



Environmental Report

for the

Strategic Environmental
Assessment (SEA)

of the

High Weald AONB Management
Plan Review 2014

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1.0 Context

1.1 - Introduction

On behalf of all relevant Local Authorities, the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit is charged with producing a management plan which formulates clear policy for the care of the AONB. This Management Plan is produced to meet the requirements set out by the Countryside Rights of Way Act (2000).

First published in 2004, and reviewed in 2009 the Plan is now due for its next five-year revision, as set out in the Act. This plan revision falls under European Directive (2001/42EC) commonly called the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive - requiring it to be assessed for any adverse impacts on the environment. In addition to this statutory obligation, there is also an opportunity within the SEA process to take into account any impacts upon key sustainability criteria (the Sustainability Appraisal). It is considered that this assessment against sustainability criteria is also appropriate to the High Weald AONB Management Plan review and to the work the Unit undertakes.

Completed in-house, the Environmental Report for the SEA is carried out alongside the Management Plan review process, enabling the formation of clear links between revised Plan objectives and targets, and their potential impact on the environment.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment is designed to be a transparent process, and this Environmental Report describes the systematic analysis of the potential effects of Management Plan policies in relation to environmental and sustainability criteria and clearly summarises the results of this assessment process, in order to maintain this transparency. Similarly, this report is subject to public consultation at the same time as the draft revised Management Plan.

All comments received regarding this Environmental Report will be reported to the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), along with proposed measures or actions to be taken as a result. The Report will then undergo further modifications, informed by these comments.

1.2 - Summary

Carrying out the SEA process the AONB Unit has been able to test their objectives against key criteria. The results of this process have provided clear evidence that the Unit's objectives are unlikely to have any negative effect upon key, broad environmental and sustainability criteria. The process has ensured no negative effects and highlights positive effects of the Unit's reviewed Management Plan objectives.

1.3 - The Assessment Process

a) The complete Assessment Process has been set out in the Scoping Report as a timeline, see Appendix (i). The High Weald Unit produced this Scoping Report for the SEA in May 2013. This report was designed to provide the context and baseline of environmental information, which would then form the foundations of the Management Plan review. In addition relevant comments made to other AONBs by statutory organisations have also been considered here.

b) As part of the Environmental Report the High Weald AONB objectives undergo an assessment using an analysis matrix. This cross-references all management plan objectives against key environmental criteria and allocates likely impacts - specifically looking to highlight those objectives which could have a negative impact upon either environmental or sustainability

criteria. These criteria were based upon those produced in the guidance document provided by Natural England (July 2007).

Through the cross-referencing of High Weald Unit objectives with these criteria for both sustainability and environmental issues, a table of outcomes was created; the possible outcomes used were;

- significant positive effect,
- partial positive effect,
- uncertain effect,
- partial negative effect,
- significant negative effect,
- not applicable

1.4 - Management Plan Objectives

The revised Management Plan has 21 objectives, categorised under the key components of natural beauty. During the revision the views of the consultees (as summarised above) were incorporated into the revised objectives, indicators and targets.

2.0 Baseline

2.1 - AONB Character

Time depth and objective analysis has defined the High Weald AONB as characterised by dispersed settlement particularly historic farmsteads; ancient tracks and routeways; an abundance of ancient woodland, wooded heaths and shaws with a heritage of woodland industries and iron working; and small, irregularly shaped and productive fields. These are all draped over a deeply incised and ridged landform of clays and sandstones with numerous gill streams, and are closely related to socio-economic characteristics that have roots extending deep into history.

The essential character of the High Weald was established by the 14th century and has survived major historical events, and social and technological changes. It is considered to be one of the best surviving coherent medieval landscapes in Northern Europe: this fundamental and largely immutable character is the essence of the natural beauty of the AONB.

2.2 - Plans & Strategies

The list of relevant plans and strategies is the same as those outlined in the Scoping Report, these are summarised in Appendix (ii).

2.3 - Environmental Trends & Baseline

Wooded and assarted landscape, reduction in grazing.

The data used to provide an environmental baseline is the same as those outlined in the Scoping Report. These are summarised in Appendix (iii).

2.4 - Environmental Issues

These issues and threats have been identified in detail in the Scoping Report. These can be viewed in the table in Appendix (iv).

