



North

Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire County Council

Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014 - 2019

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Screening Report Update (Incorporating Consultation Responses)

March 2014

Business and Environmental Services

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been produced to determine whether it is necessary to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan for 2014 to 2019. This is to ensure compliance with European Directive 2001/42/EC on 'the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment' ('The SEA Directive') and 'The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633), which implements the Directive in England and for relevant non devolved plans and programmes in the UK as a whole.

2. AONB Management Plans and Guidance on SEA

- 2.1 Part IV, Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 sets out the requirement for Conservation Boards or relevant Local Authorities to publish and review a management plan for their AONB that: *"formulates their policy for the management of the area of outstanding natural beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it"*. These management plans must be reviewed *'at intervals of not more than 5 years'*.
- 2.2 The previous AONB Management Plan (2009 to 2014) had been subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment. However, as the plan has been subject to review rather than a more fundamental rewrite, there is some uncertainty over whether SEA would be required for this plan.
- 2.3 In 2012, Natural England, the National Association of AONBs and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) published an 'Advice Note to AONB Partnerships, the Conservation Boards and Relevant Authorities on Management Plan Reviews', which gave some early guidance on considering the need for SEA:

"The requirements of the SEA and Habitats Directives, and the need for compliance with them, apply to new management plans, and to revisions or re-issues of existing management plans.

AONBs and National Park Authorities (protected landscape managing bodies) should screen their revised or amended Management Plan to evaluate whether the individual or cumulative effect of the changes which they are proposing is likely to have a significant effect, as defined under the Strategic Environmental Assessment or Habitats Regulations. They may wish to seek informal guidance from Natural England (and Environment Agency, English Heritage for SEA) at this screening stage".

That same guidance goes on to state that:

"Given that all the extant AONB Management Plans have been assessed under the regulations, the AONB Partnership / Conservation Board (protected landscape managing body) may decide that the proposed changes to the extant plan are not likely to have a significant effect, and may conclude that

there is no requirement to carry out further assessment. The AONB Partnership / Conservation Board should record the screening decision and supporting reasons for it”.

- 2.4 This Screening Report has been written to enable a judgement to be made on whether an SEA should be undertaken. In line with the ‘tripartate’ guidance outlined above, it discusses whether the Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan 2014 to 2019 is likely to exhibit significant environmental effects, and documents supporting reasons for the report’s conclusions. A further screening report, to establish whether appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations is necessary, is also published alongside this report.

3. **The Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan 2014 - 2019**

The draft Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan sets out a draft vision for a living landscape as well as a series of objectives that relate to topics of relevance to the AONB. The draft vision states:

“The Howardian Hills will continue to be a tranquil and well-managed rural area. It will still be notable for its extensive woodland, rolling agricultural fields, large country houses and designated parklands. The threats to the natural and cultural resources of the AONB will have been addressed and these assets will be sympathetically managed within a diverse and prosperous rural economy. Active and resilient communities will have increased opportunities for people of all ages to live and work in the area. Residents and visitors alike will be able to enjoy and appreciate the AONB in an environmentally sustainable way”.

The Management Plan outlines objectives that relate to the following topic areas:

An ecosystems approach;

A rich heritage;

- Natural environment;
- Historic environment;

Living and working in the Howardian Hills;

- Local communities;
- Agriculture;
- Forestry and woodland;
- Development and rural economy;
- Roads, transport and traffic management;

Enjoying the AONB;

- Recreation, access and tourism;

Awareness and promotion;

Putting the plan into action;

- Implementation;
- Monitoring.

The vision is essentially the same vision as was presented in the 2009 management plan, with only minor modifications, these being:

-While the 2009 management plan vision included the sentence: “Natural and cultural resources will be sympathetically managed within a diverse and prosperous rural economy”, the new vision seeks to add further detail by rephrasing this to: “The threats to the natural and cultural resources of the AONB will have been addressed and these assets will be sympathetically managed within a diverse and prosperous rural economy”.

-The reference to ‘active communities’ in the 2009 plan has been modified to active and resilient communities’.

Similarly most topic areas can be seen as continuations of topic areas in the 2009 management plan. However, an additional topic ‘an ecosystems approach’ has been added, which now subsumes the climate change topic, while the development topic has been retitled as ‘Development and rural economy’.

Appendix 1 shows how the objectives that underlie topics have changed between the current draft of the AONB management plan and the 2009 management plan. Generally the divergence between old and new objectives is considered to be low.

The management plan also defines a series of ‘special qualities’ for the AONB. These are:

