

## **Outside Body Report**

<b>Outside Body</b>	Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee
<b>Councillor(s) represented on the Outside Body</b>	Patrik Garten
<b>Report Author</b>	Patrik Garten & Nick Johansen (AONB Unit)
<b>Date of Outside Body Meeting Attended</b>	Current Update via email

### **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

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## **AONB Management Plan Consultation, Preliminary Findings.**

140 responses were received in total, which is good.

### **Headlines include:**

- 92% strongly agree or tend to agree with the vision for the Kent Downs AONB in 2030
- 96% strongly agree or tend to agree that the Management Plan identifies what makes the area distinctive and special
- 85% strongly agree or tend to agree that the key social and economic components have been identified

The AONB Unit have started work on the consultation report and on re-drafting the plan. There will be a second draft plan, shared only with the JAC for final comments, this draft will be discussed at a JAC meeting in November. (18<sup>th</sup>, 2.00pm)

There is an important rider to this however: we are expecting that the Government will make its formal response to the Landscape Review (Glover Review) by the end of the calendar year. It makes little sense to finalise the Management Plan and start the adoption process in advance of any announcement and so we anticipate that the draft plan will have one last review in the light of the Government's announcements.

Just for information, there is expected to be a 'direction of travel' announcement for the Landscape Review in a Prime Ministerial speech on the environment expected on the anniversary of the publication of the Review (21<sup>st</sup> September).

### **AONB offer to the Green Recovery.**

Over the summer the AONB Unit has been involved in a lot of work going on to try to support a Green Recovery both in Kent and nationally. In Kent the Recovery Plan specifically references a green recovery and the AONB Unit has some specific actions in the action plan.

At the National level, a document was prepared by their National Association and recently sent to Defra. The Kent Downs AONB Unit was closely involved in creating the content of this document during a frenetic period over the summer with a small group of other AONB Lead

The Association did a great job pulling all of the work into one place and I hope that it is influential in the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

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### **Highlights from last year's delivery:**

Each year the AONB Unit has to make a return to DEFRA. Here are some highlights from it; in 2019/20:

The AONB Unit

- conserved or enhanced 573 Ha of land for nature and 90 Ha of the setting of heritage sites;

- enhanced the condition or setting of 7 heritage sites
- engaged with over 1000 people including over 350 young people and over 350 volunteers
- appraised or were involved with 100 planning cases including several major infrastructure schemes
- had a turn-over of over £1.3m, mostly external funding.