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24th June 2019

Notice of meeting:

Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Monday, 1st July, 2019 at 2.00 pm

The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford.

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Election of Chair.	
2.	Appointment of Vice-Chair.	
3.	New Members / Introductions.	
4.	Apologies for Absence.	
5.	Declarations of Interest.	
6.	Public Question Time.	
7.	To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.	1 - 10
8.	AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 Review.	11 - 12
8.1.	Revised Programme.	13 - 14
8.2.	Pre-consultation Draft (attached at the end of the agenda due to the size of the document).	
9.	Annual Report 2018/19.	15 - 18
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18.	Date of next meetings: 2.00pm at Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 4th November 2019. • Monday 2nd March 2020. 	
19.	Appendix (6.b.) pre-consultation Draft AONB Management Plan.	135 - 248

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

Local Authority Members with Voting Powers

Gloucestershire:

T. Hale

P. Molyneux

Herefordshire:

Vacancy – To be confirmed

Vacancy – To be confirmed

Vacancy – To be confirmed

Vacancy – To be confirmed

Monmouthshire:

L. Jones

D. Dovey

M. Lane

A.E. Webb

Forest of Dean:

D. Wheeler

C. McFarling

Town / Parish Community Councils with Voting Powers

C. Evers – Gloucestershire Association of Parish / Town Councils

R. Gething – Herefordshire Association Local Councils

Councillor G. Powell – One Voice Wales

Co-opted Members with Voting Powers

Dr. G. Peterken – Voluntary Conservation Sector in Gloucestershire

B. Nash - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire

A. Thomas - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire

R. Goodwin – Country Land and Business Association

M. Price – National Farmers Union

Co-opted Members without Voting Powers

L. Taylor – The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales

C. Barron – Wye Valley Society

R. Hesketh – River Wye Preservation Trust

A. Lee – Recreation Sector

D. Broadbent – Local Tourism Sector

A. Nixon – Local Wildlife Trusts

D. Price – National Farmers Union Wales

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Welsh Language

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public through the medium of Welsh or English. We respectfully ask that you provide us with adequate notice to accommodate your needs.

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Outcomes we are working towards

Nobody Is Left Behind

- Older people are able to live their good life
- People have access to appropriate and affordable housing
- People have good access and mobility

People Are Confident, Capable and Involved

- People's lives are not affected by alcohol and drug misuse
- Families are supported
- People feel safe

Our County Thrives

- Business and enterprise
- People have access to practical and flexible learning
- People protect and enhance the environment

Our priorities

- Schools
- Protection of vulnerable people
- Supporting Business and Job Creation
- Maintaining locally accessible services

Our Values

- **Openness:** we aspire to be open and honest to develop trusting relationships.
- **Fairness:** we aspire to provide fair choice, opportunities and experiences and become an organisation built on mutual respect.
- **Flexibility:** we aspire to be flexible in our thinking and action to become an effective and efficient organisation.
- **Teamwork:** we aspire to work together to share our successes and failures by building on our strengths and supporting one another to achieve our goals.

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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford. on Monday, 4th March, 2019 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor P. Cutter (Chair) (Herefordshire Council)

Elected Members (with voting powers)

Monmouthshire County Council

County Councillors: D. Dovey, M. Lane and A. Webb

Gloucestershire County Council

County Councillor P. Molyneux

Forest of Dean District Council

Councillors: G. Davies and B. Hogan

Town / Parish Community Councils with voting powers

GAPTC – Mr. C. Evers

HALC – Mr. R. Gething

One Voice Wales – Councillor G. Powell

Co-opted Members (with voting powers)

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire – Mr. A. Thomas

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire – Mr. B. Nash

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Gloucestershire – Dr. G. Peterken

National Farmers Union – Mr. M. Price

Co-opted Members (without voting powers)

Wye Valley Society – Mrs. V. Morgan

Recreation Sector – Mr. A. Lee

Local Wildlife Trusts – Mr. A. Nixon

River Wye Preservation Trust – Mr. R. Hesketh

Technical Advice Officers:

Wye Valley AONB Manager – Mr. A. Blake

Monmouthshire County Council – Mr. M. Lewis

Monmouthshire County Council – Mr. R. Williams

Gloucestershire County Council - Mr. R. Niblett

APOLOGIES:

Councillors T. Hale, J. Hardwick and E. Swinglehurst.

Mr. D. Price, Mr. C. Barron and Ms. H. McDowell

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford. on Monday, 4th March, 2019 at 2.00 pm

1. Introductions

On behalf of the Joint Advisory Committee, the Chair welcomed Mr. M. Price, representing the National Farmers Union, to the meeting. The Chair also welcomed Mrs. V. Morgan to the meeting, as she was representing the Wye Valley Society in place of Mr. C. Barron, who was unable to attend today's meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made by the Joint Advisory Committee members.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee meeting dated 5th November 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

4. Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present.

5. Live Streaming of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee Meetings

We received a report regarding filming and broadcasting Joint Advisory Committee meetings.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) traditionally holds its meetings in the Forest of Dean District Council Chamber.
- The Forest of Dean District Council has the facility to film, record and webcast meetings held in the Council Chamber.
- The constituent local authorities of the Wye Valley AONB all have the facility to record and broadcast meetings from their respective Council Chambers.
- Some National Park Authorities also film, record and broadcast their meetings.
- However, no other AONB Partnership or Joint Advisory Committee is known to film, record or broadcast their meetings.
- The low response to the public question time and low public attendance at Joint Advisory Committee meetings would indicate that there is currently not much demand for viewing these meetings.

We resolved that the Joint Advisory Committee does not pursue the opportunity to film and broadcast its meetings at this time.

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6. AONB Unit 2019/20 Work Programme

We received a report outlining the proposed business plan for the AONB Unit during the forthcoming financial year.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The table in the report sets out the proposed business plan for the AONB Unit in the form of the Work Programme 2019 / 2020.
- During the year it is anticipated that the AONB Unit will reduce from 5.6 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff to 4.4 FTE staff and the Work Programme is built to accommodate this 20% decrease in capacity.
- Priorities include progressing the review for the AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 and continuing a range of existing activities and projects while retaining enough flexibility to pursue new funding opportunities and develop new initiatives.
- The budgets in the Work Programme have been approved by the AONB Steering Group and submitted to DEFRA and Natural Resources Wales (NRW).
- This is the final year of a four year core funding settlement with DEFRA and the second year of a three year funding agreement with NRW.
- It will be the second year of Welsh Government's confirmed allocation of £55,000 for the Sustainable Development Fund.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), in the sum of £55,000, is a delegated grant that is administered by the Wye Valley AONB. £52,329 SDF grant has been allocated with £2,671 remaining to be spent in the 2018/19 financial year.
- In response to a question raised regarding woodlands work, it was noted that Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer, has been liaising with Natural England in respect of Highbury Woods SSSI & National Nature Reserve management with AONB volunteers. The AONB Manager is liaising with Gwent Wildlife Trust regarding Piercefield Wood SSSI in respect of the management to be agreed for the site.

We resolved to endorse the AONB Unit Work Programme for 2019 / 2020.

7. Sustainable Development Fund Update

We received a report regarding the revised membership of the Assessment Panel for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF).

In doing so, the following information was noted:

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- The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) is a delegated grant from Welsh Government administered by the Wye Valley AONB Partnership and confirmed for 2019/20 at £55,000.
- The SDF Assessment Panel is established as a sub-group of the Joint Advisory Committee and consists of public, private and voluntary sector representatives with two appointees from each sector to ensure a balance across social, community, economic and environmental interests.
- At the previous Joint Advisory Committee meeting it was agreed to refresh the membership and appointees to the Panel. The revised Panel membership is as follows:

Public Sector representatives:

Councillor Mrs Ann Webb, Monmouthshire County Council (Joint Advisory Committee)

Councillor Gethyn Davies, Forest of Dean District Council (Joint Advisory Committee)

Private Sector representatives:

David Price, NFU Wales (Joint Advisory Committee)

Antony Smith, Wyastone Estates Ltd.

Voluntary Sector representatives:

Ashley Thomas: Monmouthshire Voluntary Conservation Sector representative (Joint Advisory Committee)

To be confirmed – Herefordshire Community Foundation

Local Authority officer:

Colette Bosley: Principal Green Infrastructure & Landscape Officer, Monmouthshire County Council

Statutory Agency officer:

Sarah Coakham, Partnerships Officer, Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

Wye Valley AONB officers in attendance:

Andrew Blake, AONB Manager

Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer

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Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford. on Monday, 4th March, 2019 at 2.00 pm

- The current allocation of SDF grants has £2,671 remaining to be allocated in 2018/19.

We resolved to endorse the new membership of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Assessment Panel.

8. Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales

We received a report in which the Joint Advisory Committee was provided with an update in respect of the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales and the Minister's interest in greater parity between AONBs and National Parks.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Officers from the Welsh AONBs, the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) met with the Welsh Government Minister, Hannah Blythyn AM, to discuss how to provide greater parity for AONBs with National Parks in Wales.
- In December 2018 the Welsh AONB lead officers, NAAONB and NRW submitted detailed proposals to the Minister on the parity issue.
- Following a Welsh Government reshuffle, Hannah Blythyn retains the responsibility for AONBs with National Parks although she has moved from being the Minister for Environment to Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government.
- Welsh Government officers are currently considering the submitted proposals on how to provide greater parity for AONBs with National Parks in Wales. A subsequent meeting is expected shortly.

Having received the report, it was noted that as devolution in Wales increases, there is the on-going challenge to manage the Wye Valley AONB as a single entity via two separate funding systems, as the AONB straddles two countries.

We noted the report.

9. Review of Designated Landscapes in England

We received a report in which the Joint Advisory Committee was provided with an update in respect of the Review of Designated Landscapes in England.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The Review of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) in England was launched by Environment Secretary Michael Gove MP last year with a small advisory panel chaired by Julian Glover.
- The 'Landscapes Review call for evidence' closed in December 2018.

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- A small Joint Advisory Committee task group assisted the AONB Manager in preparing a response on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.
- Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer, provided evidence to a meeting on Volunteering in AONBs and National Parks with Julian Glover.
- Sarah Mukherjee, one of the Review advisory panel members, recently visited the Wye Valley AONB.
- The AONB Manager has provided advice to DEFRA officials on the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales and will attend a meeting with Julian Glover and the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) in April 2019.
- The Review Panel is expected to present its report to the Minister in the autumn of 2019.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The Joint Advisory Committee had received information from Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) which had called for better access to English landscapes. It had been identified that more than a third of people could not easily enjoy England's most beautiful countryside.
- However, it was considered that the general outcomes contained some flaws with some assumptions having been made that could be questioned.
- It raised questions regarding what our priorities should be as, unlike National Parks, it is not a purpose of AONB designation to 'Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public' and adequate resources are not available to do this.
- In response to a question raised regarding the Forest of Dean, it was noted that this area was on a list to be considered for AONB designation.
- The remit of the Review is to look at the general designation process and not specific localities. However, there is a need to revise and speed up the process.
- It was noted that there is a need to provide areas for the public to access the countryside and explore the natural environment. However, local authorities are under pressure to build more houses and better infrastructure.
- It was noted that Sarah Mukherjee and Dame Fiona Reynolds had visited the the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean respectively and the latter had enquired about the status of the Dean Forest and Wye Valley National Forest Park.

We noted the report.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford. on Monday, 4th March, 2019 at 2.00 pm

We considered a report regarding the current situation with the Wye Valley River Festival 2020.

In doing so the following information was noted:

- Grant applications to Arts Council of Wales and Arts Council England for the Research and Development phase of the Wye Valley River Festival 2020 have been unsuccessful.
- An initial Creative Camp one-day workshop for the Wye Valley River Festival 2020 attracted nearly 40 people and generated many good ideas around the theme of 'Time'.
- The final report is awaited on a study of governance options, audience demographics and funding models to inform a new five year business plan to take the Wye Valley River Festival forward.
- Further opportunities and funding bids are being investigated.

We noted the report.

11. National Association for AONBs

We received a report regarding activity through the national Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB).

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The AONB Manager attended the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) Chairman's Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 29th November 2018 which focused on "The Designated Landscapes Review in England".
- The AONB Development Officer and the AONB Community Links Officer are both participating in the professional training 'Taking the Lead' programme as part of the Future Landscapes Programme. The AONB Manager sits on the steering group for the Future Landscapes Programme, which is supported by Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).
- The NAAONB has proposed an amendment to the Agriculture Bill and provided DEFRA with proposals for a post Brexit Environmental Land Management Scheme.
- The annual National AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference will take place in Colchester on 9th -11th July 2019.

We noted the report.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford. on Monday, 4th March, 2019 at 2.00 pm

12. Partner and AONB Unit Progress Reports and Updates

We received a report of the activity of the AONB Unit and partners, relating to:

- Ecosystem Services checklist.
- Fixed Point Photography.
- Herefordshire Meadows Facilitation Group.
- Lower Wye Catchments NFM & GI Project.
- Ross riverside.
- West Midlands Deer Priority Area.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The beavers that had been introduced to an enclosure near Lydbrook were being re-captured as a precautionary measure to check for parasites that can affect dogs and other wildlife. When captured, the beavers will be replaced with beavers from Devon, which are known not to carry the parasites.
- Fixed point photography - The first 20 sites were photographed in October 2018 and the next 21 will be photographed in May 2019. As a catalogue of photos is built up over time, this will provide a valuable insight into the changing landscape.
- Ash dieback has been located within the AONB. The subsequent consequences will be dealt with as it sets in.
- The Forestry Commission is stepping up its management of wild boar in order to maintain manageable levels within the area.
- The Herefordshire Meadows report highlighted the various groups working within the AONB which conserve and enhance grassland management. Dr. George Peterken was thanked for the work that he had undertaken in respect of the Parish Grassland Project and promoting meadow conservation.
- The pine marten project is progressing well. A detailed feasibility study and social science study has been completed, showing the area has abundant suitable habitat and strong local community support. Both are available on the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust website. It has not yet been formally announced that the project is going ahead until sufficient funding is available. However, the minimum budget is close to being raised and it is hoped that an announcement will be made in the coming months. If this goes ahead this year it would involve the release of 20 radio-collared pine martens in September 2019. Two dedicated staff members would help monitor the species and their impacts, and be on hand

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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to help with any enquiries or assistance. The project is a collaboration between Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Forestry Commission, Vincent Wildlife Trust, and the Woodland Trust.

We noted the report.

13. Dates of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee meetings for 2019/20

Future meetings of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee will be held at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford, on the following dates:

1st July 2019.

4th November 2019.

2nd March 2020.

The Chair thanked the Committee for its interest in the work being undertaken by the Wye Valley AONB Unit and also thanked officers for their support.

On behalf of the Joint Advisory Committee, the Vice-Chair thanked the Chair for his excellent chairmanship over the year and previous years.

It was noted that David Lovelace had been involved in a serious accident and was currently in hospital. On behalf of the Joint Advisory Committee the Chair expressed his good wishes for a speedy recovery.

The meeting ended at 3.17 pm.

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
1st July 2019

AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

Purpose

To present the pre-consultation draft Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 and the revised programme for the preparation and publication of the Management Plan.

Recommendation

That the JAC endorses the 10 week public consultation period for the draft Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025.

Key Issues

- The JAC previously endorsed a balanced and proportionate review of the current Wye Valley AONB Management Plan (2015-2020).
- The pre-consultation draft Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 is appended.
- Members can provide comments to the AONB Manager on this pre-consultation draft before Thursday 18th July.
- The Management Plan review programme is appended which proposes a 10 week public consultation period commencing in late July for the draft Wye Valley AONB Management Plan.
- The Scoping for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessments (HRA) will run concurrently with the public consultation.

Reasons

The 5 year statutory review of the AONB Management Plan must be complete by the end of 2020. Each local authority will approve and adopt the finalised Plan under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. The JAC previously determined that the existing Management Plan remains a sound foundation on which to base the next Plan. A proportionate and balanced review which modifies, updates and simplifies the existing Plan, but retains tried and tested policies and content, was seen as appropriate.

Implications

The pre-consultation draft Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 is attached. This has undergone a simple modification and updating of the existing Plan, retaining the tried and tested structure and policies where appropriate. Members and local authority partners have the opportunity to review and comment on this pre-consultation draft before Thursday 18th

July. Following any amendments, the Plan will then be published as the Public Consultation Draft.

The review programme for the Management Plan is attached. The next stage will be a 10 week public consultation period, from late July to early October. The Scoping reports for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessments (HRA) will run concurrently with the public consultation. The resulting comments will be assessed and assimilated into the revised draft AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 and presented to the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) in March 2020 for endorsement.

Background

The CRoW Act 2000 (Sections 89 and 90) require local authorities to publish AONB Management Plans, at not more than five year intervals, which formulate their policy for the management of their AONB and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it. The current Management Plan 2015-2020 is available on the AONB website <http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/index.php/about-us/management-and-guidance/management-plan-2015-2020/> .

Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025

Stages and outline timetable for review process

Update June 2019

TASK	WHO	EXPECTED TIMETABLE	Progress
FORMALITIES AND NOTIFICATION			
Authorisation from local authorities to undertake review on their behalf [CRoW s89(9)]	AONB Unit	June 18	✓
Propose process and timetable of review	JAC	July 18	✓
Notify Natural England & NRW [CRoW s90(1a)]. Other stakeholders – identify any beyond Partnership.	AONB Unit	Oct 18	✓
Announce requirement for SEA, HRA & SA	Partnership	Oct 18	✓
SCOPING			
Evaluation workshop on current Plan.	Partnership	July 18	✓
Discussion of Plan review priorities among AONB Team, TOWP, JAC, Partnership and with key partners.	Partnership	June-Sept 18	✓
Analyse key stakeholders in Management Plan review process	AONB Team	June-Aug 18	✓
Report on impact and strengths/weaknesses of Plan.	AONB Team [TOWP/JAC]	June-Oct 18 [Oct/Nov ?]	✓
Gather information relating to new evidence/ issues	AONB Team	June-Oct 18	✓
List and assess relevance of new strategies/ plans in England & Wales	AONB Team	June 19	□
Collate community views on issues from existing sources	AONB Team	June-Oct 18	✓
Write scoping report for SEA & HRA, setting context and objectives, establishing baseline evidence and indicators (stage A)	AONB Team	June- July 19	□
Consult on scoping report for SEA & HRA (6 weeks)	With statutory agencies	July 19	□
Publish update to State of the AONB report	AONB Team	July 19	□
REVIEW			
Assess individual sections of plan and agree main areas for revisions and structure [CRoW s89(10a)].	AONB Team/ Partnership	June-July 18	✓
Undertake specific targeted consultations /participatory workshops with relevant groups	Partnership & wider	July-Oct 18	✓
Reassess main issues, aims and objectives. Redraft, and discuss with relevant groups.	Partnership	Autumn 18	✓
Work on topic sections with relevant groups: WV&FoD Tourism Association, Area Statement group, – detailed issues, policies and updated actions.	Partnership	Autumn 18 – Spring 19	✓
Collate new draft plan	AONB Team	Spring 19	✓
Approve Draft for Consultation	JAC	July 19	□
Assess effects of objectives, policies & actions and for	AONB Team	September	

SEA and develop alternatives. (Stage B) Element of independent review required, inc LA Scrutiny		19	
Prepare Environmental Report for SEA & HRA (Stage C) and non-technical summary.		Autumn 19	
CONSULTATION & APPROVAL OF FULL PLAN			
Run public consultation on new draft plan for 10 week period.	AONB Team/ Partnership	July – Oct 19	□
Run public consultation on SEA report (Stage D) for 6 week period.	AONB Team/ Partnership	Nov–Dec 19	
Consider comments from consultation and amend plan	AONB Team	Autumn / Winter 19	
Report on consultation and suggested amendments [CRoW s89(10)]	Partnership	January 20	
Send to Natural England & NRW/WG [CRoW s90(1b)] for formal observations	AONB Team	January 20	
Consider comments from formal observations and amend plan [CRoW s90(1c)]	AONB Team	February 20	
JAC Endorsement of Adoption Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025	TOWP/JAC	March 20	
Publish Statement on how SEA & HRA taken into account and changes.	AONB Team	March 20	
Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 formally approved by local authorities	Local authorities	April 20	
Implement and monitor Plan and its effects (SEA Stage E).	Partnership	April 20+	
Design & publication of Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025	AONB Team	May 20	
Send approved Plan to Secretary of State	AONB Team	June 20	

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
1st July 2019

ANNUAL REPORT

Purpose

To present the annual reports for 2018/19 on the achievements of the Wye Valley AONB Unit and the contracted Planning consultants for the AONB Unit.

Recommendations

That the JAC welcome the Annual Reports of AONB achievements for 2018/19

Key Issues

- The 2018/19 Annual Report on the Work Programme for the AONB Unit is appended, along with a summary financial report below.
- High standards of achievement were maintained by the AONB Unit and staffing was augmented with the Lower Wye Catchment NFM&GI Project Officer.
- The AONB Unit has levered in over £10 for every £1 of local authority contribution during 2018/19.
- Worcestershire County Council Planning department continued to provide strategic planning advice to the AONB Unit on development issues, preparing appropriate responses where necessary. The annual report for the contracted work is appended.
- The AONB Manager, on behalf of the AONB Partnership, has made a limited number of comments on Planning Applications, including on 2 adjacent to the AONB, and has been involved in more pre-application enquiries and Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Reasons

The Work Programme Report for the AONB Unit 2018/19 lists the achievements of the AONB Unit and is the basis of the AONB Partnership Annual Report. The Work Programme Report has been presented to DEFRA and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) as part of the annual grant claims to the two national government funding partners.

The continuing partnership with the Malvern Hills AONB over the use of Worcestershire County Council Planning Department has continued.

Implications

The number of planning application in 2018/19 has remained fairly close to the previous year. However the AONB Manager has responded to more pre-application enquiries and liaison with case officers. Similarly engagement with the development of Neighbourhood Development Plans has continued to increase. These are proving to be effective and robust policy documents that add a further level of protection locally to the AONB. Overall the shared contract with Worcestershire County Council Planning Department and collaboration

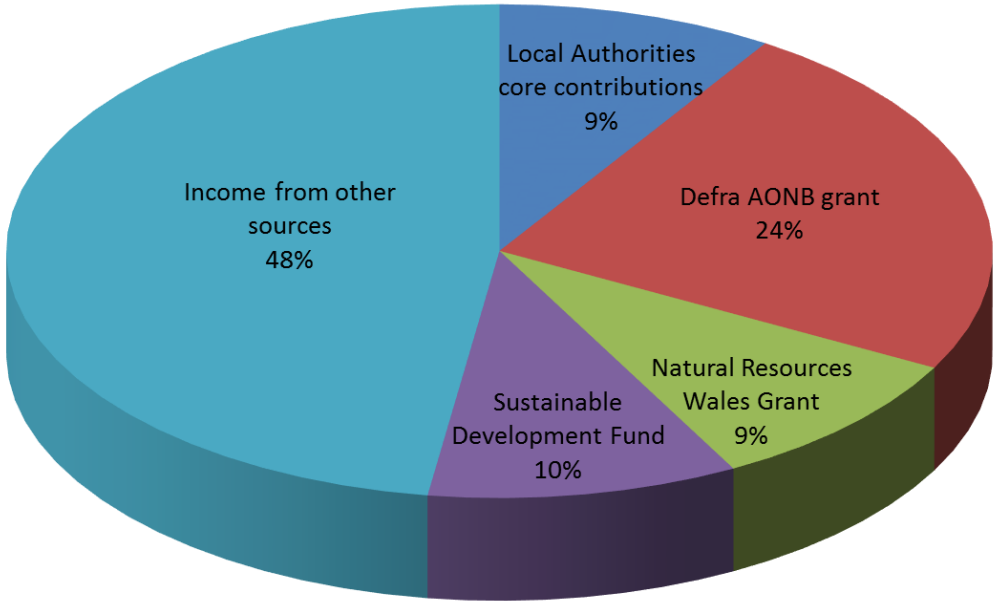
with the Malvern Hills AONB continues to work well, although there has not been a need for any co-ordinated approach to strategic consultations in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire during the year. It is proposed to review the arrangement towards the end of the current financial year.

There are a number of highlights outlined in the 2018/19 Annual Report of achievements for the AONB Unit Work Programme. The Wye Valley River Festival 2018 was held, successfully engaging 32,500 people at 30 events and gaining national media coverage. The fourth cohort of Youth Rangers concluded their programme of activities and the 5th cohort was recruited, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund through the Forests' Forest Landscape Partnership. The recruitment of the Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management & Green Infrastructure Project Officer enabled a new focus on land management practices in the Monmouthshire part of the AONB. A number of funding bids and collaborations were developed that will bear fruit during 2019/20.

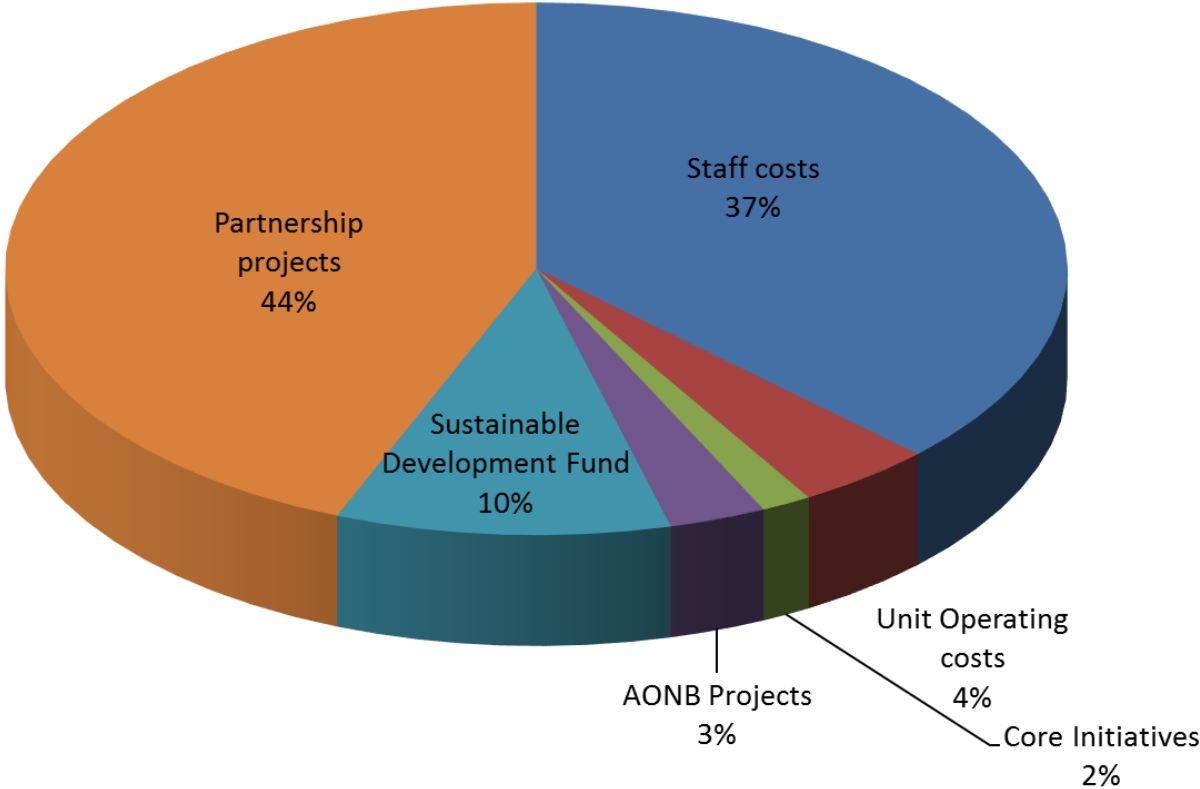
The overall turnover of the AONB Unit was higher in 2018/19 than 2017/18 as last year's figures include the main income and expenditure of the Wye Valley River Festival 2018. The leverage of the AONB Partnership in 2017/19 means that for every £1 of local authority contribution, the AONB Unit has brought in over £10.

Wye Valley AONB Unit Accounts 2018/2019		2017/18	2018/19
Expenditure		£	£
	Staff costs	194,945	201,279
	Unit Operating costs	24,334	22,541
	Core Initiatives	6,000	8,278
	AONB Projects	7,605	15,991
	Sustainable Development Fund	55,000	55,000
	Partnership projects	105,539	237,087
	TOTAL	393,423	540,176
Income			
	Local Authorities core contributions	50,002	49,002
	Defra AONB grant	126,234	128,405
	Natural Resources Wales Grant	52,210	50,251
	Sustainable Development Fund	55,000	55,000
	Income from other sources	109,977	257,518
	TOTAL	393,423	540,176

Income Chart



Expenditure Chart



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AONB Unit Work Programme <i>AONB Management Plan 2015-2020</i> <i>Strategic Objectives</i>		Outcomes
AONB Management Plan <i>WV-L1</i> <i>WV-P3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise and distribute Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Monitor use of Plan in Planning Applications, Public Inquiries etc Commence 2020-2025 Plan Review process: Initial consultations & 1st Draft of Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 available on AONB website http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/index.php/about-us/management-and-guidance/management-plan-2015-2020/ AONB Management Plan referred to in planning application responses and reports. Local Authorities confirmed delegation of Management Plan to AONB Partnership. AONBM convened Review workshop with LA Planning, Landscape and Biodiversity officers. JAC endorsed a 'light touch plus' review & Management Plan Review programme. AONBM attended NRW updates on NRW Area Statements
AONB Partnership events <i>WV-P1</i> <i>WV-P6</i> <i>WV-P7</i>	<p>For JAC members, AONB Ward members, representatives from partner organisations and local Town/Parish/Community Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise AONB Partnership Seminar on key issue Organise AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour of key sites &/or issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Unit Annual Report presented to JAC in July. Relevant JAC agenda items prepared by Technical Officers Working Party (TOWP) and AONB Manager 29 attendees of the JAC Partnership tour September 2018, visiting the Herefordshire part of the AONB north of Ross-on-Wye.
Planning, Development Control and Strategic Policy <i>WV-D1</i> <i>WV-D2</i> <i>WV-D3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renew annual contract for AONB Strategy & Development Advisor to support AONB Unit with planning advice. Comment on relevant Planning Applications and strategic planning documents Annually monitor and review development trends and the approach taken by planning authorities to issues that affect the AONB Engage in debate and consultation on national strategy in liaison with NAAONB Deliver CPD & training for LA Planning staff & members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract renewed with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Planning Department, shared with Malvern Hills AONB Partnership. AONBM provided comments on 4 significant planning applications in Monmouthshire part of the AONB, 4 in Herefordshire and 2 in Gloucestershire and has commented on 4 Neighbourhood Development Plans. AONBM & FAO monitor and review development trends that affect the AONB.
AONB Farming Awards <i>WV-L5</i> <i>WV-F1</i>	<p>Promote & publicise 11th Awards for farmers, landowners and land managers that make an outstanding contribution to conserving &/or enhancing the features, special qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 farms nominated for 2018 AONB Farming Awards. 4 Farms shortlisted. Award presented at the Monmouthshire Show. Award won by Balingham Court Farm, Herefordshire. Farm visited as part of the annual AONB Study Tour.

AONB Unit Work Programme <i>AONB Management Plan 2015-2020</i> Strategic Objectives		Outcomes
WV-F5 WV-C2 WV-E2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek sponsorship for the AONB Farming Awards from local businesses etc. • Site visits of all farm entries for short-listing • Judging • Present the prizes at the Monmouthshire Show • Involve winner in Open Farm Sunday event. 	
Habitat Conservation WV-L2 WV-L4 WV-F4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise monthly volunteer task days • Continue Phase 1 and priority BAP habitat surveys • Convene & service Woodland Management Group and emerging projects • Support species rich grassland initiatives including Herefordshire Meadows Network, Monmouthshire Meadows Group and Parish Grassland Project. • Develop non-native invasive weed control programme • Liaise over national roadside verge initiatives with local authorities and Highways Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One outing per month of AONB volunteers, average attendance 8. Varied tasks, drystone walling, scything, work in Highbury Wood NNR, collaboration with Gwent Wildlife Trust volunteers and Monmouthshire Meadows volunteers. • Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed control included in Lower Wye Valley NFM & GI project. Proposals to be developed through 2019. • One outing per month of AONB vols, varied tasks, drystone walling, scything, work in NNNR Highbury wood, collaboration with GWT vols and Monmouthshire Meadows vols. • Innovative Riverbank stabilisation work undertaken in partnership with Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross Anglers.
Landscape scale conservation WV-L1 WV-L2 WV-B3 WV-P3 WV-P4	Develop and support partnership projects that deliver landscape scale conservation activity and initiatives within and adjoining the AONB. Target areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Doward & South Herefordshire with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust & others • Woolhope Dome and area north of Foy & Sellack • National Grid Visual Improvement Programme (VIP) for area between Ross & Goodrich • Usk to Wye initiatives including Long Forest • Angidy & Lower Wye Valley Catchments Green Infrastructure and Natural Flood Management • ‘Trees outside Woodlands’ projects with veteran trees, riverine trees and orchards • Wye Catchment Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DO sits on newly created Gloucestershire LNP Naturally Healthy and Nature Recovery subgroups. 1 Naturally healthy group meeting attended. • Lower Wye Catchment NFM & GI project: 10 Farm Plans prepared in collaboration with Wye & Usk Foundation. Contact made with Farming Connect in relation to the opportunities for collaborative events. • Water Environment Grant (WEG) application submitted for English part of Wye Catchment with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and Wye & Usk Foundation – will include a farm advisor for AONB and one for adjacent Garron & Gamber sub-catchment. • AONBM hosted meeting with Infrastructure / Bridge engineers from Gloucestershire & Monmouthshire County Councils and Herefordshire Council /Balfour Beatty to progress solutions for Lydbrook, Redbrook & Wireworks bridges.

AONB Unit Work Programme <i>AONB Management Plan 2015-2020</i> Strategic Objectives		Outcomes
Deer Management WV-B2 WV-B4 WV-W4 WV-W3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene & service Deer Management Groups and Deer Monitoring Project • Coordinate deer surveys in the Woolhope Dome and Lower Wye Valley • Assist co-ordination of collaborative deer cull through the Deer Management Groups • Review and implement as appropriate the recommendations of the venison marketing feasibility study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding secured through Natural England to deliver training events linked to the 2017 'Feasibility Study Investigating the Production, Marketing and Sale of local Wild Venison in the Lower Wye Valley and southeast Monmouthshire'. • Deer surveys and Deer Management Groups disbanded due to fall off in returns and lack of resources to service groups. • Deer Initiative co-ordinated collaborative culls in Lower Wye Valley and Woolhope Dome
Monitoring WV-L4 WV-B5 WV-H2 WV-S3 WV-P8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing updating of the AONB GIS and State of the AONB data, including habitats and species, heritage, tourism and recreation etc. • Support evaluation of Drystone walls • Monitor and review implementation of the AONB Management Plan Action Plan • Support NAAONB in development of AONB Key Performance Indicators with DEFRA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data gathering consultation with Herefordshire a Great Place • AONB Fixed Point photography monitoring established • AONBM contributed to debate with NAAONB on AONB Metrics. • Data collation for AONB Management Plan & State of the AONB Report ongoing
Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) WV-L1 WV-B3 WV-C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate SDF project applications for the SDF Assessment Panel • Service SDF Assessment Panel for allocating funds • Review SDF application processes and Assessment Panel • Complete establishment of AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 projects full spend £55,000 • Grants promoted networks, social media, web, exhibitions • £218,881 levered in in cash • New members recruited to Assessment Panel & introduction of updated WG guidance • WG officer summer tour of projects • AONBM met with chairman & lead officer of Herefordshire Community Foundation to progress agreement and establishment of AONB Fund.
Wye Valley River Festival WV-A1 WV-W5 WV-C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver 'Woods & Trees' theme Festival 5th May – 20th May 2018 with funding from SDF, England & Wales Arts Council, Forestry Commission, Foresters' Forest, Environment Agency and other contributors & sponsors. • Manage and maintain www.wyevalleyriverfestival.org.uk website. • Complete all claims and evaluations • Carry out review of 3 Festivals to date and future prospects • Prepare tenders for subsequent Festivals 	The Wye Valley River Festival 2018 attracted 32,500 visits to 30 events at 25 different venues, 2 world premieres were performed on the first day of the Festival. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 meetings with community/partners to facilitate Festival delivered • Feedback Rated 'good' or 'very good': 98% for the 'overall visitor experience' 92% for the 'Quality of the art work programmed' 70% "Learnt more about the Wye Valley Landscape", 70% "Been inspired to visit the countryside more" and

AONB Unit Work Programme <i>AONB Management Plan 2015-2020</i> Strategic Objectives		Outcomes
		65% “Learnt more about woods and trees” which was the theme of the Festival. Full evaluation report available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLO attended Great outdoors conference for arts in Wales to network and build partnerships. • CLO speaker at Inside Out conference Dorset • WVRF awarded Bowland Award at NAAONB’s conference • Governance, finance, demographics study in progress • 2020 theme selected and R&D to commence 31/01/19
MindSCAPE – Foresters’ Forest HLF funding 2018 - 2022 WV-W5 WV-C2 WV-P9	HLF initiative enabling people living with dementia to reconnect with the landscape, through arts and creative environmental activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage project and submit reports & claims • Supervise contractor organising regular creative sessions, workshops and social activities at appropriate sites for participants. • Develop opportunities to expand project into other areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BIG Lottery funded mindSCAPE project completed and fully claimed in September 2018. All outcomes achieved. • Fortnightly activities continue to run through Arts Council Funding (project now lead by Artspace Cinderford – AONB a project partner). • 10 mindSCAPE sessions delivered in Care Homes through Foresters Forest funded project. • Community and Care Home Resource Guide produced and distributed. • Annual mindSCAPE report published and project evaluation commissioned and produced.
Youth Rangers – Foresters’ Forest WV-F4 WV-C2 WV-P6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue structured programme of activity for 4th Cohort of young people (14-16 year olds) that will increase their skill set in landscape and heritage conservation and management. • Develop next phase of scheme to continue opportunities of engaging young people in conservation and heritage 	10 outings 5 promotional events in school 1 radio interview 1 press release Social media promotion 4 volunteers support this activity plus CLO & numerous partners
Website and social media WV-C2 WV-A1	Update and manage websites and social networking sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk (including www.overlookingthewye.org.uk) • www.wyevalleywalk.org • www.wyevalleyriverfestival.org.uk • Facebook and Twitter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google rating of ‘Wye Valley AONB’ remains at 4.7 (out of 5) from over 4,000 reviews. • Website refurbishment continued off-line.