2.5 - Indicators

Within the High Weald AONB Management Plan 'Indicators of Success' have been chosen as measurable indicators which can be used to monitor the condition of the AONB. Please refer to the document:

High Weald AONB Management Plan Review 2012: Condition Monitoring for the Management Plan Review, for further details.

3.0 Environmental Assessment

The objectives within the AONB Management Plan reflect local issues, relevant to the High Weald AONB. This table was used to assess the likely impacts of carrying out these objectives against key environmental and sustainability criteria. This is a strategic level assessment is designed to explore the impacts of the proposed Management Plan objectives upon the environment.

The environmental criteria are:

1. To protect and enhance the landscape
2. To protect and maintain cultural heritage (inc. archaeology and architecture)
3. To protect and where practical enhance diverse habitats
4. To protect and enhance flora and fauna
5. To protect water systems and promote sustainable flood risk management
6. To safeguard the quality of soil, air, water and maintain appropriate climatic conditions
7. To protect natural resources and encourage sustainable energy production
8. To safeguard human health, well-being and ensure no adverse effects on population
9. To avoid significant adverse effects generated through the interrelationships or cumulative effects of the above criteria.

These criteria were adapted from the national guidance document produced by Natural England, to ensure they reflect environmental issues relevant to the High Weald AONB.

3.1 Table 1 - Analysis Matrix: Environmental Assessment

High Weald AONB Management Plan Objectives			Environmental Criteria								
Key Component	Code	Description	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Geology, Landform, Water Systems and Climate	G1	To restore the natural function of river catchments	High	Low	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
	G2	To protect the sandstone outcrops of the AONB	High	High	High	High	Low	Low	High	High	Low
	G3	To maintain the appropriate local climatic conditions	High	Low	High	High	Low	High	High	High	High
Settlement	S1	To reconnect settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High	High	Low
	S2	To protect the historic pattern of settlement	High	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	High
	S3	To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald	High	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Routeways	R1	To maintain the historic pattern and features of routeways	High	High	High	Low	Low	High	Low	High	Low
	R2	To enhance the ecological function of routeways	High	Low	High	High	Low	Low	High	Low	Low
Woodland	W1	To maintain existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland	High	High	High	High	Low	High	High	High	Low
	W2	To enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale	High	Low	High	High	Low	Low	High	High	High
	W3	To protect the archaeology of AONB woodlands	High	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	W4	To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets	High	High	High	High	Low	High	High	Low	Low
Field & Heath	FH1	To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald AONB, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management	High	Low	High	High	High	High	High	High	Low
	FH2	To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands	High	High	High	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

High Weald AONB Management Plan Objectives			Environmental Criteria								
Key Component	Code	Description	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	FH3	To enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats	Partial positive effect	Partial positive effect	Significant positive effect	Significant positive effect	Partial positive effect	Partial positive effect	Partial positive effect	Partial positive effect	
	FH4	To protect the historic features of field and heath	Partial positive effect	Significant positive effect		Partial positive effect					
Public Understanding & Enjoyment	UE1	To increase opportunities for learning about and enjoying of the character of the High Weald	Partial positive effect	Partial positive effect							
	UE2	To increase the contribution of individuals to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB	Partial positive effect	Partial positive effect	Partial positive effect	Partial positive effect			Partial positive effect		
	UE3	To increase community involvement in conservation and enhancement of the AONB									
	UE4	Integrated management of the resources for informal open-air recreation to facilitate 'green' use by residents and visitors	Partial positive effect		Partial positive effect			Significant positive effect	Partial positive effect	Partial positive effect	
	UE5	To promote the perceptual and aesthetic qualities that people value	Partial positive effect	Partial positive effect					Partial positive effect	Partial positive effect	

Key

Environmental Criteria	
1	To protect and enhance the landscape
2	To protect and maintain cultural heritage (including architecture and archaeology)
3	To protect and where practical enhance diverse habitats
4	To protect and enhance flora and fauna
5	To protect water systems and promote sustainable flood risk management
6	To safeguard the quality of soil, air, water and maintain appropriate climatic conditions
7	To protect natural resources and encourage sustainable energy production
8	To safeguard human health, well-being and ensure no adverse effects on population
9	To avoid significant adverse effects generated through the inter-relationships or cumulative effect of the above objectives

Significant positive effect
Partial positive effect
Uncertain effect
Partial negative effect
Significant negative effect
No significant effect

4.0 Sustainability Assessment

The sustainability appraisal uses the same processes as the environmental appraisal above, and the two were generated at the same time. The sustainability appraisal assesses the same Management Plan objectives, this time against a set of sustainability criteria.

