

**Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
Joint Committee**

**Wednesday 25th March 2009, 10:00am**

**Treetops Classroom, Birches Valley Forest Centre, Rugeley, Staffordshire  
WS15 2UQ**

**A G E N D A**

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2008**
- 3. Matters Arising**
- 4. Declaration of Interests**
- 5. Management Plan Review Progress**  
Report of the AONB Officer/Chairman of the Officers Working Group
- 6. Financial Update including Business Plan 2009-14**  
Report of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee
- 7. Partners News**  
Item for Members to update all from their own part of the AONB
- 8. Any Planning Items that may require consideration**  
Relevant papers will be tabled
- 9. Any Other Business**
- 10. Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting**

**Part Two**

**Exclusion of the Public and Press**

The Chairman to move:

"That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the local Government Act 1972 (as amended) indicated below"

**Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
Joint Committee**

**Monday 15th December 2008, 10:00am**

**Committee Room, Lichfield District Council Offices,  
Frog Lane, Lichfield, WS13 6YY**

**M I N U T E S**

**Name**

**Representing**

**Members**

Cllr David Billson	South Staffordshire Council
Cllr Doug Davis	Stafford Borough Council
Cllr Margaret Stanhope	Lichfield District Council
Cllr John Wakefield	Staffordshire County Council

**Officers**

Andy Goode	Staffordshire County Council
Antony Lancaster	Cannock Chase Council
Hayden Jones	South Staffordshire Council
John Smith	Lichfield District Council
Geoff Unwin	Stafford Borough Council
Anne Walker	Cannock Chase AONB Unit, Clerk

**Advisors**

Cllr Pat Ansell	Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, Chairman of the Advisory Partnership
Juliet Hands	Staffordshire County Council, Treasurer to the Joint Committee
Ian Hickman	Forestry Commission
Ruth Hýtch	Cannock Chase AONB Unit
Richard King	Lichfield District Council acting for the Honorary Secretary
Sally Powell	Natural England

**Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Roberts (Lichfield District Council), Cllr Williams (Cannock Chase Council), and Lindsay Johnston (Staffordshire County Council)

As both the Chairman and Vice Chairman were unable to attend the meeting a Chairman was selected as follows: Cllr Davis was proposed by Cllr Stanhope and seconded by Cllr Billson. Cllr Davis welcomed all to the meeting, particularly Cllr Stanhope and Richard King who were called in at short notice. There was then a round of introductions.

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2008**

**160 Resolved** That the minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2008 be confirmed, proposed by Cllr Wakefield and seconded by Cllr Billson.

### **Matters Arising**

**161** There were no matters arising.

### **Declaration of Interests**

**162** There were no declarations of interest.

### **Action Plan Progress**

Report of the Chairman of the Officers' Working Group

**163** A report was circulated prior to the meeting and outlined by Geoff Unwin. The major aspects of work during the year focused on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary events and the Management Plan re-write. He felt that the AONB Unit had achieved work over and above usual. Work is commencing on next year's work programme, which will be influenced by the Assistant AONB Officer's maternity leave. The Officers Working Group is considering options to ensure that the work of the AONB Unit is maintained, particularly work on SDF applications and community work.

Other area of the report highlighted included:

- State of the AONB Report and Peace and Tranquillity Report had been re-scheduled for next year as other work had taken priority. The funding for these areas of work is to be reallocated.
- Funding bids – Access to Nature Stage 1 had been submitted, partners include BTCV and The Community Council of Staffordshire. Linda Barratt, a local resident, had agreed to become a community champion for the AONB. A bid had also been prepared for funding from AWM under their Natural Assets banner. Natural England had now taken over the bid submission. They will be bidding for £2.5 million, £500,000 will be allocated to the 4 West Midlands AONBs.
- Signage – A scheme of directional signs and brown and white tourist signs to direct visitors around the AONB had been proposed by Staffordshire Highways. The Officers Working Group meeting in January will receive a presentation on the location of the signs.

Cllr Davis noted that this latter point was an important subject and asked if there were any comments.

