

## ***BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE AONB 2007 - 2012***

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE BUSINESS PLAN**

- 1.1 The purpose of this Business Plan is to describe the way forward for the AONB Team and the JAC in response to the goals set by the AONB's Management Plan. It sets out detailed proposals for achieving the actions contained in Plan by defining a programme of work matched to the resources available to the Joint Advisory Committee.
- 1.2 The Business Plan looks forward over the medium term to 2012. The Service Delivery Plan sets out how Business Plan objectives are to be achieved by means of monitored work programme targets. The Service Delivery Plan is reviewed annually and a new set of targets agreed.
- 1.3 Business Plan contains:
- An introduction to the AONB
  - An account of the Governance Review that took place during 2006/07 financial year
  - How the Joint Advisory Committee and the AONB Team are organised.
  - A description of the financial structure.
  - The current Service Delivery Plan (Appendix 1)

### **2.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE AONB**

- 2.1 The boundaries of the Nidderdale AONB were first defined by the Hobhouse Committee in 1947 alongside 40 others in England and Wales. Although the first AONBs were designated in the 1950's, the award of AONB status to Nidderdale in 1994 was the penultimate designation in the original list of 41 AONBs.
- 2.2 Confirmation of the designation was made by the Secretary of State in February 1994. The AONB's Joint Advisory Committee was established by Harrogate Borough Council in 1995, an AONB Project Officer and part-time Project Assistant appointed in 1998 and an AONB Management Strategy published in May 1999.
- 2.3 Since 1995, the Joint Advisory Committee has successfully established a role for itself as a in environmental conservation and socio-economic regeneration efforts with both the community and government agencies. Unlike the Nidderdale AONB that is almost wholly within Harrogate District, many AONBs comprise more than 10 constituent local authorities which are able to jointly bear the costs associated with management of AONBs. In Nidderdale, progress has been achieved by a funding partnership between the Countryside Agency, Harrogate Borough Council and North Yorkshire County Council.

2.4 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) enhanced the status of AONBs and laid the foundations for increased funding from the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) which has introduced new procedures to ensure that the management of AONBs reaches an agreed standard. These include guidance on the preparation of AONB Management Plans and a revised process for obtaining Countryside Agency grant aid coupled with an obligation to produce annual reports. A higher profile for AONBs, coupled with increased funding, has also raised the community's expectations of AONB designation.

### 3.0 **VISION FOR THE AONB**

3.1 The 2004 – 2009 Management Plan contains the following statement: 'The Joint Advisory Committee's goal is to ensure that it complements the AONB's special qualities by promoting change capable of winning support from all sections of the community so that:

- Stewardship of natural beauty is a priority for everyone
- Tranquility and opportunities for quiet enjoyment of nature are protected
- Biodiversity is valued for its own sake
- The legacy of the historic environment is celebrated
- Local distinctiveness is maintained
- The livelihoods of local communities are protected'

### 4.0 **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

4.1 The aim of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Objectives and Policies contained in the Management Plan set out how this is to be achieved. The role of the Business Plan is to provide an organisational framework for the JAC and the AONB Team that will enable the aims and objectives to be achieved.

### 5.0 **GOVERNANCE REVIEW (2006/7)**

5.1 A Steering Group was established in October 2006 to produce a new Business Plan for consideration by the AONB's Joint Advisory Committee. The Steering Group comprised the JAC Chair and Vice Chair, representatives of Natural England, North Yorkshire County Council, Harrogate Borough Council, AONB Friends and the Moorland Association's representative on the JAC.