These criteria were again, adapted from the national guidance document produced by Natural England, to ensure they reflect those issues relevant to the High Weald AONB.

The sustainability criteria are:

1. To create vibrant, cohesive and sustainable communities
2. To protect the quality and character of individual settlements and communities
3. To protect the environment, people and properties from flood risk
4. To reduce the need and desire to travel by car
5. To promote healthy lifestyles
6. To raise education and training standards, promote employment skills and facilitate appropriate advice to landowners/managers
7. To promote the development of an economy that supports social and environmental objectives
8. To promote good governance
9. To minimise the consumption of natural resources, including fossil fuels, minerals, land take and water and to look for alternatives

4.1 Table 2 - Analysis Matrix: Sustainability Assessment

High Weald AONB Management Plan Objectives			Sustainability Criteria								
Key Component	Code	Description	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Geology, Landform, Water Systems and Climate	G1	To restore the natural function of river catchments			■						■
	G2	To protect the sandstone outcrops of the AONB					■	■	■		
	G3	To maintain the appropriate local climatic conditions	■	■	■	■			■		■
Settlement	S1	To reconnect settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside	■	■		■	■		■		■
	S2	To protect the historic pattern of settlement	■	■						■	
	S3	To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald		■					■		
Routeways	R1	To maintain the historic pattern and features of routeways	■	■		■	■	■		■	■
	R2	To enhance the ecological function of routeways		■							
Woodland	W1	To maintain existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland		■							■
	W2	To enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale						■			
	W3	To protect the archaeology of AONB woodlands						■			
	W4	To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets	■						■	■	
Field & Heath	FH1	To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald AONB, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management	■			■		■	■		■
	FH2	To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows		■							

High Weald AONB Management Plan Objectives			Sustainability Criteria								
Key Component	Code	Description	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		and woodlands		Partial positive effect							
	FH3	To enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats						Significant positive effect	Partial positive effect		Partial positive effect
	FH4	To protect the historic features of field and heath		Partial positive effect						Partial positive effect	
Public Understanding & Enjoyment	UE1	To increase opportunities for learning about and celebrating the character of the High Weald	Significant positive effect	Significant positive effect		Partial positive effect		Significant positive effect	Partial positive effect		
	UE2	To increase the contribution of individuals to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB	Significant positive effect	Significant positive effect			Partial positive effect	Significant positive effect	Partial positive effect		Partial positive effect
	UE3	To increase community involvement in conservation and enhancement of the AONB	Partial positive effect	Partial positive effect		Partial positive effect			Partial positive effect		
	UE4	Integrated management of the resources for informal open-air recreation to facilitate 'green' use by residents and visitors	Significant positive effect	Partial positive effect		Significant positive effect	Significant positive effect		Significant positive effect	Partial positive effect	Significant positive effect
	UE5	To promote the perceptual and aesthetic qualities that people value									Partial positive effect

Key

Sustainability Criteria	
1	To create vibrant, cohesive and sustainable communities
2	To protect the quality and character of individual settlements and communities
3	To protect the environment, people and properties from flood risk
4	To reduce the need and desire to travel by car
5	To promote healthy lifestyles
6	To raise education and training standards, promote employment skills and facilitate appropriate advice/guidance to land owners and managers
7	To promote the development of an economy that supports both social and environmental objectives
8	To promote good governance
9	To minimise the consumption of natural resources, including fossil fuels, minerals, land take and water and look for alternatives

Significant positive effect
Partial positive effect
Uncertain effect
Partial negative effect
Significant negative effect
No significant effect

5.0 Assessment Results

The analysis matrix was employed once the Management Plan objectives were finalised in their draft form, rather than at intervals throughout the process. This is because the development of the objectives, indicators and targets in the Management Plan was an integrated evolutionary process and one which involved AONB partnership organisations, the Unit team and the JAC. As no objectives came up during the assessment process as 'unsure' or 'negative' possible alternatives have not been included.

