

Key Decision Required:	No	In the Forward Plan:	No
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REPORT TO THE PLANNING PORTFOLIO HOLDER

14 November 2018

A.1 SUFFOLK COAST AND HEATHS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2018 – 23.

(Report prepared by Clive Dawson)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To endorse the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2018-2023.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires the relevant Local Authorities to 'prepare and publish a plan which formulates their policy for the management of their Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it'. The Management Plan will fulfil this duty for the next 5 years and help conserve and enhance this important natural and economic asset

The Tendring Coast is currently not formally part of the AONB however the Stour Estuary and its southern shore have been included within the wider AONB Project Area since 1993, in order to further the Council's aspirations to see the area formally designated as Part of the AONB.

Natural England has proposed an extension to the AONB to include land within Tendring and which has been subject to a period of public consultation. It is anticipated that Natural England will confirm the extent of the extension within the lifetime of this plan

In order to meet the statutory requirements for producing the Management Plan the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) has been authorised to prepare the plan. The Joint Advisory Committee was chosen as the body to oversee the preparation of the Plan because of its membership and the need for a wide range of organisations to be fully supportive of the plan if it is to be successfully implemented. Each local authority needs to adopt the Final Plan and notify Natural England to this effect.

The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan is available in draft form electronically [see Background Papers]

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Management Plan be formally adopted by this Council (as one of the project's partners) in order to comply with the requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The endorsement and adoption of the Management Plan and the impact of the objectives set out in the plan will help to meet the Councils long term aims to shape and develop Tendring as set out in the Councils Corporate Plan 2016 - 2020.

Our Council Our Community: - One of the main strengths of The AONB Management Plan is close effective working with Joint Advisory Council (JAC) partner organisations such as County Councils, District Councils, The National Farmers Union, The Environment Agency and Natural England. It also involves engagement with the wider community through the AONB Partnership including Town and Parish Councils, The Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) and local landowners. Close working with our partners is a core element of the management of the AONB.

Health and Housing: - The protection and promotion of land available for quiet recreational purposes will provide opportunities for both visitors to, and residents of, the district to exercise and relax in a beautiful part of the district that will promote both physical and mental wellbeing. This fits well with the Council's aim to deliver a quality living environment.

Employment and Enjoyment: - The Management Plan will assist the promotion of the southern shore of the River Stour as a tourism destination which will assist the growth of existing visitor related businesses and provide opportunities for new business operations associated with tourism. The value of tourism in the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB was calculated at approximately £210 million per annum in 2017.

The coastal geography is the one of the district's greatest asset but also presents us with complex management issues. The adoption of Management Plan is a cost effective way of meeting our statutory requirements in terms of the care and management of the Stour Estuary and its southern shore.

By the adoption of the Suffolk Coast And Heaths Management Plan the Council shows that it is actively working to achieve its priorities set out above.

FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

Finance and other resources

Budgetary provision exists for continued commitment to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Project.

Risk

Failure to fulfil statutory duties may bring the Council into disrepute with Government Agencies and with the other partners and, if it was not endorsed by the Council the Management Plan would be less effective.

Should the Council be required to proceed independently it would prove to be a far more costly option.

LEGAL

The Council has a duty to comply with the requirements of national legislation contained in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The requirements of the crime and disorder act have been taken into account during the production of the documents.

Equality and Diversity

Equality and diversity implications have been taken into account during the production of the above documents.

Health Inequalities

There are no health inequality implications.

Wards Affected

Lawford, Manningtree, Mistley, Lt Bentley and Tendring Bradfield, Wrabness and Wix and Ramsey and Parkeston

Consultation/Public Engagement

The Management Plan has been subject to a period of consultation with local communities, professional interests and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a landscape that has been recognised as being of national importance and has received special protection from the UK government.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty can be designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949) and their management was strengthened through the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000). Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty form part of a 'family' of protected and defined landscapes that, together with National Parks and Heritage Coasts, include our finest countryside.

There are 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was designated in 1956, and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB had its designation confirmed in 1970

The statutory purpose of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. In pursuing this purpose, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves help to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Recreation is not an objective of designation but the demand for recreation should be met and managed, in so far as this is consistent with the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

CURRENT POSITION

Tendring District Council is currently operating under The Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan 2013 – 2018.

Within the lifetime of the AONB Management Plan Natural England are likely to formally designate an area as an extension to the AONB to include the River Stour and land on its southern Shore.

Depending on the decision of Natural England; the Councils formal involvement with the AONB project can then be reviewed prior to the completion and potential adoption of the management plan that will follow on from the 2018 -2023 plan.

THE PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Management Plan sets out five themes for the effective management of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These themes are: landscape; Coast and Estuaries; Land-Use and Wildlife; Enjoying the Area and Working Together.

The Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Management Plan is set in the context of national and local policy and strategy. It supports the Councils the Local Plan which contain policies relating to conserving the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The plan seeks to deliver the 20 year vision for the area out lined in the Management Plan. The vision can be summarised as:

An area of special wildlife, landscape, seascape and heritage qualities that are conserved and enhanced with the needs of people living, working and visiting the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Plan does not constitute Supplementary Planning Guidance.

An Appropriate Assessment has been carried out under *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010; Regulation 61 Assessment* to determine the effect of the Plan on the integrity of the European Designated Sites within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The formal view of Suffolk County Council ecologists of the most recently endorsed management plan was that:

... any possible negative effects on the integrity of European Sites as a result of the Proposals and Actions within the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty management plan will be considered, mitigation sought and compensation agreed in order to reduce or negate any likely significant negative effects.

Indeed, for the reasons set out at several places above, it is anticipated that implementation of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management plan will result in more positive significant impacts in the future.

The Plan, once delivered is most likely to improve the conservation of biodiversity across the area”.

The Assessment will be formally submitted to Natural England following endorsement and adoption

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION

The Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Management Plan 2018 – 2023.

<http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/about-us/aonb-management-plan/>

APPENDICES

A.1 Record of Executive Decision
