
Strategic
Environmental
Assessment
Environmental
Report for the
2019/24 AONB
Management Plan

**Malvern Hills
AONB
Partnership**

Craggatak Consulting
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Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
Strategic Environmental Assessment Non-technical Summary	iii
1. Background.....	1
Strategic Environmental Assessment.....	1
Purpose of the Environment Report	2
Malvern Hills AONB	2
Management Plan review	2
Relationships with other assessments	4
Relationship to other policies, plans and programmes.....	5
2. Environmental and sustainability baseline information.....	7
Key local environmental trends	7
Relevant environmental problems	8
3. Environmental Assessment	8
Methodology	8
Compatibility between Management Plan policies	9
Consistency with SEA Objectives.....	13
Consistency of Management Plan Policies to combined SEA Objectives	14
Consistency of combined Management Plan Policies to SEA Objectives	15
Findings	15
Review of alternative policies	15
4. Monitoring	16
Monitoring of significant environmental effects	16
Monitoring Measures	16
Data limitations	17
5. Technical review	17
Quality of existing baseline data.....	17
6. Response to Environmental bodies comments	18
7. Conclusion	19
8. Appendices	20
Appendix 1: Management Plan Policy Cascade	20

Appendix 2: List of relevant plans and policies 26

Appendix 3: Outline of future trends in the Malvern Hills AONB 30

Appendix 4: Key indicators and data sources 32

Appendix 5: SEA Objectives and Environmental Issues 34

Appendix 6: Review of alternative policies 35

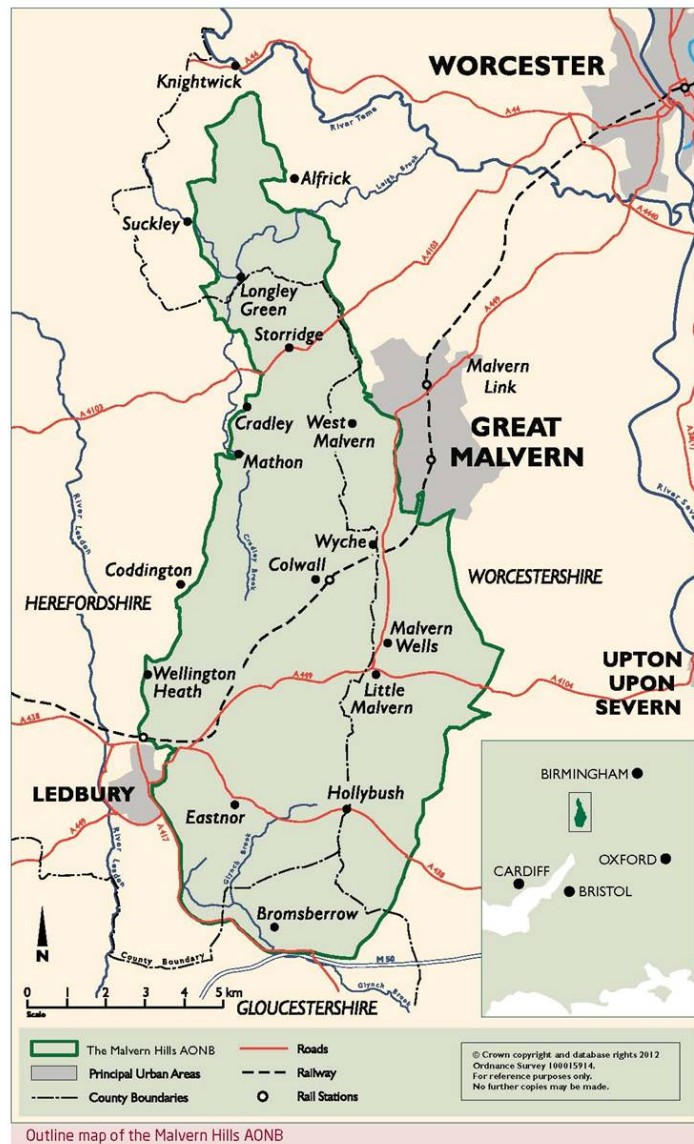
Appendix 7: SEA Objectives and links to State of the AONB Reporting 52

Appendix 8: Précis of consultation responses 56

Appendix 9: Revised management plan policies 57

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Strategic Environmental Assessment Non-technical Summary

Introduction

This is a summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan Review. Strategic Environmental Assessment is a legal requirement¹ to identify, describe and evaluate any significant environmental effects arising from implementing the management plan, or any reasonable alternatives. It highlights any significant beneficial effects and records any residual negative effects taking into account any mitigating measures. There are five stages to a Strategic Environmental Assessment:

Stage A: Setting the context, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope

Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects

Stage C: Preparing the Environmental Report

Stage D: Consultation with the public and consideration of the SEA findings by the decision maker; *and*

Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan

The Malvern Hills AONB Partnership has a legal duty to prepare and publish a Management Plan for the AONB². The plan sets out a framework that gives guidance and direction towards achieving the long term Vision for the Malvern Hills AONB. The Management Plan has twelve topic chapters under three themed sections. Within these sections, there were sixty six policies during the assessment, with two added after the consultation.

Environmental baseline information

Baseline environmental information has been developed and refined since the start of the process in order to establish the context of the Management Plan and predict how the conditions would progress in the absence of that plan. The assessment uses nine Environmental Objectives and three Sustainability Objectives to represent the local environmental issues. They test whether the Management Plan objectives (or their absence) create adverse impacts on the special qualities of the Malvern Hills AONB.

Summary of the appraisal

The proposed objectives are compatible. There are no tensions or sensitivities arising from where two or more objectives interact. The proposed policy cascade has a beneficial, and in parts a significantly beneficial, effect on the SEA Environmental Objectives. When analysed in combination, the policies show the greatest consistency with the SEA Objectives to conserve and enhance natural beauty, biodiversity and local distinctiveness. This reflects the purpose of AONB designation. A particularly welcome finding is that working in partnership, natural capital and rural land management also have strong positive relationships. This suggests that the plan is seeking to deliver the Government's priorities for the countryside, as set out in 'A Green Future (2018)'. The sustainability topics all receive positive treatment within the management plan but their subject areas have a narrow definition. The result is that they show fewer relationships. The weakest relationship is with quality of life.

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment". Transposed into law by Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the "SEA Regulations"), <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/SI/si2004/sch1>

² Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

There are no adverse effects on the SEA Environmental Objectives so there is no need to consider measures to increase the beneficial effects but opportunities exist to do so. There is no recommendation for mitigating actions.

The proposed objectives consistently give greater environmental benefits than the 'do-nothing' situation. However, the benefits are only marginally better than the 'do-nothing' scenario for the socio-economic and community trends. The objectives can deliver a sustainable programme for the management of the Malvern Hills AONB.

Monitoring

The SEA Regulations require monitoring measures for all the significant effects, both positive and negative, identified in the assessment. The SEA of the draft management plan has identified no significant negative effects that are likely to arise from the implementation of management plan. Some significant positive effects are likely to arise from the implementation of the plan. The assessment has also identified some areas of uncertainty over the significance of some of the predicted effects and monitoring is set to cover these effects as well. The monitoring requirements will become a part of the State of the AONB Report. Seventy six indicators are proposed.

The overall assessment of the current baseline data is that it is adequate. The weakness is in the reliance on indicative data. Five of the twelve Objectives appear to show adequate monitoring data. Biodiversity has data entirely fit for purpose. Landscape, Quality of life, Heritage and Land, air and water have good data with just some parts ranking as adequate. All the rest rely on indicative data.

Consultation

The SEA Scoping Report went out for consultation during October 2018 and Natural England and the Environment Agency confirmed that they are content with the report; it covered the issues they would expect to see. Historic England was generally happy with the report but wanted more indicators to monitor the historic environment and felt that there was a need to identify future adverse trends affecting heritage assets. These suggestions are accepted and the text modified.

The SEA Environmental Report went out for consultation in October 2018 and Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England were supportive of the SEA approach and findings. Historic England identified a factual error and suggested a revised sentence. This was accepted.

The Management Plan also went out for consultation during October 2018. After reviewing the responses, there was a change to the text of four policies to give greater clarity and the addition of two new policies to restore an old policy on cumulative development and strengthen the setting of the AONB.

Conclusion

There is nothing in the management plan that will undermine the special qualities of the AONB. There is no conflict with objectives in one part of the plan with those in another. Implementation of the proposed Management Plan will have environmental benefits for the Malvern Hills AONB.

A full version of this SEA Environmental Report is available from Malvern Hills AONB

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1. Background

- 1.1. This Environmental Report has been prepared as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan Review. The statutory consultation bodies (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) must agree the scope and level of detail to be contained in the Environmental Report. The SEA Scoping Report went out for consultation during July and August 2018.
- 1.2. Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England each gave written comments. Their comments were generally supportive but Historic England suggested additional material. These suggestions are accepted and the text modified.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.3. Strategic Environmental Assessment is a statutory requirement³ to ensure that land-use plans and programmes that are likely to have significant effects on the environment are the subject of a strategic assessment of options and alternative courses of action during plan preparation in order to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects. The approach for carrying out the SEA of the AONB Management Plan Review is based on current best practice and the following guidance:
 - HMSO (September 2005) *A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly Government, Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland.
 - Dodd et al (2007) *The Appropriate Assessment of Spatial Plans in England: a guide to why, when and how to do it*, RSPB.
 - Natural Scotland (September 2006) *Strategic Environmental Assessment Toolkit*. Scottish Executive.
 - Countryside Council for Wales (2008) *The Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Wales - Guidance on the Review of Management Plans*
 - Richard Partington et al (January 2008) *Guidance to English AONB Conservation Boards and Boards on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of AONB Management Plans*, Natural England
- 1.4. In order to integrate fully the SEA process with the production of the Management Plan there is close collaboration with the review team. There are five stages to a Strategic Environmental Assessment:

Stage A:	Scoping and consultation with Environmental Bodies
Stage B:	Assessment of plan content and analysis of alternatives
Stage C:	Preparation of an Environmental Report
Stage D:	Consultation with the public and consideration of the SEA findings by the decision maker; and
Stage E:	Monitoring the performance of the plan against the SEA findings.

³ Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”. Transposed into law by Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633 *The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004* (the “SEA Regulations”), <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/SI/si2004/sch1>

- 1.5. This report supports Stages B and C. The SEA Scoping Report consultation responses have been considered and used to inform relevant sections of the SEA Environmental Report (this document).

Purpose of the Environment Report

- 1.6. This Environmental Report sets out the findings of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan review. Its primary purpose is to identify, describe and evaluate any significant environmental effects arising from implementing the management plan, or any reasonable alternatives. Any significant beneficial effects are highlighted, as well as recording any residual negative effects once mitigating measures are taken into account.
- 1.7. This assessment follows the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC⁴ and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004⁵. The methodology used follows the guidance set out in paragraph 1.3.

Malvern Hills AONB

- 1.8. Designation of the Malvern Hills AONB was in 1959. It covers 105 square kilometres and includes parts of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. The special quality of the Malvern Hills lies in the contrasts. The distinctive, narrow, north-south ridge, a mountain range in miniature, thrusts unexpectedly from the pastoral farmland patchwork of the Severn Vale. The highest point is Worcestershire Beacon (425m) and walkers along the ridge crest enjoy views as far as Wales and the Cotswolds. The geological variety, and centuries of traditional farming have given the AONB great ecological value. Herb-rich, unimproved pastures and native woodland support a wealth of habitats, species and wildlife. In addition, an historic landscape of ancient monuments and historic structures adds to the special character of the AONB
- 1.9. This is an area of pastoral farming, with dairying and stock-rearing, plus fruit growing, mixed crops and forestry. Large areas are grazed as ancient commons. The AONB has a population of approximately 13,000 and villages such as Malvern Wells have experienced considerable growth in their retired population and in workers commuting to Birmingham and Worcester. The towns of Great Malvern and Ledbury fringe the AONB and the rural economy includes light manufacturing and prestige office development together with the important conference and tourism sector. Tourists have flocked here to 'take the waters' since the early 1800s and Great Malvern's formal paths and rides give the nearby slopes the air of a Victorian pleasure garden. The ridge and hillside paths and the commons are traditional 'day trip' country. The Worcestershire Way footpath is an important new recreation resource in the AONB.

Management Plan review

⁴ European Directive 2001/42/EC "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment", known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment or SEA Directive.

⁵ SEA Directive, 2001/42 transposed into English law through the 'Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004' (Statutory Instrument No 1633)

- 1.10.** Section 82 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 establishes the primary purpose of AONB designation as the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. Section 85 of the CRoW Act places a duty on all public bodies to ‘have regard’ to the ‘purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty’. Under Section 89, the ‘relevant local authorities’ must prepare and publish a Management Plan for each AONB. The Management Plan is a statutory document and presents an agreed agenda for the AONB, setting out objectives and policies for the local authorities, statutory agencies and people who live and work in the area. The plan does not dictate actions within the designated area and does not control agriculture, business or economic development activities but seeks to manage change positively.
- 1.11.** There are five relevant local authorities for the Malvern Hills AONB. They are Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council, Malvern Hills District Council and Worcestershire County Council. These councils have established a Joint Advisory Committee under the Local Government Act 1972, section 102 (4) to manage their obligations for the AONB. Representatives of four local authorities⁶ and a variety of public, private and voluntary sector bodies make up the Joint Advisory Committee. To guide this committee there is a Steering Group made up of officers from the funding local authorities and the Malvern Hills Trust. The Joint Advisory Committee, Steering Group and the AONB Unit come together as the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership.
- 1.12.** The current AONB Management Plan is for the 2014-19 period. CRoW requires a formal review of each Management Plan at intervals of not more than five years. The Partnership is now preparing the next 2019-24 Management Plan. Following consultation with local communities, public bodies and agencies with an interest in the area, the Management Plan will present the special qualities and features of the AONB and determine what policies and actions are required to ensure their conservation and enhancement.
- 1.13.** The plan will set out a framework that gives guidance and direction towards achieving the long term vision for the AONB. After an introduction setting out the context, the plan has twelve topic chapters under three themed sections:
- The natural and cultural environment
 - Landscape
 - Geodiversity
 - Biodiversity
 - Historic environment
 - Farming and forestry
 - Community life
 - Living and working
 - Build development
 - Tourism
 - Transport and accessibility
 - Enjoying and understanding
 - Recreation and access
 - Information and interpretation
 - Volunteering

⁶ Gloucestershire County Council is not directly represented

1.14. Within these sections, there were **66 Policies** during the consultation. These are set out in **Appendix 1**. After the consultation, there was a change to the text of four policies and the addition of two new policies. These are shown in **Appendix 9**.

Relationships with other assessments

Habitat Regulation Assessment

1.15. The EU Natura 2000 network provides ecological infrastructure for the protection of sites that are of exceptional importance in respect of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species within the European Community. These sites, known as European sites, consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Offshore Marine Sites. It is common practice to treat RAMSAR sites (Internationally Important Wetlands) as if they were European sites. The guidance recommends taking into consideration European sites within the plan area and within 15km of its boundary.

1.16. There are no European sites within the AONB boundary. There are three European sites that may just be within 15km of its boundary:

- Bredon Hill SAC
- Lyppard Grange Ponds SAC
- River Wye SAC

After consideration, the Partnership decided that there was no need to complete a Habitat Regulations Assessment.

Natural capital and an ecosystem approach

1.17. Natural capital is another term for the stock of renewable and non-renewable natural resources on earth (e.g., plants, animals, air, water, soils, minerals) that combine to yield a flow of benefits or “services” to people⁷. These flows can be ecosystem services or abiotic services, many of which we depend on. Ecosystem services are the benefits to society from nature; abiotic services are benefits to people that do not depend on living processes. They arise from fundamental geological processes.

