

Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

Consultation Draft

September 2018

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Executive Summary

This Screening Report has been produced to determine whether it is necessary to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan for 2019 - 2024.

It is determined that full Strategic Environmental Assessment will not be required for the 2019-2024 Management Plan because the Plan demonstrates little deviation from its previous iteration. The previous iteration was subject to full Strategic Environmental Assessment and therefore the current revision is unlikely to display further significant environmental effects.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan

Part IV, Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 sets out the requirement for Local Authorities to publish and review a management plan for their AONB that: “formulates their policy for the management of the area of outstanding natural beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it”.

The Blackdown Hills Area Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan (from hereon in referred to as ‘the Management Plan’) addresses this legal requirement by setting out the policy framework for the conservation and enhancement of the Blackdown Hills AONB for the next five years. Put simply, it describes the special qualities of the area and why the AONB is important, sets out an agreed vision for its future, identifies the challenges and opportunities for the area, and how these will be tackled. The 2019 – 2024 iteration is a revised and updated version of the previous Management Plan 2014 – 2019 which underwent full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

1.2 Purpose of this Report

This report has been produced to determine whether it is necessary to undertake an SEA of the Management Plan for 2019 - 2024. This is to ensure compliance with European Directive 2001/42/EC on ‘the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment’ (‘The SEA Directive’) and ‘The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633), which implements the Directive in England, often referred to as ‘The SEA Regulations’.

1.3 Consultation

Your comments on the process and conclusion of this SEA Screening Report are welcome.

Please submit any comments by email to blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk

Or in writing:

Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership
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Please return your response to us no later than 5.00pm on 16th November 2018.

The three statutory bodies for the purposes of SEA screening are Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England. Their opinion on this Screening Report have been requested.

2 SEA Screening

2.1 SEA Guidance

This Screening Report has been developed in accordance with current government guidance:

- [A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#) (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005)

2.2 Screening Process

The guidance referred to at Section 2.1 helpfully synthesises the requirements of the SEA Directive into a flowchart to determine which plans and programmes require SEA.

Figure 1 shows the flowchart and the decision process applied to the flowchart for the Management Plan.

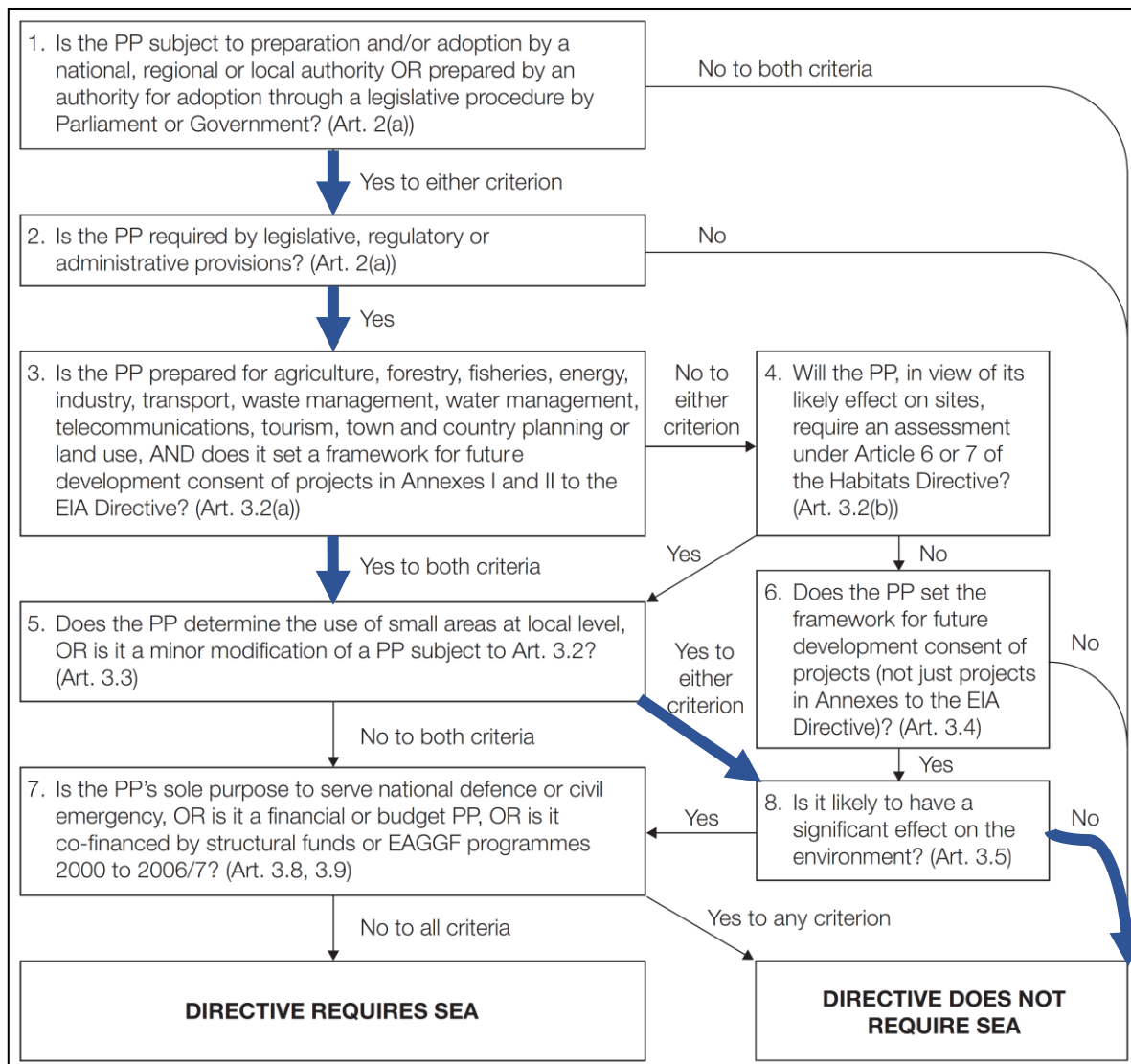


Figure 1 – SEA decision process for the Management Plan. Flowchart taken from “A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive” (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005). ‘PP’ is an abbreviation for ‘Plan or Programme’. Article numbers refer to those of the SEA Directive.