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Made by</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Made By</b>
The signs are in the Cannock Chase District only. He had requested some alterations for the Birches Valley Forest site.	Ian Hickman	The programme of signs focused on Partnership issues around directing visitors to the visitor centres. It was understood that Highways had accepted the changes proposed.	Ruth Hÿtch
This is a continuing process and it is useful to have an agreed format for the signs.	Tony Lancaster	An updated report will be made to the next Joint Committee Meeting.	Ruth Hÿtch
ENPA had written to the Minister regarding a national review of road signs.	Geoff Unwin	Endorsed the comments in the letter, particularly in respect of the proliferation of signs.	Cllr Stanhope
Good press coverage had been received for the 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. Articles are due to be published in the January editions of Geographical Magazine and Staffordshire County Magazine.	Geoff Unwin	Thanks to Officers Working Group for all the work they do on behalf of the Partnership.	Cllr Davis and agreed by all.

**Resolved** The Committee noted the progress made since the last Joint Committee meeting.

## **Natural England Three Year Funding Arrangements**

Report of the Secretary, Treasurer and AONB Officer

**164** The report circulated prior to the meeting suggested that the Joint Committee recommends that each local authority partner's Heads of Legal work together on the wording of the new Memorandum of Understanding. Natural England's Board met last week and there was nothing further to feed back at present. Amendments are not anticipated to be too extensive as the agreement is very similar to the existing one.

Cllr Davis asked if the agreement was unique to Cannock Chase AONB. Sally Powell noted that there is standard wording for each AONB which can be amended to reflect the local circumstances.

**Resolved** The recommendations in the report were proposed for acceptance by Cllr Davis, seconded by Cllr Billson and agreed by the Joint Committee as follows:

- that, delegated power be given to the Partners' respective Heads of Legal Services to agree between them appropriate final legal wording in Natural England's proposed new Local Agreement ("the Local Agreement"), and that, following such agreement and the signing of the Local Agreement on behalf of the Partners, the current Cannock Chase AONB Memorandum of Understanding will be replaced in its entirety by the Local Agreement, and
- that, delegated power be given to the Partners' respective Heads of Legal Services to agree between them suitable minor amendments to the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership Agreement so far as may be required and necessary in order to bring the Partnership Agreement precisely into line with the Local Agreement.
- that the Partners' respective authorised officers prepare and agree between them the terms of a financial Appendix or Appendices for inclusion in the Partnership Agreement and Local Agreement in accordance each three-year funding period.

## **Financial Update**

Report of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee

**165** Juliet Hands outlined the report. Appendix 1 and 2 referred to the current financial year, while appendix 3 illustrated the budget for 2009-10. Inflation is assumed at 2.75%. Natural England had indicated that 95% of the current baseline figure is guaranteed for 2009-10, 100% of this figure if performance indicators were met.

The application for single pot funding from Natural England was also attached to the report.

Comments:

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Made by</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Made By</b>
In real terms, the figures represent a cut in funding, however local authority partners' contributions are slightly reduced. In other AONBs, local authorities had been requested to cover the shortfall. Cannock Chase AONB hopes to cover this by external funding. The application is based on 100% as the performance indicators had not yet been published.	Ruth Hÿtch	<p>Is there the capability to go to companies for larger projects?</p> <p>Sympathy with this approach, however there is a need to be mindful that there are only 3 people in the AONB Unit to pursue it.</p> <p>Recognition that Natural England had given a 3 year indication of funding to look at other funding. There is also a need to ensure that the AONB Unit fulfils the core responsibilities funded by Natural England.</p>	<p>Cllr Davis</p> <p>Ian Hickman</p> <p>Sally Powell</p>
Will the funding be 95%?	Cllr Davis	Unable to confirm the level of funding at this time. Strongly recommend that the application is for 100%	Sally Powell
Sponsorship from business may be difficult in the current economic climate, time needs to be spent on an approach. It is also necessary to ensure that major landowners would not be compromised by any choice of sponsor.	Cllr Wakefield		

**Resolved** The Committee accepted the following

- Progress on spend for 2008-09 was noted
- Proposals for the 2009-10 budget were approved to be included in the draft funding bid
- The draft bid for funding from Natural England for Core and Sustainable Development Fund funding for 2009-10, as well as supporting documents (Annual Action Plan and Business Plan) were approved for final submission to Natural England on a date to be confirmed. (Any amendments to the draft will be reported at a future meeting of the Joint Committee. Any material difference will be brought forward to the Joint Committee in the relevant timescales by the Officers Working Group early in 2009)

### **Management Plan Review Progress**

Oral Report of the AONB Officer

**166** Ruth noted that there was not much more to update members on at present following the circulation of the draft text for the Management Plan at the end of November. The public consultation would be open until mid-January 2009. A press release had been circulated and open days will be held in January, at the Wolseley Centre on 14<sup>th</sup>, then at Shugborough on 28<sup>th</sup>. An extraordinary meeting of the Joint Committee is planned for 25<sup>th</sup> March to formally approve the new Management Plan. Ruth thanked the Officers Working Group for the effort and support with this task.

