



North

Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire County Council

Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019 - 2024

Strategic Environmental Assessment- Draft Screening Report

September 2018

1. Introduction

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 2019 to 2024. This is to ensure compliance with European Directive 2001/42/EC¹ 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 2004² which implements the Directive in England.

2. AONB Management Plans and Guidance on SEA

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000³ 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”*. Management plans must be reviewed ‘at intervals of not more than 5 years’.

The Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan 2009 to 2014 (2009 Plan) was subject to a formal SEA - no prior Screening exercise was carried out. The subsequent Management Plan 2014 – 2019 (2014 Plan) was Screened-out of requiring an SEA, after completing the assessment process contained in Annex 3 of the SEA Directive. This concluded that the AONB Management Plan was “unlikely to exhibit significant effects on the environment”. This conclusion was endorsed by the Statutory Consultees Natural England and English Heritage.

This SEA Screening Report has been produced to determine whether an SEA should be undertaken for the Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024 (2019 Plan). In doing so the Screening Report compares the changes to the previous AONB Management Plan (2014 Plan) and the 2009 Plan (which was subject to the last SEA).

A Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Report has also been produced to establish whether an Appropriate Assessment is necessary.

3. The Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024

The draft Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan sets out a 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:

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042>

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/contents/made>

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>

“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 designed parklands. The threats to the natural and cultural resources of the AONB will have been mitigated by the adoption of appropriate resilience strategies 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:

A Natural Capital & 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

Monitoring

Action Programme

The draft Vision and Objective topic areas are largely the same as those presented in the 2014 Management Plan. There are however, some more significant variations in the Vision and Objective topics when compared to the 2009 Plan (see Appendix 1).

The Management Plan also includes the Special Qualities for which the Howardian Hills AONB is designated, which are unchanged from the previous two Plans. These are:

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

In order to determine the requirement to conduct an SEA for the 2019 Management Plan, the draft Management Plan Objectives have been compared to those from the 2009 and 2014 Plans (see Appendix 2).

4. **Screening**

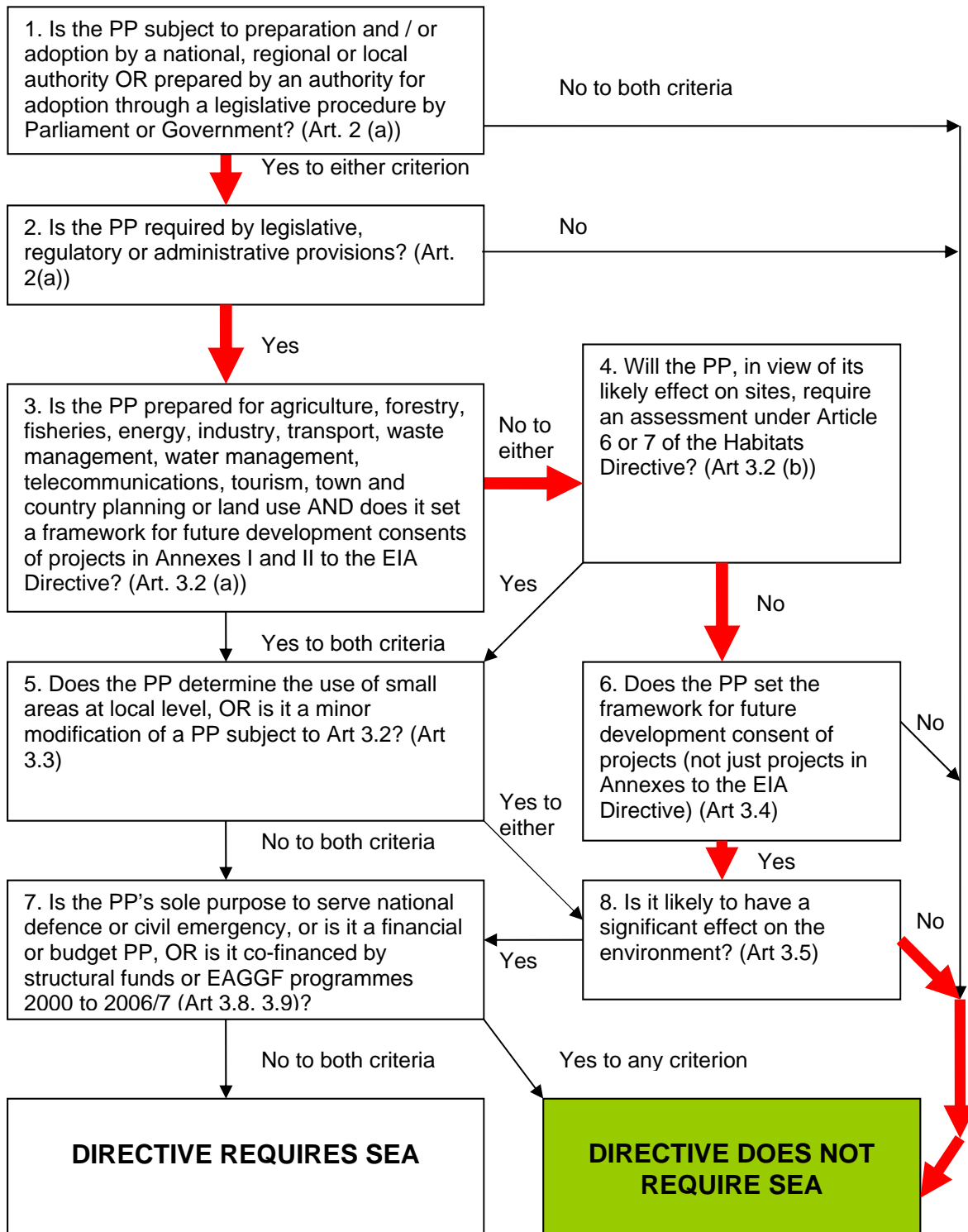
The SEA Directive and accompanying national regulations describe the types of plans for which the undertaking of SEA is mandatory. There are also a number of other plans where a decision must be taken on whether SEA should be undertaken.

