

**Environmental Report**

for the

**Strategic Environmental Assessment**

and

**Sustainability Appraisal**

of the

**Kent Downs**  
**Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**  
**Management Plan 2020-2025**

**February 2021**

***Final***

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# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 *The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)***

The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was designated in 1968. It covers 878km<sup>2</sup> stretching from the Surrey/Greater London border to the Strait of Dover. Aside from a small area within the London Borough of Bromley, the Kent Downs AONB lies wholly within the county of Kent and covers some 23% of the total land area of the county.

The Kent Downs AONB is a nationally valued and protected landscape. The purpose of the AONB designation is primarily to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape. Social and economic well-being and the needs of farming and forestry should also be supported, but in a way that conserves and enhances the landscape.

The Kent Downs AONB is the eighth largest AONB in England and Wales, falling within twelve local authorities and lying partly or wholly within 137 parish council boundaries.

The Kent Downs AONB Unit works with and for the Local Authorities that have joint responsibility, through the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), to prepare and review the Management Plan.

The ultimate aim of the Management Plan is to achieve the primary purpose of the AONB designation: to conserve and enhance natural beauty of the landscape.

## **1.2 *Context***

This Environmental Report has been prepared in support of the review of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan.

The current Kent Downs AONB Management Plan was adopted in 2014 and, in accordance with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), the local authorities with at least part of their administrative area designated as AONB must review the management plan at least every five years.

The Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 has been prepared by the Kent Downs AONB Unit on behalf of the Joint Advisory Committee.

The new Management Plan sets out the principles for management of the area for the period 2020-2025 and falls under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (SEA Regulations, Statutory Instrument 2004, No 1633).

## **1.3 *Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal***

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a statutory assessment process for plans and programmes likely to have significant effects on the environment, whether positive or negative.

The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to integrate environmental, social and economic sustainability issues into the plan preparation process.

The two processes have been combined in this Environmental Report, which aims to assess the contribution that the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan makes to sustainable development.

Whereas the previous Management Plans contained 'Policies', in accordance with the advice of the Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee, these have been replaced by 'Principles' and it is these 'Principles' that have been subject to assessment against environmental and sustainability objectives.

Within this report 'SEA' will refer to the combined SA and SEA process.

#### **1.4. Outline of the Process**

There are five stages to the SEA:

*Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope.*

This was undertaken by a Scoping Report produced in September 2019 which outlined baseline information to set the context of the assessment, including the development of environmental and sustainability objectives, against which the Management Plan policies could be assessed.

The draft Scoping Report was subject to consultation during September/October 2019. The consultation included the statutory consultees Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency, though no comments were received from Natural England. In addition, the local authorities, through the Officer Members of the Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee were provided with the consultation draft Scoping Report and invited to comment if they wished to.

The comments received have guided the scope of the SEA and are incorporated into this Environmental Report and the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan as appropriate. The comments received and commentary can be found in Appendix 1.

*Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects.*

As the draft Kent Downs AONB Management Plan principles emerged through the plan review process, assessments against the environmental and sustainability objectives were undertaken.

The Kent Downs AONB Management Plan already puts the environment at the heart of the plan-making process and it was agreed during the SEA scoping consultation that alternatives to the draft Management Plan principles would only be developed and assessed if they were identified as resulting in partial or significant negative effects on the environmental and/or sustainability objectives.

The draft Management Plan principles have not been assessed as resulting in partial or significant negative effects on the environmental or sustainability objectives so no alternatives have been developed or assessed.

*Stage C: Preparing the Environmental Report.*

This Environmental Report documents the SEA methodology, including the outcomes of the assessment of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan, its

principles and supporting evidence, including any amendments to reflect changes to the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan following the public consultation (Stage D).

*Stage D: Consulting on draft plan and the Environmental Report.*

As detailed in the guidance, the statutory consultees must be consulted at the scoping stage (see Stage A) and, along with the public, must be consulted on the Environmental Report and the draft Kent Downs AONB Management Plan.

The Environmental Report was published for public consultation alongside the draft Kent Downs AONB Management Plan.

