

Appendix F - The Assessment Matrix of the revised High Weald AONB Management Plan 2014-2019

The assessment matrix is a list of the objectives of the revised High Weald AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 assessed against the conservation objectives of the European sites. The assessment was designed to determine whether or not a plan option (objective, in this case) is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site. Consultees should also consider other relevant plans and projects when looking at the matrix.

Four possible outcomes from undertaking the screening process were chosen:

Positive Reinforcement Where High Weald management plan objectives and designation objectives are clearly aligned, in these cases positive reinforcement is the result in the matrix.	
Not Applicable/No Effect Where the two sets of objectives are un-related or have no effect upon one another then the matrix has been left uncoloured.	
Potential Conflict or Uncertain Effect This outcome relates to both the compatibility of the objectives and/or management of the sites. Either where compatibility issues are either known or where there is the potential for incompatibility.	

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-24			Ashdown Forest SAC	Ashdown Forest SPA	Dungeness to Pett Levels SPA and Ramsar Site	Hastings Cliffs SAC	Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site
			To maintain in favourable condition, the European dry heaths and Northern Atlantic wet heaths, and habitats.	To maintain in favourable condition the habitats for the population of <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> Nightjar and <i>Sylvia undata</i> Dartford Warbler	To maintain in favourable condition the habitats for the populations of Annex I birds for which the site was designated;	To maintain in favourable condition the annex I habitat, Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic & Baltic coasts, for which the site was designated.	To maintain in favourable condition the habitats for the populations of Ramshorn snail <i>Anisus vorticulus</i> and other species for which the site was designated.
Key Component	Code	Description					
Geology, Landform, Water Systems and Climate	G1	To restore the natural function of rivers, water courses and water bodies.			Upstream river & wetland restoration within the AONB will directly & indirectly benefit this downstream site		Upstream river & wetland restoration within the AONB will directly & indirectly benefit this downstream site
	G2	To protect and enhance soils, sandstone outcrops, and other important landform and geological features.				SAC managed to allow erosion which could conflict with G2.	
	G3	To help secure climatic conditions and rates of change which support continued conservation and enhancement of the High Weald's valued landscape and habitats.	Climatic conditions are important for maintaining favourable habitats.	Climatic conditions are important for maintaining favourable habitats.	Climatic conditions are important for maintaining favourable habitats.	Climatic conditions are important for maintaining favourable habitats.	Climatic conditions are important for maintaining favourable habitats. Improvements in the AONB would affect areas outside its boundary.
Settlement	S1	To reconnect settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside.					
	S2	To protect the historic pattern and character of settlement.					
	S3	To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald and ensure development reflects the character of the High Weald in its scale, layout and design.					
Routeways	R1	To maintain the historic pattern and features of routeways.					

	R2	To enhance the ecological function of routeways.	Where routeways pass through Ashdown Forest this objective supports habitats.	Where routeways pass through Ashdown Forest this objective supports habitats.	Where routeways pass through Dungeness and Pett Levels this objective supports habitats.	Where routeways pass through Hastings Cliffs this objective supports habitats.
Woodland	W1	To maintain the existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland.	Retention of woodland could frustrate heathland restoration projects.	Retention of woodland could frustrate heathland restoration projects.		
	W2	To enhance the ecological quality and functioning of woodland at a landscape scale.	This objective supports the woodland habitats of Ashdown Forest	This objective supports the woodland habitats of Ashdown Forest		
	W3	To protect the archaeology and historic assets of AONB woodlands.				
	W4	To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets.	Some forestry operations could damage habitats and species .	Some forestry operations could damage habitats and species .		
Field & Heath	FH1	To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management.			Intensive farming methods could damage habitats and species.	
	FH2	To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands.				
	FH3	To enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats.	This objective supports the heathland habitats of Ashdown Forest	This objective supports the heathland habitats of Ashdown Forest	This objective supports the farmed habitats of Dungeness and Pett Levels	
	FH4	To protect the archaeology and historic assets of field and heath.				
People	LBE1	To improve returns from, and thereby increase entry and retention in, farming, forestry, horticulture and other land management activities that conserve and enhance natural beauty.	Intensive land management activities could damage habitats and species.	Intensive land management activities could damage habitats and species.	Intensive land management activities could damage habitats and species.	Intensive land management activities could damage habitats and species.
	LBE2	To improve amenities, infrastructure (including the provision of appropriate affordable housing) and skills development for rural communities and related sectors that contribute positively to conserving and enhancing natural beauty.				
	OQ1	To increase opportunities for learning about and celebrating the character of the High Weald.				
	OQ2	To increase the contribution of individuals and communities to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB.				
	OQ3	To develop and manage access to maximise opportunities for everyone to enjoy, appreciate and understand the character of the AONB while conserving its natural beauty.	Increased access can be harmful to habitats and species .	Increased access can be harmful to habitats and species .	Increased access can be harmful to habitats and species.	Increased access can be harmful to habitats and species .
	OQ4	To protect and promote the perceptual qualities that people value.				

Amendments Made to Management Plan to Avoid Potential Conflicts and Uncertain Impacts

HWAONB MP Objective	Natura 2000 Site	Potential Conflict or Uncertain Effect	Action Taken
G2: To protect the sandstone outcrops, soils and other important landform and geological features	Hastings Cliffs SAC	SAC managed to allow erosion which could conflict with G2.	Rationale for G2 amended to include “allowing for erosion where appropriate”.
W1: To maintain the existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland.	Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA	Retention of woodland could frustrate heathland restoration projects.	Aims and Actions for Woodland amended to include “Recognise the value of wooded heath and seek to accommodate sustainable heathland restoration where appropriate”.
W4: To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets.	Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA	Some forestry operations could damage habitats and species.	Aims and Actions for Woodland amended to include “Seek to foster forestry operations – usually small scale and traditional management - that do not damage characteristic habitats and species”.
FH1: To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management.	Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA; Dungeness and Pett Levels SAC and Ramsar Site; and Hastings Cliff SAC.	Intensive farming measures could damage habitats and species.	Aims and Actions for Field and Heath amended to include “Jointly prepare a best practice code for sustainable land management which fosters activities that enhance the distinctive character of the High Weald and do not damage characteristic habitats and species”.
LBE1: To improve returns from, and thereby increase entry and retention in, farming, forestry, horticulture and other land management activities that conserve and enhance natural beauty.	Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA; Dungeness and Pett Levels SAC and Ramsar Site; and Hastings Cliff SAC.	Intensive land management activities could damage habitats and species.	Aims and Actions for Field and Heath amended to include “Jointly prepare a best practice code for sustainable land management which fosters activities that enhance the distinctive character of the High Weald and do not damage characteristic habitats and species”.
OQ3: To develop and manage access to maximise opportunities for everyone to enjoy, appreciate and understand the character of the AONB while conserving its natural beauty.	Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA; Dungeness and Pett Levels SAC and Ramsar Site; and Hastings Cliff SAC.	Increased public access can be destructive to habitats and species.	Vision for Other Qualities amended to include “without damage to characteristic habitats and species”. Objective OQ3 amended to include “while conserving its natural beauty”.