Table 1 provides an explanation for the decisions taken within the flowchart in Figure 1.

Flowchart Question	Decision	Explanation
1. Is the PP subject to preparation and / or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2 (a))	Yes	The Management Plan is being prepared by the Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership through delegation from Devon County Council, Somerset County Council, East Devon District Council, Mid Devon District Council, South Somerset District Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council.
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	Part IV, Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 sets out the requirement for Local Authorities to publish and review a management plan for their AONB
3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use AND does it set a framework for future development consents of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2 (a))	Yes	<p>Although the Management Plan is not explicitly prepared to cover these topics, it could arguably influence all of them within the AONB.</p> <p>Whilst it is unlikely that development of the scale described for projects in Annexes I and II of the EIA Directive will occur in the AONB, the Management Plan nonetheless would be used as a “framework for future development consent”. This is defined by the European Commission¹ as " criteria or conditions that guide the way the consenting authority decides an application for development consent. Such criteria could place limits on the type of activity or development which is to be permitted in a given area; or they could contain conditions which must be met by the applicant if permission is to be granted; or they could be designed to preserve certain characteristics of the area concerned”.</p>
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art 3.2 (b))	Non-Applicable	
5. Does the PP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art 3.2? (Art 3.3)	Yes	<p>The Management Plan does not “determine the use of small areas at local level” (the AONB covers 370km²). The European Commission¹ suggest that this phrase is intended to refer to plans that, for example, outline how buildings must be constructed.</p> <p>However, the Management Plan is a minor modification to the 2014-2019 Management Plan. The European Commission advise that the interpretation of ‘minor’ must consider the likelihood that the modified elements of the plan will lead to significant environmental effects. See</p>

¹ European Commission (2001) [Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment](#)

Flowchart Question	Decision	Explanation
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects ? A narrower interpretation of 'framework for development consents' would exclude the (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive) (Art 3.4)	Non-Applicable	Flowchart Question 8 below.
7. Is the PP's sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, or is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7 (Art 3.8, 3.9)?	Non-Applicable	
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art 3.5)	No	<p>Firstly, the improvements to the AONB resulting from the strategic direction given by the Management Plan are unlikely to have negative effects on the environment.</p> <p>In addition, the objectives of the Management Plan seek to maintain and enhance the special qualities of the AONB, which will have a moderating impact on development and other actions that may seek to modify the environmental character of the AONB.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Vision of the Management Plan remains unaltered from the previous version and the outcomes of the revised objectives and policies are not substantially different – see Appendices 1 and 2 of this Report.</p>

2.3 Screening Conclusion

It is determined that an SEA will not be required for the 2019-2024 Management Plan because the Plan demonstrates little deviation from its previous iteration (as described in Appendices 1 and 2). The previous iteration was subject to full SEA and therefore the current revision is unlikely to display further significant environmental effects; hence the modifications are considered minor within the context of question 5 in the flowchart shown in Figure 1.

Appendix 1 – Comparison of Management Plan Objectives

The table below compares the 2014-2019 Management Plan objectives, which were subject to full SEA, with the proposed objectives for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.

2014 – 2019 Management Plan Objective	Similar Proposed 2019 – 2024 Management Plan Objective	Divergence of Environmental Outcome
Landscape Character		
LC 1 The particular features that make the Blackdown Hills landscape distinctive at a national, regional and local level are conserved and enhanced.	To ensure that the distinctive character and qualities of the Blackdown Hills landscape are understood, conserved, enhanced and restored.	None. The proposed objective in the 2019 – 2024 Management Plan achieves the same outcome.
LC 2 Studies of the Blackdown Hills landscape lead to greater awareness and understanding of the significance of the area and help to plan for future resilience.		None. The proposed objective in the 2019 – 2024 Management Plan achieves the same outcome.
LC 3 The Blackdown Hills landscape is valued as a place where a sense of tranquillity can be enjoyed free from man-made noise and visual intrusion.		None. The tranquillity of the AONB is identified as one of its special qualities in the Management Plan and therefore this issue is covered by the proposed policy.
Cultural Heritage		
CH 1 The historic environment and cultural heritage of the Blackdown Hills is conserved and managed.	To ensure effective conservation, management and understanding of the Blackdown Hills historic environment, including historic buildings, archaeological sites and heritage landscapes	None. Whilst the term “Cultural heritage” is no longer part of the set of objectives, this is covered by “historic environment”.
CH2 The historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB is understood, valued and celebrated.		None. Whilst the term “Cultural heritage” is no longer part of the set of objectives, this is covered by “historic environment”.
Biodiversity and Geology		

2014 – 2019 Management Plan Objective	Similar Proposed 2019 – 2024 Management Plan Objective	Divergence of Environmental Outcome
BG 1 Habitats in the AONB are well managed, restored and extended forming a coherent ecological network that can support more species and facilitate movement of wildlife within the landscape.	To ensure effective conservation, enhancement, expansion and connectivity of habitats, forming coherent and resilient ecological networks across the Blackdown Hills and beyond, facilitating movement of priority species across the landscape	None. The proposed objective in the 2019 – 2024 Management Plan achieves the same outcome.
BG 2 Geodiversity within the AONB is conserved.		None. Whilst geology is not explicitly referenced in the proposed objective, geodiversity provides a range of habitats which are afforded protection via the new objective.
BG 3 Knowledge and understanding of the biodiversity, geodiversity and ecosystem services of the AONB are increased among those who influence, or are engaged in, management of the landscape.		None. The desire to increase knowledge and understanding is absent from the proposed objective but this is covered by the proposed objective regarding Communication, Education and Awareness.
BG 4 More people are aware of the value of the biodiversity and geodiversity of the AONB and are taking positive action to help conserve and enhance it.		None. This outcome is covered by the proposed objective regarding Communication, Education and Awareness.
Natural Resources		Natural Capital and ecosystem goods and services
NR 1 The natural resources of the AONB, such as air, water and soils, are protected and conserved through research, understanding and sustainable management, and the ecosystem services they provide are recognised.	To conserve and enhance the natural capital stock of the AONB and maximise the flow of ecosystem goods and services they provide	None. All of the resources listed in the old objective are included within ‘natural capital stock’ stated in the proposed objective.
Farming, Forestry and Land Management		
FLM 1 Sustainable farming practices conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB, and deliver ecosystem services.	To support sustainable farming and forestry practices that conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB and deliver a range of ecosystem services	None. The proposed objective in the 2019 – 2024 Management Plan achieves the same outcome.
FLM 2 Management of woodland forestry plantations, hedgerows and new planting conserves and enhances the special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, and locks up carbon to combat climate change.		None. Whilst hedgerows and new planting are not mentioned in the proposed objective, these are elements of sustainable farming and forestry practice.