Consultation comments on the draft Kent Downs AONB Management Plan and Environmental Report have been taken into consideration in the development of the final Kent Downs AONB Management Plan and all necessary amendments have been included in this updated version of the Environmental Report (see section 1.5).

*Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan on the environment.*

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC) requires the effectiveness of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan and its impact on the environment to be monitored.

## **1.5 Post-consultation Updates**

Following the public consultation, the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan has been amended to reflect the consultation comments. Some restructuring of and changes to the chapters has taken place and some of the principles have been repositioned, rephrased, clarified and/or amalgamated. The total number of principles is now 108.

Appendix 5 presents all of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan principles, including the revised ones. These have been reassessed in accordance with the SEA method and the updated results are shown in Chapter 4.

## **2. Baseline Information**

### **2.1 *Plans & Policies***

To comply with the SEA Directive, information is provided regarding the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan's relationship with other relevant plans and programmes, in addition to showing how environmental protection objectives have been taken into account during the Management Plan review.

A preliminary review of plans and policies relevant to the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan was undertaken for the SEA/SA Scoping Report. Appendix 2 provides a more detailed review, incorporating key aims and relevant objectives of those plans and policies and how they relate to the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan.

### **2.2 *Environmental Baseline***

The SEA/SA Scoping Report identified potential sources of information and/or data that could be used as an evidence base for the environmental conditions in the Kent Downs AONB. These have been refined following the SEA/SA Scoping Report consultation and further discussion with Kent Downs AONB Unit Officers.

The revised environmental baseline (Appendix 3) presents realistic and usable data/information that have assisted in the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan review and/or could be used for ongoing monitoring of the environmental impact of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan principles.

### **2.3 *Statement of Key Issues***

The SEA/SA Scoping Report highlighted the key environmental issues and potential impacts for the Kent Downs AONB's landscape, social and economic components (Appendix 4).

The key environmental issues and potential impacts included in Appendix 4 have been expanded on and are incorporated into the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan following consideration at the stakeholder engagement workshops during the Plan preparation and subsequent consultation.

### 3. Strategic Environmental Assessment

The draft Kent Downs AONB Management Plan policies have been assessed against the environmental and sustainability objectives developed through the SEA process, as set out in the SEA/SA Scoping Report.

The environmental objectives are:

<b>E1</b>	To protect and enhance biodiversity (habitats)
<b>E2</b>	To protect and enhance fauna and flora (individual species)
<b>E3</b>	To ensure no adverse effect arises on human population (i.e. demographic balance)
<b>E4</b>	To safeguard human health
<b>E5</b>	To protect and enhance soil quality
<b>E6</b>	To protect water quality and quantity
<b>E7</b>	To protect air quality and maintain appropriate climatic conditions
<b>E8</b>	To protect and enhance cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage)
<b>E9</b>	To protect and enhance landscape
<b>E10</b>	To protect material assets including natural resources
<b>E11</b>	To avoid significant adverse effects between the above interrelationships

The sustainability objectives are:

<b>S1</b>	To create more vibrant, cohesive, safe and mixed communities
<b>S2</b>	To protect and enhance the quality and character of individual settlements and communities
<b>S3</b>	To protect the environment, people and properties from flood risk
<b>S4</b>	To reduce the need and desire to travel by car
<b>S5</b>	To promote healthy lifestyles
<b>S6</b>	To raise standards of education and training and promote employment skills
<b>S7</b>	To promote the development of an economy that supports social and environmental objectives
<b>S8</b>	To promote good governance
<b>S9</b>	To minimise the consumption of natural resources including fossil fuels, minerals, land take and water

For the Management Plan principles, the likely effect (positive or negative) on each of the environmental and sustainability objectives is assessed. The results are presented in a table of outcomes in Chapter 4; the possible outcomes used are:

<b>Significant positive effect</b>	<b>S++</b>
<b>Partial positive effect</b>	<b>S+</b>
<b>Neutral effect</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Partial negative effect</b>	<b>C-</b>
<b>Significant negative effect</b>	<b>C--</b>
<b>Effects uncertain</b>	<b>X</b>

## 4. Assessment Results

### 4.1 Assessment matrix

The assessment of the draft Kent Downs AONB Management Plan principles is summarised in the table below. The full Kent Downs AONB Management Plan policy wording is included in Appendix 5.

