

**Northern Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Biosphere  
Service**

**Business Plan 2011/12**



**NORTH DEVON**  
Areas of Outstanding  
Natural Beauty

**Northern Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Biosphere  
Service  
Business Plan 2011/12**

**Strategic Fit  
Strategic Fit with Local Authority Funding Bodies**

<b>Shared and Common Objectives</b>			<b>Code</b>
	<b>Sustainable Community Strategy</b>		
		<b>a. World Class Environment</b>	<b>SEnv</b>
		<b>b. Sustainable Economy</b>	<b>SEc</b>
	<b>CROW Act, requirement for AONB plan and "due regard"</b>		<b>CA</b>
	<b>Marine Act</b>		<b>MA</b>
	<b>NERC Act duties</b>		<b>NERC</b>
	<b>Important feature of the LDF core strategy</b>		<b>LDF</b>
<b>Devon County Council</b>	<b>Strengthen Devon's Economy</b>		<b>DEc</b>
	<b>Care for Devon's (Environment)</b>		<b>DEnv</b>
<b>North Devon Council Corporate Plan objectives:</b>	<b>Good and Improving Services</b>		<b>NDS</b>
	<b>Clean and Safe Environment</b>		<b>NEnv</b>
	<b>Prosperous Communities</b>		<b>NP</b>
<b>Torridge District Corporate Strategy</b>	<b>Safeguard the Environment</b>		<b>TEnv</b>
	<b>Develop a sustainable economy for Torridge</b>		<b>TEc</b>

## NDABS Business Plan 2011-12

### Summary Work Plan

(\* denotes funding held by an external partner, \*\* indicates funding that is being applied for)

Task	Who	When	Target	Resource allocation (pro rata of core costs)	Project Funding	Strategic Fit codes
<b>Efficient Service Delivery</b>						
Review structure of service in the light of Devon County Council review and develop the alliance idea.	AB	June	New service structure and agreements with partners for programmes and functions.	£9,531		NDS
Reduce costs of office accommodation	AB	September	New office location that is fit for purpose and demonstrates reduction in overall costs.	£7,837		NDS
Act as theme lead for World Class Environment for SCS	AB	Ongoing	Delivery board supported and endorsing the work within the Chapter. Delivery issues highlighted. Co-deliverers supporting the SCS.	£1,271		NDS, SEnv SEc

Task	Who	When	Target	Resource allocation (pro rata of core costs)	Project Funding	Strategic Fit codes
Communicate the benefits of the Biosphere Reserve to the stakeholders	ME	March	Regular updates to elected members. Press release forward plan for events and significant areas of work. Methodologies delivered for the key audiences to engage in the Biosphere Reserve. myBR website extension operational. Walking for health contracts met.	£17,914		
Seek external and private funding opportunities with sponsors	AB	September	Corporate sponsorship sought for current and new projects. 2 Companies engaged.	£1,906		DEnv, TEnv, NEnv
<b>Engaging Communities</b>						
Apply the Education Pack and service for the Biosphere Reserve and Earthwatch programme	ME	December	15 schools in the Biosphere Reserve using the education pack. Citizen Science with Earthwatch developed	£5276		DEnv, Earthwatch
Support James May train journey event	AB, MC	April	Event supported, good chance of success and publicity for the area secured	£1,271		NP

Task	Who	When	Target	Resource allocation (pro rata of core costs)	Project Funding	Strategic Fit codes
Implement the Life's Journey programme to support enhancements at Home Farm Marsh, Fremington Quay and Rolle Canal area enhancements. Supporting volunteer development and improving access for excluded groups.	ME	March	Application with HLF by June. Supplementary funds from various and application via NDBRF	£9,449	** £70000 over 2 years	NP
Implement the Confluence Project	AB, ME		Apply the digital arts and science programme with Beaford and Plymouth University IDAT	£5,539	* £75000 over two years	Tec, Dec, NP, DEnv, TEnv, NEnv
Community Clean up in the Biosphere Reserve	ME	June	Engage 10 communities in cleaning up key environmental areas in the Biosphere Reserve	£6,851		Tec, Dec, NP
Biosphere Action Week Major community participation event in October linked to the Tarka Trail entire route	TH, ME	October	Events sought in 30 parishes. Aim for 400 volunteers engaged in the week.	£10,159	**£4000	Tec, Dec, NP, DEnv, Tenv, Nenv

Task	Who	When	Target	Resource allocation (pro rata of core costs)	Project Funding	Strategic Fit codes
<b>Moving towards a Sustainable Economy</b>						
Maintain SWCP to National Standards	MC	March	SWCP maintained to National Standards and projects identified for external funding. Use of contractors and volunteers increased.	£20,000	£15000 (TBC)	Tec, Dec, NP
Coordinate and recruit supporting businesses in the Visitor Investment Scheme for the Biosphere Reserve with the NDBRF	AB	Dec	12 businesses signed up. Supporting marketing information complete	£2,648		Tec, Dec, NP
Biosphere Reserve sustainable business awards	AB	October	Scheme promoted in conjunction with ND+, judged and awarded	£2,648		Tec, Dec, NP
Deliver the RDP projects for Watermouth Harbour route for the Coast Path	MC, ME	March	Maintain overview of Coast path projects. Discovery Points Panels applied appropriately	£3,625	*£135000	Tec, Dec, NP