2014 – 2019 Management Plan Objective	Similar Proposed 2019 – 2024 Management Plan Objective	Divergence of Environmental Outcome
FLM 3 Restoration and management of orchards as an element of the landscape and biodiversity of the AONB		None. Whilst orchards are not mentioned in the proposed objective, these are described as priority habitat and as a special quality of the AONB within the management plan and therefore are covered by the proposed objective.
Access and Enjoyment		
AE 1 Sustainable opportunities to explore and enjoy the Blackdown Hills countryside and special qualities are in keeping with AONB purpose, improve understanding of the area, and benefit the local economy.	To ensure that opportunities to explore and enjoy the Blackdown Hills countryside and special qualities are compatible with conserving and enhancing natural beauty.	None. The desire to increase knowledge and understanding is absent from the proposed objective but this is covered by the proposed objective regarding Communication, Education and Awareness.
Planning and Development		
PD 1 All development in the AONB is of the highest quality, is in keeping with the landscape and conserves its wildlife, historic character and other special qualities.	To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Blackdown Hills by ensuring that all development affecting the AONB is of the highest quality, sensitive to landscape setting and conserves its wildlife, historic character and other special qualities.	Positive. The proposed objective adds the desire to enhance the area rather than just conserve it.
PD 2 Emissions of carbon and other greenhouse gases are reduced within the AONB through reducing energy consumption, applying energy conservation measures and utilising appropriate renewable energy technologies.		None. Development will have to be low carbon to meet building regulations and renewable energy projects are still permitted by the proposed policy so long as they are sensitive to the AONB's special qualities.
PD 3 Waste is reduced and waste management does not impact on the natural beauty of the AONB.		None. Under the proposed objective, development will have to demonstrate that waste management is sensitive to the AONB's special qualities.
PD 4 Appropriate affordable housing is available in or around the Blackdown Hills to enable local people – living, working or connected to the area – to remain in their local communities.		None. Whilst affordable housing is not referenced in the proposed objective, its provision is a social issue and is outside the scope of SEA.
PD 5 The tranquillity of the Blackdown Hills AONB is conserved and enhanced by restricting or reducing noise and light pollution and major		None. Under the proposed objective, development will have to be sensitive to the AONB's special qualities. The Management Plan highlights

2014 – 2019 Management Plan Objective	Similar Proposed 2019 – 2024 Management Plan Objective	Divergence of Environmental Outcome
developments within or affecting the AONB.		tranquillity and dark skies amongst these.
Transport and highways		
TH 1 The impact on the AONB landscape and environment is considered in the planning and provision of transport networks and services.	To ensure that the impact on the landscape, environment and enjoyment of the AONB is considered in the planning, provision and management of transport networks and services	None.
TH 2 Public transport services and community transport schemes are maintained and improved and provide an integrated service throughout the AONB.		None. The principal environmental effect of losing public transport services is climate change because more private transport is necessary. The proposed objective seeks to ensure that the impact on the environment of the AONB associated with provision of transport services is considered. This will include climate change.
TH3 Manage the minor road network to encourage the use of sustainable forms of transport.		None. The principal environmental effect of a poorly maintained minor road network is climate change because residents may decide to purchase four-wheel-drive vehicles and stop cycling if they are already doing so. The proposed objective seeks to ensure that the impact on the environment of the AONB associated with the management of transport networks is considered. This will include climate change.
Rural Economy and tourism		
RET 1 A sustainable rural economy that is based on the resources of the AONB and conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the Blackdown Hills.	To sustain a local economy that is based on the resources of the AONB and conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the Blackdown Hills	None.
Community and culture		
CC 1 Community-led initiatives encourage and maintain the vitality and diversity of local communities.	To foster vibrant, healthy and resilient communities who enjoy a high quality of life and feel connected to the AONB and its special qualities	None. The spirit of objective CC1 is apparent in the proposed objective's use of the words 'vibrant' and 'healthy'.
CC 2 Community-led planning tools		None. The same environmental outcomes will be

2014 – 2019 Management Plan Objective	Similar Proposed 2019 – 2024 Management Plan Objective	Divergence of Environmental Outcome
(neighbourhood plans, parish plans, village design statements and others) have an important influence on the policies and actions of organisations and agencies relevant to the Blackdown Hills.		achieved by the proposed objective for Planning and Development.
CC 3 An increased understanding and appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage of the Blackdown Hills encourages greater local involvement in conserving and enhancing the AONB.		None. Whilst the proposed objective does not desire an increased understanding or involvement in conserving and enhancing the AONB, this is sought by the proposed objective for Communication, Education and Awareness.
CC4 Local communities in the Blackdown Hills have access to appropriate local facilities, services and amenities.		None. The proposed objective desires resilient communities which would have access to appropriate local facilities, services and amenities.
Communication, education and awareness		
CEA 1 A wide range of opportunities exist for active engagement with the countryside, wildlife and heritage of the Blackdown Hills AONB.	To promote a greater understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the Blackdown Hills AONB and wider recognition of the designation and its purpose.	None. The outcomes from CEA1 will be sought by the proposed objective.
CEA 2 Relevant information about the Blackdown Hills AONB is freely available and easily accessible to organisations and individuals.		None. The outcomes from CEA2 will be sought by the proposed objective.
CEA 3 Educational and research activities improve understanding of the AONB's special qualities.		None. The outcomes from CEA3 will be sought by the proposed objective.
Partnership and management		
PM 1 The special qualities of the AONB are conserved and enhanced through effective joint working within AONB Partnership co-ordinated by the Partnership Management Group and the AONB team.	To ensure that the special qualities of the AONB are quantified, understood, conserved and enhanced through an effective AONB Partnership	None. The outcomes from PM1 will be sought by the proposed objective.

