work in relation to planning advice and specific projects or tasks will be continued. Partnership working locally and regionally will be used to complement our activities and support delivery of Management Plan priorities.

External funding will be sought to support specialist and project staffing, either contracted through our host authority, Devon County Council or seconded through our arrangements with partner organisations

3.0 Funding for 2018/19

Following Defra’s commitment of funding for the four years of this parliament, the budget for the financial year 2018/19 is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Funding contributions

Funder	Indicative Amounts
DEFRA	140,796
Devon County Council	13,132
North Devon District Council	16,770
Torrige District Council	17,000
Total	£187,698

The financial appendices of the Memorandum of Agreement between the local funding partners will be updated annually.

4.0 Delivering the 2014 – 2019 Management Plan

a) **Monitoring and reporting on progress against ND AONB Management Plan targets**

The monitoring framework will be reported on every other year to reflect budget constraints and availability of new reporting data from external agencies and organisations. This will be conducted working with Devon Biodiversity Records Centre, Natural England, Defra and other partners. An AONB Forum was held in early 2018 providing a public report (AONB Highlights), as well as a review included in this annual Business Plan.

b) **Monitoring AONB landscape condition**

We will maintain local monitoring of key sites through fixed point photographic surveys. The Seascape Character Assessment has provided detailed visual imagery of the coastal areas of the AONB, which can be used for ongoing monitoring. New opportunities from drone technology to provide aerial monitoring will be explored.

c) **Promoting the ND AONB Vision, Management Plan and its delivery.**

A new communications plan will be developed working with the Communications Working Group based on a review of annual priorities and effectiveness of the previous year's activities. Different community engagement activities are being used to reflect the range of live projects each year and to reach new and different audiences.

d) **Advising upon, facilitating and co-ordinating implementation by others of the Management Plan.**

The Management Plan has a Delivery Plan that is broken down into priority areas and core themes. It highlights key partners for delivery and identifies whether the AONB team acts as a lead, partner or advocate on each objective. New Partnership members representing the 'Voluntary Sector' and the 'Tourism Sector' have provided improved and new engagements across the area to help deliver Management Plan themes. The Partnership will continue to meet three times a year and contribute to the regular monitoring of the Plan's implementation and impact.

e) **Accessing resources for delivering Plan objectives**

We will seek funds for new projects of benefit to the AONB through a range of sources and with key local partners. Some of these are highlighted in Section 5.

f) **Working with and contributing to the NAAONB activities, sharing advice and best practice at a regional and national level**

The manager and chair will attend NAAONB events and participate in networking and communications, supported by the NDAONB Partnership member who is a trustee of the National Association. We will work with other AONB's and protected landscapes to develop joint funding bids, contribute to policy and participate in the South West Protected Landscapes Forum and Devon AONBs group.

g) **Developing an involvement by the community in the management of the AONB**

The Partnership has been strengthened by new and additional 'community' members to reach new groups and areas. The SDF and outreach activities encourage community participation and engagement with the AONB, as will new projects proposed for 2018. We will support a diverse and active events schedule across the AONB, by the whole team.

h) **Providing landscape related planning advice to the Local Planning Authorities**

The AONB continues to work closely with the three local planning authorities through the Planning Protocol. The Projects Officer and contracted Landscape Architect working with the Planning Panel will review planning applications within the AONB and its setting. Pre-planning application advice is available through the LPAs to meet NPPF recommendations.

i) Management Plan Review

The Management Plan for the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty is produced every five years by the Partnership, at the request of the three Local Authorities as part of their statutory duty under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. The review process for the next Plan (2019-2024) started in December 2017 to meet consultation and decision making requirements before public consultations in the summer of 2018 and its publication in March 2019.

The review process provides an opportunity to measure progress against the purpose of designation “to conserve and enhance the natural beauty”, the achievement of objectives and actions over the five year period and to take into account the changing circumstances and new challenges facing the area and the Partnership members in delivering the AONB Vision and Policies. A new one year delivery plan will accompany the main Plan document and policies.