1.18. The situation in the Malvern Hills is better than in most areas with the recent publication of a natural capital scoping study⁸. Ecosystem services provided in the Malvern Hills are likely to include:

Provisioning services	Regulating services	Cultural services	Supporting services
<i>The products obtained from nature</i>	<i>The benefits obtained from the regulation of natural processes</i>	<i>The non-material benefits people obtain from nature</i>	<i>The services that are necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services</i>
Biomass energy Food production Genetic diversity Timber production Water availability	Pollination Regulating air quality Regulating climate and carbon storage Regulating soil erosion Regulation soil quality	Education Health and well-being Recreation Sense of history Sense of place and inspiration	Biodiversity and geodiversity Nutrient cycling Primary production such as photosynthesis Soil formation

⁷ Adapted from the Natural Capital Protocol, 2016

⁸ Hölzinger, O. 2017: *Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Natural Capital Scoping Study*. Malvern Hills AONB Partnership, Worcester.

	Regulating water flow and flooding Regulating water quality	Tranquillity	Water cycling
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1.19. This SEA supports an ecosystem approach. It will consider the possible indirect, direct and cumulative effects of projects implemented under this plan. It is not an ecosystem service valuation.

Relationship to other policies, plans and programmes

Introduction

1.20. A key element in the SEA process is to review relevant international, national, regional and local policy guidance, plans and strategies, in order to:

- Ensure the Management Plan proposals and the SEA are consistent with and comply with the requirements of relevant plans and policies, especially where they refer to environmental priorities;
- Identify environmental objectives, key targets and indicators that should be reflected in the SEA;
- Provide evidence for the SEA rationale.

1.21. The selection criteria were:

- International documents having the status of an EU plan, policy or programme
- National documents having the status of a national strategy or a White Paper outlining intended policy
- Regional and local documents having the status of strategy or policy
- Other documents not having a statutory status but policy documents published by the statutory bodies

1.22. **Appendix 2** presents a list of the documents reviewed. Full reference details and a brief assessment of each document are in the SEA Scoping Report.

Legislation, Conventions and national advice

1.23. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a statutory landscape designation. The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as modified by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, provides the primary legislation for the designation of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. From the Acts, a particular set of objectives is developed for AONBs⁹:

- The primary purpose of designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty.
- In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.

⁹ Countryside Agency (2006), Guidance for the review of AONB Management Plans, CA221, Cheltenham, August 2006

- Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.
- 1.24. The European Landscape Convention was ratified by the UK in November 2006 and became binding on the 1 March 2007. The Convention aims to ensure the proper protection, management and planning of landscapes across Europe and aims to bring all countries up to the standard of the best.
- 1.25. In 2012, Defra and Natural England gave advice to AONB Partnerships and Relevant Authorities on management plan reviews in the form of a note. The note highlights four themes that may require some policy response. They are:
1. **Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)** – Many objectives of NEWP have direct relevance for Protected Landscapes. The Defra Biodiversity 2020 Delivery Plan also encourages large-scale initiatives in AONBs and has the milestone: AONB partnerships to integrate Biodiversity 2020 and ecosystem targets into all AONB Management Plan Reviews by March 2014.
 2. **Climate change mitigation** –There is a need to assess the opportunities and threats to protected landscapes, given the progress made in renewable energy production and the development of adaptation measures.
 3. **Setting of Protected Landscapes** – There is a greater imperative to consider the effect of development in the setting of protected landscapes.
 4. **Historic Environment** –Cultural features, particularly those of historic interest, can profoundly influence our perception of natural beauty. For this reason, it is appropriate for AONB Management Plans to include policies and provisions supporting conservation of the historic environment.
- 1.26. Following the passing of the European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Act 2017, the UK's extraction from the European Union (Brexit) will take place during the life of the Management Plan. The 30th September 2018 is the target date for agreeing the Brexit Terms and the 29th March 2019 is set to be the day of Brexit. However, these dates can change by agreement; and the UK Government has the option of stopping the exit process at any time. By the end of September 2018 there will be a more certain understanding of the implications of Brexit.
- 1.27. The natural environment of the Malvern Hills currently benefits from considerable support from EU budgets. That support is very likely to stop unless the UK government gives a clear undertaking to match the existing funding. There could be a period of inertia whilst building new resources and structures.
- 1.28. In January 2018, the Defra Secretary of State spoke to the NFU conference. He said that he anticipates guarantees to protect the amount Defra allocates to farming support right up until the end of this Parliament in 2022. He expressed the wish to simplify the support schemes and eventually replace basic farm payments with a system of public money for public goods. The Secretary of State only discussed agricultural support; he gave no views on the other areas of EU funding.
- 1.29. In 2018, Defra launched its 25-year plan for the environment¹⁰ that includes an action to work with AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards to deliver environmental enhancement,

¹⁰ Defra (2018) *A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment*, HMSO

including through demonstrator projects, and engaging with communities through their statutory management plans. Defra also expressed a strong desire to develop a **natural capital approach** to ensure that policies align with environmental outcomes and yield the best return on every pound spent. They believe that investments in natural capital assets can deliver significant value for money and generate economic returns that rank favourably with those generated by more traditional infrastructure investments. Defra expect the AONB Management Plan to secure the right mix of public and private funding and financing for projects that protect and enhance natural assets.

Local Authorities

1.30. The Malvern Hills AONB falls within five local authority areas. They are Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council, Malvern Hills District Council and Worcestershire County Council. These councils are the local planning authorities and the 'relevant authorities' under the CRoW Act in respect of AONB Management Plans. Each council is required to produce a development plan to guide spatial change and growth within their area. These plans are either 'Structure Plans/Local Plans', 'Unitary Development Plans' or 'Local Development Plans'. Each has policies that respect the purposes of AONB designation but they also have wider social and economic duties.

Government Agencies

1.31. There is a range of Government Agencies whose actions impact upon the AONB. Their strategies set high-level policy and generally cover the whole of the country. Any mention of a particular site, such as the Malvern Hills, within these policies indicates the high national importance of the topic. Just over 10% of the area is protected for wildlife and/or geology with Natural England monitoring management. Historic England has an interest in the scheduled ancient monuments in the area.

2. Environmental and sustainability baseline information

Key local environmental trends

- 1.32. The SEA Directive requires detailed baseline information to be gathered as part of the assessment process. Information must be gathered on "relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan" and the "environmental characteristics of the areas likely to be significantly affected" (Annex I (b) & (c)).
- 1.33. The baseline data is also required to highlight "any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC (Birds Directive) and 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive)" (Annex I (c)).
- 1.34. To assess future trends there is a need to establish a baseline. The AONB team maintains a State of the AONB Report that presents an assessment of the area's condition and the forces for change. For developing this SEA Report, we use the State of the AONB Reports, Natural England's State of the Environment (South West) Report, Natural England's Malvern Hills

National Character Area Profile 103¹¹ and the evidence-base attached to the preparation of the local authority Local Development Plans.

- 1.35. The key issues associated with the environmental trends within the AONB and the likely outcomes if no action is taken are shown in **Appendix 3**.
- 1.36. Baseline information was collected in line with the Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations. During the SEA Scoping exercise, 73 key indicators found in the base-line table were grouped under 12 SEA topics identified as being of particular relevance to the environmental assessment. The eight topics are:
- Biodiversity
 - Population
 - Human Health
 - Water
 - Soil
 - Air
 - Climate Factors
 - Material Assets
 - Cultural Heritage
 - Landscape
 - Communities
 - Economy

Following the initial assessment there was an increase of the list to 76 indicators. The indicators are in **Appendix 4**.

Relevant environmental problems

- 1.37. The State of the AONB Report assesses the current condition of the area's special features. For the SEA Assessment, twelve SEA Environmental Objectives were developed. They represent the local environmental issues and they will test whether the Management Plan policies (or their absence) create adverse impacts on the special qualities of the Malvern Hills AONB. **Appendix 5** presents the SEA Environmental Objectives, complete with the associated issues.

3. Environmental Assessment

Methodology

- 1.38. Step 1 is to consider the Management Plan draft text and test the compatibility of its objectives and policies. The intent is to identify potential tensions or sensitivities where two or more objectives interact. We collect the findings in a **Compatibility Matrix** and summarise them in a chart.
- 1.39. Using professional judgement, each relationship is plotted as:

¹¹ Natural England (1025) National Character Area 103, Catalogue Code: NE361 ISBN 978-1-84754-189-2 <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/3039205?category=587130>

		= strong positive
		= positive
+	-	= mixed or uncertain
Blank or 0		= minimal interaction
		= negative

A commentary develops the findings to take account of the varying environmental sensitivities of the different topic areas. The consideration of the compatibility of the vision for the AONB and the defined special qualities of the area is a part of this stage. We express this as a **Policy Cascade** supported by the commentary.

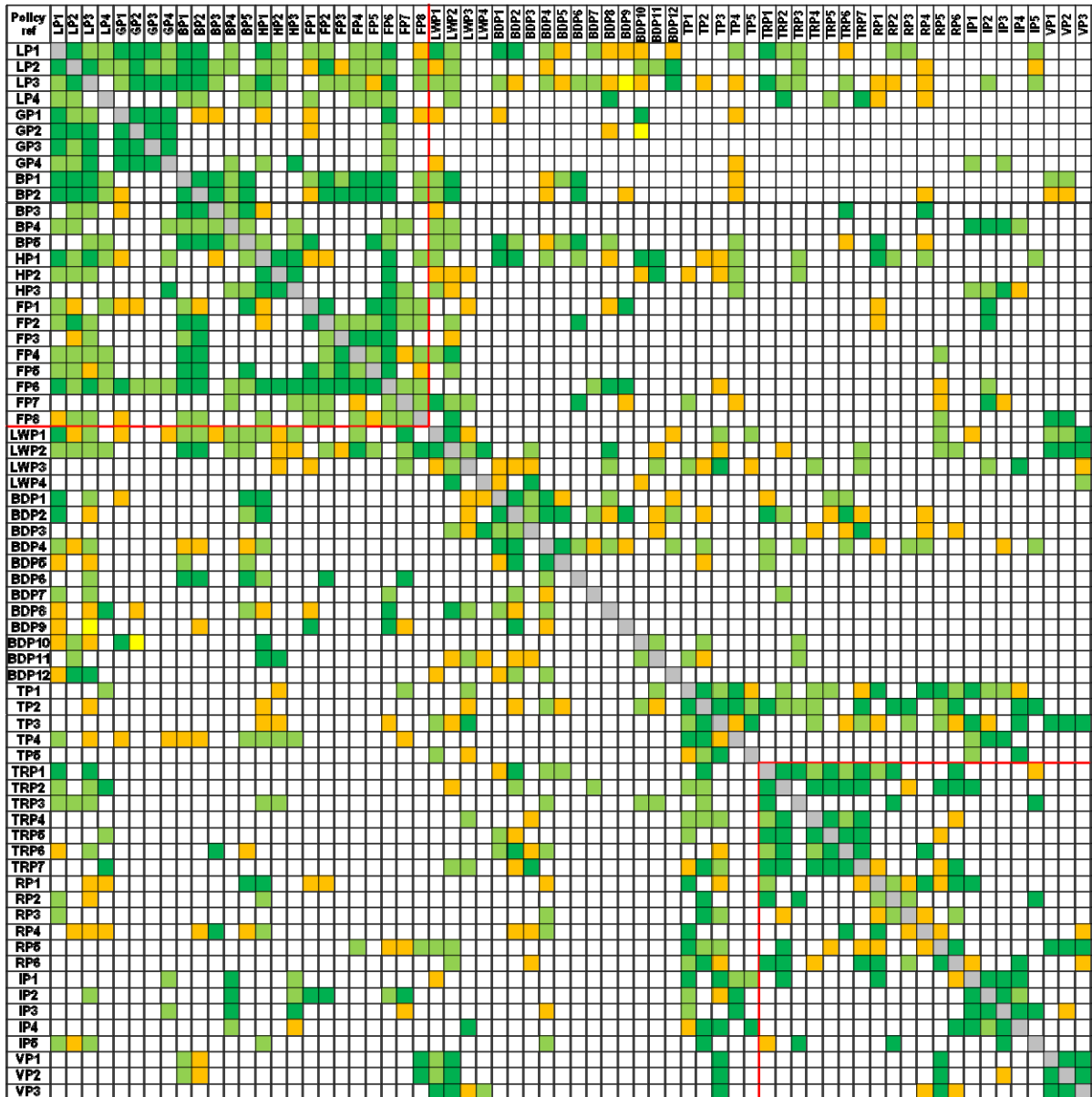
- 1.40. Step 2 is to check each objective against the full range of SEA Objectives, as identified in the SEA Scoping Report. The intent is to measure the significance of the effect in terms of:
 - Beneficial or adverse effects;
 - Magnitude of the effects;
 - Reversible or irreversible effects.
- 1.41. The findings emerge in a **Consistency Matrix**. A plot of each relationship uses the same discipline as for the Compatibility Matrix.
- 1.42. Step 3 is to consider **Alternative Solutions** to the issues identified during the management planning process. As there is no alternative solution published, we make a ‘do-nothing’ comparison. The purpose is to show that the chosen pathway is the most sound in terms of the environment and wider sustainability. This analysis tests the proposed actions and the ‘do-nothing’ scenario against the trends identified in the SEA Scoping Report (as shown in Appendix 3).
- 1.43. Finally, **Conclusions** are drawn and presented.

Compatibility between Management Plan policies

- 1.44. The first task was to check each Policy of the management plan against each other in a **Compatibility Matrix** to see whether there were any potential tensions or sensitivities arising where two or more interact. The full list of policies is set out in **Appendix 1**. The Policies show few tensions or sensitivities between them. The findings are set out in **Figure 1**.
- 1.45. The policies runs both horizontally and vertically, so each interaction appears twice (appearing either side of the diagonal grey band). The grey squares are where each separate policy meets and is not a part of the assessment. Squares close to the grey band represent policies that lie together in the plan. It is no surprise to find dark green (strong positive interaction) squares along this axis. The striking impression is the number of white squares (minimal interaction). This suggests a narrow focus for many of the interventions that may operate in isolation. This is a common occurrence when policies have a narrow focus to express a plan’s ambitions.
- 1.46. To help interpret this picture, we plot the policies in the order shown in Appendix 1. A red divider marks the themes. The top left quarter is the natural environment. This is where landscape, geodiversity, biodiversity, historic environment & farming and forestry lie. The bottom right quarter is enjoying & understanding, where recreation & access, information &

interpretation, and volunteering lie. In between there lies community life. It is striking that these three themes show so clearly as separate areas, there is little interaction between them.