Appendix 2 - Comparison of Management Plan Policies

The table below compares the 2014-2019 Management Plan policies, which were subject to full SEA, with the proposed policies for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.

2014-19 Management Plan Policies	Similar Proposed 2019 – 2024 Management Plan Policies	Divergence of Environmental Outcome
Landscape Character		
LC 1/A Support the development and delivery of environmental schemes and projects that conserve and enhance the landscape character and local distinctiveness of the AONB.	Support local distinctiveness	None. The outcomes from LC1/A will be achieved by the proposed policies for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
	The character of skylines and open views into, within and out of the AONB will be protected	
	The deeply rural setting of much of the land adjoining the AONB boundary forms an essential setting for the AONB and care will be taken to maintain its quality and character	
LC 1/B Support the development and use of landscape character assessments to inform decision-making affecting the AONB.	Approach the conservation and enhancement of the AONB based on landscape character underpinned by comprehensive and up-to-date evidence bases that are also made widely available to decision makers and others	None. The outcomes from LC1/B will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
LC 2/A Encourage studies and research that explore and improve awareness of the potential impact of change on the landscape.	Understand clearly the social, environmental and economic benefits of landscape and natural beauty and ensure this is reflected in decision making at every level, supported by sound evidence	None. The outcomes from LC2/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
LC 2/B Encourage opportunities for local people to conserve and enhance their local landscape and celebrate local distinctiveness.	[From Communication, Education and Awareness section] Develop and support a range of opportunities for active engagement with the countryside, wildlife and heritage of the Blackdown Hills AONB, promoting the benefits that the natural environment provides to us.	None. The outcomes from LC2/B will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
LC 3/A Support and promote initiatives for the understanding of tranquillity and encourage the quiet enjoyment of the AONB.	Promote high levels of peace and tranquillity with dark night skies by minimising noise, intrusive development and light pollution	None. The outcomes from LC3/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
LC 3/B Support measures to conserve		None. The outcomes from LC3/B will

2014-19 Management Plan Policies	Similar Proposed 2019 – 2024 Management Plan Policies	Divergence of Environmental Outcome
and enhance tranquillity and dark skies.		be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
Cultural Heritage		
CH 1/A Support the development and delivery of agri-environment schemes and other initiatives that conserve and manage the historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB.	Conserve and enhance the historic built environment and rural heritage assets and integrate into other land management initiatives in the AONB	None. Whilst cultural heritage is absent from the proposed policy framework for the 2019 – 2024 Management Plan, it is covered by “historic built environment” and “rural heritage assets”.
CH 1/B Use the counties’ Historic Environment Records and historic landscape characterisation to inform policy-making, and development and land management decisions.	Regularly monitor the extent and condition of historic sites, features and landscapes in the AONB and promote the use of Historic Environment Record (HER), historic landscape characterisation and other tools to inform projects, policy-making and management activities	None. The outcomes from CH1/B will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
CH1/C Encourage and support training in traditional heritage skills.	Encourage and support training in traditional heritage skills.	None. No change to policy.
CH 2/A Encourage studies and research of the historic and cultural environment that raise understanding, awareness and appreciation of its significance.	Gain a comprehensive understanding of the reasons for heritage being ‘at risk’ and in declining condition and make direct interventions to bring Scheduled Monuments and unscheduled sites into positive management and improving condition	None. The outcomes from CH2/A will be achieved by the proposed policies for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
	Promote the sensitive interpretation of the AONB’s historic environment to ensure local communities and visitors gain a good understanding and experience of place	
CH 2/B Encourage opportunities for local people to participate in exploring their cultural heritage, through historical research and recording, and celebrating local distinctiveness.	[From Communication, Education and Awareness section] Develop and support a range of opportunities for active engagement with the countryside, wildlife and heritage of the Blackdown Hills AONB, promoting the benefits that the natural environment provides to us.	None. The outcomes CH 2/B will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
CH 2/C Actively support volunteer activity to conserve, enhance and learn		None. The outcomes CH 2/C will be achieved by the proposed policy for

2014-19 Management Plan Policies	Similar Proposed 2019 – 2024 Management Plan Policies	Divergence of Environmental Outcome
more about the historic environment.		the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
Biodiversity and Geology		
BG 1/A Support the development and delivery of agri-environment schemes and other initiatives to conserve and enhance priority habitats and species within the AONB, including creation of new areas of priority habitat.	<p>Take a strategic landscape-scale based approach to the creation, restoration and maintenance of habitats within the AONB (focussing on designated and undesignated priority sites) in order to ensure resilience to climate change and other pressures</p> <p>Priority species (including Section 41, Devon Special Species, Protected Species) will be conserved. Targeted action will be taken to support the recovery of priority species</p> <p>A strategic approach to the control, or eradication where feasible, of invasive non-native species will be taken where they threaten or damage local habitats and species and where action is practicable</p> <p>Increased recreational pressure will be resisted at locations where unacceptable damage or disturbance to vulnerable habitats or species is likely to arise</p>	None. The outcomes from BG1/A will be achieved by the proposed policies for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
BG 1/B Identify and implement ways to connect existing patches of habitat to create new networks for wildlife, including cross-boundary linkages and green infrastructure connections.	Connect habitats at a landscape scale and ensure permeability for species movement within coherent and resilient ecological networks	None. The outcomes from BG1/B will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
BG 1/C Avoid and reduce the impacts of development on biodiversity and ensure biodiversity enhancements are delivered.	<p>[From Planning and Development section]</p> <p>All necessary development affecting the AONB will conserve and enhance natural beauty and special qualities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respecting landscape character, settlement patterns and local character of the built environment Being sensitively sited and of appropriate scale Reinforcing local distinctiveness Seeking to protect and enhance natural features and biodiversity 	None. The outcomes from BG1/C will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.

