



Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Supplementary

# Historic Environment Action Plans



Forces for Change Operating on the Historic Environment of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB at a Landscape Scale and their Past, Current and Future Impacts





This document forms part of a suite of documents which together comprise the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Historic Environment Action Plans.

The HEAPs provide a summary of the key characteristics of the historic environment of the AONB at a landscape scale, they then set out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of this special landscape and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance these special characteristics. These summaries are divided into two groups:

1. Summaries of the historic environment of the AONB by area
2. Summaries of the historic environment of the AONB by theme

These core documents are accompanied by documents which provide background information, supplementary information and detail on the methodologies used to create these documents.

A series of icons help you navigate this suite of documents:



**Background** - Provides an introduction to the AONB Historic Environment Action Plans and provides background information on the history and archaeology of the landscape **(B1 to B10)**



**Area** - Summarises key characteristics of discrete geographical areas within the AONB, they then set out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of each area and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance its characteristics **(A1 to A12)**



**Theme** - Summarises key characteristics of historic environment themes, each document then sets out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of each theme and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance its characteristics **(T1 to T14)**



**Supplementary** - A series of documents which explore supplementary issues of relevance to the Historic Environment Action Plans **(S1 to S2)**



**Method** - Introduces the methodology behind the production of the Historic Environment Action Plans **(M1 to M3)**

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## Introduction

This document stems from a requirement, as part of creating Historic Environment Action Plans for the AONB landscape, to assess the extent to which the key archaeological and historic characteristics of the AONB are under threat. This meant that the AONB needed to understand the forces for change impacting upon the historic environment component of the AONB landscape.

This document identifies the forces for change operating on the historic environment of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty at a landscape scale and their past, current and future impacts and effects.

This builds on work undertaken by Dorset County Council which developed a landscape change strategy for the county based on key forces for change of relevance to the study area (Land Use Consultants 2009).

This document builds on this approach but expands the forces for change identified and groups them under eight broad topics:

1. Forces for Change in Agriculture and Farming
2. Climate Change and Energy
3. Forces for Change in Industry
4. Forces for Change involving Land Holdings in the AONB
5. Forces for Change in the Natural Environment
6. Forces for Change in Recreation and Tourist
7. Settlement and Infrastructure Development
8. Forces for Change in Woods and Woodlands

It is important to recognise that not all change will have a negative impact on the historic environment of the AONB and some change will in fact provide positive opportunities for conserving and enhancing the historic environment of the AONB. Further more potential future change should not be viewed in isolation and should be considered with reference to current trends and past changes which have affected the landscape. This document offers a departure from previous approaches and describes each potential force for future change alongside description of past trends and the changes occurring in the present day.

## 1. Forces for Change in Agriculture and Farming

**Sources:** *The AONB Management Plan 2009-2014, the AONB Landscape Character Assessment, the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation, an AONB report on Farm Diversification and Agricultural Improvement and the AONB Economic Assessment details the key forces for change in agriculture and farming. These can be complemented by the national picture provided by the State of the Countryside reports produced by the Commission for Rural Communities.*



*Arable Fields near Martin Down*

### 1. Arable Farming

#### Past Trends

*Background* – Former reliance on the sheep-corn system of agriculture from 1600 to 1900 comes to an end with the development of more modern methods of fertilising the soil than sheep folding. There has been a massive increase in arable farming over the last 150 years, with the ploughing up of former downland areas.

*Impact on the Historic Environment* - Large scale change in landscape character as downland is converted to large scale ploughed fields, pockets of grassland remain as relic examples of this former land use. Surviving archaeological earthworks dating back to the Prehistoric period ploughed up, including large scale field systems, settlement and monumental complexes.

#### Current Situation

*Background* – In 2004 55% of agricultural land within the AONB was defined as being either under crop or fallow, and 23% of land holdings in the AONB were categorised as farms specialising in cereal production. The proportion of holdings specialising in

cereals is much higher than the regional and national averages. Arable markets have been increasingly volatile and uncertain, but since 2007 there have been rises in cereal prices and a reduction in the amount of land in set aside. In 2004 cereals accounted for 72% of the total area devoted to crops. Other important crops included oilseed rape, maize and field beans. Oil seed rape as a crop has been on the increase but this pattern is very reliant on market forces. Arable producers are increasingly combating the problem of volatile markets by seeking planning permission to build large state of the art grain stores and dryers to produce a top quality product. Surviving pockets of grassland often not grazed intensively begin to scrub up.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Increasing redundancy of existing historic barns and stores. Scrub encroachment on archaeological monuments.

### **Potential Future Force for Change**

*Background* – Increased uncertainty in markets for arable farmers. It is, however, very unlikely that there will be a large-scale reversion of areas of arable to grassland unless paid for through agri-environment schemes. Increased diversification in crops grown including new biofuels. Renewed emphasis on ‘food security’ may lead to a further intensification of arable agriculture.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Archaeological monuments already under the plough will continue to be ploughed for the foreseeable future. New crops and further intensification may increase damage to buried archaeology, and change appearance of landscape, and result in further removal of field boundaries.

