

Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

22 August 2019

External Board/Outside Body

External Board/Outside Body	Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee
Councillor(s) represented on the Outside Body/External Board	Patrik Garten
Report Author	Patrik Garten & Nick Johansen (ANOB Unit)
Date of External Board/Outside Body Meeting Attended	Next JAC meeting will be 13/11/19. This report provides an update relating to 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.

It's 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

Update from the AONB Unit to all JAC members:

The idea is to have a draft revision available to you in advance of our next JAC meeting (13th of November); we hope that the draft will be approved for consultation over the winter at the meeting.

We have nearly completed the draft Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal which will be sent to the statutory consultees shortly but copied to you for your information and any comments you might have.

In the meantime please let me know if you have any high level views on the current plan (2014-2019) <https://www.kentdowns.org.uk/landscape-management/management-plan/>; the sort of thing we are looking for at the moment is identifying any key issues, content and context that might be missing in the current plan or any concerns you have with the ease of use of the plan etc. Please note however that there will be ample opportunity to look in detail at the draft revision during the winter consultation period.

Vision period for the plan

Currently we have a 20 year vision for the AONB Management Plan. We modify and extend this vision at each 5 yearly management plan review. This approach does not give us that much rigour or a way to measure progress against the vision

It is suggested therefore that we shorten the vision period and take it to 2030 – two 5 year management plan cycles. That way we can make a judgment of progress against the vision at the next plan revision.

In our view a vision for 2030 works well because it broadly aligns with the Kent Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF) (2031) which all Kent Local Authorities have been involved with. The GIF provides us with a known horizon with regards to growth and infrastructure requirements – the GIF also references Green Infrastructure and the place of the AONB in the wider Kent context. The GIF signals very significant and unprecedented population growth (around 25%) in Kent by 2031.

2030 also broadly aligns with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report requiring very rapid decarbonisation (including substantively from farming, land management and rural industry) in order to avoid greater than 1.5C global warming. We also note that nearly all of the JAC Local Authorities have now either declared or recognise climate and ecological emergency; the AONB Management Plan needs to be responsive to this in our view.

While early Countryside Agency guidance suggested a 20 year vision for AONB Management Plans, our view is that the changed context in Kent is sufficiently fundamental that 20 years is now too long and feels like we would be ignoring the wider context and pressures we face.

- 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
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