2014-19 Management Plan Policies	Similar Proposed 2019 – 2024 Management Plan Policies	Divergence of Environmental Outcome
BG 2/A Ensure sites of geological and geomorphological importance are appropriately managed to conserve their special features.	Ensure sites of geological and geomorphological importance are appropriately managed to conserve their special features and reduce impacts of development	None. The outcomes from BG2/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
BG 2/B Avoid and reduce the impacts of development on geodiversity.	[From Planning and Development section] All necessary development affecting the AONB will conserve and enhance natural beauty and special qualities by: Respecting landscape character, settlement patterns and local character of the built environment Being sensitively sited and of appropriate scale Reinforcing local distinctiveness Seeking to protect and enhance natural features and biodiversity	None. The outcomes from BG2/B will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
BG 3/A Encourage and support increased survey and monitoring of habitats and species at key sites and in the wider countryside.	Take a strategic landscape-scale based approach to the creation, restoration and maintenance of habitats within the AONB (focussing on designated and undesignated priority sites) in order to ensure resilience to climate change and other pressures Priority species (including Section 41, Devon Special Species, Protected Species) will be conserved. Targeted action will be taken to support the recovery of priority species	None. Whilst survey and monitoring is not explicitly mentioned in the proposed policies for the 2019-2024 Management Plan, these activities will be required to deliver the proposed policies.
BG 3/B Identify and promote priority habitats and species within the AONB, based on survey data and relevant national, regional and local strategies.	Take a strategic landscape-scale based approach to the creation, restoration and maintenance of habitats within the AONB (focussing on designated and undesignated priority sites) in order to ensure resilience to climate change and other pressures Priority species (including Section 41, Devon Special Species, Protected Species) will be conserved. Targeted action will be taken to support the recovery of priority species	None. Whilst “identifying and promoting” is not explicitly mentioned in the proposed policies for the 2019-2024 Management Plan, these activities will be required to deliver the “creation, restoration, maintenance and conservation” anticipated by the proposed policies.
BG 3/C Ensure the value of the AONB’s biodiversity, geodiversity and ecosystem	Opportunities will be sought to maximise the benefits for wildlife and people from the positive management of all	None. The phrase “benefits for wildlife and people” is referring to

2014-19 Management Plan Policies	Similar Proposed 2019 – 2024 Management Plan Policies	Divergence of Environmental Outcome	
services is recognised and understood by decision-makers and land managers.	types of land including farmland, gardens, parks and community green spaces	ecosystem services. Therefore the outcomes from BG3/C will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.	
BG 4/A Raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity as part of the natural beauty of the AONB and the need for its conservation and enhancement.	[From Communication, Education and Awareness section] Through promotion and education make more people aware of what makes the Blackdown Hills special, inspiring them to help care for the area and contribute to its conservation and enhancement.	None. The outcomes from BG4/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.	
BG 4/B Promote understanding of how geodiversity has shaped the landscape and influences the distribution of habitats.		None. The outcomes from BG4/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.	
BG 4/C Provide opportunities for people to actively participate in conservation and enhancement of the biodiversity and geodiversity of the AONB.	[From Communication, Education and Awareness] Develop and support a range of opportunities for active engagement with the countryside, wildlife and heritage of the Blackdown Hills AONB, promoting the benefits that the natural environment provides to us.	None. The outcomes from BG4/C will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan. BG4/C will also appear in the Plan as an action.	
Natural Resources			
NR 1/A Encourage, support and promote initiatives that safeguard earth, air and water resources, without conflicting with the special qualities of the AONB.	Support studies, research and improve understanding of the AONB's rich stock of natural capital and ensure that its value to society (in terms of flow of goods and services) is recognised and understood by decision-makers and others	None. The outcomes from NR1/A will be achieved by the proposed policies for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.	
NR 1/B Support projects to improve knowledge of the state of the environment, soils and watercourses through research and monitoring.		AND	None. The outcomes from NR1/B will be achieved by the proposed policies for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
NR 1/D Promote greater recognition of the value of ecosystem services and support the development of a system that rewards land managers for their delivery.		Encourage local communities, businesses and visitors to respect the environment and minimise their carbon footprint	None. The outcomes from NR1/D will be achieved by the proposed policies for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.

2014-19 Management Plan Policies	Similar Proposed 2019 – 2024 Management Plan Policies	Divergence of Environmental Outcome
NR 1/C Support a catchment-based approach to the enhancement and sustainable management of the Blackdown Hills water environment.	<p>Promote a catchment, multiple-benefit, collaborative based approach to soil conservation, water quality and flood alleviation improvements utilising the Otter, Axe, Culm and Parrett/Tone catchments</p> <p>Improve land management in respect of the control of surface water run-off, to mitigate against flooding during more extreme weather events. Where appropriate within the landscape, seek to reinstate or improve the management of woodland, wetland and hedges to slow and store run-off</p>	None. The outcomes from NR1/C will be achieved by the proposed policies for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
Farming, forestry and Land Management		
FLM 1/A Seek to influence future agri-environment schemes, so they are appropriate to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB and reward farmers and land managers for this role and for delivering ecosystem services.	<p>A profitable, sustainable and environmentally beneficial farming and land management sector providing a range of public goods and services will be fostered as one of the principal means of maintaining the special qualities and distinctive landscape of the AONB</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Influence rural farm and rural business support mechanisms and act as a testbed for and monitor the impacts of agricultural policy reform on rural character</p>	None. The outcomes from FLM 1/A will be achieved by the proposed policies for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
FLM1/B Support and promote sustainable farm management, especially through agri-environment schemes and farm diversification, to benefit the landscape, wildlife and historic environment of the AONB.	Encourage a high take-up of agri-environment schemes especially high quality environmental land management that help conserve and enhance the natural beauty through sustainable farming and forestry practices	None. The outcomes from FLM 1/B will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
FLM 1/C Encourage and support the sensitive management of important landscape features, watercourses and habitats such as hedgerows, trees, heathland unimproved grassland.	Support will be sought for clusters of land managers who sustain land of exceptional landscape and nature conservation interest, in recognition of the value these systems provide to society	None. The outcomes from FLM 1/C will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan. Whilst “important watercourses” are not explicitly mentioned in the proposed policy, they will be part of land of