AONB Unit Work Programme <i>AONB Management Plan 2015-2020</i> Strategic Objectives		Outcomes
Public Relations & Outreach WV-C2 WV-E4 WV-A1	Promote the AONB through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> regular on-line editions of the AONB newsletter, 'Picturesque' to provide information and interpretation to increase subscribers' awareness and appreciation of the AONB Guided walks, events, children's activities and countryside craft /rural skills courses in and around the AONB Give talks/presentations to local groups Regular press releases and magazine articles / advertorial Stands at the Monmouthshire Show, Herefordshire Country Fair and other relevant shows. Local exhibitions and other local appropriate / prestigious events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DO gave conservation career talk to 2 year groups in Ashfield Park Primary School. AONBM gave talks to 5 community groups and presentations at 6 seminars & conferences. CLO 6 guided walks/talks variety groups / walking Festivals/Refugees event INeed in Monmouth AONB stand at Monmouthshire Show and Open Farm Sunday at Pentwyn Nature Reserve. Press release put out for launch of Farming Awards, and announcement of winner. Wye Valley AONB Map & Guide distributed regionally through 'Pear Communications' Lower Wye Catchments project Officer gave talk to Gwent Wildlife Trust Local Wildlife Sites events day about the project and Natural Flood Management.
Underground-ing WV-U2 WV-P4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue working with Western Power to identify power-lines within the AONB suitable for undergrounding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development Officer has attended 6 Powerline undergrounding meetings (3 Wales, 3 England). 2 Undergrounding schemes in South Wales completed, undergrounding 2km of powerlines. 3 additional schemes approved for undergrounding by steering groups. Further 2 schemes in development. DO attended WPD stakeholder event.
Wye Valley Walk WV-S1 WV-S2 WV-R1 WV-P5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Wye Valley Walk Partnership Monitor counters along Walk Manage route promotion, website and Passport scheme Facilitate future options for Lydbrook & Redbrook Bridge (in combination with campaign for Tintern Wireworks Bridge) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counter data collated; usage of the Wye Valley Walk (WVW) continues to rise. 120 requests for WVW info during 2018 & 15 passport certificates issued in 2018 Satisfaction levels from feedback maintained. Feedback shows concerns about physical infrastructure (waymarking etc, passport stamping locations vandalized/ broken/ nonexistent and route direction) but overall people love the walk Wye Valley Walk Partnership meets regularly. Increased usage of http://www.wyevalleywalk.org/

AONB Unit Work Programme <i>AONB Management Plan 2015-2020</i> Strategic Objectives		Outcomes
Offa's Dyke Collaboratory <i>WV-H1</i> <i>WV-H3</i> <i>WV-P5</i>	Collaborate with opportunities for cross border partnership projects along the corridor of Offa's Dyke, promoting archaeological projects and investigation into landscape significance of the 8 th century monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONBM contributed to and provided technical assistance at 3 Offa's Dyke Collaboratory events (Chepstow, Knighton & Oswestry)
Overlooking the Wye legacy <i>WV-H1</i> <i>WV-H3</i> <i>WV-P5</i>	Continue to develop heritage & Community projects as part of the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lancut & Spital Meend Archaeological Investigations projects progressed with Forest of Dean Buildings Preservation Trust, including open meetings in Chepstow. AONB staff attended the meetings. AONBM liaised with new philanthropic owner of Piercefield Wood and led 2 walks with owner, Woodland Trust and Gwent Wildlife Trust.
Partnerships (local / regional) <i>WV-R2</i> <i>WV-P3</i> <i>WV-P5</i> <i>WV-P6</i> <i>WV-P7</i>	Influence & attend partnerships as appropriate; eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Destination Management Partnership Visit Herefordshire Leisure and Recreation Forum. Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Wye Catchment Partnership Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC) Monmouthshire Environment Partnership Herefordshire Wildlife Link 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DO sits on Herefordshire meadows network steering group, helping to direct the work of this facilitation funded group. 3 meetings attended, 5 events also attended. DO organises and facilitates the AONB Woodland Management Projects group which meets twice a year to discuss and develop woodland management opportunities. 1 meeting and 1 group site visit organised. CLO assist with Future Generations education info gathering with fire brigade DO attended 2 Wye Catchment Partnership meetings, and 1 NFM sub group meeting. AONBM attended WyeNAC and contributed to low flow PR task group AONBM attended 3 Lower Wye Internal Drainage District Advisory Group meetings
Collaboration (Designated Landscapes) <i>WV-P5</i> <i>WV-P9</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) and Europarc seminars & events Work with Welsh Government and Wales Designated Landscapes in taking Future Landscapes Wales Programme forward Work with NAAONB & English AONBs on '21st Century Hobhouse Review' of National Parks & AONBs in UK Government's 'A Green Future - 25 Year Environment Plan'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONBM contributed to NAAONB Senior Leaders Group on Future Landscapes - Taking the Lead and Sustainability & Governance Review AONBM & CLO attended & spoke at NAAONB Landscapes for Life Conference. AONBM also contributed to AGM & Chairpersons' Conference and attended AONB Lead Officers' meeting. AONBM co-ordinated JAC Task Group and submitted response to Call for Evidence of Glover 'Review of Designated Landscapes in England'. DO has attended a number of NAAONB events

AONB Unit Work Programme <i>AONB Management Plan 2015-2020</i> Strategic Objectives		Outcomes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Landscape Enhancement Initiative workshop organised by National Grid ○ Delivering more for biodiversity workshop ○ 5 Taking the lead workshops + CLO ○ Making Local Woods Work event hosted by Dorset AONB ● CLO contributed to Glover Review info sharing meeting on volunteering ● AONBM hosted Sarah Mukherjee visit & attended Meeting with Julian Glover ● The Designated Landscapes in Wales collectively published the Scenic Wales calendar 2019.
Governance <i>WV-P1</i> <i>WV-P2</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Service and set agendas for JAC, TOWP and Steering Group ● Monitor implementation of ‘Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes’ as outlined in Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales’. ● Prepare grant bids and claims for Natural Resources Wales and Defra, and other funding bodies as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3 full JAC meetings held, 2nd July & 5th November 2018 & 4th March 2019, preceded by TOWP meetings on 6th June & 3rd Oct 2018 & 6th Feb 2019, ● AONB Annual report presented to JAC in July 2018 ● AONB Steering Group held on 3rd Oct 2018 & 6th Feb 2019, with AONB Unit budgets and spend profile presented and scrutinised. ● All bids and claims submitted on time.
Funding and resources <i>WV-P1</i> <i>WV-P2</i> <i>WV-P3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue investigating funding and development opportunities. ● Investigation into external funding and securing resources for strategic and partnership projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 funded project developed and funding secured – Lower Wye Valley NFM & GI project. £68,175 of NRW funding secured. Project Officer employed October 2018. ● AONBM & DO prepared Water Environment Grant (WEG) bid with Wye & Usk Foundation and Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, to deliver farm advice and floodplain grassland restoration work. ● AONBM responded to HLF queries about £1.7M Lydbrook Bridge HLF Heritage Grant bid written & submitted by AONBM on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council & Herefordshire Council.
Work placements <i>WV-P5</i> <i>WV-P9</i>	<p>Support the needs of student placements/group projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investigate new under-graduate and post-graduate research opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 Work experience opportunity provided for a recent graduate. Topic research carried out for website. ● AONB hosted visit from Liverpool University postgraduate planners, looking at mitigation and NFM project work.

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**A summary of
strategy and planning advisory work
by Worcestershire County Council
in the Wye Valley AONB**

April 2018 to March 2019

**A summary of strategy and planning advisory work undertaken by
Worcestershire County Council in the Wye Valley AONB – April 2018
to March 2019**

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1. Introduction

Between April 2018 and March 2019, the Strategic Planning and Development Management teams at Worcestershire County Council (WCC) provided a consultancy role to the Wye Valley AONB Unit, advising on strategic planning issues and development management. This report provides a summary of the main aspects of the work undertaken over that period.

2. Strategic policy consultations

In the last year, WCC did not provide any comments on the strategic policy consultations for the areas falling within the Wye Valley AONB boundary. However, the AONB Manager provided evidence to 6 Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs): Ballingham, Bolstone and Hentland Group Parish, Brampton Abbots & Foy Group Parish, Goodrich & Welsh Bicknor Parish, Peterstow Parish and Ross-on-Wye Town.

3. Planning casework

Planning applications in the AONB

Planning applications requiring consideration by the AONB were identified through lists of relevant applications sent to WCC by the Wye Valley AONB on a weekly basis. Table 1 is a summary of the planning applications within the AONB for 2018-2019. Table 2, below, shows the breakdown of these applications by type of development.

Table 1 - Summary statistics for planning applications April 2018 to March 2019

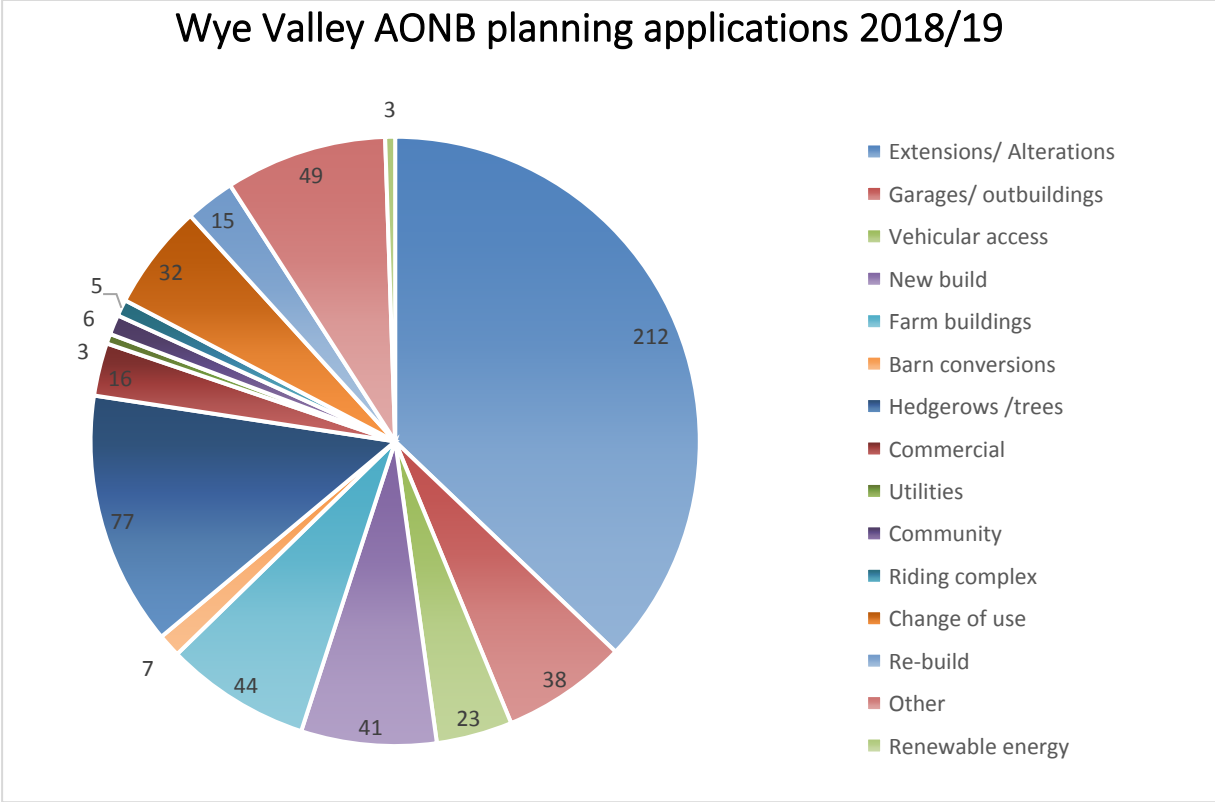
Local Authority	No. of applications registered	No. of applications considered relevant to the Wye Valley AONB	No. of applications on which WCC consulted the Unit	No. of responses submitted to the Planning Authority	No. of planning appeals
Herefordshire Council	316 (327)	177 (188)	10 (17)	2 (2)	(0)
Forest of Dean District Council	110 (85)	73 (50)	4 (2)	1 (0)	(0)
Monmouthshire County Council	145 (155)	92 (121)	2 (3)	3 (1)	(0)
Totals	571 (568)	342 (359)	16 (22)	3 (3)	(0)

(2017-18 figures in brackets)

There were 571 planning applications registered, based on the lists of applications provided by the Wye Valley AONB Unit between April 2017 and March 2018. This is consistent with figures from last year.

At 342, the number of applications identified as relevant for consideration because of potential impacts on the Wye Valley AONB very slightly decreased compared to the previous year, when 359 applications were considered.

Table 2. Breakdown of planning applications by type.



On 16 occasions, WCC consulted the AONB Unit on planning applications considered potentially detrimental. Following discussion with the AONB Manager, written responses were provided to three of these applications, which is the same level as last year.

The AONB Manager submitted 3 additional responses objecting to applications, including two in the setting of the AONB. A summary of the AONB Unit's representations, alongside the planning decision and extracts from the case officers' reports, can be found in Appendix 1.

The AONB Manager has also been invited to contribute comments for a number of pre-application enquiries with Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council.

4. Conclusions

This report covers the fourth year of the Worcestershire County Council consultancy work provided for the Wye Valley AONB Unit. The approach and success rates remain consistent with previous years of the service.

Appendix 1 Summary of Planning Applications - April 2018 to March 2019

Herefordshire Council

Application details	AONB comments	Planning decision	Justification
<p>P174625/F</p> <p>Proposed retention of an existing caravan to be used as accommodation for a farm worker. (Retrospective). (For DOC 3 and 5 see 190800)</p> <p>Tump Farm Fownhope Hereford Herefordshire HR1 4PJ</p>	<p>The application is unlikely to have a significant detrimental impact on the natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB. However currently the caravan is conspicuous from certain perspectives and should be better screened to fit into the landscape and to comply with the Fownhope Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan Strategic Objective WV-D2 states “Encourage and support high standards of design, materials, energy efficiency, drainage and landscaping in all developments, including Permitted Development, to ensure greater sustainability and that they complement and enhance the local landscape character and distinctiveness including scale and setting and minimise the impact on the natural environment”. The need for this agricultural accommodation should also be strictly monitored in the event that the farming enterprise might change negating the necessity for the accommodation.</p>	<p>Approved with conditions</p>	<p>Recommendation that planning permission is granted with necessary conditions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscape scheme - Landscape implementation scheme
<p>183187/O</p> <p>Proposed development of 9 new dwellings and access (Outline).</p> <p>Land South West of Wilton Lane, Wilton, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire</p>	<p><u>Objection</u></p> <p>The AONB Unit has major concerns regarding this proposal. The site is outside the settlement of Wilton and therefore in open countryside in the AONB....the proposed design creates an incongruous addition to Wilton and an even smaller incongruous and inefficient area of agricultural land.</p> <p>Recommendation that the Council consider refusal of the application which fails to conserve or enhance the Wye Valley AONB and the setting of Wilton Conservation Area.</p>	<p>Refused</p>	<p>The proposal fails to maintain or enhance the character and appearance of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a highly sensitive and designated landscape. The proposals are incongruous and would result in harm to landscape character and visual amenity and the historic landscape setting of Ross on Wye and Wilton. As such the proposal is contrary to Herefordshire Core Strategy policy SS6, LD1 and LD3, the Wye Valley AONB</p>

			Management Plan and the relevant aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.
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Forest of Dean District Council

Application details	AONB comments	Planning decision	Justification
<p>P0307/18/FUL</p> <p>Change of use of agricultural land to a tourism site comprising of 9 camping pods, reception building and shower/washroom. Alterations to vehicular access and associated works.</p> <p>Land At Hewelsfield Off Mill Hill Brockweir NP16 7NW</p>	<p><u>Objection</u></p> <p>The Wye Valley AONB Unit, on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership, has significant concerns regarding the siting, scale and design of this development. The proposed development is in the Wye Valley AONB ‘Dean Edge Limestone Plateau’ Landscape Management Zone [LMZ]15. It is not clear whether the applicant has considered the impact of this proposal on the AONB. We fully endorse the comments of the Council’s Sustainability and Landscape Technician. If the development takes place in its current form it will irreversibly change the landscape character of this unique ‘common’. The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 includes the Aim that “Sustainable tourism based upon the natural beauty and local distinctiveness of the AONB continues to enrich the lives of visitors, operators and employees while contributing positively to the conservation and enhancement of the area”.</p> <p>We believe the design and layout of the development is incongruous with the surrounding landscape and settlement pattern. Such a proposal at this location is likely to cause noise, light and traffic issues for the local community and visitors, creating a localised loss of tranquillity. According to our records the field was mapped as “native broadleaf woodland” 20 years ago and “continuous scrub & semi-natural broadleaf woodland” in our 2013 Phase 1 Habitat Survey. Previously it was probably species rich grassland, like most of the fields in Brockweir, Hewelsfield and St Briavels Common. The developer has already cleared most of the</p>	<p>Refused</p>	<p>The removal of roadside trees, the creation of a formal site entrance, and the presence of buildings, areas of hardstanding (even those to be created with gravel), paths (even if they were created with bark chippings, cars, lighting, and so on, would give the site a formal developed look. Such a look would do material harm to the tranquility and the rural character and appearance of the site and its surroundings, including the Wye Valley AONB.</p>

	<p>trees from the woodland/field. The new proposed access will remove a section of the roadside wall/hedge and trees. The AONB Management Plan identifies a number of Special Qualities of the AONB which include woodland [SQ2], species rich grassland [SQ4], Boundary habitat diversity & connectivity, e.g. between grassland & woodland..., hedges &/or drystone walls, lanes, banks, verges [SQ5] and Overall sense of tranquillity, sense of remoteness and aturalness/wildness [SQ12].</p> <p>Strategic Objective WV-D3 in the AONB Management Plan states “Resist inappropriate development which will create a persistent and dominant feature out of keeping with the landscape of the AONB and/or if it damages Special Qualities in the AONB, including through high levels of noise and/or light pollution or any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site or other sites designated as environmentally important”.</p> <p>Consequently we would encourage the Council to refuse this development in its current location and form.</p>		
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Monmouthshire County Council

Application details	AONB comments	Planning decision	Justification
<p>DM/2019/00013</p> <p>Outline planning application for up to 200 homes including public open space; new vehicular, pedestrian & cycle accesses; and associated landscaping & engineering works.</p>	<p><u>Objection</u></p> <p>The site of this proposed development abuts the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). We object to this application which inconsistently addresses the setting of the Wye Valley AONB.</p> <p>Planning Policy Wales (PPW Edition 10, 2018) para 6.3.5 states “Planning authorities have a statutory duty to have regard to National Parks and AONB purposes. This duty applies in relation to all activities affecting National Parks and AONBs, whether those activities lie within, or in the setting of, the designated areas.... and planning authorities should have regard to their identified special qualities in the exercise of their functions and any relevant management plans.” Para 6.3.8 states “National Parks and AONBs are of equal status in terms of landscape and scenic beauty, and must both be afforded the highest status of protection from inappropriate developments.”</p>	<p>Pending</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Monmouthshire LDP Policy LC4 – Wye Valley AONB (last sentence) states “Development proposals that are outside the AONB but would detract unacceptably from its setting will not be permitted.” LDP para 6.3.39 states “...Proposals for development within, or affecting the setting of, the AONB should have regard to the strategic objectives and policy proposals set out in the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan and seek to conserve and enhance the unique character and special qualities of the landscape.”

The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objective WV-D3 states “Resist inappropriate development which will create a persistent and dominant feature out of keeping with the landscape of the AONB and/or if it damages Special Qualities in the AONB, including through high levels of noise and/or light pollution or any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site or other sites designated as environmentally important.”

The site abuts the AONB and is in the setting of the Caerwent Limestone Plateau / Hinterlands Landscape Management Zone (LMZ16) with the following relevant Landscape Features identified in the AONB Management Plan, cross referenced to the Special Qualities [SQ]:

- Gently rolling landscape with occasional narrow winding steep-sided valleys [SQ1 – Overall Landscape]
- Ancient, semi-natural and mixed coniferous and deciduous woodland [SQ2 - Woodlands]
- Mixture of arable and pastoral farming with traditional farmsteads and large country estates [SQ20 – Vernacular architecture]
- Remnant parkland of large country estates [SQ19 – Historic/registered parks]
- Long views towards the Severn Estuary are possible [SQ11 – extensive & dramatic views]
- Chepstow Racecourse an important landscape at a local level [SQ19 – Historic/registered parks]

The DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT refers to “A landscaping buffer with the AONB”. The list of “The Key features of the site” similarly reference “A landscape corridor and public open space along the western edge of the development to incorporate the PROW”. The CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES PLAN demarcates a “15m

buffer to the Broadleaved woodland” in the AONB and a further (notably lesser) “sensitive buffer” along the rest of the AONB boundary inside the red line but with the footpath curving away into the AONB. The applicant states that the “Constraints & Opportunities Plan has been prepared for the site which has been used to shape the development concept”. However, the ‘Landscape & GI Parameter Plan’ shows a 15m buffer to the Broadleaved woodland in the AONB at the northern half of the border and no ‘sensitive buffer’ but a 20m incursion into the AONB along the southern half, with the footpath aligned through it, and outside of the red line. The UK Planning Portal definition of a ‘buffer zone’ is “An area of land separating certain types of development from adjoining sensitive land uses”.

However the placement of this “buffer with the AONB” along the site’s western boundary is completely inconsistent. The 20m strip outside the development site and inside the AONB is not buffering the AONB but enforcing a change of land-use in the AONB to pursue development up to the AONB boundary. The applicant seems to perfectly understand the concept of a buffer in the CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES PLAN and in the ‘Landscape & GI Parameter Plan’ for the woodland in the AONB but ignores it for the open field in the AONB. This does not consistently “afforded the highest status of protection from inappropriate developments.”

The Landscape & Visual Appraisal fails to address views from the AONB along the public footpath along the western edge of the site along the boundary of the AONB. This is a popular route for locals accessing the countryside and the AONB. The avoidance or omission of this view (or views) is a significant oversight, where views from the AONB will be highly impacted by the development.

There is no clarification of the impact of the 9m roof heights and visibility of the housing in relation to the 94m contour and the retained grassland and field. Some photomontages of the roof lines and better drawings than those on page 19 of the DAS are needed to adequately assess the landscape and visual impact of the development from a number of viewpoints, including Eagles Nest and the footpath along the AONB boundary.

The inconsistencies and omissions when dealing with the AONB are such that we cannot adequately ensure that the development will not have significant detrimental damage to the natural and scenic beauty

	<p>of the Wye Valley AONB.</p> <p>Consequently we recommend that the Council refuse this application for 200 houses in the setting of the AONB.</p>		
<p>DC/2017/00868</p> <p>A telecoms mast.</p> <p>Tump Farm, Whitebrook NP25 4TU</p>	<p><u>Objection</u></p> <p>The revised application remains in the original location but with a reduced height and structure of a 10 meter monopole. We still have considerable concerns about this proposed development in this location. The location remains in an exposed position in open countryside on the lip of the valley in the Wye Gorge Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) beside the regional recreational asset of the Wye Valley Walk and in view of the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. Both these routes and the LMZ are identified as Special Qualities in the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2015-2020. We acknowledge that the reduced height and monopole design would be less harmful than the previously proposed 15m lattice tower. However we do not consider that this modification in design and scale adequately addresses the impact on the conservation and enhancement of the unique character and Special Qualities of the landscape at this location. The applicant has provided an assessment of alternative sites that is based largely on cost and convenience rather than mitigation of landscape impact in a nationally designated protected landscape.</p> <p>The currently proposed landscaping is a native hedge 1.75m tall and about 1.5m wide/deep around the compound. We do not believe this is adequate to mitigate the impact on the natural beauty of the area. To conserve and enhance the landscape at this site and minimise the visual impact of the mast there needs to be a significant amount of screening of the site from all angles. A belt of native tree and shrub planting needs to surround the site to a depth of about 4meters. This should connect with / extend from the adjacent wooded area to the south and connect with the roadside hedgerow to the north, encircling the compound and help screen, over time, the site from the A466 and Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. Additionally the roadside hedgerow needs gapping up with inclusion of at least two hedgerow trees in order to help screen the mast and compound from the Wye Valley Walk, whilst also consolidating the 'backdrop' of the mast. We appreciate this will necessitate more land-take but this is the minimum necessary to mitigate the impact if the mast, both locally and in views.</p>	<p>Withdrawn and new site proposed</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>DM/2018/01573</p> <p>Retrospective Planning Application for field gates</p> <p>Billets Field near Devauden</p>	<p><u>Objection</u></p> <p>The Retrospective Planning Application is adjacent to the boundary of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is therefore in the setting of the AONB. This application arises because the restoration of the sites was not completed after the removal of the temporary telecommunications mast. The incomplete restoration of the site is in conflict with the purpose of the AONB. Planning Policy Wales (2016) states:</p> <p>5.3.5 The primary objective for designating AONBs is the conservation and enhancement of their natural beauty. Development plan policies and development management decisions affecting AONBs should favour conservation of natural beauty, although it will also be appropriate to have regard to the economic and social well-being of the areas. Local authorities, other public bodies and other relevant authorities have a statutory duty to have regard to AONB purposes.</p> <p>5.3.6.... In National Parks and AONBs, development plan policies and development management decisions should give great weight to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of these areas.</p> <p>5.3.7 The duty to have regard to National Park and AONB purposes applies to activities affecting these areas, whether those activities lie within or outside the designated areas.</p> <p>We would therefore recommend that the application is refused and the gates removed and the hedgerow restored in the interests of conserving and enhancing the Wye Valley AONB and its the setting.</p>	<p>Pending</p>	
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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
1st July 2019

WYE VALLEY RIVER FESTIVAL 2020+

Purpose

To present the Five Year Business Plan for the Wye Valley River Festival 2019-2024 and the 5 tests for the future development of the Wye Valley River Festival.

Recommendations

That the JAC

- A. welcomes the Business Plan for the Wye Valley River Festival 2020 and subsequent proposals for future Festivals over the next five years
- B. supports the on-going funding applications for Wye Valley River Festival 2020
- C. endorses the 5 tests identified to secure the future of the Wye Valley River Festival.

Key Issues

- Arts Council England funding is supporting the Research & Development phase of the Wye Valley River Festival 2020.
- Two weeks of Creative Laboratory workshops have involved over 30 people, generating a range of exciting proposals and ideas around the Festival theme of 'Time'.
- The Five Year Business Plan for the Wye Valley River Festival, covering 2019-2024, has been produced (attached) and submitted with grant applications to Arts Council of Wales and Arts Council England
- The Business Plan was informed by the governance options study and includes 5 tests for the JAC to approve to take the Wye Valley River Festival forward into a proposed Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).
- Currently £186,800 has been secured for the 2020 Festival and further opportunities and funding bids are being pursued including a grant application to Arts Council England.
- The Bowland Award, won by the Wye Valley River Festival last year, will be returned at the forthcoming national Landscapes for Life conference for a 2019 winner to receive.

Reasons

The study of governance, audience demographics and funding models to take the Wye Valley River Festival forward was received in March. This has informed the new 5 year Business Plan. It proposes moving towards a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) for the Wye Valley River Festival, recognising that the current management, governance and funding of the Festival is not a sustainable model that can be carried forward indefinitely.

Currently Wye Valley River Festival is a Wye Valley AONB Partnership project, delivered by the AONB Unit with the support of the professional Festival team led by Festival Director, Phillipa Haynes, and Artistic Directors, Desperate Men – Richard Headon and Jon Beedell. The Vision for the Festival, as outlined in the Business Plan, is:

The Wye Valley River Festival will inspire audiences to engage positively with landscape. The artistic programme will promote change, creating a compelling call to action for citizens to conserve and enhance the Wye Valley Landscape for future generations. To that end the Wye Valley River Festival will deliver thought provoking, site specific, and high quality inspiring art in the outdoors, growing empathy, emotional engagement and better understanding of the landscape of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Through celebratory and insightful Festival experiences the Festival will foster a strong connection between the Festival audience and the Wye Valley landscape.

The research and development of the Wye Valley River Festival 2020 and the theme of ‘Time’ is progressing with funding from Arts Council England, Visit Wales and the AONB Sustainable Development Fund.

Implications

The scoping of ideas around the theme of ‘Time’ for the 2020 Festival is developing well. Similarly, fund raising is progressing with over 60% of the budget secured. The main application to Arts Council England is being prepared while the grant from Arts Council of Wales, for £25,000 has just been approved. Meanwhile meetings are taking place with other potential funding partners, including some of the local Town, Parish and Community Councils, community participants and hosts.

The change of date of the May Day Bank Holiday, to coincide with VE Day on Friday 8th May, has led to a review of some of the timetabling and programme proposals. But at this early stage in the process this is not considered a critical problem. Securing the budget remains the primary concern.

The 5 year Business Plan sets out the medium to long term prospect for the Festival. Central to this is working towards the establishment of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) as a sustainable vehicle to take the Festival forward, as a new governance, management and delivery model. Further works is needed with partners and participants in developing the Festival and the proposed CIO beyond 2020.

The intention is for an independent entity that has greater scope for accessing funds from trusts and charitable sources, while retaining close links with the landscape of the Wye Valley and AONB Partnership. Five key tests are identified as necessary before progress can be made towards the new CIO for the Wye Valley River Festival. These are identified in the Business Plan (pages 15-17) as follows:

- 1) To build up a reserve of funds before setting up a CIO. This needs to be in the region of £50,000 to enable the recruitment and training of a leadership board, recruitment and employment of a part-time employee, administration and office costs and all legal fees.

Time frame: aiming to achieve by December 2023. This will be reviewed as the Business Plan is updated after the next Festival in June 2020.

- 2) Select and nurture a leadership team to become part of a future Board to run a Wye Valley River Festival CIO.

Time frame: aiming to achieve by December 2022.

3) Formalise key partnerships with key organisations, community supporters & artists around the vision, mission, values and aims of Wye Valley River Festival set out in this Business Plan.

Time frame: aiming to have partnership agreements with those partners that have become long term supporters to achieve this by December 2019.

4) Legal requirements are confirmed by host authorities Monmouthshire County Council, Herefordshire Council, Gloucestershire County Council and Forest of Dean District Council enabling the transition of Wye Valley River Festival from a Wye Valley AONB Partnership Project to an independent entity: CIO.

Time frame: aiming to achieve by December 2020.

5) Satisfy the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), as the Festival leadership body, that all the above tests have been met.

Time frame: aiming to achieve at the latest by December 2024, can be earlier if all other transition tests are met.

The progress of these 5 tests will be reviewed throughout the lifetime of the Business Plan.

Background

The Wye Valley River Festival is a Wye Valley AONB Partnership initiative. The Festival is a biennial festival focused on arts & environment with landscape at its heart. The Festival has taken place over 2 weeks and 3 weekends in early May in 2014, 2016 & 2018 and includes a community engagement programme of workshops in the run up to May. By staging magnificent outdoor arts events that captivate and engage, the Festival has celebrated and interpreted the River Wye, the countryside and its communities, using the arts to develop thinking, imagination and understanding, building new audiences and strengthening the vital role that culture plays in the future development and ‘place making’ of this AONB.

The Wye Valley River Festival received the national Bowland Award in July 2018 at the annual AONB ‘Landscapes for Life’ conference. The annual Award recognises a best project, best practice or outstanding contribution to the wellbeing of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. A fresh round of projects will be nominated and voted on by the AONB Network at this year’s conference between 9th-11th July.

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Business Plan 2019-2024



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Executive summary

This Business Plan covers the period 2019-2024 and the next 3 Festival planned to take place in 2020, 2022 and 2024. The strategic aims for this period focus on creating a quality product that moves towards a sustainable future with a separate identity. At the end of 2018 the Wye Valley AONB Unit employed Louise Emmerson to undertake a Governance review of the Festival. The Review recommended moving towards a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status as the preferred option for Wye Valley River Festival. The Business Plan has a dual focus to maintaining and improving the high quality of content and audience experience at the Wye Valley River Festival, alongside a transition for the Festival from a Wye Valley AONB Partnership Initiative, to an autonomous entity. The challenges and constraints to achieving this dual aspiration are analysed within this Business Plan and a set of options and tests are laid out in order to fulfil the end goal. The plan requires renewal with each subsequent Festival, and its success rests on achieving the key objectives set out within the plan. These objectives will be monitored by the Festival team led by Festival Director Phillipa Haynes & the AONB Unit staff and overseen by the Management team. Andrew Blake, AONB Manager, has overall responsibility for the Festival, approved by the Joint Advisory Committee of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.



Introduction

The Wye Valley River Festival (WVRF) is a Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership initiative. The Festival is biennial, focused on arts & environment with landscape at its heart and takes place over 2 weeks in early May. Since 2014 the Festival team has staged a thriving, edgy biennial arts and environment Festival plus outreach programme, celebrating the nature, culture, landscape and life of the lower Wye Valley. This new Business Plan will build on the experience to date and set out our strategic vision in the short and longer term.

This Business Plan covers the period from 2019-2024 when the Festival aims to deliver 3 Festivals in early May 2020, 2022 & 2024. During this time frame the Festival will focus on implementing changes recommended in the Governance Review Report of February 2019.

By staging magnificent outdoor arts events that captivate and engage, the Festival has celebrated & interpreted the River Wye, the countryside and its communities, using the arts to develop thinking, imagination and understanding, building new audiences and strengthening the vital role that culture plays in the future development and 'place making' of this AONB. The Wye Valley River Festival received the Bowland Award in July 2018 at the annual conference of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Award recognises the most outstanding project in 2018 of all the UK's 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Achievements in the 2018 Festival included; an audience of 32,500 at 30 events at 25 venues; 2 world premieres on the first day; a schools and community outreach programme targeted & free, Luke Jerram's Museum of the Moon sold out raising £11,700; with the film gaining 50,000 views on Visit Wales web site; the new Festival web site received 11,000 Unique views April- June 2018. The Welsh Government Minister for

Culture, Tourism and Sport opened the Museum of the Moon, covered on S4C welsh TV, plus the Moon was 'picture of the day' in Guardian, Telegraph and The Times. Success in 2018 places the Festival in a positive space to set a clear route for the future which this plan provides.

Our strategy is to promote the creation of three biennial festivals over the next 5 years that will challenge, inspire, amaze, and engage new audiences whilst promoting positive change and environmental awareness predominantly through outdoor arts. It will not be curated in the traditional way - buying in existing shows - but will develop and devise bespoke work with artists well versed in creative community engagement, consolidating these relationships and energising the wider partnerships, networks and connections. We use the river, the outstanding countryside and its communities, to inspire the artists to develop thinking, imagination and understanding, that builds new audiences and strengthens the vital role that culture will play in the future development and 'place making' of this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Plan sets out the vision which guides the Festival through the next challenging phase of development. The Festival over the lifetime of this Plan needs to capitalise on the growth and success of the last six years. Setting ambitious and strategic goals that can be achieved with clear management and leadership. This Business Plan is a practical road map for achieving a sustainable Festival that is locally cherished and nationally admired.

The vision below describes the inspirational change desired through the Wye Valley River Festival artistic programme for the life time of its existence. (see Appendix 1)

Vision

The change desired

The Wye Valley River Festival will inspire audiences to engage positively with landscape. The artistic programme will promote change, creating a compelling call to action for citizens to conserve and enhance the Wye Valley Landscape for future generations. To that end the Wye Valley River Festival will deliver thought provoking, site specific, and high quality inspiring art in the outdoors, growing empathy, emotional engagement and better understanding of the landscape of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Through celebratory and insightful Festival experiences the Festival will foster a strong connection between the Festival audience and the Wye Valley landscape.



The mission below describes how the Wye Valley River Festival will deliver the vision over the next ten years.

Mission

Stage, sustain and deliver a biennial nationally renowned arts & environment Festival showcasing thought provoking, site and community responsive work in the outdoors, that celebrates the nature, culture, landscape and life of the lower Wye Valley.



Our Values

The Wye Valley River Festival team is committed to delivering **excellence** and providing the very best opportunities for everyone to engage with the arts and the environment. We believe that, as far as it is economically possible, the rural communities and audiences of the Wye Valley have an equal right to **access** and **experience the very best** artistic performances and presentations that are commonly available in areas of greater population density. We wish to **inspire creativity** amongst individuals, community groups and the professional artists and companies of the Wye Valley region.

We believe in building effective **collaborations** and **creative partnerships** with individuals, organisations, agencies and stakeholders in order to achieve shared goals. We believe the arts should fundamentally be enjoyable, memorable and **enrich people's lives**. Outdoor arts through the Festival programme, offers an **innovative** approach and an opportunity to encourage **empathy**, emotional connection and **positive citizen action** for the natural world, promoting thought and behaviours that aim to conserve and enhance the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) for future generations.

Strategic Aims 3-5 Years

1. Create a high quality outdoor arts programme to captivate, inspire, engage, and bring meaning and emotion to the outstanding landscape of the Wye Valley AONB and the issues affecting it, for residents and visitors alike.
2. To build strong partnerships with the arts, education, environment, tourism, heritage, community and all other stakeholders in the creation and delivery of each Festival. Developing skills and capacity with partners to deliver outdoor arts and increasing environmental knowledge of the Wye Valley.
3. The audience is inspired to conserve and enhance the landscape, take actions to reverse biodiversity loss and be carbon minimal.
4. To secure the future sustainability of the Festival.



Detailed Objectives for 2020 Festival

- a. Maximise the impact and effectiveness of current funding, seeking out new income streams, and pursuing economic efficiency.
- b. Maintain artistic values and environmental integrity, nurtured and created in the development phase.
- c. To create an ensemble narrative as a holding form for each Festival.
- d. To commission at least 2 large installations and at least 3 smaller installations at each Festival.
- e. Create an engaging and lively themed programme over 2 weeks and 3 weekends in May.
- f. To work closely with community, artists and landscape partners in the creation, development and delivery of the Festival.
- g. Nurture Governance skills. Describe and identify key Governance needs. Grow a pool of talent in the arena of leadership and governance for the Festival. Build a reserve of funds to place WVRF in position to set up a future CIO.
- h. The Festival continues to build an outreach programme that delivers participation, up-skilling, engages hard to reach groups and supports local ownership. This programme will aim to increase engagement in 2019.
- i. Maintain visitor numbers in the 30,000 bracket for 2020
- j. Increase overnight visitors stay through targeted product development.
- k. Implement recycle, re-use and carbon-minimal practices and engage audiences creatively in responsible festival attendance.
- l. Implement a marketing plan and campaign to focus on the environmental messages.

Strategic Aims and Objectives

In this section each of the Festival strategic aims will be clarified in detail alongside the work plan and objectives to implement them.

Please refer to the Action Plan (page 26) which sets out the work programme for the next three years in further detail including monitoring and evaluation.

The Financial Section (page 28) covers how this Action Plan will be resourced to achieve the high quality Festival we aspire to.

The Leadership & Management Section (page 18) describes the Leadership Team and the Management Team and the roles & responsibilities of each and in addition how the wider partnership of stakeholders is represented within this framework.

The Marketing Plan is a separate document to be used in conjunction with the Business Plan and details how we will reach our target audience and implement a campaign to advocate for the Festival and reach objectives f. & g.

Strategic Aims & objectives for 2020 Wye Valley River Festival:

1. **Create a high quality outdoor arts programme to captivate, inspire, engage, and bring meaning and emotion to the outstanding landscape of the Wye Valley AONB and the issues affecting it, for residents and visitors alike.**

Including strategic objectives b. c. d. e. i. j.

How to achieve:

The Wye Valley River Festival team will develop & improve the collaborative process it has established over the life of the previous Business Plan 2014-18; co-creating with new and established partners the Festival theme and artistic content; facilitating opportunity to empower stakeholders and build ownership of their Festival. In this way each Festival is shaped by high calibre artists, the relevant landscape issues of focus, and the people who live and work within that landscape. The Festival Team Plan a series of creative workshops for May 2019 to create the narrative for the next Festival, the ensemble will work with a script writer to create a touring performative piece that will tour the Festival sites and illuminate the theme of time. The details of the installations to feature at the Festival will be developed and budgets will be allocated to leads of each element of the Festival. The outreach programme will be agreed and a tour of schools and communities arranged.