The Government published practical guidance for the SEA Directive⁴ which sets out a stepwise process for determining ('screening') which plans and programmes require SEA.

Figure 1 (below) outlines the steps that should be taken to determine the need for SEA and illustrates the path taken when screening this AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024.

⁴ ODPM, 2006. A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, ODPM, London

Figure 1: Screening the requirement for an SEA for the Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024



Screening process for the AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024
(Adapted from ODPM, 2006)

Figure 1 shows a considered view of the status of the AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024 in relation to the requirements of the SEA Directive, and determines that an SEA is not required. Further justification 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, Ryedale District Council and Hambleton District 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 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 HRA Screening Report has been completed. The report concluded that there will not to be a likely significant effect (LSE) on any designated sites, and therefore an appropriate assessment is not required.
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.

<p>6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive) (Art 3.4)⁵</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>A narrower interpretation of 'framework for development consents' would exclude the AONB Management Plan as it does not direct projects that would generally fall within the planning system.</p> <p>However, public bodies, statutory undertakers etc. have a duty to have regard to the purposes of AONBs and their Special Qualities when discharging their functions e.g. planning authorities making planning decisions⁶.</p> <p>Taking a broader interpretation of 'framework', the Management Plan may affect the outcome of future development consents, and as such a precautionary decision of 'Yes' has been made,</p>
<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)?</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>This question need only be answered if the answer to question 6 is 'no'. Or the answer to question 8 is 'yes'.</p>

⁵ 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)

⁶ 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>8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art 3.5) (See appendix for criteria and characteristics determining significance)</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>In determining the significance of environmental effects from the Management Plan, consideration has been made to the scale of change from both the 2014 Plan and 2009 Plan, and criteria of significance presented in the Annex II of the SEA Directive. Further information is provided in Section 5, Conclusion.</p> <p>Due to the relatively small-scale nature of the changes from previous Management Plans, and the fact that the Objectives and Actions of the Management Plan generally seek to maintain and enhance the Special Qualities of the AONB, it is determined that the AONB Management Plan will not result in significant effects on the environment.</p>
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5. Conclusion

In determining the potential significance of effects arising from the Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024, regard has been taken with respect to Article 3.5 of the SEA Directive, which requires a case by case consideration of whether the plan will result in likely significant environmental effects. Article 3.3 of the SEA Directive has also been considered, whereby minor modifications to plans should be considered within the context of the plan and in terms of the likelihood of them having significant environmental effects.

Criteria for significance, presented in Annex II of the SEA Directive, cover a range of plans characteristics which influence judgements on significance, as well as a range of characteristics of the area likely to be effected by the plan. Appendix 3 of this Screening Report shows the SEA Directive’s significance criteria alongside the likely effects of the Management Plan 2019 – 2024, which have been used for determining the likely significant environmental effects of the Plan.

As detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of this report, both the changes between this Management Plan, the 2014 Plan and the 2009 Plan have been considered when screening for the requirement to carry out an SEA. The comparison with the 2014 Plan was undertaken to determine the potential significance of the changes from the previous Plan. The comparison with the 2009 Plan was undertaken in order to compare the new draft Objectives with the last Plan that was subject to an SEA. This ensures that incremental changes between subsequent plans, which may not

be significant individually, do not result in significant effects if compared back to the 2009 Plan (and the SEA undertaken at that time).

The conclusion of this screening report is that a Strategic Environmental Assessment will not be required for the Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024. This is because the plan is not likely to result in significant environmental effects.

Further work has been undertaken via a HRA Screening Report to determine whether the AONB Management Plan would require assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive. This HRA concluded that the Plan will not result in likely significant effects on European Sites and that an appropriate assessment will not be required.

Consultation

The three statutory bodies for the purposes of SEA screening are Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England. These bodies will be consulted for their views on the conclusions of this screening assessment. In addition, this report will be published on the AONB website alongside the Draft 2019–2024 Management Plan, thereby enabling a wide range of stakeholders to respond if they wish.

Following consultation an SEA screening statement will be published to show the conclusions of the screening exercise.

8. Further Information

Further information on this screening report can be obtained from:

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Appendix 1 – Table comparing vision, aim objectives, structure and special characteristics for the AONB Management Plans for 2019 - 2024, 2014 - 2019 and 2009 - 2014

AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024 (2019)	AONB Management Plan 2014- 2019 (2014)	AONB Management Plan 2009- 2014 (2009)	Divergence	Likely significance of divergence to the environment
VISION				
<p>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 mitigated by the adoption of appropriate resilience strategies 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</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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. Natural and cultural resources will be sympathetically managed within a diverse and prosperous rural economy. Active 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.</p>	<p><u>Low Divergence</u></p> <p>There is very little divergence between the 2019 and 2014 visions (only replacement of “addressed” with “mitigated by the adoption of appropriate resilience strategies”).</p> <p>There is however divergence between the 2019 vision and that in the 2009 Plan.</p> <p>The 2009 vision included the: “Natural and cultural resources will be sympathetically managed within a diverse and prosperous rural economy” which is rephrased in the 2019 (and 2014) Plan: “The threats to the natural and cultural resources of the AONB will have been addressed and these assets</p>	<p><u>Not significant</u></p>

way.			<p>will be sympathetically managed within a diverse and prosperous rural economy”.</p> <p>The reference to ‘active communities’ in the 2009 plan has been modified to ‘active and resilient communities’.</p>	
KEY VISION AIMS				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farming, forestry and local businesses will be environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, thriving and developing due to the Special Qualities of the AONB and the opportunities they bring. • All SSSIs will be in Favourable Condition, with the long-standing water quality issues on the River Derwent resolved. • All conifer plantation areas within Ancient Woodland SINC will have been restored, or be in the process of restoration, to resilient native broadleaves. • All grassland SINC will be in sustainable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farming, forestry and local businesses will be environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, thriving and developing due to the Special Qualities of the AONB. • All SSSIs will be in Favourable Condition, with the long-standing water quality issues on the River Derwent resolved. • All Ancient Woodland SINC will have been restored, or be in the process of restoration, to native broadleaves. • All grassland SINC will be in sustainable grazing/cutting management regimes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farming and forestry will be sustainable both economically and environmentally. • All SSSIs will be in Favourable Condition, with the long-standing water quality issues on the River Derwent resolved. • All Ancient Woodland SINC will have been restored, or be in the process of restoration, to native broadleaves. • All grassland SINC will be in sustainable grazing/cutting management regimes. • All Heritage Assets (Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered 	<p><u>Low Divergence</u></p> <p>There is minor divergence between the 2019 and 2014 Plans: including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of “conifer plantation areas within”. • Increasing areas of Priority Habitat and increasing resilience to climate change (bullet five). • A reduction in the need for road travel and a shift to use more sustainable fuel sources. • Change of name from English Heritage to Historic England. <p>There is further divergence</p>	<p><u>Minor but beneficial</u></p> <p>The changes between the 2014 and 2019 objectives are minor and not significant.</p> <p>The changes from the 2009 Plan increase reference to AONB Special Qualities and sustainability which can be considered as beneficial.</p>

