

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Management Board
Sub-group on Partnership Terms of Reference
Minutes of Meeting Thursday 11th May 2018
AONB Partnership office, Drovers House, Craven Arms



Present:

James Williamson (Chair)	Individual member
John Long	Individual member
Cllr Cecilia Motley (Vice Chair)	Shropshire Council
Tim Jenkins	Shropshire Council

AONB Partnership staff:

Phil Holden	AONB Partnership Manager
Alison Kay	Administrator (minute taker)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Hilary Claytonsmith.

2. Proposals for new JAC Terms of Reference

- 2.1 Tim and James had met before the meeting and presented three suggested documents for: new Terms of Reference for the AONB Partnership, Rules of Procedure for the AONB Partnership, and Terms of Reference for the Management Board, including a proposed change of name to Strategy & Performance Committee. Copies of these documents are attached as Appendix A.
- 2.2 The group read through the documents and discussions took place. Amendments were made to the documents during the meeting and in subsequent email correspondence.

3. Recommendations to Management Board 22nd May

- 3.1 It was agreed that Tim would circulate the documents with the amends resulting from this meeting and that these would be circulated to the sub-group for further comments, before a further version to be taken to the Management Board meeting of 22nd May. **Action Tim**
- 3.2 It was agreed that Phil would suggest more up to date text for the bullet points in Section 2 of the Partnership Terms of Reference (the text in the new draft comes from Shropshire Council's Constitution and is older than the version used in the most recent Partnership Terms of Reference).
Action Phil
- 3.3 Tim would explore the possibilities of amending the text about the AONB Partnership within the Shropshire Council Constitution. **Action Tim**
- 3.4 There should be further discussion of having some sort of an agreement between the Partnership and Shropshire Council as the host authority, with regard to operating procedures and role and responsibilities to the staff team, to include some of the clauses proposed to be removed from the Partnership Terms of Reference.

Appendix A

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

1.1. The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership is the body responsible for coordinating the management of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

1.2. The purposes of the national AONB designation are as follows:

- The primary purpose of designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

Consider the secondary purposes??

- In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, and other 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 conserve and enhance the environment.
- Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses. (Countryside Agency, 2001)

1.3. Local authorities have a legal obligation under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 to prepare and review a Management Plan for the AONB, and to 'act jointly' in doing this. The AONB Partnership is the body formed principally to fulfil this requirement, and includes a substantially wider membership in order to engage a range of relevant interests in the management of the area.

1.4. The Partnership has the formal status of a 'Joint Advisory Committee' under Section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to the two local authorities of Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council.

2. Roles and Responsibilities of the AONB Partnership:

2.1. The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership plays three main roles regarding the AONB:

- To promote the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, character and landscape of the Shropshire Hills AONB and the surrounding project area as a local, regional and national asset.
- To promote compatible social, environmental and economic development and the well being of constituent communities.
- In pursuit of these ends, to prepare, monitor and review the statutory management plan for the AONB and to coordinate its implementation.

2.2 In order to perform the above roles and responsibilities the Partnership will lead the review of the statutory Management Plan for the AONB every five years. This Plan will be formally approved by each individual local authority, and will as required in the CRoW Act 2000,

‘formulate their policy for the management of the area and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it’.

- 2.3 In addition, the Partnership will co-ordinate and facilitate the implementation of the Management Plan, and will monitor progress in achieving its objectives, policies and actions. Actions in support of the Management Plan are taken by a wide range Structure of the AONB Partnership
- 2.4 The Partnership will champion the interests of and vision for the Shropshire Hills AONB, and promote a coherent and strong identity for the area.
- 2.5 Planning. The Partnership will add value to the role of local authorities as planning authorities for the AONB, especially by contributing to the development of planning policy and guidance, and by providing comments on significant development proposals and planning applications. Detailed roles and procedures for the AONB Partnership’s involvement in planning are set out in a formal Planning Protocol with the local authorities.
- 2.6 The Partnership will seek to secure resources required for effective management of the AONB, including external funds to assist in delivering management activities and projects.
- 2.7 The Partnership will ensure that public bodies fulfil their duty under S85 of the CRoW Act to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB in the exercise and performance of their functions.
- 2.8 The Partnership will establish and maintain effective working relationships with relevant bodies at national, regional and local levels where these can contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Shropshire Hills AONB and can contribute to wider understanding and best practice in protected area management.
- 2.9 The Partnership will monitor condition of the AONB and progress with Management Plan implementation, and will publish an annual review of progress and make recommendations to local authority cabinet members as appropriate. The Partnership will undertake a biennial review of its membership, and will periodically review its governance to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

3. Membership

3.1 Membership of the Partnership will consist of a maximum of 45 delegates comprised from the following:

- Four elected Members appointed by Shropshire Council (representatives should be relevant portfolio holders or local ward members);
- One elected member appointed by Telford and Wrekin Council (the representative should be a relevant portfolio holder or local ward member);
- Elected members of parish or town councils within or partly within the AONB;
- Representatives of other statutory bodies;
- Representatives appointed by non-statutory or voluntary organisations;
- Individual members.