The delivery of the artistic concept and the 2 week 3 weekend Festival. The outreach programme will take place in March and April creating engagement and inclusion in the Festival broadening the diversity of the audience. A targeted marketing campaign which seeks to maintain the audience size and increase the richness of Festival experience and develop a product for overnight stays. Please see Marketing plan

Monitoring and Evaluation

Quarterly reporting by Wye Valley River Festival Team on work plan delivery and achievement of milestones.

Reporting to AONB Manager and to AONB Partnership at Joint Advisory Committee meetings.

- 2. To build strong partnerships with the arts, education, environment, tourism, heritage, community and all other stakeholders in the creation and delivery of each Festival. Developing skills and capacity with partners to deliver outdoor arts and increasing environmental knowledge of the Wye Valley.**

Including objectives f, g, h.

How to achieve:

Partnership working is key to the core work that the Wye Valley AONB Unit undertake. Over the past six years it has been through collaboration with partners that we have built the Festival and achieved together. Wye Valley River Festival team aims to build upon the current positive energy of tried and tested relationships and forge new partnerships with a reputation for high quality art in the landscape.

The Research and Development phase of the Festival is key to nurturing the important stakeholders' relationships we seek to engage partners who have expertise in engaging groups that we do not, for example local National Trust staff are working with elderly people in care comes and the Monmouthshire Housing Association are working with Young Dads.

The artistic programme is developed in conjunction with partners and a range of arts, community, heritage and environmental organisation locally. This Business Plan focuses on building more capacity in community and partnerships both new and existing. We will re-focus on community producers adopting the Festival toolkit, so that with our support locals can take ownership and management of identified elements of the Festival. This applies particularly in communities, but also with some of our significant partners like Cadw and the Forestry Commission, when it comes to enabling a flexible approach to overcome the challenges of working in the outdoors and creating work in designated sites & scheduled monuments. We will ensure partnership agreements are in place during the development phase, clearly stating each partner's roles and responsibilities in the element of the Festival which they are contributing towards. In 2020 we want to increase the capacity to involve volunteers in the delivery of the Festival and intend to undertake training sessions, identify roles and allocate resource to facilitate volunteers and create ambassadors for the Festival. Armed with environmental knowledge, they will assist in the immersive experience of Wye Valley River Festival reinforcing the theme and narrative for audiences, hosting and welcoming audiences across the Festival sites.

3. The audience is inspired to conserve and enhance the landscape, take actions to reverse biodiversity loss and be carbon negative.

Objective 1

Creating a clear message for our target audience to act positively for the environment will be a focus of all Festival communications. Festival evaluation indicated there is room to improve the connection between the art and the pro-environmental knowledge and the behaviours we seek to encourage. In order to make the best use of this opportunity we will invest time and resource embedding this into the Festival narrative and in working with an artist to create an effective Wye Valley AONB presence at the Festival to act as the conduit for this messaging, creating an immersive and impactful installation/exhibition. This work will commence in 2019 and the artists will be instructed to make the work live beyond 2020 so that it can evolve with the Festival and remain relevant.

Alongside this work we will promote the Citizens' Charter to assist audiences in making pro-environmental choices in their home and workplace that will benefit the landscape of the Wye Valley and beyond.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We will need to undertake new and specific monitoring and evaluation to demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach and involve our partners in promoting the Citizens' Charter campaign. We will make use of social media and use the metrics to gain an insight into our success, alongside survey undertaken during and after the campaign.

4. To secure the future sustainability of the Festival.

Objectives g, h, a.

There are 2 elements to this aim. The **Financial sustainability** of the Business model which will be covered in the Finance section and the **Governance of the Festival**. A robust and focused approach is required to both areas to bring about the sustainability of this Business Plan.

The **strategy for Festival funding** is to continue to build relationships with key funders who value the work of the Festival to deliver on their key aims and objectives in the arts and environment sectors. The largest proportion of funding has and continues to be sought from these sources. For

further analysis of the Financial sustainability please refer to Finance section, where earned income, ticket sales, advertising & concessions are analysed.

The future sustainability of the Festival requires a move toward adopting a new **Governance Model**. The Wye Valley AONB Partnership commissioned a Wye Valley River Festival Governance Review and a report was produced by Louise Emmerson, from Taking the Current, in February 2019. One focus of the report was to investigate the viability and range of options open for the Wye Valley River Festival to adopt as a new governance model. Currently Wye Valley River Festival is a Wye Valley AONB Partnership project. The desired move is towards an independent entity allowing greater scope for accessing funds from trusts and charitable sources. The report outlined the need to meet several key tests before progressing towards the most suitable governance model for the Wye Valley River Festival. Louise identified this model to be a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). In this Business Plan we present the key **Governance Transition Tests** which must be met to achieve this new status:

- 1) To build up a reserve of funds before setting up a CIO. This needs to be in the region of £50,000 to enable the recruitment and training of a leadership board, recruitment and employment of a part-time employee, administration and office costs and all legal fees.
Time frame: aiming to achieve by December 2023. This will be reviewed as the Business Plan is updated after the next Festival in June 2020.
- 2) Select and nurture a leadership team to become part of a future Board to run a Wye Valley River Festival CIO.
Time frame: aiming to achieve by December 2022.
- 3) Formalise key partnerships with key organisations, community supporters & artists around the vision, mission, values and aims of Wye Valley River Festival set out in this Business Plan.
Time frame: aiming to have partnership agreements with those partners that have become long term supporters to achieve this by December 2019.
- 4) Legal requirements are confirmed by host authorities Monmouthshire County Council, Herefordshire Council, Gloucestershire County Council and Forest of Dean District Council enabling the transition of Wye Valley River Festival from a Wye Valley AONB Partnership Project to an independent entity: CIO.
Time frame: aiming to achieve by December 2020.

- 5) Satisfy the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), as the Festival leadership body, that all the above tests have been met.
Time frame: aiming to achieve at the latest by December 2024, can be earlier if all other transition tests are met.

We will review our success in achieving this goal throughout the lifetime of this Business Plan.

Wye Valley River Festival (WVRF) Leadership, Management Team and Partners



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Having successfully delivered 3 Wye Valley River Festivals the management team and the Wye Valley AONB Partnership have developed strong, productive working relationship over 6 successful years.

The Wye Valley AONB at its '3-in-1 nature'

It is important to understand that the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has a '3-in-1 nature' as referenced in all the WVRF documents.

The “AONB” is a nationally designated and protected landscape – an inanimate line on a map within which the purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, supported by a statutory Management Plan.

The “AONB Partnership” is the collection of local, regional and national organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors who are constituted through a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) to advise on the management, conservation and enhancement of the AONB and the delivery of the AONB Management Plan.

The “AONB Unit” are the small dedicated team based in Monmouth who co-ordinate and facilitate conservation and enhancement work in the AONB on behalf of the AONB Partnership. (see Appendix 2)

Leadership Body:

The Wye Valley AONB Partnership meets three times per annum at the Joint Advisory Committee and oversees the work programme and financial planning of the Festival. This Business Plan will continue this successful governance until such time as **all 5 of the Governance Transition Tests** have been met allowing for a smooth transition towards a new Governance Model. The aim of this plan is to meet the 5 key tests over the lifetime of this plan and to move to the new governance model by 2024. (see Appendix 2 AONB Partnership)

The Wye Valley River Festival Team are the Leadership and the Management Team:

Leadership Team

Andrew Blake AONB Manager

Andrew has overall responsibility for managing the Wye Valley River Festival, the freelance Festival Team and the AONB Unit. The 2 team collaboration monitor key milestones in line with the activity plan and overall risk assessment. Andrew reports to the JAC (as detailed above). Andrew is responsible for ensuring all Milestones are met, through monitoring of milestones on a daily, weekly and monthly basis as necessary. He also ensures evaluation data

collection, audience surveys and economic impact assessments are coordinated and set to maximise effect and outcome. Andrew has previously managed and delivered Wye Valley River Festivals 2014, 2016 and 2018.

Festival Director Phillippa Haynes: Reporting to AONB Manager Andrew Blake: Overall responsibility for:

Final Programme, events, spectacle shows, arts commissions and artistic content. Management of core team. Effective delivery of the Festival / Financial monitoring / Marketing overview / Quality overview and attainment of objectives and vision / Key advocate for festival at PR and Press events Liaison with key Partners – ACE, ACW, local authorities, Welsh Government, environmental agencies / Partnership development / Future and strategic planning / Working with Marketing and PR to develop future Sponsorship opportunities / Overview of Festival Infrastructure / Ensure H & S and Licensing is compliant present to SAGs alongside the Production Manager.

Management Team

AONB Unit: The staff at the AONB Unit is integrated into the Festival and core to delivery. They will be tasked in accordance to their skills, Job Descriptions and specific interest for this project, taking on additional duties in accordance with the needs of the successful festival delivery.

AONB Unit staff time allocation to festival will be assessed year by year. Currently the staff capacity is below the allocation for the 2018 Festival but the ambition is to restore capacity for 2020 and then potentially contract as the Festival moves towards adoption of a new governance model with dedicated staff taking on the work that AONB Unit staff have undertaken in previous Festivals. The estimate of AONB staff time in kind to the 2018 Festival was in the region of £60,000. Staff undertook varied roles, from R&D, theme development and Festival team liaison to programme design and delivery, logistics, ticketing set up, marketing, publicity, promotion and undertaking Festival facilitation from rubbish collection, signage, hosting, survey work, plus all of the administration and finance management. Without this level of support, it would not be possible to achieve a high percentage of artistic output and outcomes during the delivery of the Festival. The AONB Unit has secured funding from Visit Wales to deliver some of the marketing services the Festival. In addition £20,000 has been allocated to take on extra staff to cover Information Officer role which is reduced to 3 days a week and to add to the capacity in

administration and finance. These roles will be filled by autumn 2019. Enabling the AONB Unit to concentrate on management of the Festival as a whole and development of the new governance model. It is anticipated the support in terms of staff time will remain high.

WRVF Core Artistic Team: The AONB Partnership chose Phillippa Haynes as Festival Director based on her extensive track record of developing and managing strategic, large and small scale engaging work and **Desperate Men (DM)** as Artistic Directors of the WVRV 2014 because of their unsurpassed experience as one of the UK's most versatile and inventive outdoor arts companies. They have the ability to collaborate with and inspire artists, professionals and communities. DM combine artistic leadership, originality, bold innovation with 'on the ground' performance skills and inspirational ideas. They create the narrative world in which the interactive theatre exists, and lead on the spontaneous and inventive nature of the work as it responds to the events that live street theatre brings. DM direct and lead the ensemble work to ensure the aesthetic and theatrical cohesion of all performances and act as dramaturgs and outside eyes for all other created and commissioned work, making sure that work is of high quality, challenging and exciting but also coherent, accessible, relevant and effective.

Artistic Directors Desperate Men: www.desperatemen.com: **Reporting to the Festival Director. Responsible for:** Delivery and development of Outdoor Arts Programme / Ensuring and driving Artistic Quality.

Manage, facilitate and initiate artists' selection / Support and ensure quality artists' development- maintain good working relationship with key partners, stakeholders and funders. Foster and cultivate new and existing artistic partnerships. Prepare and present budgets for artistic activities to Festival Director.

Commissioning and budget management for artistic programme – with AONB Unit

Liaising with Production Manager and commissioned artists and other key members of the team. / Ensuring quality community engagement in projects.

Providing information for marketing, PR and social media / Using Desperate Men and national outdoor arts networks and contacts to promote Festival / Be available for PR and press events

Production Manager: Reporting to the Festival Director. Responsible for:

Delivery of the design and production of the Festival / Management and implementation of Festival infrastructure / Advice on specific events infrastructure / Ensure maximum cost effective procurement. Proposing budgets for production to Festival Director for ratification / Commissioning and budget management for production – with AONB Unit. Preparation of all paperwork for health and safety and licensing is done on time, is compliant and present to SAGs alongside Festival Director / Lead on licensing applications and liaison with LAs. Ensure security and stewarding is correct and informed. Manage local production people and volunteers

Programme Manager and Community Liaison Sarah Sawyer: Working with the Festival Director. Responsible for: Management and coordination of core & flow through programme / Partnership Development / enabling community to secure local and small funding / Liaising with AONB finance, community and marketing / Liaising with Production Manager / Contracting and financial management for core & flow through events – with AONB Manager & Unit / Community and engagement programmer alongside artistic team ensuring quality / Community development, coordination and continued work for the Festival.

Partnerships, Artists and Collaborators**Arts Organisations and Artists****Articulture**

will be a co-commissioning and development partner again and we will deliver a second networking seminar for Welsh and English based artists and producers,

University of South Wales Theatre and Ecology course professor Dr Hilary Ramsden

Contribute to creative vision and develop students input to the Festival. Hilary runs the Theatre & Ecology module on the drama degree at University of South Wales. For 2020 USW are hoping to expand our offer beyond Theatre & Drama students to include Geography, Film and Animation & Games students, thus extending the reach of the

Festival's impact within the University and broadening the pool of young artists that can work with the WVRF team.

<https://www.southwales.ac.uk/courses/madrama/2532/its-a-joy-for-us>

Dave Chadwick & Pa Boom Website: <https://xtrax.org.uk/artist/pa-boom/>

Dave will bring his considerable experience in theatrical events and artistic and community collaboration, fire displays, fire sculpture and production training to the project. His breadth of knowledge and experience, his sound advice about large scale spectacle, safety, and practicalities, as well as his considerable creative inventiveness, are a crucial part of this collaborative devising process.

Becky Prior / Priormade Website: <https://www.priormade.co.uk/home>

Leading on creative delivery of outreach work in schools, groups and communities, and help WVRF devise inventive programmes of work for participatory activities that will be integral parts of the festival.

Tim Hill Website: <http://www.tongues-of-fire.co.uk/band.html>

Tim Hill is WVRF music director, composer, performer & horn player, & has worked very closely with the world renowned Lydbrook Band of the Wye Valley. They are an integral part of the WVRF, combining the ensemble's street band of top jazz players with the trained brass players of the Lydbrook Band in original compositions and arrangements that complement all the festival activities, and greatly enhance the skills of both set of musicians.

Lydbrook and Monmouth Band

Will be collaborating with us identifying ways they can present and develop new work under Tim's direction.

Kathy Hinde Website: <http://kathyhinde.co.uk/>

Kathy Hinde - award winning international artist - is an audio-visual practitioner, inspired by 'phenomena found in nature and the everyday, working with sound, light, image, sculpture, and location'. Kathy previously worked with WVRF to create an installation in 2016 which brought a new dimension and understanding of art forms to the WVRF audiences.

Somewhere Nowhere / Harriet and Rob Fraser Website: <http://www.somewhere-nowhere.com/>

Harriet & Rob took part in the Wales funded R&D day in January and were enthused and inspired by our approach to collaboration. As artists new to WVRF we welcomed them bringing in different and original methods of working, and a very particular and acute sense of making art in the landscape and responding creatively to the countryside.

Anita Westmoreland**Website:** whatfolly.com

A core member of the annual Green Man festival team, responsible for management and production, she knows the outdoors context well and knows what is entailed in the practicalities and challenges of creating outdoor work. She recently produced and presented an interactive bicycle powered light installation in central Bath for Bath Business Improvement District, as part of their vision for a Bath Festival of Light 2020.

Wyldwood Arts / Penny Allen - Exec Producer**Website:****Mr and Mrs Clark****Website:** <http://www.mrandmrsclark.co.uk/>

WVRF Ensemble members since 2014, they know the festival well - it's ethos, values, aspiration and work - and as such have importantly strong and palpable connections with many of the stakeholders, partners and audience that have in many cases grown into friendships and further inventive collaborations.

Mike Akers**Website:** <http://www.mikeakers.co.uk/#welcome>

Our writer in residence has written several radio plays broadcast on BBC Radio 4. He works regularly with director Sally Cookson. Shows they have collaborated on include Boing!, Bob The Man in the Moon (both for Travelling Light in Bristol) and a trio of highly successful productions for Bristol Old Vic, Treasure Island, Peter Pan and Jane Eyre, the latter two of which both transferred to the National Theatre.

Duncan Hallis / Big Loop Theatre**Website:** <https://www.biglooptheatre.com/past-projects>

Duncan Hallis first performed and connected with WVRF as a University of Wales performing arts student in 2016, and subsequently was invited to join the Ensemble in 2018. He's young, sharp, intelligent, a fine actor and a valuable asset to the Ensemble company, and inspired partly by his work with WVRF he has set up a new theatre company Big Loop who are all keen to get involved, and who we may be able to commission collectively for specific work in WVRF20

Rod Machlachlan**Website:** rodandcone.co.uk/

Rod worked with WVRF in 2018 making bespoke projections and lighting for iconic buildings. Rod's work is technically cutting edge and beautiful. Rod can produce stunning work in a relatively short period of time - a valuable skill and great asset in the fast moving environment of a live outdoors arts festival.

Built and Natural Heritage Organisations Partners

Cadw, Forestry Commission, Foresters' Forest, Environment Agency, National Trust, Gwent Wildlife Trust, British Pilgrimage Trust, Monmouthshire Museum Services, Herefordshire Nature Trust, Wye Navigation Committee

Local, National and Regional Government supporters

Welsh Government, Ross on Wye Town Council, Shire Hall Monmouth, Monmouthshire County Council, Herefordshire Council, Tintern Community Council, Monmouth Town Council, Trellech Community Council

Tourism Supporters

Visit Wales, Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association, Visit Monmouthshire

Community and Voluntary Groups Partners

Tump committee Lydbrook, Hereford River Carnival, Carnival Arts, Art Blast, Soundworks Roger Drury, William Wilding and Play Ross, Monmouth Lantern Parade Group, Llandogo WI, Engage Youth Circus, Chepstow Walkers Welcome, Lydbrook and Monmouth Town Bands, Ross Civic Society

Local Business Supporters

Monmouth School Sports Club Wild Swim, Tintern Business Forum, Celtic Trails, Humble by Nature, Hay on Wye Festival

Action plan 2019- 2020

	Development 2019	Who	When-milestones	Evaluation	Reporting
Programme	R&D phase Jan-May 2019: adopt new theme, partner's locations, develop programme concepts devised	Wye Valley River Festival Team (WVRFT)	Achieved May 2019	Participants evaluation	JAC Date:
	1 commission of national significance co-commissioned 1 European co-commission 1 commission on AONB work	WVRFT	September 2019	Participants evaluation	
	Citizens charter	AONB unit / WVRFT	September 2019	JAC evaluation	
	Outreach programme agreed	AONB unit / WVRFT	June 2019		
Audience	Study on audience demographics	Louise Emerson	Feb 2019		Wye Valley River Festival Team and AONB unit
	Target audience identified & segmented. Data gathering strategy formulated	AONB unit	May 2019		
Marketing	New marketing strategy written	AONB unit/WVRFT	May 2019	JAC evaluation	JAC Date:

	Development 2019	Who	When- milestones	Evaluation	Reporting
	Festival pro-environmental messaging and Festival theme campaign commences social media	AONB unit/WVRFT	July 2019	Data gathering	
	Full campaign commences	AONB unit/WVRF	September 2019		
	Target increase in overnight stays, offering packages with Visit Wales Funding	AONB unit	September 2019		
Finances	Funding round Wales 5/05/2019 England rolling programme SDF rolling programme Visit Wales Funding successful £50,000 secured	AONB unit/WVRF	September 2019 act on funding picture when all grant applications known	See breakdown of time frames fir funding bids	JAC
	Income commitments from partners finalised	AONB unit/WVRF	September 2019		
Partnership Development	Partnerships maintained and developed partnership agreements in place.	Wye Valley AONB/ WVRFT	September 2019	Repeat partner's evaluation survey January 2020	JAC
	Partners letters of support	Wye Valley AONB/ WVRFT	December 2019		
Governance	Include recommendations of governance review into Business Plan	WVRFT & AONB unit	March 2019		Wye Valley River Festival Team and AONB unit

	Development 2019	Who	When-milestones	Evaluation	Reporting
	Commence meeting 5 tests to governance transition	WVRFT & AONB unit	Review Dec 2019 Review June 2020	Report on 4. Legal fit	JAC JAC

Finance

Wye Valley River Festivals in 2014, 2016 & 2018 were under-written by the Wye Valley AONB Partnership and facilitated by our finance body Herefordshire Council. In this Business Plan we intend to move from the Festival as a project run by the Wye Valley AONB Partnership to an entity with its own governance and autonomous finances. This will bring new challenges to the fore in terms of cash flow and insolvency and in terms of contracting and procurement. As the Wye Valley River Festival has a track record of 6 years of operation, we know the costs of undertaking the development and delivery of the Festival. However, there are costs that are covered in kind by the Wye Valley AONB Unit in the current set up which need to be identified and will add to the cost of Festival operations.

The majority of the income for the Festival comes from a variety of funding streams. In the 2018 Festival income was diversified by the addition of ticket sales to selected activity. This provided income that covered the costs of hosting a portion of the artistic activity, but did not accrue enough income to cover the full costs entirely. Money from sponsorship and advertising was less than in 2016 when a specialist was employed to secure advertising deals. Income from food concessions remained steady.

Income heading	2016 Festival	2018 Festival
Arts Council England - Development Phase	£8,000	£0
Arts Council of Wales - Development Phase	£5,000	£0
Sustainable Development Fund - Development Phase	£12,500	£6,512
Other funders - Development Phase	£0	£0
Wye Valley AONB funds - Development Phase	£0	£4,981
Ernest Cook Trust - Delivery Phase	£3,000	£0
Awards for All	£9,400	£0
Arts Council England - Delivery Phase	£46,900	£59,000
Arts Council of Wales - Delivery Phase	£27,000	£25,000
Sustainable Development Fund - Delivery Phase	£51,500	£50,000
Wye Valley AONB core funds - Delivery Phase	£8,000	£0
Local Authority - Delivery Phase	£2,000	£1,000
Town / Parish / Community Councils	£1,000	£2,800
Sponsorship/ advertising	£2,100	£100
Food concessions	£527	£2,134
Ticket sales	£0	£11,831
T-shirt sales / cash tickets	£0	£1,350
Cadw	£0	£4,800
Forestry Commission	£2,000	£5,000
Foresters' Forest	£0	£5,000
Environment Agency	£5,000	£5,000
Visit Wales Delivery Phase	£0	£14,400
Visit Wales Development Phase (Governance study etc.)	£0	£0
SDF underspend & re-allocation of projects	£7,287	£7,073
Tintern contribution	£975	£0
SDF education project	£4,300	£0
Total	£196,489	£205,981

Earned Income comparison 2016 and 2018

Comparing the two Festivals of 2016 & 2018 reveals a marked difference in earned income. For the 2016 Festival the strategic direction focused on generating a revenue stream from sponsorship and advertising (See Figure 1). Expertise was bought in to create and sponsorship offer in the form of packages/advertising deals to local businesses. The income accrued amounted to £2,100, while the cost of buying in the expertise amounted to £5,000, leaving a budget deficit of £3,000. Beyond financial considerations the strategy presented the Festival to the business community, creating brand awareness with potential future supporters. Several reciprocal advertising deals were arranged providing exposure in magazines and in tourism publications. The 2016 Festival partnered with Sunshine Radio as a media sponsor providing exposure on line and on the airwaves during the Festival.

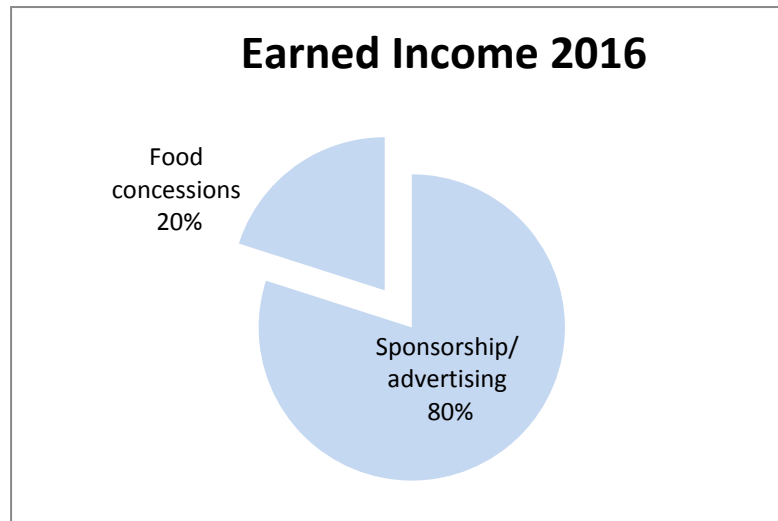
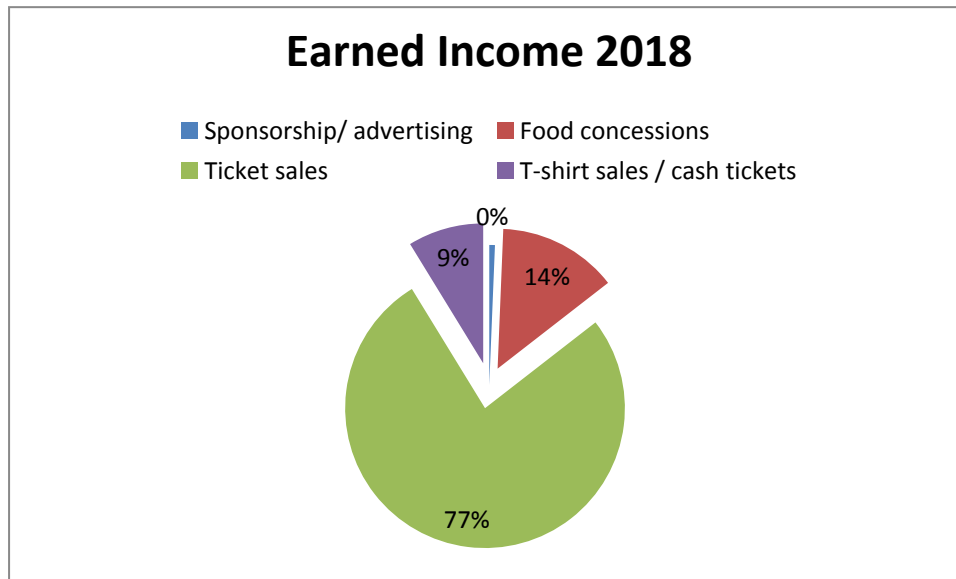


Figure 1

Earned Income 2016	
Food concessions	£527
Sponsorship and advertising	£2,100

For the 2018 Festival the we tested the viability of ticket sales at a selected event that was part of the Festival Programme (See Figure 2). The event was the week long installation of Luke Jerram’s Museum of the Moon at Tintern Abbey. This venture was more successful in creating an income stream for the Festival. A modest ticket price accrued an income to offset the hire and installation costs. The income from food concessions increased although the management of fee recovery (10% of takings) was poor and difficult to enforce and only one food concession company contributed to the earned income, while others chose to charge less or fed the cast free of charge instead of paying 10% of their takings to the Festival. An improved business approach is required to manage food concessions to maximize earnings in this area. The Report into future income generation undertaken by Louise Emerson recommended not to pursue the area of merchandising for income generation. The t-shirts produced in 2018 were a brand visibility and marketing strategy as opposed to an income generation and in that way they proved to be a successful tool.



Earned Income 2018	
Sponsorship/ advertising	£100.00
Food concessions	£2,133.63
Ticket sales	£11,831.32
T-shirt sales / cash tickets	£1,350.00

Figure 2

Earned Income Strategy 2020

For the 2020 Festival a ticketed event is again planned at Tintern Abbey. The gate for 2018 was 3,500 with ticket sales of £11,831 at a ticket price of £3.80 - below the normal daytime entry price to Tintern Abbey. In 2020 we plan to set our ticket price more in line with standard Tintern Abbey entry prices, charging a little above where value is added with additional attractions. The table below indicates the proposed ticketing price point and an estimate of ticket sale accrued. The gate for the event is based on actual gate figures from 2018. The sales projections are then repeated with a gate at half of the ticket sales of 2018. This gives an indication of the potential to raise revenue from ticket sales in 2020.

Description	Ticket Entry Cadw	WVRF 2020 regular night	WVRF 2020 picnic	Based on 2018 Gate	Sales estimate	Based on a reduced gate	Reduced Sales estimate
Adult	£7.30	£7.00	£8.50	2,160	£15,120.00	1160	£8,120.00
Family (2 adults up to 3 kids)	£21.20	£20.00	£24.00	200	£4,000.00	100	£2,000.00
Juniors 5-17	£4.40	£4.00	£5.00	50	200	25	£100.00
kids under 5	free	free	free				
65+	£5.80	£5.00	£6.00	800	£4,000.00	400	£2,000.00
Armed forces	£4.40	£4.00	£6.00	20	£80.00	10	£40.00
Disabled & companion each	free	£3.50	£5.00	20	£70.00	10	£35.00
Tintern Resident	free	£3.50	£5.00	250	£1,250.00	125	£437.50
Total				3,500	£24,720.00	1830	£12,732.50

The profit from the income generated from ticket sales in 2020 will go towards building Wye Valley River Festival reserves in order to meet test 1) in the criteria needed to **Transition to a New Governance Model**.

Food concessions and advertising

In 2020 where the opportunity for food concessions at Festival sites exists a flat stand fee of £50 will be charged when booking a pitch. Each stand will sign a contract agreeing to pay 10% of takings to the Festival. Management of this element will be undertaken by staff managed by the Wye Valley AONB Unit.

Advertising opportunities with Wye Valley River Festival are limited. We want to keep the Wye Valley River Festival brand clean and clear and to highlight the grant funders whose support make it possible. There will be opportunities for limited advertising in the programme. The marketing strategy will further set out this small revenue raising opportunity.

Sponsorship

Taking advice from our Festival mentor Andy Fryers of Hay Festival, we are producing an advocacy pack for the Festival and looking to engage sponsors or patrons who have a strong connection with the Wye Valley and the core values of the Festival. Andy is providing contacts through business networks to the Welsh Diaspora in particular, these individuals identify with the geographical region, the beauty of the landscape and the lifestyle and cultural of the area. Many of these individuals are part of a business network dispersed nationally and internationally and have positions of influence and resources at their disposal. Our strategy is to target these individuals through the networks provided by Andy Fryers and direct our advocacy work towards building a close and beneficial relationship. Financial patronage would move this plan towards building the sustainable financing required to fulfil test **1) Transition to New Governance**.

Delivery Phase Strategy Comparison 2016 and 2018

Figures 5 & 6 show that the input from the main funders. The Sustainable Development Fund has remained steady of the period of comparison. The investment from Arts Council of Wales has steadily declined, with re-application required before funding was secured for 2018. The investment from Arts Council England has steadily increased and surpassed any other funder. Arts Council England whole heartedly supported the application providing a detailed and helpful breakdown of the Festival Funding application.

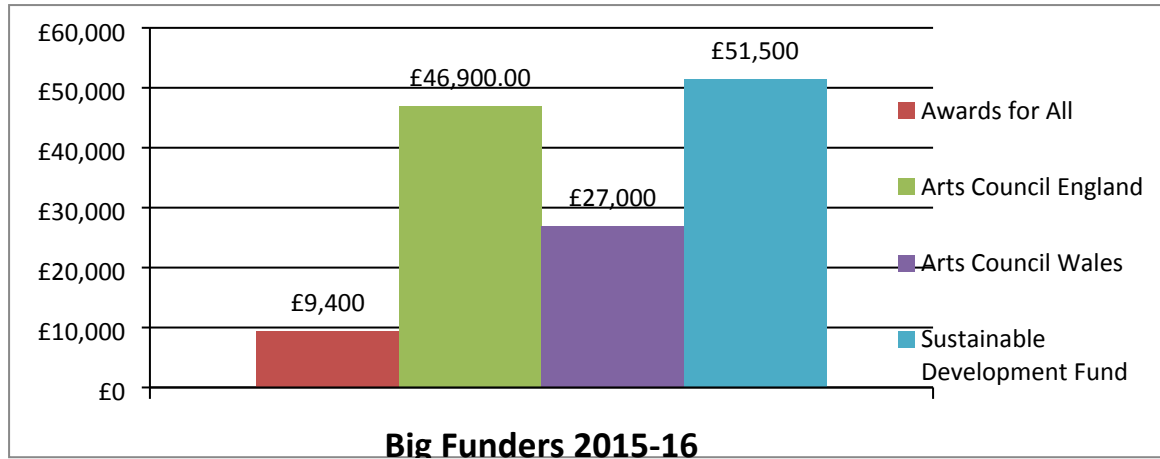


Figure 5

Funding to Awards for All was unsuccessful in 2017-18 but a new funder Visit Wales has provided support for our marketing budget. See Figure 6.

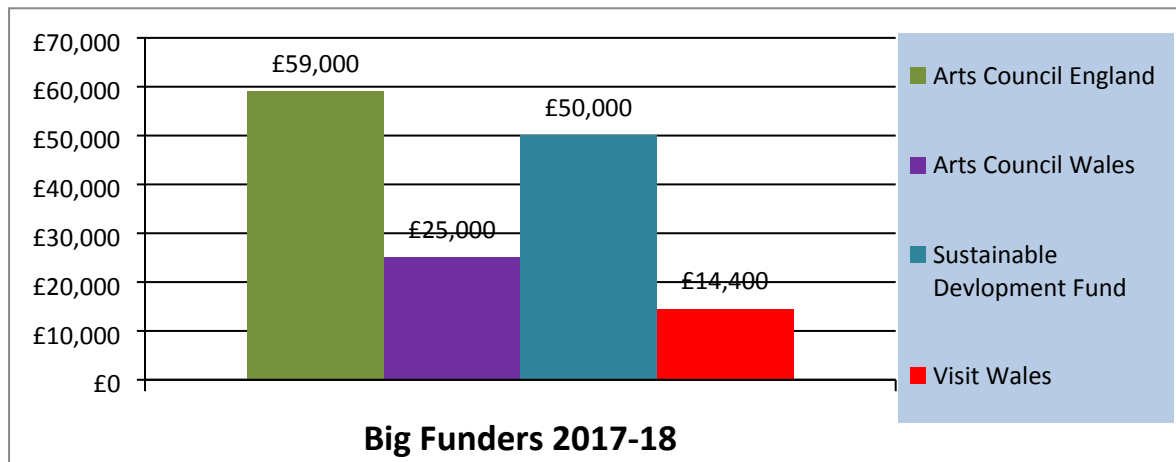


Figure 6

Funding strategy for Delivery Phase 2019-2020

The majority of the Funding for Wye Valley River Festival is again to be raised from grants and funders.

Our funding target for 2020 is £305,699 which is larger than previous Festivals, however an important portion of this finance is already secured. Visit Wales have awarded funding in April 2019 to develop this product alongside an Interpretation space for the Wye Valley Landscape at the Festival to enhance the visitor experience. Wye Valley River Festival, after costs raised revenue from ticket sales enabling a small reserve to facilitate the marketing bid and arts development bid. This places the Festival in a strong position to move forward with the plans for 2020.

The Festival aims to increase overnight visitors stays and in particular attract visitors from England into Wales (see Marketing Strategy 'Across the Bridges' campaign). This element of the Festival includes developing a product for overnight stays to enhance the visitors experience during the Festival.

The funding target for 2020 is achievable and realistic based on previous experience and taking into consideration the current economic climate (see SWOT and PESTLE). There will be at least 2 bookable products with the intention of creating an income stream for the Festival (see Marketing Strategy). During the Festival a week- long event at Tintern Abbey with a spectacular evening to night time show will be ticketed offering the opportunity for revenue raising

Projected Income & Financial Milestones 2019-2020

£82,800 secured to date

Date of Submission	Funder	Expected decision	Amount
08/05/2019	Arts council Wales	01/08/2019	£25,000
01/07/2019	Arts council England	01/10/2019	£70,000
29/04/2019	SDF	secured	£50,000
01/04/2019	Visit Wales	secured	£50,000
11/04/2019	Forestry Commission	11/05/2019	£5,000
11/04/2019	Foresters' Forest	secured	£5,000
11/04/2019	Environment Agency	secured	£5,000
01/12/2018	Cadw	Secured	£4,800
29/03/2019	Welsh Government	secured29/03/2019	£5,000
01/04/2019	AONB core funds	secured01/04/2019	£20,000
01/04/2019	WVRF funds	secured01/04/2019	£18,000
03/05/2019	Further Cadw money	secured	£4,800
tbc	Town councils	target	£3,000
01/06/2019	Lottery Bid	target	£10,000
Target Ticket sales			£10,000
Food Concession target			£5,000
Bookable walking product target ticket sales			£3,000
Sponsorship/advertising			£2,000
AONB contingency (unless other funds raised)			£10,000
Total			£305,600
Target			£305,699

Projected Expenditure 2019-20

Choirs	Fee	£1,000
William Wilding	Fee	£2,500
Musical Programme Llandogo	Fees	£1,000
Musical Commission Tintern	Fee	£2,000
Pa-Boom Dave Chadwick - Commissions	Fee	£6,500
Fire Processions Llandogo and Monmouth		£1,500
Shire Hall - Various installations	various fees	£12,000
Symonds Yat - Various installations	various fees	£10,000
Llandogo Finali day	various fees	£12,000
Wolves	fee	£6,000
Art event in Ross/Fownhope		£6,000
CloudScapes	Fee	£1,700
Humanoids - Artists Fee and Production		£30,000
Rod Mclachlan - projections	Fee	£3,500
	Subtotal	£131,200
Marketing		
social media across the bridge campaign		£2,447
Print advertising, including design		£1,000
Roadside banners and arts specific interpretation		£2,422
20,000 leaflets		£3,000
10.000 programmes		£2,100
Welsh translation		£3,000
Distribution		£490
Posters and postcards		£540
Digital marketing campaign		£10,000
Photography		£2,000
Film and drone shorts		£4,000

website		£4,000
Marketing Guerilla		£2,000
Subtotal		£36,999
Running costs		
Productions Costs - equipment hire PA etc		£8,000
Specialist contractors (electricians, riggers etc)		£2,000
Toilets , marquees structures		£3,500
Legal, licencing and insurance		£1,500
Vehicle hire / fuel		£2,000
Stewarding and security		£7,500
LX and safety lighting		£3,500
Site decor including tables		£2,000
Accomodation		£4,000
Travel core, crew and performers		£4,000
Festival Production staff		£2,000
Subtotal		£40,000
Making your work more accessible		
Outreach workshops TBD		£10,000
Engagement on site workshops TBD		£6,000
Wye Valley AONB interpretation space		£10,000
Bookable walking product		£10,000
Subtotal		£36,000
Monitoring and evaluation		£2,500
In kind students USW		£2,000
Total Festival Budget		£307,699

SWOT Analysis

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong national geographical area awareness/brand recognition • Good images from WVRF2018 • Success of 3 festivals with good community take up and support • Unique location cross border Wales/England. History of cross border working • Strong regional and country identification/ three counties/two countries • Strong landscape/river affinities/awareness • Good tourism connections • Strong AONB and festival team experienced in project management • Strong Core artistic team exceptional experience and networks for developing engaged festivals • Long and historical partnership working/good network • Good communications and administration systems • Variety of funding opportunities • Good local press awareness of event following success of 2018 event • Targeting of key audience through social media campaign • Extensive arts networks within core team 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large geographical area to manage • Large number of diverse community interests • Problems of cross border co-operation • Dealing with three counties and two countries with different language, systems, councils, regulations and legal constraints and funding mechanisms • Complex logistics • Fragmented tourism associations/bodies throughout river valley corridor • Small team with other core activities and time restrictions • Restricted timescales and short deadlines • Limited funding • Dependence on community volunteers • Limited press penetration in Hereford/wider region; nationally
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop further local, national and international awareness of area and extend positive messages about Wye Valley landscape, heritage, culture, history and environment • Raise Arts engagement and participation • Create a unique and contemporary artistic, cultural and environmental experience for visitors and locals alike • Build on cross border working opportunities • Increase regional and country identification with the Wye Valley • Raise awareness of AONB purpose & Unit/landscape/river affinities/awareness • Bring together tourism connections and develop further tourism opportunities • Increase AONB team skills and experience 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of communities if expectations • Lack of investment by national government in local authority tourism or arts services. • Inability to raise enough funding to create and market a robust programme • Overstretching AONB team and systems • Environmental problems • Unable to build reserves to transition governance and sustain the Festival • Failure to meet marketing objectives if marketing not funded and targeted correctly and comprehensively • Insufficient skills or motivation within some communities to manage/support local delivery and marketing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish partnership working with arts and heritage organisations /professionals • Develop communications and administration systems including social networking • Explore further funding opportunities and gain experience of funding bids • Link diverse organisations together in a common cause • Deliver the message about the historical, cultural and environmental importance of the Wye Valley to a local, national and international audience. • Establish a sustainable River Festival over 5 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events coming together at the last minute, limiting advance PR and marketing opportunities; creating demand for last-minute PR activity which deluges local press
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An analysis of the strategic external environment facing Wye Valley River Festival.