<p>grazing/cutting management regimes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of Priority Habitats within the AONB will have been expanded, buffered and linked via a more diverse landscape, to form a coherent network of green infrastructure that is resilient to climate change impacts. • Designated Heritage Assets (Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks & Gardens, etc) will be in sustainable management, in the Low/Not at Risk category as defined by Historic England. • There will be a more diverse mix of housing units/tenures and more services will be delivered at community level or remotely e.g. via the internet or as yet undeveloped technologies, thereby reducing the need to travel. • A network of public and community transport links will be in place to cater for the majority of travel needs. • The need for personal and business road transport will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitats within the AONB will be linked to the wider landscape, to form a coherent network of green infrastructure. • Designated Heritage Assets (Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks & Gardens, etc) will be in sustainable management, in the Low/Not at Risk category as defined by English Heritage. • There will be a more diverse mix of housing units/tenures and more services will be delivered at community level or remotely e.g. via the internet, thereby reducing the need to travel. • Where travel is necessary, a network of public and community transport links will be in place to cater for the majority of needs. • Personal transport is still likely to be important, but will be powered by more sustainable fuels. • All Rights of Way will be easy to use, with the minimum of barriers to all types of user. 	<p>Parks & Gardens) will be in sustainable management, in the Low Risk category.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a more diverse mix of housing units/tenures and more services will be delivered at community level, reducing the need to travel. • Where travel is necessary, a network of public and community transport links will be in place to cater for the majority of needs. Personal transport is still likely to be important, but will be powered by more sustainable fuels. • All Rights of Way will be easy to use, with the minimum of obstruction to all types of user. • A wide cross-section of society will enjoy and appreciate the special qualities of the AONB, for their intrinsic value and for the physical and mental stimulation they provide. 	<p>between the 2009 Plan and 2019 plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first aim in 2009 does not make reference to local business, social aspects of sustainability, nor the importance of the AONB special qualities. • 7th aim in the 2009 Plan doesn't reference the importance of remote delivery of services e.g. using the internet. 	
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<p>be much reduced, and this will be powered by more sustainable fuels as part of a low-Carbon economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Rights of Way will be easy to use, with the minimum of barriers to all types of user. • A wide cross-section of society will enjoy and appreciate the Special Qualities of the AONB, for their intrinsic value and for the physical and mental wellbeing that they provide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wide cross-section of society will enjoy and appreciate the Special Qualities of the AONB, for their intrinsic value and for the physical and mental stimulation they provide. 			
<p>TOPIC / OBJECTIVE HEADINGS</p>				
<p><u>Natural Capital & Ecosystems Services;</u> <u>A rich heritage;</u> - Natural environment; - Historic environment; <u>Living and working in the Howardian Hills;</u> - Local communities; - Agriculture; - Forestry and woodland; - Development and rural economy; - Roads, transport and traffic management; <u>Enjoying the AONB;</u> - Recreation, access and</p>	<p><u>An ecosystems approach;</u> <u>A rich heritage;</u> - Natural environment; - Historic environment; <u>Living and working in the Howardian Hills;</u> - Local communities; - Agriculture; - Forestry and woodland; - Development and rural economy; - Roads, transport and traffic management; <u>Enjoying the AONB;</u> - Recreation, access and tourism;</p>	<p><u>A Sustainable Future;</u> - climate change; <u>A Rich Heritage;</u> - Special Qualities; - Natural Environment; - Historic Environment; <u>Living and Working in the Howardian Hills;</u> - Local Communities; - Agriculture; - Forestry and Woodland; - Development; - Roads, Transport and Traffic Management; <u>Enjoying the AONB;</u> - Recreation, Access and</p>	<p><u>Low Divergence</u></p> <p>There is no significant divergence between the 2014 and 2019 Plans.</p> <p>As identified in the 2014 SEA screening document, the 2014 and 2019 Plans include ‘an ecosystems approach’ which was not included 2009 plan. However, this subsumes the climate change topic (included in the 2009 Plan), while the development topic has been</p>	<p><u>Not significant</u></p>

<p>tourism; <u>Awareness and promotion;</u> <u>Putting the plan into action;</u> <u>Monitoring;</u> <u>Action plan.</u></p>	<p><u>Awareness and promotion;</u> <u>Putting the plan into action;</u> <u>-Implementation;</u> <u>-Monitoring.</u></p>	<p>Tourism; <u>Awareness and Promotion;</u> <u>Future Local Management</u> <u>Priorities;</u> <u>- Putting the Plan into</u> <u>Action;</u> <u>- The Action Programme;</u> <u>- Monitoring.</u></p>	<p>retitled as 'Development and rural economy'.</p> <p>Special qualities remain the same across the 3 plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An unusual landform • A richly varied landscape • An important wildlife resource • A remarkable heritage • A landscape of high visual quality 	
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Appendix 2 – Table comparing plan objectives between the AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024, the 2014 Plan, and 2009 Plan

