

Comments	AONB Response
2.4 check eastern/western	Amendments made
<p>In the Purposes & Duties section you quote the Countryside Commission’s 1991 guidance that ‘Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.’ That has far too often been twisted to allow major development in the AONB with some pathetic mitigation conditions attached, conditions which in any case are widely ignored. You should include reference to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018. In particular, paragraph 172 (115 and 116 in the previous edition) states: Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in ... AONBs which have the highest status of protection ... The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.’ So what qualifies as ‘exceptional circumstances’ ? With regard to Vearse Farm, Bridport, in excess of 50 hectares of ‘Best and Most Versatile’ farmland entirely within the Dorset AONB, WDDC claim in the Local Plan that ‘...the need for growth from both a national and local perspective..’ is all that is required to pass the test. The government’s Planning Inspector apparently agreed, as did yourselves and Natural England. If that’s all that’s required, i.e. a constant and ubiquitous desire for growth, then the AONB has no protection at all and the designation - and your existence - is completely pointless. In the 2013 High Court judgment regarding an AONB planning application in Mevagissey, Cornwall the judge ruled that such generalisations did not meet the exceptional circumstances test: ‘in any event and far more potently, any assessment of “exceptional circumstances” must be done in respect of a specific proposed development’, and ‘Even if there were an exceptional need for affordable housing in an area, that would not necessarily equate to exceptional circumstances for a particular development, because there may be alternative sites that are more suitable because development there would result in less harm to the AONB landscape.’ Additionally, in the 2016 Farthingloe, Kent AONB case the Appeal Court judge ruled that: ‘A local planning authority which is going to authorise a development which will inflict substantial harm on an AONB must surely give substantial reasons for doing so.’ None of the parties involved in the outline planning approval for Vearse Farm, including yourselves, have ever given substantial reasons for allowing the AONB to be substantially harmed in the way proposed - a shameful indictment on all of you.</p>	Some amendments made to chapter 4 and 9.3
<p>Section 2.5 mentions working with the LNP and LEP. Dorset AONB officers also participate in the Dorset catchment partnerships. With an increased role in delivering the catchment based approach in the West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams Catchment, it would be beneficial to understanding of stakeholders if this were included in the range of partnerships in Dorset. A structure diagram may help to re-inforce the importance of partnership working across Dorset.</p>	Some amendments made
<p>We are aware that the recent revised National Planning Policy Framework included changes to the wording of text related to AONBs and their status in planning. It appears that the new Paragraph 172 of the NPPF weakens the protection AONB designation offers to wildlife and cultural heritage by attributing ‘great weight’ in planning to the conservation and enhancement of landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs. Great weight to wildlife and cultural heritage being restricted to National Parks and the Broads.</p>	No change required: we are doing what we can with this plan to reinforce the fact that 'landscape' includes all of its constituent elements and their function.