5.1 - Environmental Assessment

The results in Table 1 show no significant or partial negative effects on the key environmental criteria. The largest proportion of the results (49.2%) shows that no significant effect will occur, and 36.5% of the matrix suggests 'partial positive effects'. 14.3% of the objectives, as assessed against the environmental criteria will likely have a significant positive effect.

5.2 - Sustainability Assessment

Similarly the matrix in table 2 shows no significant or partial negative effects are likely to occur from working towards the revised management plan objectives. 62.4% of the matrix results were 'no significant effect', 24.8% shows a 'partial positive effect' and 12.6% a 'significant positive effect'.

In the environmental assessment over half of the objectives will likely induce positive benefits, for the sustainability assessment the figure was over one third; those that do not were found to have no significant effect, sometimes because the objective simply was not applicable to the criteria. Both sets of assessments clearly show the Unit's objectives are taking it in the right direction in terms of not having a detrimental effect and working towards achieving key environmental and sustainability aims.

6.0 Monitoring & Evaluation

It is important when setting objectives to aim for, that organisations are able to monitor the accomplishment or otherwise of these objectives. For this reason the High Weald Unit accompanies each objective with a set of indicators. These indicators are measurable to enable monitoring in the future. From these indicators a set of specific clear targets are set.

However, there exists a set of difficult parameters for which all protected landscapes would like to monitor, these are qualitative indicators, such as beauty or tranquillity – as yet there is no agreed measure of these features of protected landscapes.

In addition, some quantitative data simply aren't available for AONBs to interrogate. There could be a number of reasons for this, sometimes data is not collected at small enough scales (i.e. geographically accurate) to be applied to the boundary of an AONB, data is often 'scaled-down' to Local Authority boundaries, but AONB boundaries rarely follow administrative boundaries (particularly an issue for the High Weald-covered by 4 different County Councils. Of course some data needs to be generalised for a specified geographic area in order to conform to the Data Protection Act. Some organisations such as SEE-IN (South East England Intelligence Network) www.see-in.co.uk are working hard to improve the gathering and accuracy of data across the South-East region, and to improve the sharing of information between organisations.

Standardised methodologies for certain data should be established. This happens with biological information, but not always with other elements which are less well understood and have less of a history of being collected.

Also data ownership is an issue. Sometimes no organisation is charged with the collection of particular data, or those that are charge for its use – which AONBs can often not afford.

The High Weald AONB Unit recognises the importance of having consistent datasets which can be robustly used year on year in order to monitor change within our protected landscape. Whilst the lack of information is disappointing, data is vital for AONBs to be able to predict and monitor effects and outcomes of advice and policies.

7.0 Technical Review & Conclusions

The process of performing an SEA is designed to ensure impacts of any plan or policy on the environment are considered. The High Weald Management Plan is a document designed to set out methods for conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of this landscape. With this in mind, the SEA process has forced few changes to the content of the Plan. However it has served an important role as a means of checking that the revised objectives do not affect key environmental and sustainability criteria.

Above this process is designed to be transparent, to ensure people can see how environmental and sustainability issues are being fully considered through all stages of the Unit's work. The consultation process will run in parallel with the consultation on the AONB Management Plan, allowing for examination of the combined approach.

Details of Consultation

Details for comments:

For more details about the Management Plan review process or if you'd like to send us your comments about this document please send them via post or email to the addresses below.

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8.0 Appendices

Appendix (i)

The complete assessment process

Dates	Plan Review	SEA process
October 2012	Review initiated by JAC	SEA announced
October – December 2012	Review current plan Compile condition data Stakeholder consultation	Draft Scoping Report Consult on Scoping Report
Jan, Feb 2013	Finalise review and prepare report on review conclusions	Finalise Scoping report and prepare draft document
March 2013	Report on review to Joint Advisory Committee	Report Scoping Report to Joint Advisory Committee
April- June 2013	Revision of Management Plan Stakeholder consultation Publication of draft revised plan / report of amendments	Scope and consult on draft Environmental Report Preparation of Environmental Report
July 2013	Report of amendments & modifications to JAC Management Board	Present draft Environmental Report to JAC Management Board
August – Sept 2013	Revision and preparation of final draft of report of modifications	Revise and complete Environmental Report
October 2013	Present final report of modifications / draft revised plan to JAC for approval	Present final Environmental Report to JAC for approval
November 2013 – February 2014	Local authority & partner consultation and approval of revised plan	Environmental Report circulated and approved by local authorities
March 2014	Final adoption of revised plan by JAC Publication of revised plan	Final approval of Environmental Report by JAC