Task	Who	When	Target	Resource allocation (pro rata of core costs)	Project Funding	Strategic Fit codes
Maintain features on the Tarka Trail for interpretation and access.	MC	March	Trail infrastructure improved using the funds achieved from external contributions. Code of conduct displayed appropriately. New interpretation panels in place.	£8,505		Tec, Dec, NP
<b>Providing a Healthy Natural Environment and Secure Environmental Future</b>						
Biosphere Reserve and FWAG Sustainable Farming award	ME	July	Successful award ceremony and associated publicity promoting good farming		*£400	DENV DEc, TENV, Tec, , NEnv, NP, SEnv
Reduce diffuse pollution from river catchments through CSF methods	TH	March	Fresh catchment identified at Ilfracombe. Continue work on Torridge Catchment at end of year	£8,702	£25000 (TBC)	DENV DEc, TENV, Tec, , NEnv, NP, SEnv

Task	Who	When	Target	Resource allocation (pro rata of core costs)	Project Funding	Strategic Fit codes
Develop joint funding bids with other regional players and international Biosphere Reserve partners that reduces the emission of greenhouse gases and supports good farming practices.	AB	May Develop project and implement pilot phases by March	Programme designed with multi-agency approach to safeguard communities from flooding and reduce GHG.	£6,354	**£600K over 3 years	DENV DEc, TENV, Tec, , NEnv, NP, SEnv
Climate change adaptation works to reduce probability and frequency of flooding at key locations/ settlements.	AB	March	Supportive research and policy documents developed for use in the LDF. Land-use based project designed and funding identified with Environment Agency and Devon County Council highways	£6,354	**£200K over 2 years	DENV DEc, TENV, Tec, , NEnv, NP, SEnv
Climate change mitigation support	AB	March	Provide ongoing support for the Atlantic Array proposals in accordance with Biosphere Reserve position.	£3,177		LDF, DENV DEc, TENV, Tec, , NEnv, NP, SEnv

Task	Who	When	Target	Resource allocation (pro rata of core costs)	Project Funding	Strategic Fit codes
Support NDDC and TDC in the preparation of Local Development Frameworks	AB	Ongoing	Biosphere Reserve opportunity seized within the LDF to underpin the areas distinctive approach to sustainable development	£3,177		LDF, DEnV DEc, TENV, Tec, , NEnv, NP, SEnv
Estuary and coast flood risk and habitat strategic work to create new wetland areas and natural features that provide effective flood and coastal defence	AB	October	Strategic direction for the creation of mitigation sites in the estuary identified. Projects designed and funding identified.	£7,942		NERC, DEnV DEc, TENV, Tec, , NEnv, NP, SEnv, MA
Implementing Marine Conservation for the Biosphere Reserve	AB	March	Working with Fisheries Local Action Group, identify monitoring and community projects to put in place	£6,354	FLAG will be approached	NERC, DEnV DEc, TENV, Tec, , NEnv, NP, SEnv, MA
LNR maintenance and development at Fremington, Cairn, Hillsborough, Meddon Green, Kynocks Foreshore and Ford Wood.	TH	Ongoing	LNR sites maintained with community. Designations complete	£7,325		NERC, DENV, TENV, NEnv, SEnv

Task	Who	When	Target	Resource allocation (pro rata of core costs)	Project Funding	Strategic Fit codes
Pearl Rivers Project to support conservation of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel in the Biosphere Reserve through conservation action on catchment farmland.	TH	May	Pearl Rivers Project. Application lodged with HLF and other funders. Community and volunteer actions identified.	£14,650	£200k over 3 years TBC	NERC, DEnV DEc, TENV, Tec, , NEnv, NP, SEnv, EU Habitat Directive
Extension of Biosphere Reserve Biodiversity Action Plan to attract funds from variety of sources including section 106 and community infrastructure. Develop a biodiversity credit scheme	TH, AB	October	Work with partners to extend detail of BAP to make fit for purpose for Biodiversity Credits and community infrastructure levy/ Section 106 payments	£10,884		LDF, NERC, DEnV DEc, TENV, Tec, , NEnv, NP, SEnv,
Manage habitats on the Trail for a range of species including Wood White Butterfly and Dormouse	MC	March	Establish working arrangements with Youth Enquiry service, Petroc and various centres for regular habitat management along the TT.	£8,505		NERC, DEnV DEc, TENV,
<b>Governance and contingency</b>	<b>ALL</b>			£20,499		

£218,353

Summary AONB Work Plan

Task	When	Who- DAYS pa	Target	Cash Resources	Project (External Funding	Strategic ft
<b>Efficient Service Delivery- Ensure delivery of management strategy, evidence base for future management, Management; efficient management, plan for reduced funding, ensure future funding through projects, communications with funders and partners</b>						
Monuments at Risk Monuments at Risk Survey with volunteers to develop base line data	Mar-2012	LB 4	18 Monuments recorded			EH, D env, Senv, EH, Tenv, AONBLHA4
National Mapping Programme. Improve understanding of the historic environment and plan for future management		LB 10	Subject to approval by EH			EH, D env, Senv, EH, Tenv,AONBLHA3
Photographic monitoring. Develop methodology for evaluation and undertake resident surveys- included in Cordiale						
Data Collection, keep data up to date and work with others to find cost effective ways of collecting and presenting monitoring data, Biodiversity monitoring	Mar-2012	LB 2, DE 3	Annual surveys, Report completed	£1,800		NERC, Denv,Tenv, Nenv, AONBGC6
Strengthen and support for AONB Partnership, Ensure best possible access to expert advice, ensure strong community engagement in decision making	Report for Autumn partnership recommendations implemented by	LB 15, DE6 GK 6	Review of Partnership structure, MOA signed, Hold 2 local focus and 1 thematic meeting, chairman's meetings	£3,350		NDS, D env, Senv, EH, Tenv, AONB MOPM1