Figure 1: Snapshot of policy compatibility matrix



1.47. There are no negative impacts, although two interactions have negative uncertainties (bright yellow squares).

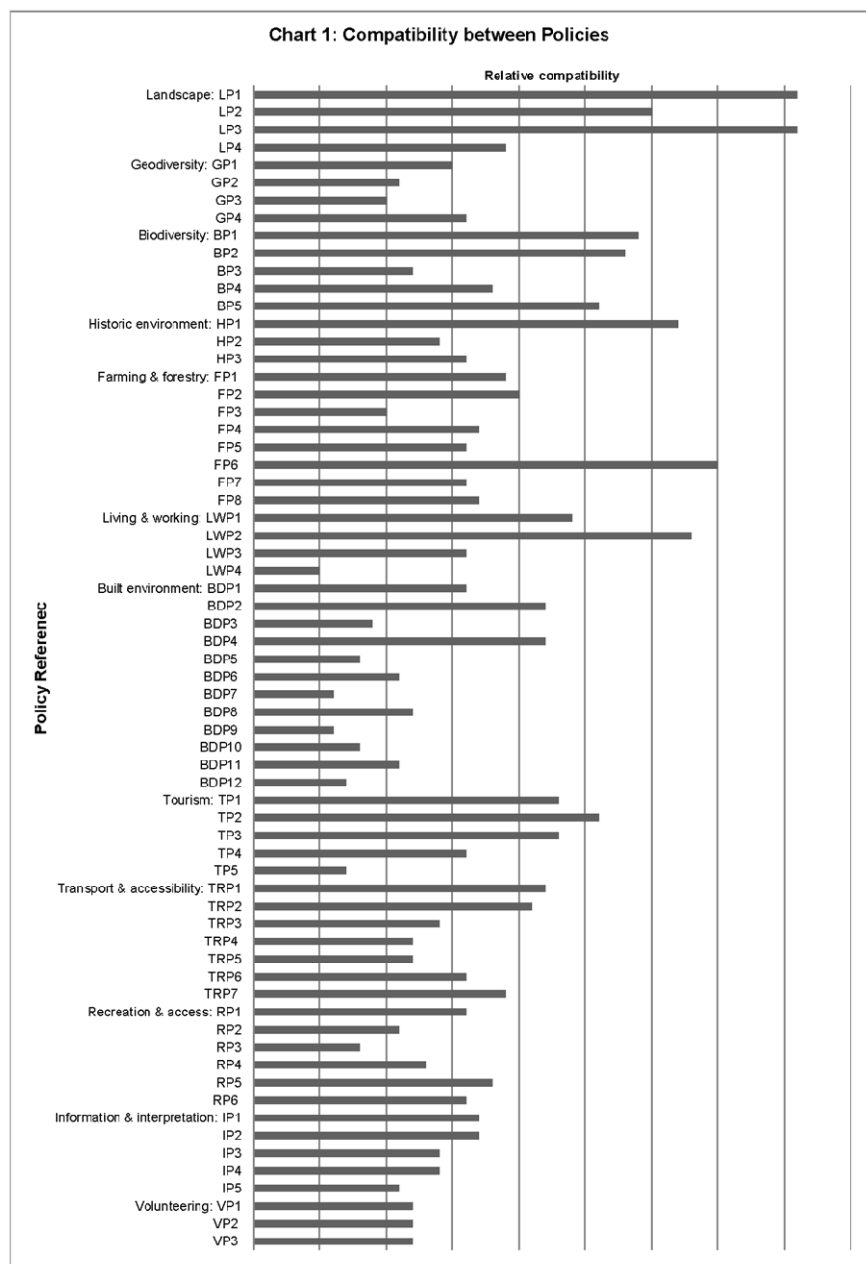
- Policy BDP9 (Farm-scale polytunnels) allows for use that would not normally be an acceptable form of development in the AONB. There is a potential conflict with policy LP3 (Promote positive landscape change). However, within policy BDP9 there is the requirement for a whole farm plan; this would give the opportunity to temper any adverse impacts.
- Policy BDP10 (Support recycling) also has a provision to allow the extraction of locally distinct building materials (e.g. Malvern stone). There is a potential conflict with policy GP2 (Conserve geodiversity). The policy does attempt to limit extraction to small quantities and only for local use. If that is maintained, there are no significant effects. If it is not possible to put such limits on the extraction operations, then the effect could

become significant. The affect on habitats was also considered, though not marked, as extraction would create new habitats as well as destroy old ones; leading to a neutral effect within this analysis.

- 1.48. It is also important to consider the strong positive relationships. These are what will focus the plan. The long bands of green in Figure 1 suggest that there are some strong links with certain policies. This is clearer in **Chart 1**; a chart showing the indicative strengths of each policy.
- 1.49. The Policies that have the strongest positive relationships with other policies are LP1 (a landscape-led approach) LP3 (promoting positive landscape change) and FP6 (encouraging the take up of options that benefit the natural and historic environment). Other well connected policies are LWP2 (community initiatives), HP1 (heritage conservation) and LP2 (restoring distinctive landscapes). This is of no surprise. The AONB is a landscape designation and the Management Plan focuses tightly on the purpose of designation.

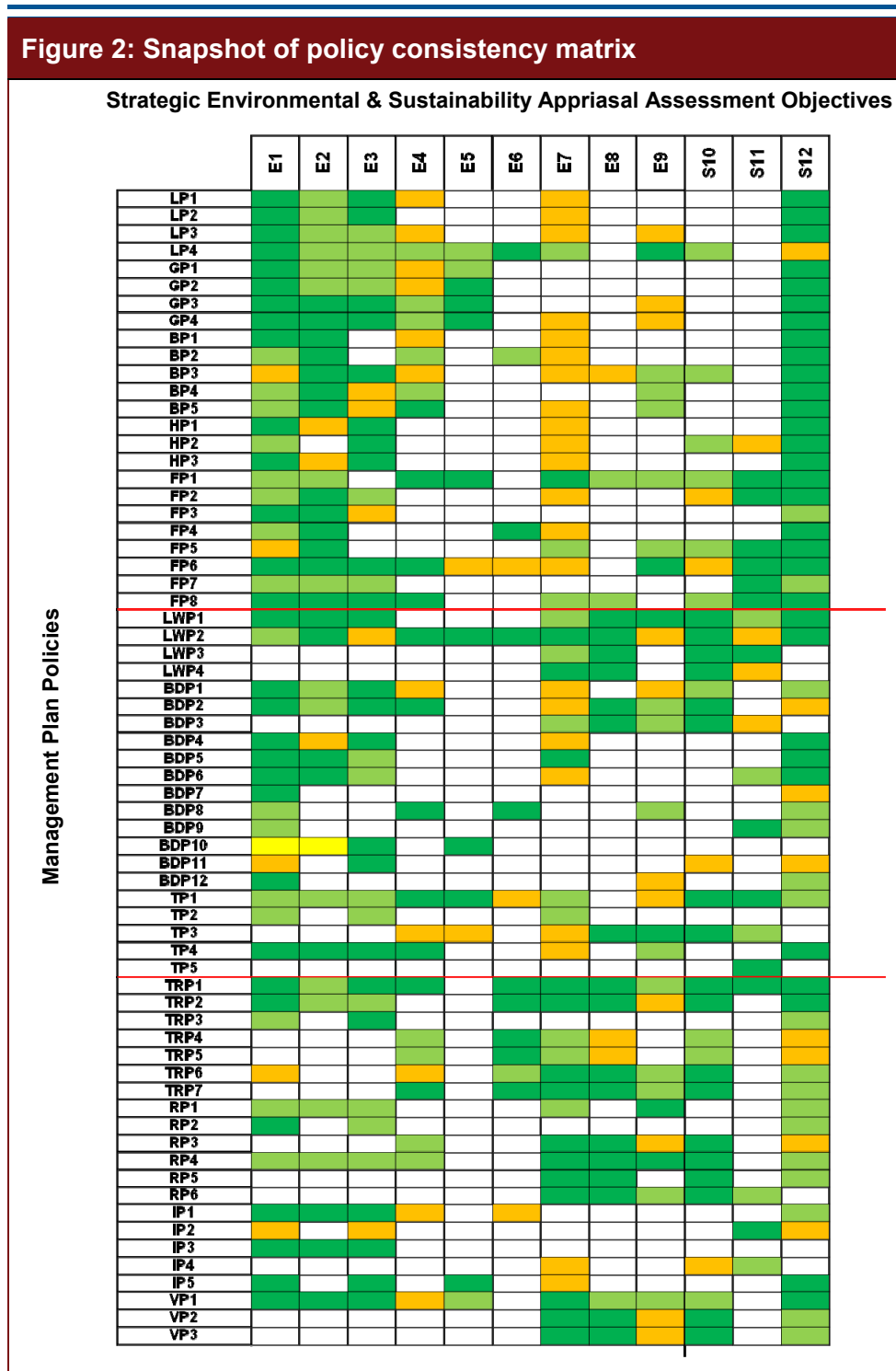
- 1.50. The least interactive policies are LWP 4 (provision of local housing), BDP7 (equestrian development), BDP9 (farm-scale polytunnels), BDP12 (Three Counties Showground master plan), TP5 (showcasing new tourism technologies) and RP3 (Rights of Way management). These policies have a very specific focus, rather than a strategic approach. There is no cross-referencing to other ambitions of the management plan.

- 1.51. It is possible to achieve higher compatibility by combining and redrafting policies to give each a wider focus but there is no need to do this. As there is compatibility between all the policies, there is no need to consider measures to reduce any tensions or sensitivities.



Consistency with SEA Objectives

- 1.52. The next task is to check the proposed Policies of the management plan against the SEA Environmental Objectives (see **Appendix 5**) in a **Consistency Matrix**. This was to see whether there were any significant beneficial or adverse effects; and to gage the magnitude of that effect. Where appropriate, there is consideration as to whether the effect is reversible. **Figure 2** supports this analysis. Again, the red lines show the divide between the three management plan themes.



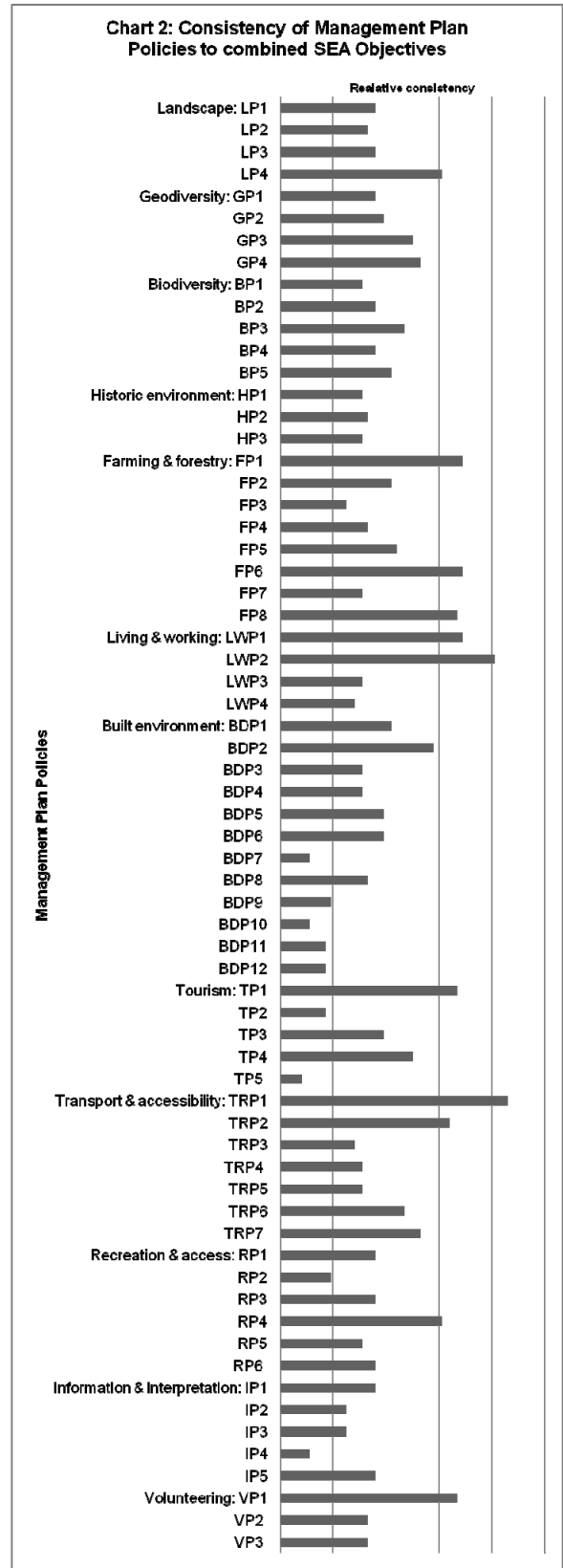
1.53. A number of strong relationships between the Management Plan Policies and the SEA Objectives stand out and there are only a few instances of minimal or no impact on the SEA objectives. There are no negative impacts but one policy triggers two negative uncertainties (bright yellow squares):

- BDP10 (Support recycling) also has a provision to allow the extraction of locally distinct building materials (e.g. Malvern stone). There is a potential conflict with E1 (safeguard landscape) and E2 (safeguard habitats). Any industrial operation, no matter how small a scale, will have some impact on the landscape. Extraction could change an important skyline. The affect on habitats is complex; extraction would destroy habitats but it would also create new ones. The policy does attempt to limit extraction to small quantities and only for local use. If that is maintained, there are no significant effects. If it is not possible to put such limits on the extraction operations, then the effect could become significant. If approvals are given, there will be a need to ensure that monitoring is put in place to trigger a warning of the possibility of significant harm.

1.54. It is useful to consider the material in Figure 2 in two ways. Firstly to study the interactions of each plan policy against the combination of the SEA Objectives (**Chart 2**); and then of the combination of each policy against each SEA Objective (**Chart 3**).

Consistency of Management Plan Policies to combined SEA Objectives

1.55. All the Management Plan Policies are consistent with the combined SEA Objectives, albeit to varying degrees. The policy with the greatest beneficial effect on the SEA Objectives is TRP1 (highway management), on first view a surprise but its strength comes from the guidance produced by the AONB partnership. The next beneficial policy is LWP2 (community initiatives); this is because it is a very broad policy that includes many of the SEA themes. Other beneficial policies are TP1 (sustainable

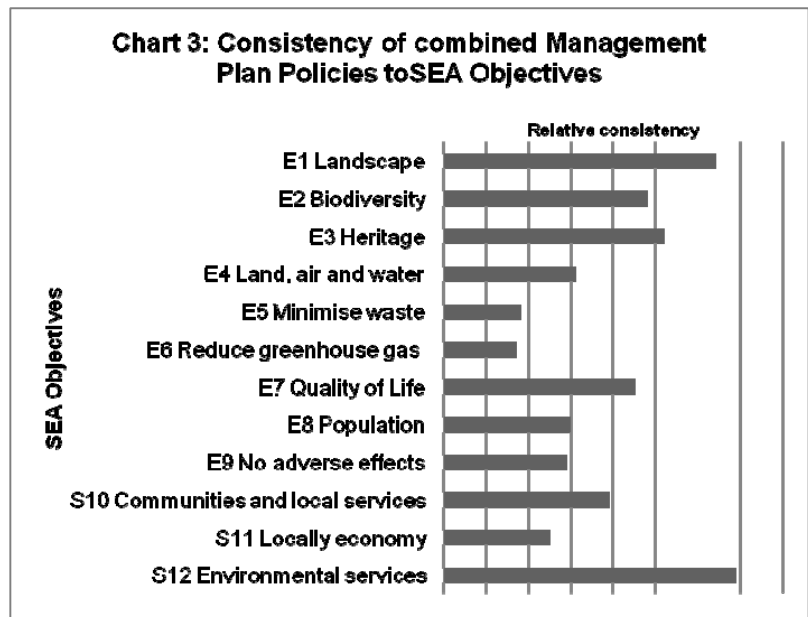


tourism), LWP1 (community-led plans), FP1 (farming and forestry practices), FP8 (skills), RP4) mitigation from development, LP4 (allowing for climate change) and VP1 (encouraging voluntary activities). These are all broad ranging policies that, consequently, address a number of issues covered by the SEA Objectives.

- 1.56. The less beneficial policies are TP5 (showcasing new tourism technologies), TP2 (quality public realm), BDP10 (Support recycling), BDP7 (equestrian development), BDP11 (reusing existing buildings), BDP12 (Three Counties Showground master plan) and IP4 (working with technology and science sectors). BDP10 is weak because of its two potential negative impacts (see paragraph 3.16). The others are all very narrowly focused and so only address a few of the SEA Objectives.

Consistency of combined Management Plan Policies to SEA Objectives

- 1.57. Each SEA Objective gains support from the management plan Policies operating in combination. Given the purposes of AONB designation, it is no surprise that SEA Objective E1 (landscape) gains a high benefit from the management plan Policies. What is good to see is that SEA Objective S10 (delivering environmental services) gains the highest benefit. This suggests that the plan can support the Natural Capital led approach advocated by Defra. It is also reassuring to find that E2 (biodiversity), E3 (heritage) and E7 (quality of life) receives such strong support.