## **2. Dairy and Livestock Farming**

### **Past Trends**

*Background* – 150 years ago sheep farming was a crucial part of the local economy linked to the sheep-corn system of agriculture. This meant that there were very large flocks of sheep moving between downland and valley locations. Dairy farming was much more common in the clay vale – leading to the common distinction between chalk and cheese.

*Impact on the historic environment* – The end of the sheep-corn system of agriculture, lead to a massive reduction in grassland areas and existing patterns of animal husbandry. Live stock farming now undertaken largely on more marginal downland locations, in the clay vale, and in the river valleys.

### **Current Situation**

*Background* - Between 1990 and 2004 there was a large decline in temporary grassland (44%) and smaller reductions in permanent grassland (2%) This was initially offset by a large increase in set-aside land (although this peaked in the mid-1990's following the 1992 CAP reforms and has since declined). In 2004 permanent and temporary grassland made up 29% of the AONB. In 2004 dairy farms made up 7% of the AONB. Over the last 10 years there has been a significant decline in numbers of all types of livestock (29%) and the conversion of existing dairy farms to beef cattle.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Beef cattle provide less intensive grazing leading to the possibility for scrub encroachment on archaeological earthworks.

### Potential Future Force for Change

*Background* – It is however unlikely that land will become ungrazed in the AONB in the foreseeable future, as has been seen in other parts of England. Sheep numbers are likely to increase in lieu of cattle.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Changes in stocking densities and grazing regimes have the potential to rapidly affect the appearance of this historic landscape. Small scale historic field patterns beyond downland areas could see changes in management and be merged. In addition archaeological monuments on surviving grassland need carefully planned grazing regimes if they are to remain free of scrub.



*Cows below Cley Hill*

### 3. Common Agricultural Policy

#### Past Trends

*Background* - Direct government intervention of both agricultural prices and agricultural labour has a long and complex history. For example, Corn Laws were imposed in the UK between 1815 and 1846 to protect corn prices against competition from less expensive foreign imports. However it is with the drive to modernise and expand the UK's agricultural industries in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the State's role in supporting agricultural prices and influencing the structure of the industry increased markedly, through the payment of subsidies. The United Kingdom's entry into the European

Economic Community known as the 'Common Market' in 1973 also resulted in entry into the Common Agricultural Policy. Initially this focused on price restrictions, levies, quotas and set aside. With the establishment of Environmentally Sensitive Areas in 1987 followed by agri-environment schemes like Countryside Stewardship (from 1991) the payment to farmers became decreasingly decoupled from agricultural production and the regulation of markets, and increasingly concentrated on the provision of environmental benefits. Support for agricultural production in the European Union was rationalised in 2005 into the Single Payment Scheme. Through a range of cross-compliance measures this ties subsidy to good environment practice.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Positive management of archaeological sites and monuments, and elements of the wider historic landscape, including field boundaries. Other management, for example for biodiversity, can occasionally have a negative impact on historic environment issues if it restricts access, affects historic landscape character, or causes disturbance from root growth.

### **Current Situation**

*Background* - The trend in providing payment to farmers that deliver environmental benefits has continued with the current agri-environmental scheme known as Environmental Stewardship; the Entry Level Scheme (ELS) is open to all farmers, and the Higher Level Scheme (HLS), open to farms with the most important environmental assets.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Agri-environment schemes have also been widely used to conserve archaeological sites and monuments. Much of the positive management of historic environment assets in the landscape of the AONB is also undertaken through agri-environment schemes, including the management of ancient hedgerows, boundaries, trees, historic parkland, designed and engineered water bodies, and water meadows.

### **Potential Future Force for Change**

*Background* – The Common Agricultural Policy is undergoing major review in 2013 (as the current 2007-2013 EU budget term ends). There is major uncertainty about both the future structure of the Single Payment Scheme and agri-environment schemes and the level of payments which will be available. Until 2013 there is an increased amount of agri-environment scheme funding available.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Increased positive management of elements of the historic environment by landowners until 2013 as increasing number of farmers enter agri-environment schemes for a 10 year period. Maintenance of current agri-levels of agri-environment scheme monies would increase the numbers of land holdings undertaking positive management of historic environment assets. However the likely possibility of reduced levels of agri-environment money post 2013 could have a major impact on the positive management of archaeological sites and the wider historic landscape in the future.

#### 4. Farm Intensification and Diversification

##### Past Trends

*Background* – Intensification and mechanisation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century lead to a reduction of farm workers and labourers.

*Impact on the historic environment* – A decrease in farm labour and a lack of income lead to a reduction in traditional forms of environmental management, such as hedgerows and ditches, which has affected the condition of ancient boundaries. Other ancient field patterns have been lost as fields have been merged and enlarged.

