

APPENDIX D

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 3 JUNE 2014

Title:

**REVIEW OF THE SURREY HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING
NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014 - 2019**

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Brian Adams]

[Wards Affected: All wards except Farnham, Cranleigh and Godalming]

Summary and purpose:

The purpose of the report is to seek endorsement of the review of the AONB Management Plan which has been prepared by the Surrey Hills AONB Board. The five district/borough councils who are affected by the AONB have contributed to the preparation of the Review.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The AONB Management Plan deals with a number of corporate priorities, including natural resource use, biodiversity heritage, the appearance of an area, jobs, services and facilities; rural proofing and the rural economy.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

There are no implications.

Resource/Value for Money implications:

It is not anticipated that the Council will have to contribute any more towards implementation of the Plan than the £5,279 it has already allocated annually. DEFRA contributes £224,851 a year. The four other borough/district councils and Surrey County Council fund the balance of the AONB Unit's core income.

Legal Implications:

The preparation of a Management Plan for the Surrey Hills AONB, and its review within 5 years, is a statutory requirement for local authorities under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The constitution for the Surrey Hills Board, as a Joint Management Committee, is to prepare and keep under review the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan. However, it is for the constituent local authorities to independently adopt it. Local authorities are required to have regard to the AONB Management Plan and the purposes of the AONB in carrying out their functions.

1.0 The Management Plan Review

- 1.1 The first Management Plan for the Surrey Hills was produced by the Surrey Hills Board in April 2004 to cover the period up to 2009. It was subsequently reviewed in 2009 to cover the period up to 2014. The plan can be viewed in detail at <http://www.surreyhills.org/surrey-hills-board/management-plan-2014-2019/>.
- 1.2 Section 1 sets out the context for preparing the AONB Management Plan. This includes who the plan is for; how it was prepared; its relationship with the National Planning Policy Framework; what defines the “Natural Beauty” and the landscape character of the AONB; the key pressures and threats to the AONB; how the condition of the AONB will be monitored and the changes to policy and guidance since the last review of the AONB Management Plan.
- 1.3 Section 2 sets out the vision for the Surrey Hills which provides the context and guide for the AONB Management Plan policies. These relate to:
 - Landscape
 - Farming.
 - Woodland.
 - Biodiversity.
 - Historic and cultural heritage.
 - Recreation and tourism.
 - Land use planning.
 - Transport and traffic.
 - Community development and the local economy.
- 1.4 The Surrey Hills AONB undertook a public consultation on the draft AONB Management Plan from the 1st December to 31st January 2014. This included sending copies of the draft to all the parish councils in the AONB and on-line survey. The consultation period was extended by two weeks to 14th February 2014 following a request from parish councils. There were 590 responses to the consultation, the vast majority (564) coming through the completion of the on-line survey. The responses generally supported the policies in the review of the AONB Management Plan, although some of the comments have resulted in some minor amendments to the document.
- 1.5 The representations were reported to the Surrey Hills AONB Board on 16th April 2014 where they agreed to commend to the Surrey Hills’ Councils that they should adopt the final draft of the review of the AONB management Plan. The Surrey Hills AONB Board also agreed that if any council requires further minor amendments, then these should be reported to the AONB Director. He would then consult with the Chairman of the AONB Board as appropriate, and with the Surrey Hills’ Councils through the officers’ working group. The Surrey Hills AONB Board plan to publically launch the AONB Management Plan on the 16th July 2014 after all the Surrey Hills’ Councils have adopted it.

2.0 The Changes

- 2.1 The review of the AONB Management Plan is light touch. The main changes to the document have been a restructuring of the document to make it more

concise and to remove any duplication of advice and information that could be found in other documents. Most of the policies in the AONB Management Plan have been unchanged or only slightly amended to make it clearer or to add a new emphasis.

- 2.2 The policies most relevant to Waverley are those to be found in the land use planning section. The main changes here are that there is greater emphasis on the impact of new development on the landscape character of the locality, the use and colour of building materials and the need to enhance their setting. As such these small changes means that the AONB Management Plan and the adopted Waverley Local Plan remains in conformity
- 2.3 The Delivery Strategy for the AONB Management Plan recognises the continued constraints in public financing and seeks to reduce the reliance of the AONB Unit on government funding. Other changes therefore include the development of Surrey Hills Enterprises to work with business to build the brand and economic activity; creating a Surrey Hills Trust Fund to generate income and increasing the membership and activity of the Surrey Hills Society.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 Waverley has a statutory responsibility to produce and review at intervals of less than five years an AONB Management Plan. The preparation of the AONB Management Plan is delegated to the Surrey Hills AONB Board. However, it is up to each of the Councils to adopt it.
- 3.2 The existing Management Plan informs the development control process and has been the source of many enhancement projects in the AONB. The review of the AONB Management Plan is light touch. The main changes have been to shorten it whilst maintaining it as an authoritative and comprehensive Plan for the AONB. The Review will ensure that the management of the AONB continues successfully, and that Waverley, along with the other Surrey Hills Councils, has met its statutory requirement.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the review of the AONB Management Plan be adopted as the statutory AONB Management Plan for the Surrey Hills AONB for the period 2014 to 2019.

Background Papers

Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan (2014 – 2019) Pre Publication Draft April 2014

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