### **Review of 50th Anniversary Year – Delivery Successes**

Report of the AONB Officer

**167** Ruth explained that the Officers Working Group were keen to bring a report to the Joint Committee listing the successes of this year, achieved as a result of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary events. The Officers Working Group recognised that an ambitious programme of events had been planned, involving local, regional and national participants. It had also provided the opportunity to trial sponsorship and sales of merchandise as income generation.

Of particular note was that contact had been made with someone who is willing to act as a young person's champion along with the Staffordshire Children's Commissioner.

Cllr Ansell congratulated the team in delivering community efforts, improving year on year. She was amazed at the level of response from the community, which was getting better. The ideas to get people involved and the stamina to sustain interest should be noted. Cllr Davis noted that the 16<sup>th</sup> September anniversary event was very good, especially the Saxon Hill School Choir. All seemed to leave the event pleased with the proceedings.

**Resolved** The Committee noted the successful outcomes of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary programme of delivery.

### **Dates for Joint Committee and Partnership meetings 2009**

Report of the Clerk to the Committee

**168** A report listing the dates of the planned Joint Committee meetings during 2009 was circulated prior to the meeting.

**Resolved** The Committee agreed the proposed meeting schedule for 2009.

### **Partners News**

Item for Members to update all from their own part of the AONB

**169** The Joint Committee received oral reports on the following:

**Cannock Chase Council** – nothing to report at present.

### **South Staffordshire Council**

Undertaking a tree management system project aimed at examining all trees for safety. This will include proactive management to preserve the tree stock for the future. The sites being assessed include Shoal Hill, which may need some management. Press coverage and information for visitors will need careful thought.

### **Staffordshire County Council**

- The Higher Level Stewardship Agreement was signed in November for the agricultural management of the heathlands in the Country Park. Funding of around £130,000 per year for 10 years had been secured to ensure that the heathlands are managed in favourable condition. Andy Goode wished to record thanks for the work of Eleanor Pickard from Natural England and Sue Sheppard, the Biodiversity Officer for Staffordshire County Council. The agreement includes the historical aspects of the area, including the military history.
- A major beech tree had been felled on the Shugborough Estate. The tree had been infected with a fungal disease, *Phytophthora ramorum*. Discussions had been held with Forestry Commission staff and other experts on the implications for other trees in the vicinity. The fungal infection is carried by rhododendron, which may need to be removed. In laboratory conditions, heather and bilberry had been affected. SCC is in the process of drawing up a management plan for the Shugborough Estate which may see the removal of rhododendron along the main drive. Cllr Davis asked how far the spread of the infection was, some gardens backing onto Shugborough and the AONB had rhododendron. Andy replied that it is thought that the infection of the beech tree had been water borne from the River Trent, then plant debris from the gardens dumped in the woodlands. They are taking advice about

the best method of controlling the spread of the disease as this is a new situation for them. Cllr Davis requested that colleagues at Stafford Borough Council and Cannock Chase Council are notified of this matter and kept up to date with progress.

- As part of the heathland management programme, 5ha of heather is being cut.

### **Lichfield District Council**

- The Countryside Services Team is undertaking management at Gentleshaw Common. The current Stewardship Scheme is due to end shortly and it is hoped to convert this to Higher Level Stewardship.
- Work includes scrub clearance, although there are complaints about tree cutting from some local people, despite publicity explaining the heathland management. They are also looking at the sustainability of recycling brash.
- Working with Gentleshaw Primary School on a project at the northern end of the Common. This will be a long term project for the school to adopt an area and use this as an education resource.
- Heathland event in September had been lower key than in previous years.

### **Stafford Borough Council**

- The Ministry of Defence is discussing proposals for the former RAF Stafford, which is now the base for 22 Signal Regiment. The proposals include the establishment of a super garrison due to the amount of land nearby. Battle groups based in Germany may be relocated and will need a large amount of land for training. They may look at Cannock Chase AONB for these purposes.
- Near miss at Stafford Castle when a tree fell, narrowly missing a walker. This had triggered survey work on the tree stock in the Borough and the purchase of a computer system costing £80,000 (Ian Hickman offered to share their systems with SBC).