##### Current Situation

*Background* – The agricultural workforce within the AONB totalled 1,900 in 2004. Employment levels in the farming sector though still significant within the overall context of the AONB have fallen by 9% since 1990. An increase in the number of farmers and managers has been offset by a significant reduction (48%) in the number of full time employees. Farmers are tending to do more of the work themselves with the help of increasing mechanisation. Farmers are increasingly diversifying their businesses in response to uncertain agriculture markets. In addition trends in diversification are changing. Traditionally farm diversification consisted of the conversion of existing farm buildings to holiday accommodation or business, with other activities including farm shops and farm based food processing. However there has been a shift in recent years to other opportunities such as renewable energy (including the growth of new biofuels), an increase in equestrianism, and the use of farms for storage and distribution. Agricultural development is being characterised by more mechanisation and larger developments.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Historic farm buildings are becoming redundant or are converted into accommodation or commercial units.

##### Potential Future Force for Change

*Background* – Further intensification of farming (linked to concerns over food security) and increasing diversification of farm activity.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Major changes to the way in which fields are managed and used, increased mechanisation has the potential to lead to the need for larger agricultural buildings served by larger machinery, increased redundancy, and conversion of historic farm buildings.

## 2. Climate Change and Energy

**Sources:** *The UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) funded by DEFRA was established in 1997 to help co-ordinate scientific research into the impacts of climate change. The climate change scenarios detailed below are based on the latest report from this body – the UK Climate Projection 2009 (UKCP 09). This report details the probability of shifts in climate in the UK under a range of future emissions scenarios (high, medium, low) and over a range of timescales (2020s, 2050s and the 2080s). The different future emission scenarios are based on work undertaken by the*

*Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and look at the different factors likely to determine future greenhouse gas trajectories: demographic change; social and economic development; and the rate and direction of technological change. Naturally as with any complex model the future path of Climate Change is highly uncertain. For example, the emission scenarios themselves are neither predictions nor forecasts. Rather, each scenario is one alternative image of how the future might unfold and merely allows policies to be constructed in a more robust way, and the potential impacts of that change are even harder to estimate. As it is beyond the scope of this project to delve too deeply into the complex literature on climate change, rather the following text is based on the key predictions of climate change for the South West of England (produced by UKCIP) and specialist guidance. This guidance includes a document produced by English Heritage on Climate Change and the Historic Environment and a recently completed project by Natural England looking at the potential impacts of climatic change on the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase National Character Area under a high emissions scenario.*



**Solar Panels Installed at Bridzor Dairy in the AONB**

## **1. Direct Impacts of climate change on the Historic Environment**

### **Past Trends**

*Background* – Average global temperatures and sea levels have risen since the late 19th century, with global average temperatures having risen by nearly 0.8 °C since the late 19th century. Global sea-level rise has accelerated between mid-19th century and mid-20th century

*Impact on the historic environment* – There is little literature on whether these climatic changes have already started to impact on the historic environment. The pace of change over this period means that other forces, for example the intensification of agriculture, have had a much greater impact. This is especially the case within the AONB.

## Current Situation

*Background* - Average global temperatures and sea levels have risen at an increased rate over the past few decades, with global average temperatures rising at about 0.2 °C/decade over the past 25 years. Emissions appear to have caused most of the observed temperature rise since the mid 20th century. Global sea-level rise is now about 3mm per year. It is likely (>90% probability, IPCC) that human activities have contributed between a quarter and a half of the rise in sea level in the last half of the 20th century. Average UK temperature has risen since the mid 20th century, as have average sea level and sea surface temperature around the UK coast. Over the same time period, trends in precipitation and storms are harder to identify.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Awareness of climate change has increased dramatically over the last 10 years, to the position today where it is a key agenda for all organisations concerned with the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Current initiatives are mostly concerned with studying the likely future impacts of both climate change, and initiatives designed to mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change, on the historic environment and formulating strategies to deal with these impacts.

## Potential Future Force for Change

*Background* – The likely impact of climate change depends on the severity of the change experienced and in terms of climate change mitigation strategies, the degree of concern over climate change that society shares. However regardless of which emission scenario is adopted the following changes in climate are predicted:

- An increase in both winter and summer temperatures both in terms of the average temperature and the minimum and maximum daily temperature.
- An increase in winter precipitation and a decrease in summer precipitation.
- The South West climate therefore will have warmer and wetter winters, and warmer and drier summers. Rainfall intensity may increase and extreme events such as heat waves and storms are predicted to increase in frequency and severity.

*Impact on the historic environment* – There are a range of impacts which will have an effect on both individual sites and the wider historic character of the landscape. These include:

- More frequent and severe flooding, which may damage some historic buildings.
- Increased ground subsidence could pose a threat.
- Fewer frosts and drier summers, and the northward migration of pests and diseases, which may make it difficult to maintain traditional planting schemes in some historic gardens.
- Some historically authentic tree plantings may not be viable by the time they reach maturity.
- A possible increase in the frequency of extreme weather, or a change in its geographical distribution, which could pose an increased risk of damage to some historic landscapes and buildings, as well as trees.