Political	Economic	Social- cultural	Technology	Legal	Environment
<p>Legislation With the adoption of a new governance model the need to implement that change with care against a background of closer scrutiny of the charitable sector since well-publicised failures e.g. Kidz company</p> <p>Brexit uncertainty may provide an opportunity to focus on the British landscape and celebrate it in a positive way.</p>	<p>Investment The competition for funding is strong and the need to diversify income streams is inevitable. The challenge is to do this without compromising the values of the Festival to provide free and inclusive access to high quality art in the landscape.</p> <p>Costs With the move to new governance model new costs will be incurred. Economists are currently</p>	<p>Values and culture Post Blue Planet and in answer to climate change inertia there is an opportunity to focus on clear pro-environmental actions- citizens charter</p> <p>Lifestyle Active lifestyles and actions towards improving health and well -being are a current focus of attention. The Festival programme can provide opportunities through walking etc. that do both.</p>	<p>New tech Data will become increasingly important in our ability to reach our target audience, evidence our success and advocate for our approach.</p> <p>IT Social media will continue to morph and develop we need to buy in expertise to mount campaigns on our behalf to keep up to date relevant and efficient. Savvy use of technology can pay off in engaging target</p>	<p>Industry's laws and policy Increasing our data handling ability requires compliance with the law and we will need to ensure policies and procedures are in place to do so.</p> <p>Safety issues Keeping up to changes to the HSE guidelines and once Festival activity has been risk assessed we will be able to identify any outstanding issues</p>	<p>Environmental issues The Festival is largely about environmental education and the focus will be on climate change in 2020</p> <p>Energy consumed and Waste disposal Carbon minimization if the aim. We are consulting with experts to undertake a strategic approach to achieve this aim.</p>

Political	Economic	Social- cultural	Technology	Legal	Environment
<p>Within the context of the National Association of AONB's work with Arts has come to the fore as an important mechanism for raising the importance of landscape & threats to conserving and enhancing now and in the future. There is an opportunity for the Festival to raise its profile nationally through this current level of interest. We will need to keep up to date with moves nationally and remain engaged and relevant to all conversations going forward.</p>	<p>predicting food and retail price inflation in 2019 and it would be safe to assume that other costs of services will also increase. We will need to reflect this within the new budgets created for the 2020 Festival and continue to seek the best value for money with this budget.</p> <p>Economic growth We want to demonstrate the positive economic impact of the Festival. An objective is to generate overnight visitor stay. (This will require using existing data from tourism partners to bench mark newly collated data. However, this is set against a background of predicted slow-down of the economy and weak consumer spending. It is safe to say that predictions for the economy at time of writing this Business Plan are challenging for the expert economists as the</p>	<p>Attitudes We strive for an inclusive Festival. This comes with challenges to provide access for all too challenging landscapes. We will continue to improve opportunities for all to access the Wye Valley River Festival in as many locations as possible.</p> <p>Demography The Wye Valley is well placed to encourage visitors from Bristol, Cardiff, Newport, Gloucester and Hereford to larger events. See demographics study for a full breakdown of our current understanding of our audience (marketing plan)</p> <p>Education Involving young people in gaining an understanding, knowledge that develops the desire to care for the natural environment is acknowledged as an</p>	<p>audiences with our messages.</p>	<p>that need considered and separate attention.</p> <p>Trade regs Food concessions Road closures Permissions Signage all needed to be planned and implemented in a timely fashion to respond to changes to process and procedures locally which we have found to be a common external challenge.</p>	

Political	Economic	Social- cultural	Technology	Legal	Environment
	<p>country is facing a time of volatility and unpredictable financial markets. Flexibility, adaptability and on-going awareness of the situation will be key to Wye Valley River Festival success in navigating turbulent economic times.</p>	<p>important aspiration. Some of this work happens in schools yet is limited by the knowledge of teachers and lack of outdoor contact. This Festival provides an opportunity to provide high quality activity that schools may not have the time with all the other pressures, to deliver. A focused attention on issues of importance and a means to engage with those issues designed to match those needs.</p>			

WVRF 19-2020 Delivery Schedule

Start date	End Date	Activity or Task	Task Lead
		KEY : AONB = Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit / FD = Festival Director / AD's Artistic Directors / PM = Production Manager /	
16.11.19	30.11.19	Inform all Artists, Partners and Stakeholders of final funding / current funding / and festival plans	AONB / FD
16.11.19	15.1.20	Confirmation of Contracts & Partnership Agreements / Setting Roles and Responsibilities	AONB / FD
16.11.29	15.1.20	Confirmation of Artists & PM's Contracts	AD's
16.11.19	15.1.20	Set up meetings with Site Managers / Local producers and production staff	AD's
16.11.19	27.11.20	Set up monthly monitoring and Evaluation meetings	FD
16.11.19	20.5.20	Activate Marketing Plan	AONB
16.11.19	5.2.20	Plan Rehearsal and Production Schedules	AD's
16.11.19	29.1.20	Initial Marketing to Regional and National Tourist and Festival Organisations	AONB
24.11.19	25.11.19	WVRF2019 rep to attend ISAN conference	FD
30.11.19	18.12.19	Set dates for training and W/shop book venues/ prepare marketing	FD
23.11.19	18.12.20	Tender for PR agency	AONB
8.1.20	10.1.20	Creative planning weekend with all Artists Partners & Environmentalists	AD's
4.1.20	1.2.20	Tender for Evaluation work	AONB
4.1.20	4.3.20	Apply for Permissions/ Licenses / Road Closures etc.	PM
4.1.20	1.4.20	Site Visits with Artists and PM	AD's
4.1.20	1.4.20	Confirm, contract and agree all other programming / artists / contractors / freelancers / personnel / security / volunteers etc.	FD

4.1.16	28.3.20	Design and development bespoke art pieces / props / Costumes & sourcing of materials / suppliers	PM with And Now & Will Datson
4.3.20	28.4.20	Creative Workshops	AD's
22.3.20	28.4.20	Schools Workshops	FD
14.3.20	1.4.20	Manage set up of full programme including community additions and new partnership work	FD
4.3.20	6.3.20	Festival Partners and Participants Launch Event	
7.3.20	18.3.20	Prepare press launch / Finalise print	AONB
1.4.20	22.4.20	Finalise delivery details of overall programme	FD
28.3.20	11.4.20	Prepare and finalise production infrastructure	PM
11.4.20	28.4.20	Ensemble Rehearsal period	AD's
11.4.20	28.4.20	Site Builds and get-ins prior to delivery	PM
		Festival Delivery	FD
16.5.20	20.5.20	Production Wrap Up / Budgets / Sites /	PM
16.5.20	27.5.20	Post Festival Marketing /Promotion / Reporting	AONB
23.5.20	6.6.20	Evaluation / Economic impact / Collation / Report Writing	FD
23.5.20	6.6.20	Editing of & Collation of Film & Photographic Documentation	AD's
6.6.20	13.6.20	complete funding reports	AONB/FD
6.6.20	30.7.20	Finalise and Wrap up Budgets	AONB / Festival Director
6.6.20	30.7.20	Finish all Data / Feedback collation	AONB

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Pro-Environmental Research: the evidence base for our vision

A wealth of current research points to the importance of engaging emotions to assist in change towards pro-environmental behaviour. The Arts play a role in eliciting an emotional response to landscape, although experienced differently by audiences depending on a range of other factors as illustrated in the model below 'Mind the Gap.' A proportion of the audience will experience a profound engagement of the emotions, sufficient to break through barriers to behaviour change and move towards pro-environmental behaviour. By engaging an audience with emotions, providing clear information and discussion and offering opportunity to channel pro-environmental actions we feel that the Festival offers a great opportunity to take an audience on a journey towards a pro-environmental behaviour.

Curtis in his paper '*Creating inspiration: The role of the arts in creating empathy for ecological restoration*,' concluded that 'by providing an emotional affinity or empathy for the natural environment, art can have a major role in influencing pro-environmental attitudes.' First published: 24 November 2009 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1442-8903.2009.00487.x>

Citation: Lumber R, Richardson M, Sheffield D (2017) Beyond knowing nature: Contact, emotion, compassion, meaning, and beauty are pathways to nature connection. PLoS ONE 12(5): e0177186. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0177186>

Lumber, Richardson and Sheffield in the 2017 research concluded that 'Activities that involved contact, meaning, emotion, compassion and beauty were found to be both indicators of, then pathways towards nature connectedness. There is a need to move beyond a superficial contact with nature or focussing exclusively on knowledge and identification, when fostering a relationship with nature. Researchers and

practitioners interested in facilitating nature connectedness and its associated benefits should focus specifically on activities that involve contact, meaning, emotional attachment, or a compassionate relationship with nature that includes engaging with nature’s beauty.’

In conclusion it is good to be aware of the growing body of academic research which we can hang ‘pin’ our vision to. The approach the Wye Valley River Festival has chosen seeks to fully engage the emotions and foster the change we want to see towards pro-environmental behaviours.



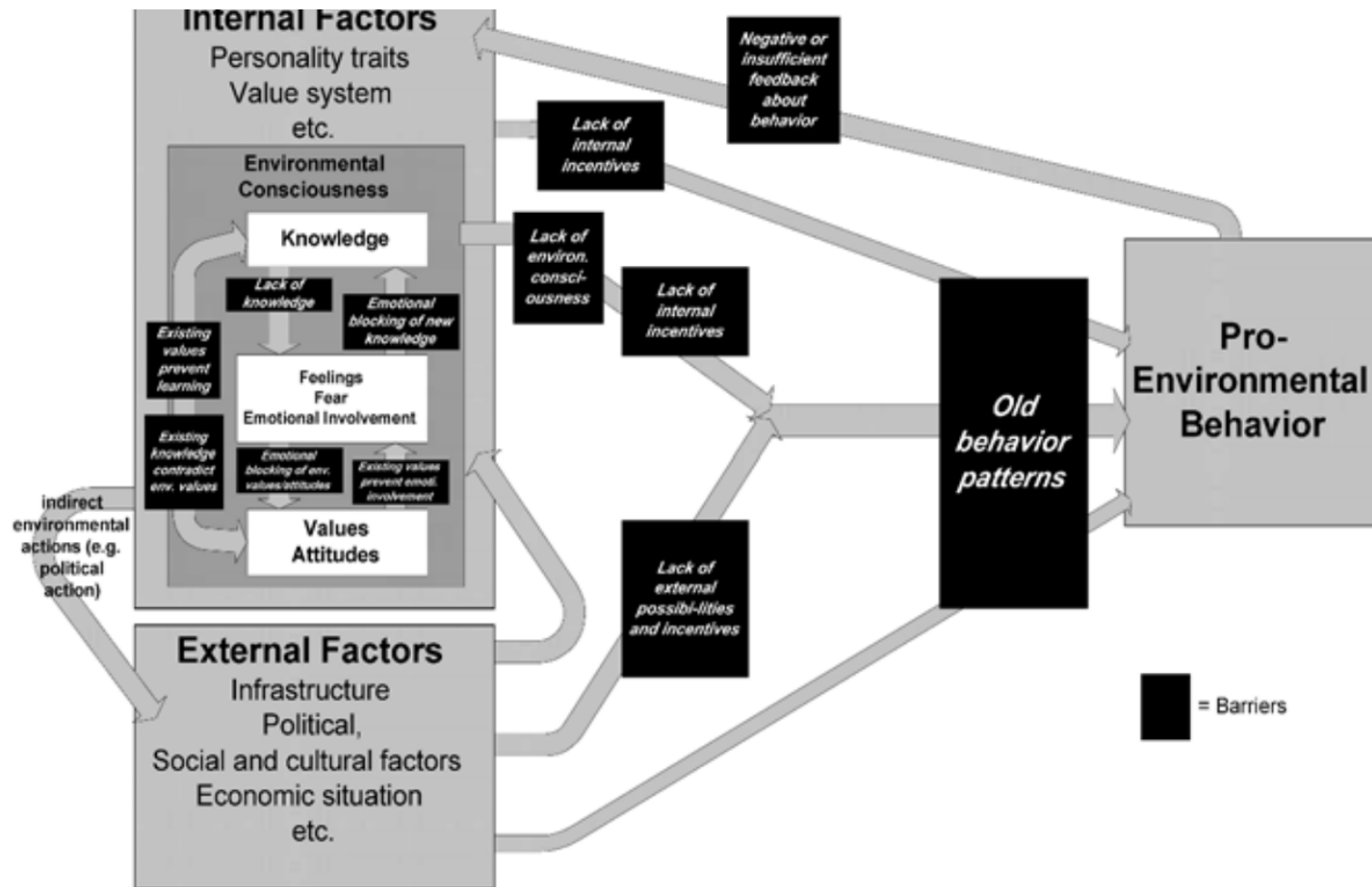


FIG. 7. Model of pro-environmental behaviour (Kollmuss & Agyeman).

Mind the Gap: *Why do people act environmentally and what are the barriers to pro-environmental behaviour?* Anja Kollmuss & Julian Agyeman July 2009.

Appendix 2 - Wye Valley AONB Partnership

The Wye Valley AONB Unit is the lead delivery agent for the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership dedicated to conserving & enhancing the nationally designated Wye Valley AONB, guided by the statutory Wye Valley AONB Management Plan and staffed by employees of the representative local authorities; Forest of Dean District Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council. The AONB Partnership is led by the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) established under agreement by the Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council with core grant contributions from Welsh Government through Natural Resources Wales and DEFRA. Herefordshire Council acts as treasurer for the AONB Unit's finances.

The wider and higher interests in the AONB are generally referred to as the "AONB Partnership" which includes the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), Tourism Co-ordination Group etc. who have all endorsed and are supportive of the Wye Valley River Festival and see great value in it to further our ambitions. **Joint Advisory Committee includes Local Authorities:** Forest of Dean District Council - 2 councillors, Gloucestershire County Council - 2 councillors, Herefordshire Council - 2 councillors, Monmouthshire County Council - 4 councillors. **Co-opted members:** Hereford Association of Local Councils, Gloucestershire Associated Parish Town Councils, One Voice Wales, County Land and business Association, National Farmers Union, Voluntary conservation representatives from Gloucestershire, Herefordshire & Monmouthshire, The Wildlife Trust, Wye Valley Society, River Wye Preservation Trust, recreation and tourism interests.

Technical Officers' Working Party: Representatives of the four local authorities, and Government Agencies including: Cadw / Historic England / Environment Agency / Natural Resources Wales / Forestry Commission / Natural England.

Appendix 3 - Themes

Strap line:

Wye Valley River Festival: embrace the outdoors, ignite the imagination, and engage the mind (2018)

Brand/ look:

Woodcut image

Artistic Theme for 2020:

Time

Environment Messages:

We need to act now to reverse effect of climate change and biodiversity loss





TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
1st July 2019

AONB PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL STUDY TOUR

Purpose

To endorse the date and outline programme for the Annual AONB Partnership Study Tour.

Recommendations

That the JAC

- A. Note the date of Friday 20th September 2019 for the Study Tour and encourage a good attendance, at £15 each.

- B. Invite representatives from our neighbouring Shropshire Hills and Malvern Hills AONB Partnerships and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and other appropriate partners.

Key Issues

- This year the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour will be held on Friday 20th September.
- The programme is still being finalised but will focus predominantly on projects and management issues in the southern part of the AONB in Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire.
- Initial invitations for expressions of interest to attend will be sent out shortly.
- Invitations could be extended to representatives from our neighbouring Designated Landscapes and other appropriate partner organisations in the interest of sharing good practice and broadening collaboration.

Reasons

The Annual Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour is hosted by the JAC and has a good reputation for networking and achieves good attendance from the wider AONB Partnership. The invitation to attend the Tour is extended to all members of the Joint Advisory Committee, to Senior Officers and County and District Councillors whose wards fall within the Wye Valley AONB and all Town/Parish/Community Councils that lie within the AONB. It is thus a key tool in the transfer of information to the wider partners and interested parties in the AONB. There is some capacity to increase numbers on the Tour and this could include invitations to neighbouring Designated Landscapes and other appropriate partner organisations.

Implications

The date of 20th September was chosen for the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour because there appear to be no conflicting council meetings of the four constituent local authorities. In various previous years invitations have been extended to our neighbouring Designated Landscapes; in the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership. It is also proposed to invite representatives from the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership, and also potentially from the National Association for AONBs, the Welsh Government Landscape and Outdoor Recreation team and DEFRA's Landscape Policy Unit.

In recent years the Tour has comprised of 2 mini-buses, driven by AONB staff, and there is the capacity to provide a 3rd mini-bus.

The programme for the Tour is still being finalised, but will include the Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) and Green Infrastructure (GI) Project and other initiatives and management issues in the southern part of the AONB in Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire.

The event reaches a wide audience of AONB partners and interested parties and always proves to be very popular and informative for those who attend. Lunch and transport is included in the total cost of £15 per person.

Background

Each year the JAC hosts the Annual Study Tour. A total of 29 people participated in the 2018 AONB Partnership Tour. There was a good spread of representation from throughout the AONB even though the Tour was focused on a selection of land management projects and issues in the Herefordshire part of the AONB north of Ross-on-Wye. The Tour visited Hurstans' Coronation Meadow, Sollers Hope; the Canwood Gallery & Sculpture Park, Checkley; Haugh Wood; Ballingham Court Farm - AONB Farming Award winners in 2008, 2012 & 2018; Tresseck Campsite, Hoarwithy and the Harewood Park Estate. Feedback from attendees of the Tour was extremely positive.

The 2017 Tour visited sites between Ross-on-Wye and Lydbrook. The Tour visited the riverside at Ross, Goodrich Castle, Coppett Hill Common, Brelston Green and Lydbrook Bridge.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
1st July 2019

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)

Purpose

To inform members of the achievements of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in 2018/19 and recent applications in 2019/20 and to make suggestions for the co-option of a new SDF Assessment Panel member.

Recommendation

That the JAC welcomes the achievements of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in 2018/19 and 2019/20 to date.

Key Issues

- The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) is a delegated grant from Welsh Government administered by the Wye Valley AONB Partnership and confirmed for 2019/20 at £55,000 per annum.
- The achievements of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in 2018/19 are below and in Appendix 1.
- The current allocation of SDF grants is also appended with £16,100 remaining to be allocated in 2019/20.
- The local government elections created a vacancy on the SDF Assessment Panel for a co-opted public sector representative. Suggestions are welcome.

Reasons

Welsh Government (WG) provide the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) which is administered by the Wye Valley AONB Unit and the SDF Assessment Panel. WG have confirmed that the SDF for 2019/20 is £55,000 per annum, similar to the previous 3 years.

The SDF Assessment Panel is established as a sub-group of the JAC. The SDF Assessment Panel is made up of public, private and voluntary sector representatives with 2 appointees from each sector to ensure a balance across social, community, economic and environmental interests, with additional officers' support. The JAC nominates 3 members, one for each sector, to complement 3 independent co-opted appointees to the Panel. The current Panel members and Terms of Reference of the SDF Assessment Panel is attached (Appendix 2).

The local government elections in May have created a vacancy on the SDF Assessment Panel.

Implications

The value of projects receiving SDF in 2018/19 totalled £301,961.65. Fourteen projects shared £55,000 of SDF (see Appendix 1 below), with an average grant rate of 36.7% and leveraging in match funding totalling £262,214.74:-

2018/19 SDF	Match Funding	
Cash	Public sector	£186,468.00
	Private sector	£18,079.00
	Voluntary sector	£1,334.00
	Lottery	£0.00
	European - LEADER	£13,000.00
Volunteer/In Kind	time@£50/day	£3,456.24
	time@£100/day	£1,087.50
	In Kind Value	£38,790.00
	Total	£262,214.74

The current SDF allocations in 2019/20 are also listed below in Appendix 1. Grants to date total £38,900 with an average rate of 28.6%, towards projects with a value of £143,852. There is £16,100 remaining from the £55,000.

The AONB Unit and other partners promote the availability of the SDF to as many sectors as possible in Monmouthshire. Members are similarly encouraged to do so, and Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer, is available to discuss and advise on potential applications (contact community@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk).

The SDF Assessment Panel has two representatives each for the public, private and voluntary sectors, along with officers from Natural Resources Wales and Monmouthshire County Council. There is currently a vacancy on the Panel following the local government elections in May. Therefore it is proposed that a new appointee is found and co-opted to the Panel as a Public Sector representative. These will be complemented by three members from the JAC, one for each sector, and two other independent appointees. The objective is to have a good balance across social, community, economic and environmental interests on the Panel.

Background

The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) has been available in the Wye Valley AONB for 18 years in Wales and but was a casualty of austerity in England, where it ran for 10 years.

APPENDIX 1. SDF Approved 2018/19 & 2019/20 to date

2018/19 Code	Applicant	Project Title	years		Total Cost	SDF Grant	%
			This	Total			
WV00 YR18W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	10% Admin	1	1		£5,500	
WV02 YR18W	Wye Valley AONB Partnership	Wye Valley River Festival 2018	2	2	£238,500.00	£26,000	11%
WV03 YR18W	Cadw & Wye Valley AONB Partnership	Tintern Abbey Beacon Technology	2	2	£22,800.00	£5,000	22%
WV04 YR18W	Arborealists	Exhibition	1	1	£4,438.75	£1,000	23%
WV05 YR18W	Tintern Festivals	Ways to Peace	1	1	£4,483.00	£999	22%
WV06 YR18W	Wye Valley AONB Partnership	Tintern Japanese Knotweed Project	1	2	£2,325.00	£1,725	74%
WV07 YR18W	Little Wren	Hedge-laying	1	1	£2,000.00	£960	50%
WV08 YR18W	Monmouth Town Council	Monmouth Lantern Parade	1	1	£8,000.00	£1,000	13%
WV09 YR18W	Edward Rodgers	Hedge laying at Trellech Barn	1	1	£2,000.00	£1,000	50%
WV10 YR18W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	GWT Trainees	1	2	£4,426.00	£900	20%
WV11 YR18W	Wye Valley AONB Partnership	Natural Flood Management Farm Advice	1	1	£9,234.90	£7,200	78%
WV12 YR18W	Chris Trow	Hedgelaying at Elm Farm	1	1	£1,514.00	£757	50%
WV13 YR18W	Anne Porter	Llanishen church yard	1	1	£240.00	£120	50%
WV14 YR18W	Suzanna Knock	Farm Hedge planting	1	1	£2,000.00	£1,000	50%
WV15 YR18W	Wye Valley AONB Partnership	Wye valley River Festival R&D	1	1	£238,500.00	£1,839	1%
TOTALS					£301,961.65	£55,000	av36.7%

2019/20 Code	Applicant	Project Title	years		Total Cost	SDF Grant	%
			This	Total			
WV00 YR19W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	10% Admin	1	1		£5,500	
WV01 YR19W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	GWT Trainees	1	2	£2,192	£900	41%
WV02 YR19W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	GWT Machinery & Habitat Management Project	1	1	£35,360	£7,500	21%
WV03 YR19W	Wye Valley AONB Partnership	Wye Valley River Festival 2020	1	2	£106,300	£25,000	24%
TOTALS (to date)					£143,852	38,900	av28.6%
<i>Remaining from £55,000</i>						<i>£16,100</i>	

APPENDIX 2.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)

ASSESSMENT PANEL

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Objectives

- a. The purpose of the Assessment Panel is to decide upon allocation of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) based on applications for the SDF in accordance with the SDF Guidelines. The SDF is a delegated grant from Welsh Government administered by Wye Valley AONB Partnership.

2. Panel membership

- a. The Panel is a task-group of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and has executive powers and co-opted members.
- b. Membership of the Panel will be based on the thirds principle:- public, private and voluntary sector, to include those with experience through local and regional organisations and embracing a range of interests such as community, business, environmental, wildlife, agriculture, tourism and recreational interests. The current membership of the Panel is appended.
- c. Nominations and co-options to the Panel will be normally for three years.
- d. Nominations and co-options will be endorsed annually by the JAC in March for the forthcoming financial year.
- e. The Panel will elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman at its first meeting. In the absence of both, those Panel members present will choose a Chairman for the meeting.
- f. If a member of the Panel has any direct and significant involvement with a proposed project being considered, then they should declare this at the appropriate point on the agenda, and revoke their voting rights for any vote on that project.

3. Meetings

- a. Meetings will be held at least once each year and will be serviced by the AONB Unit.
- b. The quorum for a Panel meeting shall be one-third plus one. However previously submitted comments on an application by a Panel member will be recorded as valid for that item. If at any time the number of members falls below quorum the meeting shall be adjourned.
- c. The order of business at each meeting shall be as follows:
 - to receive any apologies for absence
 - receive disclosures of interest
 - approve the Minutes of the last Meeting
 - dispose of business (if any) remaining from the previous meeting
 - report on progress of approved schemes
 - consider applications for grants
 - receive reports on grant applications fast tracked and /or under £3,000
 - any other business.
- d. Decisions by the Panel shall be made by show of hands with the Chairman having the casting vote, after consideration of any previously submitted comments by absent Panel Members.
- e. The AONB officers in attendance shall keep minutes of each meeting, which shall be circulated to Panel members as soon as possible after each meeting.
- f. The outcomes of the meeting shall be reported to the next meeting of the Wye Valley AONB JAC for information.
- g. A fast track process may be initiated in exceptional circumstances where an application needs to be determined before the next Panel meeting. The application will be circulated to members for comment before a fixed deadline. The determination of the application will be made by the AONB Manager and Chairman based on the comments received. The result will be reported to the next Panel meeting.
- h. Applications of less than £3,000 are delegated to the AONB Manager to determine following endorsement from the NRW officer. The result will be reported to the next Panel meeting.
- i. All decisions shall be communicated to applicants within fourteen working days of the Panel meeting, giving the reasons for the decision. Applicants will have a right of appeal to the Wye Valley AONB JAC.

Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)

Members of the SDF Assessment Panel

Public Sector representatives:

Cllr Mrs Ann Webb, Monmouthshire County Council (JAC)
vacant

Private Sector representatives:

David Price, NFU Wales (JAC)
Antony Smith, Wyastone Estates Ltd.

Voluntary Sector representatives:

Ashley Thomas: Monmouthshire voluntary conservation sector representative (JAC)
tbc – Herefordshire Community Foundation

Local Authority officer:

Colette Bosley: Principal Green Infrastructure & Landscape Officer,
Monmouthshire County Council

Statutory Agency officer:

Sarah Coakham, Partnerships Officer, Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

Wye Valley AONB officers in attendance:

Andrew Blake, AONB Manager
Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
1st July 2019

RESTORING OUR AMAZING RIVER (ROAR) PROJECT

Purpose

To inform members of the commencement of the Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR) Water Environment Grant (WEG) project with the Wye & Usk Foundation, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and Herefordshire Rural Hub.

Recommendations

That the JAC welcomes the collaboration with the Wye & Usk Foundation, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and Herefordshire Rural Hub through the Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR) Water Environment Grant (WEG) project

Key Issues

- The Wye & Usk Foundation, working with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, Herefordshire Rural Hub and the Wye Valley AONB Unit, submitted an application for the Water Environment Grant (WEG) entitled Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR).
- The WEG scheme is competitive and a bid for £1.2million covering the English part of the Wye Catchment was submitted in May 2018.
- The ROAR project was finally approved in June 2019 with a grant of £672,000 until March 2021.
- The ROAR project includes additional farm Catchment Advisors across the English part of the Wye Catchment
- Two advisors, covering the English part of the Wye Valley AONB and the adjacent Garren & Gamber catchment, will be employed by the Wye & Usk Foundation and hosted by the AONB Unit.

Reasons

WEG, as a competitive scheme, is aimed at a wide range of river restoration projects, including advice for landowners, control of invasive species and work which improves water quality. It supports information sharing and delivery of catchment scale improvements which demonstrate they meet Water Framework Directive objectives as set out in river basin management plans, including those for water dependant protected sites. These may include restoration of habitats, landscapes and other features (including river and water), addressing diffuse and other water pollution, and recovery of species populations including the threat from non-native species.

The Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR) project has four main objectives:-

- Supporting Restoration of water dependent habitats and ecosystems
- Removing or reducing threats from non-native species

- Support for activities that will help improve land management practices in relation to water dependent habitats
- Hosting demonstration or knowledge events and advisory visits which promote improved land management

It is also intended that the project will widen the capacity of the partnership to deliver.

Implications

The project lead is the Wye & Usk Foundation (WUF) and the collaborative delivery will be secured through partnership agreements.

The Catchment Advisors will operate within the wider farm advisory team run by the WUF and will be based with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and the Wye Valley AONB Unit. WUF will provide additional support and farm advice as the project progresses. The Herefordshire Rural Hub and Farm Herefordshire will run networking events for farmers.

The Catchment Advisors role entails working with farmers and a broad range of project partners to identify and implement changes in land use practices that will have benefits to the river systems. The advisers will visit and offer advice to farmers to identify sources of diffuse pollution arising from land management, deliver appropriate advice and make recommendations where appropriate for improvements, including for capital works or adoption of new management practices. They will utilise and signpost a variety of funding streams including the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, to allow implementation of recommendations and deliver the dual purpose of protecting watercourses whilst also realising cost savings or efficiencies on the farm.

It is also anticipated that the two Catchment Advisors based with the AONB Unit will help identify initiatives for inclusion into a bid to the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative.

Background

The Water Environment Grant (WEG) scheme is led by DEFRA, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Rural Payments Agency as part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) 2014-2020.

The objective of the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) scheme is to reduce the landscape and visual impact of National Grid's existing electricity infrastructure and enhance the quality of the affected designated landscapes.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
1st July 2019

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT EMERGENCY

Purpose

To advise members that local authorities covering the whole of the Wye Valley AONB have declared a Climate Emergency, as has Welsh Government.

Recommendations

That the JAC, as an organisation long aware of the significant climate and ecological challenges facing the natural environment, welcomes the recognition of the climate and environment emergency now being declared at all levels of government in and around the AONB.

Key Issues

- The United Nations says we could have just 11 years left to limit a climate change catastrophe.
- Local authorities covering the whole of the Wye Valley AONB have declared a Climate Emergency, as has Welsh Government.
- The UK Parliament have also declared an environment and climate emergency.
- The new AONB Management Plan (about to go out for public consultation) continues to emphasise the adaptation and mitigation measures required to address the environment and climate emergency.
- The AONB Unit will continue to collaborate with the local authorities and other public, private & 3rd sector interests to help deliver sustainable mitigation and adaptation solutions in and around the AONB.

Reasons

Forest of Dean District Council, declared a Climate Emergency on 6th December 2018 Herefordshire Council, on 8th March 2019, Welsh Government on 29th April and Monmouthshire County Council on 16th May. Ross-on-Wye Town Council (Ross being the only town in the AONB) also declared a Climate Emergency on 10th June 2019.

On 1st May MPs approved a motion to declare an environment and climate emergency. This demonstrates the will of the Commons but is not currently government policy. The government is considering changes to include setting a new target of reaching net zero emissions by 2050. The current target is to reduce carbon emissions by 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 under the Paris Agreement. Gloucestershire County Council endorsed this motion on 15th May.

The United Nations Environment Programme recognises that even with the pledges made under the Paris Agreement, global temperatures could still rise by up to 3.4°C this century, forcing people and the natural environment to adapt to extreme new weather patterns.

Sir David Henshaw, Chairman of Natural Resources Wales (NRW) recently said, “The Climate Emergency declaration is a critical challenge to us all and should acknowledge the wider environmental emergency, particularly that of biodiversity loss.”

A recent report from the Institute for Public Policy Research says human impacts have reached a critical stage and threaten to destabilise society and the global economy, with a potentially deadly combination of factors. These include climate change, mass loss of species, topsoil erosion, forest felling and acidifying oceans.

Implications

The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, of which the latest draft will shortly go out for public consultation, continues to emphasise the adaptation and mitigation measures required to address the environment and climate emergency. These include action around ecological connectivity - benefiting biodiversity; land management and farming - benefiting carbon storage and resilience to water; and people’s understanding and appreciation of the natural environment - re-wilding minds & bodies.

The AONB Unit will continue to collaborate with the local authorities and other public, private & 3rd sector interests to develop and deliver sustainable mitigation and adaptation solutions in and around the AONB. Current initiatives include the Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management and Green Infrastructure Project, various woodland management projects and partnerships, the Restoring Our Amazing River project and farm Catchment Advisors, various grassland management projects and partnerships, the AONB Youth Rangers programme and the Wye Valley River Festival. However, there is more work to be done on reducing the carbon footprint of the AONB Unit operations to net zero emissions. Both the Forest of Dean District Council and Monmouthshire County Council aim to reduce their carbon emissions to net zero by 2030.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has identified priority actions to support the Welsh Government’s declaration of a Climate Emergency. NRW’s Board has committed to go further and faster to develop a range of decarbonisation, adaptation and behaviour change measures, including:

- Improving the management of forests and peatlands so that they store more carbon;
- Being more energy efficient and generating renewable energy where possible at offices;
- Rapidly increasing use of electric vehicles;
- Exploring more opportunities to generate renewable energy on NRW managed land;
- Giving more consideration to the use of carbon in everything purchased;
- Sharing NRW’s experience of managing carbon emissions with other public-sector bodies to help bring about a greener public sector.
- Factoring in the inevitable global warming in all that we do and helping Wales adapt to the changes ahead.

The UK government is committed to leaving the environment in a better state than they inherited it, through the 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) and the forthcoming Environment Bill. Over the 25 years it will replenish depleted soils, rid the seas and rivers of the rubbish trashing our planet, cut greenhouse gas emissions, cleanse the air of toxic

pollutants, and develop cleaner, more sustainable energy sources. The 25YEP makes the case for landscape-scale restoration to develop a robust and resilient Nature Recovery Network. The Environment Bill will also create a new environmental body, the Office for Environmental Protection, to hold government to account on this commitment.

The National Association for AONBs will be discussing and declaring its ambition and intent around nature recovery within the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation at the national Landscape for Life Conference in Colchester on 9th -11th July.

Background

Below are extracts of a speech by Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, given on 16th April 2019: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/climate-change-turning-emergency-into-opportunity>

Climate change is happening: the evidence is compelling and no serious scientist denies it. There has always been climate change: almost since the Earth formed, natural processes have driven cycles which cause ice ages and global warming. We wouldn't be here if this hadn't happened.

However the climate change we are now experiencing is different, because this time it's being caused by humans – by the emissions from fossil fuels since the start of the industrial revolution which have greatly increased the amount of carbon dioxide and similar gases in our atmosphere.

These gasses are creating a greenhouse effect around the planet which means temperatures are increasing. This has two major effects. It is making the world's seas rise, as landlocked ice melts. And it's making the world's weather more extreme.

And this, ladies and gentlemen, is a bad thing. The result will be (and already is) more frequent and more extreme flooding; faster and more extreme coastal erosion; more frequent and more extreme droughts, water shortages and fires; more pollution; and potentially existential damage to habitats, plants and wildlife.

We are already seeing all of these effects. Unless we tackle them, they will have profound and potentially terminal consequences for everything that matters to us. Some parts of the planet, including in this country, may become unliveable. While you can recover from a flood, there is no recovery from a rising sea: it takes land, communities, infrastructure and everything else away forever.

The business models of many companies will cease to work...our wider economy may cease to function.... Our world may become more dangerous, as conflict over water and other scarce resources escalate. At worst, our planet may simply become unviable as a place for the species who caused all this: us.

That is why climate change is simply the biggest issue there is. It is the biggest threat out there to our economy, environment, health, way of life, our country, our world, and our future.

The good news is that it doesn't have to be like this. We can tackle climate change successfully if we act now and act together. We know what we need to do: mitigate and adapt.

We need to mitigate the causes of climate change, by cutting our emissions of greenhouse gases. Most of the UK's emissions come from the way we produce and consume energy – from heating our buildings, driving our cars, manufacturing goods, watching our TVs or boiling our kettles. We can lower our emissions by becoming more energy efficient and switching to renewable or low-carbon fuels...

A truly successful response to climate change requires us not just to change our technology but to change our whole way of living and of thinking. We need a revolution in the head. This is about much more than just cutting emissions – it's about turning our thinking on its head to plan for a sustainable future in which we are responsible consumers of stuff and responsible custodians of the planet's future. We don't yet have all the answers, and we should recognise that. But we do know that by radically changing the way we live, think about and plan for the future we can build a thriving economy, vibrant communities, and a more resilient world...

Perhaps we should stop talking about climate change and call it what it now is: a climate emergency. Better still, let's use language that lifts our emotions up rather than drags us all down. Let's talk about what the right response to climate change will give us: sweet water, clean air, safe homes, a planet that stays blue and green not brown and grey.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
1st July 2019

NAAONB UPDATE

Purpose

To advise members of activity through the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB).

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- A brief report on what the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) has achieved during 2018/19 is appended.
- The national AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference will take place in Colchester on 9th -11th July around the theme of 'Outstanding beauty, outstanding opportunity'.
- The AONB Manager, Development Officer and Community Links Officer will be attending the national conference, where the Bowland Award will be passed to new winners.
- The AONB Development Officer and the AONB Community Links Officer are both participating in the professional training 'Taking the Lead' programme, which is supported a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Resilient Heritage grant.
- The AONB Manager attended a meeting with Julian Glover, chair of the Review of Designated Landscapes in England, with the NAAONB.
- The NAAONB have appointed a Wales Development Manager and the AONB Manager was on the interview panel.

'Outstanding beauty, outstanding opportunity' Landscapes for Life Conference 2019

The 2019 conference will be held over the 9th -11th July in Colchester with the support of the Dedham Vale AONB and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. It will form part of the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act that paved the way for designated landscapes. It has never been a more important time to demonstrate the value of designated landscapes, with the Designated Landscapes Review progressing in England along with the Environment and Agriculture Bills due soon and the Government's aspiration communicated through the 25 Year Environment Plan: to leave the environment in a better condition than they inherited it.

Speakers from government, biodiversity, environment and academic backgrounds will seek to challenge delegates on what they currently do and how the network might work to support environmental enhancements. During the conference delegates will have the opportunity to shape a 'Colchester Declaration'. This will act as a statement of intent on how the network of designated landscapes can act together to promote real change. There will be ample

opportunity to share knowledge, learn from each other, and inspire others over the contemporary value of the AONB designation and the wonderful landscapes they represent.

The AONB Manager, Development Officer and Community Links Officer will be attending the conference, along with returning the Bowland Award and presenting it to the new winners.