	March					
Strengthen national and strategic policy framework for AONBs through NAAONB. Support and develop joint projects and more efficient working practices through SWPLF	On going	LB 8, DE 2	National consultation responses via SWPLF, Support and deliver on NAAONB work plan, support SWPLF officer management group	£1,850		NDS, D env, Senv, EH, Tenv, AONB MOPM 2
Work with SWPLF, DCC and Devon AONBs and investigate solutions to reduced funding future	Agree programme in June	LB 6	Deliver to targets agreed in Devon AONB Plan			NDS, D env, Senv, EH, Tenv, AONB MOPM2
Future Funding Draw in resources especially for practical wildlife, heritage and landscape work	Commence Delivery June 2013	LB 5, DE 5	investigate funding opps with SWPLF, Consider follow on project for ETC and Cordiale	£5,000		NDS, D env, Senv, EH, Tenv,AONBMOPM2
Financial management, target monitoring, core funding, host authority liaison, Financial control, future efficiencies, annual report reporting to funders etc	Annual	LB 28, DE 2,GK 20	3 core funder meetings, monthly budget monitoring, deliver and monitor comms programme	£500		NDS, D env, Senv, EH, Tenv, AONB MOPM 2
Current web site maintained to be replaced by simpler business site once ETC launched, Information for stakeholders and funders easy to access. Open accountable working methods	Sept	LB 5, DE 1, GK 8	new site up and running, Annual report by Sept, enews June,Sep,Mar, Dec, web hosting, new web construction package design, events listing software	£4,500		NDS, D env, Senv, EH, Tenv, AONB RESJ06

**Engaging Communities;**

Leader 4 -See Sustainable Economy						
Sustainable Development Fund; enable delivery of management plan through local projects	FEB	LB12, DE 20, GK 20	All money spent	£40,000		NDS, D env, Senv, EH, Tenv,Dec,NP,Tec, AONB ARTF 07
Community Events, education and enews: Increasing community action and capacity, increase volunteering, increase understanding and awareness of designation and support a sustainable economy	March with peak in Spring and Autumn	LB 29, DE 10	50 AONB branded events with staff/partner attendances at minimum of 7, support for 2 Ilfracombe cruise ship visits, Antiques Roadshow at Hartland, Northam and Come Martin Discovery days, Sea Ilfracombe, Clovelly Festival, Co-ordinate environmental stand for Atlantic Watersports event, AONB marathon	£10,000		NDS, D env, Senv, EH, Tenv,Dec,NP,Tec, AONB CEAL 1,2,3, AONB04
WORDQUEST Devon, Agree activity to round through events and facebook linked to literary heritage and tourism project	Program me agreed May, complete March	LB 1 GK 1	Minimum of 200 people engaged through events and facebook- educational programme in Autumn			NDS, D env, Senv, EH, Tenv,Dec,NP,Tec, AONB CEAL4
<b>Moving towards a Sustainable Economy: Using the AONB brand and vision to support the local tourism economy</b>						

Complete Explore the Coast: Provision of information to support car free tourism improve understanding of AONB, optimise access for disability groups	Soft Launch Sept, training Autumn project complete Feb,	LB 12, DE 12	Fit for purpose popular web site			DENV ,Dec,TENV, AONB REJ6, CCK1, RESJ06
Support for Leader 4: maximise benefit to AONB, assist in preparation and delivery of strong projects, supports delivery of Management Plan	Ongoing	LB 15,	Broker comments on Croyde feasibility, Assist Braunton Countryside centre when fund relaunched, attend management group			DENV,Dec,TENV, AONB RESJ3
Explore Braunton: maintain low level of support to ensure benefits to community and local economy	Ongoing	DE 2	Ensure accurate info that promotes community lead sustainable tourism and understanding of the AONB designation			DENV,Dec,TENV, AONB RESJ2
Hartland Peninsula Association: maintain low level of support to ensure benefits to community and local economy	Ongoing	LB 1. DE 2	Ensure accurate info that promotes community lead sustainable tourism and understanding of the AONB designation			DENV,Dec,TENV, AONB RESJ 2

Unlocking our Coastal Heritage: Improve condition of historic environment, access and interpretation of this major economic asset	walks agreed by June, Future management Hillsboro' agreed Dec, other works agreed with SWCP in June	LB 2, DE15	Improved interpretation at Berrynarbor, Long term solution for Hillsborough, Visitor Information points, visitor payback			DENV,Dec,TENV, AONB RESJ4,
Events; ensure that community events and engagement meets Economic needs			See Engaging communities			
<b>A healthy natural environment and secure environmental future. Ensure conservation AONB landscape, biodiversity and heritage</b>						
Cordiale management and local pilot:	Agree pilots with Local Authorities May; contribute to or host exchange , June, Audit local info	LB18, DE 35. LD 8 hours per week, CM 12 hours per week	increase community engagement in landscape policy, encourage action planning and take up of grants for landscape, heritage and wildlife policy, strengthen planning framework, methodology for evaluation of FPP, learn and benefit	6000 TBC		TEC, Dec, NP,CA, LDF, AONB L1

	may,		from partner projects			
Development Control + LDF Responses, Ensure best results for landscape; Improve on area of weakness in delivery of Management plan, other local consultations		LB 4, DE 58	Improved AONB policies in LDF, Ensure good planning decision making	£8,000		LDF, CA, TEC, Dec, NP, AONB PG6
Encourage Biodiversity projects and access to HLS via Cordiale and SDF; Improve on area of weakness in delivery of Management plan	See Sustainable Development Fund					

## **Introduction:**

NDABS is a jointly funded service to manage and coordinate the North Devon UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, manage and co-ordinate the North Devon Coast AONB, Coordinate the management and promotion of the Tarka Trail, manage the maintenance and development of the Southwest Coast Path between Exmoor and the Cornwall Boarder.

