

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd July 2018

ANNUAL REPORT

Purpose

To present the annual reports for 2017/18 on the achievements of the Wye Valley AONB Unit and the contracted Planning consultants for the AONB Unit.

Recommendations

That the JAC welcome the Annual Reports of AONB achievements for 2017/18

Key Issues

- The 2017/18 Annual Report on the Work Programme for the AONB Unit is appended, along with a summary financial report below.
- High standards of achievement were maintained by the AONB Unit and staffing issues were resolved.
- The AONB Unit has levered in nearly £8 for every £1 of local authority contribution during 2017/18.
- Worcestershire County Council Planning department continued to provide strategic planning advice to the AONB Unit on development issues, preparing appropriate responses where necessary. The annual report for the contracted work is appended.
- The AONB Unit, on behalf of the AONB Partnership, has made fewer comments on Planning Applications but has been more involved in pre-application enquiries and Neighbourhood Development Plans during the year.

Reasons

The Work Programme Report for the AONB Unit 2017/18 lists the achievements of the AONB Unit and is the basis of the AONB Partnership Annual Report. The Work Programme Report has been presented to DEFRA and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) as part of the annual grant claims to the two national government funding partners.

The continuing partnership with the Malvern Hills AONB over the use of Worcestershire County Council Planning Department has enabled a co-ordinated approach to be taken to strategic consultations in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire relating to the two AONBs.

Implications

The number of planning application in 2017/18 has increased slightly compared to the previous year. However the AONB Unit responded to fewer planning applications, on behalf of the AONB Partnership, but was involved in more pre-application advice and liaison with case officers. Similarly engagement with the development of Neighbourhood Development

Plans has increased. These are proving to be effective and robust policy documents that add a further level of protection locally to the AONB. Overall the shared contract with Worcestershire County Council Planning Department and collaboration with the Malvern Hills AONB continues to work well. It is proposed to review the arrangement towards the end of the current financial year.

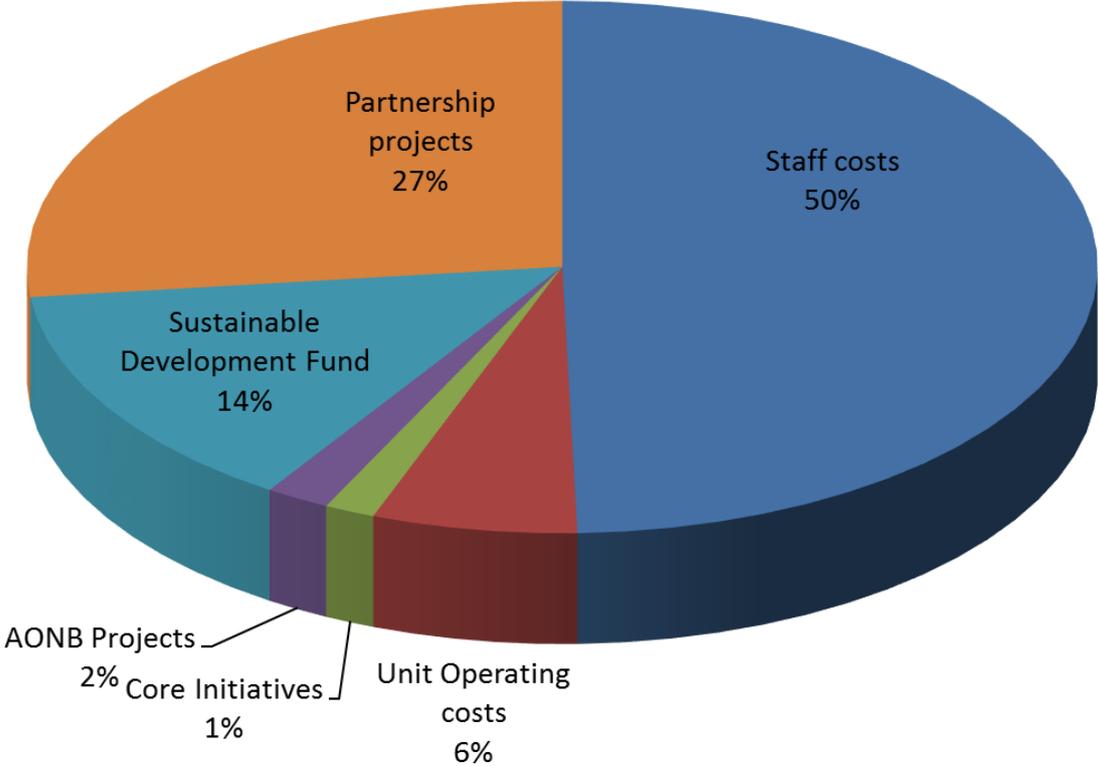
There are a number of highlights outlined in the 2017/18 Annual Report of achievements for the AONB Unit Work Programme. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), between the constituent local authorities, was signed covering the 3 years 2018-2021, giving the AONB Partnership some medium term security and stability. The preparations for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 engaged an increasing number of people in the local communities and levered substantial resources into the area to increase people's appreciation and understanding of the area. The third cohort of Youth Rangers 'graduated' and the fourth cohort recruited, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund through the Forests' Forest Landscape Partnership. The mindSCAPE project entered its final year of Big Lottery funding and continued to attract national recognition. The recruitment of the replacement AONB Information Officer enabled renewed focus on communications and interpretation over the report period. A number of funding bids and collaborations were developed that it is hoped will bear fruit in due course.

The overall turnover of the AONB Unit was lower in 2017/18 than the previous year as the 2016/17 figures included the main income and expenditure of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016. Despite this the leverage of the AONB Partnership in 2017/18 means that for every £1 of local authority contribution, the AONB Unit has brought in nearly £8.

Wye Valley AONB Unit Accounts 2017/2018		2016/17	2017/18
Expenditure		£	
	Staff costs	<i>198,603</i>	194,945
	Unit Operating costs	<i>21,942</i>	24,334
	Core Initiatives	<i>7,601</i>	6,000
	AONB Projects	<i>9,921</i>	7,605
	Sustainable Development Fund	<i>70,000</i>	55,000
	Partnership projects	<i>230,095</i>	105,539
	TOTAL	<i>538,163</i>	393,423
Income			
	Local Authorities core contributions	<i>50,848</i>	50,002
	Defra AONB grant	<i>122,001</i>	126,234
	Natural Resources Wales Grant	<i>52,210</i>	52,210
	Sustainable Development Fund	<i>70,000</i>	55,000
	Income from other sources	<i>243,104</i>	109,977
	TOTAL	<i>538,163</i>	393,423

Wye Valley AONB Unit Accounts 2017/2018

Expenditure Chart



Income Chart