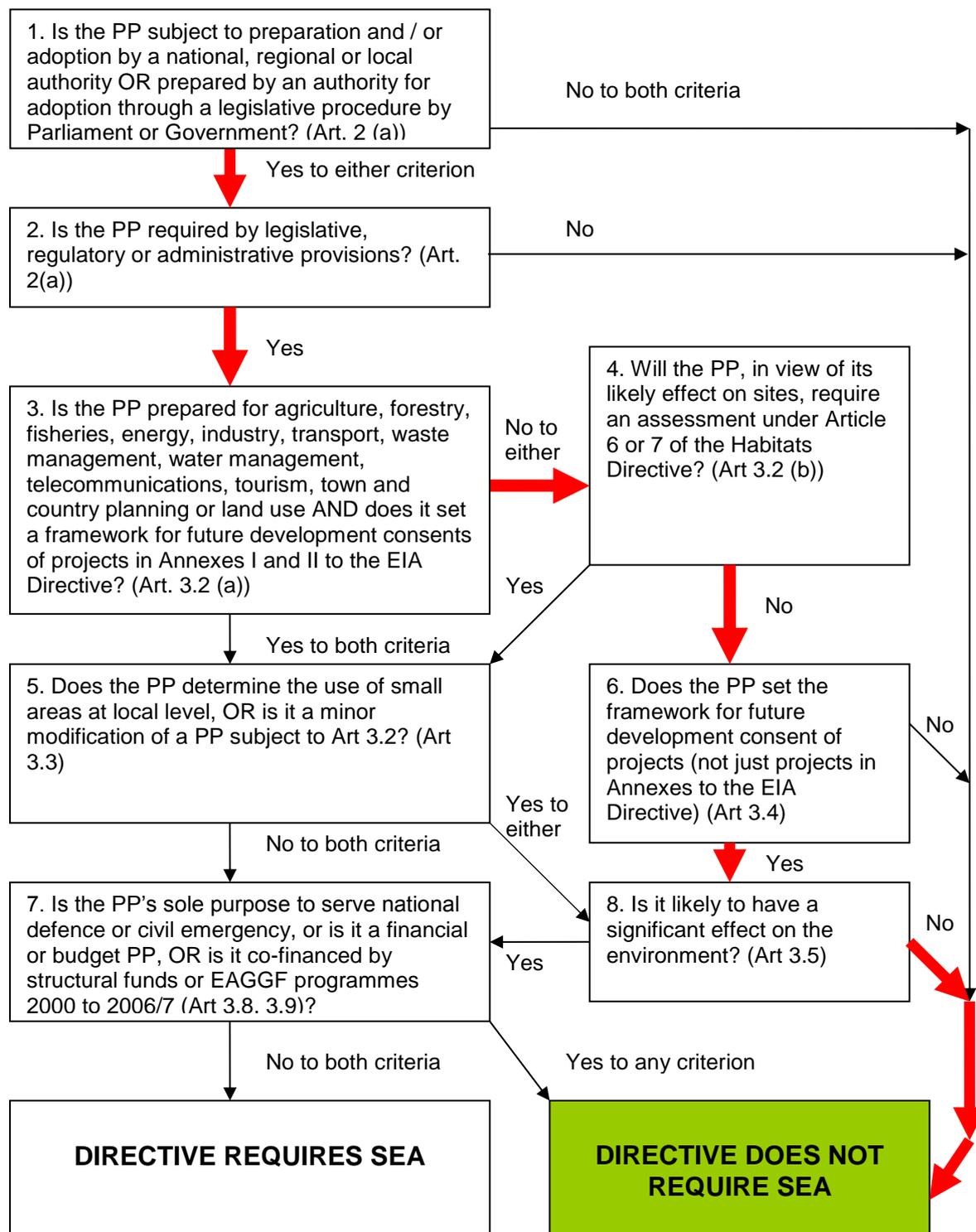
- An unusual landform;
- A richly varied landscape;
- A landscape of high visual quality;
- A remarkable heritage;
- An important wildlife resource.

4. Screening

- 4.1 The SEA Directive and accompanying national regulations describe the types of plans for which the undertaking of SEA is mandatory. There are also a number of other plans where a decision must be taken on whether SEA should be undertaken.
- 4.2 The Government has set out in a series of steps a means to determine which plans and programmes require SEA¹, as required by the SEA Directive. Figure 1 describes the steps that should be taken to determine the need for SEA. The path taken by the AONB Management Plan is indicated by a series of red arrows.

¹ ODPM, 2006. A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, ODPM, London

Figure 1: Deciding whether the SEA Directive is applicable to the AONB Management Plan



Anticipated status of the AONB Management Plan 2014 - 2019
 (Adapted from ODPM, 2006)

4.3 Figure 1 shows a considered view of the status of the AONB Management Plan 2014 - 2019 in relation to the requirements of the SEA Directive. Further explanation of the reasons for selecting the Management Plan's pathway through the flow chart is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Establishing the need for SEA

Stage	Answer	Reason
1. Is the PP subject to preparation and / or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2 (a))	Yes	The AONB Management Plan will be prepared and adopted by North Yorkshire County Council.
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	The AONB Management Plan is being prepared under section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000
3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use AND does it set a framework for future development consents of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2 (a))	No	Although the AONB Management Plan covers several of these topics, it is unlikely that any work proposed, framed or required by the management plan would fall into Annexes I and II of the EIA Directive.
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art 3.2 (b))	No	A Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report has been completed. This report concluded that there are unlikely to be significant negative effects on the network of European Sites in and around the AONB.
5. Does the PP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art 3.2? (Art 3.3)	Not applicable	This question need only be answered if questions 3 or 4 are answered in the affirmative.
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects	?	A narrower interpretation of 'framework for development consents' would exclude the

(not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive) (Art 3.4) ²		<p>AONB Management Plan as it does not direct projects that would generally fall within the planning system.</p> <p>However, public bodies have a duty to consider the natural beauty of AONBs in their decisions, including in planning decisions³. Taking a broader interpretation of 'framework' (see footnote 3), the Management Plan may affect the outcome of future development consents, though only in as much as they affect the special qualities of the AONB.</p>
7. Is the PP's sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, or is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7 (Art 3.8, 3.9)?	Not applicable	This question need only be answered if the answer to question 6 is 'no'. Or the answer to question 8 is 'yes'.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art 3.5) (See appendix for criteria and characteristics determining significance)	No	The relatively small scale improvements to the AONB resulting from the strategic direction given by the AONB management plan are unlikely to have significant negative effects on the environment. In addition, the objectives and actions in general seek to maintain and enhance the special qualities of the AONB, which will have a moderating impact on development and other actions that may seek to modify the

² The Directive is not clear on what constitutes a framework for development consents, but a broad interpretation has been taken in this assessment, informed partly by wider experience of SEA as described in the Resource Manual to Support Application of the UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (United Nations draft document, 2006). This describes such frameworks as documents that place limits on types of activity from an area, contain conditions to be met by applicants if permission is to be granted, or that are designed to preserve certain characteristics of an area. (See: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/eia/sea_manual/documents/SEA%20Manual%20-%20Chapter%20A3%20-%20slides.pdf)

³ Part IV, Section 85 (1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 establishes a general duty on public bodies: "In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty". Public bodies are listed as relevant authorities.