## **Modus operandum**

NDABS is currently going through a change like all publicly funded bodies and needs to respond to the financial pressures. Since the recent round of cuts the service has not replaced the coast path ranger and not replaced the temporary contract of the biodiversity projects officer. Whilst this has compromised the capacity of the service to deliver directly with hands on staff. Therefore the delivery will be done through contractors, closely supervised and trained volunteers and, in some cases, with direct action by team members. Staff reductions within the AONB unit have been avoided in the current year.

With regard to economic development in the area, the role of NDABS is to be the guardian of the prime asset and ensure its enhancement and worth as an economic driver of the area. It is the role of others such as North Devon Plus to market the asset. In this role it is implicit that the service plays the role of the environmental conscience in the region to support the development of a truly green economy based on valued ecosystem services. In doing so the service ensures a good complementary fit with those economic services.

Generally, in the development and application of programmes, the service seeks to work in partnership with other relevant bodies to remove any duplication or conflicting effort and seek the best value from public and private funds towards the goals of the Biosphere Reserve and AONB.

## **Priority Projects for 2011-12**

These areas of work have been identified from the revised Biosphere Reserve Action plan where programmes were prioritised according to achievability and impact.

## **Improving the Efficiency of the Service**

The service operates with an ethos of continuous improvement.

1. Review structure of service in the light of Devon County Council review and develop the alliance model.

DCC has instigated an internal review of its offer of countryside services the Devon as a whole. The interim results of the review have led to a categorisation of service types and priorities as the seen from a DCC perspective. In parallel NDABS has been looking at leaner delivery systems by working more effectively with partners; including exploring changed ways of working and of service governance. The strengths of the NDABS model and the concepts it has been pursuing are viewed with positive interest by DCC and other agencies.

In 2011-12 we will:

Review the structure and operation of the service centred on the concepts of a new Alliance approach to demonstrate most efficient use of public sector resources in countryside development and environmental management.

Outputs will be:

- Proposals for revised structure, budget and with detailed and assessed method of operation.

2. Reduce costs of office accommodation

Bideford Station is a double-edged sword, regarded by some as very apt and not imposing as base for a body such as NDABS, for others unprofessional and not fit for purpose. However as a base it is quite large for the current staff number and although very cheap in terms of rent, other running costs of the office make the place expensive on a per head basis. Other office locations are sought within the local authority sector.

In 2011-12 we will review the merits of such a move on a financial and operational basis, taking into account the merits of co-location with other government or local government agencies.

Output will be:

- Review of accommodation options with costings and a move of office location based on the assessment.

3. Act as theme lead for World Class Environment for SCS

The SCS is likely to change form and include task and finish groups for various programmes and projects. At the moment the Biosphere Reserve provides the only environmental lead body for the SCS. Whilst the future of the LSP is uncertain and the Joint Delivery Board, the emerging locality bill may demand similar structures in the future.

In 2011-12 we will provide co-ordination of the environmental theme for projects that are not any service units regular work load and reporting to the JDB.

Output will be:

- SCS meeting reports and co-ordinated projects.

4. Communicate the benefits of the Biosphere Reserve to the stakeholders

A key function for the service is to broadcast its own successful work but also the work of others done under the banner of the Biosphere Reserve. The Biosphere Reserve has gained ground in the level of understanding within the community but more needs to be done.

In 2011-12 we will produce regular press releases on the projects of the Biosphere Reserve and improve communication with members.

Output will be:

- Press release at least every 2 weeks.
- Regularly updated website
- Co-ordinate message and influence the marketing of the Biosphere Reserve done by ND+
- Regular single side bullet point sheets for members
- Develop a press campaign with a media partner for a Biosphere Reserve theme.

5. Seek external and private funding opportunities with sponsors

Moving into the realms of private funding is almost becoming an expectation. The service has begun a relationship with Mole Valley farmers and is in the process of developing programmes and projects with MilkLink.

In 2011-12 we will seek corporate support from a variety of sectors for the range of projects that we deliver. We will exploit fundraising opportunities arising from the services assets.

Output will be:

- Brochure for external sponsors
- Key meetings with potential sponsors.

### **Engaging Communities**

6. Apply the Education Pack and service for the Biosphere Reserve

The education packs have been developed with Beaford and with Devon learning partnership. The latter of the 2 packs was designed to have a commercial value to pay for future development. It is quite probable that the market value of these has collapsed with cutbacks being faced within schools not being able to afford them.

In 2011-12 we will further distribute the packs for the schools by marketing the packs with the freelance education providers to support the sector and improve uptake. We will also support strategic education initiatives through STEM and teacher training.

Output will be:

- Wider application of the education packs.
- 2 teacher training events.

7. Support James May Toy Story event

BBC/Plum Pictures are keen to retry the world record attempt to build the longest model railway. The first attempt proved popular with the public and resulted in interested visits from Australia and other countries.

In 2011-12 we will work with Plum Pictures to make a second attempt. This time NDABS will seek repayment for services from the event.

Output will be:

- Large scale publicity event and world record achieved.
- Moderate income to the service for the Tarka Trail.

8. Implement the Life's Journey programme.

This project is a scaled down Access 2 Nature project that will support enhancements at Home Farm Marsh, Fremington Quay and Rolle canal area where it intersects the Tarka Trail. As well as physical infrastructure improvements, the project will support volunteer development and improving access for excluded groups.

In 2011-12 we will submit the application to HLF "Your Heritage" to fund the project over the 18 month period

Outputs will be:

- External funding application(s)
- Improve access around Home Farm Marsh
- Improve interpretation at Fremington Quay
- Improve access for disabled from Fremington to Home Farm Marsh
- Improve interpretation at Ridd (inclined plane)
- New route along the canal bed between Torrington and the Tarka Trail
- Developed volunteer group

#### 9. Implement the Confluence Project

Confluence is an art and science project stimulated by the Biosphere Reserve. The project is funded by Arts Council England and LEADER. The main delivery bodies are Beaford, Plymouth University Institute of Digital Art and Technology and the Biosphere Reserve Foundation. The project will work with a range of communities along the Torridge to Instow/Appledore to explore the visualisation of environmental data and the behaviour of the communities.