5.2 The Steering Group's remit was to review governance of the Nidderdale AONB by examining:

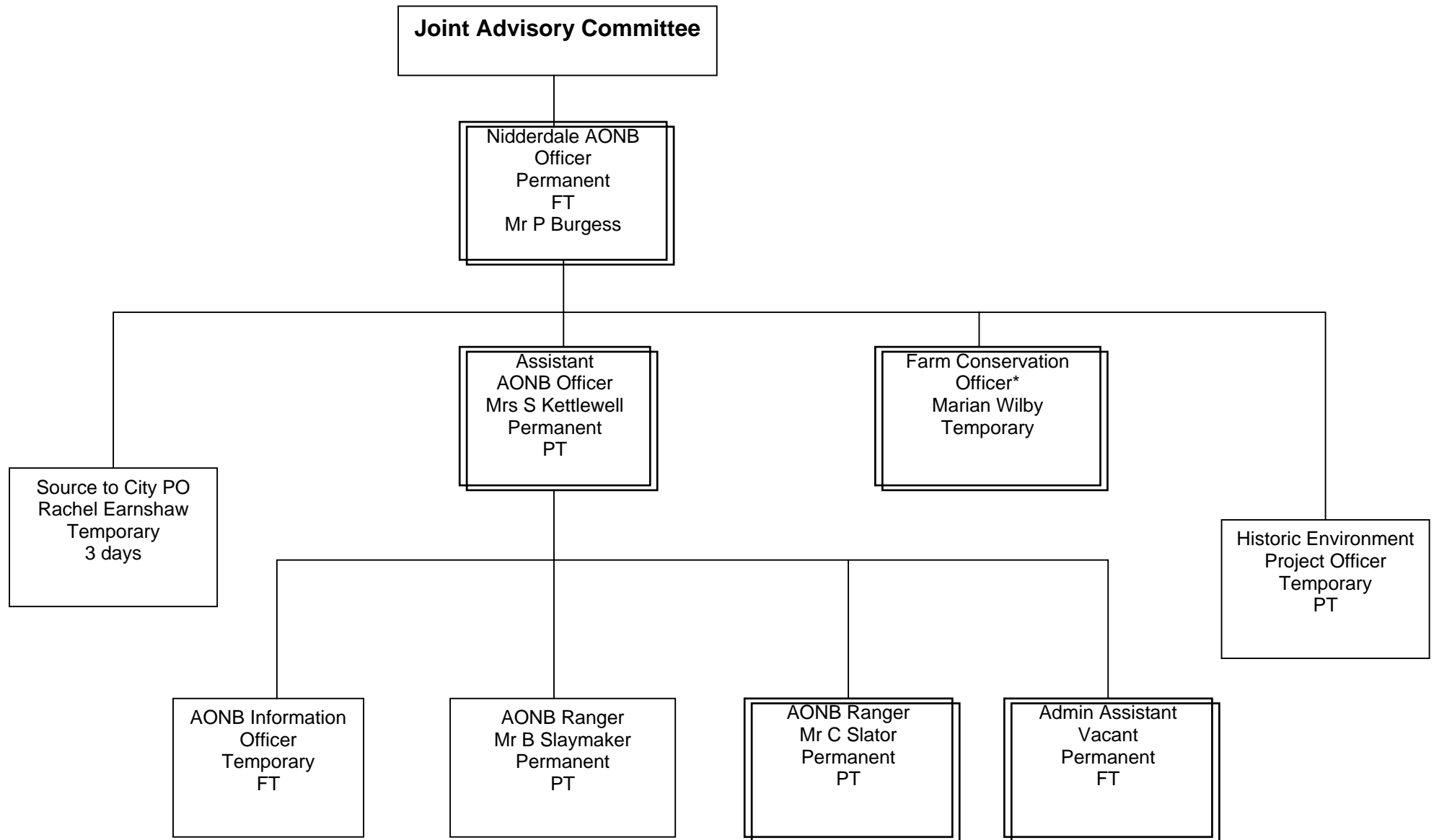
- The key challenges facing protected landscapes including AONBs.
- The role of the JAC as a guardian or champion of the designation locally, across the region and nationally.
- The relationship between the JAC and partners.
- The composition of the JAC.
- JAC operating procedures including the Constitution and the role of sub-groups.
- The capacity and effectiveness of the AONB Team.

