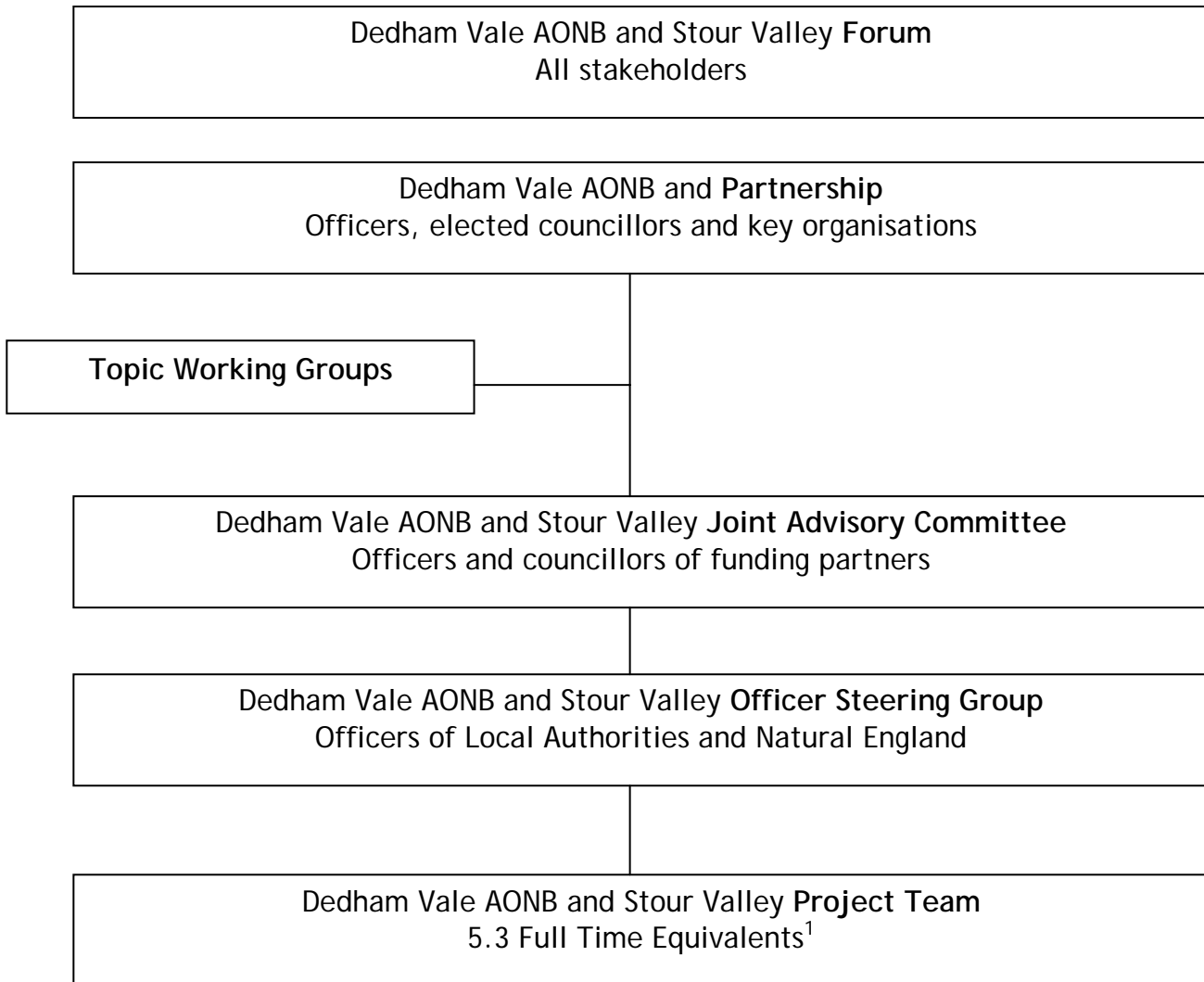




**Dedham Vale AONB
(Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
and Stour Valley partner guidelines**

July 2009

The structure



¹ As at 1 July 09

Acting AONB Manager: Simon Amstutz 1.0 FTE
Operations Manager: Paula Booth 1.0 FTE
Landscape and Biodiversity Officer: Neil Catchpole 1.0 FTE
Transport and Tourism Officer: Elaine Bryce 0.6 FTE
Community Officer: Emma Black 0.5 FTE
Communications Officer: Cathy Smith 0.5 FTE
Support Officer: Jasmin Hicks 0.5 FTE
Ranger: Jem Adams 0.2 FTE

Forum

Key purpose

A valley wide forum to champion the environmental and cultural quality of the Stour Valley. Involvement in the management strategy process.

What is expected of Forum members?

1. To champion the area
2. To contribute to the development, review and monitoring of the Management Plan
3. To be actively involved

Invitees will include:

- Landowners
- Land managers
- Suffolk Preservation Society
- Local Amenity Societies e.g. Dedham Vale Society, Nayland with Wissington
- Conservation Society, Colne/Stour Countryside Association
- River Stour Trust
- River Stour Boating
- Parish Councils
- English Heritage
- Forestry Commission
- Suffolk Wildlife Trust
- Essex Wildlife Trust
- Farming and Wildlife Advisory Groups
- Ramblers Association and other recreation user groups e.g. British Horse Society
- Suffolk Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)
- Rural Community Council for Essex
- East of England Tourism
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Anglers associations
- Canoe groups
- Essex and Suffolk Community Rail Partnership
- Other groups/individuals as appropriate

Frequency and timing

One conference type event per year. There will also be regular communications and other opportunities to become involved

Chairing

There would not be a need for a formal chair, but speakers and facilitators may be used.

Voting

The emphasis will be on participation and active involvement of partnership members. It is unlikely that voting on anything would be required as this is not a formally constituted body.