Kent Downs AONB Management Plan Principles		SEA Objectives																				
Special Characteristics & Qualities	Principle code	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	
Management of the AONB	MPP1	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	S+	S++	S++	N	S+	S++	S+	S++	S++	S++	
	MPP2	S++	S++	S++	S+	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S+	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	
	MPP3	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	S+	S++	S++	N	S+	S++	S+	S++	S++	S++	
	MPP4	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	S+	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	N	N	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	
	MPP5	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	N	S+	S++	S+	S++	S++	S++	
	MPP6	S++	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	S++	N	S+	S++	S+	S++	S++	S++	
Sustainable Development	SD1	S+	S+	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	N	N	S+	N	S+	S++	S++	
	SD2	S+	S+	N	N	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	S++	S+	S+	S+	N	S+	S++	S++	
	SD3	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	S+	S++	S++	S+	S+	N	N	S+	S++	S++	
	SD4	S++	S++	N	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	N	S+	N	S+	S+	
	SD5	S++	S+	S+	S++	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	S++	S+	S++	S++	N	N	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	
	SD6	N	N	N	S+	N	N	S+	N	S+	N	N	N	S++	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	N
	SD7	N	S+	N	S+	N	N	S+	N	S+	N	N	N	S++	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	N
	SD8	S++	S++	N	S+	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	S++	N	N	S+	N	N	S++	S++	
	SD9	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S++	S++	S++	N	N	S++	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	S++
	SD10	S+	S+	N	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S+	S+	S+	S++	S+	N	S+	N	S+	S+	S++	
	SD11	S++	S++	N	S+	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	S++	S++	N	S+	N	S++	S+	S++	
	SD12	S+	S+	N	N	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	S+	N	S++	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	N



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	SD13	S+	S+	N	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	
	SD14	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	N	S+	N	S++	S+	N	
Landform and Landscape Character	LLC1	S++	S++	N	S+	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	S++	S+	N	S+	S+	N	S++	S++	
	LLC2	N	N	N	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	N	S+	N	N	
	LLC3	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	N	N	S+	S+	S+	S++	S+	
	LLC4	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	S+	N	S+	S+	
	LLC5	S++	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S++	S+	N	N	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	N
	LLC6	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S+	S++	S+	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+
	LLC7	S++	S+	N	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S+
Biodiversity	BD1	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	N	S+	N	N	S+	S+	
	BD2	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	N	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	S+	
	BD3	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	N	N	N	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	
	BD4	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	N	N	S+	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	
	BD5	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	
	BD6	S++	S++	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	S+	N	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	S++	S+	S+	
	BD7	S++	S++	N	N	S+	S+	N	N	S++	S++	S+	N	N	S+	N	S+	N	S+	S++	S+	
	BD8	S++	S++	S+	S++	S+	N	N	N	S++	S++	S+	S++	S+	N	N	S++	S+	S++	S+	S+	
			S++	S++	N	N	S+	S+	S+	N	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	N
Farmed Landscape	FL1	N	N	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	N	N	S++	N	N	N	N	S+	N	S+	
	FL2	S++	S++	N	S+	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	S++	N	N	S+	N	S++	S++	S++	
	FL3	S+	S+	N	S+	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S+	N	S++	S+	N	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	
	FL4	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	S+	S++	S+	
	FL5	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S+	S++	S++	N	N	N	S++	S++	S++	S++	
	FL6	S++	S++	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	N	N	N	S++	S++	S++	S++	
	FL7	N	N	S+	S+	N	N	N	S++	S++	N	S+	N	S++	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	S+	
	FL8	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	S++	N	N	N	N	S+	S++	N	