For the full conference programme see <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/events/l4l-conference-2019/programme>

Taking the Lead - Future Landscapes Programme.

Nick Critchley, Wye Valley AONB Development Officer and Sarah Sawyer, Wye Valley AONB Community Links Officer are both participating in the 'Taking the Lead' programme. This is a professional and personal development programme delivered through a cohort of AONB staff, from across the 38 AONBs in England and Wales, to help develop greater collaborative working across the AONB network. Through Topic Working Groups, the participants are concentrating on some of the key challenges facing AONBs, and will report to the Landscapes for Life Conference on progress and recommendations.

Nick Critchley is working in the Staff Development Topic Working Group. They are looking at a number of connecting themes related to the subject, including reviewing and rewriting an AONB Induction Pack which used to exist on CD, but is long outdated. The induction will be targeted towards both new AONB staff and members of AONB Partnerships, JACs etc. It will be a simple PowerPoint presentation or similar with links to allow deeper exploration of subjects if necessary. They are also exploring staff development opportunities including 1:1 support, mentoring and internships, collective skill sharing using the Northern Group of AONBs as an exemplar, and how to develop links with a broader audience more reflective of the population.

Sarah Sawyer is in the Technology, Data and Evidence Topic Working Group. Their research to date has revolved around harnessing the power of big data or crowd source data in potentially providing insight and evidence for AONB work. They invited an 'expert witness' from mobile operator O2 to explain the potential of harnessing big data to help understand more about visitors to protected landscapes. This will be the focus of a facilitated workshop at the AONB conference on 11th July. They will refine their work based on colleagues' feedback from the conference workshop.

The Taking the Lead programme has also provided the opportunity for CPD, in particular a refined self-awareness of working style has developed through the programme. The process has required personal reflection upon psychometric tests, using the Lumina Spark model. The profiles have revealed working styles, strengths and weaknesses. Coaching and conversations with colleagues help compare and contrast how these underpin values. This clear insight into motivations is helping staff, for example in planning the next Wye Valley River Festival. Taking the lead has offered the opportunity to raise awareness of may skill sets and behaviours and how these can help or hinder collaborative working, while providing strategies to overcome weaknesses.

The Taking the Lead programme is an enriching experience for participants and is having positive benefits in work practices locally and nationally. Much of the focus of the programme involves looking at ways to improve collaboration and partnership working in individual settings and across the AONB Family.

The support from the National Lottery will help the NAAONB Charity and the AONB Family to be well positioned to take full advantage of the opportunities that emerge from the Designated Landscapes Review in England.

Wales Development Manager

The purpose of the role is to:

- Maximise opportunities and support collaboration across the designated landscapes in Wales.
- Develop opportunities for AONB partnerships to support delivery and targeting of future land management post-Brexit
- Optimise landscape scale resilience and connectivity in AONBs to address biodiversity decline
- Lead on the co-ordination of input to, and the production of, responses to national consultations, harnessing diverse pools of knowledge and supporting the development of the Welsh AONB partnerships as a unified voice

The AONB Manager was on the interview panel, which met at the end of May and a suitable appointment has been made and is due to take up the role in September.

Background

The NAAONB is a charity that provides a strong collective voice for the UK's AONBs. Its objectives are to promote the conservation and enhancement of AONBs, advance the education, understanding and appreciation by the public of AONBs, and promote the efficiency and effectiveness of those promoting or representing AONBs, other Protected Areas and those areas for which designation might be pursued. It takes a collaborative and partnership-based approach to working with its membership and other organisations at a national level to achieve shared goals. For more information see:

www.landscapesforlife.org.uk

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What the National Association for AONBs has achieved with your support over the financial year 2018/19

Our vision

The natural beauty of AONBs is valued and secure.

Our priorities

- To support policies that help conserve and enhance natural beauty.
- To gain a detailed understanding of AONBs and the issues they face
- To improve the way in which AONB Partnerships, Conservation Boards, and the NAAONB work together.
- To secure and manage our collective resources to best effect.

We do this by

- Demonstrating the value and relevance of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Advocating for the AONB designation, AONB partnerships and Conservation Boards
- Supporting behavioural change and collaboration.
- Providing expertise and insight into the management of these nationally important landscapes.

Our underpinning principles

Leading

We bring AONB partnerships and Conservation Boards together as a cohesive and coherent entity. We are an influential and trusted organisation that leads from the front. We actively promote collaboration, collective action and cooperation.

Sharing

We are open and trusting with our ideas. We harness the collective experience, enthusiasm and goodwill of the AONB network and use this to collaborate with others.

Learning

We constantly look for new opportunities and provide access to up-to-date learning. We set aspirational targets and take risks because we have confidence in the abilities and potential of ourselves, colleagues and partners.

Inspiring

We go the extra mile. We nurture and support self-belief, innovation and pro-action. We celebrate the success of the AONB network.

What the National Association for AONBs has achieved with your support over the financial year 2018/19

<p>Demonstrated the value and relevance of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained close and productive working relationships with government departments and Ministers, highlighting the value that AONB partnerships and their teams deliver for society. • Showcased the role of the AONB designation in delivering a significant role in nature recovery across England and Wales. • Designed and delivered a highly acclaimed National Conference in the Kent Downs AONB with support from the local AONB team and partnership. Click here to view L4L Conference 2018
<p>Supported behavioural change and collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secured £200k of external funding from the HLF to support AONB staff in taking forward a collaborative approach to achieving shared objectives through the 'Taking the Lead' programme. Click here for more info on Taking the Lead • Supported and managed Basecamp – the national online platform where AONB staff share ideas, information, and learning. • Held national Lead Officer meetings to agree on key priorities and methods of delivery.
<p>Advocated for the AONB designation, AONB partnerships and Conservation Boards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a national response to the Glover Review of AONBs and NPs, including engagement with the review panel and co-ordination of national meetings with AONB staff. Click here to view 'Outstanding!' The AONB Family's evidence to the Review of England's National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty • Provided input to the development of the Agriculture Bill and the Environment Bill to benefit the AONB designation. • Developed the 'Farming for the Nation' position statement for AONB partnerships/Conservation Boards and co-ordinated the associated tests and trials across AONBs. Click here to view 'Farming for the Nation'
<p>Provided expertise and insight into the management of these nationally important landscapes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided input to the review of National Planning Policy Framework guidance on behalf of the AONB network. • Provided technical advice to AONB staff and government on strengthening the Duty of Regard. • Provided technical advice to AONB staff and government on natural beauty and the law. • Provided practical technical support to AONB staff to help embed an ecosystems approach into AONB management plans.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
1st July 2019

WYE NAVIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE OUTPUTS

Purpose

To advise of some outputs from the Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC).

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- The Environment Agency, as the Navigation Authority for the River Wye produces a Calendar of events for the river, available on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/information-to-help-boaters-on-the-river-wye>
- The Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC) recently endorsed a Dry weather briefing for the River Wye, which is attached.
- The Environment Agency Wye Navigation Officers co-ordinate a Summer Survey of river users, the results for 2018 are attached.

Reasons

The Environment Agency (EA) is the Navigation Authority for the River Wye and manage the public right of navigation between Hay Bridge downstream to Bigsweir Bridge. The Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC) meets twice a year and advises the Environment Agency about issues along the Wye. The AONB Manager represents the AONB Partnership on WyeNAC. Some other members of the JAC also sit on the WyeNAC in other capacities.

Over the winter there was increasing concern about the soil moisture content in the Wye catchment and the potential for river drought situations to emerge should there be extended dry periods.

Implications

At the last Wye NAC meeting, in April, members received the attached 'Dry weather briefing' paper and heard how continued dry weather could impact on the right of navigation. Reduced water levels in the river might prevent canoes and other vessels from using the river due to the combined factors of the lack of flow and consequent potential impact on wildlife of paddlers walking and dragging boats over shallows.

The attached Summer Survey Report gives an indication of the level of use of the river by canoeists at peak times through the Summer of 2018.

Background

The Wye Navigation Advisory Committee was established in 2003 following the Wye Navigation Order. Wye NAC has an independent chairperson and supports and advises the Environment Agency (EA) as the Navigation Authority. The secretariat for WyeNAC is provided by EA. The Gloucester Harbour Trustees are the Navigation Authority for the tidal Wye downstream of Bigsweir.

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Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC) Date of meeting: Friday 12 April 2019

Item

INFORMATION PAPER: Dry weather briefing for the River Wye

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members are invited to provide advice and comment in particular, on the procedures for managing navigation.

Context

The River Wye is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its entire length. It is important for a number of rare and threatened species and habitats. The Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) must balance the water needs of people, businesses and the environment. During periods of exceptional shortage of rain, we will need to seek additional measures as part of our duty to protect the SAC and restrictions may be necessary for water abstraction, navigation and angling. Voluntary restrictions for all aspects of river use are encouraged before any additional measures are required.

Introduction

The Environment Agency uses 4 stages of drought to describe and manage our response:

- **prolonged dry weather,**
- **drought,**
- **severe drought and**
- **recovering drought.**

A combination of hydrological and environmental factors known as 'Trigger levels' across the Wye catchment trigger a move between these drought stages. These trigger levels help determine what actions need to be taken. A range of factors are taken into consideration including the present conditions, forecast weather and how effective the proposed action would be. Local knowledge and judgement is also an important part of drought management.

Restrictions to navigation for the River Wye

Under certain drought conditions the Environment Agency, as the Navigation Authority for the Wye, may have to restrict navigation. We will give people and businesses likely to be impacted as much notice as possible of any plans with implications to navigation. We will also use social media to share messages. Any restrictions to navigation will be kept to a minimum as far as possible.

Commercial canoe hire companies are encouraged to have contingency plans in place to deal with these extreme conditions and potential restrictions to navigation. A special meeting with the Wye Navigation Advisory Committee can be arranged if desired.

Stage 1: If river flows continue to fall and water levels are low, active monitoring of boating activity will be carried out by the navigation team. User groups will be informed and will be asked to monitor the situation

themselves and to avoid the shallower sections where possible. We will ask to be notified of any sections where low water levels have made navigation impractical.

Stage 2: Active monitoring of the canoeing activity will continue. If water levels are low enough to be considered a significant risk to ecology, vulnerable stretches will be temporarily closed to navigation by implementing Article 19 (c) of the Wye Navigation Order 2002. As a guide, we will use a trigger level of 133 million gallons per day (7 m³/s) at the Redbrook gauge* to initiate Stage 2. The closures will extend from the nearest upstream and downstream public access point of the vulnerable stretch affected. Temporary closure notices will be displayed at the relevant access points.

Stage 3: Active monitoring of the canoeing activity will continue. If the additional pressure placed on the remaining open stretches becomes a matter of concern, then user numbers may have to be restricted. We will work with British Canoeing and canoe hire companies throughout this process.

Stage 4 (recovery phase): Any restrictions to navigation will be removed as and when conditions permit. User groups will be kept informed of any action taken.

Supporting information

The River Wye system acts as an important wildlife corridor, an essential migration route and a key breeding area for many nationally and internationally important species. The ecological value of the river and its tributaries is recognised through their national designation as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and as a riverine SAC under the European Union Habitats Directive (1992). The SAC designation applies to the River Wye itself and some of its tributaries. The trampling of gravel used as spawning grounds may cause a significant damage to the ecology.

The River Wye is known as a 'regulated river'. During dry weather water is released from the Elan Valley reservoirs to support public water supply in the lower reaches of the Wye, when flows, as measured at Redbrook gauging station, fall below a certain threshold. Reservoir releases are managed under the Wye Regulation Scheme under an agreement between Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, Natural Resources Wales and the Environment Agency.

Many abstraction licences have "hands-off flow conditions" (HoFs) that require abstractors to stop abstracting when the river is below a defined flow. To restrict historic spray irrigation licences without HoFs (Section 57 restrictions) a Notice has to be issued when river flows drop to a significantly low level, based on an exceptional shortage of rain.

* A trigger level of 133 million gallons per day (7m³/s) at the Redbrook gauge is the last HoF to be applied and has previously been used as the trigger for considering the need to enforce s57 restrictions if flow continues to fall below this threshold. The Environment Agency will inform licence holders before this flow level is met so they can make provision for such restrictions.

Sprayline is the EA/NRW telephone information service in the Wye river catchment of spray irrigation licences. On calling the Sprayline number (0870 905 6061) you can find out information on flows.

Users are encouraged to use Sprayline to maintain an understanding of current flows and therefore any likelihood of restrictions being put in place.

Information on Welsh river levels can be accessed by the public via the NRW website here:
<https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/maps/check-river-levels/?lang=en>

The Redbrook gauge can be accessed via this link:
<https://rloi.naturalresources.wales/ViewDetails?station=4028>

Wye Navigation Order 2002, Temporary closure of principal rivers:

19(1) Subject to the provisions of this article, the Agency may temporarily prohibit, restrict or regulate the navigation and use of any part of the principal rivers for any of the following purposes -

(c) to conserve the natural beauty of the principal rivers and their flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest;

(7) The Agency shall not exercise its powers under paragraph (1)(c) so as to create a serious obstruction to the navigation or use of the principal rivers.

(8) The Agency may exercise the powers of this article in relation to all classes of vessel navigating and using the principal rivers, or in relation to such class of vessel as it thinks fit.

(‘principal rivers’ means – Hay Town Bridge to Bigsweir Bridge and that part of the river Lugg from its confluence with the river Wye to Presteigne Bridge)

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Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC) Date of meeting: Friday 16 November 2018

Item

WYE NAVIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: SUMMER SURVEY REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is invited to note and comment on the summary of surveys completed in 2018.

BACKGROUND

As the navigation authority, we wish to promote the river and improve access to the river with the intention of easing pressure at existing “hot spot” locations. However, in order to help achieve sustainable management and use of the river, further data is required now and in the future to inform management decisions.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Survey locations: The table below details the ‘indicator’ survey locations. They have been selected as they include a mixture of both busy and quiet stretches. Some locations are at access points which have the added advantage of giving an insight into river use upstream and downstream. Where possible, the locations that are grouped together by colour as shown below were surveyed consecutively. These indicator sites have been used since 2015 and will be surveyed each year so that comparisons can be made.

Survey locations	River height gauge	Water temp gauge	Total no. of surveys at each site
Hay-on-Wye u/s and d/s of access point	Hay on Wye	Bewardine	2
Whitney-on-Wye	Hay on Wye	Bewardine	2
Ross-on-Wye u/s and d/s of access point	ross on Wye	Ross on wye	3
Kerne Bridge u/s and d/s of access point	Lydbrook	Lydbrook	2
Lower Lydbrook	Lydbrook	Lydbrook	3
Symonds yat East u/s and d/s of Wyedean access point	Lydbrook	Lydbrook	5
Monmouth u/s and d/s of access point	Lydbrook	Lydbrook	4
Symonds yat West	Lydbrook	Lydbrook	3

Survey periods: Four hour sessions between 0900-1300hrs and 1300-1700hrs.

Survey days: the surveys have been carried out on various days of the week beginning in June; this is to capture corporate recreational activities, school

trips and school outward bound activities that take place towards the end of the summer term in schools. The majority have been carried out during the school holidays. As agreed in the WyeNAC November 2016 meeting, weekend surveys this year were carried out at Symonds Yat East. This year, the surveys were carried out on a Sunday.

At each location the following information was recorded:

Boat data: the number of boats (excluding club rowing boats, ferries and powered passenger boats) per hour and the number of people per hour.

Variables: weather conditions, air temperature, water temperature, river height (using the most appropriate gauge as specified in the table above).

General comments: brief description of other boats in use, any observational points of interest – such as the rafting of canoes, capsizes, conduct etc.

RESULTS

A total of 40 sets of data were recorded at the eight indicator survey locations (see Appendix 1 and 2). The surveys were carried out on 16 days throughout the period 15 June – 1 September. At any one time, up to 4 sets of data may have been recorded, as would be the case when surveying at Ross and Kerne.

It is important to note that on occasions some boats may have been counted twice as it is possible to canoe past one indicator site to another within the survey period. It is also possible that boats at some sites, Symonds Yat East in particular, may be counted twice if they are doing round trips going either upstream or downstream

Similar to 2015, 2016 and 2017, the three busiest locations on average were downstream of Kerne Bridge, Lydbrook and upstream of Symonds Yat East (jointly with upstream of Hay on Wye).

In contrast, the quietest stretches were upstream of Ross, downstream of Monmouth and downstream of Symonds Yat East similar again to 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Figure 1 compares the hourly average number of canoes counted at each location over the total survey period.

Figures 2, 3 and 4 show the number of canoes at three of the busiest locations for the surveys conducted in 2018, 2017 and 2016.

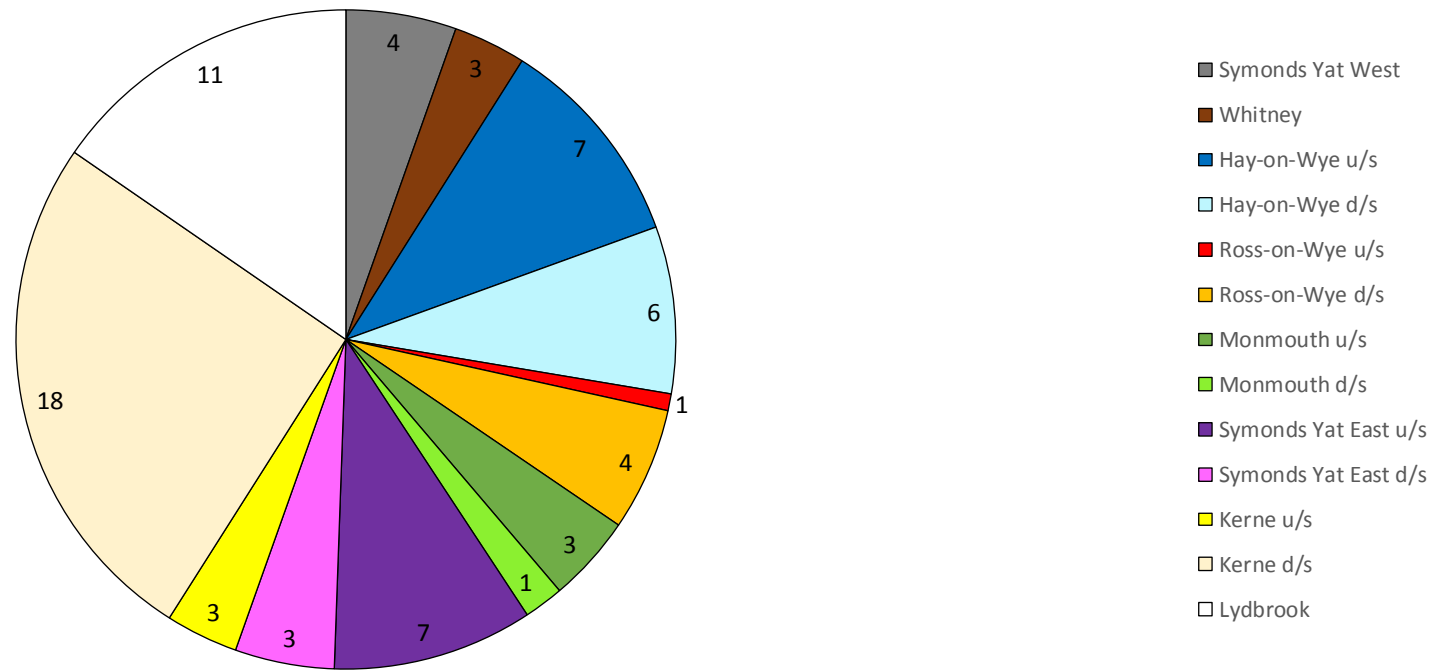


Figure 1: Average number of canoes passing each location per hour

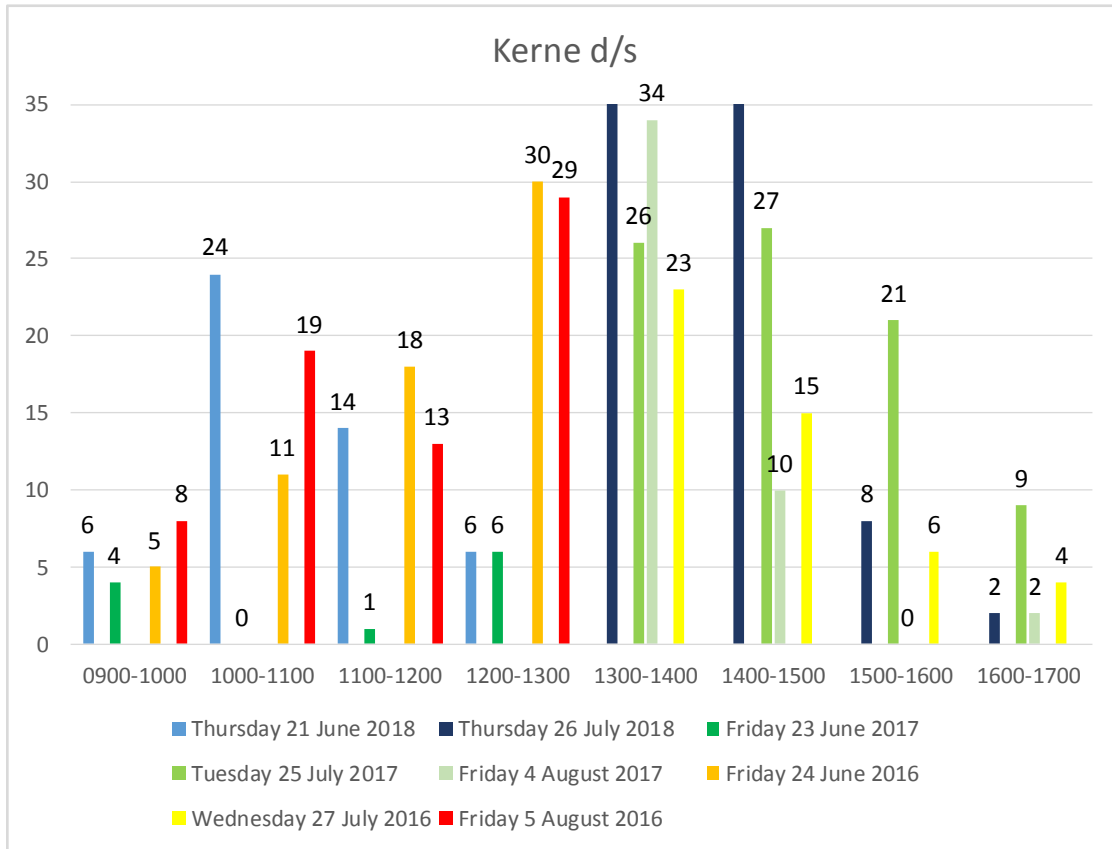


Figure 2: Number of canoes per hour downstream of Kerne

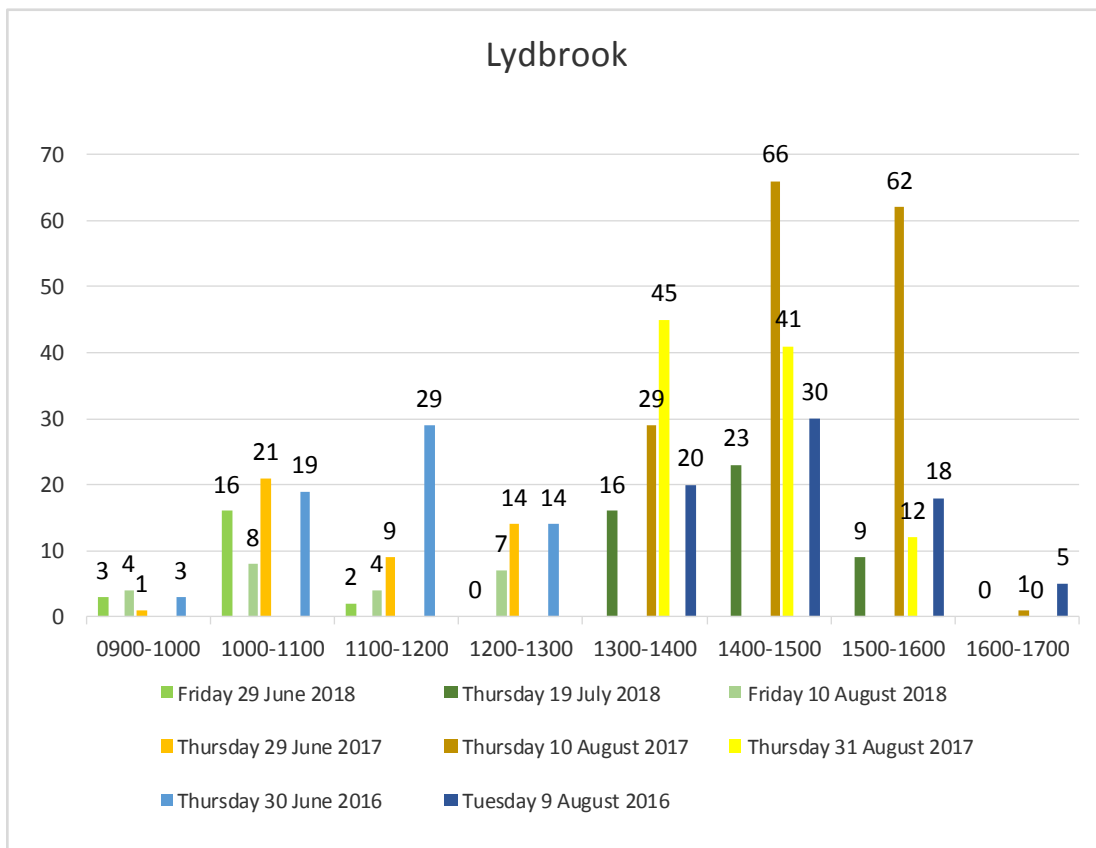


Figure 3: Number of canoes per hour downstream of Lydbrook

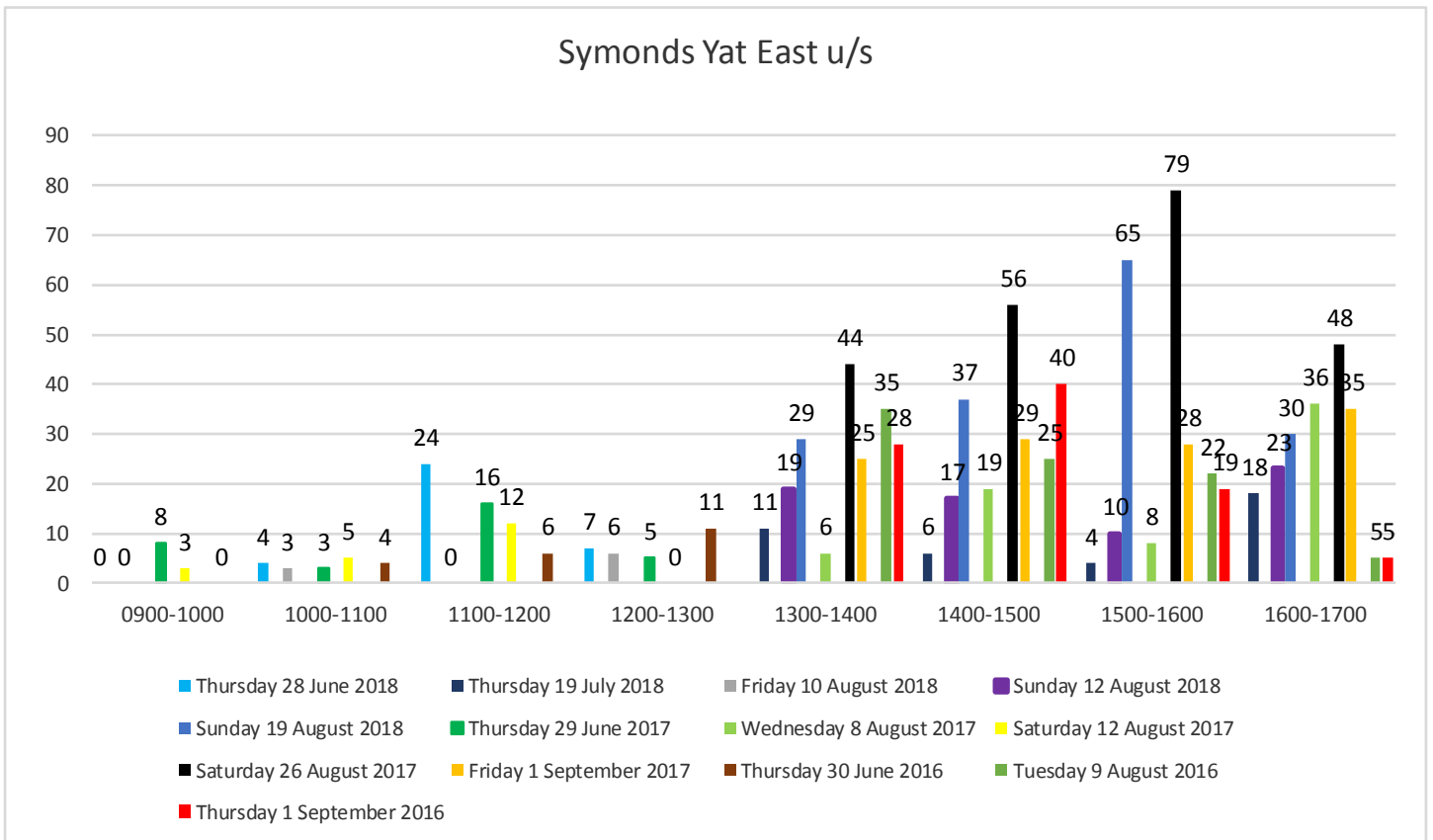


Figure 4: Number of canoes per hour upstream of Symonds Yat East

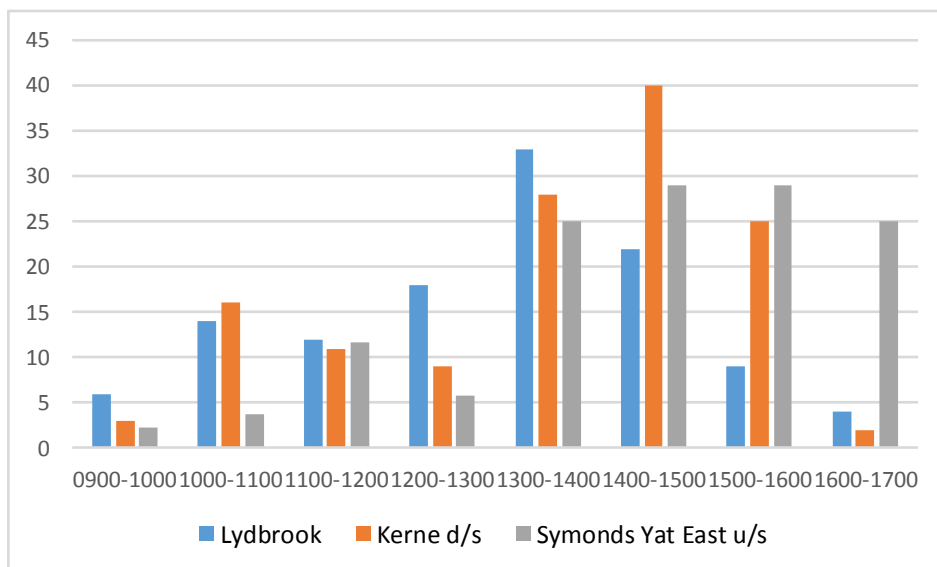


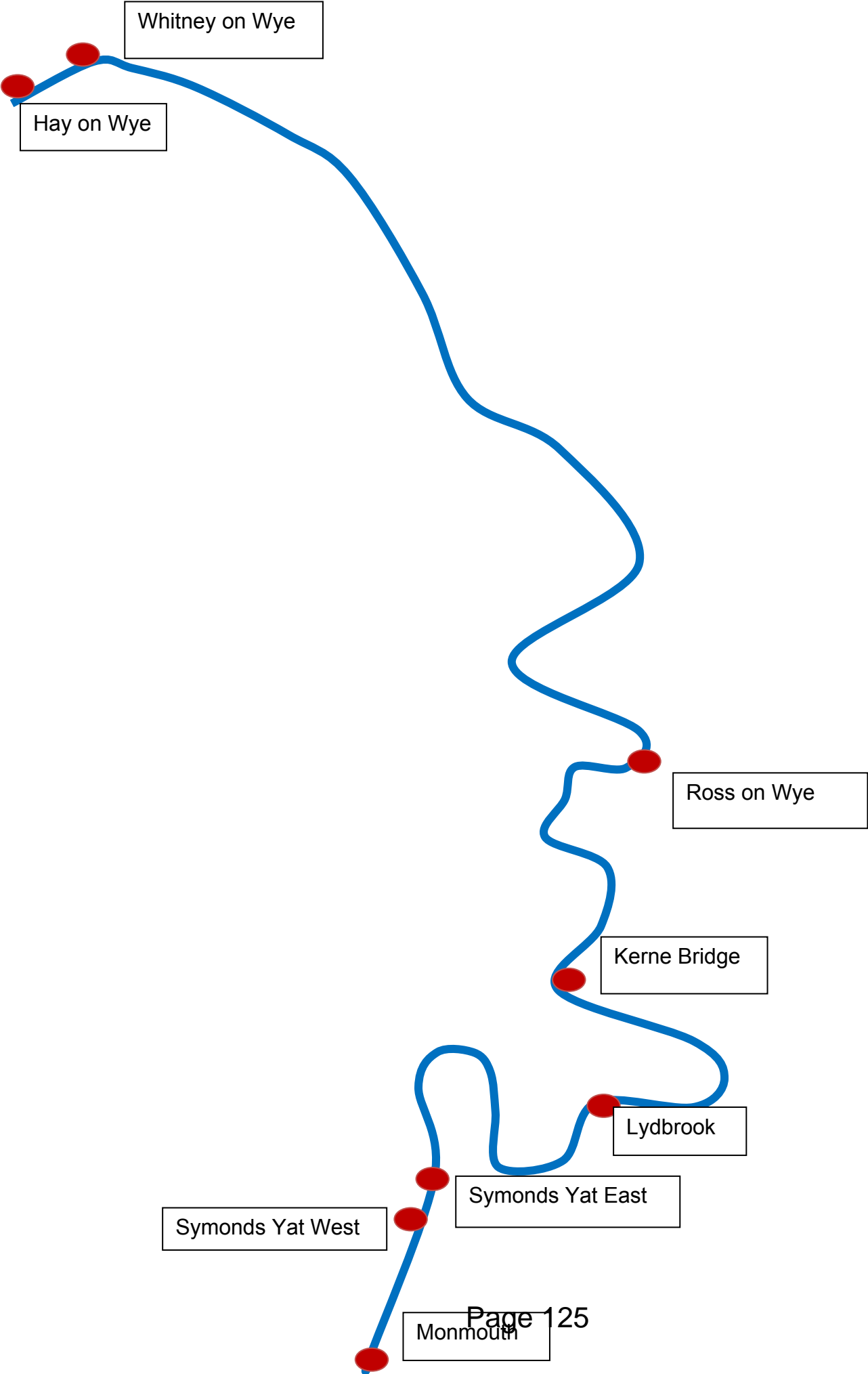
Figure 5: Number of canoes per hour at the busiest locations

Appendix 1

Survey Date - 2018			am/ pm	Location	Total Boats	Total Canoeists	total hours	water temp	river level	air temp
Wednesday	13	Jun	pm	Symonds Yat West	1	1	4	18	0.88	20
Friday	15	Jun	am	Monmouth d/s	2	3	4	22	0.85	17
Friday	15	Jun	am	Monmouth u/s	8	19	4	22	0.85	17
Thursday	21	Jun	am	kerne d/s access	50	113	4	18	0.82	20
Thursday	21	Jun	am	Kerne u/s access	13	26	4	18	0.82	20
Friday	22	Jun	am	Ross-on-Wye d/s	21	38	4	19	0.28	16
Friday	22	Jun	am	Ross-on-Wye u/s	0	0	4	19	0.28	16
Thursday	28	Jun	am	Symonds Yat East d/s	21	36	4	22	0.75	20
Thursday	28	Jun	am	Symonds Yat East u/s	35	59	4	22	0.75	20
Friday	29	Jun	am	Lower Lydbrook	45	95	4	22	0.75	21
Tuesday	3	Jul	pm	Hay-on-Wye u/s	3	6	4	23	0.26	24
Tuesday	3	Jul	pm	Hay-on-Wye d/s	13	22	4	20	0.26	25
Tuesday	3	Jul	pm	Whitney d/s	2	4	4	23.6	0.26	25
Tuesday	3	Jul	pm	Whitney u/s	15	37	4	23.6	0.26	25
Wednesday	11	Jul	pm	Monmouth d/s	6	8	4	21	0.7	27
Wednesday	11	Jul	pm	Monmouth u/s	13	19	4	21	0.7	27
Wednesday	11	Jul	pm	Symonds Yat West	39	62	4	21	0.7	27
Thursday	19	Jul	pm	Lower Lydbrook	57	132	4	21.9	0.66	27
Thursday	19	Jul	pm	Lower Lydbrook	48	109	4	21.9	0.66	27
Thursday	19	Jul	pm	Symonds Yat East d/s	12	24	4	21.9	0.66	27
Thursday	19	Jul	pm	Symonds Yat East u/s	39	83	4	21.9	0.66	27
Thursday	26	Jul	pm	Kerne u/s access	27	55	4	21.9	0.63	28
Thursday	26	Jul	pm	kerne d/s access	94	203	4	21.9	0.63	28
Thursday	26	Jul	pm	Ross-on-Wye u/s	1	2	4	24	0.11	28
Thursday	26	Jul	pm	Ross-on-Wye d/s	1	2	4	24	0.11	28
Tuesday	31	Jul	am	Whitney d/s	13	30	4	20	0.41	20
Tuesday	31	Jul	am	Whitney u/s	5	10	4	20	0.41	20
Tuesday	31	Jul	am	Hay-on-Wye u/s	27	53	4	18.5	0.3	18
Tuesday	31	Jul	am	Hay-on-Wye d/s	12	24	4	18	0.3	18
Friday	10	Aug	am	Lower Lydbrook	23	53	4	21	*u/r	13
Friday	10	Aug	am	Symonds Yat East u/s	9	16	4	19.4	u/r	13
Friday	10	Aug	am	Symonds Yat East d/s	8	15	4	19.4	u/r	13
Sunday	12	Aug	am	Symonds Yat East u/s	69	119	4	18.5	u/r	19
Sunday	12	Aug	pm	Symonds Yat East d/s	31	52	4	18.5	u/r	19
Tuesday	14	Aug	am	Ross-on-Wye u/s	6	13	4	18	u/r	19
Tuesday	14	Aug	am	Ross-on-Wye d/s	29	60	4	18	0.2	18
Sunday	19	Aug	pm	Symonds Yat East d/s	84	158	4	22	u/r	20
Sunday	19	Aug	pm	Symonds Yat East u/s	164	313	4	22	u/r	20
Thursday	23	Aug	am	Monmouth d/s	7	20	4	20	u/r	19
Thursday	23	Aug	am	Symonds Yat West	10	22	4	20	u/r	20
Thursday	23	Aug	am	Monmouth u/s	1	2	4	20	u/r	19
Thursday	30	Aug	pm	Symonds Yat West	11	22	4	16	u/r	18.5
Thursday	30	Aug	pm	Monmouth d/s	7	26	4	16	u/r	18.5
Thursday	30	Aug	pm	Monmouth u/s	26	50	4	16	u/r	19

*u/r: under range

Appendix 2: indicator survey locations



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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
1st July 2019

AONB UNIT & PARTNER REPORTS

Purpose

To advise members of activity of the AONB Unit and various partners.