Partnership

Key Purpose

To deliver actions of the management plan and champion the environmental quality of the AONB and Stour Valley. The Partnership would also guide the work of, and decide upon the need for, topic related working groups.

What is expected of Partnership members?

All members of the Partnership are there to represent the best for the whole valley and therefore may well have to operate apart from their own organisation. Members will be expected to promote the objectives of the Partnership and the Project within their own organisations and be active in implementing delivery of the Management Plan.

N.B. the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project is not the operational arm of the Partnership but is a specific unit of the local authorities, which works solely in the valley.

The Partnership will not be run as a local authority committee. All members are encouraged to bring forward items for the agenda. (The secretariat will be with the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project). There will be occasions, particularly on major issues, when the Partnership may wish to take a collective position or response independent of its constituent organisations.

Membership

- 9 from Officer Steering Group (plus other members of the Project team as appropriate)
- 13 Elected councillors from funding local authorities
- 1 NFU representative
- 1 CLA representative
- 1 Environment Agency representative
- 2 Natural England representatives
- 1 CPRE representative
- 1 National Trust representative
- 1 representative of sub-regional economic partnership (or designated substitutes)

TOTAL =29

An option is retained to co-opt people to specific meetings.

Frequency and timing of meetings

The Partnership will meet twice per year but with the option of calling additional special meetings if necessary. The meetings will be in spring and autumn to fit in with budget cycles, financial years and local elections.

Chairing

Any member of the Partnership could chair. The chair will stand for 3 years, (unless they stood down earlier). The next election will be due at Spring 2012 Partnership meeting. The vice chair would be on a similar basis. The chair would also be required to attend meetings with officers to represent the Partnership.

Voting

The Partnership is encouraged to operate on a consensus basis, to choose options that are best for the Valley as a whole. However to elect the chair and other issues that go to a vote, each person on the Partnership will have a vote. The chair would have the casting vote if necessary.

Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)

Key Purpose

As representatives of the funding partners the JAC will scrutinise and support the staff unit including monitoring and setting the budget and Project business plan.

To have overall responsibility for producing, monitoring and reviewing the Management Plan, including the delivery plan. The JAC will intervene in the planning system as appropriate.

The JAC is responsible for the review of the Memorandum of Understanding.

What is expected of JAC members?

The requirements will be as for those on the Partnership. In addition, it is essential that:

- Officers and councillors ensure the necessary steps are taken to obtain funding commitments as set in the Memorandum of Understanding.
- Members liaise with other councillors and officers prior to, and between meetings regarding issues relating to the AONB and Stour Valley.
- Members communicate with other local authority senior officers and councillors about the budget process.

Membership

Officers and Elected Members of the funding partners.

- AONB Manager, Operations Manager, Natural England Officer
 - Suffolk CC - 1 officer, 2 councillors
 - Essex CC - 1 officer, 2 councillors
 - Babergh DC - 1 Officer, 2 councillors
 - Colchester DC - 1 officer, 2 councillors
 - Braintree DC - 1 officer, 2 councillors
 - St Eds BC - 1 officer, 2 councillors
 - Tendring 1 officer, 1 councillor
- TOTAL = 26

Frequency and timing of meetings

These meetings would be allied to the Partnership meetings, to avoid members having to set aside two separate dates. The JAC will meet at a slightly earlier time, with the Partnership meeting starting later. These meetings would be likely to be held in spring and autumn.

There is the option to call additional special meetings.

Chairing

If the Partnership chair is a local authority councillor they may also chair this group. However if the Partnership chair is not a local authority councillor then the JAC would select a chair.

The appointment of chair will run over the same period as for the Partnership, the next election is due at the Spring JAC 2012. A vice chair will also be appointed using the same criteria as for the chair.

Voting

All the Elected Members and the Officer of Natural England will have a vote.

Officer Steering Group

Key purpose

Deals with operational matters, in particular supports the AONB manager in the management of the Project and team. Supports the development of the business plan/work programme. Suggests agenda items for the JAC and Partnership meetings.

What is expected of OSG members?

To provide support for the AONB manager in terms of:

- Setting a budget for approval at JAC meeting.
- Providing management support for AONB manager (line management remains with the host authority).
- Develop and scrutinise the business plan and work programme of the Project team.

Membership

One officer from each of:

- Suffolk County Council
- Essex County Council
- Babergh District Council
- Braintree District Council
- Colchester Borough Council
- St Edmundsbury Borough Council
- Tendring District Council
- Natural England

And in addition:

- AONB Manager

TOTAL = 9

Frequency and timing of meetings

Usually twice per year around one month before the JAC and Partnership meetings. Timing to be flexible according to business. To fit into the budget cycles of the local authorities likely to be early autumn for early planning and deciding on future year, then early spring for indication of year's work and confirmation for future year.

Chairing

To be chaired by one of the officers (except for the AONB Manager) with the next to be selected at the spring 2011 meeting. Each chair will stand for 2 years, with the next one elected by expression of willingness, but ensuring that all authorities take a turn.

Voting

The group will operate largely on a consensus basis. If any item comes to a vote in an OSG meeting, there is one member one vote system in operation.

Working Groups

Key Purpose

To be set by the Partnership, on specific topics. To have an advisory role to the Partnership, and at their first meeting will further define their objectives. Each working group will report to the Partnership. Examples are the Dedham Vale Visitor Management Group and Sustainable Development Fund Panel.

Membership

Can be made up of any member of the Partnership, and call upon external expertise if necessary. Suggested that numbers for any one group do not exceed 10, for effective working.

Frequency and timing

This again will be subject to agreement of working group members, with guidance from the Partnership. It is crucial that the working groups are focussed and time-limited.

Chairing

Each group will nominate a chair at its first meeting