In 2011-12 we will support the confluence project with technical advice and promotion of the project.

Output will be:

- 5 communities engaged specifically in the project
- A range of ecoids collecting environmental data
- High profile national leading example of art and community science

#### 10. Awareness and volunteer engagement

Following the success of the Biosphere Reserve Beach Clean and the Biosphere Reserve action week event there will be a repeat of the Biosphere Action Week to generate volunteer interest and awareness generally in the community. Using the recent work on the 180 mile TT, we will use this as a gateway for action within the communities.

In 2011-12 we will implement a major community participation event in October linked to the Tarka Trail entire route

Output will be:

- 300 volunteers engaged in the week
- 20 parishes engaged
- Press campaign in support of the project

### **Moving Towards a Sustainable Economy**

#### 11. Maintain SWCP to National Standards

The SWCP is a national asset in the area that is a key tourism facility. Its economic value to the area is rated to be more than £2M per annum. The path maintenance is funded by Natural England at a rate of 75%. The service has a direct responsibility for over half of the coast path on the north Devon coast and the overview of all of it.

In 2011-12 we will ensure that the vegetation, surface and structures along the coast path meet with national standards.

Output will be:

92Km of coast path maintained to a high standard

12. Coordinate and recruit supporting businesses in the Visitor Investment Scheme for the Biosphere Reserve with the NDBRF

This project has started with some success and has been implemented in collaboration with the SWCP business engagement officer. Through combined efforts, 5 businesses are contributing to projects in the area.

In 2011-12 we will meet with a number of businesses to explore bespoke opportunities for sponsorship and visitor investment schemes.

Output will be:

- 5 further businesses signed up to the visitor investment programme not associated with the coast path.

13. Biosphere Reserve sustainable business awards and sustainable farming award

In 2011-12 we will work with ND+, Mole Valley Farmers and FWAG to promote sustainable practices in businesses to award a prize from within existing Biosphere Reserve business partners and those other companies that might chose to

Output will be: Award scheme promoted and judged with winners awarded.

14. Deliver the RDP projects including Watermouth Harbour route for the Coast Path.

The service was part of the Unlocking the coast RDP bid that has secured projects along the coast path including (a) Watermouth Harbour high tide route, (b) Hillsborough interpretation, (c) Combe Martin Pleasure Grounds and (d) Embury Beacon. Under our aegis of managing the coastpath and projects we maintain an overview of the implementation of the projects.

In 2011-12 we will ensure the completion of the Watermouth route by the highways section and support the AONB projects officer in the completion of the Hillsborough site.

Output will be:

- New safe high-tide route around the west side of Watermouth Harbour
- Completed interpretation and site enhancement at Hillsbrough.

15. Maintain features on the Tarka Trail for interpretation and access.

The Tarka Trail is a key economic asset for the area as well as a green vein for providing communities with opportunities for exercise and is shown to be valued at £7.5M to the local economy each year.

In 2011-12 we will maintain the visitor enjoyment elements along the trail, seek funds from various sources to secure continued improvement of the interpretation, complete the work with ND+ on the production of the commercially sponsored trail leaflet.

Output will be:

- Leaflet for the TT

- Maintained visitor enjoyment of the 48Km shared use section of the Tarka Trail.
- Code of conduct information in place along the trail.

### **Providing a Healthy Natural Environment and Secure Environmental Future**

16. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions arising from land-use  
Nitrous oxide is a potent greenhouse gas given off by natural soil biochemical processes. However it can be exacerbated by application of excess nitrates or untimely application. Similar can be said for the emissions of methane from applied slurry.

In 2011-12 we will develop joint funding bids with other regional players and international Biosphere Reserve partners that reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and supports good farming practices and the farming economy.

Output will be:

- Application to international funds to work with the producer and supply chain sector to reduce the emissions to air arising from farming.

17. Reducing diffuse bacteriological and chemical pollution into rivers and other receiving water bodies through catchment sensitive farming methods.  
Although half of the area is Nitrate Vulnerable Zone, the policy does not seem to be working. Funds from Defra are provided by Natural England to the service to implement training, farm visits and capital works to reduce pollutants reaching rivers and bathing beaches.

In 2011-12 we will continue the CSF programme concentrating on the catchments in from Berrynarbor to Lee.

Output will be:

- 35 farm visits,
- 2 training events,
- capital works depending on farm visit outcomes.

18. Climate change adaptation works to reduce probability and frequency of flooding at key locations/ settlements.

The land-use and climate modelling research made recommendations for working with landowners to change land management practices to reduce the run-off rates in the catchment. This suggested that the return heights currently rated at 1% probability could be reduced to 0.3% probability. Other work by the EA and Forestry Commission has improved river response rates through some site-specific actions.

In 2011-12 we will work with the EA and DCC Highways to identify key flooding areas and measures to reduce frequency of flooding events on a site by site basis.

Output will be:

- Identification of flood prone areas.
- Application of measures to reduce the run off from land.

19. Climate change mitigation support

Renewable and sustainable energy projects are an important feature of the action against climate change.

In 2011-12 we will support the development of RE projects to ensure best practice is applied in making scheme socially and environmentally acceptable

Output will be:

- Strategic and tactical support in the development of the Atlantic Array.
- Support for appropriate scale farm and community based energy projects

#### 20. Support NDDC and TDC in the preparation of Local Development Frameworks

The Biosphere Reserve has been identified as a key unique driver in the LDF. The team have convened workshops and continued to provide support for the development of the core strategy and for good sustainable development policies. In 2011-12 we will continue to provide strategic support and specialist technical advice to ensure the application of cutting edge and distinctive policies

Output will be:

- Strengthened LDF strategy.