		<p>environmental character of the AONB.</p> <p>Criteria for significance are presented in Annex II of the SEA Directive, in which a range of characteristics of plans are listed as influencing judgements on significance, as well as a range of characteristics of the area likely to be effected by the plan. Appendix 2 at the end of this report shows the SEA Directive's significance criteria alongside the likely effects of the plan.</p>
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5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The conclusion of this screening report is that a Strategic Environmental Assessment will not be required for the Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan. This is because the plan is unlikely to display significant environmental effects.

One objective 'FW3: Monitor and manage the incidence and impacts of pests and diseases in the AONB' is seen as having a potential to exhibit significant environmental effects. However, this should be seen as a control measure to the far more significant effect that would arise were pests and diseases, particularly tree diseases' allowed to take hold, and should therefore be considered as a positive environmental improvement. Nonetheless, an assessment has been made of this objective against the SEA Framework of the original 2009 SEA (see appendix 3). This has concluded that the inclusion of FW3 is significantly more environmentally benign than not including the objective.

- 5.2 Further work has been undertaken via a Habitats Regulations Assessment screening report to clarify uncertainty over whether the AONB Management Plan would require assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive. This HRA concluded that significant effects on European Sites are unlikely and Natural England support this conclusion and have confirmed that an appropriate assessment will not be required.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The three statutory bodies for the purposes of SEA screening are Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage. These bodies have been consulted for their views on the conclusions of the screening assessment. In addition, the Screening Report has been placed on the AONB website and on a CD alongside the consultation on the draft management plan, which was circulated to a list of stakeholders. The consultation on the

screening report took place from Monday 30th September to Friday 15th November.

7. Consultation Outcome

- 7.1 Consultation with Natural England and English Heritage confirmed that a Strategic Environmental Assessment will not be necessary for the Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan. No response was received from the Environment Agency. Further detail on the responses received is included in Appendix 4.

8. Further Information

Further information on this screening report can be obtained from:

The Environmental Policy Officers
Natural Environment Team, Waste and Countryside Services
North Yorkshire County Council
County Hall
Northallerton
North Yorkshire
DL7 8AD
mwsustainability@northyorks.gov.uk
Telephone: 01609 536 493

Appendix 1: Comparison of AONB Management Plan Objectives

2015 Management Plan Draft Objective	Is there a similar 2009 Management Plan objective	Divergence	Notes on likely significance of divergence to the environment
AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH			
ES1 Gain a better understanding of the AONB's contribution to ecosystem services	N/a	High divergence as not previously covered	<u>Not significant.</u> Actions relate to gathering information only so environmental effects are not significant
ES2 Promote sustainability and support appropriate projects that benefit the AONB's ecosystems services and Special Qualities	SF2 Promote sustainability and support appropriate projects that benefit the AONB	Low to moderate Objectives are similar – ecosystems approach was partly reflected in previous actions under SF2 ⁴ .	<u>Moderate but beneficial significance.</u> Greater emphasis on ecosystem services and special qualities can be seen as strengthening protection to the AONB's environment making it more resilient to significant environmental effects.
ES3 Understand potential climate change trends and scenarios and monitor impacts on the AONB	SF1 Assess the AONB's contribution to climate change mitigation / adaptation and monitor the impacts of climate change on its special qualities	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
A RICH HERITAGE			
NE1 Continually improve knowledge of the wildlife resources in the AONB	NE1 Continually improve knowledge of the wildlife resources in the AONB and the possible impacts of climate change upon them.	Low to moderate divergence Objectives are similar though climate change is now covered by other objectives	<u>Not significant</u> as climate change is still considered elsewhere.
NE2 Ensure that appropriate protection is given to the best nature	NE2 Give priority to conservation of the best remaining nature conservation nature	Low	<u>Not significant</u>

⁴ In the 2009 Management Plan an action, SF2.1 stated 'use an ecosystem approach to guide consultation responses and assess projects that receive grant assistance from the JAC'.

conservation sites in the AONB	conservation sites in the AONB		
NE3 Assist with the implementation of LBAP /BD2020/WFD targets for priority habitats in the AONB: broadleaved woodland; grasslands; and wetlands, to improve condition and increase habitat connectivity	NE4 Implementation of local BAP targets for woodland habitats; NE5 Implementation of local BAP targets for grassland habitats; NE6 Implementation of local BAP targets for wetland habitats NE9 Encourage less-intensive management of farmland, to create a wider network of complementary semi-natural habitats	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
NE4 Assist with the implementation of LBAP/BD2020 targets for priority species for which the AONB is important	NE7 Implementation of local BAP targets for important species	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
NE5 Assist with the implementation of LBAP/BD2020 targets for wildlife within villages	N/A	Moderate – although not previously covered, this objective could have been progressed under previous plan's existing objectives,	<u>Not significant.</u> Additional emphasis on wildlife within villages is merely an extension of previous objectives and will not significantly impact (other than beneficially) on the environment.
NE6 Monitor and where appropriate support control of invasive non-native species in the AONB	NE8 Monitor and where appropriate control invasive non-native species in the AONB	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
NE7 Encourage the identification and conservation of important geodiversity sites and features in the AONB	NE11 Encourage the identification and conservation of important geodiversity sites and features in the AONB	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
NE8 Provide assistance to farmers and land managers, to help them manage their land sympathetically	NE12 Provide assistance to farmers and land managers, to help them manage their land sympathetically NE9 Encourage less intensive management of farmland, to create a wider network of	Low	<u>Not significant</u>

