

PAPER A Mendip Hills AONB Partnership Committee - 13th June 2018

Officer Support Group Report

The Officer Support Group meeting met on Monday 4th June 2018. The OSG considered the;

1.0 Partnership Terms of Reference agreeing minor amendments to recommend to the Committee. Amendments are to:

- 1.2 recognise North Somerset as a funding partner
- 5.2 to have the Partnership Chair and Vice Chair, and remove 'may attend by invitation' with regard Natural England.
- 5.3 in recognition of the above to delete 'of the five constituent authorities' to allow NE officer to chair the meeting if required.

1.1 The OSG noting 3.14 'All Partnership members are to sign the 'Membership Accord' that is attached to the ToR, agreed that this should be re-signed by all members annually and to recommend that action to the Partnership on 13th June.

2.0 The Statement of Intent 2018-21 was agreed by the funding partners with the understanding that partners would provide an update on their 2019/20 funding contributions by the end of September 2018 in line with the requirement to give no less than 6 month's notice to withdraw or reduce funding. However it was noted that local authorities are unlikely to be able to confirm their allocations until Council budgets are agreed by Cabinet late in the current financial year.

3.0 Partnership Committee agendas – in discussing the Terms of Reference 5.1 (b) regarding the content of Partnership agendas, the OSG agreed that Declarations of Interest should be standard item on the Partnership agenda as of June 2018.

4.0 Business Plan – the OSG discussed in detail and agreed changes to be made and circulated before the Partnership meeting. Key amendments were:

- 3.0 Current funding – include table showing partner contributions, figure required for the 25% match funding of core costs and disparity figures.
- 4.0 Opportunities - include reference to the Government 25yr Environment Plan, Defra review of National Parks and AONBs and Joint Spatial Plan.
- Appendix 1- include in table risks listed under 3.11 plus risk of review of NPs/AONBs with regard funding and review of Somerset local authorities.
- Appendix 2 Budget – include 'contingency' line with allocated amounts for redundancy/vehicle replacement, and to show more clearly where income relates to specific projects eg Mendip Rocks, Young Rangers, Mendip Hills Fund.

4.1 The OSG noted 4.27 with regard the AONB Unit/Partnership in future seeking to cover costs of fundraising for the Mendip Hills AONB Fund, and fully supports the Manager in approaching Somerset Community Foundation to discuss this with a view to determining and putting this in place as soon as is possible if agreed to by the Foundation.

4.2 The Manager proposed in future aligning the periods covered by all the above documents with the period of the new Management Plan that will be 2019-2023. The OSG supported this.

Recommendations:

The Partnership

- i) endorse the Business Plan and revised Terms of Reference
- ii) each member to sign the Partnership Membership Accord, and to re-sign annually