FOR INFORMATION

Below are brief update reports on the following AONB Unit and partners' initiatives: -

- a) Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management & Green Infrastructure Project
- b) Wentwood to Wyre Endangered Landscapes Programme
- c) AONB Farming Awards
- d) AONB visits by Welsh Government and DEFRA staff
- e) Ross Riverside
- f) Youth Rangers – recent activities & what some former Youth Rangers are doing now.
- g) AONB Volunteers

a) Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) and Green Infrastructure (GI) Project

Farm management advice

Wye & Usk Foundation (WUF) have completed ten farm advice visits across the Angidy catchment. Confidential plans are being written for farmers and shared with the AONB Unit. Grant funded capital work has been signed up, balancing prioritising need with the pilot project focus of trying to demonstrate a variety of land management interventions. Work is set to include riparian fencing, farm yard infrastructure (to separate clean/dirty water), cross contour hedgerows and woodland linkage, fencing to assist rotational grazing, wet meadow advice and management, leaky ditch barriers and maize under-sowing trial opportunities.

Farmers have also been supported through the online application process to Glastir small grants where appropriate options have been identified through the scheme, and where this fits with the farmer's ongoing business needs.

MCC access project research, development and GI strategy

Atkins consultancy are finalising their report with water management proposals for Chapel Hill Road/Limekiln Brook. This follows their modelling and investigation into surface water run-off and culvert blocking due to the rapid response of the catchment (water source, pathway, impact). The Limekiln Brook is proving to be a very complex study, with considerable ground water flows and springs. The catchment is also in a young state which presents a high erosion potential; the steep gradient of the small valley provides the brook

with considerable energy contributing to the hydraulic erosion of Chapel Hill Lane and sediment movement to the culvert pinch point in Tintern.

A brief is to be drawn up for Atkins to carry out a walkover study of four unclassified county roads to establish causes of the significant degradation to these routes and suggest potential solutions.

Best practice/info sharing events

The NFM & GI Project has held or contributed to ten events since October; most recently this has included a farming advice evening in partnership with Farming Connect and The Wye & Usk Foundation at Trelleck, attended by 20 farmers. The main feedback was regarding future funding and the need for financial support to implement environmental and green infrastructure improvements while not impacting on the business.

We have also worked with volunteer groups and held guided walks promoting the project and natural flood management opportunities.

Arrangements are commencing for a seminar in the autumn involving local NFM project officers and other experts including Pickering Slow Flow project staff.

Pilot NFM work

At Ty Mawr with Gwent Wildlife Trust we are aiming to establish a local demonstration site with the installation of leaky dams.

Watercourse consents are being prepared. From information gathering on other NFM visits and projects, leaky dam consents (risk, liability & maintenance) are always contentious, with the consensus that these come down to local decision making due to lack of any national framework.

Discussions regarding opportunities in Natural Resources Wales (NRW) landholdings are ongoing. Liaison is required between NRW (contractors and site managers), MCC flood risk officers (ordinary watercourse consent) and how to meet ongoing maintenance requirements.

Invasive weed mapping and control

Locations of Japanese knotweed (JK) are being recorded and mapped throughout the project area; permissions to spray are being agreed with private landowners and pursued for NRW managed land. There is significant JK through the Angidy catchment and there are further areas to survey. The Wye & Usk Foundation will carry out spraying operations in September, proved to be the most effective time of year, once landowner permissions have been secured.

American Skunk cabbage (ASC) has been identified in the Whitebrook catchment. This is a terrestrial, semi-aquatic perennial plant native to western North America and is one of a growing number of species being recognised as a threat at a national level. ASC can grow to 1.5m in height and has large leathery leaves which dominate native vegetation. At a private site in Whitebrook ASC been found forming a dense colony. The AONB Unit are currently investigating the most effective method of control.

We will be working with AONB volunteers and NRW on a Himalayan Balsam (HB) pulling event within Colonels Park, Whitebrook in July. The North volunteer group are keen to control HB within Manor Wood but in order to lead the task AONB staff/volunteer group leaders require additional First Aid (+F) qualification to satisfy NRW permission requirements for working on their land. Sporadic records of HB are being gathered from site visits and the public throughout the project area. A coordinated long-term approach - such as working with NRW in July to eradicate from a specific site - is required for effective control rather than reactive, ad hoc 'pulling' across random sites.

The Lower Wye Valley Catchments Natural Flood Management & Green Infrastructure Project is funded by Natural Resources Wales and the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.

b) Wentwood to Wyre Endangered Landscapes Programme

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust have been leading on a Project Innovation Grant application to the Endangered Landscapes Programme for the planning and development of a large scale, multifunctional, sustainable forested landscape from Wentwood to the Wyre Forest and encompassing the Wye Valley AONB. The application, submitted in mid May, was for US\$100,000 (about £75,000) for an 18month development phase to work up a subsequent Project Implementation Grant, which can be up to US\$5M (about £4M) and have a maximum duration of five years.

A core area of 385km² includes Wentwood, the lower Wye Valley and the Forest of Dean, and has 43% woodland cover. The rough extent of the wider vision area, to be confirmed during the development phase is around 1600km² (with 24% woodland cover) extending from the Forest of Dean to the Wyre Forest. The aim is to restore, enhance and reconnect habitats and natural processes across this extensive forested landscape. The project will provide a unique opportunity to experiment and develop a blueprint for the economically sustainable restoration of forest ecosystems, whilst ensuring long term resilience by developing an inclusive and innovative cross-border partnership, landscape vision and economic model.

The Wye Valley AONB Unit was one of the partners that helped Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust with scoping proposals for the application. Not surprisingly for such a large landscape-scale initiative a wide range of individuals and organisations have been involved including Forestry England, Forest Research, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Gwent Wildlife Trust, the Woodland Trust, Ecosulis and various local authorities. The Project Innovation Grant application will be assessed in July. Success with a Project Innovation Grant is no guarantee of securing a Project Implementation Grant. But should the grant be awarded the development phase will engage with private landowners and woodland managers, contractors, volunteers, local conservation, community and recreation groups, and other interested organisations.

The Endangered Landscapes Programme is managed by the Cambridge Conservation Initiative and is funded by Arcadia, a charitable fund of Peter Baldwin and Lisbet Rausing. <http://www.endangeredlandscapes.org/>

c) AONB Farming Awards

The Wye Valley AONB Farming Awards are running for the 12th year in 2019. The Award is for anyone managing land in or adjacent to the AONB that makes an outstanding contribution to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape. Three entries were shortlisted; Monmouthshire Meadows Group, Gadr Farm, Cwmcarvan and Berry Hill Community Orchard. Each was initially visited by the AONB Development Officer and then on 14th June by the judging panel. This consisted of Andrew Blake (AONB Manager), David Price (NFW Wales & JAC), Mike Williams (Wye & Usk Foundation) and Martin Rowberry

(Coppett Hill Common Trust & 2017 winners). This years' winner will be announced at the Monmouthshire Show on July 6th, receiving the Farming Awards' Trophy and a £400 cheque. Runners-up receive a certificate and a cheque.

d) AONB visits by Welsh Government and DEFRA staff

The AONB Unit has hosted separate visits from members of both DEFRA's Landscape Policy team and Welsh Government's Landscape & Outdoor Recreation team. Both groups were able to meet some of the AONB Unit staff and visited a range of sites and projects in the AONB. There was particular interest from both teams on the perceptions of the Review of Designated Landscapes in both England and Wales and how the AONB Partnership operates cross-border.

e) Ross Riverside

The Development Officer has been working closely with Ross-on-Wye Town Council and the Herefordshire Meadows Group to secure funding for the restoration of approximately 0.6 hectares of amenity grassland to a more traditional floodplain meadow habitat. Following grass cutting and removal, and harrowing, seed is to be harvested from a similar floodplain meadow site and spread in July. The results will be monitored in Spring 2020.

f) Youth Rangers

Recent activity of the 5th cohort of Youth Rangers includes the following:

In February the Youth Rangers explored the geological heritage of the Forest of Dean. Visiting the stone works at Cannop Ponds and the mine at Hopewell Colliery, providing an insight into current and past mineral wealth of the area and how this land use shape has shaped landscape and communities.



In March two hedges were planted by the young people. One at Clearwell as part of the Natural England led, Gloucestershire Batscape project and another at the community initiative at Scarr Bandstand, to improve the habitat for wildlife on this newly restored site.



April's focus was on the veteran trees of the Wye Valley. They explored the landscape from St. Briavels to Bigsweir and through Hudnalls Wood in the company of Andrew Hoan an archaeologist with an interest in veteran trees. The Youth Rangers helped Andrew add to his knowledge and records of locally significant trees. The group also toured St. Briavels Castle on their return learning about its past importance and its current use.



In May the focus was on navigation and outdoor skills; camp cooking & establishment of safe shelter. A navigation challenge was undertaken taking the group from Bracelands near Christchurch to a meeting point on the River Wye near Ye Olde Ferrie Inn, Symonds Yat West. Here a wild swimming instructor met the group and led a swimming experience in the river on a very cold May Saturday!

All Youth Ranger visits and activities are part-funded by the Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership scheme supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Where are they now?

Here is an update on a selection of graduated / former Youth Rangers:



Helen - Cohort 2

Helen is now volunteering with the Brecon Beacons and Monmouthshire National Trust team, working primarily with Ranger Abbi Knight across several National Trust sites including the Sugar Loaf, the Skirrid and the Begwns. Here she's helping remove a series of worn out steps on the Skirrid near Abergavenny.



Todd Clarke - Cohort 1

Running his own business, charcoal coppicing

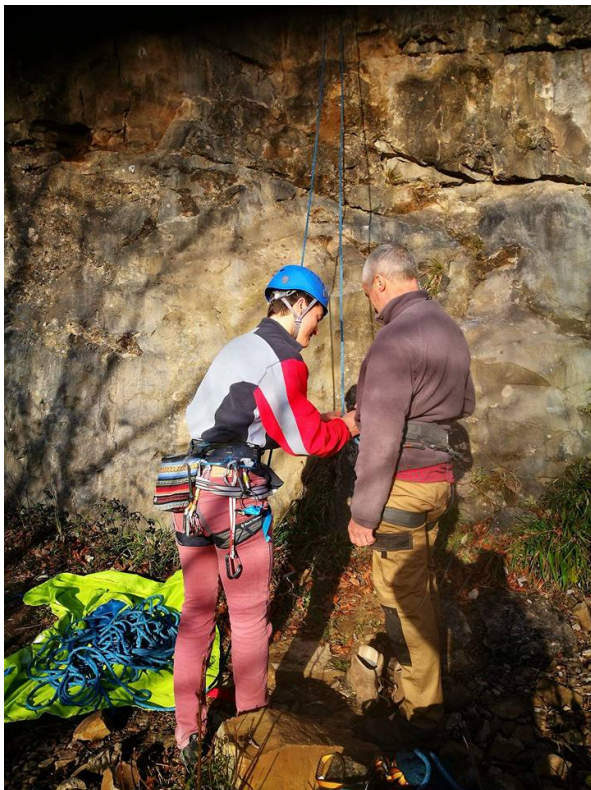
<https://resilientwoodlands.co.uk/who-we-are/>



Seb Hagget - Cohort 1

Trainee Reserves Officer with the
Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

<https://nrconservation.wordpress.com/2019/05/21/the-wildlife-trust-and-me/?fbclid=IwAR0T3OVjwVWuLjTBZIYpQ3XpFRRCBnuqCrSxh5tiT6xX4LNhb9Dnu4rbHBA>



Max Eckert - Cohort 1

Certification Officer at the Soil Association

<https://www.soilassociation.org/staff-bios/max-eckert/>

g) AONB Volunteers: January – May 2019

The Wye Valley AONB volunteers have concentrated much of their efforts in the early part of the year working for Natural England at the Highbury Woods National Nature Reserve. The group removed a large number of plastic netting enclosures that had provided protection for establishing coppice. Thirteen enclosure, in the region of 4 acres, have been cleared of redundant netting and two more remain for work to continue in the autumn. In addition, the group rebuilt a stone wall at the entrance to the reserve and helped hang a traditionally oak gate. The group were treated to a celebratory BBQ by the Natural England Team.



Works have also continued at Staunton Meend where 10 meters of drystone wall have been re-instated.





Wye Valley
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
(AONB)

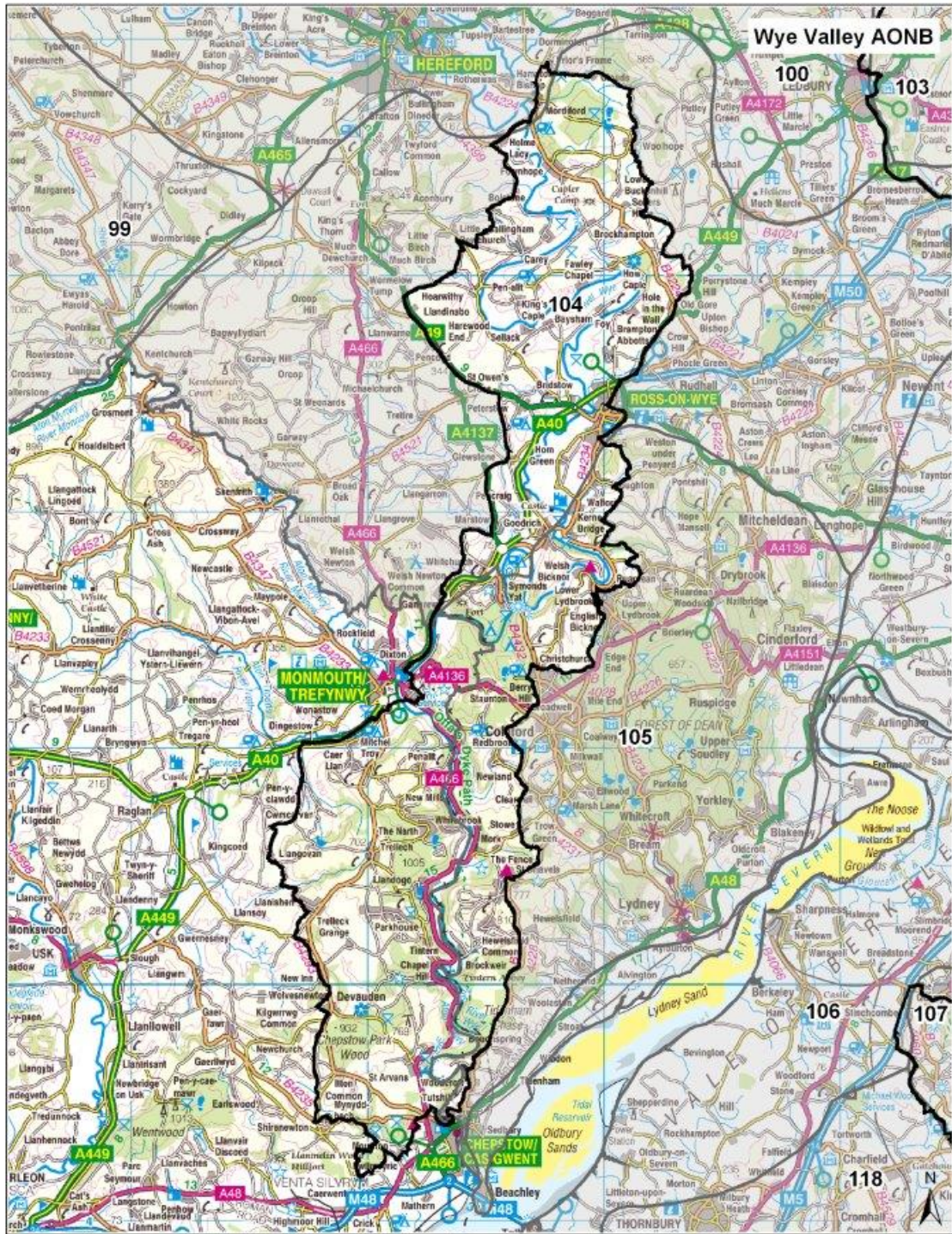
Pre-consultation
DRAFT
Management Plan

2020-2025

July 2019

Wye Valley AONB Office
Hadnock Road
Monmouth
NP25 3NG

Map 1: Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Boundary




Base mapping Ordnance Survey 1:250,000 GB Atlas. NOTE: not to scale; actual scale differs due to variations in size of individual Protected Areas.

0 2 4 6 Kilometres

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Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 Joint Character Areas

This map was created as part of the Second Assessment of Change in Countryside Quality 1998 - 2003.



Foreword

Lord Gardiner of Kimble

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity

Hannah Blythyn AM

Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government, Welsh Government

Chairperson

Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Declaration

This Management Plan was produced and adopted by the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee on behalf of the four local authorities, under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000:

(signature)
Chairman
Wye Valley AONB JAC

(signature)
Councillor
Cabinet Member for Environment,
Forest of Dean District Council

(signature)
Commissioning Director – Communities and Infrastructure,
Gloucestershire County Council

(signature)
Councillor
Cabinet Member, Economic Development and Community Services,
Herefordshire Council

(signature)
Councillor
Cabinet Member, Environment, Public Services & Housing,
Monmouthshire County Council

(signature)
Area Manager,
Natural England (West Midlands)

(signature)
Regional Director South East Region,
Natural Resources Wales

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Map 2 Landscape Management Zones in the Wye Valley AONB

PART 1 CONTEXT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the AONB Management Plan

1.1.1 This Management Plan, under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, formulates local authority policy and action in relation to the management of the Wye Valley AONB. Regard will be given to this Management Plan which is a material consideration in the respective Core Strategies and Local Development Plans / Local Development Frameworks of the constituent local authorities, under National Planning Practice Guidance and Planning Policy Wales.

1.1.2 The AONB Management Plan is a place-based plan derived through local consensus. It seeks to define the approach to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB through the application of local solutions to local challenges that also respect the national and international importance of the AONB. It is a plan for the AONB, the landscape and people who live in, work in and visit it - not just the AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and AONB staff Unit. Like its predecessors, this Management Plan provides guidance and strategic objectives, giving support and direction to help steer positive landscape change, particularly to those bodies that make up the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee and the wider AONB Partnership. It also provides guidance to the local communities and many landowners, residents and visitors in the area. The Management Plan is thus for all the bodies and individuals whose actions affect the AONB and who can play an important part in helping to conserve and enhance the outstanding landscape of the lower Wye Valley, for the benefit of both current and future generations. However this Plan does not provide all the answers for the next five years. It addresses the implications for the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area. Meanwhile it complements a range of plans, strategies and programmes that cover other aspects in the administrative areas covering the Wye Valley AONB. In this context it articulates the value of the landscape and the added value brought by the designation and the role of the partners in the AONB in supporting society's needs through an integrated approach to land management.

1.1.3 This is the fourth statutory 5 year Management Plan following the earlier non-statutory Plans of 1992 and 1981. Therefore this Management Plan sits in the context, and should inform subsequent iterations, of the following:-

National: National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949,
Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000,
National Planning Policy Framework,
Planning Policy Wales,
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
Environment (Wales) Act 2016
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment
Valued and Resilient: Welsh Government's Priorities for Areas of
Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks
South East Wales Area Statement

County/District: Forest of Dean Core Strategy,
Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan,
Herefordshire Local Plan & Core Strategy,
Monmouthshire Local Development Plan.
Monmouthshire Public Service Board Well-Being Plan

Local: Neighbourhood Development Plans

State of the AONB Report,

AONB Management Plan Action Plan,

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Wye Valley AONB Partnership guidance notes and positions statements.

The SEA & HRA contain a list of policy documents relevant to the Wye Valley AONB.

1.1.4 The preparation of this Management Plan was commenced in mid-July 2018. Biodiversity, Landscape and Planning officers from the Local Authorities met to discuss the format of the review of the Management Plan 2015-2020 including undertaking a SWOT analysis. The JAC, in November 2018, endorsed the conclusion that the 2015-2020 Management Plan remained a sound foundation on which to base this Plan. The core of the last Plan was still robust and the timetable difference with other strategies & legislation would seem to make a ‘full review’ more applicable to the preparation of the subsequent Plan (2025-2030). Therefore a proportionate and balanced ‘light touch’ review was proposed which modifies and updates the Plan, but retains tried and tested policies and content as appropriate.

1.1.5 A Consultation Draft AONB Management Plan 2020-25 was published in July 2019 with a 10 week public consultation period. In addition two seminars will be held with key stakeholders in September/October 2019 to provide further opportunities for everybody to inspect and comment on the new AONB Management Plan. The consequent recommended amendments to the AONB Management Plan will be made and the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee will recommend the finalised Plan for adoption by the Local Authorities in 2020. Screening Reports for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) are also being consulted on by, in England: Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England and in Wales: Cadw, Natural Resources Wales and the Welsh Government, between July to September 2019. The Management Plan has also been subject to a Future Generations Evaluation, which includes Equalities and Sustainability Impact Assessments.

1.2 AONB designation

1.2.1 The 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland cover approximately 1/8th of the land surface. Together with National Parks, AONBs represent our most outstanding landscapes; unique and irreplaceable national assets, each with such distinctive character and natural beauty that they are recognised and designated nationally to be managed in the interest of everyone – local residents, businesses, visitors, and the wider public - and protected

for future generations. They are also recognised internationally as part of the global Protected Areas Family.

1.2.2 The rich combination of breath taking views, impressive geology, historic legacies and diverse wildlife in the valley of the River Wye between Hereford and Chepstow led to the designation, in 1971, of the valley and adjoining plateaux and hills as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Wye Valley AONB covers 92km (58 miles) of the lower reaches of the River Wye totalling an area of 327km² (128 square miles), being 45km North to South and 11.3 km at its widest (East - West) point. It stretches from Mordiford in the north, just east of the city of Hereford, southwards to the outskirts of Chepstow (see Map 1).

1.2.3 The Wye Valley AONB is unique among the 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 14 National Parks in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland in being the only protected landscape to straddle a national boundary; being 64% in England and 36% in Wales. This provides a number of challenges and opportunities for the management of the Wye Valley AONB.

1.2.4 **The primary purpose of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (and National Parks) is to conserve and enhance natural beauty.** This was laid out seventy years ago in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, modified in the Countryside Act 1968 and confirmed for AONBs in the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. Supplementary purposes to the AONB designation were developed by government agencies in the 1990s (the Countryside Commission and Countryside Council for Wales ‘AONBs: A Policy Statement CCP 356, 1991’ and reiterated by the Countryside Agency in ‘CA 24, November 2001’). These further AONB purposes are as follows:-

- In pursuing the primary purpose, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries, and of the economic and social needs of the local communities.
- Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.
- Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met in an AONB so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.

1.2.5 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty share equal status with National Parks in terms of scenic beauty and landscape protection. This was reinforced in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF para 172) and Planning Policy Wales (PPW para 6.3.8).

1.2.6 Unlike National Parks, AONBs are not authoritative bodies with their own planning or development control functions and other executive powers. Instead, responsibility for the designated purposes lies chiefly with the local authorities, for the Wye Valley AONB being Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council. The government departments and agencies responsible for designating AONBs and

advising Government and others on how AONBs should be protected and managed are Defra, Natural England and Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

1.2.7 The CRoW Act (Section 85) also requires that relevant authorities, in addition to government and local planning authorities, ‘have regard’ to the purpose of AONBs. These include parish, town and community councils and the holders of public office.

1.2.8 On the grounds of good citizenship and guardianship at least, a duty of care for the AONB also lies with individuals and organisations (private or third sector), especially those who own or manage land in the AONB and also with the visitors to the area.

1.3 What is Natural Beauty?

1.3.1 The term ‘natural beauty’ first gained currency in a legislative context in the 1907 Act which gave legal status to the National Trust (‘for Places of Historic Interest and Natural Beauty’). The 1931 Addison Report on mechanisms to preserve the countryside by National Park status includes the phrase “to improve the means of access for pedestrians to areas of natural beauty”. It has been the basis for the designation of both AONBs and National Parks since the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 in which, however the term was not defined.

1.3.2 In the 1949 Act ‘Natural beauty’ replaced other phrases such as ‘landscape beauty’ and ‘characteristic landscape beauty’. These provide a clue to the importance of landscape character and beauty as an aesthetic experience. Character is interpreted in different ways with the Landscape Institute focusing on the pattern of landscape elements, landscape archaeologists seeing the human process of a palimpsest landscape ‘coming into being’, and ecologists also considering the quality of the natural processes and ecological systems which underpin patterns of topography and vegetation. Natural beauty encompasses all of these views.

1.3.3 Natural Beauty is defined in the Countryside Act 1968 as “flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features”. These aspects of natural beauty are the components that make a landscape so scenic and distinctive; the wildlife, trees and plants, and the shape of the land with its rivers and hills and rock outcrops. However, it is recognised and understood that 'natural' landscapes of the British Isles are the product of millennia of human intervention. Therefore landscape is about the relationship between people and place; the interaction between nature and culture. Subsequent government guidance provides a further definition: ‘The natural beauty of AONBs encompasses everything – ‘natural’ and human – that makes an area distinctive: geology, climate, soil, plants, animals, communities, cultural associations, archaeology, buildings, the people who live in it, past and present, and the perceptions of those who visit it.’ Public appreciation is a key component of natural beauty and considerable provision for recreation and tourism in AONBs were made in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Natural beauty goes well beyond just scenic or aesthetic value.

1.3.4 This Management Plan defines the natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB through the Statement of Significance, Landscape Features and the Special Qualities of the AONB, as outlined below. These encompass sense of place, landscape beauty, scenic beauty, amenity, natural and cultural heritage and landscape assets.

2. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND VISION

2.1 Statement of Significance for the Wye Valley AONB

2.1.1 The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is regarded as one of **the finest lowland landscapes in Britain**, with the River Wye one the **nation's favourite rivers**. The AONB, straddling the English Welsh border, with the river as the centrepiece, is an area of striking contrasts. In the north, the river meanders through the **broad meadows** of the Herefordshire lowlands. The more dramatic scenery, including famous spots like Symonds Yat and Tintern Abbey, lie downstream from Ross-on-Wye. Here the river has cut **dramatic gorges** with sheer **cliffs and steep wooded slopes**, interspersed with broader valley reaches, with rounded hills and bluffs.

2.1.2 The Wye Valley AONB contains a **splendid variety of geological outcrops** and important examples of **active and past geomorphologic processes**. Formed over millions of years, the underlying rocks have been worked on by ice and then the river to produce the landscape of the Wye Valley we recognise today. The differing geology has given rise to a **range of distinctive settlement and farming patterns**. The oldest rocks are the Silurian limestones and sandstones that make up the grey soils of the Woolhope Dome in the north of the AONB. The Old Red Sandstone creates the fertile red and brown soils of the Herefordshire lowlands along with the rich river alluvium of the floodplain. These softer rocks allowed the river to meander more widely. From Lydbrook the river cuts in and out of the harder Carboniferous Limestone strata of the Forest of Dean plateau to form dramatic gorges. The area has a **full sequence of the Carboniferous Limestone Series** and excellent exposures and formations including limestone pavement, quartz conglomerate, caves, natural stream channels and tufa dams.

2.1.3 The Wye Valley is particularly important for its **rich wildlife habitats**. This is reflected in the remarkable juxtaposition of three separate Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), under the European Union's Habitats Directive. The river is a SAC as well as being the first major river to be designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) along its entire length. Nearly a thousand hectares of valley side woodland are also designated a SAC. Nine roosting sites for Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bats make a third SAC. Underlying this are 46 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) including 4 National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and 204 County local/key wildlife sites. The limestone woodlands are renowned as a refuge of rare species and form part of **one of the largest remaining areas of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland in the country**. As a predominantly wooded and riverine environment, the Wye Valley has a greater combination of ancient and natural features than virtually all the other AONBs and National Parks in the UK. Priority

Habitats cover nearly 17% of the English part of the AONB. The traditional orchards, pastures, hay meadows, hedges and copses within the farmed landscape also provide rich habitats for wildlife. The strong mosaic of these habitats makes the landscape robust and permeable for many species.

2.1.4 The AONB contains an abundance of sites of historic and cultural significance. Many activities **fundamental to the cultural identity of Britain** have an origin in the Wye Valley. This is reflected in the fact that there are 125 Scheduled Monuments (SMs) in the Wye Valley AONB, 11 registered Parks and Gardens, 22 Conservation Areas and 959 Listed Buildings. The river is both the backbone and the border of the historic environment that underlays the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB. There is a range of distinctive settlement types and patterns, field systems, and vernacular building styles and materials. The whole of the lower Wye Valley, from Goodrich to Chepstow, has been included in the **Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest** in Wales. Features range from caves with Palaeolithic occupation, ancient forests, Roman and Celtic settlements, defensive structures such as hill forts, Offa's Dyke and Mediaeval castles, secluded early churches and monasteries. Tributaries cascade down side valleys to join the Wye, giving focus to settlements and power to **pioneering industries** including wireworks, papermaking, tanning, tin-plate and quarrying. The river was the main transport route up and down the valley, superseded by the railway and eventually the roads. The scenic qualities of the Wye Valley are important in the history of art. Landscaped parks, gardens and viewpoints inspired some of the great British poets and writers. The Reverend William Gilpin was inspired in 1770 to write his treatise on the notion and depiction of landscape and gave birth to the **'picturesque' movement**. As a result of his work the valley became very popular with visitors.

2.1.5 The lower Wye Valley remains nationally renowned as a **destination for tourism and recreation** with 2.3 million tourist days per annum. Overnight stays, while common, are outweighed by day trips with many people travelling for less than 2 hours to visit the Wye Valley. Amongst these visitors are some of the **29,300 residents** living and/or working in the market towns, villages and hamlets of the Wye Valley AONB.

2.1.6 The **high quality environment** of the lower Wye Valley makes a significant contribution to the area's economic development. The **water quality** of the Wye enables abstraction of drinking water at Lydbrook and Monmouth. The natural beauty of the area is recognised as **contributing to economic activities and well-being** such as tourism and inward investment, as well as the overall **quality of life**, making the Wye Valley a more attractive place in which to live and work. However, the general locality is renowned for limited job opportunities. Many residents work outside the AONB, often commuting to Birmingham, Bristol or Cardiff. The reality for some is an area of low incomes, limited housing, inadequate services and poor transport.

2.1.7 **Agriculture, forestry and tourism** are the main industries that operate in the landscape of the lower Wye Valley along with mineral extraction. Combined together they have to a large extent **crafted the landscape** we see today. Agriculture and forestry are the most apparent land uses with farmland covering 58% of the AONB and woodland 27%. There is a great diversity of enterprises dependant on all these

industries, which tend to be characterised by low pay and seasonal employment. The viability of some of these businesses can have significant implication for the natural beauty and social well-being of the area. Tourism, from the early days of The Wye Tour, has focused on the river corridor and the market towns. It is still predominantly based around **enjoyment of the scenic beauty** and the **palimpsest heritage** of the Wye Valley. With increasing diversification tourism is spreading throughout the AONB. Limestone extraction continues at one commercial quarry, with another abutting the AONB boundary. Neither of these quarries are operating at full capacity at the moment.

2.1.8 The majority of employment in the AONB comes from distribution, education, manufacturing, public administration and tourism. The growth of environmentally beneficial activities in these sectors is becoming an increasingly important factor in the local economy. For example the increased interest in **locally produced food** is generating renewed investment locally in environmental land management, local food processing and distribution, food tourism, education and recreation. Other influences that have the potential to benefit the local economy include changes in working practices and the development of woodfuel and other local renewable energy technologies.

2.1.9 The **Special Qualities of the Wye Valley AONB**, which contribute significantly to the ecosystem goods and services of the area, are listed below and tabulated in Table 8.

1. Overall Landscape
 - of 16 Landscape Management Zones (see Table 1 & Map 2 - at rear) with key features and links to the other Special Qualities
- Biodiversity*
2. Woodlands
3. The river & tributaries
4. Species-rich grassland, including small field pattern of un/semi-improved grassland, often bounded by drystone walls or old hedges
5. Boundary habitat diversity & connectivity, e.g. between grassland & woodland, farmland & heathland, tidal river & ASNW, hedges &/or drystone walls, lanes, banks, verges and fields & woods
- Geological*
6. Silurian Rocks
7. Devonian - Lower Old Red Sandstone
8. Quartz Conglomerate outcropping between Lower and Upper Old Red Sandstone
9. Carboniferous Limestone
10. Riverine geomorphology
- Visual and Sensory*
11. Picturesque, extensive & dramatic views.
12. Overall sense of tranquillity, sense of remoteness and naturalness / wildness
- Historic Environment*
13. Prehistoric sites from Palaeolithic to Iron Age
14. Roman and early Medieval sites including Offa's Dyke
15. Mediaeval Defensive and Ecclesiastical sites and associated landscapes
16. Post-medieval industrial sites and associated landscapes

17. Railway heritage
 18. Ancient trees
 19. Historic / registered parks and gardens
 20. Vernacular architecture: Farmsteads, Commoners cottages, Estate houses
- Language*
21. Welsh language & accent; Forest of Dean & South Herefordshire dialects & accents
- Access and Recreation*
22. Old tracks: often in sunken ways &/or bounded by drystone walls
 23. Offa's Dyke Path
 24. Wye Valley Walk
 25. Access land
 26. Small commons; largest are Coppet Hill, Broadmoor, Staunton Meend, Whitelye, The Hudnalls
- Other*
27. Orchards

2.2 The Vision for the Wye Valley AONB

2.2.1 The following was developed for the 2009-14 AONB Management Plan as a 20 year vision and remains a true encapsulation of how we want the AONB to be in 15 years' time and beyond:-

The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will be a landscape

- *that continues to evoke inspiration in a wide range of people*
- *where some degree of change is accepted and its impacts accommodated through positive management including effective adaptation to and mitigation of climate change*
- *where the distinctive mix of steep valley sides and rolling hills, covered with ancient and semi-natural woodland, mixed farmland, and scattered settlement dominate the landscape along with the meandering river*
- *where the natural and heritage assets are in good order, well-understood and accessible where appropriate, in fully compatible uses and adapted and changed in ways which respect and enhance their significance*
- *with a robust mosaic of inter-connected semi natural habitats for native wildlife, particularly around grassland, wetland and woodland*
- *providing functioning services and resources for society, including flood storage, food, timber, tourism and minerals*
- *which provides work for local people, who make good use of the varied resources the area has to offer*

- *where both visitors and residents are able to enjoy the area, particularly for sustainable tourism, recreation and informed appreciation of the historic and natural environment, with minimal conflict or disturbance from other users*
- *where association with the Wye Valley continues to benefit the surrounding villages, market towns and counties*
- *supported by the good will, pride and endeavour of local people, visitors, and the public, private and voluntary sectors*
- *worthy of its designation as an internationally important protected landscape.*

3. MANAGING CHANGE

3.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Wye Valley has always been subject to natural and cultural changes and this will inevitably continue. Our actions inexorably lead to change and we have to recognise and adapt to change. The increasing impacts of climate change and loss of biodiversity are particularly significant. The countryside has evolved as a result of natural processes and land management practices and this evolution will continue as demands from consumers and users continue to change. It is neither possible nor desirable to ‘fossilise’ a landscape, and we must aim to keep a living, working and functioning countryside. Table 2 and Table 8 below outline what the landscape features and Special Qualities of the area are that people value and wish to see remaining in the landscape, and the ecosystem goods and services that the landscape provides. Understanding these interrelations helps us recognise what is required to manage, adapt and sustain those assets and services for future generation.

2.1.2 In the past change has often been quite gradual. Today the nature, speed and extent of changes induced by climate change, modern lifestyles and management practices are more threatening to the ecosystems, landscape and natural beauty. Indeed the speed and scale of changes in lifestyles, agriculture and transport in the last seventy years are unprecedented and, along with the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss, threaten to degrade distinctive landscape features and wildlife habitats; but there are opportunities to adapt and arrest destructive change in places.

2.1.3 Many of the pressures we face now will erode the assets and character of the area unless we make positive choices about what we want to see happen, and make sometimes difficult decisions to achieve this. Thus the impetus in the AONB needs to focus on the most effective solutions to managing those factors influencing change. The challenge is to conserve the distinctive features and Special Qualities of the AONB, to maintain the ecosystem services the area provides and to seek to enhance all of these where they are judged to be deteriorating. We must do this for the benefit of current and future generations.

2.1.4 The main activities and pressures in the AONB are laid out in Table 9 below. This identifies the impacts that are likely to force change in the Wye Valley AONB over the next five years and beyond. These need to be recognised and managed, or the cumulative effect of all these changes could have a significant detrimental impact on the Special Qualities and ecosystems of the AONB.

3.2 Forces for Change

Some of the most dominant forces for change are outlined below:-

3.2.1 Climate change & Climate emergency:

3.2.1.1 In 1971, when the Wye Valley was designated an AONB, the globally averaged CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere was 326 parts per million (ppm). These have now risen to 411ppm and are expected to increase further. This is having a significant impact on temperatures with the years between 2015 and 2018 being the four warmest on record. The Exponential Climate Action Roadmap report (2018) states “The world is on the verge of a tipping point. The analysis presented here confirms it is necessary, desirable and achievable to halve greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 in every sector of the economy with existing technologies, and momentum is growing. But crossing the tipping point will require large-scale behavioural change driven by greater climate leadership, stronger policies and the application of exponential technologies. By exponential technologies we mean both technologies and business models that are designed to reach a global scale rapidly – within a decade. Aligning their disruptive capability with climate goals will be crucial.... If successful, we are at the start of one of the most exciting and dramatic changes in human history.”

3.2.1.2 The local authorities covering the AONB and Welsh Government have declared a climate emergency. The Committee on Climate Change recommends a new emissions target for the UK of net-zero greenhouse gases by 2050 with a 95% reduction target in Wales. A net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target for 2050 will deliver on the UK’s commitment made by signing the Paris Agreement. In 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned the world that "rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented" changes were needed if the climate crisis was to be tackled effectively. The 2018 IPCC Special Report ‘Global warming of 1.5°C’ states:-

“Climate-related risks for natural and human systems are higher for global warming of 1.5°C than at present, but lower than at 2°C.

“On land, impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems, including species loss and extinction, are projected to be lower at 1.5°C of global warming compared to 2°C.

“Climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, and economic growth are projected to increase with global warming of 1.5°C and increase further with 2°C.”

3.2.1.3 The changing climate is likely to have significant direct and indirect impacts on landscape character, local distinctiveness and quality. Flooding and drought events, more frequent extreme weather, erosion, wildfires, diseases affecting tree cover and

changing land cover, habitats and species ranges are examples of how the landscape may change to a greater or lesser degree, in the short or long term. Landscape changes may also be evident from mitigation measures, such as renewable energy generation, water resource management and adaptation through the planned expansion of woodland.

3.2.1.4 The UK Climate Change Projections (UKCP18) projects greater chance of hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters. Across Wales by 2050, average annual temperatures are projected to increase by 2.3 degrees. In summer, daily maximum temperatures are projected to increase by 3.4 degrees and in winter daily minimum temperatures are predicted to increase by 2.5 degrees. Rainfall is projected to increase in winter on average by 14% and decrease in summer by 16%, however overall the total annual average rainfall is predicted to remain the same.