	complementary semi-natural habitats.		
NE9 Ensure continued recognition of the Howardian Hills as a priority area for biodiversity in North Yorkshire, as part of the NY&Y LNP.	N/a	High divergence as not previously covered	<u>Not significant.</u> This objective may result in additional resources targeted to the AONB, but such resources allocations would need to be consistent with the management plan. So the significance of this objective can be seen as a function of the significance of other objectives, and is not in itself significant.
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT			
HE1 Improve understanding of the AONB's historic environment and its significance	HE1 Improve knowledge of the AONB's archaeological remains, historic buildings, cultural history, the inter-relationship of these features in the wider landscape.	Low – although slight difference in wording	<u>Not significant</u> – all objectives / actions relate to knowledge rather than physical impacts to the environment.
HE2 Sustain and enhance the significance of the AONB's historic environment	HE3 Encourage local participation in the monitoring, adoption and management of cultural and historic heritage sites	Low to Moderate – the new objective's emphasis on 'sustain and enhance' can be seen as repeating the older objective's emphasis on management, though the new objective is not just restricted to local participation.	<u>Not significant</u>
HE3 Help local people to identify the non-designated heritage assets which contribute to the character of their area and ensure that Local Plans include appropriate measures for their management	HE3 Encourage local participation in the monitoring, adoption and management of cultural and historic heritage sites HE4 Ensure that the diversity, quality and distinctiveness of the AONB's historic heritage is conserved and enhanced.	Low to Moderate – generally the new objective is covered by the older plan, though the new objective makes an explicit reference to Local Plans.	<u>Not significant</u>
LIVING AND WORKING IN THE HOWARDIAN HILLS			
LC1 Assist local communities with	LC1 Assist local communities with	Low	<u>Not significant</u>

identifying and implementing projects that maintain and enhance their character, sustainability and sense of community	identifying projects that maintain and enhance their character, sustainability and community pride.		
AG1 Encourage the development and uptake of Government support mechanisms that achieve sustainable farm and rural business development	AG1 Encourage the development of government support mechanisms that achieve sustainable farm and rural business development	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
AG2 Support farm businesses in the AONB by providing advice and appropriate assistance	AG2 Support farm businesses in the AONB by providing conservation advice and appropriate assistance	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
AG3 Ensure high standards of design and careful siting of all new farm buildings and infrastructure	AG4 Ensure high standards of design and careful siting of all new farm buildings and infrastructure	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
FW1 Ensure that all woodland felling, management and creation proposals recognise the Special Qualities of the AONB	FW1 Ensure that all woodland felling and management proposals recognise the Special Qualities of the AONB FW5 Encourage new areas of woodland where these would conserve or enhance the special qualities of the AONB or improve habitat networks.	Low to moderate The new objective also scopes new woodland creation into the objective, though this was previously covered by a different objective (FW5)	<u>Not significant</u> – the new objective simply makes environmentally benign actions more likely.
FW2 Encourage a multi-objective approach to woodland management in the AONB	FW2 Encourage a multi-objective approach to woodland management in the AONB	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
FW3 Monitor and manage the incidence and impacts of pests and diseases in the AONB	N/A	High divergence as not previously covered in a way which is specific to forests and woodland.	<u>Potentially significant</u> changes to the environment could result from this objective – however these are far less significant than not having the objective in the management plan, so this objective should be seen as a control measure to a threat that is beyond

			the control of the AONB.
FW4 Encourage the use of known provenance trees and shrubs when planting or re-stocking	FW3 Encourage the use of local provenance trees and shrubs where appropriate when re-stocking	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
FW5 Encourage new areas of woodland where these would conserve or enhance the special qualities of the AONB or improve habitat networks	FW5 Encourage new areas of woodland where these would conserve or enhance the special qualities of the AONB or improve habitat networks	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
FW6 Encourage the continued development of markets for wood and timber	FW4 Encourage the development of alternative markets for wood and timber	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
FW7 Encourage the development of grant and advice mechanisms that achieve AONB Management Plan objectives for woodland creation and management	FW6 Encourage the development of grant and advice mechanisms that achieve AONB management plan objectives for woodland management FW5 Encourage new areas of woodland where these would conserve or enhance the special qualities of the AONB or improve habitat networks.	Low – although creation is mentioned in the new objective it is referenced in FW5 in the old plan.	<u>Not significant</u>

D1 Ensure that any new development is compatible with the aims of AONB designation and has regard to social, economic and environmental sustainability	D1 Ensure that any new development is compatible with the aims of the AONB designation and has regard to social, economic and environmental sustainability.	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
D2 Encourage high standards in both the design of new development within the AONB and the management of existing buildings/features	D2 Encourage high standards in both the design of new development within the AONB and the management of existing buildings / features.	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
D3 Encourage the mitigation of intrusive features, to enhance the local landscape character and tranquillity of the AONB	D3 Encourage the mitigation of intrusive features, to enhance the local landscape character and tranquillity of the AONB	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
D4 Support appropriate minerals-working proposals which conserve and enhance the Special Qualities of the AONB	D4 Encourage the supply of local stone for building and drystone wall restoration work	Moderate There is some divergence in the new objective. Although the older management plan objective included an action to 'support appropriate proposals for small scale quarrying of stone for local uses', the newer objective does not explicitly cite local stone supply. However this is referred to in the new plan's actions ⁵ . It should be noted that the newer objective places the emphasis on conserving and enhancing special qualities, which, if	<u>Low to moderate significance</u> . The newer objective makes a stronger link with special qualities, thus lessening environmental effects. However, inevitably the objective broadens the array of development that might be deemed acceptable. This is, however, offset to a large degree by D3 and action D4.1 to resist any large-scale minerals working operations which are not compatible with AONB objectives.