- 1.58. As is common with many AONB management plans, the SEA Objectives receiving least support are associated with climate change (E6 reduce greenhouse gases) and recycling (E5 minimise waste), though there is still good consistency. This is partly because an AONB Management Plan can only influence a limited range of climate change and waste management interventions.

Findings

- 1.59. There are no adverse effects and some significant beneficial effects. There is no need to consider measures to increase the beneficial effects but opportunities exist to do so. There is scope to widen the focus of some Management Plan Policies.

Review of alternative policies

- 1.60. To meet with the requirements of the SEA Directive, the assessment needs to consider alternative options to determine whether the chosen pathway is the most sound in terms of the

environment and wider sustainability. There is no record of any alternative options considered as a part of the management planning process.

- 1.61.** In this situation, the approach is to compare the effect of the proposed objectives with a ‘do-nothing’ scenario informed by the trends identified in the SEA Scoping Report (as shown in **Appendix 3**). The task is to establish the environmental and sustainability benefits of the proposed objectives over the ‘do-nothing’ situation. This comparison is set out in **Appendix 6** with an assessment for each trend.
- 1.62.** The findings are that the proposed policies consistently give greater environmental benefits than the ‘do-nothing’ situation, though there is not always a significant difference. There are two factors affecting this. Firstly, some of the forces for change are of such a scale as to be beyond the influence of the AONB working alone. Secondly, though the Management Plan policy cascade covers all the SEA topics, the definition of some Policies is very narrow. Though this has the advantage of making clear the action to take, it limits the scope of those actions. The Policies do not address the breadth of some issues. It is not surprising that the plan has only a small impact on development; though a material consideration, it is not a planning document. The planning authorities will make decisions even if the plan is absent. Similarly, with agriculture where other bodies take the lead. The plan could be expected to have a greater impact on environmental quality. Minimising waste is a difficult topic for a n AONB management plan to address but more could be done to enhance the soil, air and water components of natural capital. Much of the impact of the Management Plan will come from its action plan and other supporting documents and advice the Partnership develops.

4. Monitoring

Monitoring of significant environmental effects

- 1.63.** The SEA Regulations require monitoring measures for all the significant effects, both positive and negative, identified in the assessment. The SEA of the draft management plan has identified no significant adverse effects that are likely to arise from the implementation of management plan. Some significant positive effects are likely to arise from the implementation of the plan. The assessment has also identified some areas of uncertainty over the significance of some of the predicted effects and monitoring will cover these effects as well.
- 1.64.** There are likely to be several benefits in monitoring any environmental effects arising from the implementation of the management plan, including:
- Identifying when action should be taken to reduce or offset any potential environmental effects of the plan;
 - Enhancing understanding of how the environment is changing in the AONB;
 - Tracking whether the plan has had any unforeseen environmental effects; and
 - Providing baseline data for future SEAs.

The advice is to incorporate the monitoring requirements of the SEA Regulations into the existing State of the AONB Report.

Monitoring Measures

- 1.65. The SEA Scoping Report identified 73 potential indicators to monitor the environmental effects of implementing the Management Plan. Following the initial assessment there was an increase to 76 indicators. These are set out in **Appendix 5** and analysed in **Appendix 7**.

Data limitations

- 1.66. The Strategic Environmental Assessment uses a combination of quantitative information from a number of sources (e.g. National Statistics and commissioned studies) and qualitative assessment using considered judgement. The qualitative approach is robust, given the strategic nature of the Management Plan. Detailed quantitative information relating to the effects of the plan is likely only to be available at a later stage.
- 1.67. Monitoring data are often subject to changes in methodology or reporting that may prevent the establishment of trend data from a known baseline date. Trend data and targets are the significant data gaps and these affect certain topics; in particular, effective and up-to-date reporting on pollution emission trends and aspects of air, soil (including contaminated land) and water quality are lacking. Consequently, the effects of diffuse pollution and other environmental impacts, such as recreation damage, are often difficult to ascertain. Funding cuts due to the recession may create additional burdens in terms of environmental monitoring and exacerbate this problem.

5. Technical review

- 1.68. The prime purpose of the SEA process is to review the potential impacts of the Management Plan on the key environmental aspects of the Malvern Hills AONB. There is also a requirement, however, to monitor the implementation of the Management Plan and its impact on the environment over time. The baseline indicators (Appendix 4) were selected with this in mind. They are expected to be a part of the State of the AONB reporting.

Quality of existing baseline data

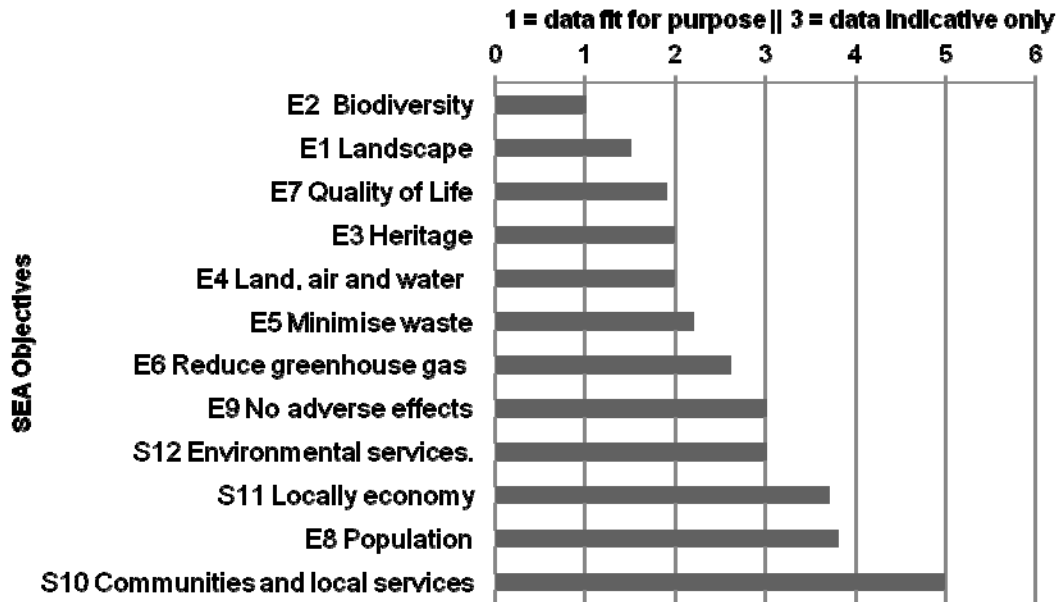
- 1.69. The assessment of the 76 SEA indicators is by a five-point quality scale. The analysis identifies where required data is weak or absent, so providing a framework for future data collection.

Indicator 5-point quality scale		
		<i>Comment</i>
1	Fit for purpose	
2	Adequate	Some minor improvements desirable
3	Indicative only	Not considered accurate
4	Inadequate	Little relevance to the AONB
5	Absent	No available data

The full assessment of each indicator against the 12 SEA Objectives is set out in **Appendix 7**. Of the 76 SEA indicators, 46% are ‘fit for purpose’ (35 indicators) and 11% are ‘adequate’ (8 indicators). Of the remaining, 18% (14 indicators) are indicative; 1% (1 indicator) is inadequate

and 24% (18 indicators) were absent. **Table 4** shows the assessment for each of the 12 SEA Objectives.

**Table 4: Quality of base-line data
Average score per SEA Objective**



1.70. Objective E9 (No adverse effects) and S12 (Environmental services) each have only one indicator, which is indicative in each case. All the other Objectives have a range of indicators but they do not have the same number. So the plot is of the average score per Objective. Five of the twelve Objectives appear to show adequate monitoring data as they all score below two. Biodiversity has data entirely fit for purpose. Landscape, Quality of life, Heritage and Land, air and water have good data with just some parts ranking as adequate. All the rest rely on indicative data. This is useful for spotting trends but it is not accurate.

6. Response to Environmental bodies comments

- 1.71. The report was subject to consultation with Natural England, Historic England, the Environment Agency (the statutory consultees) and other key stakeholders during October 2018. All three statutory consultees responded. A summary of their comments are set out in **Appendix 8**.
- 1.72. All the respondents agreed with the conclusions of the SEA report (or indicated that they had no substantive comments to make). Historic England noted that Section 1.8 refers to the historical landscape and the presence of three ancient hill forts. In fact, there are only two and the agency suggested alternative wording.
- 1.73. The Management Plan also went out for consultation during October 2018. After reviewing the responses, there was a change to the text of four policies to give greater clarity and the addition of two new policies to restore an old policy on cumulative development and strengthen the setting of the AONB. These changes are shown in **Appendix 9**.

- 1.74. **In response**, the Partnership accepted the new text and made a corresponding correction in the Management Plan to address these concerns. The change made does not require a formal re-assessment of the SEA.

7. Conclusion

- 1.75. The Management Plan has 66 policies falling under three themes. The proposed policies are compatible. There are no tensions or sensitivities arising from where two or more interact. The proposed policy cascade has a beneficial, and in parts, a significantly beneficial, effect on the SEA Environmental Objectives.
- 1.76. When analysed in combination, the policies show the greatest consistency with the SEA Objectives to conserve and enhance, landscape, biodiversity and heritage. This reflects the purpose of AONB designation. A particularly welcome finding is that environmental services and quality of life also have strong positive relationships. This suggests that the plan is seeking to deliver the Government's priorities for the countryside, as set out in 'A Green Future (2018)'. The weakest relationship is with reducing greenhouse gases.
- 1.77. There are no adverse effects on the SEA Environmental Objectives so there is no need to consider measures to increase the beneficial effects but opportunities exist to do so. There is no recommendation for mitigating actions.
- 1.78. The proposed policies consistently give greater environmental benefits than the 'do-nothing' situation. In some case, the benefits are only marginally better than the 'do-nothing' scenario.
- 1.79. The overall assessment of the current baseline data is that it is adequate. The weakness is in the reliance on indicative data. Very little information about people, communities or the local economy is presented. The traditional concerns of an AONB are covered well (landscape character, biodiversity and heritage; as quality of life).
- 1.80. **In conclusion: There is nothing in the management plan that will undermine the special qualities of the AONB. Implementation of the proposed Management Plan will have environmental and sustainability benefits for the Malvern Hills AONB.**

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Management Plan Policy Cascade

Topic	Objectives What we want to achieve		Policies How to get things done	
Under the natural and cultural environment:				
Landscape	LO1	Conserve and enhance the distinctive landscapes of the AONB and its setting, particularly those that are most sensitive or have little capacity for change.	LP1	Manage the landscape of the AONB in accordance with key documents such as the AONB Landscape Strategy, Landscape Character Assessments, Historic Landscape Characterisations and other guidance documents.
			LP2	Restore distinctive landscapes and landscape features that have been significantly degraded.
			LP3	Promote positive landscape change to landowners, managers, government and all those with an influence over land.
	LO2	Advocate and implement appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change.	LP4	Ensure that climate change adaptation and mitigation proposals are consistent with the special qualities of the AONB and minimise any adverse effects on the area.
Geodiversity Biodiversity	GO1	Protect important geological and geomorphological sites and promote effective long-term management.	GP1	Secure best practice in geodiversity management within and adjacent to designated sites.
			GP2	Conserve the geodiversity resource in line with Geodiversity Action Plans,
			GP3	Ensure that landowners refer to site management plans before undertaking work on LGSs.
			GP4	Promote greater understanding of the geological value of the AONB, its links with the historic environment and the need for its protection and management.
	BO1	Establish and maintain coherent and resilient ecological networks across the AONB and beyond.	BP1	Enhance the wildlife value of the countryside and achieve greater buffering and connectivity between key habitats within the AONB and between the AONB and the countryside beyond.
			BP2	Conserve, enhance and expand key habitats and populations of key species in line with local biodiversity priorities and the England Biodiversity Strategy.

			BP3	In exercising development control decisions, secure developer contributions to enhance the natural environment.
	BO2	Ensure that the benefits and services provided by the natural environment are understood and accurately valued by decision-makers at all levels.	BP4	Improve knowledge and understanding of the AONB's biodiversity, to enable evaluation of the effectiveness of policies and actions.
			BP5	Safeguard biodiversity from potential damaging impacts arising from development or other activities.
Historic environment	HO1	Conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB through appropriate funding, management and awareness raising.	HP1	Conserve and enhance the historic and cultural environment of the AONB in accordance with key documents such as Historic Landscape Characterisations, Conservation Area Appraisals, Historic England and locally developed advice and guidance.
			HP2	Ensure the sustainable use of historic buildings and other heritage assets, particularly those identified as being at risk.
			HP3	Promote greater public understanding of, and engagement with, the historic environment of the AONB.
Farming and forestry	FO1	Ensure that sustainable farming and forestry are the primary means by which the distinctive landscapes of the AONB are managed.	FP1	Ensure that agricultural and forestry practices include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable production of produce • sustainable utilisation of soil, minimising erosion • effective water catchment management • avoidance of direct pollution and measures to reduce diffuse pollution farm waste minimisation and recycling
			FP2	Bring woodlands, orchards and other characteristic habitats into favourable conservation condition through encouraging and supporting management regimes that provide an economic return.
			FP3	Ensure that all new woodland planting in the AONB is largely of native species; no more than 20% being non-native species.
			FP4	Create native woodland in appropriate locations.
			FP5	Support appropriate measures to monitor and control pests, diseases and invasive non-native plant and

				animal species to protect food production and biodiversity resources.
			FP6	Encourage the take-up of options and management practices that benefit the distinctive natural and historic environment of the AONB.
			FP7	Promote local and seasonal produce and support the development of local services and markets.
			FP8	Maintain and develop the skills required to manage the landscape and its special qualities.
Under Community life:				
Living and working	LWO1	Enable vibrant communities to grow by stimulating diverse and sustainable economic prosperity while conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of the area.	LWP1	Support the production of community-led plans, strategies and statements (such as Neighbourhood Plans) that conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB and encourage and maintain the vitality and diversity of rural community life.
			LWP2	Support community initiatives that promote the creation and management of key habitats, appropriate renewable energy schemes, energy efficiency, recycling, community transport and community housing
			LWP3	Seek new, inventive and sensitive solutions to the retention of local shops and provision of viable local services, for example, through the integration of local service delivery and through the delivery of universal high-speed broadband.
			LWP4	Support the provision of a variety of housing that is appropriate to the character of the area and meets local community needs.
Built development	BDO1	The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in the development and implementation of consistent statutory land use planning policy and guidance across the AONB, and in decision-making on planning applications for development.	BDP1	Allocations of land for development in the AONB and its setting should be informed by Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessments and/or Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments, as appropriate.
			BDP2	Development in the AONB and its setting should be in accordance with good practice guidance and capacity studies including that produced by the AONB Partnership.
			BDP3	Development in the AONB should be based on convincing evidence of local need arising from within the AONB. Priority should be given to the provision of affordable housing and

			enhancing local services.
		BDP4	Development proposals should protect and/or enhance key views to and from the AONB. AONB guidance relating to views and development in views should be used in relevant cases.
		BDP5	Lighting schemes should be kept to a minimum and only installed where absolutely necessary. Light pollution should be avoided through adherence to good practice design and through practice, for example, dimming or turning lighting off wherever possible.
		BDP6	There should be a presumption against the loss of traditional orchards to development, or changes to other uses.
		BDP7	Equestrian development should proceed in accordance with best practice guidance, including the AONB Partnership guidance on keeping horses in the landscape.
		BDP8	Appropriate scale renewable energy schemes should be encouraged where these support the management of core elements of the AONB landscape and/or where they do not negatively affect the distinctive attributes or special qualities of the AONB.
		BDP9	Farm-scale polytunnels for commercial use would not normally be an accepted form of development in the AONB. Where there is an essential need for such developments and no other suitable location is available outside the AONB, a whole farm approach should be taken to ensure an acceptable location, design, and scale.
		BDP10	Support the recycling, re-use and limited and appropriate extraction of small quantities of locally distinctive building materials, such as Malvern stone, where this is needed to help retain local distinctiveness in the built environment.
		BDP11	The reuse and redevelopment of existing buildings should be supported, especially where this helps retain the distinctive character of the AONB.
		BDP12	A Master Plan will be developed for the Three Counties Showground. This