#### 21. Reducing flood and coastal erosion risk through natural systems

Following the adoption of the SMP, the action plan suggests a string of actions to support the implementation of a sustainable flood and coastal defence strategy. The various measures need to be brought together in a strategic way. The service convenes the technical officer group to ensure communication between agencies and ensures best technical solutions are applied.

In 2011-12 we will continue to host the technical officer group with a programme to develop the estuary and coastal strategy for habitat creation. This element will be supported with core funding from the Tarka Trust.

Output will be:

- Active officer group
- Habitat creation strategy
- Site specific programmes

#### 22. Implementing Marine Conservation for the Biosphere Reserve

The marine wildlife of north Devon is one of its defining features. The new Marine Act places duties on bodies to participate in Marine Spatial Planning and set up a network of marine conservation zones. Furthermore there is a duty to apply the NERC act in marine area.

In 2011-12 we will work with the Fisheries Local Action Group to ensure that sustainability issues remain high on the agenda. We will develop initiatives that will set baseline conditions for the suite of proposed marine conservation zones in the area.

Output will be:

- High quality FLAG strategy and delivery plan
- Projects to establish baseline conditions in the MCZs.

#### 23. LNR maintenance and development

The service has established Local Nature Reserves at Fremington, Meddon Green, Kynocks Foreshore and Ford Wood and has a history of involvement in the sites at Cairn, and Hillsborough.

In 2011-12 we will work with the community groups to continue the management of the sites as community assets.

Output will be:

- Volunteer projects at the LNRs

#### 24. Conservation of EU rare species

The Freshwater pearl mussel has been identified as the central species for action in the previously named "Four Rivers Project". The now newly named Pearl Rivers Project will support the conservation of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel in the Biosphere Reserve through sympathetic land management action and possible translocation of part of the colony from the Torridge to the Mole.

In 2011-12 we will make a submission to HLF for a programme of conservation actions designed to conserve the freshwater pearl mussel.

Output will be:

- Project application, costings and delivery plan with committed partners

25. Enhancement of the Biodiversity Action Plan for the Biosphere Reserve  
The Biosphere Reserve BAP has been completed to the recognised good practice of local BAPS. However in accordance with the suggestions from the LDF workshop, the BAP needs to be deepened in its detail to make it suitable to attract funds from variety of sources including section 106 and community infrastructure levy.

In 2011-12 we will add more geographic context to the plan and highlight ecosystem service connections to use as a tool to draw in biodiversity credits from a variety of sources.

Output will be:

- Geographically detailed BAP

#### 26. Manage habitats on the Trail for a range of species including Wood White Butterfly and Dormouse.

The TT is an important biodiversity asset in its own right and provides a good opportunity for the community to be involved in linked biodiversity projects along its entire route.

In 2011-12 we will implement the management plan using contractors on a quid pro quo basis for timber from woodland management, with community volunteers for smaller scale projects and

Output will be:

- 40 Ha of habitat managed.
- 4 volunteer projects
- 4 picnic sites maintained by Youth Enquiry Service

## **AONB Unit**

### **Key areas of work- for 2011-2012**

These areas of work are linked to the Core Functions of an AONB Staff Unit taken from the proposed Memorandum of Understanding which is not yet signed

#### **1. Management Plan**

##### **1.1 Developing, reviewing, preparing and publishing the AONB Vision and Management Strategy**

The Management Strategy guides the long term work of the Partnership and Staff Unit and is valid until 2014. At the time of writing we are in a period of uncertainty about funding arrangements for the staff unit and Partnership. There is no signed funding agreement and our main sponsor, Natural England, is undergoing a major reorganisation and planning for reductions of 30%. Local Authorities have yet to set their budget within a context of austerity. We will therefore keep the delivery plan under review and advise partners on changes and deletions necessitated by the local and national policy and funding context. A workshop was held with the Partnership in October 2010 seeking guidance as to current priorities and the 2011-12 Business plan seeks to reflect the outcomes of the workshop.

##### **In 2011-12 we will:**

- Ensure that the delivery plan is realistic and reflects changing priorities
- Work with NAAONB to establish procedures which ensure that the preparation of the next Statutory Review of the Management plan (2014 - 2019) is efficient and that where appropriate work is shared with other AONBs

##### **1.2 Promote the AONB vision and management to help distinguish the AONB from the wider countryside**

This is an important part of our work in that it increases understanding of the special qualities of the North Devon Coast to engender sympathetic management of the AONB to ensure that its remains a treasured landscape.

It is also important for us to support the local economy, health and quality of life by encouraging the sustainable use of the AONB for leisure and recreation.

##### **In 2011-12 we will:**

- Complete the ***Explore the North Devon Coast Sustainable Tourism project***; This will include the completion of the web site and content, provision of downloadable guides, educational resources and itinerary planning facility, promotion and training of tourism operators in using the site for visitors and the local community in the uploading of local information, guides, photographs etc.
- Retain a supportive role for ***Explore Braunton***; Although this project has been handed on to the local museum we retain an

overview and convene a steering group to help the project's long term success. We will use the Explore the Coast project to promote access the Braunton Web site and encourage school use of the Node Explorers. We will also support bids to develop and enhance the Countryside Centre

- Retain a supportive role for ***the Hartland Peninsula Association sustainable tourism project***; although this project is independent of the AONB the group has benefited from an SDF grant and we provide advice and support for the content of their promotional material. The main aim is to ensure seamless linkages between Explore the Coast and the Hartland project.
- Support ***local festivals and projects*** to ensure that Coastal communities gain maximum benefit