⁵ Including D4.2 'Support appropriate proposals for small scale quarrying of stone for local uses and to assist with repairs to heritage assets' and ' D4.3 Safeguard / obtain supplies of suitable local stone for dry stone wall restoration'.

		anything, strengthens the environmental soundness of the objective.	It should be noted that the AONB unit is not the competent authority in relation to minerals planning decisions, the framework for which must be subject to its own strategic environmental assessment / sustainability appraisal. This objective has therefore only been considered in respect of the way in which it relates to the AONBs special qualities.
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D5 Support appropriate renewable energy installations that do not have adverse impacts on the special qualities of the AONB	D5 Support appropriate renewable energy installations that do not have adverse impacts on the special qualities of the AONB	Low	<u>Not significant</u>
D6 Support rural business, local employment and farm diversification activities that do not have adverse impacts on the special qualities of the AONB	D6 Support business and diversification opportunities linked to the special qualities of the AONB.	Low to moderate Although broadly the same the newer policy supports a broader range of actions. However, although the actions may vary, the previous plan referred to specific mechanisms (CAN Do, Business Link) without being specific on the actual work that would be realised via those mechanisms. Therefore, the additional actions may well have previously been supported via those mechanisms.	<u>Not significant</u> as new objective adds protection to previous objective by supporting business opportunities 'that do not have adverse impacts on the special qualities of the AONB'.
D7 Encourage the expansion of modern communications technology, whilst safeguarding the AONB landscape	D8 Encourage the expansion of modern communications technology, whilst safeguarding the AONB landscape.	Low	Not significant
D8 Encourage the increased provision of local-needs/ affordable housing in the AONB	D9 Encourage the increased provision of local-needs/ affordable housing in the AONB	Low	Not significant
RT1 Develop solutions to specific traffic routing issues in and around the AONB, to discourage through-traffic and ensure that other traffic uses the most appropriate route	RT1 Develop solutions to specific traffic routing problems in and around the AONB, to discourage through-traffic and ensure that other traffic uses the most appropriate route	Low	Not significant

RT2 Support initiatives to monitor and address traffic and driver behaviour issues in the AONB	RT2 Develop initiatives to monitor and address traffic and driver behaviour issues in the AONB.	Low	Not significant
RT3 Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport as alternatives to the private car	RT3 Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport as alternatives to the private car	Low	Not significant
RT4 Maintain the existing rural character of the road network in the AONB	RT4 Maintain the existing rural character of the road network in the AONB	Low	Not significant
RT5 Ensure any proposals for improvement of the A64 trunk road through the AONB are fully justified and adopt appropriate local standards of design. Taking account of significant safety concerns, proposals should aim to make maximum use of the existing road alignment and have minimum environmental impact	RT5 Ensure any proposals for improvement of the A64 trunk road through the AONB are fully justified, adopt appropriate local standards of design, make maximum use of the existing road alignment and have minimum environmental impact.	Low	Not significant

RA1 Encourage sustainable recreational activities that do not conflict with the special qualities of the AONB	RA1 Encourage sustainable recreational activities that do not conflict with special qualities of the AONB	Low	Not significant
RA2 Promote the attractions and special qualities of the AONB to encourage sustainable use and support the local visitor economy	RA2 Promote the attractions and special qualities of the AONB in a sustainable way	Low	Not significant
RA3 Maintain and improve both the condition and network of Public Rights of Way in the AONB	RA4 Manage the Public Rights of Way Network to a high standard RA6 Encourage appropriate local improvements to the public rights of way network RA7 Manage path usage issues arising between: - different types of path user; between path users and land managers	Low One objective now covers areas previously covered by several objectives.	Not significant
RA4 Carry out recreational management measures as appropriate, to enhance enjoyment by the public and address local issues	RA3 Carry out recreational management measures as appropriate, to address problems and enhance enjoyment by the public	Low	Not significant
RA5 Develop routes within the AONB for different user groups and provide self-guided information	RA5 Encourage the correct identification of all public rights of way routes on the Definitive Map by 2015. RA7 Manage path usage issues arising between: - different types of path user; between path users and land managers RA9 Establish guided routes around the AONB for walkers, touring cyclists, horse riders, off road cyclists.	Low This objective broadly amalgamates elements of previous management plan objectives.	Not significant

AP1 Maintain awareness and understanding of the AONB designation, its importance and the role of the Joint Advisory Committee	AP1 Raise awareness and understanding of the AONB designation, its importance and the role of the Joint Advisory Committee	Low	Not significant
AP2 Promote awareness of the Special Qualities of the AONB	AP2 Promote awareness of the Special qualities of the AONB	Low	Not significant
PUTTING THE PLAN INTO ACTION			
IM1 Consolidate and develop funding and partnership mechanisms to achieve Management Plan objectives	IM1 Consolidate and develop funding and partnership mechanisms to achieve Management Plan objectives	Low	Not significant
IM2 Ensure that the AONB partnership has a robust business model that is resilient to future challenges	IM2 Monitor the business development of AONB Partnership	Low	Not significant
MN1 Monitor the performance of the AONB Partnership and AONB unit	MN1 Monitor performance of AONB Partnership and AONB Unit	Low	Not significant
MN2 Monitor the condition of the AONB	MN2 Monitor condition of the AONB	Low	Not significant

Appendix 2: Judging Significance in Relation to the SEA Directive

Annex II of the SEA Directive lists criteria for determining the significance of environmental effects of a plan or programme. Taken together these criteria should inform judgements about whether environmental effects can be considered to be significant.