				should ensure that the site and any future development and landscaping is effectively integrated into the nationally designated landscape of the AONB.
Tourism	TO1	To ensure the AONB is widely recognised and valued as a sustainable visitor destination, where local communities benefit, businesses prosper and the environment is well managed.	TP1	Stimulate and support sustainable tourism practices in the AONB
			TP2	Provide a quality public realm with good access and accessibility to facilities and features that attract tourists.
			TP3	Develop more collaborative and joined-up working between public, private and voluntary sector tourism organisations across the AONB, enabling greater overall efficiency and use of resources.
			TP4	Ensure that the tourism sector recognises the benefits of conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the AONB and reflects this in policy and practice
			TP5	Work in partnership to develop the Malverns as an area for showcasing new tourism technologies.
Transport and Accessibility	TRO1	To reduce the impact of the motor vehicle whilst promoting a more sustainable approach to accessibility management.	TRP1	Highway management and design should be in accordance with the AONB Guidance on Highway Design.
			TRP2	Promote sustainable transport to enhance tranquillity and minimise the impact of traffic on the AONB; encouraging a safer and more attractive environment for walking, cycling and horse riding.
			TRP3	Reuse and refurbish appropriate highway furniture and fittings to strengthen the special character of the AONB.
			TRP4	Coordinate the planning of integrated passenger transport to, from and within the AONB.
			TRP5	Introduce and maintain measures to reduce car movements in the AONB, particularly during major events and at peak times.
			TRP6	Ensure that new developments on the periphery of the AONB do not give rise to significant traffic increases and associated effects on tranquillity and enjoyment. Seek compensation for such effects where relevant
			TRP7	Develop and promote sustainable transport options to meet local

				accessibility requirements.
Under Enjoying and understanding:				
Recreation and access	RO1	The development and management of informal recreation in the AONB should respect the character of the area whilst meeting the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation.	RP1	Pursue appropriate opportunities to spread recreational use to those areas that can sustain it and that will benefit from it, ensuring the provision of suitable infrastructure.
			RP2	Ensure that the rights of way network and associated infrastructure (signs, gates, etc) do not detract unnecessarily from the special qualities of the landscape.
			RP3	Seek a consistent approach to the development and delivery of access through Rights of Way management and Improvement Plans
			RP4	Developments that are likely to lead to an increase in negative recreational effects in an area should contribute to the costs of mitigating and managing these effects.
	RO2	Everyone can enjoy and explore the AONB in ways that respect the purposes of designation.	RP5	Develop, support and promote programmes and projects that improve health and well-being.
			RP6	Increase the range of opportunities for those with restricted mobility and health impairments to experience the AONB.
Information and interpretation	IO1	That residents and visitors value the special qualities of the AONB and understand the need to invest in their management.	IP1	Develop a co-ordinated approach to information, interpretation and marketing activity to promote the special qualities of the Malvern Hills area and appropriate behaviour within it.
			IP2	Promote products and services that support the special qualities of the Malvern Hills
			IP3	Raise awareness of 'being in the Malvern Hills AONB' and the significance of the designation.
			IP4	Work in partnerships with the technology and science sectors to develop innovative ways of accessing and using information.
			IP5	Enhance local distinctiveness through the maintenance and restoration of appropriate signs and through sign removal where appropriate
Volunteering	VO1	To support and manage a wide range of volunteers in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty AONB through	VP1	Support and encourage effective voluntary activity, in all its shapes and forms, that helps deliver the AONB Management Plan.

		volunteering.	VP2	Develop and support networks of volunteers able to assist in specialist activities.
			VP3	Encourage and support Parish Councils to achieve high standards in working closely with voluntary and community groups and meeting local needs and aspirations within the AONB.

Appendix 2: List of relevant plans and policies

INTERNATIONAL

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International importance, especially waterfowl habitat (1971)
 Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979) (came into force on 1 June 1982)
 Bonn Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species (1979)
 Rio Declaration of Environment and Development 1992
 The Convention on Biological Diversity (The Rio Convention) (Adopted June 1992, entered into force December 1993)
 Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Adopted December 1997, entered into force February 2005)
 The World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg (2002), Commitments arising from the Johannesburg Summit
 Copenhagen Accord United Nations Climate Change Conference (2009)
 Paris Agreement United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2015)

EUROPEAN

The Birds Directive (Directive on Conservation of Wild Birds) (79/409/EEC) (Adopted 1979)
 The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada Convention) Council of Europe (121) 1985
 European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised 1985)
 Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) (1991)
 The Habitats Directive (Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora) (Directive 92/43/EC) (1992)
 The Landfill Directive (99/31/EC) (1999)
 The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) (2000)
 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC) (2001)
 The Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC) (2002)
 The Public Access to Environmental Information Directive (2003/4/EC) (2003)
 Aarhus Convention (1998, ratified February 2005)
 The Landscape Convention (entered into force 1st March 2004, ratified by UK in November 2006)
 Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy (June 2006)
 The Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EEC) (2008)
 Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020, European Commission (2011)

NATIONAL

Legislation

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended)
Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000
Sustainable Energy Act 2003
Secure and Sustainable Buildings Act 2004
Traffic Management Act 2004
Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006
Climate Change Act 2008
Localism Act 2011
European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Act 2017
The Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994 (Habitats Regulation) as amended in 1997, 2000 (in England only) and 2017
Rights of Way Circular (1/09) Guidance for Local Authorities (Defra 2009)
Agricultural Waste Regulations Defra (2006)
National Policy Statements for Energy Infrastructure (DECC 2011)
National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2012)

Policies, Strategies and Plans

Securing the Future – UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (Defra 2005)
The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland Defra (2007)
Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (English Heritage 2008)
Future Water The Government's water strategy for England Defra (2008)
Water for people and the environment - Water Resources Strategy for England and Wales, Environment Agency 2009
The Rural Development Programme 2015-2020 (Defra amended 2017)
Safeguarding our Soils - A Strategy for England (Defra 2009)
Code for Sustainable Homes (CLG 2009)
Green Infrastructure Guidance (Natural England 2009)
Traditional orchards: a summary Natural England Technical Information Note TIN012 (Natural England 2010)
Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network, (Chaired by Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS) Defra 2010
Mainstreaming sustainable development – The Government's vision and what this means in practice (Defra 2011)
Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (Defra 2011)
Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011 (Defra 2011)
Water for Life, the Water White Paper (Defra 2011)
Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon – Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen (DfT 2011)
The Carbon Plan (DECC 2011)
Strategic Framework for Tourism in England 2010 – 2020 (Visit England 2011)
Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places English Heritage (2008 -revised 2012)
The National Heritage Protection Plan (2011 – 2015) (English Heritage 2012) Revised 2013
Local Authority Heritage Assets: Current Issues And Opportunities - Report to English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund - by *Green Balance* with *Grover Lewis Associates Ltd* 2012
UK Forestry Standard (Forestry Commission 2011)
UK Bioenergy Strategy (DECC 2012)

Creating a sporting habit for life, A new youth sport strategy (DCMS 2012)
'The Natural Choice', the Natural Environment White Paper (Defra 2012)
Healthy lives, healthy people: Improving outcomes and supporting transparency (DH 2012)
Independent Panel on Forestry Final report, Defra (2012)
Natural Capital Committee How to do it: a natural capital workbook NCC 2012
Realising nature's value: The Final Report of the Ecosystem Markets Task Force Defra (March 2013)
Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement - Forestry Commission (Defra 2013)
National Character Area Profile:103 Malvern Hills (NE361) (Natural England 2012)
Tourism Action Plan, DCMS (August 2016)
Conservation 21: Natural England's conservation strategy for the 21st century – Natural England 2016
Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Historic England Advice Note 8, Historic England, December 2016
BEIS The Clean Growth Strategy Leading the way to a low carbon future HMSO BEIS (October 2017)
Fixing our broken housing market Cm Paper 9352 HMSO, DCLG, February 2017
The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) Historic England December 2017
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment, HMSO, Defra (2018)
Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit, Cmd paper 9577, HMSO, Defra, February 2018

REGIONAL

West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership, Enhancing Biodiversity Across the West Midlands, 2008
Growing our future: West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework (Forestry Commission 2004)
West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework GROWING OUR FUTURE 2007-2010 Delivery Plan (Forestry Commission 2007)
Water for people and the environment Water Resources Strategy & Regional Action Plan for Midlands region (Environment Agency 2009)
Putting the historic environment to work A strategy for the West Midlands 2010-2015 The West Midlands Historic Environment Forum (English Heritage) 2010
Water for life and livelihoods: River Basin Management Plan Severn River Basin District (Environment Agency 2009) updated in 2015
Severn Trent Water Resources Management Plan (Severn Trent Water Company June 2010)
Severn Trent Water is currently reviewing its Resources Management Plan (consultation ended 14th May 2018). This will inform the plans for 2019- 24.

LOCAL

Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan Gloucestershire County Council (1997 now adopted)
Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 - 2012 Gloucestershire County Council (adopted 2004)
Highways & Biodiversity Guidance for Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire County Council (2017)
Responding to Climate Change: Gloucestershire County Council's Corporate Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan 2008/09 to 2011/12 (2008)
Gloucestershire's Local Transport Plan 2015-31 Gloucestershire County Council 2017
Strategic Economic Plan for Gloucestershire gfirstLEP (March 2014)
HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL
Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011 - 2031 (2015)
Herefordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy Be Well, Keep Well, Live Well
Invest Herefordshire - Herefordshire's Economic Vision

Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy 2010 - 2011 A Short Guide to the Plan for the Long Term Future of Herefordshire (The Herefordshire Partnership 2010)

Herefordshire Council Local Transport Plan 2016 – 2031 Strategy

Herefordshire Council Local Transport Plan 2016 – 2031 Policy Document (2016)

The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire 2004 – 2034 First review August 2011

Worcestershire County Council, Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013-2018 (2013)

Waste Core Strategy Local Plan 2012-2027 Worcestershire County Council adopted 2012

Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan Worcestershire County Council saved 2007

Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy 2012 - 2020 Worcestershire Partnership 2012

Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy Action Plan Worcestershire Partnership 2013

Worcestershire Joint Health and Well-being Strategy 2016-21

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Air Quality Strategy July 2009

Worcestershire Countryside Access and Informal Recreation Strategy 2009 – 2019 Worcestershire Partnership's Cultural Theme Group 2009

Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 3 The Worcestershire Transport Strategy (2011-2026) Worcestershire County Council 2011

Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 3 Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2011)

The Worcestershire Local Economic Assessment 2018. Worcestershire County Council, January 2018

Local Development Plan Forest Of Dean Council adopted 2012

Growing the Economy Action Plan 2015 - 2019 Forest of Dean District Council

Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Destination Management Plan 2015 – 2020 (2015)

The Adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) 2016

Malvern Hills District Economic Development Strategy 2013 – 2018

Malvern Hills District Visitor Economy Action Plan Our Vision To 2020

Malvern Hills District Health And Well-Being Plan 2016-21

Malvern Hills District Sport and Leisure Strategy 2014-2024 - Active Communities Malvern Hills District: A Vision for the Future

Appendix 3: Outline of future trends in the Malvern Hills AONB

Forces for Change	Outcomes without mitigating actions
Agriculture	Agriculture is the dominant land use within the AONB, occupying around 80% of the area. There will continue to be potentially conflicting approaches to land management driven on the one hand by production imperatives and on the other by conservation imperatives. As commodity prices rise, the amount of land managed with conservation in mind may decline. Withdrawal from the EU and the agreement of new trade deals (as yet undetermined) may lead to demands for a greater intensification of use.
Biodiversity	Outside of key land holdings wildlife sites will remain small and relatively isolated, wildlife corridors and connection may be lost. A decline in habitat condition could arise from a range of factors, including inappropriate grazing regimes, agricultural intensification, inappropriate development, and high levels of phosphates and nitrates from both point and diffuse sources.
Climate Change	Outcomes are unknown, as limited data exist for the Malvern Hills AONB. It is likely that temperatures in the region will continue to increase and rainfall will fall in summer and increase in winter. There may be more extreme weather events, such as storms and floods. Warmer winters and fewer frosts may extend the growing season of some species but conversely may affect the ability of some plants to produce fruits, particularly commercial grown top fruits e.g. apples. The incidence and severity of tree diseases may increase.
Development	There are plans for significant development in South Worcestershire (in and around Malvern and the City of Worcester) and around the edge of Ledbury. This will add to traffic movements and recreational use of the Malvern Hills AONB. Development out from existing settlements within the AONB may lead to some loss of tranquillity / remoteness.
Environmental Quality	Habitats and water quality may deteriorate because increased traffic and housing/employment development in the area will increase emissions of oxides of nitrogen and sulphur, as well as carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and ozone. These impacts are not likely to be great.
Green Energy	Innovative green solutions (such as photovoltaic tiles) may lead to an erosion of vernacular design features that add to the special qualities of the AONB. Without careful design and siting, even small-scale energy infrastructure in the wider countryside can have a visual impact.
Green infrastructure	Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. Without a strategic approach, ecological services and quality of life benefits will be lost and new developments will lead to higher levels of pressure on the AONB because of the lack of alternative green space provision.
Historic Environment	There is a lack of consistent and current information about the conditions of the historic environment. Heritage assets are at risk from land-use, vegetation and burrowing animals. Without mitigation, there will be a greater loss due to general neglect, including plant growth. Historic buildings and their settings, and the wider landscape, are under pressure from inappropriate development. Climate change and changes in agricultural following Brexit may create new challenges.
Scale of management	Borders are not natural; they are a creation by people. Environmental assets follow nature's design. The management of large-scale landscape and habitat issues will fail without cross-boundary cooperation and meaningful working partnerships.
Setting	The setting of an AONB is the surroundings in which the area is experienced. If the quality of the setting declines, then the appreciation and enjoyment of the AONB diminishes. Construction of a distant but high structure; development or change generating movement, noise, odour, vibration or dust over a wide area; or a new understanding of the relationship between neighbouring landscape assets may all extend what might previously have been

	<p>understood to comprise the setting.</p> <p>Views are one element of setting, being associated with the visual experience. Views are particularly important to the AONB because of the juxtaposition of high and low ground and the fact that recreational users value them. Without management, views within, from and to the AONB may be lost or degraded. Some views will be more important than others. Planned development, particularly allied to Government targets for housing growth, is likely to have an impact on views from the hills.</p>
Woodland Management	<p>Woodland covers 20% of the AONB, but many of the woodlands are small and difficult to manage. In some areas, woodland cover is fragmented. Forest trees may succumb to tree diseases without appropriate management. (Even with good management, this is highly likely to occur).</p>

Appendix 4: Key indicators and data sources

SEA Topic	Key Indicator ¹²	Source
Biodiversity	<p>% of SSSIs in favourable condition</p> <p>The area of priority BAP habitats and the % that are managed under agri-environment schemes</p> <p><i>The condition of broad BAP habitats in SSSIs</i></p> <p><i>The favourable conservation status of European protected species</i></p> <p>The area of deciduous woodland plus the area of Forestry Commission estate</p> <p>The area managed under Environmental Stewardship</p> <p>The average annual values of current Environmental Stewardship agreements</p>	<p>Natural England</p> <p>Forestry Commission</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>Defra</p> <p>BAP Partnership</p>
Population	<p>Socio-economic profiles</p> <p><i>Increase in rural skills</i></p> <p><i>Percentage change in population</i></p> <p><i>Resident population within the AONB</i></p> <p><i>Levels of deprivation</i></p> <p><i>Crime levels</i></p> <p><i>Crime perception</i></p>	<p>Census</p> <p>Defra</p> <p>British Crime Survey Indices of Deprivation</p> <p>Local Authorities</p>
Human Health	<p><i>Health inequality data</i></p> <p><i>Standard Mortality Ratios</i></p> <p><i>Disability data</i></p> <p>Distribution of open space</p> <p>The area of land that is actually accessible under CROW, plus land with existing access rights that pre-determine CROW Access</p> <p>Length of existing public rights of way</p> <p>The amount of open and linear access brought about by agri- environment agreements</p>	<p>Indices of Deprivation</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>Natural England</p>
Water	<p>Water resource features</p> <p>% rivers and lakes achieving good ecological status environment data</p> <p><i>Pollution incidents (by source)</i></p> <p><i>Capacity of water treatment works</i></p> <p><i>Water availability</i></p> <p><i>Water abstraction data</i></p> <p><i>Water use</i></p> <p><i>Flood risk</i></p>	<p>Environment Agency</p> <p>Natural England</p>
Soil	<p><i>Previously developed land and vacant / derelict building availability</i></p> <p><i>Spatial location of agricultural land (and classification)</i></p> <p>Number and condition of Local Geological Sites</p>	<p>Environment Agency</p> <p>Defra</p> <p>Natural England</p>
Air	<p><i>AQMAs, their objectives and whether they are being met.</i></p>	<p>Local Authorities</p>

¹²Indicators marked in bold are certain; indicators in italics are not certain. They require a partner to agree to present the material in a form suitable for the AONB.

