

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017

## ANNUAL REPORT

### *Purpose*

To present the annual reports for 2016/17 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 2016/17

### *Key Issues*

- The 2016/17 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 despite staffing issues and illness continuing to hamper AONB Unit activity throughout the year, however these issues have now been resolved.
- Worcestershire County Council Planning department were contracted to provide advice to the AONB Unit on strategic planning documents and development issues, and where necessary prepare appropriate responses for the AONB Unit. The annual report for the contracted work is appended.
- The expectation that the AONB Unit, on behalf of the AONB Partnership, comments on Planning Applications and pre-application enquiries has continued during the year.

### *Reasons*

The Work Programme Report for the AONB Unit 2016/17 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 as part of the annual grant claims to the two central 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 2016/17 has increased compared to the previous year. Similarly the expectation and number of requests for the AONB Unit to respond to either current planning applications, on behalf of the AONB Partnership, or to give pre-application advice has continued. The shared contract with Worcestershire County Council Planning Department and collaboration with the Malvern Hills AONB continues to work well.

There are a number of highlights outlined in the 2016/17 Annual Report of achievements for the AONB Unit Work Programme. The AONB Management Plan was finally adopted by all the local authorities and is available on [www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk](http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk). The Wye Valley River Festival 2016 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 Research and Development phase also commenced for the 2018 River Festival. The third cohort of Youth Rangers continued their programme and the mindSCAPE project achieved national recognition and completed its third year (of 4). The AONB Unit has maintained appropriate levels of activity and output despite various staff being affected by ill health and necessitating prolonged absences from work. Recruitment for a replacement AONB Information Officer commenced at the end of the report period.

<b>Wye Valley AONB Unit Accounts 2016/2017</b>		<i>2015/16</i>	<b>2016/17</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
	Staff costs	<i>179,713</i>	198,603
	Unit Operating costs	<i>24,042</i>	21,942
	Core Initiatives	<i>3,388</i>	7,601
	AONB Projects	<i>26,400</i>	9,921
	Sustainable Development Fund	<i>61,000</i>	70,000
	Partnership projects	<i>107,462</i>	230,095
	<b>TOTAL</b>	402,004	<b>538,163</b>
<b>Income</b>			
	Local Authorities core contributions	<i>50,848</i>	50,848
	Defra AONB grant	<i>122,001</i>	122,001
	Natural Resources Wales Grant	<i>52,211</i>	52,210
	Sustainable Development Fund	<i>61,000</i>	70,000
	Income from other sources	<i>115,944</i>	243,104
	<b>TOTAL</b>	402,004	<b>538,163</b>