AONB Management Plan 2019 2024 (2019)	AONB Management Plan 2014- 2019 (2014)	AONB Management Plan 2009- 2014 (2009)	Divergence	Likely significance of divergence to the environment
AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH				
NCES1 Improve knowledge of the AONB’s natural capital assets, their quality and their relative roles/significance in the provision of ecosystem services	ES1 Gain a better understanding of the AONB’s contribution to ecosystem services	N/a	<p><u>Moderate divergence</u> between the 2014 and 2019 Plans. The new policy provides additional emphasis on natural capital assets, rather than just the ecosystem services the AONB provides. It also seeks to increase understanding of the relative importance of the assets and the services they provide.</p> <p><u>High divergence</u> between the 2019 and 2009 as there was no related policy previously.</p>	<p><u>Not significant</u></p> <p>The objective relates to gathering information and increasing understanding of natural capital and the ecosystem services they provide. Therefore, any environmental effects are not significant.</p>
NCES2 Promote sustainability and support appropriate projects that benefit the AONB’s natural capital, ecosystems services and Special Qualities	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	<p><u>Low divergence</u> between 2019 and 2014 Plan, due to the addition of natural capital.</p> <p><u>Low divergence</u> from 2009 Plan, with increased emphasis on natural capital, ecosystem services and AONB Special Qualities. However, the overall aims of the objectives</p>	<p><u>Low to Moderate significance but beneficial</u></p> <p>The overall aims of the objectives are the same but with greater emphasis on natural capital, ecosystem services and AONB Special Qualities. This reflects updates to government</p>

			are the same.	policy e.g. DEFRA 25 Year Environment Plan ⁷ and will potentially strengthen protection for the AONB and increase resilience to significant environmental effects.
NCES3 Monitor climate change trends/scenarios and evaluate potential future impacts on the AONB	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	<u>Low divergence</u> The overall aim of the objectives is broadly the similar but NCES3 increases emphasis on considering future climate change impacts.	<u>Not significant</u> The NCES3 will increase resilience of the AONB by considering future climatic impacts.
A RICH HERITAGE				
NE1 Continually improve knowledge of the biodiversity resources in the AONB	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	<u>Low divergence</u> between 2019 and 2014 objectives which has been updated to replace 'wildlife' with 'biodiversity'. <u>Moderate divergence</u> between 2019 and 2009 objective largely due to the removal of climate change.	<u>Low significance</u> The inclusion of natural capital is in keeping with current government policy. The absence of climate change (when compared to the 2009) is not significant as it is dealt with in other Objectives (e.g. NCES3).
NE2 Ensure that appropriate protection is given to the best nature conservation sites in the	NE2 Ensure that appropriate protection is given to the best nature conservation sites in the	NE2 Give priority to conservation of the best remaining nature conservation nature	<u>Low divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>

⁷ [A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#)

AONB	AONB	conservation sites in the AONB		
NE3 Assist with the implementation of 25YEP/BD2020/WFD/LBAP targets for priority habitats in the AONB (broadleaved woodland; grasslands; wetlands) to improve condition and increase network connectivity	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	<u>Low divergence</u> Each objective has been updated to reflect new government policy and targets e.g. the 2019 objective includes reference to the new Defra 25 year Environment Plan.	<u>Not significant</u>
NE4 Assist with the implementation of 25YEP/BD2020/WFD/LBAP targets for priority species for which the AONB is important	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	<u>Low divergence</u> The objectives have been updated to reflect new government policy and targets e.g. the 2019 objective includes reference to the new Defra 25 Year Environment Plan.	<u>Not significant</u>
NE5 Assist with the implementation of	NE5 Assist with the implementation of	N/A	<u>Low divergence</u> from 2014 objective due to inclusion of	<u>Not significant</u>