### **Forestry Commission**

- Struggling in the recession, regrettably not eligible for HLS as they are Crown land.
- In discussion with Defra regarding future funding, less available in the next few years.
- Additional funding had been secured, however, from Sport England for new cycle trails.

### **Any Planning Items that may require consideration**

Relevant papers will be tabled

**170** Ruth noted that responses to LDF consultations had been made in addition to relevant planning applications. Local Authority partners' Core Strategies will also be commented upon. Full details are available from the AONB Office. The following was highlighted:

- Grand Lodge – Lichfield District Council declined the planning application;
- Rugeley Quarry – within the existing consent. This will have a visual impact with the amount of tree felling proposed.

Cllr Davis and Cllr Ansell commented on the number of applications submitted by developers for housing allocations in their districts. Presentations from Planning Officers had allayed their concerns, however it had been alarming for local people prior to consultation.

Bleak House Wind Farm – Tony Lancaster reported that the application is not due to go to planning committee until the New Year. Cllr Davis asked if there was any indication if the application would be permitted. Tony replied that evidence was still being collected, so it was not known at present.

### **Any Other Business**

**171** There was no other business.

### **Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting**

**172** The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2009

### **Part Two**

#### **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

The Chairman to move:

"That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the local Government Act 1972 (as amended) indicated below"

None

**Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee – 15 December 2008**  
**Report of the Chairman of the Officers' Working Group**  
**and AONB Officer**  
**Agenda Item 5**  
**Draft Management Plan 2009-14**

**1 Recommendation**

- 1.1 The Committee approves the draft Management Plan for the period 2009-14 for submission to Natural England and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

**2 Introduction**

- 2.1 The Cannock Chase AONB Partnership is required under s89 and 90 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) to produce, adopt and publish a Management Plan for the conservation and enhancement of the AONB. Once plans have been published, they have to be reviewed at intervals of not more than five years.
- 2.2 Formal responsibility for the Management Plan review lies with the responsible authorities i.e. the constituent local authority members of this Partnership. The responsible authorities formally delegated this task to the AONB Unit at the Joint Committee meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> December 2006, with the Officers' Working Group being the chosen body to oversee the process and report back to the Joint Committee.
- 2.3 Guidance for reviews published by the Countryside Agency in 2006 specifies how they should take place to meet the needs of CROW. The steps include review, making amendments and publication of reports on any changes. They also require consultation of stakeholders and statutory consultees throughout the process.
- 2.4 The current Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan covers the period 2004-09. Regular reports to previous meetings have set out the need to review the Management Plan and processes used for its review.
- 2.5 This report sets out the full detail of the review undertaken by the Officers' Working Group and the proposed draft of the Management Plan for 2009-14. The draft Management Plan is attached at Appendix 1.

**3 Producing the Draft Management Plan**

- 3.1 Early in 2007-08, members of the Partnership were briefed via a number of national workshops about the guidance and aspirations for the Management

Plan review, led by the National Association of AONBs (NAAONB) and Natural England.

- 3.2 A programme was scheduled to review the existing Management Plan in 2007-08 and undertake any necessary re-drafting in 2008-09. This was later revised to undertake some early re-drafting in parallel with on-going review across both years, in order to be able to shape an up-dated Management Plan more efficiently. At all stages, extraordinary meetings of the Officers' Working Group took place to steer the process undertaken by the AONB Unit.
- 3.3 Consultations with stakeholders took place from an early stage via:
- facilitated sessions at Partnership meetings
  - structured workshops at the annual Partnership conference
  - open consultation via the AONB website
  - direct correspondence with statutory consultees
  - direct correspondence with all known stakeholders
  - four well-publicised public consultations held at different times of the day and week and in different locations around the AONB.
- 3.4 These consultations were recorded and established that whilst some minor amendments of the existing Management Plan were desirable, no new issues were raised and respondents were generally comfortable that its content remains appropriate. It was therefore agreed that a refresh rather than a re-write was required. This focused on style and an eradication of duplication from the first Plan. It also aimed to produce a streamlined Management Plan that builds upon the existing plan, as the second in a suite of documents.
- 3.5 Once a draft of the revised Management Plan had been produced, it was consulted upon via:
- two well publicised public consultations held at different times and in different locations
  - formal discussion at Partnership meetings
  - open consultation via the AONB website
  - direct correspondence with statutory consultees
  - direct correspondence with all known stakeholders.