## 2. Indirect Impacts of climate change on the Historic Environment

### Past Trends

*Background* - During the whole course of human history shifts in climate has been a recurrent theme. These have been both long term and short term in scale and thus variably recognised by the people living through the climatic change. For example people living during the Little Ice Age in Medieval England were aware that they were living during a much colder period than their forebears, but this was experienced as a series of extreme weather events which affected their daily life, for example the winter fairs held on the Thames. Responses to climate change were, therefore, unplanned and could be creeping and gradual.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Changes in climate over time clearly have a massive impact on all factors of human life, for example where settlements and dwellings are sited, the character of those settlements, and patterns of agriculture. It can be very difficult to tease out unplanned responses to climate change from other forces for change and there has been little direct work on this subject in the AONB.

### Current Situation

*Background* – Current indirect impacts of climate change are probably quite subtle in nature and include responses to flooding, and shifts in planting schemes in historic parks and gardens

*Impact on the historic environment* – It is very difficult to gauge whether climate change is currently having an indirect impact on the landscape of the AONB, and therefore it is even more difficult to judge impacts on the historic environment.

### Potential Future Force for Change

*Background* – Future changes in climate could lead to changes in farming systems and agriculture; and new patterns of recreation and tourism. Climate change may result in higher summer temperatures leading people to seek recreational opportunities in shaded areas.

*Impact on the historic environment* – There are a range of impacts which will have an effect on both individual sites and the wider historic character of the landscape. For example, alteration of agricultural practices, resulting from changes in crop or stock viability, could pose a risk to some archaeological landscapes and buried archaeological sites

## 3. The Landscape Effects of Climate Change Mitigation

### Past Trends

*Background* – The recognition of possible radical future changes in climate, and a desire to take steps to mitigate this change is a recent phenomenon.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Not applicable.

## Current Situation

*Background* – Small scale micro-renewables have been adopted in the AONB, some biomass crops have been planted as part of wider crop rotations.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Historic houses are increasingly being retro fitted with solar panels and other renewables, biomass crops have been restricted in scale and duration and have not as yet had any major impact on the historic environment.

## Potential Future Force for Change

*Background* – There will be an increased emphasis placed on renewable energy supplies, it is extremely likely that the number of small scale renewable schemes will increase in the AONB, and it is possible, though less likely, that large scale schemes will also be present. In addition responses to reduce the demand for energy may include the introduction of new energy saving measures.

*Impact on the historic environment* – There are a range of impacts which are likely to have an effect on both individual sites and the wider historic character of the landscape. These include:

- Construction of new renewable energy infrastructure, including wind turbines, small scale hydro-electric turbines may also have a direct archaeological impact on riverside remains.
- Small scale hydro-electric projects may provide opportunities for the careful reuse of mills, water wheels, and mill races.
- Wind turbines and wind farms could, if insensitively located, compromise significant landscapes, the visual setting of important sites and buildings, or the integrity of the wider historic environment.
- New biomass crops may pose a risk to buried archaeology or radically change the appearance of the wider historic landscape character.
- An increased reliance on wood fuel might provide opportunities for the more active management of the woodland, thereby helping to protect archaeological remains; conversely increased woodland exploitation could intensify use of heavy machinery and increase woodland planting, providing a threat.
- Some micro-renewable might be suitable to fit on historic buildings.
- Energy saving measures could detract from the historic character and fabric of buildings.

## 4. The Landscape Effects of Climate Change Adaptation

### Past Trends

*Background* – The recognition of possible radical future changes in climate caused by man, and a desire to take proactive steps to adapt to this change is a recent phenomenon.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Not Applicable

### Current Situation

*Background* – No landscape scale steps have yet been taken in the AONB to adapt to climate change. Current initiatives are mostly concerned with studying the likely future impacts on the historic environment and formulating strategies to deal with these impacts.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Not Applicable

### Potential Future Force for Change

*Background* – Adaptive responses may include new water storage, and control measures in river valleys.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Water meadows altered and used for use in flood control and water storage. New planting schemes of drought resilience plants change appearance of historic parks and gardens. A lack of sufficient change in land management practice may lead to a decrease in the resilience of 'living' historic assets such as avenues.

## 3. Forces for Change in Industry

**Sources:** *The AONB Management Plan 2009-2014, the AONB Landscape Character Assessment, the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation and the Dorset Landscape Change Strategy details the key forces for change in industry.*



*Historic Chilmark Stone Mines (Courtesy of Tisbury Archive)*

## 1. Quarrying

### Past Trends

*Background* – Up until the coming of the railways in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the industrialisation of Britain, building materials were sourced and created locally, including chalk for lime, Chilmark and greensand stone for building, and clay for bricks. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was small scale gravel extraction in the Wylde Valley.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Legacy of small scale chalk pits and quarries and larger scale stone quarries. Impact of the Langford Lakes Nature Reserve on the wider historic landscape of the river Wylde.