5.0 Annual Priorities – ‘Historic Environment’ and ‘Health and Wellbeing’

The focus for 2018-2019 will continue to be historic environment and health and wellbeing. This will be alongside the Management Plan Review process being led by the AONB team working with the Partnership. Key objectives to be addressed this year from the Management Plan are detailed below:

Historic Environment	AONB role
Protect historic features and landmarks – e.g. strip field systems	Lead
To develop further Historic Environment Action Plans for the AONB	Lead
Protect and appropriately manage the landscapes’ archaeological heritage including prehistoric hill forts and burial sites	Partner
Promote protection and awareness of key WW2 heritage sites	Partner
Develop an innovative programme of interpretation projects for heritage features	Partner
Involve and engage local communities in celebrating the historic environment	Partner
Health and Wellbeing	
H6 To maximise health-linked recreation in the North Devon AONB	Partner
H7 Develop links with healthy lifestyle initiatives	Partner

6.0 Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)

There is a strong commitment from Partnership members to maintain a small grant scheme due to its potential to engage different audiences with the AONB and with delivering

Management Plan objectives. A sum of £25,000 will be allocated for 2018-19 and publicity will highlight the annual themes as well as the full management plan priorities. Decisions on projects to be funded will continue to be made by the SDF Panel in conjunction with the AONB Manager.

7.0 Projects and Activities

Biodiversity

This will be the final year of the **Coastal Creatures** project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the AONB, Tesco Bags of Help and local partners that has focussed on the beaches and rocky foreshores of the AONB. It provides an education and interpretation officer, species and habitats training and monitoring, citizen science, schools training, volunteer engagement, interpretation and wildlife trails. In addition to increased biodiversity monitoring, the aim is to increase access to and understanding of the AONB for a wide range of people and visitors through wildlife. Key partners are the National Trust, Coastwise North Devon, Combe Martin Primary School, Northam Burrows Country Park and North Devon+. The project will complete in July 2018.

The Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project (GHB) - This Heritage Lottery Fund supported project started in October 2015 with 19 partners led by Devon Wildlife Trust. With a total value of £2m over 5 years, one of the 12 target areas is the GHB population around Braunton and the Caen Valley. ND AONB is the lead partner in North Devon, working closely with key partners to support delivery of the biodiversity, land management and community elements. Following survey and community engagement work in 2017, 2018 will focus on creating a bat friendly community in Braunton and begin survey and engagement work in the Combe Martin area.

North Devon Biosphere Reserve, Catchment Partnership and Defra Pioneers

The AONB is a member of the Biosphere Partnership and active in the North Devon Catchment Partnership, looking to deliver the wider benefits of the catchment based approach to communities and land managers. The AONB is also part of the working groups for the two Defra **Landscape and Marine Pioneers** covering the North Devon Biosphere Reserve area, testing innovation in delivery and funding through priorities in the Defra 25 Year Environment Plan.

Farming and Land Management

Following initial engagement with some farmers across the AONB, the AONB Forum in February 2018 is focussing on farming and tourism's impact on the landscape and environment. As more information emerges on domestic agricultural policy alongside the 25 year Environment Plan, we will consider appropriate engagement with partners and farmers to ensure access to new opportunities to conserve the natural beauty of the AONB alongside a thriving economy.

Historic Environment theme

Partnership agreements, funding bids and secured match funding will provide a focus on several historic environment priorities this year. With £49,900 grant secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the two year "North Devon Coastal Heritage" project from April 2018, new work with local partners will include conservation work on SAMs, surveying and recording of historic features in the AONB including WW2 features and hillforts, development of a volunteer practical conservation group and development of a Historic

Environment Action Plan for Hartland. SDF grants will be promoted to support community engagement with and celebration of local heritage.

Health and Wellbeing theme

Activities will be commissioned to deliver the recommendations from the ‘Naturally Healthy Activities in the AONB’ research and community consultation report completed in 2017 and enhanced with additional work to engage with the local health service in early 2018.

Engagement with the Devon Local Nature Partnership’s ‘Naturally Healthy May’ campaign and the ‘Naturally Healthy Working Group’ will support partnership working to deliver activities in north Devon. SDF grants will be promoted for health and wellbeing activities.

8.0 Expenditure Summary and Key Milestones for the year

Table 2: Expenditure – core costs and project activity

Expenditure item	Amount (£)
2.6 Staff incl. training & travel	119,778
Accommodation and support	9,767
PR, website and interpretation	3,950
Partnership, NAAONB & Plan monitoring	7,250
Planning contractors	11,000
SDF grants	25,000
Projects match funding	10,953
Total	£187,698

Table 3: Key Milestones 2018/19

Activity	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
Partnership Meetings												
Executive Meetings												
Communications Working Group												
Annual Forum												
SDF Launch & Panels												
Coastal Creatures project delivery												
GHB project delivery												
Coastal Heritage HLF project												
Management Plan Review Process												
Publicity & events												