2014-19 Management Plan Policies	Similar Proposed 2019 – 2024 Management Plan Policies	Divergence of Environmental Outcome
		“exceptional landscape and nature conservation interest”.
FLM1/D Encourage and support training in traditional land management skills.	[From Rural Economy and Tourism section] Economic capacity and skills in the area will be supported through training opportunities, community enterprise, business networking and cooperation especially where these assist businesses to contribute to AONB purposes	None. The “training opportunities” can include training in traditional land management skills. Therefore the outcome from FLM1/D can be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019/2024 Management Plan.
FLM 1/E Encourage the production and marketing of local food and other agricultural products where these are compatible with the AONB designation.	Encourage the production and marketing of local food and other agricultural products where these are compatible with the AONB designation.	None. The outcomes from FLM 1/E will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
FLM 2/D Encourage the use of sustainably produced woodland products locally, where it is compatible with the AONB designation.		None. The outcomes from FLM 2/D will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
FLM 2/A Support and promote initiatives that encourage sensitive environmental management of woodlands, particularly those that conserve ancient woodland and veteran trees, and restore the original broadleaved character of plantations on ancient woodland sites.	Support and promote initiatives that encourage sensitive environmental management of field boundaries and hedgerow trees, woodlands, particularly those that conserve ancient woodland and veteran trees, orchards and restore the original broadleaved character of plantations on ancient woodland sites. AND	None. The outcomes from FLM 2/A, FLM 2/B, FLM2/C and FLM3/A will be achieved by the proposed policies for the 2019-2024 Management Plan. Whilst the benefits of woodlands and hedges etc. are not described by the proposed policies (e.g. benefits wildlife, water quality, carbon, business opportunities), these will occur naturally as a bi-product.
FLM 2/B Promote initiatives that encourage sensitive environmental management of woodlands and hedgerows to deliver economic benefits and promote business opportunities, and that conserve and enhance natural beauty.	Give careful consideration to the landscape and visual impact of new woodland planting schemes AND	
FLM 2/C Support the planting of trees and new woodland that conserve and enhance the landscape character and	Control, mitigate and monitor damaging diseases such as ash dieback	

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cultural heritage of the AONB, benefits wildlife, water quality and locks up carbon.		
FLM 3/A Encourage and support the restoration and management of orchards where they will enhance the landscape character and biodiversity of the AONB and provide a source of local produce.		
Access and Enjoyment		
AE 1/A Work with highway authorities, parish councils and land managers to achieve an accessible, connected and above-minimum-standard network of Public Rights of Way across boundaries throughout the AONB that also conserves and enhances the special qualities of the AONB.	Take a co-ordinated, strategic and planned approach to the management of public rights of way and publicly accessible land to achieve an accessible, well-connected network that conserves and enhances the special qualities of the AONB, avoids impact on sensitive sites and minimises conflict between different interests.	None. The outcomes from AE 1/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
AE 1/B Seek an appropriate balance between providing and promoting access and the conservation of the landscape and tranquillity of the AONB to avoid impact on sensitive sites and minimise conflict between different interests.		None. The outcomes from AE 1/B will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
AE 1/C Work with relevant groups to ensure a wide range of sensitive and sustainable access opportunities for users of all abilities to enjoy the special qualities of the AONB.	Opportunities will be sought to extend and improve the rights of way network, including improving connections with surrounding settlements where this is compatible with conserving and enhancing natural beauty.	None. The outcomes from AE 1/C will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
AE 1/D Promote and develop the AONB’s role in supporting health and wellbeing.	AND Opportunities to use the Blackdown Hills AONB to benefit the health and well-being of residents and visitors will be sought and promoted, seeking a range of sensitive and sustainable access opportunities for users of all abilities to	None. The outcomes from AE 1/D will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.

2014-19 Management Plan Policies	Similar Proposed 2019 – 2024 Management Plan Policies	Divergence of Environmental Outcome
	enjoy the special qualities of the AONB.	
Planning and Development		
PD 1/A Seek to ensure that all local plan documents and decision making has regard to the AONB purpose, the management plan and other AONB statements and guidance, and ensure that the importance of conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the AONB is fully reflected in the land-use planning framework.	All local and neighbourhood plan documents and planning decision-making will have regard to the AONB purpose, the management plan and other AONB statements and guidance, and ensure that conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the AONB is given great weight.	None. The outcomes from PD 1/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
PD 1/B Seek to ensure that any necessary new developments or conversions within the AONB or affecting its setting conserve and enhance natural beauty and special qualities, particularly by respecting the area’s landscape character and the local character of the built environment, reinforce local distinctiveness and seek to enhance biodiversity.	All necessary development affecting the AONB will conserve and enhance natural beauty and special qualities by: Respecting landscape character, settlement patterns and local character of the built environment Being sensitively sited and of appropriate scale Reinforcing local distinctiveness Seeking to protect and enhance natural features and biodiversity	None. The outcomes from PD 1/B will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
PD 1/C Protect the AONB from inappropriate and unnecessary development, including promoting the use of existing buildings to accommodate new uses where appropriate and compatible with current planning policies and the special qualities of the AONB.		None. The proposed policy in the 2019-2024 Management Plan requires the developer to demonstrate that the development is necessary. This will serve to protect the AONB from the unnecessary development described in policy PD 1/C.
PD 2/A Encourage new developments or conversions to use traditional and local materials, to be as carbon-neutral and water-efficient as reasonably practicable, and to incorporate	Support measures to improve energy efficiency and resource use, and support appropriate small scale renewable energy schemes that do not detract from historic character or visual amenity, and do not conflict with the special qualities of the AONB or the conservation	None. The outcomes from PD 2/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan. The reference to “use traditional and local materials”