5.3 The Steering Group's report to the July 2007 meeting of the JAC recommended that the JAC should:

- Create a JAC Executive;
- Establish an Officer Technical Group
- Make greater use of working parties and 'task and finish' groups;
- Clarify the role of the AONB Annual Conference;
- Revise the JAC's terms of reference;
- Produce a new Constitution to reflect these changes.

5.4 The JAC adopted a new Constitution at a meeting in November 2007.

6.0 THE EXISTING MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



## 7.0 THE JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (JAC)

The JAC was established by Harrogate Borough Council in February 1995. Membership of the JAC is as follows:

Organisation	Number of Representatives
British Horse Society	1
Council for the Protection of Rural England	1
Country Landowners Association	1
Harrogate Borough Council	6
Moorland Association	1
National Farmers Union	1
Natural England	1
National Trust	1
Nidderdale Chamber of Trade	1
North Yorkshire County Council	3
Parish Councils	2
Ramblers Association	1
Yorkshire Water	1

### 7.1 The JAC's terms of reference are :-

*The JAC's overriding purpose is to maintain and enhance the special qualities of the AONB. The Committee's Terms of Reference are as follows:*

- a. *To promote awareness of the objectives of AONB designation, and to encourage people to appreciate and enjoy its special qualities*
- b. *To promote and facilitate sustainable development in pursuit of AONB objectives.*
- c. *To maintain an active partnership with the local authorities that are accountable bodies for the designation.*
- d. *To advise local authorities and other public bodies about management of the AONB in line with their obligations under S85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.*
- e. *To coordinate the work of local authorities and other public bodies to maximise the benefits to the AONB.*
- f. *To encourage involvement by all sections of the community in the work of the Committee and of the AONB Team.*
- g. *To produce a Management Plan for the AONB on behalf of the local authority accountable bodies in accordance with S89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to revise the Plan as necessary and to produce an annual review of progress.*
- h. *To agree and monitor an annual work programme for the AONB Team, and to coordinate bids for funding and other resources to facilitate implementation.*

*i. To provide the local authorities and regional Government as appropriate with comments on proposals for development, and on planning and other policies insofar as they relate to the AONB.*

*j. To commission research, special studies and monitoring exercises to provide the foundation for evidence-based AONB policy development.*

7.2 The JAC currently meets three times a year. Elections for the Chair, Vice Chair and Executive take place annually at Annual General Meeting in July.

7.3 Harrogate Borough Council acts as lead local authority for the JAC. It also hosts members of AONB team, and provides a range of administrative support-services that include personnel and financial management, IT, media liaison and graphic design.

7.4 The Constitution of the JAC is at Appendix 2.

## 8.0 **JAC EXECUTIVE & TECHNICAL OFFICERS GROUP**

8.1 The role of the Executive is to conduct the Committee's business outside the normal cycle of JAC meetings. It comprises the JAC Chair, Vice Chair, a representative of the 'Special Interest Groups' represented on the JAC, a Parish representative and a Natural England advisor.

8.2 The Technical Officers Group exists to provide Members of the JAC with professional advice on conservation issues.

8.3 Full details of the remit and composition of the Executive and Technical Officers Group are contained in the JAC's Constitution (Appendix 2).

## 9.0 **FINANCIAL STRUCTURE**

### 9.1 Core Costs

9.1.1 75% of staff costs associated with the existing management structure, including salaries, national insurance, superannuation, travel and subsistence, are funded by Natural England. These costs are regarded as 'Core Costs'. The remaining 25% is shared between Harrogate Borough and North Yorkshire County Councils.

9.1.2 This same partnership also funds support costs, including office accommodation for example, and work by the AONB Team designed to promote understanding and awareness of the designation.

### 9.2 Project Costs

9.2.1 Project work is also supported by the Core Funding partnership of the Countryside Agency, Harrogate Borough and North Yorkshire County Councils, although the Natural England's contribution to project costs is at a lower rate of 50%.