### Current Situation

*Background* – Small scale stone quarrying of local building material with very restricted quotas.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Stone quarries represent a crucial local resource for the maintenance of existing historic buildings, and the creation of new buildings that are in keeping with wider settlements.

### Potential Future Force for Change

*Background* – Future gravel extraction is extremely unlikely in the river valleys of the AONB both due to the protection afforded the landscape and other available sources elsewhere in the region. Small scale extraction of Chilmark and green sand stone from quarries in the AONB will continue.

*Impact on the historic environment* – These stone quarries will continue to represent a crucial local resource for the maintenance of existing historic buildings, and the creation of new buildings that are in keeping with wider settlements.

## 4. Forces for Change involving Land Holdings in the AONB

**Sources:** *The AONB Management Plan 2009-2014, the AONB Landscape Character Assessment, the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation and the AONB Economic Assessment details the key forces for change in land holdings in the AONB.*

### 1. Estates

#### Past Trends

*Background* – Since the Reformation the AONB has been dominated by large estates centred on historic houses often associated with demense land. Some of these shrank massively in size in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, firstly during the First World War when the heirs to some estates were killed and during the agricultural depression of the 1930s when land also changed hands.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Landscape scale legacy of the great estates is a crucial element of the historic landscape character of the AONB.

## Current Situation

*Background* – Estates are generally resistant to change and to selling land. Land does not tend to come on the market, due to continuity in family holdings. Only one large estate in the AONB is decreasing in size. Many estates retain significant housing stock which are privately rented or tied on long let leases. Housing tenure patterns are therefore significantly different to the typical rural pattern; levels of owner occupation are relatively low and there is much more use of private rented and tied accommodation (25% of AONB households).

*Impact on the historic environment* – Landscape scale legacy of the great estates is still visible in the landscape including landscape scale visual enhancement, such as avenues and the influence of estate styles of architecture. Significant numbers of historic buildings in settlements are estate owned.

## Potential Future Force for Change

*Background* – Continued presence of large estates in the AONB landscape.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Landscape scale legacy of the great estates remain visible. In some areas conservatism in land use practices is encouraged and tolerated by estates, through the use of covenants leading to the maintenance of historic landscape character.

## 2. Size and Structure of Land Holdings

### Past Trends

*Background* – Historically many of the land holdings in the AONB were ribbon-shaped, taking a slice of river valley, valley slope and downland, while those on the Chase were more rounded in shape reflecting their position on the plateau.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Landscape scale legacy of historic land holding is a crucial element of the historic landscape character of the AONB, in terms of the positions of farms, fields and boundaries.

### Current Situation

*Background* – Continuity in the historic pattern of land holdings. There are between 800 and 850 farm holdings in the AONB with an average size of 85 hectares. Around 40% of holdings are less than 5 hectares in size while 26% are 100 hectares and over. Many of the land holdings which are less than 5 hectares in size and are classified as small holdings (these are identified as “other farm category in the 2004 Defra agricultural census). There has been a small increase in the number of small holdings since 1990.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Continuity in farming patterns means continuity in elements of the historic landscape including fields, field boundaries, parish boundaries and trackways, as well as in the siting and position of farm buildings.

### Potential Future Force for Change

*Background* – Erosion in the historic patterns of land holdings resulting from farm amalgamation and diversification and the further intensification of agriculture. Decrease in profitability of small land holdings could lead to neglect of small or marginal areas of the AONB.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Loss of key elements in the historic landscape including fields, field boundaries, parish boundaries and trackways.

## 5. Forces for Change in the Natural Environment

**Sources:** *The AONB Management Plan 2009-2014, the AONB Landscape Character Assessment, and the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation details the key forces for change in the natural environment in the AONB.*



*Grass on chalk downland at Chiselbury Hillfort*

### 1. Biodiversity

#### Past Trends

*Background* – Changes in land use patterns and the intensification of agricultural patterns have led to a major decrease in biodiversity. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century special areas such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and National Nature

Reserves were designated to protect remaining biological assets, halt the decline in biodiversity and improve the management of these sites.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Nature designations protecting key areas of habitat have also protected archaeological sites and monuments as well as rarer historic landscape types, including open unimproved chalk downland, and wooded over common land.

### **Current Situation**

*Background* – Many current initiatives are now focusing on habitat recreation and connectivity, looking at biodiversity on a landscape scale.

*Impact on the historic environment* – New schemes, for example arable reversion to chalk grassland, may have additional positive benefits for archaeological sites and monuments and for enhancing the wider historic landscape character. Other schemes, for example new woodland planting, may obscure archaeological traces.