25YEP/BD2020/WFD/LBAP targets for wildlife within villages	LBAP/BD2020 targets for wildlife within villages		25YEP targets. <u>High divergence</u> from 2009 as there was no previous objective. However, the aim of this policy would have been delivered through other objectives in the 2009 Plan e.g. NE7, NE9 etc.	
NE6 Monitor and where appropriate support control of invasive non-native species in the AONB	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	<u>Low divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
NE7 Encourage the conservation of important geodiversity sites and features in the AONB	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	<u>Low divergence</u> NE7 was updated to identify that the identification of geodiversity sites and features has already been undertaken.	<u>Not significant</u>
NE8 Provide assistance to farmers and land managers, to help them manage their land sympathetically	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 complementary semi-natural habitats.	<u>Low divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>

NE9 Ensure continued recognition of the Howardian Hills as a priority area for biodiversity	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	<p><u>Low divergence</u> from 2014 objective due to the removal of reference to the geographical location of the AONB.</p> <p><u>High divergence</u> from 2009 Plan, as there was no comparable objective. This objective can be met by delivery of management plan and other natural environment objectives.</p>	<u>Not significant</u>
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT				
HE1 Improve understanding of the AONB's historic environment and its significance	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.	<u>Low divergence</u> - there is no change from the 2014 objective, and only minor wording changes from the 2009 objective.	<u>Not significant</u>
HE2 Conserve and enhance the significance of the AONB's historic environment	HE2 Sustain and enhance the significance of the AONB's historic environment	<p>HE2 Ensure appropriate statutory protection for all nationally important monuments, buildings and structures in the AONB.</p> <p>HE4 Ensure that the diversity, quality and distinctiveness of the AONB's historic heritage is conserved and enhanced.</p>	<p><u>Low divergence</u> from previous Plan objective ('sustain' replaced with 'conserve').</p> <p>Objectives HE2 and HE4 from the 2009 Plan together cover the same objective aims as the 2019 HE2 objective.</p>	<u>Not significant</u>

<p>HE3 Help local people to identify the non-designated heritage assets which contribute to the character of their area and support the development of management strategies for their conservation and enhancement</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>HE3 Encourage local participation in the monitoring, adoption and management of cultural and historic heritage sites</p> <p>HE4 Ensure that the diversity, quality and distinctiveness of the AONB's historic heritage is conserved and enhanced</p>	<p><u>Low divergence</u> – there is a change in the drafting from the previous Plan, which broadens the requirement to supporting management strategies rather than specifically Local Plans.</p> <p>The new HE3 objective broadly meets the same objective aim as those in the 2009 Plan.</p>	<p><u>Not significant</u></p>
<p>LIVING AND WORKING IN THE HOWARDIAN HILLS</p>				
<p>LC1 Support the retention of village services and the identification and implementation of projects that maintain and enhance village character, sustainability, economy and sense of community.</p>	<p>LC1 Assist local communities with identifying and implementing projects that maintain and enhance their character, sustainability and sense of community</p>	<p>LC1 Assist local communities with identifying projects that maintain and enhance their character, sustainability and community pride.</p>	<p><u>Moderate to High divergence</u></p> <p>The inclusion of emphasis of retention of village services and the economy is different to the previous to LC1 objectives.</p>	<p><u>Low to Moderate significance</u></p> <p>The retention of services in rural communities and reference to the economy may result in potential significant effects.</p> <p>However, when considering the objective as a whole, noting the emphasis on enhancement and sustainability, and in the wider context of the Management Plan and its other objectives, it is not consider to result in significant environmental effects.</p>

LC2 Encourage voluntary and community engagement with the local natural and historic environment of the AONB	LC2 Encourage voluntary and community engagement with the local natural and historic environment of the AONB.	n/a	<u>No divergence</u> from the objective in the 2014 Plan. <u>High divergence</u> from the 2009 Plan as it did not include a LC2 policy.	<u>Not significant</u> The objective aims in the 2009 Plan where met by other policies including LC1 and HE3.
AG1 Encourage the development and uptake of new Government support mechanisms that promote sustainable farm and rural business development	AG1 Encourage the development and uptake of Government support mechanisms that achieve sustainable farm and rural business development	AG1 Encourage the development and uptake of government support mechanisms that achieve sustainable farm and rural business development AG3 Encourage sustainable alternative farm enterprises that conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB.	<u>Low divergence</u> Replacement of 'achieve' with 'promote'. The AG3 objective was removed following review for the 2014 Plan. It is considered that the objective is covered by AG1.	<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 advice and appropriate assistance	AG2 Support farm businesses in the AONB by providing conservation advice and appropriate assistance	<u>Low divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
AG3 Ensure high standards of design and careful siting of all new farm buildings and infrastructure	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	<u>No divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
FW1 Ensure that all woodland felling, management and creation	FW1 Ensure that all woodland felling, management and creation	FW1 Ensure that all woodland felling and management proposals	<u>No divergence</u> between the 2019 and 2014 Plans.	<u>Not significant</u>