Table 2: Table showing criteria of significance listed in Annex II of the SEA Directive alongside an assessment of their applicability to the AONN Management Plan 2014 to 2019

Characteristic of significance	Is it significant?	Likely effect of plan
1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:		
The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	Yes	The AONB Management Plan will set a framework for a number of smaller scale projects.
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	Yes	The AONB Management Plan does not influence a hierarchy of subsidiary plans; however, actions include the contributing to other plans and programmes of varying significance.
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations with a view to promoting sustainable development	Yes	The management plan sets sustainable development at the heart of its vision, and objectives and actions contribute to the maintenance of special qualities in the AONB. This ensures that environmental considerations are fully integrated.

		The plan is considered highly beneficial to the achievement of sustainable development.
Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	No	The management plan is unlikely to cause environmental problems. It is not substantively different from the previous 2009 to 2014 management plan (see appendix 1) which had been subject to SEA and shown not to exhibit significant environmental effects. It is highly likely to lessen problems such as atmospheric, soil and water pollution, loss of biodiversity, loss of landscape character, and deterioration of cultural heritage.
The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).	No	The management plan is carried out as a result of national legislation (the Countryside and Rights of Way Act) which is not transposed from higher Community legislation.
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:		
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,	No	The AONB Management Plan is unlikely to exhibit significant long term / frequent / irreversible effects as:

		<p>-Objectives and actions generally link to and support national or local initiatives that are designed to enhance the quality of the rural environment;</p> <p>-Objectives are linked to preserving special qualities so actions which are contrary to this are not promoted as part of the plan.</p> <p>-The condition of the AONB will be monitored as part of the management plan</p>
The cumulative nature of the effects	No	The generally positive environmental improvements are likely to negate / offset cumulative environmental effects arising from outside sources.
The transboundary nature of the effects	No	There is no likelihood of transboundary effects occurring.
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),	No	Objectives / actions which aim to manage traffic levels will reduce the risk of accidents occurring.
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),	No	While the management plan applies to the entirety of the AONB, negative environmental effects are not likely to be significant.
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: special natural	No	The AONB is a highly valued area that contains areas of high biodiversity and

<p>characteristics or cultural heritage</p>		<p>cultural heritage value, making the area sensitive to environmental impacts. However, no such impacts are predicted and, due to the protections given to 'special qualities' emphasised in the management plan, would in any case be unlikely to be significant.</p>
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The AONB management is highly unlikely to provoke the exceedence of any environmental thresholds and is likely to increase environmental capacity in many instances (e.g. by restoring biodiversity).</p>
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to intensive land-use</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The AONB management plan is unlikely to promote intensive land use, rather it helps promotes less intensive farming.</p>
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The AONB is a highly valued nationally protected landscape designation. However, the management plan is integral to the maintenance of that status and aims to achieve this through positive interventions that are likely to enhance landscape value. Such interventions are shown to be similar to those in the previous 2009 -14 management plan for</p>

		<p>which a previous SEA did not identify significant environmental effects.</p> <p>One exception to this has been identified: objective 'FW3: Monitor and manage the incidence and impacts of pests and diseases in the AONB' is seen as having a potential to exhibit significant environmental effects. However, this should be seen as a control measure to the far more significant effect that would arise if pests and diseases, particularly tree diseases, were allowed to take hold. This should therefore be considered as a positive environmental improvement.</p>
<p>Overall level of significance: Unlikely to exhibit significant effects on the environment.</p>		

Appendix 3: Assessment of Objective FW3

The 2008 Environmental Report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan featured an assessment of Management Plan objectives against 20 SEA objectives.

Table 3, below presents the 20 objectives in a matrix alongside objective FW3. Predicted environmental effects are rated from ‘very negative’ to ‘very positive’ and are considered against the environmental context / baseline presented in the 2008 Environmental Report.

As a comparator, Table 4 presents an option called ‘policy off’. This option envisages that the AONB management plan would be published, but that there would be no objective on pest and disease management and no consideration of it under other objectives. The assessment focusses on a fictional objective that could be termed ‘We will not monitor the incidence and impact of pests and diseases in the AONB’.

While the assessment of the objective is based on a relatively old baseline, it is considered that the assessment should give a broad indication of the likelihood of significant environmental effects occurring. It is felt that this should be considered sufficient for the purpose of determining whether a fuller SEA is necessary.

Table 3

Option	FW3: Monitor and manage the incidence of and impact of pests and diseases in the AONB							
SA Objective	Impact / timescale			Type of effect				Analysis
	S ⁶	M	L	P ⁷	T	D	I	
1. To protect and enhance the landscape	-/?	-/?	0/?		✓	✓		Assuming that pests and diseases will affect the AONB, and assuming that there are means by which pests and diseases can be controlled it is

⁶ S, M, L stand for ‘short term’, ‘medium term’ and ‘long term’ respectively.

⁷ P, T, D, I stand for ‘permanent’, ‘temporary’, ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’.

								anticipated that there will initially be some negative effects as monitoring pests and diseases will create a time lag before action can take place. Beyond that measures may be implemented that change the appearance of the landscape (e.g. selective felling of trees). However, as pests and diseases are reduced some degree of recovery is likely to take place in the longer term. However, there is considerable uncertainty over the nature and impact of pests and diseases and aggravating factors such as climate change, which may limit management options.
2. To protect and where applicable enhance biodiversity (habitats) and geodiversity	-/?	-/?	0/?	?	?	✓	✓	Assuming that pests and diseases will affect the AONB, and assuming that there are means by which pests and diseases can be controlled it is anticipated that there will initially be some negative effects as monitoring pests and diseases will create a time lag before action can take place. In the medium term the threat to biodiversity may be neutralised, however ecosystems may by this time have been altered. Informed management is likely to improve the situation significantly from this point, though some ecological losses may by this time be permanent. However, there is considerable uncertainty over the nature and impact of pests and diseases and aggravating factors such as climate change, which may limit management options.
3. To protect and enhance fauna and flora (individual species)	-/?	-/?	0/?	?	?	✓	✓	As objective 2 above (it should be noted that this analysis applies to desirable species only. To the pest or disease species themselves the effect may be severely negative).
4. To ensure no adverse effect arises on population (i.e. demographic balance)	0	0	0					No significant effects
5. To safeguard human health	-/?	0	0			✓	✓	Some pests and diseases of plants and animals can also have negative effects on human health (e.g. oak processionary moth), so if monitoring is prolonged there is the risk of some initial negative effects. But the net