### **Potential Future Force for Change**

*Background* – Increased habitat connectivity linked to the ecosystems services agenda. Continued maintenance of existing natural habitats.

*Impact on the historic environment* – As with the current situation impacts on the historic environment could be both positive and negative. Closer dialogue between historic and natural environment interests should lead to the design of initiative that have mutual benefit. A better understanding of long term historical change may suggest potential for more innovative schemes that could include some reversion of intensively used land.

## **2. Hydrology**



*Chalk River in the AONB*

**Past Trends**

*Background* – Reliance on the chalk aquifer and chalk river valleys.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Hydrology had a major influence on siting of settlements, for example in the chalk river valleys and along spingline locations on the edge of the chalk.

**Current Situation**

*Background* – High levels of extraction from the chalk aquifer by water companies.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Potential impact on buried archaeological remains and, in particular, those areas currently waterlogged.

**Potential Future Force for Change**

*Background* - Increased demand on irrigation requirements throughout summer, potential water shortages, chalk rivers rise lower down the valleys.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Impact on maintenance of historic features in valley floors and wider afield, including lakes, ponds and relic water meadows. Potential impact on buried archaeological remains and, in particular, those that are currently waterlogged.

**3. Soil**

*Large scale prairie field in the AONB*

**Past Trends**

*Background* – Human activity in the past has had a massive influence on soil types and soil erosion. For example, in the Prehistoric period the removal of woodland and the development of various forms of agriculture had a massive influence on soil profiles

and gradually over time there were increasing levels of soil erosion from downland areas into river valleys.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Soil erosion deposits important caches of information on past environment in river valleys. Shifts in settlement pattern in response to changes in soil productivity.

### **Current Situation**

*Background* – Continuing issues with soil erosion especially on downland areas, exacerbated under certain agricultural regimes, such as pig rearing.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Some erosion of archaeological sites.

### **Potential Future Force for Change**

*Background* - Increased levels of soil erosion due to an increase in arable farming and higher levels of winter rainfall.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Potential for major erosion of important archaeological sites. Loss or impoverishment of soil will affect viability of agricultural businesses, with knock-on affect on patterns of agricultural exploitation and thus on historic landscape character.

## **6. Forces for Change in Recreation and Tourism**

**Sources:** *The AONB Management Plan 2009-2014, and the AONB Landscape Character Assessment, and the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation details the key forces for change in recreation and tourism in the AONB.*

### **1. Recreational Land in the AONB**

#### **Past Trends**

*Background* – In the 19<sup>th</sup> century land was first opened up to the wider population with the creation of the Larmer Tree Gardens by General Pitt Rivers. The increasing expense of maintaining historic parks and gardens in 20<sup>th</sup> century meant other private estates opened their doors to the general public, including Longleat, Chettle and Breamore. A parallel trend continued in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the purchase and gifting of land, as well as archaeological and historic sites, on behalf of the nation. This was undertaken to safeguard both the nation's cultural and national heritage. Such areas in the AONB are owned by the Woodland Trust, RSPB, English Heritage and the National Trust.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Parts of the AONB are under management to safeguard the nation's heritage, placing many sites and areas of landscape under positive management. In addition private land holdings reliant on tourism have an additional reason to promote and safeguard their historic and archaeological assets.

## Current Situation

*Background* – Large numbers of visitors are attracted into the AONB to visit key archaeological and historic sites. Longleat, for example, sees visitor numbers of tourists in excess of 1 million per annum. Kingston Lacy saw total visitors numbers of 195,000 in 2009 compared with 100,000 in 2000. This upward trend has accelerated during the recent recession with the National Trust at Stourhead seeing a 99% increase in visitors during the spring of 2009 alone.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Key assets are under positive management but may be threatened by the impact of large visitor numbers. The historic environment sector generally welcomes visitors to both assets and the wider historic environment. Tourism often provides the most sustainable method of maintaining an historic asset, and provides a key mechanism through which the nation's past is understood and valued.

## Potential Future Force for Change

*Background* - Increased visitor numbers with an expanding population and as rising summer temperatures make people seek recreational opportunities. It is possible that more private land will be turned over to amenity use, especially in woodlands, as land managers and owners increasingly diversify their operations. It is unlikely that further land will come into public ownership.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Key assets remain under positive management but may be increasingly threatened by the impact of large visitor numbers. Historic and archaeological features could be threatened by new tourist enterprises, but careful design normally enables heritage and enterprise to coexist.



Cranborne Chase Woodfair 2009

## 7. Settlement and Infrastructure Development

**Sources:** AONB reports including the Management Plan 2009-2014, Landscape Character Assessment, Historic Landscape Characterisation, Market Town Growth, the AONB report on permitted development rights, Roads and Planning and the AONB report on Dark Skies and Light Pollution; English Heritage report on Affordable Rural Housing and the Historic Environment details the key forces for change in settlement both within and beyond the AONB boundary.