proposals recognise the Special Qualities of the AONB	proposals recognise the Special Qualities of the AONB	recognise the Special Qualities of the AONB	<u>Moderate divergence</u> from the 2009 Plan, as FE1 now includes new woodland. However, this was previously covered by FW5 in 2009 Plan.	
FW2 Encourage a multi-objective approach to woodland management in the AONB	FW2 Encourage a multi-objective approach to woodland management in the AONB	FW2 Encourage a multi-objective approach to woodland management in the AONB	<u>No divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
FW3 Monitor and mitigate the incidence and impacts of pests and diseases in the AONB.	FW3 Monitor and manage the incidence and impacts of pests and diseases in the AONB	N/A	<u>Low divergence</u> between from 2014 Plan. However, a <u>high degree of divergence</u> from the 2009 Management Plan as not previously covered.	<u>Low Significance</u> The potential significance was identified in the previous SEA Screening (2014) and a 'policy off' was undertaken (see Appendix 2 of the 2014 SEA Screening Report ⁸). It identified that the inclusion of the objective resulted in less significant environment effect than not having the objective in the management plan.
FW4 Encourage the use of selected provenance trees and shrubs when planting or re-stocking, to develop future	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	<u>Low divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>

⁸ <http://www.howardianhills.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Howardian-Hills-AONB-MP-SEA-Screening-Report-Update-March-2014.pdf>

resilience.				
FW5 Encourage new areas of woodland where these would conserve or enhance the Special Qualities of the AONB or enhance habitat networks.	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	<u>Low Divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
FW6 Support the continued development of local and regional markets for timber and woodland products.	FW6 Encourage the continued development of markets for wood and timber	FW4 Encourage the development of alternative markets for wood and timber	<u>Low Divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
FW7 Encourage the development and uptake of new grant and advice mechanisms that achieve AONB Management Plan objectives for woodland management and creation.	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	<u>Low Divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u> Updated wording for new objective to reflect replacement of existing schemes post Brexit ⁹ .
DRE1 Ensure that all new development is compatible with the aims of AONB designation and has regard to	D1 Ensure that any new development is compatible with the aims of AONB designation and has regard to	D1 Ensure that any new development is compatible with the aims of the AONB designation and has regard to	<u>Low Divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>

⁹ [Health and harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit](#)

social, economic and environmental sustainability	social, economic and environmental sustainability	social, economic and environmental sustainability		
DRE2 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	D2 Encourage high standards in both the design of new development within the AONB and the management of existing buildings / features.	<u>No Divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
DRE3 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	D3 Encourage the mitigation of intrusive features, to enhance the local landscape character and tranquillity of the AONB	<u>No Divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
DRE4 Support appropriate minerals-working proposals which conserve and enhance the Special Qualities of the AONB	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	<u>No Divergence</u> from the 2014 objective. <u>Moderate Divergence</u> from the 2009 Plan. The new objective does not explicitly cite local stone supply but adds emphasis on conserving and enhancing special qualities, which strengthens the environmental soundness of the objective.	<u>Low significance</u> As considered within the 2014 SEA Screening, the newer objective makes a stronger link with special qualities, thus reducing environmental effects. The objective broadens the f development that might be deemed acceptable but this is controlled through objective D3 and actions

				<p>D4.1¹⁰.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>DRE5 Support appropriate renewable energy installations that do not have adverse impacts on the Special Qualities of the AONB</p>	<p>D5 Support appropriate renewable energy installations that do not have adverse impacts on the special qualities of the AONB</p>	<p>D5 Support appropriate renewable energy installations that do not have adverse impacts on the special qualities of the AONB</p>	<p><u>No Divergence</u></p>	<p><u>Not significant</u></p>
<p>DRE6 Support rural business, local employment, training & skills and farm diversification activities that do not have adverse impacts on the Special Qualities of the AONB.</p>	<p>D6 Support rural business, local employment and farm diversification activities that do not have adverse impacts on the special qualities of the AONB</p>	<p>D6 Support business and diversification opportunities linked to the special qualities of the AONB.</p> <p>D7 Encourage the sustainable re-use of</p>	<p><u>Low Divergence</u></p> <p>The new policy adds emphasis on the importance of training and skills.</p> <p>When compared to the 2009</p>	<p><u>Not significant</u></p>