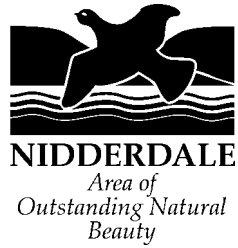
9.2.2 The project budget is supplemented by contributions from a variety of sources including the Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund National Lottery and the private sector.

## 10.0 **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 10.1 The Business Plan looks forward over a five-year time-horizon to 2012. It is not envisaged that the organisational structure will change significantly, but composition of the AONB Team is likely to alter, and appropriate amendments will need to be made to the Plan.
- 10.2 The Service Delivery Plan (Appendix 1) contains detailed information about current work programmes and financial profiles that are geared to each successive financial year. It is updated annually by the JAC each spring. The JAC receives a report containing details of progress towards meeting targets set in the previous Service Delivery Plan on an annual basis. A summary of this is included in the AOMNB Annual Review that is posted on the AONB's website.







*NIDDERDALE AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE*

**Constitution**

OCTOBER 2007

The following organisations are members of the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee. They have agreed to adhere to the clauses contained in this Constitution:

***TO BE ADDED***

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The JAC's overriding purpose is to maintain and enhance the special qualities of the AONB. The Committee's Terms of Reference are as follows:

- 1.1 To promote awareness of the objectives of AONB designation, and to encourage people to appreciate and enjoy its special qualities
- 1.2 To promote and facilitate sustainable development in pursuit of AONB objectives.
- 1.3 To maintain an active partnership with the local authorities that are accountable bodies for the designation.
- 1.4 To advise local authorities and other public bodies about management of the AONB in line with their obligations under S85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- 1.5 To coordinate the work of local authorities and other public bodies to maximise the benefits to the AONB.
- 1.6 To encourage involvement by all sections of the community in the work of the Committee and of the AONB Team.
- 1.7 To produce a Management Plan for the AONB on behalf of the local authority accountable bodies in accordance with S89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to revise the Plan as necessary and to produce an annual review of progress.
- 1.8 To agree and monitor an annual work programme for the AONB Team, and to coordinate bids for funding and other resources to facilitate implementation.
- 1.9 To provide the local authorities and regional Government as appropriate with comments on proposals for development, and on planning and other policies insofar as they relate to the AONB.
- 1.10 To commission research, special studies and monitoring exercises to provide the foundation for evidence-based AONB policy development.

## 2.0 MEMBERSHIP

### 2.1 Composition

Organisation	Number of representatives
North Yorkshire County Council	3
Harrogate Borough Council	6
Representatives of Parish Councils in the AONB	2
Country Land and Business Association	1
Moorland Association	1
Gamekeepers Association (Moorland Branch)	1
National Farmers Union	1
Natural England	1
Friends of the AONB	1
Ramblers Association	1
British Horse Society	1
Yorkshire Water	1
Nidderdale Chamber of Trade	1
Council for the Protection of Rural England	1
National Trust	1

### 2.2 Representation

- 2.2.1 In nominating representatives, the local authorities should give priority to elected Members serving wards/electoral divisions within the AONB.
- 2.2.2 The Chairman of the JAC shall have the right to invite representatives of other bodies to the Committee to discuss issues of relevance to the Committee's Terms of Reference
- 2.2.3 A nominated Member of the Committee who is unable to attend a particular meeting shall arrange for a substitute from his/her constituent body to attend in his/her place.
- 2.2.4 Local authority Member representatives shall have the right to be accompanied at meetings of the JAC by appropriate officers in an advisory capacity.

## 2.3 Roles and Responsibilities of JAC Members

- 2.3.1 Members should play an active role in the JAC's work by attending Committee meetings, contributing to Working Parties, by representing the JAC in other organisations as appropriate, and by attending events and other activities organised by the JAC or the AONB Team.
- 2.3.2 JAC Members will be expected to take account of both local and national interests in their contribution to the work of the JAC, recognising that the AONB is designated by Government on behalf of the nation while ensuring that the pursuit of conservation objectives must not adversely affect the AONB's economy or rural communities.
- 2.3.3 Members will be expected to take a particular interest in strategic issues such as conservation, recreation, planning, access, land management and resource issues including sustainable development.
- 2.3.4 All JAC Members should take every opportunity to promote the objectives of AONB designation by disseminating information about the work of the JAC and the AONB Team throughout their host organisations and to the wider public.