3.2.1.5 The effects of climate change may not be that consistent over the 5 years of this Plan. However we are likely to encounter more energy in weather system and more extreme weather, with potentially prolonged summer heatwaves but when it does rain it will be more intense. Wet winters are likely to get wetter and flood risk will become more severe in some places. We may swing from not having enough water to dealing with too much. There are potentially increased risks from interdependencies - the cumulative impacts of multiple weather events in a short period. Therefore some of the most likely outcomes are:

- Greater fluctuations in water table levels
- Increases in localised flooding, and associated pollution risks, soil erosion and property and crop damage. For example, heavy rainfall may result in soil erosion higher up the Wye resulting in pollution of the water course downstream
- Increase in storm events may result in greater tree fall and land slip, particularly in the steep Wye Valley woodlands resulting in damage to and blocking of roads
- Bridges may be at risk from increased river flows and accumulation of storm debris.
- Changes in species distribution (including arrival of non-native species and potential loss of species for which suitable climate conditions disappear)
- Changes in phenology (timing of natural events such as migratory patterns of winter and summer visiting birds, egg laying dates, emergence of flowers and leaves etc.)
- Increased levels of over wintering pest species
- Potential for new pests and diseases of crops, trees and livestock
- Increased spring and summer fire risks on woodland and heathland
- Increased storm damage to, and losses of, field and hedgerow trees
- Introductions of new crops and increased viability of existing crops, for example vineyards.
- Changing patterns of visitor numbers with increased usage throughout the year and particularly during the ‘shoulder’ seasons of spring and autumn
- Increased vulnerability of historic environment features (e.g. wetter ground conditions on monuments causing greater poaching, increased decay of

redundant farm buildings, erosion or damage of bankside archaeological features and structures such as bridges, watermills, wharves and forges. Much of the above increase risks for businesses, who need to make sure they are resilient and can keep going through periods of disruption.

3.2.1.6. The challenges for delivering such significant change including priorities for decarbonising homes, energy and agriculture; improving resource use and efficiency and maintaining industrial competitiveness. As well as drastic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, we will also need to change the way we do things to take account of the changes in climate and maintain ecosystem functions. There is a need to ‘act locally’ and to address the contribution that the AONB and AONB based activities, such as tourism, transport, exploitation of renewable materials, design and siting of housing, etc. can make to reducing greenhouse gas emissions while building resilience for our well-being and future generations.

3.2.1.7 Ecological connectivity and robust habitat networks will allow for the movement of species in the face of climate change. Restored habitats can be utilised to reduce the impacts of extreme events related to climate change. For example, restored woodlands and wetlands and natural flood management measures can help alleviate the impacts of flooding. The adoption of an integrated landscape-scale approach will create more resilient networks and habitats that improve the adaptive capacity of the countryside and the maintenance of ecosystem services. In the River Wye water flows are maintained above an agreed minimum level by releases from the Elan Valley Reservoirs to ensure sufficient water levels for drinking water abstractions from the Wye at Lydbrook and Monmouth.

3.2.1.8 Green Infrastructure is a clear mechanism that delivers ecosystem services in which landscape, biodiversity, accessibility and quality of life benefits are supported through sustainable communities. Green Infrastructure can therefore play a vital role in tackling climate change, by:-

- Sustaining diversity by promoting ecological connectivity and robust habitats.
- Restoring habitats e.g. woodlands/vegetation, to help reduce flooding and offset air pollution whilst also conserving the key features and characteristics which have led to the AONB designation that make it so attractive to locals and visitors today.
- Providing sustainable urban drainage and natural flood management (NFM) to absorb excess rainfall and ensuring the character of the river and tributaries are not degraded.
- Contributing space to grow foods using sustainable methods thus promoting healthy diets for local communities but also enhancing biodiversity, providing jobs and educational benefits.
- Safeguarding accessible green space which helps reduce the effects of urban heat islands and also contributes to people’s sense of health and well-being as well as having economic benefits relating to tourism.
- Reducing carbon emissions through encouraging alternative modes of transport by walking and cycling whilst also supporting health, well-being and tourism.

3.2.1.9 Key challenges in tackling adaptation to climate change will be the speed with which we need to share and adopt good practice. Some measures to adapt to predicted changes might have unintended consequences for the landscape, historic environment and biodiversity, such as new reservoirs or renewable energy infrastructure. Therefore good planning is required to reduce negative impacts and secure positive benefits. The UK's third Climate Change Risk Assessment evidence report is due in 2021.

3.2.2 **Standardisation:** The overall pressure for standardisation in many aspects of life can have an erosive effect on the natural beauty and distinctive character of an area. The cumulative effect of the replacement of locally distinctive features with standardised materials can create a creeping urbanisation of the rural landscape. Standardised highways infrastructure, replacing drystone walls with mortared walls, hard surfacing of green lanes or uniform design in a new development are all examples of adopting standards that may not complement the landscape features and Special Qualities of the AONB. Examples of damaging and cumulative effects suggest that these issues need greater consideration within planning applications in the AONB.

3.2.3 **Agriculture:** There are considerable challenges for farming in the UK, with Brexit potentially having an impact on market access, welfare standards and future subsidy arrangements. There is movement towards a system of payment for 'public goods' in areas such as environmental and animal welfare standards. The UK's reduction targets on greenhouse gas emissions also puts agriculture as a key area which requires action to meet targets. There is uncertainty around how productivity fits into this mix and how the system will promote sustainability and stewardship while enabling efficient and competitive farming with reduced emissions. Farmers need to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and expertise to deliver effective sustainable land management as well as responding to innovative and disruptive technologies to deliver improved farm productivity. Government and the agricultural industry need to address the barriers to uptake and investment. The subsequent changes to farming practices may force change on the landscape that are undesirable or unintentional, while other may be positive.

3.2.4 **Forestry:** The concept of multi-purpose forestry underpins modern forestry policy. Recreational use of the woods remains high. Timber prices, particularly for firewood are buoyant and markets strong. This is encouraging private owners back into managing their woods and grants can assist with improving the access for increased harvesting and for producing robust management plans. However in many parts of the Wye Valley the woods remain under-managed and over-mature. Meanwhile buyers of wood products are increasingly demanding assurances about the quality and impacts of forest management. Certification is one way of providing such an assurance and much of the Wye Valley woodlands are already certified. Past activities, such as planting conifers in ancient semi-natural woodland and on heathland, is being reversed. Historically the Wye Valley woodlands were managed for woodfuel in the form of charcoal. The development of modern woodfuel markets could increase the management of these woods once more. However this will need larger access tracks for modern machinery. These changes would revert the continuous covered forest canopy to which people have become accustomed over

recent years, to a more dynamic patchwork of different-aged coppiced coups and stands of maturing trees for timber. The overall connectivity of woodlands in the valley mean the wildlife habitats are fairly robust. However there are significant threats to a variety of tree species by an increasing array of pests and diseases, which are having a dramatic impact on both the landscape and the viability of some forestry practices. In particular, Chalara / Ash Dieback is affecting the majority of Ash trees in the area and the loss of significant numbers of trees is inevitable. The diversity of the Wye Valley woodlands means the forest cover will continue but Sycamore and other species will replace the Ash, changing the nature of the woodlands. Meanwhile *Phytophthora ramorum* has significantly affected larch plantations with clear felling of larch trees in the Wye Valley.

3.2.5 Transport: Private vehicle and HGV use remains the dominant form of transport, although cycling is increasing in the lower Wye Valley. The increase in electric cars is unlikely to affect this trend especially with declining public transport services.. Incremental changes in transport infrastructure can erode local distinctiveness and natural beauty and mar the landscape character. For example; concrete curbing is installed to prevent increased erosion of verges; signs proliferate to direct and inform the driver, and these are bigger and brighter to gain attention. In Wales bi-lingual signs are even larger. Street lighting has also increased so that main junctions are fully lit and what were once quiet obscure rural crossroads may now have a mini-roundabout and a dozen street lamps. Sustainable transport options are required which avoid these pitfalls.

3.2.6 Tourism and Recreation: Visitors support an important part of the local economy, being one of the largest sectors of employment in the AONB. But managing the flow of visitors, particularly in the peaks and troughs (often weather dependent), is a challenge along with maintaining appropriate staffing levels to service this variable demand, thus very reliant on part-time local labour. Over-tourism, according to Responsible Travel, occurs when there are too many visitors to a particular destination. Of course defining ‘too many’ is subjective, but if narrow roads are jammed with tourist vehicles, when wildlife is scared away, when tourists cannot view landmarks because of the crowds, when fragile environments are degraded, that is over-tourism. The investment generated by tourism can help to sustain aspects of the local environment. However the trend for late booking and discounting is reducing the profitability for many businesses, particularly the small family-run businesses typical of the Wye Valley. This is exacerbated by rising costs. When visitors spend less or expect more for less money, it is often the food and drink industry which is hardest hit. This part of the industry can be an integral part of supporting local production and landscape conservation. Visitors also bring pressures on the local infrastructure, such as facilities, roads and trails, with modifications required to accommodate their needs or mitigate against the impacts.

3.2.7 Development pressures: The UK population will continue to grow, and its demands and expectations continue to evolve. This is likely to increase pressures on ecosystem services, exacerbated by climate change impacts. As more people require more houses in which to live, many wishing to live in the countryside while working in neighbouring towns and cities, there is accompanying growth in road traffic. This all has an effect on the tranquillity and undeveloped nature of the area. Conversely,

some people may perceive the AONB designation itself as a threat to the modern aspirations and lifestyles of the area’s residents and businesses. Expansion of the market towns adjacent to the AONB can alleviate the pressure for development in the AONB but the associated growth in traffic can still have significant implications for the area. A robust Green Infrastructure approach when considering development allows the holistic consideration of a wide range of aspects which can contribute positively to ecosystem services and the AONB.

3.2.8 Quality of life: As the demographics of the population in the AONB evolve so the requirements of local communities change. This has already led to the loss of local services including the closure of many village shops and rural pubs. Agriculture and forestry remain the dominant land uses but less and less people in the countryside have any connection to the growing or processing of local produce. Most of our rural landscapes are oddly quiet now as they are increasingly occupied by people who do not work in the villages and who are not there during the day. For those left behind, such as car-less parents, young people and the elderly, the ‘peace and tranquillity of the countryside’, that contributes so much to some peoples’ quality of life, can become a key feature of social isolation emphasising the emptiness and silence of their situation. If we do not want our settlements to be soulless dormitories or week-end resorts we must find ways to sustain, recover or improve the core quality of life for people living and working in the Wye Valley AONB. It is also important to ensure that the quality of life that visitors to the Wye Valley experience here is good too.

3.3 Changes since designation

3.3.1 The Wye Valley was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1971. The published designation history gives an outline of the key features and reasons for designating the lower Wye Valley as an AONB. However there is not much consistent baseline information from which to measure what changes have occurred in the landscape over the nearly fifty years since the Wye Valley was designated.

3.3.2 A comparison of habitat surveys from the early 1970s and 2010-13 over a 10% parcel of the AONB, the Gloucestershire part north of St Briavels, provide a useful insight into changes since designation. The comparison analysis is ongoing but interim results report the following:-

“There are several striking differences between the two surveys. The proportion of broadleaved or mixed woodland, as opposed to solid conifers, has increased considerably, whilst unimproved grasslands and orchards have almost disappeared from the map in most areas. Smaller habitat features such as scrub and bracken patches, small ponds and strips of new planting (including a couple of new orchard patches) have increased:

Deciduous woodland:	+59%
Coniferous woodland:	-43%
Mixed woodland:	+18%
Scrub:	+23%
Improved grass – species-poor:	+6%

Unimproved grass and species-rich semi-improved: -41%
 Orchards: -87%
 Open water: +140%

“Despite the apparent timelessness of the Wye Valley landscape, there have been big changes since the 1970s. Potential drivers for these changes include:

1. Changes in farming subsidies, leading to abandonment or diversification away from extensive pasture, especially in the more hilly areas;
2. Removal of orchards during the 1970s may also have been encouraged by grants, including grants for farm improvements which required “spare” land near to existing farm buildings;
3. A change in forestry policy leading to replanting of conifer plantations with more diverse mixtures of trees. Outside of the Forestry Commission land some felled areas appear to have been converted to other uses or allowed to grow into scrub;
4. More use of grassland improvement appears to have led to most “unimproved” grasslands either being improved, or allowed to develop bracken or scrub. Some “improved” fields have now developed some species-diversity, however, possibly due to organic farming or the use of minimal improvement on acid grassland, which can lead to increased floral diversity.”

Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records (GCER) 2013.

3.3.3 The following summarises further notable changes that have impacted on the AONB since designation in 1971:-

- The A40 dual carriageway had been constructed by 1971 but subsequent development along the roadside has continued to impact on the natural beauty of the area.
- Most major industry had ceased in the valley by 1971, but development of redundant sites has not always been sympathetic to the heritage or natural beauty of the valley.
- The railway line, closed by 1971, has overgrown significantly providing a tree line where before was a managed transport corridor.
- Agricultural intensification has significantly changed the AONB in some places; field boundaries and orchards have been removed in more intensively farmed areas and much floodplain grassland has been ploughed for arable use.
- Recently there has been a resurgence in cider production and consequently more orchards have been planted, albeit with bush varieties rather than standard trees.
- The mixture of gardens, rough ground, churchyard, semi-natural grassland, scattered trees and walls that characterises [many of] the village[s] provides far greater habitat variety than the commercial farmland nearby (Peterken 2008)
- The number of farmers and people employed in farming has declined steeply.
- Most quarries in the AONB have closed, but the last remaining large quarries in or adjacent to the AONB are still working extensions.
- Many more people work from dedicated home offices. In some parts of the AONB this amounts to about 10% of the resident workforce, equivalent to over 3 home offices per square km.
- The dramatic decline in salmon stocks in the river is slowly recovering.

- The planting of conifers in ancient woodland sites has significantly reduced in response to higher grants for broadleaves and several areas of heathland have been restored.
- Visitor numbers to the area appear to have declined from highs in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but are increasing again.
- Increasing recreational activity and individual car use continues to exert pressure on honey-pot sites such as Tintern and Symonds Yat.
- Canoeing on the river has increased.
- Housing and development pressure has increased, to the detriment of the stock of affordable housing.
- Many villages and rural areas have lost their shops, pubs and petrol stations, although new community initiatives have re-opened some village shops.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE PLAN

The guiding principles that underpin the approach to managing the AONB are sustainable development, natural resource management, the ecosystem approach and the landscape approach.

4.1 Sustainable development

4.1.1 The concept of ‘sustainable development’ is based on the definition from the World Commission on Environment and Development’s 1987 Brundtland Report as “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The UK government is committed to the delivery of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agreed in 2015 at the United Nations. The SDGs are underpinned by the principle of universality. This means that all nations, and all people, are responsible for their achievement both internationally and domestically. Delivering the SDGs sets us on a trajectory to end poverty and inequality, improve health and wellbeing, end the devastating decline of biodiversity and ecosystems, and reduce the impacts of climate change. They offer a route to a better, more sustainable and just, future. However, governments alone cannot deliver the Goals. Partnership and multi-stakeholder participation is also essential. Collaboration is critical as we cannot neglect the challenges we face domestically nor ignore the reliance and impact our way of life has on the rest of the world.

4.1.2 A move to managing sustainability will require an appropriate mixture of regulations, technology, financial investment and education, as well as changes in individual and societal behaviour and adoption of a more integrated, rather than conventional sectorial, approach to ecosystem management.

4.1.3 In Wales, the overarching sustainable development context is enshrined through the Well-being of Future Generations (WFG) Act. The Environment Act, which integrates the management of natural resources into the WFG Act’s sustainable development architecture – the seven well-being goals, introduced a further set of

principles – the 5 ways of working, which apply to the management of Wales’ natural resources. In this way, a two-tier policy architecture exists which is not only aligned closely with the EU’s architecture, but is also aligned to the international level, in particular, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity’s ecosystem approach.

4.1.4 The Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) ensures that the most is made in Wales of the opportunities that Wales' natural resources provide. This respects the limits of natural processes that continue to be our life support system. The overall aim is to ensure that Wales has increasingly resilient and diverse ecosystems that deliver economic, environmental and social benefits. In both England and Wales natural resource management is most evident through river catchment management.

4.1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for England has a “presumption in favour of sustainable development”. However this does not automatically apply in AONBs because (under NPPF paragraph 11 footnote 6) there are other specific policies in the NPPF that protect AONBs (paragraph 172) which provide a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the area. This does not constitute a favour against sustainable development in AONBs and indeed reinforces that change (i.e. development) will occur in many aspects of life and the environment but that where change does occur it must be managed in a manner which contributes to a better quality of life for current and future generations, without undermining the quality of the natural environment. Therefore sustainable management means a future Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which continues to justify its designation as a nationally important area of highly valued functioning landscape with distinctive features and Special Qualities, which is also a living, working area, with vibrant communities where people want to live and work and visit and where they will continue to want to do so.

4.2 Natural Capital

4.2.1 The benefits we derive from the natural world are critically important to human well-being. The Management Plan adopts the ‘Ecosystem Approach’, being a central principle in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 2004). This focuses on the holistic and integrated management of land, water and living resources to promote conservation and sustainable use and the three objectives of the Convention:

- Conservation of biological diversity;
- Sustainable use of its components;
- Fair and Equitable Sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.

4.2.2 The ecosystem approach provides a mechanism which can be used to look at whole ecosystems during the decision making process, and for valuing the ecosystem services they provide, ensuring that society can maintain a healthy and resilient natural environment for current and future generations. In the context of sustainable development, decisions need to be made within environmental limits and at an appropriate spatial scale, whilst recognising the cumulative impacts of decisions.

River catchments are recognised as an appropriate scale for this, including the Wye catchment, as are woodland connectivity networks.

4.2.3 Natural capital refers to both the living (e.g. fish stocks, forests) and non-living (e.g. minerals, energy resources) aspects of nature which produce value to people, both directly and indirectly. It is this capital that underpins all other capital in our economy and society. Essentially, natural capital is about nature’s assets. From these assets we derive a flow of benefits known as ecosystem services. A monetary value can be placed on some elements of the natural system.

4.2.4 Using the natural capital concept’s division of assets and flows, a monetary value can be placed on some elements of the natural system. For instance, the ‘Marches Ecosystem Assessment: An Assessment of the Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services Value in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin’ was published in 2016 by Shropshire Council on behalf of the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Partnership. This included Annualised and Capitalised Baseline Value of Assessed Ecosystem Services in each of the 3 counties in The Marches (Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin). The Wye Valley AONB cover 7% of Herefordshire which accounts for 46% of the AONB. Therefore some analysis and extrapolations can be made from the Herefordshire data. While the accuracy of these calculations can be disputed, they help to underline the importance of an ecosystem asset (‘stock’) to society.

4.2.5 However, it is critical in undertaking any valuation exercise that intrinsic and incalculable value delivered by ecosystem and cultural assets are recognised. A balanced approach to natural beauty and its conservation and enhancement cannot be fully economically valued, so cannot be fairly weighed against developments which would destroy or damage those ecosystem stocks in simple economic terms.

4.3 Ecosystem services

4.3.1 Ecosystem services are the services provided by nature that benefit people. The environment is our life support system, important for its intrinsic value, as well as providing water, producing our food, energy and timber, sustaining our wildlife and creating employment and income worth billions of pounds (TEEB, 2010). Ecosystem Services (ESs) are the multiple benefits humans obtain either directly or indirectly from these ecological systems and include services pertaining to food provision, carbon sequestration, water regulation and many others, all of which are essential for human well-being (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA), 2005; Troy & Wilson, 2006). The MEA categorised ecosystem services into four broad categories (Table 1).

Table 1: Ecosystem Services (MEA, 2005)

Service Categories	Examples of specific services
Provisioning	Food, fibre, fuel, bio-materials and clean water.

Regulating	Climate regulation, flood protection, pollination, air/soil/water quality
Cultural	Education, cultural heritage, sense of place, health, recreation, tourism and aesthetic value
Supporting	Soil formation, nutrient cycling, water cycling and primary production

4.3.2 Ecosystem services are part of the wider integrated ecosystem approach which also includes the other key elements of involving people and valuing the natural environment in decision making. The UK’s existing ecosystems are the product of continuous interactions between people and their surrounding environments, driven by societal changes e.g. demographic, economic, socio-political, technological and behavioural. The historic environment itself is also an environmental resource that confers physical as well as more intangible ecosystem services. Therefore an ecosystem approach is more than managing the environment as an integrated system; it involves managing societal and economic drivers as part of this system. This is fundamental to achieving sustainable development. A fully functioning landscape should continue to provide these services; therefore it also correlates closely with landscape scale management and the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR).

4.3.3 However, while the ecosystem services and SMNR frameworks are useful means of assessing the benefits that the AONB provides to people, these need to be examined in conjunction with the primary purpose of AONBs which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. This should help to secure ecosystem services, but these are an additional benefit of AONB designation. The intrinsic value of natural beauty therefore needs to be recognised alongside the ecosystem services approach. These sets of values are important, distinct and complementary.

4.3.4 A study of the main Ecosystems Services in the Wye Valley AONB was carried out (Parrett, 2011). This identified the Broad Habitat Types in the Wye Valley AONB (see Table 4.) with Enclosed Farmland and Woodland accounting for nearly 88% of the land area combined.

4.4 Landscape approach

4.4.1 The landscape of the Wye Valley is the result of millions of years of natural evolutionary and climatic processes and thousands of years of human settlement and use. It is a rich mosaic of historical, social, economic, cultural, ecological, geological and geomorphological features.

4.4.2 The landscape approach as it relates to conservation, agriculture and other land uses seeks to address the increasingly complex and widespread environmental, social and political challenges that transcend traditional management boundaries. The landscape approach helps to bring together the disciplines associated with the

humanities, and social and natural science in a way that creates policy useful to not only help deliver environmental outcomes but for the delivery of important social and economic objectives. To do this we have to really understand that meeting ground between people and place; the intended and unintended ways we interact with the environment upon which we depend as a species. This means not just viewing traditional policy areas at a landscape scale but seeing landscape as a framework where the skills and assets of people and the social and economic processes that drive them are fundamentally and intrinsically interconnected with nature and the physical environment.

4.4.3 The landscape approach and an understanding of landscape character guide the AONB Partnership's work. This fits well with the ecosystems approach and SMNR as these all encourage consideration of the links between various elements of the landscape in their management. The interaction between natural and cultural forces and the influence of our demand for goods and services impacts on the way we manage our natural resources. These activities in a landscape, particularly a Protected Landscape, should take account of the impacts they may have on the capacity of the landscape to maintain the ecosystem services. For example, the decisions that land managers take determine, to a great extent, whether society's ambitions for water, wildlife, healthy soil and food production can be achieved. The extensive nature of the Wye Valley AONB can help secure the sustainable management of healthy, resilient and productive ecosystems.

4.4.4 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) promotes the protection, planning and management of landscapes and reinforces the approach to landscape character assessment. In line with the Convention and the principles of sustainable development, this Management Plan uses an understanding of landscape character to help guide local activity and ensure that planning decisions and management practices conserve and enhance the distinct character and Special Qualities of the AONB's landscapes.

4.4.5 Conservation and enhancement of the character and quality of the AONB landscape lie at the heart of this Management Plan. There are four landscape management strategies that are to be used:

Conserve - for landscapes in good condition with strong character where the emphasis is on protecting the key characteristics of the area.

Enhance - for landscapes where some features have fallen into decline. Management should aim to reintroduce features, improve their management and remove features that detract from the overall character.

Restore - for landscapes where features have been lost or are in a severe state of decline. Management should aim to repair and re-establish characteristic features.

Create - for landscapes where condition is poor and character weak beyond repair. Management should consider creation of a new landscape.

4.4.6 In taking forward these approaches, AONB management tends to focus on large or 'landscape scale' initiatives. However they are equally applicable to small sites. Landscape scale initiatives also tend to be integrated to include many different interests, often relying on collaborations and partnerships to be truly effective.

Sharing management experience beyond the AONB boundary, into the surrounding catchment and/or beyond, is also encouraged where resources allow.

4.4.7 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 both recognise the importance of taking a landscape-scale scope and working through an ecosystem services approach to recognise the multiple values that landscapes provide for nature and natural processes and people and their well-being.

4.5 The setting of the AONB

4.5.1 The AONB is not an isolated landscape. It is connected to the surrounding landscapes, towns and countryside, ecologically, economically, socially and through the action of natural processes such as hydrology and geomorphology. Development and other activities within the setting of the AONB may have an impact on some or all these processes. The extent of the setting will vary depending upon the issues considered but some can be mapped, for example, the impact of development on views into and out of the AONB.

4.5.2 Section 85 of the CROW Act 2000 requires public bodies to consider whether any activities outside the AONB may affect land in the AONB. Both Planning Practice Guidance (Natural Environment: 003) in England and Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10. para 6.3.5) emphasise that this duty is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside of the AONB boundary, but which might have an impact on the setting of the AONB.

4.5.3 Not all activities outside the AONB will be detrimental; for example, conservation practices, such as connecting habitats, and economic ties, such as processing or markets for local produce, may have beneficial impacts that support the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty.

5. MANAGEMENT OF THE WYE VALLEY AONB

5.1 AONBs in the Wider World

5.1.1 There are more than 100,000 protected areas worldwide. Each contributes in its own way to sustaining life on Earth, including providing a wide range of benefits to people and the environment. These may embrace protection of biodiversity, soil and land productivity; climate regulation; local culture and identity; recreation and well-being. Collectively protected areas cover 15% of the earth's land surface and inland waters, and just above 7% of the global oceans. The 2018 Protected Planet Report, by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), states that "the conservation of biodiversity in protected and conserved areas provides the foundation for achieving the whole suite of Sustainable Development

Goals. In particular, the ecosystem services of the world's protected areas underpin global needs to address climate change; protect water sources and food production systems; alleviate disaster risk; and maintain health, well-being and the livelihoods of millions of people.” However, the report notes that there is still insufficient protection of areas of importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services. But connectivity between protected areas is key to maintaining the viability of populations and ecosystems and Protected areas that are effectively managed generally lead to improved biodiversity outcomes.

5.1.2 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are part of a family of nationally designated protected landscapes in the UK, which include the AONBs of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the National Parks of England, Scotland and Wales and the National Scenic Areas of Scotland. Together they cover nearly 5 million hectares or 20% of the UK land area. Their future relies on sustaining people's relationship to the land and its resources.

5.2 International protected area policy

5.2.1 Protected areas remain the fundamental building blocks of virtually all national and international conservation strategies supported by governments and international institutions such as the **Convention on Biological Diversity**. They provide the core of efforts to protect the world's threatened species and habitats and are increasingly recognised as essential for addressing biodiversity loss, the provision of ecosystem services, biological resources and climate change mitigation strategies.

5.2.2 AONBs are recognised as **Category V Protected Landscapes** under IUCN's (International Union for Conservation of Nature) global protected area framework. A Category V Protected Landscape is “*a protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value: and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values*”. They offer a unique contribution to the conservation of biological diversity particularly where conservation objectives need to be met over a large area with a range of ownership patterns and governance; acting as models of sustainability and promoting traditional systems of management that support particular species.

5.2.3 The importance of all landscapes is recognised by the **European Landscape Convention** (ELC), ratified by the UK government in 2006. Article 1 defines ‘landscape’ as “*an area perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and human factors*”. General measures include:-

- Recognition of landscapes in law as an essential component of people's shared heritage;
- Implementation of landscape policies aimed at landscape protection;
- Procedures established for participation of the general public and local authorities in landscape protection;
- Landscape integrated into planning and other policies.

- A range of other measures on identification and assessment of landscape; raising awareness and European cooperation

5.2.4 UK government policy reflects these aspirations through an implementation strategy drawn up for DEFRA by Natural England (NE) and English Heritage. Welsh Government also notes “The Convention recognises the importance of all landscapes but also supports international systems of planning, management, conservation and protection for nationally important landscapes.”

5.2.5 The Europarc Federation is the main NGO representing the protected areas of Europe, uniting national parks, regional parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves in 35 countries, with the common aim of protecting Europe's unique variety of wildlife, habitats and landscapes. EUROPARC has around 400 member organisations from hundreds of protected areas. It provides a forum to share professional experience, collaborate on technical projects and progress common aims, across the field of natural, cultural and landscape protection.

5.2.6 Brexit

This plan was prepared as negotiations continued to remove the UK from the European Union (EU) and establish a new trading relationship with it. This has significant implications for the UK’s rural areas and their management, particularly regarding:

- Investment in agriculture, fisheries, the environment and rural communities to replace those arising from Common Agricultural Policy. These are partially addressed in an Agriculture Bill at the time of writing.
- National legislation for environmental protection to replace those agreed at EU level, to come in an Environment Bill.
- Agreements for international trade with the EU and beyond, and the potential for future cross-Channel co-operation.

At the time of writing, it is impossible to predict where the threats and opportunities lie with any precision. The situation will clarify over the coming months and during any transition period to EU withdrawal.

5.3 AONB Family

5.3.1 The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) was established in 1998 as an independent organisation to act on behalf of AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and represent those involved in the planning and management of 8000 square miles of the UK’s finest landscapes. In 2015 the NAAONB became a registered charity. Its vision is that the natural beauty of AONBs is valued and secure, with the mission to support and develop a network of ambitious AONB partnerships with a strong collective voice.

5.3.2 The charity has three objects:

a) to promote the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty including the physical, natural, cultural and built environment in and around Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, other protected areas, and those areas for which such designation might be pursued,

b) to advance the education, understanding and appreciation of the public in relation to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty including the physical, natural, cultural and built environment of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), other protected areas and those areas for which such designation might be pursued, and

c) to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of those organisations promoting or representing Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, other protected areas and those areas for which such designation might be pursued.

The charity pursues this by

- Demonstrating the value and relevance of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Advocating for the AONB designation, AONB partnerships and Conservation Boards
- Supporting behavioural change and collaboration.
- Providing expertise and insight into the management of these nationally important landscapes.

5.3.3 The Wye Valley AONB Partnership is a member of the NAAONB and has a long and involved history. The first Wye Valley AONB Officer, Dr Ruth Williams, was instrumental in establishing an AONB Staff Forum and the original Association of AONBs, along with the then JAC Chairman Cllr Bart Venner MBE, who became the Association's first chairperson. The merger of the two groups created the NAAONB which was subsequently chaired by JAC chairman Ashley Thomas, between 2007-2010.

5.3.4 The Wye Valley AONB Partnership is also actively engaged in collaborations with Designated Landscapes in Wales, the West Midlands and South West England including developing and delivering joint projects and initiatives with neighbouring AONBs and National Parks.

5.3.5 The existence of these national and international networks provides the opportunity to share good practice with other Protected Landscapes around the experience of looking after these special areas.

5.4 Responsibility for the AONB

5.4.1 Most of the Wye Valley AONB is in private ownership. Therefore much of the responsibility for the conservation and enhancement of the AONB rest with the residents, landowners and land managers, be they farmers or gardeners. Similarly the many visitors to the AONB should have a responsibility to care for the outstanding landscape they have chosen to spend some of their time (and probably money) in. The Government has designated the Wye Valley as an AONB because it recognises that it is in the public interest to protect such an important area for current and future generations.

5.4.2 Administratively the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is very complex, being the only protected landscape to straddle the English Welsh border. It lies in the three counties of Herefordshire (45.5%), Monmouthshire (36%) and Gloucestershire (18.5%), each in a different region; the Midlands, Wales

and the South West of England respectively. However, the cross-border nature of the AONB does also present a strength in the range and experience that the various partners are able to bring to the management of this internationally important landscape designation.

5.4.3 All **public bodies have a ‘duty of regard’** to the purpose of AONBs, under the Section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000. This applies to government and relevant authorities, including local planning authorities, parish, town and community councils and the holders of public office.

5.4.4 **Central Government** responsibility for AONBs remains substantial. This comes through the provision of legislation and the policy statements whereby the purposes of the designation can be met. From Whitehall and the Welsh Government there is also direct involvement, guidance and funding through departmental and agency functions delivered, for example by Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission, Forestry England and the Rural Payments Agency.

5.4.5 The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 sets out the procedure for future designation (by Natural England or Natural Resources Wales) and incorporates significant measures designed to address increased pressures on protected landscapes that had rendered the provisions of the 1949 act inadequate.

5.4.6 Government policy reaffirms the special treatment for AONBs in other major policy areas: the significance of AONBs in the context of land use planning is considered in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2018) and Planning Policy Wales (PPW Edition 10); the 25 Year Environment Plan recognises the role designated landscapes play in reconnecting people with nature and the contribution they can make to a coherent and resilient ecological network requiring more and bigger sites that are better managed and joined up. Other public bodies such as Cadw, Historic England, the Forestry Commission and Visit England and Visit Wales focus their activities through protected landscape strategies or joint accords to ensure their work reflects the distinctive nature of each AONB and helps deliver the priorities identified in AONB management plans.

5.4.7 Natural England (NE) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) retain a role in delivering protected landscapes policy and the statutory role in respect of AONBs including powers to designate AONBs and vary their boundaries. NE and NRW are the respective government’s statutory consultees on nationally significant infrastructure projects.

5.4.8 The Water Framework Directive (WFD) Regulations in England & Wales place a duty on public bodies to have regard to River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). The aim of the Directive is to safeguard and improve water quality. It will do this through the RBMPs which develop the links between surface and groundwater, and water quantity and water quality. The Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are the lead agencies for ensuring that that the Directive is implemented. The River Wye Catchment and the Wye Valley AONB come within the Severn River Basin District. The Wye Catchment Partnership was

established in 2014 with support from Defra and the Welsh Government to bring the farmers, foresters, planners, charities, statutory bodies and people who have an interest in the Wye together to secure better outcomes for the Wye catchment and the environment we rely on. The partnership is hosted by NRW and the Wye and Usk Foundation.

5.4.9 The **local planning authorities**, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council, are central to achieving the purposes of the AONB designation. They deal with all planning issues in the AONB and other local authority functions, such as Public Rights of Way, highways, countryside services, tourism, public transport, etc. Their responsibility was reaffirmed in the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, section 84.4, by which they are empowered to “take all such action as appears to them expedient for the accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB”. Part of the way they achieve this is by acting jointly through their support for the Joint Advisory Committee.

5.4.10 The ‘**Duty to Co-operate**’ applies to all local planning authorities in England and to a number of other public bodies, under Section 110 of the Localism Act. The Duty

- Relates to sustainable development or use of land that would have a significant impact on at least two local planning areas or on a planning matter that falls within the remit of a county council,
- Requires that councils set out planning policies to address such issues,
- Requires that councils and public bodies ‘engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis’ to develop strategic policies,
- Requires councils to consider joint approaches to plan making.

The ‘Duty to Co-operate’ also covers a number of public bodies including the Civil Aviation Authority, Historic England, Environment Agency, Highways Agency, Highway Authorities, Homes and Communities Agency, Integrated Transport Authorities, Natural England and Primary Care Trusts.

5.4.12 **Local communities**, including all people that live and work in the AONB, can play an active role in caring for the Wye Valley AONB. This Management Plan identifies some of the priorities for action and ways to get involved, including the Charter in section 12.2. This Plan can also aid community planning, by helping to inform Neighbourhood Development Plans and community strategies. This will also help local Town, Parish & Community Councils fulfil their Section 85 ‘duty of regard’.

5.5 Management and Governance of the Wye Valley AONB

5.5.1 A **Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)** has overseen the Wye Valley AONB since 1972. Unlike a National Park Authority the JAC is not a planning authority or an executive body. The role of the JAC is one of advising and guiding the statutory authorities regarding particular issues within the AONB. The constitution and membership of the JAC reflects the trans-national and trans-regional nature of the AONB (see Appendix I). While the complex nature of the AONB is an administrative

challenge, in practice the JAC has for many years been a strong partnership based on the tremendous goodwill towards the Wye Valley. This committee meets formally three times per annum and hosts a late summer study tour for the wider **AONB Partnership**, which encompasses the local partner organisations involved in the AONB and occasional seminars on specific issues.

5.5.2 The JAC is supported by a Technical Officers Working Party (TOWP), which comprises representatives of the four local authorities involved, plus a range of relevant Government agencies (see Appendix I). The core costs of managing the **Wye Valley AONB Unit** are jointly funded by Defra and Natural Resources Wales grant aid with match funding contributions from the four local authorities. The AONB Unit are a small team of dedicated staff employed by the local authorities on behalf of the JAC and consist of an AONB Manager, an AONB Finance and Administration Officer, an AONB Community Links Officer, an AONB Development Officer and an AONB Information Officer with additional/occasional project staff, volunteers and trainees. The AONB Unit staff work from the AONB Office in Monmouth, which is near the geographic centre of the Wye Valley AONB. The core budget for the AONB unit is approximately £300,000 per annum, with additional funds depending on varying levels of partnership funding for specific projects and initiatives. Welsh Government also provide a Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) to the AONB Partnership which delegate allocation of community grants through an Assessment Panel.

5.5.3 The AONB Unit convenes and services a variety of **AONB Topic Groups** and project partnerships which include a wide range of relevant experts and interested partners, often not directly engaged with the JAC or TOWP. These Topic Groups work as either steering or advisory groups on specific projects and topics, or ‘task and finish’ groups for particular issues or initiatives. The membership of these groups broadens the AONB Partnership considerably.

5.5.4 The AONB’s designation, landscape assets and management structures present opportunities to positively address the challenges in the area, both those identified in this Management Plan and unanticipated ones. For example the AONB attracts resources by being a target area for agri-environment schemes, benefiting landowners, biodiversity and wider society. There are many decisions affecting the landscape over which the AONB Partnership does not have direct influence, however it seeks to improve understanding to enable better decisions to be taken. The format and nature of the AONB Partnership makes it well placed to spread information and bring people together quickly in response to environmental changes and challenges. An independent assessment by Land Use Consultants (LUC) on The Value of AONB Partnerships (July 2013) endorsed this approach.

5.5.5 Many of the principles of this Management Plan can be applied to landscapes outside the AONB boundary. Where appropriate, the Wye Valley AONB Partnership works with partners to deliver projects across a wider area than just the AONB, ensuring that the context of the AONB is recognised. Many projects also operate collaboratively with adjacent protected landscapes to make best use of available resources.

6. OVERVIEW OF THE AONB

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This section provides a description of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) with its landscape features and Special Qualities and the activities and pressures affecting the AONB. A separate State of the AONB Report complements this Management Plan and sets out the current state of the Special Qualities.

6.2 The Landscape Character of the AONB

6.2.1 The main elements and features that contribute to the landscape character of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) have been independently assessed in the three counties of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire. Herefordshire Council and Forest of Dean District Council each have Landscape Character Assessments, while Monmouthshire County Council has LANDMAP, developed under the leadership and methodology of the Countryside Council for Wales (now Natural Resources Wales). The former and the latter were adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in the respective councils' Unitary Development Plan and Core Strategies and Local Development Plans. The various character areas and landscape types identified by the three assessments were amalgamated into sixteen Landscape Management Zones within the AONB (see Map 2). Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) has also been completed in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Monmouthshire, albeit to different methodologies. But the Gloucestershire methodology was extended over the whole AONB.

6.2.2 In England also National Character Areas have been profiled by Natural England. There are two that cover the Wye Valley AONB; South Herefordshire & Over Severn (no. 104) and Forest of Dean and Lower Wye (no. 105). NCA 104 covers 12,836 ha of the Wye Valley AONB (25% of the NCA) while NCA 105 contains 8,041 ha of the AONB (26% of that NCA).

6.2.3 The key features of the sixteen Wye Valley AONB Landscape Management Zones (LMZ) are outlined in Table 2 and Map 2. These are cross-referenced to the Special Qualities [SQ] of the AONB, which are detailed in Table 8, along with the ecosystem goods and services they provide. This forms the basis of the Natural Capital of the AONB and the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR).