### 1. Settlement Expansion within the AONB

#### Past Trends

*Background* – The core of most villages in the AONB date back to the Medieval period. Most expansion of modern villages occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, coupled with the creation of new satellite settlements. There has been a much greater expansion of some villages, such as Tisbury and Dinton in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In some areas, for example the Ebbles Valley, this has led to an infilling of the more linear historic settlement pattern.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Erosion of historic pattern of settlement, and historic character of villages with the provision of unsympathetic new housing stock with some positive enhancement by well designed building conversion and design.

#### Current Situation

*Background* – Population within the AONB is very low, at 34 persons per square kilometre compared with an average of 129 per person for rural England. 69% of residents live in villages and a further 24% in hamlets or dispersed dwellings. Despite the tendency for planning policies to restrain development in the countryside all districts within the AONB recognise the need for some economic growth in rural areas. This means increased building and settlement expansion (and related infrastructure) to meet demands of growing population, at the moment this is represented mostly by infilling within the curtilage of existing settlements. For example there were four settlements with allocations proposed within the AONB to be completed by 2011 covering a total of 136 dwellings over approximately 25 hectares. Creeping and gradual changes to existing houses is occurring through Permitted Development Rights. The majority of planning applications received on farm properties are for residential development. Many of these developments consist of high-cost conversions aimed at professional households. These can change the character of farming settlements. A related trend is the establishment of new farmyards with standardised farm buildings adjacent to the historic farmstead.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Subtle changes in historic settlement character and pattern through new development occurring in existing settlements. Low individual impacts of individuals extending their dwellings through residential Permitted Development Rights, particularly considered against restrictions which apply limiting PDR for extensions in AONB's and the requirements of additional consent for Listed Buildings. However the volume of such development is likely to be high and there is the potential problem for cumulative impacts to the historic character of settlement. Reuse of historic farmsteads provide opportunities for maintaining these structures that

contribute much to the historic landscape character of the AONB as long as care is taken on the design of any conversions to retain original materials, openings and character. The creation of new farmyards with standardised farm buildings adjacent to the historic farmstead can lead to neglect of these historic assets, or conversely, to opportunities to ensure their future through well considered conversion.

### Potential Future Force for Change

*Background* – Future development of former military bases in the AONB, notably RAF Chilmark. There are no large growth areas identified and agreed in the AONB, but it is very likely that villages will continue to expand in size and that settlement infilling will continue. Potential for future changes to Permitted

Development Rights (with the exception of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings) providing greater flexibility to householders to make changes to the properties, especially to the rear of holdings and in relation to the provision of renewable energy source,s leading to an increase in the number of properties undergoing alterations. It is likely that the changes to the character of existing farmsteads and the creation of new farm buildings will continue.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Opportunity to enhance historic character through the building of carefully designed and sited buildings, potential for negative impact of poorly located and designed buildings, especially outside of Conservation Areas. Threat to buried archaeological remains, archaeological earthworks and historic field patterns on the edge of settlements from development. Potential for an extension of Permitted Development Rights leading to a gradual and accumulative loss of historic character. Reuse of historic farmsteads provides increased opportunities for maintaining these structures that contribute much to the historic landscape character of the AONB, as long as care is taken on the design of any conversions to retain original materials, openings and character. The creation of new farmyards with standardised farm buildings adjacent to the historic farmstead may lead to neglect of these historic assets or, conversely, to opportunities to ensure their future through well considered conversion.



*Renovation of old cottages*

## 2. Settlement Expansion outside the AONB

### Past Trends

*Background* – In the past settlement expansion immediately outside of the AONB was much smaller in size and scale.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Some impact on historic routeways as different routes shifted in importance.

### Current Situation

*Background* – In the last 50 years building and settlements expansion (and related infrastructure) to meet the demands of a growing population has had a much greater impact on the AONB landscape. In recent years 680 new dwellings have been created near to the western boundary of the AONB to the east of Shaftesbury. Other smaller allocations within 2km of the AONB boundary include sites at Wimborne Minster, Mere, Wilton, Downton and Verwood.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Provision of infrastructure to serve expanding population has had a major impact on the historic landscape, for example through the expansion of the A303.

### Potential Future Force for Change

*Background* – Further settlement expansion (and related infrastructure) in market towns outside the AONB, notable proposed housing allocations close to the AONB boundary includes land to the north of Wimborne Minster, with further potential for development around Shaftesbury, Blandford and Salisbury.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Increased strain on historic road network, impact on view from key historic landscapes within the AONB. Increased threat to buried archaeological remains, archaeological earthworks and historic field patterns on the edge of the AONB from development. Increased light pollution may blur the distinction between urban and rural areas and affect people's perception of a sense of long-established cultural heritage.