## 3.0 **STRUCTURE OF THE JAC**

### 3.1 Chair and Vice Chair

- 3.1.1 The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee will be elected annually (see clause 000). Nominations for either post shall be open to any elected member appointed to the JAC by either North Yorkshire County Council, Harrogate Borough Council or a representative of the parish councils in the AONB.
- 3.1.2 The Chair will conduct the business at meetings of the Committee and of the Management Board (see clause 000), and will normally represent the JAC in dealings with outside bodies unless this is delegated to another Member.
- 3.1.3 The Vice Chair will substitute for the Chair in these roles as necessary.

### 3.2 JAC Executive

- 3.2.1 The Executive will be elected annually. It will consist of
  - JAC Chair
  - JAC Vice Chair
  - A Parish Council representative
  - A representative of the 'Special Interest Groups' represented on the JAC (see Appendix 1)
  - A member of Natural England's staff

Officers of the local authorities will be invited to accompany elected representatives in an advisory capacity.

### 3.2.1 The Executive will:

- a) Represent the JAC's interests outside the normal cycle of JAC meetings
- b) Ensure that JAC Members are kept informed of progress and of any business conducted outside the normal cycle of JAC meetings.
- c) Plan meetings of the Committee.
- d) Receive reports on progress towards annual targets for the AONB Team identified in the annual Service Delivery Plan, and on budgets and funding, and make recommendations to the JAC as appropriate.
- e) Advise the local authorities on AONB staffing issues
- f) Receive reports from Working Parties set up by the JAC and make recommendations to the JAC as appropriate.
- g) Receive reports from the Officers Technical Group as necessary.
- h) Advise the AONB Officer on JAC responses to planning consultations in accordance with the procedures agreed with the local authorities (see Appendix 2).
- i) Agree responses to policy and other consultations initiated by national or regional Government, by local authorities or by organisations with an interest in rural affairs.

### 3.3 Officers Technical Group

3.3.1 An Officers' Technical Group will be convened by the JAC to ensure that Members receive professional advice about issues relevant to the Committee's Terms of Reference from specialists working for local authorities and Government agencies. The Officers' Technical Group will consist of:

- AONB Team (AONB Officer)
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Harrogate Borough Council
- Natural England
- North Yorkshire County Council

### 3.3.2 The Officers' Technical Group will:

- a) Consider developments in national and regional rural policy and make recommendations to the Management Board as appropriate.
- b) Seek to align delivery and funding programmes of DEFRA-sponsored organisations and local authorities with AONB objectives.
- c) Consider progress reports on progress towards AONB Team Service Delivery Plan targets
- d) Advise and assist with the development of funding bid
- e) Provide general technical support for the JAC
- f) Consider proposed changes to the AONB Management Plan.

### 3.4 AONB Annual Conference

- 3.4.1 The JAC will organise an Annual Conference of community organisations, Parish Councils, amenity groups and local societies, youth groups, AONB Volunteers and Friends, and individuals with an interest in the work of the JAC and the AONB Team.
- 3.4.2 The aim of the Conference will be to inform the wider community about the work of the JAC and the AONB Team, to outline past progress and future projects.

### 3.5 Working Parties

- 3.5.1 Working parties will be convened by the Management Board to investigate specific issues and make recommendations to the Board and the JAC.
- 3.5.2 Working Parties will be chaired by a member of the Management Board. The Board will nominate Working Party members who will be drawn from the JAC, the Officer's Technical Group, individuals with expertise in the issues under investigation and from organisations not represented on either the JAC or the Officer's Technical Group whose remit is relevant to the Working Party's interests.