### **1.3. Advising on, facilitating and co-ordinating the implementation by others of the Management Plan.**

Delivery of the Management Plan is reliant on many interest parties. One of the major ways in which we can assist others is by judicious use of the Sustainable Development Grant Fund. It is likely that this fund will be considerably reduced in future years but we will endeavour to retain a small sum

#### **In 2011-2012 we will**

- Meet with key Partners on a 1:1 basis to facilitate project delivery especially for Easy Access Trails and Green Travel Plans as identified for year 3 in the Management Strategy
- Ensure that SDF applications are targeted to deliver management plan action

### **1.4 Accessing resources for management activities**

In a period a reduced resources we will make the most of opportunities for landscape management for direct delivery by the staff unit and partners and for the benefit of the local community

#### **In 2011-2012 we will**

- ***Leader 4 Torridge and North Devon Local Action Fund*** has brought substantial EU funds to North Devon. The AONB is a core partner in the project and we have a place on the Local Action Group and the Management Group. Our role is to encourage AONB communities to access this fund and to support them in the production and delivery of high quality project. In 2010 grants of almost £380,000 have been awarded to projects which directly support AONB management plan actions and other project such as Progressions (a youth training project based at Abbotsham) will support AONB communities
- If the Expression of interest to the **National Mapping Programme** is successful then develop a full bid to English Heritage

- Continue to facilitate community bids and project delivery from this fund and provide support **Landscape Management Funding**; e.g. Higher Level Stewardship and lottery funding
- Use the opportunities provided by Cordiale to link local communities and landowners to potential sources of funding to support sustainable landscape management within the Coastal Parishes
- Support the work of the South West Coast Path team “Unlocking our Coastal Heritage Programme” to secure private sector funding for enhancement of the coast path corridor
- Investigate opportunities for external funding for the period 2012 onwards.

### **1.5 Developing an involvement by the community in the management of the AONB**

The work of local communities and landowners in delivering their own project and working towards the enhancement of the AONB is crucial for the future of the AONB. We will use opportunities provided by local and national events and festivals to encourage local action. In 2011 we will use the opportunity provided by the European Year of Volunteering, The international year of the Volunteer plus 10, *International Year of Forests*, 2011 to provide a theme for our events programme. Whilst the AONB does not have forests hedgerows, copses, small woodlands and individual trees are very important to our wildlife and landscape.

#### **In 2011-12 we will**

- Promote action for hedgerows, copses, small woodlands and individual trees at a minimum of 4 events
- Support volunteering action at least 4 other events (Northam, Big Sheep, Marathon Woolacombe/Croyde, and Seashore Day Combe Martin)
- Maximise volunteering opportunities through our core and project activities
- Use the Cordiale Project to encourage local action to conserve and enhance the North Devon Coast AONB

### **1.6 Providing a management role to co-ordinate AONB protection through the actions of the AONB unit, the AONB Partnership and other partners at a local and strategic level**

We currently have a strong partnership which provides an effective voice for the AONB and guides the work of the staff unit through its core funding group. There are concerns that with public sector funding cuts and increased pressure that maintaining the commitment of members to attend all the partnership meetings will be difficult.

### **In 2011-2012 we will**

- Reduce the number of Partnership meetings from four to three per annum, two with a local focus and a third which will provide a more general overview
- Review methods of working to ensure that all possible efficiencies are made and that there is strong financial control on budgets
- Ensure that targets are met through rigorous monitoring using staff appraisal and supervisory meeting
- Ensure that staff receive necessary training in a cost effective manner
- Reposition the main AONB website to form the main communication tool for the management of the AONB once Explore the Coast has been launched

### **1.7 Problem solving with the unit acting as co-ordinator and facilitators**

There are frequently local concerns and difficult decisions to be made in the management of the specific projects and areas of the AONB

### **In 2011 we will**

- Build on the local focus of two of our Partnership meetings to promote discussion and provide information about controversial local issues
- Use the third partnership meeting to develop learning and debate on themes of local concern
- Where resources permit provide a facilitating role in local conflict

## **2. ADVISORY / ADVOCACY**

### **2.1 Advising Local Authorities and other partners on their activities within AONBs, to encourage them to attain the highest possible standards in AONBs**

The North Devon Coast is a national as well as a local asset and it is important that the Local Authorities are able to establish high standards of management to provide exemplar demonstration models for other land managers in the AONB

### **In 2011-2012 we will**

- Continue to support the **Hillsborough Hill Fort and Local Nature Reserve, Ilfracombe**. The successful South West Coast Path Bid, unlocking our Coastal Heritage has brought a grant of £20,000 for the improvement of the interpretation and vegetation clearance is being supported by AONB staff time. The capital works will be completed by March 2011 and in the

period from March will be to assist North Devon Council in the establishment of a constituted volunteer group and to encourage the application to Natural England for a Higher Level Stewardship Grant

- Support work at **Northam Burrows Country Park, Westward Ho!** In the current year we have provided comment on options for the long term management of the area and we are liaising with TDC to establish new events (Northam Burrows Discovery Day and proposals for a national event) which will promote understanding of the area and income generation. We will provide advice on future management proposal as requested.