## 3. Infrastructure Development

### Past Trends

*Background* – The two railways lines which still exist in the AONB were built in the 19th century. No new roads have been created in the AONB in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However sections of the A303 have been converted to dual carriageway and a new junction created between the A36 and A303. In addition the original junction at Willoughby Hedge has been reengineered into the modern junction between the A350 and the A303. The A350 has been reconstructed in some places, for example, the East Knoyle and Semley Bypass. Finally a small section of dual carriageway has been created at Martin on the A354. All communities and settlements in the UK are supported by engineered civil infrastructure such as sewage works and electrical substations. The rural nature of the AONB means that the impact of this infrastructure is small scale and low key,

as indicated by the small number of examples recorded in the Historic Landscape Characterisation Project.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Road widening on the A303 has obscured the character of the former turnpike road in places. A new junction between the A36 and A303 near Wylde now dominates the surrounding of this village. However compared to areas to the east the road network of the AONB remains very rural in character and remarkably unaltered since the turnpike era.

### **Current Situation**

*Background* – Within the AONB the Highways Authority has responsibility for two trunk roads the A36 and A303; all other roads are the responsibility of the Local Highways Authorities, Dorset County Council, Hampshire County Council, Somerset County Council and Wiltshire Council. Local Highway Authorities have Permitted Development Rights to maintain or improve highways. Changes to the historic character of routeways may gradually occur through unsympathetic maintenance and improvement. Similarly other public service providers such as railway companies, gas supplier's, and electricity suppliers have similar Permitted Development Rights, though, these are restricted in AONB's. Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE) have been undertaking targeted undergrounding of overhead powerlines.

*Impact on the historic environment* – The only large scale infrastructure development work currently ongoing in the AONB is maintenance and improvements to the A303, as this is restricted to the existing footprint of the road additional impacts to the historic environment are low. Changes to the historic character of routeways may gradually occur through unsympathetic maintenance and improvement. The visual impact of overhead power lines on the historic landscape is reduced by undergrounding.

### **Potential Future Force for Change**

*Background* – The rural roads in the AONB are currently under capacity so it is unlikely that the AONB will see any major changes to road infrastructure to the AONB. Potential of adoption of a rural road protocol across the whole of AONB. Continuing programme of undergrounding of overhead cables.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Continuance of the current road maintenance regime may lead to an increasing erosion of the historic character of rural roads, alternatively the character of historic routeways could be improved through the implementation of a rural roads protocol. The visual impact of overhead power lines on the historic landscape continues to be reduced by undergrounding.

## **8. Forces for Change in Woods and Woodlands**

**Sources:** *The AONB Management Plan 2009-2014, the AONB Landscape Character Assessment, the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation, the AONB Economic Assessment and a landscape view of trees and woodlands details the key forces for change in woods and woodlands in the AONB.*

## 1. Woodland Industry



*Woodland working on the Rushmore Estate*

### Past Trends

*Background* – Decrease in coppice since 19<sup>th</sup> century and transformation to high forest. Removal of large areas of coppice and conversion to agricultural land, and large scale planting of new coniferous areas of woodland. Thirty years ago newly planted game cover woodland transformed some areas of the AONB.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Major changes in historic landscape character including the loss of woodland and the placing of archaeological monuments under the plough.

### Current Situation

*Background* – Broadleaves are increasingly unprofitable, and economic viability of woodland management has been difficult for years. However there are some valuable economic crops, for example at Longleat and Stourhead, and these areas have an excellent reputation for silviculture. Nationally there is a trend towards native tree planting, at least partly for their biodiversity and amenity value. Between 1990 and 2004 the area of woodland on farm holdings in the AONB increased by 29%.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Woodland, especially under positive management, can protect archaeological earthworks. Unfortunately the scale of this archaeological resource is unknown. Ancient woodlands are an important historical feature in their own right and positive management of these woodlands can protect their attributes, while new planting if reasonably sited, can reinforce inherited

landscape patterns. Conversely tree root systems can disturb buried remains, as can mechanised planting and harvesting.

### Potential Future Force for Change

*Background* – There is likely to be an increased uptake of the Woodland Grant Scheme and a new grant stream for conifer plantations in the South West. Importance of woodlands may increase as a renewable energy resource and a method of carbon capture linked to climate change mitigation. There is likely to be an increase in the amount of woodland.

*Impact on the historic environment* – Woodland in the future may be more intensively managed which may have a positive impact on known archaeological and historic features, but a negative impact on areas where such features survive but have not been identified. New woodland can reinforce the pattern of historic landscape if its location is carefully guided. There will be a future need to balance the sensitivity of the area to landscape change, against the long-term trend towards high forest and the need to make woodland more resilient to climate change.

### Key Data Sources

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Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



## Historic Environment Action Plans

[www.historiclandscape.co.uk](http://www.historiclandscape.co.uk)

This document forms part of a suite of documents which together comprise the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Historic Environment Action Plans, or HEAPs for short. The HEAPs provide a summary of the key characteristics of the historic environment of the AONB at a landscape scale, they then set out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of this special landscape and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance these special characteristics.



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