

# Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

05/02/2019

## External Board/Outside Body

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| <b>External Board/Outside Body</b>                                  | Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee   |
| <b>Councillor(s) represented on the Outside Body/External Board</b> | Patrik Garten  |
| <b>Report Author</b>  | Patrik Garten & Nick Johannsen (AONB Unit)   |
| <b>Date of External Board/Outside Body Meeting Attended</b>         | Next JAC meeting will be 13/06/19. This report provides an update relating to <b>Maidstone relevant (in bold)</b> projects, currently in progress. |

### Purpose of the External Board/Outside Body:

#### Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)

The Kent Downs relies on many stakeholders who have a role in managing the landscape, supporting local business and communities and enabling quiet recreation. The Joint Advisory Committee plays a pivotal role in helping realise the strategic vision for the Kent Downs AONB and oversee the Management Plan.

Its purpose is to provide advice to its members with statutory responsibilities for the effective management of the Kent Downs AONB. An Executive of representatives from the JAC, with some outside advisors, advises the work of the Kent Downs AONB Unit.

The Kent Downs AONB Unit is employed by Kent County Council and works on behalf of the JAC to carry out the preparation and review of the Management Plan, to advocate its policies and work in partnership to deliver a range of actions described in the Action Plan.

#### Funding partners & Members

Defra, Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council, Gravesham Borough Council, London Borough of Bromley, Medway Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Swale Borough Council, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Country Land and Business Association, Environment Agency, Kent Association of Local Councils, Action with Communities in Rural Kent, National Farmers Union, English Heritage.

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## Update:

Summary since our last report (November 2018)

- The Kent Downs AONB Unit worked with the Joint Advisory Committee to prepare and submit an official response to the Government's review of National Parks and AONBs. **The response reflected Maidstone Borough Council's wish to achieve AONB status for parts of the Greensand Ridge.**
- The AONB Unit has been taking forward significant external project funding bids which include to work with Visit Kent to secure 4m Euro investment in rural tourism in Kent and in particular the Kent Downs AONB and North Downs Way.
- The Unit has been taking forward the North Downs Way Discover England Fund to promote sustainable tourism to near European markets – Discover England Fund is supported by Visit England.
- **The Unit has been working with partners to continue the preparations for the statutory review of the AONB Management Plan which is scheduled to be completed by December 2019.**
- The Unit has been liaising with the South East LEP to seek that future investments through the Shared Prosperity Fund properly reflect the needs of rural as well as urban areas.
- The Unit has been working with Defra to develop new Environmental Land Management Schemes which are expected to replace the traditional area payments made to farmers and land owners and support public good.
- **The Unit has been promoting Ash to Ash the significant new sculpture located in White Horse Wood (MBC area) and which is attracting new visitors.**
- **The Unit continues to provide advice and support to Maidstone Officers and Members on planning matters that affect the Kent Downs.**

If Members would like to know more about the Kent Downs AONB Unit or the work of the Joint Advisory Committee they are very welcome to get in touch directly with Nick Johannsen, the Director. [Nick.johannsen@kentdowns.org.uk](mailto:Nick.johannsen@kentdowns.org.uk)  
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