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appropriate renewable energy sources where these do not cause visual intrusion or detract from historic character.	of natural beauty.	in PD 2/A is covered by the proposed policy that replaces PD 1/B and PD 1/C above.
PD 2/B Support and encourage appropriate, small-scale renewable energy schemes to help achieve carbon reduction and energy security that do not conflict with the special qualities of the AONB or the conservation of natural beauty.		None. The outcomes from PD 2/B will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
PD 3/A Reduce the production of waste and ensure that waste management does not conflict with conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the AONB.		None. “waste” is included within the term “resource use” within the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
PD 4/A Support initiatives that provide affordable housing to meet identified needs for local people in locations with access to employment and local services, ensuring that developments conserve and enhance natural beauty, particularly by respecting landscape and settlement character and avoiding impacts on nature conservation and historic interests.	Support the provision of affordable housing to meet identified local needs in locations with access to employment and local services, ensuring that developments are appropriately scaled and sited to respect landscape and settlement character, and avoiding impacts on nature conservation and historic interests.	None. The outcomes from PD 4/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
PD 5/A Encourage quiet enjoyment of the AONB and avoid or restrict developments, activities and events, including artificial light installations, which detract from the tranquillity of the Blackdown Hills.	[From Landscape Character section] Promote high levels of peace and tranquillity with dark night skies by minimising noise, intrusive development and light pollution	None. Whilst not specific to activities and events, which PD 5/A is, the proposed policy in the 2019-2024 Management Plan can be used to achieve the same environmental outcome.
PD 5/B Support recreational development only where it is in keeping	[From Planning and Development section] All necessary development affecting the AONB will	None. The outcomes from PD 5/B will be achieved by the proposed

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with the purpose and the special qualities of the AONB.	<p>conserve and enhance natural beauty and special qualities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respecting landscape character, settlement patterns and local character of the built environment Being sensitively sited and of appropriate scale Reinforcing local distinctiveness Seeking to protect and enhance natural features and biodiversity <p>[From Rural Economy and Tourism section] Tourism and recreation provision will contribute to the local economy without harming the Blackdown Hills landscape, historic environment, biodiversity or tranquillity, and respecting the special qualities of the AONB.</p>	policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
Transport and highways		
TH 1/A Work to ensure road and transport schemes (including road design, maintenance, signage, landscaping and safety measures) within or affecting the AONB have regard to the purpose of AONB designation and conserve and enhance the area's special qualities.	Road and transport schemes (including design, maintenance, signage, landscaping and safety measures) affecting the AONB will be undertaken in a manner that is sensitive and appropriate to landscape character, having regard to the purpose of AONB designation and conserving and enhancing the area's special qualities. The landscape and cultural features of the AONB's road network (including hedge banks, flower-rich verges, and locally distinctive historic highway furniture) will be protected and conserved	None. The outcomes from TH 1/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
TH 2/A Support and promote initiatives that provide sustainable solutions to local transport needs.	Promote the development of high quality, integrated and sustainable transport services and initiatives in and around the AONB where they can be achieved without compromising the conservation of natural beauty and local character.	None. The outcomes from TH 2/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
TH 3/A Work with highways authorities to implement agreed traffic management techniques to reduced traffic volume and speed on minor roads to provide a safer environment for walking, cycling and	Traffic management measures will be supported which reduce the impact of large and heavy vehicles on the most minor roads and help to provide a safer environment for walking, cycling and horse riding, where this is compatible with conserving and enhancing natural beauty.	None. The outcomes from TH 3/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.

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horse riding.		
Rural economy and tourism		
RET 1/A Support rural diversification which contributes to business viability, develops local markets and adds value to local products without compromising the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and the special qualities of the AONB.	Support the principle of local markets and sustainable local products where it adds value to the local economy without compromising the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and the special qualities of the AONB. AND	None. The outcomes from RET 1/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
RET 1/B Encourage the development of sustainable employment opportunities that are compatible with conserving and enhancing natural beauty and the special qualities of the AONB, and encourage people to continue to live and work within their communities.	Economic capacity and skills in the area will be supported through training opportunities, community enterprise, business networking and cooperation especially where these assist businesses to contribute to AONB purposes	None. The environmental outcomes associated with providing “Sustainable employment opportunities” can be achieved through providing the training, support to community enterprise and business networking as described by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
RET 1/D Support sustainable initiatives that encourage and develop economic links, which also support social and environmental objectives, between the AONB and the surrounding market towns.		None. The environmental outcomes associated with “supporting sustainable initiatives that encourage and develop economic links” can be achieved through the training opportunities, support for community enterprise and business networking and cooperation as described by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
RET 1/C Support the development of sustainable tourism activities within the AONB that are compatible with conserving and enhancing natural beauty and the special qualities of the AONB, increase understanding and	Tourism and recreation provision will contribute to the local economy without harming the Blackdown Hills landscape, historic environment, biodiversity or tranquillity, and respecting the special qualities of the AONB.	None. The outcomes from RET 1/C will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.