							effect of informed management is likely to be to restore the situation to the norm.
6. To protect and enhance soil quality	0	0	0				No significant effects
7. To protect water	0	-/?	0			✓	Managing pests and diseases may involve the use of chemical agents such as pesticides which may affect water quality. It is assumed that once pest problems are controlled the need for chemical management would lessen to below significant levels.
8. To protect air and climate	0	-/?	0/?		?	✓	Given that management of certain pests and diseases may result in a loss in mature trees / tree biomass (e.g. <i>Chalara fraxinea</i>) ultimately this will mean increased delivery of carbon to the atmosphere (though the scale of loss is unknown). However, it is quite possible that this would be offset by natural regeneration or the planting of alternative species in the longer term (though the success of replanting may be subject to other factors such as climate change).
9. To maintain cultural heritage	-/?	-/0	+/0		✓	✓	Pests and diseases affecting biodiversity can affect cultural heritage assets such as historic parks and gardens. Assuming that pests and diseases will affect the AONB, and assuming that there are means by which pests and diseases can be controlled it is anticipated that there will initially be some negative effects as monitoring pests and diseases will create a time lag before action can take place. In the medium term negative impacts may have reached a zenith, but control measures may be beginning to take effect. In the longer term replacement trees / features may offset the net effect on the baseline.
10. To protect material assets including natural resources	-	0	0	✓		✓	One would assume that other organisations such as the Forestry Commission would disseminate advice to commercial agents engaged in forestry. However, the objective would help provide an early warning system and help prevent spread to commercial forestry operations.

11. To avoid significant adverse effects between the above relationships (combination)	-/?	-/?	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	Several factors may combine to aggravate the overall threat posed by pests and diseases and the process of monitoring them. These may include impacts on natural and cultural heritage occurring at the same time which may stretch the resources required to tackle them, or impact upon tourism. However, as with other objectives, the longer term effect with management is likely to be a restored or at least partly restored situation.
12. To create more vibrant cohesive and mixed communities	0	0	0					No significant effects
13. To protect the quality and character of individual settlements and communities	-/?	-/?	0		✓	✓		Assuming that pests and diseases will affect the AONB, and assuming that there are means by which pests and diseases can be controlled it is anticipated that there will initially be some negative effects as monitoring pests and diseases will create a time lag before action can take place. Beyond that measures may be implemented that change the appearance of the settlement (most likely to be selective felling of trees). However, as pests and diseases are reduced recovery is likely to take place in the longer term, particularly as settlements are closely monitored by their own residents.
14. To protect people, environment and properties from flood risk	0	0	0/?					This is unlikely to be significant unless whole woodlands are lost to pests and diseases. It is considered that in most cases competitor tree species will provide equivalent flood protection or, in plantations, informed re-stocking will take place even without pest management (which would further reduce impacts), though there may be some commercial operations that switch away from forestry as a result of changes in profitability.
15. To reduce the need and desire to travel by car	0	0	0					No significant effects

16. To promote healthy lifestyles	0	0	0					No significant effects
17. To raise standards of education and	0	0	0					No significant effects
18 To promote the development of an economy that supports social and environmental objectives	0	+/-	+	✓			✓	<p>Monitoring and managing pests will likely generate future business opportunities in pest / disease management that, by virtue of the fact they are removing a danger to the environment , contribute to environmental objectives.</p> <p>There is the possibility that managing diseases may have a negative impact on tourism in the medium term as a result of cumulative environmental and cultural impacts.</p>
19. To promote good governance	0	0	0					No significant effects
20. To minimise the consumption of natural resources; including fossil fuels, minerals, land take and water.	0	0	0					No significant effects
Secondary, Cumulative and Synergistic Effects								
<p><u>Secondary effects:</u> There may be secondary effects on biodiversity resulting from changes to ecosystems. These are not possible to predict at a strategic scale.</p> <p><u>Synergistic effects:</u> Climate change may exacerbate pest and disease problems and limit options for management.</p> <p><u>Cumulative effects:</u> Environmental and cultural impacts could combine to put strains on resources or impact on tourism.</p>								

Recommendations for Mitigation	N/a
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Option	Alternative option: 'Policy off' scenario ('We will not monitor the incidence and impact of pests and diseases in the AONB')							
SA Objective	Impact / timescale			Type of effect				Analysis
	S ⁸	M	L	P ₉	T	D	I	
1. To protect and enhance the landscape	-	--	--/-	✓		✓		There are likely to be severe effects on the landscape if pests and disease are not monitored and managed. While this may get more severe over time, there may be some prospect for a degree of recovery in the longer term as replacement features such as tree species mature (subject to impacts from climate change).
2. To protect and where applicable enhance biodiversity (habitats) and geodiversity	-	--	--/-	✓		✓		There are likely to be severe effects on the habitats if pests and disease are not monitored and managed. While this may get more severe over time, there may be some prospect for a degree of recovery in the longer term as replacement features such as alternative tree species mature or resistant specimens proliferate (subject to impacts from climate change). However, significant ecosystem change may have occurred by this time.
3. To protect and enhance fauna and flora (individual species)	-	--	--/?	✓		✓		There are likely to be severe effects on species if pests and disease are not monitored and managed. While this may get more severe over time, it will depend on the adaptive capacity of individual species whether there is a prospect of recovery. The smaller genetic base and

⁸ S, M, L stand for 'short term', 'medium term' and 'long term' respectively.