	<i>Emissions of air pollutants by source.</i> <i>Headline air quality indicator (future trends in air quality)</i>	Environment Agency
Climate Factors	<i>Greenhouse gas emissions (M tonnes carbon equivalent)</i> <i>Greenhouse gas emissions by source.</i>	Local Authorities Environment Agency
Material Assets	<i>Spatial location of mineral reserves</i> <i>Energy Consumption</i> <i>Take up of energy efficiency measures</i> <i>Renewable energy generation</i> <i>Incidents of fly tipping</i> <i>Total waste arisings</i> <i>Recycling rates</i> The uptake of selected ES options that contribute towards the protection of natural resources The area covered by the England Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS), plus the area of ancient woodland in WGS	Local Authorities Waste disposal authorities and waste planning authorities. Environment Agency Natural England Forestry Commission
Cultural Heritage	The number of listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks & gardens, and registered battlefields Heritage at Risk – both statistics eg % of heritage assets ‘at risk, plus GIS datasets under licence Condition of Scheduled Monuments Condition of Listed Buildings Condition of registered parks and gardens <i>Number and condition of local heritage assets</i> <i>Number of conservation areas and % of the AONB covered by designation</i> <i>% of conservation areas in the AONB with an up-to-date character appraisal</i> <i>Improvements in the condition of historic and archaeological sites and features</i>	Historic England Local Authorities
Landscape	Local Landscape Character Assessments Extent, condition and change in characteristic landscape features. Fixed point photography <i>Light pollution maps</i> Tranquillity index The uptake of selected ES options that contribute towards the good condition of landscape elements and/or landscape character	Local Authority, AONB Natural England
Communities	<i>Access to key services</i> <i>Distribution of current housing stock – by tenure and type including affordable housing</i> <i>Quality of housing (decent homes standard)</i> <i>Vacant housing and second homes.</i> <i>Level of motor vehicle traffic</i> <i>Percentage of journeys made by foot or cycle</i> <i>Average distance and travel times by journey type.</i> <i>Congestion levels</i>	Indices of Deprivation Local authorities Regional Housing Studies Regional Transport Plans Census 2011
Economy	Agricultural Survey statistics	Defra

	<p>Tourism statistics, including % employed in tourism and the number of tourism businesses in the protected landscape and within 5 miles.</p> <p><i>Employment rate</i> <i>No of jobs by sector</i> <i>Total visitor spend</i></p>	<p>Annual Business Enquiry Local Authorities</p>
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Appendix 5: SEA Objectives and Environmental Issues

N°	Objectives	Issues / Criteria
E1	To safeguard the landscape	Conserving and enhancing: landscape features contributing to the special qualities; landscape character and local distinctiveness; tranquillity and remoteness; dark night skies; and the setting of settlements
E2	To safeguard habitats, fauna and flora	Conserving and enhancing: habitat condition; diversity; extent; interconnectivity; adaptation to climate change; Conserving and enhancing: populations of key species; the habitat requirements of key species; their adaptation to climate change
E3	To conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their setting	The historic environment covers a wide range of heritage assets including areas, buildings, features and landscapes with statutory protection, together with those parts of the historic environment that are locally valued and important, and also the historic character of the landscape and townscape. Strengthening: Local character and distinctiveness; maintaining local vernacular styles Conserving: heritage assets and their setting Promoting: High quality design and heritage-led regeneration Community engagement: In valuing and enjoying culturally important features and areas
E4	To protect and enhance the environmental quality of land, air and water resources through the use of sustainable practices	Conserving and enhancing: geodiversity Reducing: soil compaction; erosion; leaching of nutrients and organic matter. Increasing soil organic matter and carbon storage Protect air: by reducing pollution sources within and outside the AONB. Conserving and enhancing: surface and groundwater quality/quantity; maintaining natural river geomorphologies. Reducing flooding (e.g. retaining water in upper catchments; increasing water retention by habitats and soils; maintain floodplains as natural washlands)
E5	To minimise waste and through re-use, re-cycling and recovery reduce the use of landfill	Conserving the environment: reusing or re-cycling materials saves resources, including energy, materials, and landfill space
E6	To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and encourage sustainable forms of energy production	Promote climate change mitigation measures: reduced output of greenhouse gases; energy saving; carbon storage and sequestration; appropriate renewable energy sources

E7	To safeguard human health and Quality of Life	Improving quality of life; providing for countryside recreation which has both mental and physical health benefits
E8	To ensure no adverse effect arises on population (i.e. demographic balance)	Maintaining a mixed community with a diverse age structure
E9	To avoid significant adverse effects between the above interrelationships	Promoting the importance of environmental services
Sustainability Objectives relevant to an AONB Management Plan		
S10	To avoid adverse effects on the sustainability of communities and local service provision	Minimising the loss of local jobs and local services Supporting affordable housing that specifically meets local need
S11	A locally embedded economy	Promoting economic activity that adds value to local products and helps support the conservation of the AONB's special qualities Promoting a career in land-based and traditional building skills; encouraging apprenticeships and training
S12	To ensure the delivery of environmental services.	Promoting the importance of environmental services

Appendix 6: Review of alternative policies

Table 1: Agriculture

Agriculture is the dominant land use within the AONB, occupying around 80% of the area. There will continue to be potentially conflicting approaches to land management driven on the one hand by production imperatives and on the other by conservation imperatives. As commodity prices rise, the amount of land managed with conservation in mind may decline. Withdrawal from the EU and the agreement of new trade deals (as yet undetermined) may lead to demands for a greater intensification of use

Management Plan Objectives	Benefits of the proposed policies	Do nothing situation
LO1 Conserve and enhance the distinctive landscapes of the AONB and its setting, particularly those that are most sensitive or have little capacity for change.	Advocates good policy advice and guidance; promotes positive landscape change to land owners and managers.	There will be Defra / Natural England advice but it will be generic. Local authorities will have a view but few resources.
LO2 Advocate and implement appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change.	Will match adaption and mitigation proposals with the need to enhance special qualities.	Adaption and mitigation will proceed but there will be less allowance made for local circumstances.
GO1 Protect important geological and geomorphological sites and promote effective long-term management.	Neutral	Neutral
BO1 Establish and maintain coherent and resilient ecological networks across the AONB and beyond.	Strong voice for adjusting commercial land management practices to secure net environmental gain.	Wildlife Trusts and local authority ecologists may seek to achieve the same outcomes but there will be resource issues.
BO2 Ensure that the benefits and services provided by the natural environment are understood and accurately valued by	Improved knowledge	Opportunities to capitalise on Defra's wish to use public money for public goods may be lost to the

decision-makers at all levels.		agricultural community.
HO1 Conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB through appropriate funding, management and awareness raising.	Limited	Historic England and others will seek to protect undesignated and hidden heritage.
FO1 Ensure that sustainable farming and forestry are the primary means by which the distinctive landscapes of the AONB are managed.	Active support to the farming and forestry community. A number of initiatives that will support marketing.	Perhaps a weaker marketing proposition. Others will pick up the advisory aspects.
LWO1 Enable vibrant communities to grow by stimulating diverse and sustainable economic prosperity while conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of the area.	Limited impact though local shops may help some farmers.	Limited but there may be fewer local strategies. This may mean opportunities are lost; or it may mean that there is less scrutiny.
BDO1 The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in the development and implementation of consistent statutory land use planning policy and guidance across the AONB, and in decision-making on planning applications for development.	This does seek to control commercial poly-tunnels and equestrian businesses. It supports traditional orchards.	May be a greater decline in traditional orchards, and more intrusive development in the landscape.
TO1 To ensure the AONB is widely recognised and valued as a sustainable visitor destination, where local communities benefit, businesses prosper and the environment is well managed.	Limited but sustainable tourism may help with diversification.	Neutral
TRO1 To reduce the impact of the motor vehicle whilst promoting a more sustainable approach to accessibility management.	Neutral	Neutral
RO1 The development and management of informal recreation in the AONB should respect the character of the area whilst meeting the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation.	May reduce conflicts between land management and recreational use.	More conflict between land managers and recreationalists.
RO2 Everyone can enjoy and explore the AONB in ways that respect the purposes of designation.	Neutral	Neutral
IO1 That residents and visitors value the special qualities of the AONB and understand the need to invest in their management.	Will promote local produce.	Perhaps a weaker marketing proposition.
VO1 To support and manage a wide range of volunteers in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty AONB through volunteering.	Neutral	Neutral

The proposed policies give marginally greater environmental benefits than the 'do-nothing situation. The Environment Agency, Natural England and others will undertake actions irrespective of this plan.

Table 2: Biodiversity

<p>Outside of key land holdings, wildlife sites will remain small and relatively isolated, wildlife corridors and connection may be lost. A decline in habitat condition could arise from a range of factors, including inappropriate grazing regimes, agricultural intensification, inappropriate development, and high levels of phosphates and nitrates from both point and diffuse sources.</p>		
Management Plan Objectives	Benefits of the proposed policies	Do nothing situation
LO1 Conserve and enhance the distinctive landscapes of the AONB and its setting, particularly those that are most sensitive or have little capacity for change.	Will support a landscape-scale approach.	May be a lack of co-ordination though it is likely that county-wide or regional organisations will deliver.
LO2 Advocate and implement appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change.	Adaption measures may help develop habitat connections.	Local contacts lost but other bodies lead.
GO1 Protect important geological and geomorphological sites and promote effective long-term management.	Neutral	Neutral
BO1 Establish and maintain coherent and resilient ecological networks across the AONB and beyond.	A key policy to deliver joined up nature.	Opportunities may be lost though others are active in this field.
BO2 Ensure that the benefits and services provided by the natural environment are understood and accurately valued by decision-makers at all levels.	Will provide data to inform decisions.	Locally relevant data may be lost or slow to emerge.
HO1 Conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB through appropriate funding, management and awareness raising.	Neutral	Neutral
FO1 Ensure that sustainable farming and forestry are the primary means by which the distinctive landscapes of the AONB are managed.	An advocate for linking farmers to natural capital thinking. May help release funds to land managers.	Limited. Others also give advice.
LWO1 Enable vibrant communities to grow by stimulating diverse and sustainable economic prosperity while conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of the area.	Encourages communities to care for biodiversity	Opportunities lost but communities will still wish to do something.
BDO1 The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in the development and implementation of consistent statutory land use planning policy and guidance across the AONB, and in decision-making on planning applications for development.	Neutral	Neutral
TO1 To ensure the AONB is widely recognised and valued as a sustainable visitor destination, where local communities benefit, businesses prosper and the environment is well managed.	Sustainable tourism may help nurture biodiversity but limited ambitions.	Neutral
TRO1 To reduce the impact of the motor vehicle whilst promoting a more sustainable approach to accessibility management.	Neutral	Neutral

RO1 The development and management of informal recreation in the AONB should respect the character of the area whilst meeting the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation.	May reduce disturbance of wildlife	Possible conflict between wildlife and recreational use.
RO2 Everyone can enjoy and explore the AONB in ways that respect the purposes of designation.	Neutral	Neutral
IO1 That residents and visitors value the special qualities of the AONB and understand the need to invest in their management.	Neutral	Neutral
VO1 To support and manage a wide range of volunteers in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty AONB through volunteering.	Neutral	Neutral

The proposed policies give greater environmental benefits than the 'do-nothing situation.

Table 3: Climate Change

Outcomes are unknown, as limited data exist for the Malvern Hills AONB. It is likely that temperatures in the region will continue to increase and rainfall will fall in summer and increase in winter. There may be more extreme weather events, such as storms and floods. Warmer winters and fewer frosts may extend the growing season of some species but conversely may affect the ability of some plants to produce fruits, particularly commercial grown top fruits e.g. apples. The incidence and severity of tree diseases may increase.

Management Plan Objectives	Benefits of the proposed policies	Do nothing situation
LO1 Conserve and enhance the distinctive landscapes of the AONB and its setting, particularly those that are most sensitive or have little capacity for change.	Will work with landowners to secure positive landscape change.	May be adverse impacts on landscape character.
LO2 Advocate and implement appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change.	Will match adaption and mitigation proposals with the need to enhance special qualities.	Adaption and mitigation will proceed but there will be less allowance made for local circumstances.
GO1 Protect important geological and geomorphological sites and promote effective long-term management.	Neutral	Neutral
BO1 Establish and maintain coherent and resilient ecological networks across the AONB and beyond.	A key policy to deliver joined up nature.	Opportunities may be lost though others are active in this field.
BO2 Ensure that the benefits and services provided by the natural environment are understood and accurately valued by decision-makers at all levels.	Will provide data to inform decisions.	Locally relevant data may be lost or slow to emerge.
HO1 Conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB through appropriate funding, management and awareness raising.	Neutral	Neutral
FO1 Ensure that sustainable farming and forestry are the primary means by which the distinctive landscapes of the AONB are managed.	Supports good sustainable practices that will help with mitigation and adaption.	Others already lead on this topic.

LWO1 Enable vibrant communities to grow by stimulating diverse and sustainable economic prosperity while conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of the area.	Will encourage appropriate renewable energy schemes, energy efficiency and recycling by communities.	Others already lead on this topic.
BDO1 The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in the development and implementation of consistent statutory land use planning policy and guidance across the AONB, and in decision-making on planning applications for development.	Limited	Local Planning Authorities are already the lead.
TO1 To ensure the AONB is widely recognised and valued as a sustainable visitor destination, where local communities benefit, businesses prosper and the environment is well managed.	Neutral	Neutral
TRO1 To reduce the impact of the motor vehicle whilst promoting a more sustainable approach to accessibility management.	Support for initiatives and the development of locally relevant guidance.	Local Highway Authorities are already the lead.
RO1 The development and management of informal recreation in the AONB should respect the character of the area whilst meeting the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation.	Neutral	Neutral
RO2 Everyone can enjoy and explore the AONB in ways that respect the purposes of designation.	Neutral	Neutral
IO1 That residents and visitors value the special qualities of the AONB and understand the need to invest in their management.	Neutral	Neutral
VO1 To support and manage a wide range of volunteers in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty AONB through volunteering.	Neutral	Neutral

The proposed policies give a marginally greater environmental benefit than the 'do-nothing situation.

Table 4: Development

There are plans for significant development in South Worcestershire (in and around Malvern and the City of Worcester) and around the edge of Ledbury. This will add to traffic movements and recreational use of the Malvern Hills AONB. Development out from existing settlements within the AONB may lead to some loss of tranquillity / remoteness.

Management Plan Objectives	Benefits of the proposed policies	Do nothing situation
LO1 Conserve and enhance the distinctive landscapes of the AONB and its setting, particularly those that are most sensitive or have little capacity for change.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	The Local Planning Authorities are the lead but they may not have sufficient specialist support. Some opportunities may be lost.