¹⁰ [D4.1 Resist any minerals exploration or production proposals which are not compatible with AONB Purposes of Designation or Management Plan Objectives.](#)

		redundant farm buildings.	Plan, the 2019 objective includes 'that do not have adverse impacts' on the special qualities of the AONB, which helps ensure there is no significant environmental effect.	
DRE7 Encourage the expansion of modern telecommunications infrastructure, whilst safeguarding the Special Qualities and tranquillity of the AONB.	D7 Encourage the expansion of modern communications technology, whilst safeguarding the Special Qualities and tranquillity of the AONB	D8 Encourage the expansion of modern communications technology, whilst safeguarding the AONB landscape.	<u>Low Divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
DRE8 Encourage the increased provision of local-needs/affordable housing in the AONB	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	<u>No Divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
RTT1 Encourage 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 Encourage 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	<u>No Divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
RTT2 Support initiatives to monitor and address traffic and driver behaviour issues in the AONB.	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.	<u>No Divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>

RTT3 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	RT3 Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport as alternatives to the private car	<u>No Divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
RTT4 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	RT4 Maintain the existing rural character of the road network in the AONB	<u>No Divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
RTT5 Ensure that any proposals for improvement of the A64 Trunk Road through the AONB are fully justified and sensitive to local characteristics. Proposals should aim to minimise environmental impact, make maximum use of the existing road alignment and utilise new techniques such as 'green bridges' where possible.	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.	<u>Moderate Divergence</u> The updated objective still requires the minimising of environmental impacts, maximising use of existing road alignment and the justification for the works in the context of the AONB.	<u>Not significant</u>
RAT1 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 the special qualities of the AONB	RA1 Encourage sustainable recreational activities that do not conflict with special qualities of the AONB	<u>No divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
RAT2 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 to encourage sustainable use and support the local visitor economy	RA2 Promote the attractions and special qualities of the AONB in a sustainable way	<u>Low divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>

RAT3 Maintain and improve both the condition and network of Public Rights of Way in the AONB.	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	<u>Moderate divergence</u> No change from 2014 objective and amalgamates objectives RA4, RA6 and RA7 from the 2009 Plan.	<u>Not significant</u>
RAT4 Carry out recreational management measures as appropriate, to enhance enjoyment by the public and address local issues.	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	<u>Low divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
RAT5 Develop routes within the AONB for different user groups and provide self-guided information.	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,	<u>Low divergence</u> There is no change from the previous objective, and broadly amalgamates the objectives RA5, RA7 and RA9 from the 2009 Management Plan.	<u>Not significant</u>

		touring cyclists, horse riders, off road cyclists.		
AP1 Maintain awareness and understanding of the AONB designation, its importance and the role and work of the Joint Advisory Committee	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	<u>Low divergence</u> – minor wording change.	<u>Not significant</u>
AP2 Promote awareness of the Special Qualities of the AONB.	AP2 Promote awareness of the Special Qualities of the AONB	AP2 Promote awareness of the Special qualities of the AONB	<u>No divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
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	IM1 Consolidate and develop funding and partnership mechanisms to achieve Management Plan objectives	<u>No divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
IM2 Ensure that the AONB Partnership has a robust business model that is resilient to future challenges	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	<u>Low divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
MN1 Monitor the performance of the AONB partnership and AONB unit	MN1 Monitor the performance of the AONB Partnership and AONB unit	MN1 Monitor performance of AONB Partnership and AONB Unit	<u>Low divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>
MN2 Monitor the condition of the AONB	MN2 Monitor the condition of the AONB	MN2 Monitor condition of the AONB	<u>No divergence</u>	<u>Not significant</u>

Appendix 3: 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 AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024

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:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Objectives and actions generally link to and support national or local initiatives that are designed to enhance the quality of the rural environment; - Objectives are linked to preserving special qualities so actions which are contrary to this are not promoted as part of the plan. - The condition of the AONB will be monitored as part of the management plan.
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

characteristics or cultural heritage		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.
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values	No	The AONB management is highly unlikely to provoke the exceedance of any environmental thresholds and is likely to increase environmental capacity in many instances (e.g. by restoring biodiversity).
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to intensive land-use	No	The AONB management plan is unlikely to promote intensive land use, rather it helps promotes less intensive farming.
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	No	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>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>		