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	FL9	S++	S++	N	S+	S++	S+	S+	N	S++	S+	S+	N	N	S+	N	N	S+	S+	S++	S++	
	FL10	S+	S+	S++	S+	N	N	N	S+	S+	S+	N	S++	N	N	N	S++	S++	S++	S++	S+	
Woodland and Trees	WT1	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	N	S+	S++	S++	S++	S+	N	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
	WT2	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	N	S+	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	N	N	N	S+	S+	S++	S++	S+	
	WT3	S++	S++	N	N	S+	N	N	S++	S++	S++	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S++	S+
	WT4	S+	S+	S+	N	S+	N	N	S+	S+	S++	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	S++	S+	S++	S+	S+
	WT5	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	N	N	S++	S++	S++	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S++	N
	WT6	S++	S++	N	S+	N	N	N	S+	S+	S++	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	N
	WT7	S++	S++	N	N	S+	N	S+	S+	S++	S++	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S++	S+
	WT8	S++	S++	S+	N	S+	N	N	S++	S++	S++	N	S+	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	S++	S+	S+
	WT9	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	S+	S+	S+	S++	N	S+	N	N	N	N	S+	S++	S++	S++	S++
	WT10	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	S+	N	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S++	N
	WT11	S++	S++	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Historic and Cultural and Scientific Heritage	HCH1	S+	S+	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	S++	N	N	S+	N	S++	S+	S+	
	HCH2	N	N	S+	N	N	N	N	S++	S++	S++	N	S+	S++	N	N	N	N	N	S++	N	
	HCH3	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S++	S++	N	N	S+	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	N	N
	HCH4	N	N	S+	N	N	N	N	S++	S++	S++	N	S+	S++	S+	N	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+
	HCH5	N	N	S+	N	N	N	N	S++	S+	S+	N	S++	S+	N	N	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	N
	HCH6	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S++	S++	S++	N	S+	S++	N	N	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	N
	HCH7	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S++	S+	S++	N	N	S++	N	N	N	S+	N	S+	S+	N
Heritage Coast	HC1	S++	S++	N	N	N	N	N	S++	S++	S++	N	N	N	S++	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	
	HC2	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	N	S+	S++	S++	S+	S+	S++	S++	S+	S+	S++	S+	S++	S++	S+	
	HC3	S++	S+	N	N	S+	N	S+	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	S++	S+	N	N	N	N	S++	S+	
	HC4	S++	S++	S+	N	S+	N	S+	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	S++	S+	
	HC5	S++	S++	N	N	N	N	N	S++	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	N	S+	N	N
	HC6	S++	S++	N	N	N	N	N	S++	S++	S++	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S++	N

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	HC7	S+	S+	S+	S++	N	N	N	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	N	N	S+	S++	N	N	S++	S+	
	HC8	S+	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	S++	N	N	S+	N	S++	S++	S+	
	HC9	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S++	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	N
	HC10	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	S++	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	N
Geology and Natural Resources	GNR1	S+	S+	N	N	S+	N	N	N	S++	S++	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S+
	GNR2	S+	S+	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	N
	GNR3	S+	S+	N	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	S+
	GNR4	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	S+	S+	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	N	N	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++
	GNR5	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	S++	N	S+	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S++
	GNR6	S++	S++	N	S+	N	S+	N	S+	S++	S++	N	N	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S++
	GNR7	S+	S+	S+	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	N	S+	N	S++	S++	S+	S+
	GNR8	S+	S+	N	N	S++	S+	N	N	S+	S++	S+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S+
	GNR9	S+	S+	N	S++	N	N	S++	N	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	S+	N	N	S+	S+	N
Vibrant Communities	VC1	S+	S+	S++	S+	N	N	N	S+	S+	S+	N	S++	S++	N	N	S+	S+	S++	S+	S+	
	VC2	S+	S+	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	N	N	S+	N	S+	S++	S+	
	VC3	S+	S+	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	S+	N	N	S+	S++	S++	
	VC4	S+	S+	S++	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S+	S+	S++	S++	N	S++	S+	S++	S++	S++	S++	S++
	VC5	S+	S+	S++	S+	N	N	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	N	S+	N	S++	S++	S++	S++	S+
	VC6	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S+	S+	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	S++
	VC7	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S+	N	S+	S+	S+	S++	S++	S++	S++
	VC8	N	N	S+	N	N	N	N	S++	S++	S+	N	S++	S++	N	N	N	N	N	N	S++	N
	VC9	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S+	N	N	N	S+	S+	N	N	N	S+	S+	N	N	N
	VC10	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	N	S+	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	N	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	N
	VC11	N	N	S++	S++	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S++	S++	N	N	S++	N	S++	S+	N