The Partnership will have responsibility for determining the amount of members from each representative group and all of the above will be full voting rights.

3.2 The Partnership will operate an application process for the individual member seats and Parish/Town Council seats, and where necessary for non-statutory or voluntary organisations. Appointment of applicants to seats will be made by the full Partnership, based on the following criteria:

Individual and Parish/Town Council members

- Resident in the AONB or a nearby town or countryside;
- Proven commitment to AONB purposes and relevant areas of interest;
- Ability to make a valuable contribution to the Partnership.

Non-statutory and voluntary bodies

- Support for AONB purposes and a clear overlap in remit with that of the AONB;
- A significant material or operational interest within the AONB;
- Representative with ability to make a valuable contribution to the Partnership.

3.3 Statutory and non-statutory bodies on the Partnership will appoint a named representative to attend as their member, and may identify a named 'deputy' who will also receive papers and may attend meetings in place of the representative without prior arrangement. A representative other than the named member or deputy may attend a meeting in their place by agreement with the Chair.

APPROVAL OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

Signed

Date

Position

on behalf of SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

Signed

Date

Position

on behalf of TELFORD AND WREKIN COUNCIL

Strategy & Performance Committee

Terms of Reference:

The Strategy & Performance Committee will act as the representative of the Joint Advisory Committee and report at least annually to constituent local authorities on behalf of the Partnership:

Role of the Committee:

1. Advise on the development of strategic direction and monitor progress with the annual work programme
2. Provide guidance to the local authorities and make recommendations to improve the effectiveness and performance working alongside the AONB Team
3. Scrutinise budgets and management accounts of the AONB Partnership, and advise and recommend to the host authority (Shropshire Council) and funding partners on these matters.
4. The Partnership & Strategy Board will advise and participate in recruitment and appointment of staff of the AONB Team on behalf of the Partnership to the extent that this is consistent with Shropshire Council's procedures.

Membership of the Committee will be:

- The Chair and two Vice-Chairs of the Partnership (one Vice chair will be a Shropshire Council member - see Rules of Procedure of the Partnership)
 - The elected member representing the Telford & Wrekin Council (if not one of the Vice Chairs);
 - Six additional Partnership members elected biennially by the Partnership.
 - A local authority officer lead representative from Shropshire Council.
5. The committee may co-opt members to these seats if they are not filled by an election process.
 6. The committee may assign certain members to advise on particular topics to provide additional support to the Chair and AONB Partnership Manager. The scope and responsibilities for such roles will be defined in writing.

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

Procedure of the Partnership:

All parties recognise that the Partnership is likely to be most effective if its recommendations can be reached by consensus rather than by confrontation, but if it is necessary to regulate any debate then the Chairman shall have the power to order that the Council Procedure Rules Sub-Committees under the Constitution of Shropshire Council shall apply.

Frequency of Meetings

1. The Partnership will normally meet three times per year. A site-based meeting or tour will normally be held annually. The Chair of the Partnership may call additional meetings or cancel pre-arranged meetings if it is felt that there is either urgent business which needs to be discussed or there is insufficient business to justify a meeting being held.
2. The Strategy & Performance Committee will normally meet four times per year, with additional meetings being called (or cancelled) as necessary by the Chair.
3. Additional sub-groups or working groups will meet as necessary.

Chair and Vice Chairs

1. The Partnership will elect its own Chair on a biennial basis, or as necessary. The Chair will be a non-local authority member. The Chair will not serve for more than three consecutive terms (i.e. six years maximum). Both Vice Chair posts will be elected biennially by the Partnership, or as necessary. One Vice Chair post will be an elected member of Shropshire Council and the other Vice Chair post will be open to any Partnership member. Nominations will be invited in advance of the meeting at which the elections take place.
2. The Chair of the Partnership will also be the Strategy & Performance Committee.
3. In the event of neither the Chair or Vice Chair being present at a meeting of the Partnership, a chair for the meeting will be elected by the Partnership members present.
4. The expectations of Chair and Vice Chair roles are set out in Role Descriptions and Person Specifications, which will be reviewed as necessary by the Partnership.

Local authority officers

1. A local authority member may be accompanied to a Partnership meeting by one officer, but an officer may still attend if the member is absent.
2. If a member wishes to be accompanied to a Partnership meeting by more than one officer, or if more than one officer wishes to attend such a meeting when the member is absent, this should be with the prior agreement of the Chair.
3. Local authority officers attending Partnership meetings do not have the right to vote on issues being decided by the Partnership, except when the member representative of the local authority is not in attendance and he/she has delegated authority to the officer to vote on his/her behalf. In such cases, one local authority officer, with the prior agreement of the Chair, may vote on behalf of the member.

Declaration of interests

1. Members of the Partnership and any of its sub-groups shall declare an interest in a meeting where a matter discussed may affect:
 - Their own wellbeing or financial position, or
 - the wellbeing or financial position of a family member, close associate, or
 - the financial position of an employer/business of the member, their family member or close associate, or Shropshire Hills