⁹ P, T, D, I stand for 'permanent', 'temporary', 'direct' and 'indirect'.

								fragmented distribution of the most threatened species may make them particularly vulnerable. However, new niches will be created and other species may benefit (though it is uncertain whether these will be presently threatened species or whether the new species distributions will simply make it even harder for current flora and fauna to be sustained at certain affected sites).
4. To ensure no adverse effect arises on population (i.e. demographic balance)	0	0	-/?	✓			✓	It is possible that if pests go unmanaged certain ecosystem services (such as pollination) will become threatened. This may ultimately affect populations as food or materials become more expensive. Technological services may, however, be able to replicate certain ecosystem services in the longer term (there is considerable uncertainty that this will happen, however)
5. To safeguard human health	-	-	-/?	✓			✓	Certain pest species that are also harmful to humans will proliferate under this objective. In addition the effect on ecosystem services highlighted for the previous objective is applicable here.
6. To protect and enhance soil quality	0	-	-	✓			✓	Where tree populations are damaged, problems of erosion may increase on adjacent land. As replacement trees grow to replace lost specimens this erosion will be lessened. However, commercial considerations may prompt a permanent switch away from woodland in some cases.
7. To protect water	0	-	-		✓		✓	Increased erosion and runoff will affect water quality in the medium term. As the land management response to loss of trees is uncertain, the longer term picture is uncertain, though effects are likely to endure in many places making the net effect negative.
8. To protect air and climate	0	--	-	✓		✓		Unmonitored and unmanaged there is likely to be a significant loss of biomass (assuming pests and diseases become problematic) with some recovery / offsetting in the longer term where regeneration occurs.
9. To maintain cultural	-	--	-	✓	✓	✓		Where pests are unmanaged historic parks and gardens and the

heritage								settings of historic properties is likely to change significantly. Some reactive manual replacement of trees is likely to occur in the longer term, though the lack of monitoring will reduce the prospect of successful re-establishment.
10. To protect material assets including natural resources	-	-	-		✓	✓	✓	There could be severe loss of commercial tree species where monitoring does not take place at all – however, one would assume that other organisations such as the forestry commission would disseminate advice to commercial agents. There may be the prospect of reservoirs of pests in the AONB outside of commercial woodlands that could undermine commercial efforts to manage the issue. In the longer term some commercial agents may switch away from forestry.
11. To avoid significant adverse effects between the above relationships (combination)	-	--	--	✓	✓	✓	✓	In the longer term a policy off scenario could put pressure on resources that could be made available for future management and affect tourism in the AONB.
12. To create more vibrant cohesive and mixed communities	0	0	0					No likely significant effects
13. To protect the quality and character of individual settlements and communities	-	--	-	✓	✓	✓		Loss of trees in settlements would increase over time. Communities would lack the information to rectify the situation in the longer term, though some efforts would probably succeed.
14. To protect people, environment and properties from flood risk	0	-	-		✓	✓	✓	Loss of individual trees to pests would have little effect, but where plantations are affected on a larger scale impacts may be significant. However, one would assume that other organisations such as the Forestry Commission would disseminate advice to commercial agents engaged in woodland management. There may be the prospect of reservoirs of pests in the AONB outside of commercial woodlands that could undermine commercial efforts to re-establish woodland. And

									woodlands may be lost as they become unprofitable to manage in the long term.
15. To reduce the need and desire to travel by car	0	0	0						No significant effects
16. To promote healthy lifestyles	0	0	0						No significant effects
17. To raise standards of education and	0	0	0						No significant effects
18 To promote the development of an economy that supports social and environmental objectives	0	0	0						No significant effects
19. To promote good governance	0	0	0						No significant effects
20. To minimise the consumption of natural resources; including fossil fuels, minerals, land take and water.	0	0	0						No significant effects
Secondary, Cumulative and Synergistic Effects	<p><u>Secondary effects:</u> There may be secondary effects on biodiversity resulting from changes to ecosystems. These are not possible to predict at a strategic scale.</p> <p><u>Synergistic effects:</u> Climate change may exacerbate pest and disease problems and limit options for management by other organisation. Reservoirs of pests may occur that could undermine efforts where management takes place.</p> <p><u>Cumulative effects:</u> Environmental and cultural impacts could combine to put strains on resources or impact on</p>								

	tourism.
Recommendations for Mitigation	<u>There are several very negative and significant deleterious effects associated with this option. It is recommended that this is not a viable option and that an alternative option should be pursued.</u>

Score	Significance
++	Very positive
+	Positive
0	Neutral
-	Negative
--	Very negative
?	Uncertain

Appendix 4: Comments made on the Screening Report by Consultees

Table 4: Comments made on the Screening Report by Statutory Consultees

Consultee	SEA Required – Yes / No	Summary of Comments
Natural England	No	The SEA Screening Report determines that the amendments to the AONB Management Plan are unlikely to have a significant adverse effect upon the natural environment, and consequently will not require SEA. Natural England is in agreement with this conclusion.
English Heritage	No	In terms of the historic environment, English Heritage would concur with the conclusion that SEA will not be required for the AONB Management Plan as it is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects.
Environment Agency		No response received.

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اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو براہ کرم مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

Aby otrzymać te informacje w innym języku lub formacie, np. w alfabecie brajla, w wersji dużym drukiem lub audió, prosimy się z nami skontaktować.

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