Appendix (ii)

Plans & Strategies

International & European	Date
European Landscape Convention	2006
Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC	2000
EU Sixth Environmental Action Programme	2002
The EU Habitats Directive 92/42/EU	1992
The World Heritage Convention (UNESCO)	1972
National	
The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000	2000
Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan HMSO.	1995
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations	1994
National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949	1949
Securing the future: Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy	2005
Climate Change - The UK Programme	2006
National Planning Policy Framework	2012
The Historic Environment: A force for Our future (DCMS, DLTR)	2001
Principles Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of Historic Environment (EH)	2007
Heritage Counts annual reports (Historic Environment Review Executive Committee)	2005
Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plans	
Regional	
Seeing the Wood for the Trees - A forestry and woodlands framework for the SE	2004
Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food - Facing the Future (Defra)	2002
Local Authority Local Development Frameworks	

Appendix (iii)
Environmental Baseline

Data sources for Management Plan review and SEA		
<i>Key components of natural beauty from AONB Management Plan</i>		
Geology , Water Systems & Climate	Sandrock outcrops Geology (BGS) Ghyll Streams	627 recorded outcrops British Geological Survey
Settlement	Built development (settlement pattern) Historic Farmsteads Listed Buildings (EH) Historic Landscape Characterisation (EH) Historic Parkland (EH)	3703 farmsteads & outfarms 4443 listed buildings HLS and HER vital data 4,252ha (3% of AONB)
Routeways	Historic Drove ways Public Rights of Way (ESCC, KCC, WSCC) Roman roads	785 km recorded 2,462 km RoW Margary data
Woodland	Ancient Woodland (NE/EN) Other woodland (not ancient) Woodland Archaeology	25,773ha(17.6% of AONB) 10,132ha (6.9%of AONB) HER
Field and Heath	Unimproved/semi-improved grassland (Meadows) Heathland Historic field boundaries Archaeology of field and heath	305 (655ha) 1930.5ha 36% surviving HER
<i>Other data sources</i>		
Natural Environment	SSSI SAC, SPA Sites nature conservation importance	5,535ha, 50 sites 2,909ha 3,506ha 10,866ha 201 sites
Built Environment	Archaeologically sensitive areas Scheduled ancient monuments Highways	
Agricultural	Farm Holdings Farmed Area Farm Size	3170 farm holdings 97,404ha 40% farms less than 5ha
Statistical	Population of the AONB Population surrounding urban areas	

Appendix (iv)