The responses received from this consultation and resultant changes to the draft or responses to them are recorded. Responses were drawn up at a meeting of the Officers' Working Group and subsequently, under its guidance. The responses are shown at Appendix 2 of this report.

## **4 Assessing the Management Plan Drafts**

- 4.1 The draft Management Plan has also undergone a number of formal assessments to ensure it is compliant with related legislation. These are the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), the Appropriate Assessment (AA) (or Habitat Regulations Assessment) and Diversity Assessment. They have been undertaken by the AONB Unit, following expert advice and guidance issued to AONBs by Natural England. In order to retain integrity of the process throughout, the AONB Officer undertook drafting of the Management Plan, whilst the Assistant AONB Officer undertook drafting of the SEA and AA.
- 4.2 The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC) requires that all plans and programmes whose implementation would have a significant effect on the environment must undergo assessment to ensure a high level of environmental protection. At an early stage in the process, many AONB Partnerships, including Cannock Chase, queried the need to environmentally assess plans that have an over-riding intent to produce a positive environmental impact. However legal advice from Natural England directed that the SEA should be undertaken for each AONB Management Plan.
- 4.3 A Scoping Report was drawn up and consulted upon for the SEA process. Following the production of the draft Management Plan, a draft SEA was produced and then circulated for formal consultation. The resultant final SEA incorporates comments received from the consultation and is shown at Appendix 3.
- 4.4 The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 cover European Directive 92/43/EEC and provide for the designation and protection of 'European sites', the protection of 'European protected species', and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites. An Appropriate Assessment (or Habitat Regulations Assessment) under these regulations is the assessment of the impacts of implementing a plan or policy on a Natura 2000 Site. Its purpose is to consider the impacts of a land use plan against conservation objectives of the site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of the site. Where significant negative effects are identified, alternative options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects. Since the AONB contains a designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which falls under these regulations, it has been necessary to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of the draft Management Plan.
- 4.5 The draft Appropriate Assessment was circulated in January 2009 and a number of minor comments were received which were incorporated into revised text of the Assessment. However on 10 March, as this report was

being compiled, a detailed set of comments were received from the Natural England Freshwater and Pollution Specialist, West Midlands Region. The summary of these comments and the response, incorporated into the Management Plan policies and the text of the Appropriate Assessment, is attached at Appendix 4.

- 4.7 The Joint Committee may wish to consider whether the response in Appendix 4 above to these comments is sufficient, before final approval of the Management Plan draft. It should be noted that the comments were received extremely late in the process and do not appear to concur fully with guidance or other advice received from Natural England. It may also be noted that Natural England expert advisors have been involved at every stage of all the drafting and assessment process over the two years period that it has been undertaken.
- 4.8 Following discussion about the need for an Equality Impact Assessment of the Management Plan draft, technical advice was obtained from Natural England. This indicated that a strategic assessment should be made of the impact of the Management Plan on diversity, in accordance with the duties of the constituent local authority Partners of this Partnership. A strategic assessment has therefore been undertaken by the AONB Officer, following final drafting of the Management Plan. This is attached at Appendix 5.

## **5 Next Steps**

- 5.1 If the Joint Committee wishes to approve the draft of AONB Management Plan 2009-14, it will be submitted to Natural England for formal comment. As the statutory body responsible for the Management Plan, Natural England may choose to either accept the Plan, as submitted or require additional work or changes. Should this be the case, it is proposed that Joint Committee Members will be contacted about this by correspondence.
- 5.2 Once Natural England is satisfied that the Management Plan should also be approved, it will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and become a fully adopted and published plan. It is hoped that these responses will be received from Natural England in accordance with its defined schedules.

## **6 Conclusion**

- 6.1 Following a thorough consultation process, review and re-drafting of the AONB Management Plan 2004-09 have been undertaken. At each stage, stakeholders and technical advisers have been involved in shaping the refreshed Management Plan for 2009-14.

- 6.2 Three formal assessments have been made of the AONB Management Plan draft, following advice from technical experts and using guidance issued by Natural England.
- 6.3 The Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2009-14 draft and its associated assessments are proposed to the Joint Committee for approval.