<p>A clear definition of ‘natural beauty’ in the AONB management plan would help ensure that the importance of both wildlife and cultural heritage is not undermined by the change to NPPF wording and that the AONB designation can legitimately challenge developments that might ‘harm’ the wildlife and cultural assets of the Bride valley.</p>	Amendments made
<p>Paragraph 2.5 states that ‘partners are listed here’ : in fact the list appears at Chapter 11</p>	Amendments made
<p>Emphasise the commitment to natural beauty whilst recognising the adverse impact of urbanisation at the margins of the AONB</p>	Newly worked Chapter 4 should cover the pressures from building

<p>I assume from the fact that the Dorset AONB was designated in 1959 that its limits have not been adjusted since that time? It is also clear that the overall 'standard' of the Dorset landscape has meant that the boundary of the AONB has probably left out areas which still have a claim to special consideration: "the surrounding countryside in Dorset, while not being covered by landscape designations, is still of extremely high quality" (page 7). Both these factors suggest that the AONB will already feel a high degree of involvement with matters affecting Dorchester, both because it is the county town and also because the edge of the AONB is so close to it on the western, southern and northern sides. In addition, it already covers roughly the western half of Poundbury, and runs close to the Dorchester by-pass as it of course includes Maiden Castle. I also noted that the AONB has an advisory function for both the County Council and West Dorset District Council and that planning authorities seek advice from the AONB Team under the Dorset AONB planning protocol.</p> <p>My suggested amendment is simply that at the present time, developmental pressures on the county generally and on West Dorset in particular are so acute that planning for new housing is probably being done on a larger scale than ever before. This has the effect of making land with and without landscape designations merge more than before as increasingly they are subject to the same risks and opportunities. Decisions made about the growth and development of Dorchester will impact on the AONB for good or ill. It seems to me that all the special landscape and townscape of this town should now be brought within the AONB so that the fullest possible joined-up planning may be done. Perhaps such a development would also fit with the creation of the new unitary authority for this part of the county.</p>	<p>Not relevant to this plan</p>
<p>The LAF acknowledges that recreation is not an objective of AONB designation, and that the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses. However, we feel that the LAF could provide the AONB with useful advice and expertise on issues relating to countryside access and think that it should be mentioned as a partner organisation in the final paragraph of section 2.5, alongside the Health & Wellbeing Board, Local Enterprise Partnership and Local Nature Partnerships</p>	<p>Amendments made</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In its fourth edition, there is nothing substantive which can be added to this statement of fact. • The statement of fact that " delivery is coordinated by the Dorset AONB Partnership" now needs to be shifted up a gear to give the "dedicated staff team" more resources for monitoring delivery on an annual basis and reporting to Parishes and Towns. • This Parish would support calls to DEFRA and Local Authorities to fund additional monitoring and enforcement. 	<p>Action planning</p>
<p>BTC is aware that the recent revised National Planning Policy Framework included changes to the wording of text related to AONBs and their status in planning. It appears that the new Paragraph 172 of the NPPF weakens the protection AONB designation offers to wildlife and cultural heritage by attributing 'great weight' in planning to the conservation and enhancement of landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs. Great weight to wildlife and cultural heritage being restricted to National Parks and the Broads.</p> <p>The AONB Statement of Significance is clear about the importance of wildlife and cultural heritage and cultural associations to the AONB. For BTC, the history of Bridport and surrounding parishes, the fishing and ropemaking industries together with the important biodiversity of the river valleys and coast are of intrinsic value and make a significant contribution to the special character of the area and of the AONB.</p> <p>A clear definition of 'natural beauty' in the AONB management plan would help ensure that the importance of both wildlife and cultural heritage is not undermined by the change to NPPF wording and that the AONB designation can legitimately challenge developments that might 'harms' the wildlife and cultural assets of the Bridport Area.</p>	<p>No change required: we are doing what we can with this plan to reinforce the fact that 'landscape' includes all of its constituent elements and their function.</p>
<p>We suggest altering the paragraph break in 2.4 which currently separates "The surrounding countryside..." from "To the north lies the Blackmore Vale.....". It is important that the point about other areas having significant landscape value is linked with the named areas (Blackmore Value, Frome and Piddle Valley and Portland).</p>	<p>Amendments made</p>
<p>Within 2.4, it would be helpful not just to state that activities within the marine elements of the AONB and out at sea can have significant implications for the AONB, but that a high quality marine environment is just as crucial to the AONB's integrity as a high quality terrestrial environment</p>	<p>Amendments made</p>
<p>Section 2.3 mentions the population and catchment population within 20 miles of the boundary. It would be worthwhile adding the population within a wider catchment area of 40 or 50 miles, to indicate the scale of population within a reasonable proximity to commute, provide goods/services or take day-trips.</p>	<p>Examining available data</p>
<p>Doesn't the role of the Dorset Wildlife Trust warrant further elaboration?</p>	<p>Mentioned as a key partner which they are: further elaboration would require that of many similarly key partners, which undermines the aim of brevity</p>