## **2.2 and 2.4 Financial support for NAAONB: Contribution and support to regional activity between AONBs and protected landscapes to strengthen status of the AONBs individually and collectively.**

The North Devon Coast benefits from two umbrella organisation the NAAONB and South West Protected Landscapes which are now working closely together to deliver co-ordinated policy advice, lobbying, training, to deliver efficiencies through joint working and to access external funds. The recently successful bid for funding for the Cordiale project was lead by SWPLF

### **In 2011-2012**

- Retain membership and an active role within the National Association of AONBs and South West Protected Landscapes Forum
- We will support the NAAONB project to provide an efficient co-ordinated response to relevant National Consultations
- Encourage closer working with between the SWPLF and the NAAONB with a view to eventual merging of the two organisations
- Take advantage of relevant briefings and training provided by the two organisations
- Play an active role in supporting cooperative working where there is benefit to the North Devon Coast AONB

## **2.3 Providing landscape related planning advice (to local planning authorities and in conjunction with Natural England as appropriate in line with, and underpinned by protocols)**

The Cordiale project has landscape character assessment at its heart and a significant element of the project will involve working with planners to strengthen the Planning Policy Framework with regard to the AONB and to use it to provide a strong evidence base for Development Control decision making.

In the last year there has been a marked increase in significant and complex planning application within the AONB which are covered by the existing protocol. This is stretching resources to a

considerable degree and in the current financial year we have moved resources from other budgets to cover the costs of this work. We are currently exploring options for resolving this issue

**In 2011-12 we will**

- Use Cordiale resources to work with the LPA to use Landscape Character Assessment as an evidence base for planning decision making
- Review planning role and provide responses to key planning applications as far as resources permit
- Provide response to Local Development Framework documents relevant to the AONB

**3. MONITORING**

**3.1 To monitor and report on progress against AONB Management Plans and annual business plans to the Partnership.**

In order to demonstrate that the North Devon Coast AONB resources are used effectively and efficiently and that Partners are engaged in delivering their commitments to the Management Strategy

**In 2011-12 we will**

- We will prepare and circulate an Annual Report
- Maintain management and delivery plan tracking records

**3.2 To provide monitoring and reporting information to Natural England in accordance with issued guidance.**

**In 2011-12 we will**

- Report on progress toward relevant Natural England and Local Authority Targets at Partnership meetings and in the annual report
- Continue to monitor landscape condition and change
- **Photographic Monitoring from fixed points.** We are now three years into the programme of photographic monitoring of landscape change and our work has been used as a demonstration model for other AONBs. In 2011-12 we will work with the Cordiale project partners to develop an agreed process to evaluate landscape change through the photographic record
- **Monuments at Risk Monitoring.** By March 2011 we will have completed a pilot to ensure that the condition of all Scheduled Monuments within the AONB is assessed by trained volunteers to a common methodology. We will review preliminary results with English Heritage and aim to deliver the first survey by October 2011 for inclusion into the national Heritage at Risk

publication

- ***Biodiversity Monitoring***

Due to changes in the work programme to the Biosphere Team their role in monitoring, conserving and enhancing biodiversity within the AONB has reduced considerably, Work by the AONB team between 2004 and 2007 established a base line position for sites which were not SSSI's. In 2011-12 we will explore ways of improving our monitoring of the condition of County Wildlife sites within the AONB with Cordiale and other Partners

## **Projects**

We have worked hard to ensure that our externally funded projects deliver multiple aims and link closely to our core work and Management Strategy. The main linkages are noted in the proceeding text and the projects for which we are a lead partner is summarised below.

### **Explore the Coast: Lead Partner North Devon Coast AONB**

Building on the raised profile from the AONB's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary promotion, this project will develop community, visitor and business awareness of, and access to, the physical, cultural and heritage resources of the AONB. It will also increase healthy recreational use and spread tourism benefits across the area.

The project will:

- Create a range of web-based resource guides, which map and present, in an accessible format key features of the AONB around themes promoting new reasons to visit and explore; the guides will include content for families, enthusiasts and interested observers
- Provide searchable visitor listings of the heritage, cultural and environmental assets in each parish, with guidance upon how to visit and experience them
- Create searchable and downloadable car-free and self-guided days out itineraries through iPod, MP3 and mobile phone technology, focused around three key but peripheral AONB communities outside the main 'honey pot' areas – Hartland, Combe Martin, and Westward Ho! Visitors will be able to access Public Rights of Way online mapping centred on their location, overlaid with layers of local features, services and facilities, walking/cycling routes and activity opportunities
- Engage with local accommodation businesses, communities and key agencies in developing and collating resource material
- Deliver training workshops to local businesses and the community on how to launch the new resources and how to make best use of them to inform visitor experiences.

**Staff:** Project co-ordinator Clare Manning, responsible Officer Linda Blanchard

**Cordiale: Lead Partner Devon County Council, Local Delivery Partner North Devon AONB.** This work is considered as supporting core functions 1.5, 2.3.2.5 and 3.2 and although presented as a project in order to help us draw down external funding is in fact a core work.

Following the successful bid to the EU the North Devon AONB will benefit from this work which includes the appointment of a landscape specialist to work with AONB communities and the Local Planning Authority for up to 30 months. We will also benefit from training, research programmes and exchange visits from strands of the project lead by other partners. Due to the changes in recruitment policy and the delayed start the project we are currently making some amendments to the programme.

### **Key Outcomes for North Devon**

Make our landscape character assessment and other data more accessible to everyone

Develop our understanding of the potential impacts of climate and farming change on the landscape

Work with communities and the local planning Authority to develop the use of the Landscape Character Assessment and other data as a tool to inform decision making and stimulate action to enhance the landscape and its resilience to change.

Ensure that the fixed point photographic monitoring is linked closely to the Landscape Character Assessment and use it to develop a methodology for evaluating landscape change.

To ensure that other Protected Landscapes at both sides of the Channel can benefit from our skills in harnessing community engagement, and in landscape character and landscape monitoring.

To ensure that North Devon AONB Partners and communities can benefit from learning opportunities offered by other Cordiale Partners e.g. Work on repair and energy retention properties of earth and vernacular building, and energy from hedgerows and copses,

**Staff:** Local Project co-ordinator to be appointed, Local officer lead; Dave Edgcombe. Programme Representative Linda Blanchard