

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Date of meeting: 21 January 2019

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: High Weald Management Plan

Purpose: To adopt the High Weald Management Plan 2019-2024

RECOMMENDATION: Lead Member is recommended to adopt the High Weald Management Plan 2019 – 2024 as approved by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee

1 Background Information

1.1 The County Council has a statutory duty, under the Countryside and Rights of Way [CROW] Act 2000, to ensure the preparation and publication of a Management Plan for the area of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) that lies within its administrative boundary. A Management Plan covering the High Weald AONB was first adopted in March 2004 by all 15 partner local authorities and is required to be reviewed every five years. The Management Plan for 2019-24 is the 3rd review of the Management Plan.

1.2 The Management Plan for 2019-2024 (Appendix 1) has been through public consultation and was agreed by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) in November. The High Weald AONB unit have written to all partner local authorities recommending that they adopt the revised plan. This letter is attached as Appendix 2. The High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) is a partnership, established in 1989, of 15 local authorities, Defra, Natural England and organisations representing farming, woodland, access and community interests. The JAC employs a small, dedicated staff team, the High Weald AONB Unit which furthers understanding of the High Weald, advises on its management and enables action to conserve it. The JAC is responsible for publishing and monitoring the statutory AONB Management Plan.

2 Supporting Information

2.1 Statutory Duty

2.1.1 The County Council discharges its duty to the High Weald AONB through being a member of the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and paying an annual financial contribution to the High Weald AONB Unit. Financial contributions are also made from the other partner organisations, including the local authorities that have part of the AONB within their administrative area. This funding enables the Unit to prepare a joint management plan for the whole of the High Weald AONB.

2.1.2 The Management Plan is based on evidence and is formulated to coordinate policy, investment and action in the AONB, as well as ensuring achievement of the legal purpose of 'conserving and enhancing natural beauty', as required under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 The Lead Member is recommended to adopt the latest review of the High Weald Management Plan 2019-2024, as this will enable the County Council to meet its statutory duty to ensure the preparation and publication of a Management Plan for the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within East Sussex.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None