



Title of report: Malvern Hills National Landscape Management Plan

Decision maker: Cabinet member environment

Decision date: 27 May 2025

Report by: Principal Countryside Officer, Head of Environment, Climate Emergency and Waste Services

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To adopt the Malvern Hills National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) Management Plan 2025-2030

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) The Cabinet Member adopts the Malvern Hills National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) Management Plan for the period 2025 - 2030**
- b) The Cabinet Member recognises its duty under Section 245 (Protected Landscapes) of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) to 'seek to further' the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the National Landscapes.**

Alternative options

1. None – The Council has a joint legal duty as a ‘relevant authority’ under Section 89 (2 & 9) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) to have a current Management Plan for the Malvern Hills National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). This is a duty shared with the other local authorities within the area of the National Landscape.

Key considerations

2. Over the last 12 months the Malvern Hills National Landscape Team has acted on behalf of local authorities in the area to lead on the review of the current Management Plan for the Malvern Hills National Landscape (NL). Information on the review process and completed consultation processes, including a timetable and outputs can be found at [Management Plan Review 2024 – Malvern Hills National Landscape](#).
3. Following the review, the proposed new management plan for the period 2025-30 has been produced (see Appendix 1) and was approved by the Malvern Hills NL Joint Advisory Committee at its meeting on [15 November 2024](#).
4. The Council has an active duty as a ‘relevant authority’ under Section 245 (Protected Landscapes) of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) to ‘seek to further’ the purposes of conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the NL when undertaking any function to, or so as to affect, land in the NL.
5. When ‘seeking to further the purposes’, the Council should consider the information contained in the Protected Landscape’s Management Plan. Management Plans describe the natural beauty, special qualities and key characteristics of and targets and objectives for the designation. The council should make all efforts to understand The Malvern Hills NL Management Plan 2025-2030 and relate its functions to it.

Community impact

6. A primary purpose of the National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) defines ‘natural beauty’ as ‘The natural beauty of AONBs encompasses everything – ‘natural’ and human – that makes an area distinctive: geology, climate, soil, plants, animals, communities, archaeology, buildings, the people who live in it, past and present, and the perceptions of those who visit it.’ This management plan supports this designation and ethos helping ensure the quality of life for residents in the National Landscape the satisfaction of visitors, and the enhanced and sustainable economics of the area.

Environmental Impact

7. The Management Plan directly supports the Council environmental objectives and declared Climate Change & Ecological Emergency and directly links to countywide strategies such as Local Nature Recovery and the emerging new Herefordshire Tree, Hedgerow & Woodland Strategy.
8. The Management Plan embraces ‘Net Zero’ as a core consideration and supports initiatives including sustainable travel, air quality, sustainable energy and building design, carbon sequestration whilst ensuring the purpose of the National Landscape designation is upheld.

Equality duty

9. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
10. The Management Plan has been developed and written with full regard and to further the Council's duty in respect of Equality

Resource implications

11. Adoption of the Malvern Hills National Landscape Management Plan does not directly create any requirement for new or additional resources on the Council.
12. The Council's commitment to the Malvern Hills National Landscape Partnership is already approved and accommodated within existing budget considerations.
13. Any additional resources to assist in the delivery of the Management Plan and the Council's statutory duty will be managed on a case by case basis as part of the normal financial and budgetary processes within the Council and with relevant oversight and approvals being secured.

Legal implications

14. The joint legal duty for the Council (and the other constituent local authorities within the NL) to produce and update a management plan in relation to a NL has been considered in this report. The management plan was considered and approved by the joint advisory committee.

Risk management

15. There are no risks associated with the formal adoption of the Malvern Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030.
16. If the Malvern Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030 is not adopted the Council would be in breach of its statutory duties; with potential for legal action, cross compliance loss of other Government funding and a risk to the Council's public and professional reputation.

Consultees

17. The Management Plan has been through a range of consultation processes that includes:
18. Partnership members and constituent Local Authorities

- a) Key services and teams within constituent Local Authorities
- b) Statutory agencies and organisations.
- c) Parish & Town Councils
- d) Third Sector partners, community groups, landowners and specialist interest groups
- e) Wider public and local residents
- f) Malvern Hills NL Joint Advisory Committee

19. In total over 300 people or groups were directly consulted with a wider public consultation open to all residents in the National Landscape.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Malvern Hills National Landscape (AONB) Management Plan 2025-2030 – adoption draft

Background papers

- None Identified

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published		
Governance	John Coleman	Date 13/02/2025
Finance	Karen Morris	Date 03/03/2025
	Judith Tranmer	Date 03/03/2025
Legal	Sean O'Connor	Date 14/02/2025
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 11/02/2025
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 12/02/2025
Procurement	Claire Powell	Date 15/02/2025
Risk	Jessica Karla	Date 03/03/2025
Approved by	Ross Cook	Date 19/03/2025

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.