**Appendices available on request, or via the website shortly –**  
[www.cannock-chase.co.uk](http://www.cannock-chase.co.uk)

<b>Local Members Interest</b>
N/A

**Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee- 25 March 2009**

**Financial Update  
Provisional Outturn 2008-09 and Budget 2009-10**

**Report of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee and the AONB Officer**

**Recommendations**

1. The Joint Committee is asked to note the provisional financial outturn for 2008/09 and approve the proposed budget for 2009/10 for the Core and Project Costs.
2. The Joint Committee is asked to note the content of the draft Business Plan 2009-14.

**Part A**

**Why is it coming here – what decision(s) are required?**

2. The Joint Committee in its role under the Partnership Agreement is responsible for:-
  - Approving the final accounts for the year as soon as possible after the year has ended and this report sets out the provisional accounts for consideration. Once the accounts for the year have been finalised, details will be sent to members of the Joint Committee for formal approval prior to inclusion in the Annual Report.
  - The approval of budget provision for the year ahead including the proposed partner projects. This report sets out the budgets for next year which have been submitted to Natural England for their approval and provides an update on the approvals received so far.

**Reasons for Recommendations:**

3. The recommendations represent an effective way to continue to carry forward the implementation of the Management Plan for the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership.

**Part B**

**Background:**

4. Provisional Financial Outturn 2008/09
  - a) The detailed provisional outturn for 2008/09 for the core budget and action projects is set out in Appendix 1 and is compared with the budget approved by Natural England. The overall expenditure outturn of £166,790 is very much in line with the approved budget of £166,250. The income of £169,113 is slightly greater than expected as

donations have been received towards some of the Core Action projects. There were under spends on accommodation and office equipment mainly due to a refund of photocopier rental and on the Partnership budget for PR events. This underspend has been utilised as part of the Core Projects budget and used on the Implementing Signs Programme. The Core Action projects show an overspend of £4,260 but there were additional donations towards these projects of £2,658 (marked with an asterisk). Any surplus/deficit will be transferred to the reserve.

- b) The individual projects which were supported from the Sustainable Development Fund are set out in Appendix 2 and cover a range of activities and providers. Predicted outturn is £61,754 against a budget of £61,666. This includes an administration fee which will be claimed to cover the additional work provided by the AONB Unit.

## 5. Budgets 2009/10

- a) The proposed core budget and action projects for 2009/10 were presented to the committee at the last meeting for inclusion in the bid to Natural England for grant aid. Details of the submission are set out again for information in Appendix 3. The proposed budget totals £165,700 of which £124,300 (75%) will be funded by Natural England. This represents 100% of the 08/09 allocation to Staffordshire. The remaining 25% is split between the five local authority partners in accordance with the Partnership Agreement. The Joint Committee is requested to approve the proposed core and action projects budget for next year. Following the last Joint Committee Natural England have advised that the AONB will be entitled to a further £5,000 in addition to this funding but it is not yet clear how this will be administered.
- b) The Sustainable Development Fund budget for 09/10 will be £66,166.
- b) Members of the Joint Committee will be kept informed of the funding which is finally approved for the year by Natural England.

## 6. **Reserve**

The balance on the reserve is currently £9019.83 as £572.09 has been transferred in during the year which relates to sales of merchandise commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the designation of the AONB.

## 7. **Business Plan**

The draft Business Plan attached at Appendix 4 addresses core business and additional projects that could be included in work programmes should additional resources be obtained. It focuses on the 2009-10 financial year but also takes a forward look at the implications of the single funding agreement for the period of the 2009-14 Management Plan. The Business Plan remains a draft as it will not be possible to insert the actions until the new Management Plan is approved and published. Members are asked to note the implications of each scenario. The Officers' Working Group aims to refine this Business Plan and present it to the September 2009 Joint Committee.

## **7. Equalities Implications**

This report has been prepared in accordance with the equal opportunities policies of the County Council.

## **8. Legal Implications**

Actions recommended in this report are in accordance with the provisions of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership Agreement.

## **9. Resource and Value for Money Implications**

This report recommends actions to ensure the continued efficient delivery of the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan. The matched funding requirements to make up the 25% of contributions towards the core activity are set out in the Partnership Agreement. The SDF is a funding stream to be administered to partners who are able to provide the necessary matched funding for their Management Plan project proposals.