LO2 Advocate and implement appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change.	Neutral	Neutral
GO1 Protect important geological and geomorphological sites and promote effective long-term management.	Neutral	Neutral
BO1 Establish and maintain coherent and resilient ecological networks across the AONB and beyond.	Will seek developer contributions to enhance biodiversity	Neutral
BO2 Ensure that the benefits and services provided by the natural environment are understood and accurately valued by decision-makers at all levels.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	The Local Planning Authorities are the lead but they may not have sufficient specialist support. Some opportunities may be lost.
HO1 Conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB through appropriate funding, management and awareness raising.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	The Local Planning Authorities are the lead but they may not have sufficient specialist support. Some opportunities may be lost.
FO1 Ensure that sustainable farming and forestry are the primary means by which the distinctive landscapes of the AONB are managed.	Neutral	Neutral
LWO1 Enable vibrant communities to grow by stimulating diverse and sustainable economic prosperity while conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of the area.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach. May empower local communities.	The Local Planning Authorities are the lead but they may not have sufficient specialist support. Some opportunities may be lost.
BDO1 The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in the development and implementation of consistent statutory land use planning policy and guidance across the AONB, and in decision-making on planning applications for development.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	The Local Planning Authorities are the lead but they may not have sufficient specialist support. Some opportunities may be lost.
TO1 To ensure the AONB is widely recognised and valued as a sustainable visitor destination, where local communities benefit, businesses prosper and the environment is well managed.	Will support communication and may stimulate new thinking.	The LEPs and Local Authorities are the lead but they may not have sufficient specialist support. Some opportunities may be lost.
TRO1 To reduce the impact of the motor vehicle whilst promoting a more sustainable approach to accessibility management.	Advocated good practice but delivery is by others. Will seek compensations and developer contributions to enhance the AONB.	The Local Highway and Planning Authorities are the lead but they may not have sufficient specialist support. Some opportunities may be lost. AONB may not be the highest priority.
RO1 The development and management of informal recreation in the AONB should respect the character of the area whilst meeting the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation.	Neutral	Neutral
RO2 Everyone can enjoy and explore the AONB in ways that respect the purposes of designation.	May improve access for all; may deliver health benefits	Local Health Boards and Local Authorities are the lead bodies.

IO1 That residents and visitors value the special qualities of the AONB and understand the need to invest in their management.	Neutral	Neutral
VO1 To support and manage a wide range of volunteers in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty AONB through volunteering.	Neutral	Neutral

The proposed policies give marginally greater environmental benefits than the 'do-nothing situation.

Table 5: Environmental Quality

Habitats and water quality may deteriorate because increased traffic and housing/employment development in the area will increase emissions of oxides of nitrogen and sulphur, as well as carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and ozone. These impacts are not likely to be great.

Management Plan Objectives	Benefits of the proposed policies	Do nothing situation
LO1 Conserve and enhance the distinctive landscapes of the AONB and its setting, particularly those that are most sensitive or have little capacity for change.	Neutral	Neutral
LO2 Advocate and implement appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change.	Will match adaption and mitigation proposals with the need to enhance special qualities.	Adaption and mitigation will proceed but there will be less allowance made for local circumstances.
GO1 Protect important geological and geomorphological sites and promote effective long-term management.	Neutral	Neutral
BO1 Establish and maintain coherent and resilient ecological networks across the AONB and beyond.	Neutral or limited. Can plan for change.	Neutral
BO2 Ensure that the benefits and services provided by the natural environment are understood and accurately valued by decision-makers at all levels.	Soil and water are identified as ecosystem services / benefits in the plan. Action is limited to giving advice.	Environment Agency, Natural England and Local Authorities will lead.
HO1 Conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB through appropriate funding, management and awareness raising.	Neutral	Neutral
FO1 Ensure that sustainable farming and forestry are the primary means by which the distinctive landscapes of the AONB are managed.	Advocates good practice, will give advice and data. But action will be by others.	Environment Agency and Natural England will lead.
LWO1 Enable vibrant communities to grow by stimulating diverse and sustainable economic prosperity while conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of the area.	May encourage communities to introduce programmes to prevent or mitigate harms.	Environment Agency and Natural England will lead but may not have the local contacts.

BDO1 The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in the development and implementation of consistent statutory land use planning policy and guidance across the AONB, and in decision-making on planning applications for development.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	The Local Planning Authorities are the lead but they may not have sufficient specialist support. Some opportunities may be lost.
TO1 To ensure the AONB is widely recognised and valued as a sustainable visitor destination, where local communities benefit, businesses prosper and the environment is well managed.	Will support communication and may stimulate new thinking.	The LEPs and Local Authorities are the lead but they may not have sufficient specialist support. Some opportunities may be lost.
TRO1 To reduce the impact of the motor vehicle whilst promoting a more sustainable approach to accessibility management.	Advocated good practice but delivery is by others.	The Local Highway and Planning Authorities are the lead but they may not have sufficient specialist support. Some opportunities may be lost. AONB may not be the highest priority.
RO1 The development and management of informal recreation in the AONB should respect the character of the area whilst meeting the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation.	Neutral	Neutral
RO2 Everyone can enjoy and explore the AONB in ways that respect the purposes of designation.	Neutral	Neutral
IO1 That residents and visitors value the special qualities of the AONB and understand the need to invest in their management.	Neutral	Neutral
VO1 To support and manage a wide range of volunteers in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty AONB through volunteering.	Neutral	Neutral

The proposed policies give marginally greater environmental benefits than the 'do-nothing situation. The Environment Agency, Natural England and others will undertake actions irrespective of this plan.

Table 6: Green Energy

Innovative green solutions (such as photovoltaic tiles) may lead to an erosion of vernacular design features that add to the special qualities of the AONB. Without careful design and siting, even small-scale energy infrastructure in the wider countryside can have a visual impact.

Management Plan Objectives	Benefits of the proposed policies	Do nothing situation
LO1 Conserve and enhance the distinctive landscapes of the AONB and its setting, particularly those that are most sensitive or have little capacity for change.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	Local Planning Authorities are the lead but may not have the specialist skills or information required. A possible decline in the quality of design.
LO2 Advocate and implement appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change.	Will match adaption and mitigation proposals with the need to enhance special qualities.	Adaption and mitigation will proceed but there will be less allowance made for local circumstances.

GO1 Protect important geological and geomorphological sites and promote effective long-term management.	Neutral	Neutral
BO1 Establish and maintain coherent and resilient ecological networks across the AONB and beyond.	Neutral	Neutral
BO2 Ensure that the benefits and services provided by the natural environment are understood and accurately valued by decision-makers at all levels.	Neutral	Neutral
HO1 Conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB through appropriate funding, management and awareness raising.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	Local Planning Authorities are the lead but may not have the specialist skills or information required. A possible degrading of the vernacular.
FO1 Ensure that sustainable farming and forestry are the primary means by which the distinctive landscapes of the AONB are managed.	Neutral	Neutral
LWO1 Enable vibrant communities to grow by stimulating diverse and sustainable economic prosperity while conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of the area.	May encourage communities to introduce programmes to introduce new technologies in a sensitive manner.	The lead will be elsewhere but generic policies will apply. The AONB may not be a high priority.
BDO1 The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in the development and implementation of consistent statutory land use planning policy and guidance across the AONB, and in decision-making on planning applications for development.	Limited but an advocate for appropriately scaled renewable energy schemes that also conserve the special qualities.	Local Planning Authorities will be the lead and generic policies will apply. The AONB may not be a high priority.
TO1 To ensure the AONB is widely recognised and valued as a sustainable visitor destination, where local communities benefit, businesses prosper and the environment is well managed.	Limited	The lead will be elsewhere but generic policies will apply. The AONB may not be a high priority.
TRO1 To reduce the impact of the motor vehicle whilst promoting a more sustainable approach to accessibility management.	Neutral	Possible development of infrastructure for electric cars.
RO1 The development and management of informal recreation in the AONB should respect the character of the area whilst meeting the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation.	Neutral	Neutral
RO2 Everyone can enjoy and explore the AONB in ways that respect the purposes of designation.	Neutral	Neutral
IO1 That residents and visitors value the special qualities of the AONB and understand the need to invest in their management.	Neutral	Neutral

VO1 To support and manage a wide range of volunteers in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty AONB through volunteering.	Neutral	Neutral
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The proposed policies give marginally greater environmental benefits than the 'do-nothing situation.

Table 7: Green infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. Without a strategic approach, ecological services and quality of life benefits will be lost and new developments will lead to higher levels of pressure on the AONB because of the lack of alternative green space provision.

Management Plan Objectives	Benefits of the proposed policies	Do nothing situation
LO1 Conserve and enhance the distinctive landscapes of the AONB and its setting, particularly those that are most sensitive or have little capacity for change.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	Local Planning Authorities are the lead but may not have the specialist skills or information required. A possible decline in the quality of design.
LO2 Advocate and implement appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change.	Neutral	Neutral
GO1 Protect important geological and geomorphological sites and promote effective long-term management.	Neutral	Neutral
BO1 Establish and maintain coherent and resilient ecological networks across the AONB and beyond.	A key policy to deliver joined up nature.	Opportunities may be lost though others are active in this field.
BO2 Ensure that the benefits and services provided by the natural environment are understood and accurately valued by decision-makers at all levels.	Will provide data to inform decisions.	Locally relevant data may be lost or slow to emerge.
HO1 Conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB through appropriate funding, management and awareness raising.	Neutral	Neutral
FO1 Ensure that sustainable farming and forestry are the primary means by which the distinctive landscapes of the AONB are managed.	Neutral	Neutral
LWO1 Enable vibrant communities to grow by stimulating diverse and sustainable economic prosperity while conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of the area.	Encourages communities to think strategically and may lead to coordinated planning of green infrastructure.	Opportunities may be lost but communities will still wish to do something. Others will also lead.
BDO1 The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in the development and implementation of consistent statutory land use planning policy and guidance across the AONB, and in decision-making on planning applications for development.	Limited	Planning Authorities are the lead and local authorities develop green infrastructure plans. They may lose some specialised scrutiny.

TO1 To ensure the AONB is widely recognised and valued as a sustainable visitor destination, where local communities benefit, businesses prosper and the environment is well managed.	Neutral	Neutral
TRO1 To reduce the impact of the motor vehicle whilst promoting a more sustainable approach to accessibility management.	Neutral	Neutral
RO1 The development and management of informal recreation in the AONB should respect the character of the area whilst meeting the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation.	Neutral	Neutral
RO2 Everyone can enjoy and explore the AONB in ways that respect the purposes of designation.	Neutral	Neutral
IO1 That residents and visitors value the special qualities of the AONB and understand the need to invest in their management.	Neutral	Neutral
VO1 To support and manage a wide range of volunteers in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty AONB through volunteering.	Neutral	Neutral

The proposed policies give marginally greater environmental benefits than the 'do-nothing situation.

Table 8: Historic environment

There is a lack of consistent and current information about the conditions of the historic environment. Heritage assets are at risk from land-use, vegetation and burrowing animals. Without mitigation, there will be a greater loss due to general neglect, including plant growth. Historic buildings and their settings, and the wider landscape, are under pressure from inappropriate development. Climate change and changes in agricultural following Brexit may create new challenges.

Management Plan Objectives	Benefits of the proposed policies	Do nothing situation
LO1 Conserve and enhance the distinctive landscapes of the AONB and its setting, particularly those that are most sensitive or have little capacity for change.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	Local Planning Authorities are the lead but may not have the specialist skills or information required. A possible decline in the quality of design.
LO2 Advocate and implement appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change.	Neutral	Neutral
GO1 Protect important geological and geomorphological sites and promote effective long-term management.	Limited	Historic England and Local Planning Authorities are the lead
BO1 Establish and maintain coherent and resilient ecological networks across the AONB and beyond.	Neutral	Neutral
BO2 Ensure that the benefits and services provided by the natural environment are understood and accurately valued by decision-makers at all levels.	Neutral	Neutral

HO1 Conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB through appropriate funding, management and awareness raising.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	Historic England and Local Planning Authorities are the lead.
FO1 Ensure that sustainable farming and forestry are the primary means by which the distinctive landscapes of the AONB are managed.	May support the management of pests / burrowing animals. But action will be by land managers	Historic England is the lead but local contacts may be lost and opportunities missed. Local authorities are proactive but action will be by land managers
LWO1 Enable vibrant communities to grow by stimulating diverse and sustainable economic prosperity while conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of the area.	Limited.	Historic England is the lead but local contacts may be lost and opportunities missed.
BDO1 The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in the development and implementation of consistent statutory land use planning policy and guidance across the AONB, and in decision-making on planning applications for development.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	Historic England and Local Planning Authorities are the lead. Setting may become harder to defend without the AONB 'voice'.
TO1 To ensure the AONB is widely recognised and valued as a sustainable visitor destination, where local communities benefit, businesses prosper and the environment is well managed.	Some support for a high quality public realm, will include vernacular features and conservation areas.	Historic England and Local Planning Authorities are the lead
TRO1 To reduce the impact of the motor vehicle whilst promoting a more sustainable approach to accessibility management.	Some support for the restoration of vernacular features.	Highway Authorities are the lead.
RO1 The development and management of informal recreation in the AONB should respect the character of the area whilst meeting the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation.	May be some management of recreation pressures on hidden heritage.	Neutral
RO2 Everyone can enjoy and explore the AONB in ways that respect the purposes of designation.	Neutral	Neutral
IO1 That residents and visitors value the special qualities of the AONB and understand the need to invest in their management.	Neutral	Neutral
VO1 To support and manage a wide range of volunteers in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty AONB through volunteering.	Neutral	Neutral

The proposed policies give greater environmental benefits than the 'do-nothing situation.

Table 9: Scale of management

Borders are not natural; they are a creation by people. Environmental assets follow nature's design. The management of large-scale landscape and habitat issues will fail without cross-boundary cooperation and meaningful working partnerships.

Management Plan Objectives	Benefits of the proposed policies	Do nothing situation
LO1 Conserve and enhance the distinctive landscapes of the AONB and its setting, particularly those that are most sensitive or have little capacity for change.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	Natural England is the lead but it needs partners to act. The Local Authorities may not have sufficient specialist support. NGOs are very active and the LEPs may develop initiatives. Some opportunities may be lost.
LO2 Advocate and implement appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change.	Neutral	Neutral
GO1 Protect important geological and geomorphological sites and promote effective long-term management.	Neutral	Neutral
BO1 Establish and maintain coherent and resilient ecological networks across the AONB and beyond.	A key policy to deliver joined up nature.	Opportunities may be lost though others are active in this field, especially NGOs.
BO2 Ensure that the benefits and services provided by the natural environment are understood and accurately valued by decision-makers at all levels.	Will provide data to inform decisions.	Locally relevant data may be lost or slow to emerge.
HO1 Conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB through appropriate funding, management and awareness raising.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	Historic England and Local Planning Authorities are the lead. Setting may become harder to defend without the AONB 'voice'.
FO1 Ensure that sustainable farming and forestry are the primary means by which the distinctive landscapes of the AONB are managed.	An advocate for linking farmers to natural capital thinking. May help to develop cooperative land management – 'farming clusters' is a growing idea.	Limited. Others also give advice.
LWO1 Enable vibrant communities to grow by stimulating diverse and sustainable economic prosperity while conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of the area.	Play a facilitators role and bring communities together.	Limited because communities do not naturally work outside of their boundary. Needs a facilitator – may be an NGO
BDO1 The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in the development and implementation of consistent statutory land use planning policy and guidance across the AONB, and in decision-making on planning applications for development.	Neutral	Neutral
TO1 To ensure the AONB is widely recognised and valued as a sustainable visitor destination, where local communities benefit, businesses prosper and the environment is well managed.	Neutral	Neutral
TRO1 To reduce the impact of the motor vehicle whilst promoting a more sustainable approach to accessibility management.	Neutral	Neutral

RO1 The development and management of informal recreation in the AONB should respect the character of the area whilst meeting the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation.	Neutral	Neutral
RO2 Everyone can enjoy and explore the AONB in ways that respect the purposes of designation.	Neutral	Neutral
IO1 That residents and visitors value the special qualities of the AONB and understand the need to invest in their management.	Neutral	Neutral
VO1 To support and manage a wide range of volunteers in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty AONB through volunteering.	Limited but may encourage people to work cooperatively. Will develop support for NGOs.	Neutral

The proposed policies give greater environmental benefits than the 'do-nothing situation.