Environmental Issues

Key Issues for High Weald Management Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment		
Topic	Key Issues	Predicted trends and impacts without intervention
<i>Key components of natural beauty</i>		
Geology , Water Systems & Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding 	Extended hard engineering management of rivers and flood defences with damage to environment and landscape quality around river basins
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor aquatic systems – failing to meet their potential for water quality, biodiversity and amenity 	Degradation of river and stream quality, reduction in biodiversity and natural function of small scale water systems essential to gill woodland
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River restoration policies that can utilize natural processes to reduce flooding, improve the aquatic systems, and reduce costs of maintaining the current systems 	Hard engineering river defences inappropriate in scale and function to the landscape and traditional interactions. Archaeological impacts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats to sandstone outcrops – inappropriate use, management, and neglect of key geological features and the ecology that they support 	Loss of, or continuing damage to the resource leading to erosion of the features
Settlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for greater understanding – e.g. of the dispersed settlement pattern of the High Weald, and the connections between settlements and the countryside 	Inappropriate development and artificial expansion of key settlements to the detriment of the rural areas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suburbanization – erosion of AONB character through extension of curtilages, and inappropriate modifications, or treatments, of boundaries and buildings 	Unsustainable patterns of development dependent on local key services not providing services to local rural areas and small scale settlement typical of the Weald. Impact on settlement archaeology.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suburbanization – introduction of non-native species inappropriate boundaries and gates, and intrusive highway engineering 	Gradual decline in landscape quality and traditional indigenous species and distinctive features
Routeways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor understanding – of the resource and the management needed to conserve the roads and non-vehicular routeways, for their ecology, archaeology, and their potential for informal recreation and non vehicular transport 	Threat to localised habitats dependent on the routeway character and loss of biodiversity. Threat to the quiet enjoyment and character of the country lanes and paths through inappropriate management
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neglect – e.g. lack of management and poor stock and deer control • Increased commercialization and archaeological impact 	Degradation of existing woodland, loss of biodiversity and development of scrubby woodland and inappropriate species
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of non-native species. Non-native species include invasive rhododendron, cherry laurel, sycamore, and grey squirrels 	Spread of invasive species leading to degradation of biodiversity and decline in landscape quality
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmentation – the poor connectivity, increasing isolation, fragmented ownership, and small size of many woodlands is degrading their ecological value 	Reduction in quality and spread of woodland and links between them, further degradation of biodiversity value.
Field and Heath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining extent of agriculture – land falling out of productive use into amenity and residential use, with consequent suburbanization and neglect 	Loss of biodiversity, particularly plant species common to flower rich meadows, reduction in finite resource of un-improved grassland
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental degradation – neglected fields scrubbing up, increasing run-off and agrochemical inputs, loss of key habitats (e.g. meadows and heaths), and damage to historic features (e.g. field boundaries/pattern, and archaeological sites and monuments) 	Continued scrubbing up of fields, decline in biodiversity and loss of specialist habitats, heathland and unimproved grassland. Threat to field boundaries and historic and archaeological features of these landscape features.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental degradation – neglected fields scrubbing up, increasing run-off and agrochemical inputs, loss of key habitats (e.g. meadows and heaths), and damage to historic features (e.g. field boundaries/pattern, and archaeological sites and monuments) 	Continued scrubbing up of fields, decline in biodiversity and loss of specialist habitats, heathland and unimproved grassland. Threat to field boundaries and historic and archaeological features of these landscape features.

Topic	Key Issues	Predicted trends and impacts without intervention
<i>External threats and issues affecting natural beauty</i>		
Climate Change	Temperature rise, threat to species, hotter summers, migration or loss of habitats	Threat to local indigenous species and habitats, loss of biodiversity, fundamental change in land cover and locally distinctive species
	Sea level rise	Risk to coastal areas, challenge of managed retreat or hard engineering sea defences
	Higher rainfall, wetter winters, risk of flooding	Damage to water courses, risk of flooding, threat of need to engineer against high water levels in water courses
	Extreme weather events.	Threat of damage to sensitive or vulnerable habitats and features, storm damage, flash flooding
	Approaches to and types of mitigation against the effects of climate change	Need to understand and scope the possible effects and impacts of any actions to mitigate for climate change in terms of their impact on landscape character and locally distinctive features. E.g. renewable energy – effects of woodfuel, bio crops etc.
	Approaches to and types of adaptation against the effects of climate change	Need to understand and scope the possible effects and impacts of any actions to adapt to the effects of climate change in terms of their impact on landscape character and locally distinctive features. E.g. need to understand the effects of temperature rise on specific species and ability of habitats to migrate.
Farming	Intensification of farming, concentration of holdings,	Intensive farming is a threat to biodiversity and traditional land management. Trend to increase farm holdings threatens to break down the traditional small scale approach to farming in the high weald. Intensive farming may lead to larger field sizes, loss of boundaries and features and degradation of landscape quality. Archaeology impacts.
	Agricultural profitability	Low or non profitable farming, especially traditional farming practices, is a threat to the continued use of the land. Holdings are going out of production and management leading to a degradation of landscape quality, and habitats.
	Hobby farming, loss of traditional farming families & traditions	Small scale buying up of farm holding and hobby farming is a threat to the integrity of holdings and the traditional structure of agriculture in the high weald, leading to a break down in land use, management and biodiversity/habitat maintenance
Development	Housing development	High levels of house building threaten major development potential in the AONB, and inappropriate scale and form of housing generally. Inappropriate development threatens local character and distinctiveness and traditional settlement patterns. Significant Archaeological impacts, particularly in un-surveyed areas.
	Sustainable development (rural / environmental sustainability)	Inappropriate definition and interpretation of sustainable development and communities threatens to impose uncharacteristic forms and patterns of development on the landscape to the detriment of the built environment and local social and economic patterns in rural areas.