## 4.0 **OPERATION OF THE COMMITTEE**

### 4.1 JAC Meetings

- 4.1.1 There will be at least two business meetings and one Annual General Meeting of the Committee annually. In appropriate circumstances at the discretion of the Chair, additional meetings shall be held as necessary.
- 4.1.2 The Annual General Meeting of the Committee will take place in the summer. This meeting will:
  - a) Elect a Chair and Vice Chair
  - b) Elect members of the Management Board
- 4.1.3 Wherever possible, meetings of the JAC will be held at a venue within or close to AONB and will normally be held in open session with access for press and public. Exceptionally, at the discretion of the JAC, individual matters may be considered in private session.
- 4.1.4 Administrative support for the Committee shall be provided by Harrogate Borough Council.
- 4.1.5 It is hoped that the Committee should normally be able to reach agreement on recommendations by discussion and consensus, but where required each Member or substitute shall be entitled to one vote.

- 4.1.6 An agenda shall be circulated at least one week before each meeting and constituent authorities and organisations shall notify items in time for them to be included on the agenda.
- 4.1.7 No business shall be transacted at a meeting unless both North Yorkshire County Council and Harrogate Borough Council are represented and unless there are a minimum of six members of the Committee present

## 5.0 **CONSTITUTION**

- 5.1 The Constitution of the JAC shall be open to review only at the Annual General Meeting. Proposed variations shall normally require the agreement of Harrogate Borough and North Yorkshire County Councils.

**List of Special Interest Groups represented on the Joint Advisory Committee**

Country Land and Business Association  
National Farmers Union  
National Gamekeepers Association  
Moorland Association  
Council for the Protection of Rural England  
National Trust  
Nidderdale Chamber of Trade  
Yorkshire Water  
Ramblers Association  
Friends of the Nidderdale AONB  
British Horse Society

**SCHEME FOR CONSULTATION BETWEEN THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES AND  
THE AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

General

1. *This draft scheme is intended to define, in agreement with the local planning authorities, the scope of the AONB Joint Advisory Committee's involvement in planning matters.*
2. *It sets out arrangements whereby the Joint Advisory Committee will be consulted upon planning policy documents affecting all or part of the designated AONB, together with the more significant planning applications. It also commits the Joint Advisory Committee to carry out and make an annual report on development trends within the AONB.*
3. *This scheme has been agreed with the local authorities.*

Planning Policy Documents

4. *The relevant planning authority will consult the Joint Advisory Committee on all planning policy documents, or proposed amendments/modifications to them, affecting all or part of the Nidderdale AONB.*

Planning Applications

5. *The relevant planning authority will consult the Joint advisory Committee on applications under the Town and Country Planning Acts, and consultations by statutory authorities, within, or likely to affect the landscape character of the Nidderdale AONB.*
  - a) Residential Development: *applications involving 10 or more dwellings (or where a number of dwellings is indicated the site area is 0.5 hectares/1.25 acres or greater), except where the site is allocated for residential use in an approved plan.*
  - b) Other major developments: *applications for non-residential development involving 1000 square metres/10, 760 square feet or floorspace or where the site area is 1 hectare/2.5 acres or more, except where the site is allocated for the proposed use in an approved plan.*
  - c) Minerals and Waste Disposal: *all applications involving new or extended operational areas of 1 hectare.2.5 acres or more.*
  - d) Major road proposals: *all applications and consultations by the relevant highway authorities.*

- e) Utilities and other infrastructure: all applications for the following forms of development.
- i) Overhead electricity lines and facilities for transmission over 33KV.
  - ii) Cross country pipelines or similar installations.
  - iii) Construction of significant water resource or sewage treatment facilities.
  - iv) Renewable energy developments.
  - v) Telecommunication towers.
- f) Development of a novel nature which may have an effect on the landscape character of the AONB and/or set a precedent.

Monitoring and research

7. The Joint Advisory Committee will monitor and carry out research into development trends in the Nidderdale AONB and make an annual report to the local planning authorities.