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appreciation of the Blackdown Hills and benefit the local economy.		
Community and culture		
CC 1/A Support local communities in taking action to identify and plan for their own needs, in celebrating their achievements and strengths and in undertaking community activities which reinforce the cultural traditions of the AONB.	Local communities will be supported to identify, plan, and provide for their own needs, in undertaking community activities to encourage sustainable lifestyles, reinforce local cultural traditions, and in celebrating their achievements and strengths.	None. The outcomes from CC 1/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
CC 2/A Encourage and support local communities in the development of community-based plans and guides that are in keeping with the AONB's objectives.	Community-led planning tools (neighbourhood plans, parish plans, village design statements and others) that contribute to conserving and enhancing the AONB will be supported.	None. The outcomes from CC 2/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
CC 3/A Support local community engagement in cultural and natural heritage initiatives within the AONB.	<p>[From Communication, Education and Awareness section] Develop and support a range of opportunities for active engagement with the countryside, wildlife and heritage of the Blackdown Hills AONB, promoting the benefits that the natural environment provides to us.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>[From Forestry, Farm and Land Management section] Wider community engagement with the farming and land management sector will enable a deeper understanding of the important role played by land managers in maintaining the AONB's special qualities</p>	None. The outcomes from CC3/A will be achieved by the proposed policies for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
CC 4/A Support the retention or enhancement of community facilities, services and amenities where compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and the	Support and promote initiatives that help to provide, retain or enhance community facilities and services where compatible with conserving and enhancing natural beauty.	None. The outcomes from CC 4/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.

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special qualities of the AONB.		
CC4/B Support community-based initiatives that promote sustainable measures and lifestyles to minimise waste and use of water, and promote reuse, recycling, composting, energy efficiency and community transport, where these are compatible with the purpose of the AONB and its special qualities.	[From Planning and Development section] Support measures to improve energy efficiency and resource use, and support appropriate small scale renewable energy schemes that do not detract from historic character or visual amenity, and do not conflict with the special qualities of the AONB or the conservation of natural beauty.	None. The outcomes from CC 4/B will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan. The phrase “energy efficiency and resource use” covers the list of environmental activities in policy CC4/B.
Communication, education and awareness		
CEA 1/A Promote existing countryside and heritage volunteering opportunities and facilitate the creation of new and diverse opportunities that will contribute to the positive management of the AONB.	Develop and support a range of opportunities for active engagement with the countryside, wildlife and heritage of the Blackdown Hills AONB, promoting the benefits that the natural environment provides to us.	None. The outcomes from CEA 1/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan. CEA 1/A is also to appear in the Plan as an action instead of a policy.
CEA 1/B Promote and provide events and activities that offer outdoor experiences and learning.		None. The outcomes from CEA 1/B will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan. CEA 1/B is also to appear in the Plan as an action instead of a policy.
CEA 1/D Encourage and facilitate community groups in organising projects and events which engage people with landscape, wildlife and heritage.		None. The outcomes from CEA 1/D is covered by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.
CEA 1/C Use a range of techniques and settings to interpret the AONB’s natural, cultural and built heritage for diverse audiences.	Through promotion and education make more people aware of what makes the Blackdown Hills special, inspiring them to help care for the area and contribute to its conservation and enhancement.	None. The outcomes from CEA 1/C will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan. CEA 1/C is also to appear in the Plan as an action instead of a policy.

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CEA 2/A Ensure that all relevant authorities and organisations with responsibilities towards the AONB have access to relevant, up-to-date, technical information so that decisions are made in the light of good knowledge and understanding of the AONB.		None. The outcomes from CEA 2/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan. CEA 2/A is also to appear in the Plan as an action instead of a policy.
CEA 2/B Ensure that non-professional audiences have access to engaging information in a wide range of formats.		None. The outcomes from CEA 2/B will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan. CEA 2/B is also to appear in the Plan as an action instead of a policy.
CEA 3/A Encourage the appropriate use of the AONB for a wide range of education and research initiatives that will contribute to its conservation and enhancement.		None. The outcomes from CEA 3/A will be achieved by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan. CEA 3/A is also to appear in the Plan as an action instead of a policy.
Partnership and management		
PM 1/A Encourage joint-working to deliver the objectives of the Management Plan by all members of the AONB Partnership.	-	None. Whilst policy PM 1/A does not appear as a proposed policy in the 2019-2024 Management Plan, it will appear as an action.
PM 1/B Encourage all members of the AONB Partnership to enhance the status, identity and awareness of the Blackdown Hills AONB.	-	None. Whilst policy PM 1/B does not appear as a proposed policy in the 2019-2024 Management Plan, it will appear as an action.
PM1/C Seek to ensure that funding programmes, such as Heritage Lottery Fund, RDPE and European Union programmes, are used to their fullest extent to further the purposes of the Blackdown Hills AONB.	Encourage co-ordination and partnership amongst the wide range of national and regional agencies and organisations to secure funding for the care and enhancement of the AONB	None. The outcomes from PM 1/C is covered by the proposed policy for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.

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<p>PM 1/D Promote the Blackdown Hills AONB as a test bed for new ideas and projects that will benefit natural beauty and communities, and are compatible with the AONB purpose.</p>	<p>[From Farming, Forestry and Land Management section] Influence rural farm and rural business support mechanisms and act as a testbed for and monitor the impacts of agricultural policy reform on rural character</p> <p>AND</p> <p>[From Natural Resources section] Support studies, research and improve understanding of the AONB's rich stock of natural capital and ensure that its value to society (in terms of flow of goods and services) is recognised and understood by decision-makers and others</p>	<p>None. Whilst there is not a specific policy to promote the Blackdown Hills as a test bed, there is considerable ambition within the 2019-2024 Management Plan set of policies to test new ideas. Others are likely to emerge over the period of the plan.</p>
<p>PM 1/E Promote joint working with East Devon AONB and other protected landscapes within Devon and Somerset to achieve the purposes of the AONB.</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>None. Whilst policy PM 1/E does not appear as a proposed policy in the 2019-2024 Management Plan, it will appear as an action.</p>
<p>PM 1/F Monitor and report on the progress of actions, and their effects, on the natural beauty and communities of the Blackdown Hills.</p>	<p>Monitor the state of the landscape to identify where erosion and enhancement of the quality of the AONB is taking place and develop feedback mechanisms for corrective management</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Promote and highlight good practice within the AONB and the role and activities of the AONB Partnership</p>	<p>None. The outcomes from PM 1/F is covered by the proposed policies for the 2019-2024 Management Plan.</p>