Table 10: Setting

The setting of an AONB is the surroundings in which the area is experienced. If the quality of the setting declines, then the appreciation and enjoyment of the AONB diminishes. Construction of a distant but high structure; development or change generating movement, noise, odour, vibration or dust over a wide area; or a new understanding of the relationship between neighbouring landscape assets may all extend what might previously have been understood to comprise the setting.

Views are one element of setting, being associated with the visual experience. Views are particularly important to the AONB because of the juxtaposition of high and low ground and the fact that recreational users value them. Without management, views within, from and to the AONB may be lost or degraded. Some views will be more important than others. Planned development, particularly allied to Government targets for housing growth, is likely to have an impact on views from the hills.

Management Plan Objectives	Benefits of the proposed policies	Do nothing situation
LO1 Conserve and enhance the distinctive landscapes of the AONB and its setting, particularly those that are most sensitive or have little capacity for change.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	Local Planning Authorities are the lead. Setting may become harder to defend without the AONB 'voice'.
LO2 Advocate and implement appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change.	Neutral	Neutral
GO1 Protect important geological and geomorphological sites and promote effective long-term management.	Neutral	Neutral
BO1 Establish and maintain coherent and resilient ecological networks across the AONB and beyond.	Neutral	Neutral
BO2 Ensure that the benefits and services provided by the natural environment are understood and accurately valued by decision-makers at all levels.	Neutral	Neutral
HO1 Conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB through appropriate funding, management and awareness raising.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	Historic England and Local Planning Authorities are the lead. Setting may become harder to defend without the AONB 'voice'.

FO1 Ensure that sustainable farming and forestry are the primary means by which the distinctive landscapes of the AONB are managed.	Neutral	Neutral
LWO1 Enable vibrant communities to grow by stimulating diverse and sustainable economic prosperity while conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of the area.	Limited, may lead to local strategies that help define and defend setting	Local Planning Authorities are the lead. Setting may become harder to defend without the AONB 'voice'.
BDO1 The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in the development and implementation of consistent statutory land use planning policy and guidance across the AONB, and in decision-making on planning applications for development.	Will support a plan and evidence led approach.	Local Planning Authorities are the lead. Setting may become harder to defend without the AONB 'voice'.
TO1 To ensure the AONB is widely recognised and valued as a sustainable visitor destination, where local communities benefit, businesses prosper and the environment is well managed.	Neutral	Neutral
TRO1 To reduce the impact of the motor vehicle whilst promoting a more sustainable approach to accessibility management.	Neutral	Neutral
RO1 The development and management of informal recreation in the AONB should respect the character of the area whilst meeting the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation.	Neutral	Neutral
RO2 Everyone can enjoy and explore the AONB in ways that respect the purposes of designation.	Neutral	Neutral
IO1 That residents and visitors value the special qualities of the AONB and understand the need to invest in their management.	Residents and visitors will have the information to defend 'their' AONB	Setting may become harder to defend without the AONB 'voice'.
VO1 To support and manage a wide range of volunteers in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty AONB through volunteering.	Neutral	Neutral

The proposed policies give greater environmental benefits than the 'do-nothing situation.

Table 11: Woodland management

Woodland covers 20% of the AONB, but many of the woodlands are small and difficult to manage. In some areas, woodland cover is fragmented. Forest trees may succumb to tree diseases without appropriate management. (Even with good management, this is highly likely to occur).

Management Plan Objectives	Benefits of the proposed policies	Do nothing situation
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LO1 Conserve and enhance the distinctive landscapes of the AONB and its setting, particularly those that are most sensitive or have little capacity for change.	Advocates good policy advice and guidance; promotes positive landscape change to land owners and managers.	There will be Defra / Natural England / Forestry Commission advice but it will be generic. Local authorities will have a view but few resources.
LO2 Advocate and implement appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change.	Neutral	Neutral
GO1 Protect important geological and geomorphological sites and promote effective long-term management.	Neutral	Neutral
BO1 Establish and maintain coherent and resilient ecological networks across the AONB and beyond.	Strong voice for adjusting commercial land management practices to secure net environmental gain.	Wildlife Trusts and local authority ecologists may seek to achieve the same outcomes but there will be resource issues.
BO2 Ensure that the benefits and services provided by the natural environment are understood and accurately valued by decision-makers at all levels.	Improved knowledge	Forestry Commission give authoritative advice
HO1 Conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB through appropriate funding, management and awareness raising.	Neutral	Neutral
FO1 Ensure that sustainable farming and forestry are the primary means by which the distinctive landscapes of the AONB are managed.	Active support to the forestry community. A number of initiatives that will support planting and management.	Forestry Commission and NGOs will offer support.
LWO1 Enable vibrant communities to grow by stimulating diverse and sustainable economic prosperity while conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of the area.	Limited	Limited but there may be fewer local strategies. This may mean opportunities are lost.
BDO1 The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in the development and implementation of consistent statutory land use planning policy and guidance across the AONB, and in decision-making on planning applications for development.	Neutral	Neutral
TO1 To ensure the AONB is widely recognised and valued as a sustainable visitor destination, where local communities benefit, businesses prosper and the environment is well managed.	Limited but sustainable tourism may help with orchards.	Neutral
TRO1 To reduce the impact of the motor vehicle whilst promoting a more sustainable approach to accessibility management.	Neutral	Neutral

RO1 The development and management of informal recreation in the AONB should respect the character of the area whilst meeting the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation.	Neutral	Neutral
RO2 Everyone can enjoy and explore the AONB in ways that respect the purposes of designation.	Neutral	Neutral
IO1 That residents and visitors value the special qualities of the AONB and understand the need to invest in their management.	Neutral	Neutral
VO1 To support and manage a wide range of volunteers in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty AONB through volunteering.	Neutral	Neutral
The proposed policies give greater environmental benefits than the 'do-nothing situation.		

Appendix 7: SEA Objectives and links to State of the AONB Reporting

Indicator 5-point quality scale				
Score				Comment
1	Fit for purpose			
2	Adequate		Some minor improvements desirable	
3	Indicative only		Not considered accurate	
4	Inadequate		Little relevance to the AONB	
5	Absent		No available data	
Objectives	SEA Indicators	Quality	Comment	
Environmental Objectives				
E1	Landscape	Local Landscape Character Assessments	2	AONB / Local authorities
		Extent, condition and change in characteristic landscape features.	1	State of the AONB Report
		Light pollution maps	2	State of the AONB Report
		Tranquillity index	2	State of the AONB Report
		Fixed point photography	1	State of the AONB Report
		The uptake of selected ES options that contribute towards the good condition of landscape elements and/or landscape character	1	Natural England
E2	Biodiversity	% of SSSIs in favourable condition	1	Natural England
		The area of priority BAP habitats and the % that are managed under agri-environment schemes	1	Local Authorities BAP Partnership Natural England
		The condition of broad BAP habitats in SSSIs	1	National Framework Data
		The favourable conservation status of European protected species	1	Natural England
		The area of deciduous woodland plus the area of Forestry Commission estate	1	Forestry Commission
		The area managed under Environmental Stewardship	1	Defra Natural England
		The average annual values of current Environmental Stewardship agreements	1	Defra Natural England
E3	Heritage	The number of listed	1	HERS

		buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks & gardens, and registered battlefields		
		Heritage at Risk – both statistics eg % of heritage assets 'at risk, plus GIS datasets under licence	1	State of the AONB Report
		Condition of Scheduled Monuments	1	State of the AONB Report
		Condition of Listed Buildings	1	State of the AONB Report
		Condition of registered parks and gardens	1	
		Number and condition of local heritage assets	5	Not presented
		Number of conservation areas and % of the AONB covered by designation	2	
		% of conservation areas in the AONB with an up-to-date character appraisal	1	
		Improvements in the condition of historic and archaeological sites and features	5	Not presented
E4	Land, air and water	Water resource features	1	Environment Agency
		% rivers and lakes achieving good ecological status environment data	1	Environment Agency
		Pollution incidents (by source)	3	Environment Agency
		Capacity of water treatment works	3	Environment Agency
		Water availability	3	Environment Agency
		Water abstraction data	2	Environment Agency
		Water use	5	None presented
		Flood risk	2	Environment Agency
		Previously developed land and vacant / derelict building availability	1	Contaminated Land Registers Local Authorities
		Spatial location of agricultural land (and classification)	1	Defra Agricultural Statistics
		Number and condition of Local Geological Sites	1	Natural England
		AQMAs, their objectives and whether they are being	2	Local Authorities www.apis.ac.uk

		met.		
		Emissions of air pollutants by source.	1	Environment Agency www.apis.ac.uk
		Headline air quality indicator (future trends in air quality)	2	Met office stats www.apis.ac.uk
E5	Minimise waste	Spatial location of mineral reserves	1	Local planning authorities
		Incidents of fly tipping	4	Local authorities
		Total waste arisings	3	Waste disposal authorities and waste planning authorities.
		Recycling rates	3	Waste disposal authorities and waste planning authorities.
		The uptake of selected ES options that contribute towards the protection of natural resources	1	National Framework Data
		The area covered by the England Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS), plus the area of ancient woodland in WGS	1	National Framework Data
E6	Reduce greenhouse gas	Greenhouse gas emissions (M tonnes carbon equivalent)	3	DECC / DEFRA
		Greenhouse gas emissions by source.	3	DECC / DEFRA
		Energy Consumption	3	Local Authorities
		Take up of energy efficiency measures	3	Local Authorities
		Renewable energy generation	1	State of the AONB Report
E7	Quality of Life	Health inequality data	3	Indices of Deprivation
		Standard Mortality Ratios	3	Indices of Deprivation
		Disability data	3	Indices of Deprivation
		Distribution of open space	1	
		The area of land that is actually accessible under CROW, plus land with existing access rights that pre-determine CROW Access	1	National Framework Data
		Length of existing public rights of way	1	National Framework Data
		The amount of open and linear access brought about by agri- environment agreements	1	

E8	Population	Level of motor vehicle traffic	5	None presented
		Percentage of journeys made by foot or cycle	5	Census
		Average distance and travel times by journey type.	5	Census
		Congestion levels	5	None presented
		Socio-economic profiles	1	
		Percentage change in population	1	State of the AONB Report Census / Local Authorities National Framework Data
		Resident population within the AONB	1	State of the AONB Report Census / Local Authorities
		Levels of deprivation	5	Indices of deprivation
		Crime levels	5	None presented
		Crime perception	5	None presented
E9	No adverse effects	No indicator but monitored through the State of the AONB Report	3	State of the AONB Report
S10	Communities and local services	Access to key services	5	Census
		Distribution of current housing stock – by tenure and type including affordable housing	5	Census
		Quality of housing (decent homes standard)	5	Census
		Vacant housing and second homes.	5	Census
S11	Locally economy	Agricultural Survey statistics	1	Defra
		Tourism statistics, including % employed in tourism and the number of tourism businesses in the protected landscape and within 5 miles.	1	Annual Business Enquiry Local Authorities
		Employment rate	5	Census
		Increase in rural skills	5	None presented
		No of jobs by sector	5	Census
		Total visitor spend	5	None presented
S12	Environmental services.	No indicator but monitored through the State of the AONB Report	3	State of the AONB Report

Appendix 8: Précis of consultation responses

Natural England

Natural England is generally satisfied that the SEA report has been based on robust evidence and information and that it provides a reasonable baseline with respect to the natural environment within the Malvern Hills AONB. The proposed sustainability objectives and key indicators identified appear appropriate and we are satisfied with the conclusion that the AONB Management Plan will not result in negative environmental effects.

Hazel McDowall
Lead Advisor
5th November 2018

Environment Agency

Both the Management Plan and Environmental Report appear robust and contain all the content we'd expect to see in such

Dave Throup
6 November 2018

Historic England

Thank you for your enquiry regarding the Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report, which my colleague Christina Sinclair was consulted and advised upon in in her letter of the 3rd August 2018. As stated in that letter, good reference is made to the historic environment and our comments at that draft stage were limited. We are pleased to see that many of the issues that were raised have been addressed and thank you for this. My comments at this stage are limited and are as follows:

Section 1.8 makes reference to the historical landscape and the presence of three ancient hill forts. Herefordshire Beacon and Midsummer Camp are the only hillforts on the ridge of the Malvern Hills and therefore I would advise amending this sentence to the following 'In addition, an historic landscape of ancient monuments and historic structures adds to the special character of the AONB'. This better reflects the diversity of the heritage assets within the landscape.

Appendix 4 (Key indicators and data sources) has addressed our concern about the need to develop better indicators of the wider heritage assets of the AONB. Although the data required for this is absent from reporting at the moment (as stated in appendix 7), this recognition identifies the need to work collaboratively alongside local authorities and other agencies to develop indicators over the coming new management plan period. We have already made recommendations in our letter of the 5th November 2018 regarding possible indicators and would be willing to engage further with you in exploring these.

We welcome the inclusion of the historic environment in appendix 3 (Outline of future trends in the Malvern Hills AONB) as requested and the inclusion of reference to our latest guidance on the setting of heritage assets.

Neil Rimmington
Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments
14th November 2018

Appendix 9: Revised management plan policies

Ref N°	New Policy	Consultation Policy	Comments
FP6	Encourage the take-up of options and management practices that benefit the natural and cultural capital of the AONB.	Encourage the take-up of options and management practices that benefit the distinctive natural and historic environment of the AONB.	Tightened wording to better reflect a Natural Capital approach
LWP3	Seek new, inventive and sensitive solutions to the retention of local shops and provision of viable local services, for example, through the integration of local service delivery, and through the delivery of universal high-speed broadband and 5G mobile phone coverage.	Seek new, inventive and sensitive solutions to the retention of local shops and provision of viable local services, for example, through the integration of local service delivery and through the delivery of universal high-speed broadband.	Extended to cover mobile phone coverage.
BDP3	Development in the AONB should be based on convincing evidence of local need. Priority should be given to the provision of affordable housing and enhancing local services.	Development in the AONB should be based on convincing evidence of local need arising from within the AONB. Priority should be given to the provision of affordable housing and enhancing local services.	The phrase 'arising from within the AONB' deleted to allow for parishes that straddle the AONB boundary.
BDP9	Farm-scale polytunnels for commercial use would not normally be an accepted form of development in the AONB. Where polytunnel development is proposed and where economic benefits are being weighed against landscape impact, priority will be afforded to protecting the natural beauty of AONBs. A whole farm approach should be taken to ensure an acceptable location, design and scale.	Farm-scale polytunnels for commercial use would not normally be an accepted form of development in the AONB. Where there is an essential need for such developments and no other suitable location is available outside the AONB, a whole farm approach should be taken to ensure an acceptable location, design, and scale.	Adjusted to reflect changes in local authority policy and the NPPF 2018.
BDP13	The cumulative impact of small-scale change and development will be monitored. Data gathered will be used to inform decisions and to revise and/or develop policy.		Was a policy in the old plan but shown as a key action in the consultation version. Now back as a policy.
BDP14	In the setting of the AONB, Local Planning Authorities should consider identifying locally important landscape areas to conserve the special qualities and features of the AONB and their enjoyment by people		Added to strengthen the protection of setting and tie into Local Authority development plan initiatives.