

Legislative background and the review process

All of the relevant local authorities are required to produce and review a Management Plan for the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). The Countryside Agency publications CA 23 '*Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans, A Guide*' (2001) and CA 221 '*Guidance for the review of AONB management plans*' (2006) are the principal published guidance documents to assist in this process and highlights the need for producing a partnership Strategy and Action Plan.

One major change since the production of the 2004-2009 Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Management Plan is the requirement under the European Directive 2001/42/EC for the review to also include a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This Directive applies to plans and programmes whose preparation began on or after 21 July 2004 and Natural England has confirmed that all AONB Management Plan reviews must undertake an SEA irrespective of the extent of the modifications.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) publication '*A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*' (2005) provides guidance on the completion of an SEA. Good practice in SEA recommends that the process for undertaking the assessment closely follows the process for the preparation of the plan itself, and should not be conducted as a separate activity.