Kent Downs AONB Management Plan Principles		SEA Objectives																			
Special Characteristics & Qualities	Principle code	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9
Access, Enjoyment and Understanding	AEU1	N	N	S+	S++	N	N	N	N	S+	N	N	S++	S+	N	S+	S++	S+	N	S+	S+
	AEU2	N	N	S++	S++	N	N	S+	N	N	S+	N	S++	S++	N	S++	S++	N	S+	N	S+
	AEU3	N	N	S+	S++	N	N	N	S+	S+	N	N	S+	S+	N	N	S+	N	N	N	N
	AEU4	S+	S+	S+	S++	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	S+	N	N	S++	N	N	N	S+
	AEU5	S+	S+	S+	S+	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	N	S+	S++	N	N	S+	N	N	S+	N
	AEU6	S+	S+	N	S+	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	N	S+	S++	N	N	S+	N	N	S+	N
	AEU7	N	N	S++	S++	N	N	N	N	S+	N	N	S++	S++	N	S++	S++	N	N	S+	S+
	AEU8	S+	S+	S++	S++	N	N	N	S+	S++	S+	N	S++	S++	N	S+	S++	S+	N	S+	S+
	AEU9	N	N	S++	S++	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S++	N	N	N	S++	S++	N	N	N
	AEU10	N	N	N	S+	N	N	N	S+	N	N	N	N	S+	N	N	S++	N	N	N	S+
	AEU11	N	N	S+	S+	N	N	S+	N	N	S+	N	S+	S+	N	S++	S++	N	S+	N	S++
	AEU12	N	N	S+	S+	N	N	S+	N	S++	N	N	S++	S++	N	S++	S++	N	S+	S+	S++
	AEU13	N	N	N	N	S+	S+	S+	S+	S++	S+	S+	N	S++	N	S++	S+	S+	N	S+	S+
	AEU14	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S++	N	N	S+

## **4.2 Assessment commentary**

The assessment of all 108 Kent Downs AONB Management Plan principles indicates that none of the principles will lead to partial or significant negative effects on the environmental or sustainability objectives. As such, it has not been necessary to develop and assess alternatives to the principles.

Overall, the results show that 61% of the principles are likely to result in partial or significant positive effects on the environmental and sustainability criteria, with the remaining 39% of the principles likely to be neutral in their impact on the assessment criteria. The reassessment following the revision of principles following consultation has not led to any significant changes (<1% change).

When reviewing the results for the environmental and sustainability criteria separately, a greater proportion of the principles are likely to lead to partial or significant positive effects on the environmental criteria than the sustainability criteria (67% and 53% respectively).

It is concluded that the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan will not only avoid having a detrimental effect on the environmental and sustainability criteria but will contribute to achieving key environmental and sustainability aims.

## **5. Monitoring & Evaluation**

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive requires the effectiveness of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan and its impact on the environment to be monitored. The environmental baseline in the Scoping Report presented potential data sources for relevant information and/or data that could inform the current condition of the AONB.

The environmental baseline has been refined and updated (Appendix 3) so that it can be used to assist in the ongoing monitoring of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan and monitor any impact that the Management Plan and its principles may have on the environment.

The suggested environmental baseline datasets can only provide an indication of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan's effectiveness; much of the data will be influenced by external forces over which the Kent Downs AONB has little or no control, such as the economy, climate change and EU agricultural policy and Brexit.

The availability of data and the resources to collect them are lacking in some areas, but the Kent Downs AONB Unit is working to develop and improve the monitoring regime, based on the information provided in Appendix 3, so that it encompasses consistent, robust datasets that can be used to monitor change within the protected landscape over time.

## **6. Technical Review & Conclusions**

The Kent Downs AONB Management Plan aims to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, taking into account social and economic needs. To this end the Management Plan principles encompass many of the environmental and sustainability objectives against which those policies have been assessed for this SEA.

As such, the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan principles have been assessed as likely to result in partial or significant positive effects on many of the environmental and sustainability criteria.