## **10. Risk Implications**

If continuity of funding and spend are not continued as recommended to the Joint Committee, then the five authorities involved in the partnership will need to seek other methods of fulfilling their statutory obligations for the AONB under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

### **Report authors:**

Authors Names:

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Ruth Hÿtch AONB Unit 01889 882613

APPENDIX 1

CANNOCK CHASE AONB JOINT COMMITTEE

Provisional Outturn for 2008/09 for  
Cannock Chase AONB Core and Project Costs

	Approved Budget	Provisional Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£
<b><u>AONB Core Budget</u></b>			
Staff Salaries and Associated costs	111,250	111,100	-150
Accommodation /Office Equipment	13,200	12,050	-1,150
Transport	5,300	4,780	-520
Partnership budget for PR events	2,300	400	-1,900
Partnership running costs (In kind)	6,500	6,500	0
	<b>138,550</b>	<b>134,830</b>	<b>-3,720</b>
<b><u>Core Action Projects</u></b>			
AONB Website	200	150	-50
AONB Annual report	3,000	1,400	-1,600
AONB Newsletters	1,000	1,260	260
AONB partner awareness raising events	1,000	1,600	600 *
Annual Conference	0	1,200	1,200 *
Business Plan	2,000	1,700	-300
Community Program Project	7,500	7,500	0
Implement Signs Programme	6,500	10,000	3,500
Community Involvement Programme	6,500	7,150	650 *
	<b>27,700</b>	<b>31,960</b>	<b>4,260</b>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>166,250</b>	<b>166,790</b>	<b>540</b>
<b>FUNDED BY:</b>			
Countryside Agency	124,300	124,300	0
Lichfield District Council	2,100	2,100	0
South Staffordshire District Council	2,100	2,100	0
Cannock Chase District Council	8,400	8,400	0
Stafford Borough Council	8,400	8,400	0
Staffordshire County Council	20,950	20,950	0
Donations		2,658	2,658 *
Other Income		205	205
			0
	<b>166,250</b>	<b>169,113</b>	<b>2,863</b>

\* Denotes projects where donations/funding has been received

**APPENDIX 2**

**CANNOCK CHASE AONB JOINT COMMITTEE**

**Budget Update for 2008/09 for  
Sustainable Development Fund**

**March 2009**

	<b>Provisional Outturn 2008/09 £</b>
<b>AONB SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND</b>	
<b>Approved Projects</b>	
Friends of Cannock Chase - Community Day	6,178
Slitting Mill VH external Improvements	1,463
Cannock Chase 50th Anniversary	1,604
FWAG- Horsiculture and sustainability	1,090
WT-Healthy heathlands	2,381
6 visitor centre leaflets	5,475
Fixed point photography project	2,560
Equipment for protecting wildlife in AONB	3,708
Canine Project	6,700
Canal interpretation - Shugborough	4,592
Hazelslade Nature Reserve interpretation	1,490
Mammal Group - celebrating & protecting wildlife	8,348
Pond dipping boards - Wildlife Trust	9,999
Admin	6,166
	61,754
<b>TOTAL PROPOSED/APPROVED</b>	<b>61,754</b>

**APPENDIX 3**

**CANNOCK CHASE AONB JOINT COMMITTEE**

**Budget for 2009/10 for  
Cannock Chase AONB Core and Project Costs**

**AONB Core Budget**

Staff Salaries and Associated costs	116,100
Accommodation /Office Equipment	13,050
Transport	4,150
Partnership budget for PR events	2,300
Partnership running costs (In kind)	6,600

<b>Budget 2009/10 £</b>
116,100
13,050
4,150
2,300
6,600

142,200

**Action Budget Awareness Projects:**

Annual Action Plan	1,500
AONB Website	200
AONB Annual review	1,500
AONB Newsletters	700
Monitoring Projects (SAONB, visitors, peace & tranquility)	7,500
Signage	2,000
Annual Conference	2,000
Community Involvement	1,500
To be allocated from new management plan	6,600

23,500

**TOTAL BUDGET**

**165,700**

**AGREED FUNDING:**

Natural England	124,300
Lichfield District Council	2,100
South Staffordshire District Council	2,100
Cannock Chase District Council	8,250
Stafford Borough Council	8,250
Staffordshire County Council	20,700

**165,700**