Table 2: Wye Valley AONB Landscape Management Zones and Features

LMZ ID	Landscape Management Zone (LMZ)	LCA ref [NCA no.]	Features and link to Special Qualities [SQ]
LMZ01	Woolhope Dome	<p><i>HC Character Areas:</i> Woolhope Dome</p> <p><i>Landscape Types:</i> Principal Wooded Hills Wooded Hills and Farmland Principal Timbered Farmlands Principal Settled Farmlands [NCA 104]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient broadleaved & mixed woodland [SQ2, SQ18]] • Varied topography [SQ9] • Hedgerow network often with mature trees [SQ5, SQ18]] • Mixed farming [SQ1] • Traditional orchards with locally distinctive apple & pear varieties [SQ1, SQ27] • Streams [SQ3] • Irregular field patterns, often linked with semi-natural grassland [SQ4] • Scattered settlement pattern [SQ20] • Commons [SQ26] • Filtered and medium distance views [SQ11] • Grey and brown Silurian limestone soils [SQ6]
LMZ02	Herefordshire Floodplain (Wye Meadows)	<p><i>HC Character Areas:</i> Central Herefordshire Archenfield</p> <p><i>Landscape Types:</i> Riverside Meadows Principal Settled Farmlands [NCA 104]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floodplain grassland with mature trees [SQ10, SQ18] • Streamside and hedgerow trees, traditionally pollarded [SQ5] • Ditches and wetland habitats [SQ5] • River bank vegetation, mud cliffs and wildlife [SQ3] • River channel islands, beaches and riffles [SQ3] • Minimal settlement [SQ20] • Bridges [SQ3, SQ17]
LMZ03	Sollers Hope Ridges and	<p><i>HC Character Areas:</i> Central Herefordshire</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedgerows with mature trees [SQ5, SQ18] • Mixed farming [SQ1]

LMZ ID	Landscape Management Zone (LMZ)	LCA ref [NCA no.]	Features and link to Special Qualities [SQ]
	Valleys	Archenfield Leadon Vale <i>Landscape Types:</i> Principal Settled Farmlands Wooded Estatelands Principal Wooded Hills Estate Farmlands [NCA 104]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragments of ancient woodland [SQ2, SQ18] • Varied topography [SQ1] • Medium to long distance views [SQ11] • Clustered settlement pattern [SQ20] • Parkland [SQ19] • Narrow lanes with hedges and hedgebanks [SQ5, SQ18] • Remnants of traditional orchards [SQ1, SQ27] • Red soils of Devonian Old Red Sandstone [SQ7]
LMZ04	Hentland Ridges and Valleys	<i>HC Character Areas:</i> Archenfield <i>Landscape Types:</i> Principal Settled Farmlands Timbered Plateau Farmland Principal Timbered Farmland Sandstone Farmlands Wooded Estatelands [NCA 104]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedgerows with mature trees [SQ5, SQ18] • Mixed farming [SQ1] • Fragments of ancient woodland [SQ2, SQ18] • Varied topography [SQ1] • Filtered medium distance views [SQ11] • Clustered settlement pattern [SQ20] • Estate parkland [SQ19] • Narrow lanes with hedges and hedgebanks [SQ5, SQ18] • Red soils of Devonian Old Red Sandstone [SQ7]
LMZ05	Kings Caple Lowlands	<i>HC Character Areas:</i> Archenfield <i>Landscape Types:</i> Principal Settled Farmlands Principal Wooded Hills [NCA 104]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedgerows define field boundaries [SQ5, SQ18] • Arable, horticultural and mixed farming [SQ1, SQ27] • Open aspects with medium distance views [SQ11] • Steep northern wooded slope to river [SQ2, SQ18] • Red soils of Devonian Old Red Sandstone [SQ7]
LMZ06	Archenfield	<i>HC Character Areas:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedgerows define field boundaries [SQ5, SQ18]

LMZ ID	Landscape Management Zone (LMZ)	LCA ref [NCA no.]	Features and link to Special Qualities [SQ]
	Lowlands	Archenfield <i>Landscape Types:</i> Principal Settled Farmlands Sandstone Farmlands [NCA 104]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arable, mixed farming and orchards [SQ1, SQ27] • Medium distance views [SQ11] • Clustered settlement pattern [SQ20] • A40 cluster of light industrial use • Red soils of Devonian Old Red Sandstone [SQ7]
LMZ07	Ross-on-Wye	<i>HC Character Areas:</i> Archenfield <i>Landscape Types:</i> Urban [NCA 104]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinctive Spire and skyline [SQ11] • Devonian Old Red Sandstone buildings and cliffs [SQ7] • Mix of stone and rendered buildings on escarpment overlooking river [SQ20] • Cultural association with Wye Tour and Picturesque Movement [SQ11]
LMZ08	Walford Lowlands	<i>HC Character Areas:</i> Archenfield <i>Landscape Types:</i> Principal Settled Farmlands [NCA 104]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedgerows define field boundaries [SQ5, SQ18] • Arable and horticultural farming [SQ1, SQ27] • Open aspects with medium distance views [SQ11] • Estate parkland [SQ18, SQ19] • Linear settlement pattern [SQ20] • Red soils of Devonian Old Red Sandstone [SQ7]
LMZ09	Wye Gorge	<i>HC Character Areas:</i> Archenfield Forest of Dean <i>Landscape Types:</i> Principal Wooded Hills Wooded Hills and Farmland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient, semi-natural and mixed broadleaved & coniferous woodland [SQ2, SQ18] • Ancient and extensive tree cover pattern and skyline [SQ2, SQ18] • Steeply sloping topography [SQ1] • Tributaries and cascades [SQ3] • Dramatic limestone cliffs [SQ9]

LMZ ID	Landscape Management Zone (LMZ)	LCA ref [NCA no.]	Features and link to Special Qualities [SQ]
		Principal Settled Farmlands Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Unenclosed Commons <i>Forest of Dean Character Areas:</i> The Wye Valley - Common Grove to The Slaughter The Wye Valley - Redbrook to Brockweir The Wye Valley - Brockweir to Tutshill Monmouthshire Landscape Character Area: The Wye Valley [NCA 105]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quartz conglomerate outcrops [SQ8] • Narrow floodplain pastures on the valley floor [SQ4] • Hedgerow network often with mature trees [SQ5, SQ18] • Mixed farming [SQ1] • Linear settlements bordering valley floor often at bridging points [SQ20] • Small clusters of historic squatter settlements on valley sides surrounded by intricate pattern of small fields, drystone walls, narrow lanes and small deciduous woodlands [SQ4, SQ5, SQ20, SQ22] • Predominantly unwooded Coppett Hill Common [SQ26] • Long panoramic views from high vantage points and medium ‘picturesque’ views from valley floor [SQ11] • Long history as an important route way and boundary feature, including Offa’s Dyke. [SQ14, SQ15, SQ17, SQ23] • Rich heritage of local natural resource transport and exploitation [SQ16, SQ17, SQ22] • Ancient meanders preserved as the course of tributary streams [SQ3, SQ10] • Woodlands and riverine habitats of high ecological and scenic value [SQ2, SQ3, SQ4, SQ5] • Tintern Abbey [SQ15] • Cultural association with Wye Tour and Picturesque Movement [SQ11] • Strong sense of place due to distinctive landform, woodland and river [SQ12, SQ18]

LMZ ID	Landscape Management Zone (LMZ)	LCA ref [NCA no.]	Features and link to Special Qualities [SQ]
LMZ10	Dean Edge Limestone Hills	<i>Forest of Dean Character Areas:</i> Bicknor Hills High Meadow Woods and Staunton Coleford and Christchurch Newland Hills [NCA 105]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolling landscape of interlocking convex hills and dry valleys formed from Carboniferous Limestone and Coal Measures [SQ8, SQ9] • Large areas of mixed and coniferous woodland [SQ2, SQ18] • Generally poor soils and hilly landform well suited to pasture [SQ4] • Fields defined by well-maintained hedgerows with hedgerow trees and copses on steeper slopes [SQ5, SQ18] • Small villages are well integrated with their surroundings [SQ20] • Scowles and other remnants of mining activity [SQ13, SQ14, SQ16] • Medium and long distance views [SQ11]
LMZ11	River Trothy Convergence	<i>Monmouthshire Landscape Character Area:</i> River Trothy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat valley floor convergence of the rivers Monnow, Wye and Trothy [SQ3, SQ10] • Lines of alder and willow enclose river banks [SQ5] • Little settlement [SQ20] • Arable and permanent grassland. [SQ1]
LMZ12	Llangovan Foothills	<i>Monmouthshire Landscape Character Area:</i> Llangovan Foothills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large fields with mature hedgelines, hedgerow trees and individual field trees [SQ5, SQ18] • Limited settlement and traditional farmsteads [SQ20] • Long distance views [SQ11]
LMZ13	Devauden Escarpment	<i>Monmouthshire Landscape Character Area:</i> Devauden Escarpment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent and steep escarpment [SQ1] • Substantial woodland cover [SQ2] • Mixed farming and pasture with mature hedges [SQ5] • Scattered settlement and clustered villages [SQ20] • Long panoramic views to the north and west [SQ11]

LMZ ID	Landscape Management Zone (LMZ)	LCA ref [NCA no.]	Features and link to Special Qualities [SQ]
LMZ14	Trellech Sandstone Plateau	<p><i>Monmouthshire Landscape Character Areas:</i> Chepstow Parkland Trellech Grange Trellech forest and commons Tredunnock Trellech Plateau</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High hills and ridges with inward looking basin [SQ1] • Flat or gently rolling plateau centred on the settlement Trellech.[SQ1] • Large woodland blocks of relict ancient forest and modern conifer plantations eg. Chepstow Park Wood [SQ2] • Mixed arable and pastoral farming [SQ1] • Red soils of Devonian Old Red Sandstone [SQ7] • Strong network of thick hedges, hedge banks, drystone walls and tree lines [SQ5] • Woodlands enclose fields of permanent pasture and enclaves of unimproved and semi-improved grassland [SQ4] • Sparse settlement outside Trellech with large farmsteads and hamlets [SQ20] • Estates with associated parkland [SQ19] • Distinctive settlement pattern related to small fields and common land [SQ4] • Intricate network of narrow winding lanes with remnant stone walls and mature hedges [SQ5, SQ22] • Springs, streams, wetland, marshland and bogs found, most notable at Cleddon bog [SQ3, SQ10] • Distinct sense of place from the relationship of the woodland, pasture and settlement [SQ12] • Evidence of early occupation, Iron Age enclosure of Gaer and medieval village of Trellech [SQ13, SQ14, SQ15] • Long views and vistas across the Severn and towards the Brecon Beacons from high land [SQ11]

LMZ ID	Landscape Management Zone (LMZ)	LCA ref [NCA no.]	Features and link to Special Qualities [SQ]
LMZ15	Dean Edge Limestone Plateau	<i>Forest of Dean Character Areas:</i> Tidenham Chase St Briavels Common [NCA 105]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gently undulating plateau with expansive views [SQ11] ▪ Strong field pattern of large or moderately sized arable and pasture fields [SQ1] ▪ Distinctive stone walls and ancient hedgerows [SQ5] ▪ Dispersed isolated farms which are located at the end of lanes and often associated with modern barn complexes [SQ20] ▪ Villages sited at the edge of the plateau [SQ20] ▪ Redundant Limestone quarries located across the landscape [SQ9] ▪ Small enclosures of semi-natural, unimproved grasslands, winding lanes, small woodlands and 'squatter' cottages on St Briavels Common [SQ4, SQ5, SQ20, SQ22] ▪ Heathland landscapes at Tidenham Chase [SQ19]
LMZ16	Caerwent Limestone Plateau / Hinterlands	<i>Monmouthshire Landscape Character Area:</i> Caerwent Hinterland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gently rolling landscape with occasional narrow winding steep-sided valleys [SQ1] ▪ Ancient, semi-natural and mixed coniferous and deciduous woodland [SQ2] ▪ Mixture of arable and pastoral farming with traditional farmsteads and large country estates [SQ20] ▪ Remnant parkland of large country estates [SQ19] ▪ Long views towards the Severn Estuary are possible [SQ11] ▪ Nucleated village of St Arvans [SQ20] ▪ Chepstow Racecourse an important landscape at a local level [SQ19]

6.3 The State of the AONB Report

6.3.1 Reporting on the state of the AONB provides a baseline for determining and understanding the Special Qualities and the pressures on the AONB. The State of the AONB Report establishes a foundation for measuring change – beneficial or adverse – in the state or condition of the AONB. Therefore it forms the starting point for associated monitoring procedures, the assessment of the Natural Capital of the AONB and the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR).

6.3.2 The State of the AONB Report will be available separately and complements the following sections:

6.3.3 **Special Qualities** - These are listed in Section 2.1.9 above and Table 8 below, which identifies the Special Qualities of the AONB and their nature, quality, extent and condition. These have been cross referenced with the features of the Landscape Management Zones in Table 2 above that are crucial to the long-term well-being of the AONB.

6.3.4 **Changes or threats**-these are identified in Table 9 and represent the social, environmental and economic facets of the AONB and its communities that are significant sources of pressure for change on the Special Qualities of the AONB.

6.3.5 **Ecosystem goods and services** - these are also in Table 8 and identify the ecosystem function provided by the respective Special Qualities.

6.3.6. **Activities / Pressures** - these are highlighted under Table 9. These need to be understood in terms of their interaction, whether positive or negative, on the Special Qualities of the AONB and their occurrence in the various Landscape Management Zones. Many of the ‘changes or threats’ identified in Table 8 arise directly from these activities and pressures.

6.3.7 **Air, Soil and Water quality:** In AONB Management Plans prior to 2015 these were categorised as separate Special Qualities. However, water quality is a constituent part of SQ3 The river & tributaries. Soil quality varies across the AONB and is determined by the underlying Geological Special Qualities, SQ 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Air quality is not a unique or defining feature of the Wye Valley and is dependent on weather and occasionally temperature inversions in the Wye Gorge. The government provides guidelines and codes of good practice on the management and maintenance of air, soil and water quality. The following Ecosystem Goods & Services are also listed in Table 8 which helps identify what consideration need to be given and how the Plan addresses these elements.

- Air Quality
 - Regulating Services: Climate regulation, Air quality regulation, Pollution control, Pollination, Noise regulation, Local climate regulation.
- Soil Quality
 - Provisioning Goods: Food, Fibre, Fresh water, Biofuels, Timber
 - Regulating Services: Water quality regulation, Erosion control, Pollution control, Soil quality regulation, Water regulation, Flood regulation, Wild species diversity.

- Water Quality
 - Provisioning Goods: Fresh water, Water
 - Regulating Services: Climate regulation, Water quality regulation, Pollution control, Disease and pest control, Water regulation, Flood regulation, Local climate regulation, Wild species diversity

Consequently, while not specific Special Qualities, Air, Soil and Water quality are important parameters for a healthy functioning landscape and underpin the Ecosystems Approach. For example, the water quality of the Wye enables abstraction of drinking water at Lydbrook and Monmouth and this can be impacted on by run off into the river through a combination of poor soil management and adverse weather.

6.4 Statistics for the AONB

6.4.1 **Data:** The fundamental challenge with the use of any statistics for the AONB is the correlation of the data with the AONB boundary. The boundaries of the AONB do not generally follow any standard geographical data collection unit (such as post code areas, Wards, Parishes or Local Authority Areas). Therefore there is very little data collected that relates directly to the AONB. Greater effort is being made by government agencies to ensure that monitoring by partners is coordinated and data disaggregated for the AONB. This will help avoid wasting effort through slightly different methodologies or monitoring subjects being pursued in different areas where they could have been linked up. However data is rarely compatible between England and Wales making it is extremely difficult to gain consistently accurate statistical information for the whole AONB.

6.4.2 **Census data:** The 2011 census, the most recent available, provides a large amount of information about the population within the Wye Valley AONB, which totals 29,300 people in 13,450 dwellings. The 2001 census data gave a population of 26,374, up from 24,370 in 1991, with 11,129 households up from 9,429 households in 1991.

6.4.3 **Land types and Habitats in the Wye Valley AONB:** Phase 1 Habitat mapping is being completed for the AONB. However the final data is not yet available, so it is not possible to provide AONB wide information on habitats and land uses. This data will be analysed as soon as it is available to provide a more definitive AONB wide breakdown of habitats and evidence for project development, delivery and monitoring. Meanwhile the identification of land types below (Table 3) is a reworking of an exercise developed by Dr George Peterken and used in previous Management Plans and originating in the AONB Nature Conservation Strategy 1999. Listed are all the land types that could be differentiated on the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 maps, then tallied for each of the 326 intersections of the 1km grid that fall within the AONB. Each intersection represents 100 ha, e.g., the area of conifer woodland is estimated at 1,800 ha. The accuracy of the estimates diminishes with the area of each land type. Thus, there is a level of confidence that the area of farmland (including orchards) is 59-60% of the AONB, but the area of marshland is unlikely to be exactly 100 ha, though it must be very small, and some very small habitats (e.g., heaths) failed to coincide with a grid intersection.

6.4.4 The OS classification itself will be approximate. Thus, it fails to pick up important habitats (eg cliffs), and the balance between woodland types may be both approximate and out-of-date. Compared to estimates in the 2015-20 management plan, there is more woodland, less farmland, and fewer small fields, fewer orchards and more development. Some of this will be due to different OS editions, but some will reflect the changing judgements about what to assign where.

6.4.5 The collation of data on Geographical Information Systems (GIS) for the State of the AONB Report will in time validate and/or supersede these estimates. However as estimates they provide a useful indication of land types in the AONB.

Table 3: Land types in the Wye Valley AONB

Aggregated land types	Land Types	Number of grid intersections for each land type	Number of grid intersections for each aggregated land type	Proportion of AONB %
Woodland	Broadleaved	23	86	26.4
	Mixed	31		
	Conifer	18		
	Scrub	14		
Non-intensive	Marsh	1	22	6.7
	Small fields	15		
	Parkland	3		
	Bracken, Heath, Rough Grassland	3		
Farmland	Undifferentiated	192	194	59.5
	Orchards	2		
Open water	Rivers	7	8	2.5
	Pools	1		
Development	Rural houses	7	16	4.9
	Roads	5		
	Urban	4		
TOTAL		326		100

6.4.6 The above data from the 2015-20 management plan was used in the Wye Valley AONB Ecosystem Goods and Services report 2011 to identify the ‘Broad Habitat types’ for the AONB, as outlined in the UK National Ecosystem Assessment (UK NEA). Table 4 shows how the AONB contains 7 of the 8 ‘Broad Habitat types’.

Table 4: Broad Habitat types in the Wye Valley AONB

Broad Habitat type (UK NEA)	Examples in Wye Valley AONB
Enclosed Farmland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmland: c. 19,400 ha, 59.5% of AONB Major Agricultural Land Uses (2016 MEOP data for English part of AONB) include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crops & Fallow: (50.5%) Permanent Grass: (31.5%) Temporary Grass (8.5%)

	Other (including set aside, farm owned woodland, rough grazing) (9.5%)*
Woodlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woodland: c8,600ha, 26.4% of AONB. Of which: Broadleaved: 2300 ha Mixed: 3100 ha Conifer: 1800 ha Scrub: 1400 ha SSSI: 2267 ha Wye Valley Woods SAC: 916ha Public Forest Estate: 5082ha
Semi-Natural Grasslands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grassland: c2200 ha, 6.7% of AONB Small Fields: 1500 ha Parkland: 300 ha Marsh: 100 ha
Urban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Houses, Roads, Urban approx. 1600 ha, 4.9% of AONB.
Freshwaters – Openwaters, Wetlands and Flood Plains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> River Wye, tributaries and pools, 2.5% of AONB. Flood Plain Habitat, particularly in Herefordshire Wye meadows.
Mountains, Moorlands and Heaths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Bog and Lowland Heath habitat such as Cleddon bog and Broad Meend Heath. Bracken, Heath, Rough Grassland: 300ha Inland rock and scree habitats present in cliffs throughout the Wye Valley gorge as well as some limestone pavement.
Coastal Margins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited area of salt marsh and intertidal sediments on tidal reach of the Wye.
Marine	N/A

6.4.7 **Priority Habitats** have been identified by Natural England for the English part of the AONB (see Table 5). The former UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats lists identifies those habitats that are the most threatened and requiring the greatest conservation action. Currently the comparable information is not available for the Welsh side of the AONB, although there is a NERC Section 42 list of Priority Habitats in Wales. However, the England data shows that Tradition Orchards make up nearly 0.6% of the total English resource of that Priority Habitat, this is down from 0.87% in the 2015-20 State of the AONB report. Also grassland habitats make up approximately 1% of the national resource, whereas woodlands are less than 0.5% of the resource. Of the Priority Habitats in SSSIs nearly 65% are in Favourable condition and a further 28% in Unfavourable but recovering status (see Table 6).

Table 5: Priority Habitat on English side of AONB

Priority Habitat (on English side of AONB)	Total Area (ha)	% of total PH resource	% of AONB
Deciduous Woodland	2954	0.42 ?	14.15
Traditional Orchards	145	0.59	0.69

Good Quality Semi-improved Grassland*	103	0.22 ?	0.49
Lowland Meadows	61	0.83	0.29
Mudflats	30	0.01	0.14
Lowland Dry Acid Grassland	2	0.01	0.01
Lowland Heathland	10	0.02	0.05
Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh	5	0.00	0.02
Lowland Calcareous Grassland	3	0.01	0.01
Purple Moor-grass and Rush Pastures	3	0.01	0.01
Total	3316		15.86

*(Non-priority Habitat)

Table 6: Condition of Priority Habitats in England

Priority Habitat (on English side of AONB)							
area (ha)	Condition within SSSIs				Outside SSSIs		
Total English Priority Habitat	Total in SSSIs	Total Favourable	Total Un-favourable recovering	Total Un-favourable	Total outside SSSIs	Total Within HLS	Non-SSSI, Non-HLS
3316	870	564	245	62	2044	358	2086

6.4.8 **Agricultural statistics:** According to the DEFRA Agricultural Census for 2016, agricultural land use amounts to 13,290ha of the English part of the AONB (64%). The land use and cropping split for England is shown in Table 7. Comparison with previous years' data will be included in the State of the AONB report.

Table 7: AONB land use and cropping in England

	Crops & Bare Fallow	Temporary Grass	Permanent Grass	Rough grazing	Woodland	Other
Total	6717ha	1115ha	4217ha	163ha	870ha	205ha
% of AONB in England	32%	5%	20%	0.8%	4.2%	1%
% of agric. area	51%	8%	32%	1%	6.5%	1.5%

Table 8: Special Qualities of the Wye Valley AONB

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Ecosystem Goods* & Services† P: Provisioning, R: Regulating C: Cultural
1	Overall Landscape				
16 Landscape Management Zones (see Table 1) with key feature	Nationally designated protected landscape: Outstanding (see county Landscape Character Assessments and LandMap)	Whole AONB	Purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty	<p>Sustainable-land management &/or ownership that conserves or enhances key landscape characteristics and features</p> <p>Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy landscape features; (including neglect, addition of inappropriate features, ongoing loss & decline of elements that define landscape character resulting in increased uniformity and loss of distinctiveness)</p>	<p>P: Food*, Fibre*, Fresh water*, Biofuels* Genetic resources*, Timber*, Species diversity*, Water*, Navigation*, Health products*, Bioenergy*, Pharmaceutical products*</p> <p>R: Climate regulation†, Water quality regulation†, Erosion control†, Air quality regulation†, Pollution control†, Pollination†, Disease and pest control†, Soil quality regulation†, Noise regulation†, Water regulation†, Fire hazard regulation†, Flood regulation†, Local climate regulation†, Wild species diversity*, Coastal defence†</p> <p>C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*, Employment*</p>
	Biodiversity				
2.	Woodlands	Diversity of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and Planted Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) including 35 SSSIs and many ancient / veteran trees (see SQ18). Some plantation and other	25% woodland cover in AONB. 6083 ha of Ancient woodland >2ha covers 18.65% of AONB. SSSIs cover 1679 ha. 5% of AONB. Public Forest Estate (PFE) cover 16% of AONB	<p>Varied; much ASNW under managed, some PAWS being restored [in English part of AONB 67% of SSSIs meet NE PSA targets, sites ranging from 0-100%. 93% PFE SSSIs meet PSA targets]</p> <p>Changes in land management, including neglect of much private small woodland and road & bank side trees</p> <p>Ongoing degradation of ancient woodland sites by the continuing existence of conifers and other non-native species, including continued replanting of ASNW with conifers</p> <p>Degradation of features of the historic environment</p> <p>Fragmentation of ancient woodland sites by land use</p>	<p>P: Timber*, Fuelwood*, Fresh water*, Species diversity*</p> <p>R: Climate regulation†, Erosion control†, Flood regulation†, Pollination†, Disease & pest control†, Air & water quality regulation†, Soil quality regulation†, Noise regulation†</p> <p>C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Employment*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*</p>

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Ecosystem Goods* & Services† P: Provisioning, R: Regulating C: Cultural	
	woodland. 50 SMs and 33 Listed Buildings within woodlands.			changes Climate change		
	Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	913.62ha 3% of AONB	Unfavourable to fair; [woodland SAC / SSSI condition; NRW, in English part of AONB 72% of SSSIs meet NE PSA targets, sites ranging from 0-100%;	Degradation through neglect Degradation by specific alien &/or expanding species (eg. cherry laurel, Himalayan balsam, deer, grey squirrel)		
3.	The river & tributaries	Main river SAC and SSSI, 6 SMs and 70 Listed Buildings within Flood Zone 3. Nationally important for water based recreation and one of the key reasons why people visit the AONB. Drinking water extracted at 2 locations from Wye (Lydbrook & Monmouth). Wye voted 'best	58 miles (92km) of main river (1.3% of AONB) and a similar length of tributaries and streams 2,790 ha of Flood Zone 3 floodplain	Of 11 SAC features 5 are in unfavourable condition, 36% of SSSI meets NE PSA target [condition of salmon & white clawed crayfish unfavourable, sediment levels & diffuse pollution of concern] (NE, NRW), Water quality is good, although river & many streams suffering from	Degradation of natural processes, including constraints on flooding Land use impacts may degrade or destroy features e.g. loss of riverside grassland, siltation from poor soil management, loss of historic environment features, engineering for recreational interests etc. Invasive alien species Diffuse Pollution, including the leaching of chemicals from agricultural land Point source pollution, including increased development overfilling old drainage and sewerage systems Changes through climate change	P: Food*, Water*, Fibre*, Navigation*, Bioenergy*, Health products* R: Climate regulation†, Water regulation†, Water quality regulation†, Fire hazard regulation† C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Employment*, Health benefits*

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Ecosystem Goods* & Services† P: Provisioning, R: Regulating C: Cultural
	river in England & Wales' 2010 by the Our Rivers Campaign, (run by RSPB, WWF-UK, the Angling Trust and the Salmon and Trout Association)		some pollution.	and altered seasonal rainfall. Spread of disease, such as <i>Phytophthora</i> infection of riparian alders	
4.	Species-rich grassland, including small field pattern of un/semi-improved grassland, often bounded by drystone walls or old hedges	Very few SSSIs, 133 CLWS Target area for HLS	4.4% of AONB inc 250 ha Hewelsfield & St Briavels Common	Prone to neglect [Hewelsfield & St Briavels Common Parish Grassland survey] Continuing degradation through neglect and/or Change in ownership &/or land management (including overgrazing or incorporation into 'garden') Development of land for housing	P: Food*, Biofuels*, Fresh water*, Genetic resources*, Species diversity* R: Climate regulation†, Air & water quality regulation †, Pollution control†, Pollination†, Erosion control†, Soil quality regulation†, Disease and pest control†, Wild species diversity* C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Employment*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*
5.	Boundary habitat diversity & connectivity, e.g. between grassland & woodland, farmland & heathland, tidal river & ASNW, hedges &/or drystone walls, lanes, banks, verges and fields & woods	Varied, locally or regionally important as landscape &/or habitat, heritage &/or socio-economic feature	Throughout AONB	Varied Damage and degradation through change in ownership &/or land management, including removal, inappropriate activity, road widening	P: Food*, Fibre*, Fresh water*, Biofuels* Genetic resources*, Timber*, Species diversity*, Health products*, Pharmaceutical products* R: Climate regulation†, Water quality regulation†, Erosion control†, Air quality regulation†, Pollution control†, Pollination†, Disease and pest control†, Soil quality regulation†, Noise regulation†, Water regulation†, Fire hazard regulation†, Flood regulation†, Local climate regulation†, Wild species diversity*, Coastal defence† C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*, Employment*

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Ecosystem Goods* & Services† P: Provisioning, R: Regulating C: Cultural	
Geological						
6.	Silurian Rocks	Grey / Brown rocks and soils (series of alternating limestones and shales)	Woolhope Dome	Exposures in small old quarries	Little used as a traditional building material	P: Food*, Fibre*, Biofuels*, Fresh water*, Genetic resources* R: Climate regulation†, Air & water quality regulation †, Pollution control†, Pollination†, Erosion control†, Soil quality regulation†, Disease and pest control† C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Employment*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*
7.	Devonian - Lower Old Red Sandstone	Good; creates fertile red soils of South Herefordshire	Underlies about 60% of AONB	Good Outcrops, eg Wilton Road, Ross	Vernacular building material, although rarely used in modern architecture due to softness of rock	P: Food*, Fibre*, Biofuels*, Fresh water*, Genetic resources* R: Climate regulation†, Air & water quality regulation †, Pollution control†, Pollination†, Erosion control†, Soil quality regulation†, Disease and pest control† C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Employment*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*
8.	Quartz Conglomerate outcropping between Lower and Upper Old Red Sandstone	Good, (Quartz Conglomerate overlain by Tintern Sandstone)	Prominent seams between Tintern and Ross	Good Outcrops, eg Coppett Hill & Doward	Traditionally used locally in millstones and in drystone walls, limited modern use	P: Genetic resources* R: Climate regulation†, Air & water quality regulation †, Erosion control†, Soil quality regulation†, Disease and pest control† C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Employment*, Sense of place*
9.	Carboniferous Limestone	Good (overlain by Carboniferous Coal Measures)	Underlies about 25% of AONB south of Ross	Good Outcrops, especially cliffs and quarries	Quarrying; two working quarries in, and one bordering, AONB Loss of working small quarries	P: Food*, Fibre*, Biofuels*, Fresh water*, Genetic resources* R: Climate regulation†, Air & water quality regulation †, Pollution control†, Pollination†, Erosion control†, Soil quality regulation†, Disease and pest control† C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*,

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Ecosystem Goods* & Services† P: Provisioning, R: Regulating C: Cultural
					Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Employment*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*
10. Riverine geomorphology	Good, incised meanders & superimposed drainage globally important examples for educational purposes	Along length of river	Good	Natural processes, including flooding and movement of meanders Invasive alien species Land use impacts may degrade or destroy features e.g. siltation, engineering for recreational interests or flood defence	P: Food*, Water*, Navigation* R: Climate regulation†, Water regulation†, Water quality regulation†, Fire hazard regulation† C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Employment*, Health benefits*
Visual and Sensory					
11. Picturesque, extensive & dramatic views.	72 viewpoints identified. 20 included in Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme including 4 SMs at Piercefield.	Throughout AONB but majority overlooking the Wye	Varied; some spectacular, some overgrown, some inaccessible, health & safety poor at some [Assessment of Historic & Picturesque Viewpoints in AONB, 2001]. Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme conserved &/or enhanced 12.	Changes in ownership &/or land management may degrade or block both physical access to viewpoints and/or the view window Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy the landscape viewed from a viewpoint including large single structures	P: Genetic resources*, Timber*, Species diversity* R: Erosion control†, Wild species diversity* C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Ecosystem Goods* & Services† P: Provisioning, R: Regulating C: Cultural
12. Overall sense of tranquillity, sense of remoteness and naturalness / wildness	Varied	Much of AONB	Poor to good, with localised disturbance from heavy traffic and individual vehicles and military aircraft [CPRE & CCW maps]	Changes in land management including new or expanding development and intensification of use (i.e. inappropriate tourism and recreation or increasing road or air traffic) Change driven by new standards and legislation e.g. street lighting, highway construction may lead to loss of tranquillity and sense of remoteness	C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*
Historic Environment					
13. Prehistoric sites from Palaeolithic to Iron Age	Palaeolithic occupation at Arthur's Cave 18 SMs	Standing stones at 3 sites. 11 Iron Age hillforts spread throughout AONB	Varied	Neglect or continuing unsympathetic management may degrade or destroy archaeological features eg. damage to archaeological horizons through deep ploughing, irresponsible treasure hunting or continued neglect which may lead to tree and shrub root damage	P: Food*, Fibre*, Genetic resources*, Timber*, Species diversity* R: Erosion control†, Wild species diversity* C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Sense of place*
14. Roman and early Medieval sites including Offa's Dyke	Romano-British settlements and industry, Offa's Dyke early medieval boundary of unique cultural and historical importance	Throughout AONB, Offa's Dyke on eastern crest of Lower Wye Valley	Varied, see Offa's Dyke Conservation Management Plan 4 sections of Dyke on English Heritage's Register of Heritage at Risk	Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy archaeological features visitor access, Offa's Dyke Path National Trail erosion	P: Food*, Fibre*, Genetic resources*, Timber*, Species diversity* R: Erosion control†, Wild species diversity* C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Sense of place*

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Ecosystem Goods* & Services† P: Provisioning, R: Regulating C: Cultural
15. Medieval Defensive and Ecclesiastical sites and associated landscapes	Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Cadw Register of Historic Landscapes. Goodrich & Chepstow Castles and Tintern Abbey in state ownership.	Lower Wye Valley from Ross to Chepstow	Fair to good 6 churches on English Heritage's Register of Heritage at Risk	Changes in the visiting regime and increases in popularity of various sites. Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy archaeological features	P: Genetic resources*, Species diversity* R: Erosion control†, Wild species diversity* C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Employment*, Sense of place*
16. Post-medieval industrial sites and associated landscapes	Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Cadw Register of Historic Landscapes	Throughout AONB.	Some sites under management, others suffering from neglect	Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy archaeological features Changes in the visiting regime and increases in popularity of various sites.	P: Genetic resources*, Species diversity* R: Erosion control†, Wild species diversity* C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Sense of place*
17. Railway heritage	Line closed 1958	Disused line through length of AONB	Redundant track bed with decaying infrastructure	Further neglect of structures	P: Genetic resources*, Species diversity* R: Erosion control†, Wild species diversity* C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Employment*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*
18. Ancient trees	Significant numbers of ancient pollards and mature trees in hedges, woods and parkland 2,347 in total (av 7/km ²)	Throughout AONB	Poor	Neglect or inappropriate management may damage or destroy trees	P: Timber*, Fuelwood*, Species diversity* R: Climate regulation†, Erosion control†, Flood regulation†, Disease & pest control†, Air & water quality regulation†, Soil quality regulation†, Noise regulation† C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Employment*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Ecosystem Goods* & Services† P: Provisioning, R: Regulating C: Cultural
19. Historic / registered parks and gardens	10 registered parks and gardens; Sufton Court, Hill Court, The Kymin, Troy House, High Glanau, The Argoed, Wyndcliffe Court, Piercefield, Itton Court, Mouton House, plus 48 of local significance in AONB	Through-out AONB	Fair to good none on EH 'risk register'	Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy historic features (including the degradation of identified designed landscape)	P: Food*, Fibre*, Fresh water*, Biofuels* Genetic resources*, Timber*, Species diversity*, Water*, Health products*, Bioenergy* R: Climate regulation†, Water quality regulation†, Erosion control†, Air quality regulation†, Pollution control†, Pollination†, Disease and pest control†, Soil quality regulation†, Noise regulation†, Water regulation†, Fire hazard regulation†, Flood regulation†, Local climate regulation†, Wild species diversity*, Coastal defence† C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*, Employment*
20. Vernacular architecture: Farmsteads Commoners cottages, Estate houses	Varied – no one dominant style due to varying geology	Through-out AONB, dependant on geology	Varied, dependant on geology & building materials	Inappropriate management may degrade or destroy historic features	P: Genetic resources*, Species diversity* R: Climate regulation†, Water quality regulation†, Erosion control†, Air quality regulation†, Pollution control†, Noise regulation†, Water regulation†, Wild species diversity* C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Sense of place*, Employment*
Language					
21. Welsh language & accent; Forest of Dean & South Herefordshire dialects & accents	Usage diminishing. Welsh taught in schools in Monmouthshire.	Varied through-out AONB	Welsh usage consolidating in Monmouthshire [2011 Census].	Loss of local identity can further erode traditional usages Influences of universal education and media	C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Sense of place*, Employment*
Access and Recreation					

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Ecosystem Goods* & Services† P: Provisioning, R: Regulating C: Cultural
22. Old tracks: often in sunken ways &/or bounded by drystone walls	Some in Rights of Way network, some County Road (Highways), some other highways, remainder private. No formal cataloguing and assessment	Through-out AONB	Variable	Degradation of surface and/or boundary features due to changes in levels of usage &/or ownership or management, eg. water erosion, deep rutting and waterlogging, hard surfacing, widening, etc. Blockage and/or obstruction Unclear classification and misleading signage	P: Genetic resources*, Species diversity* R: Water quality regulation†, Erosion control†, Air quality regulation†, Pollution control†, Noise regulation†, Water regulation†, Fire hazard regulation†, Flood regulation†, Local climate regulation†, Wild species diversity* C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*
23. Offa's Dyke Path	National Trail	Monmouth to Chepstow (35km)	Premier national walking route	Erosion due to excessive usage leading to damage to Offa's Dyke earthwork Blockage and/or obstruction	C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*, Employment*
24. Wye Valley Walk	Regional Route	Through length of AONB (70km / 45miles) [T1.1-76]	Good	Degradation of route due to erosion and excessive usage and/or river flooding and/or landslips Blockage and/or obstruction Some sections still on Permissive Paths	C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*, Employment*
25. Access land	Good	Forestry Commission woodland and Woodland Trust holdings eg. Haugh Wood, Chase Wood & lower Wye Valley woods	Good	Changes in legislation or sale removing access rights	P: Food*, Fibre*, Fresh water*, Biofuels* Genetic resources*, Timber*, Species diversity*, Water*, R: Climate regulation†, Water quality regulation†, Erosion control†, Air quality regulation†, Pollution control†, Pollination†, Disease and pest control†, Soil quality regulation†, Water regulation†, Fire hazard regulation†, Local climate regulation†, Wild species diversity* C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*, Employment*

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Ecosystem Goods* & Services† P: Provisioning, R: Regulating C: Cultural
26. Small commons; largest are Coppet Hill, Broadmoor, Staunton Meend, Whitelye, The Hudnalls	Generally good	12 scattered through -out AONB (260ha in England)	Generally good	Obstruction to access Lack of, or inappropriate, management	P: Food*, Fibre*, Fresh water*, Biofuels* Genetic resources*, Species diversity*, Water*, Health products* R: Climate regulation†, Water quality regulation†, Erosion control†, Air quality regulation†, Pollution control†, Pollination†, Disease and pest control†, Soil quality regulation†, Water regulation†, Fire hazard regulation†, Flood regulation†, Local climate regulation†, Wild species diversity* C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*
Other					
27. Orchards	Traditional orchards mostly cider apples and perry pear also commercial apple standard and bush orchards	Throughout AONB, dependant on geology and topography. New commercial orchards being planted.	Many traditional orchards redundant or underused. New commercial planting of bush orchards	Lack of, or inappropriate, management practices, may damage or destroy trees, including weather damage or harmful grazing by stock, particularly horses Development of land for housing	P: Food*, Fresh water*, Biofuels*, Genetic resources*, Timber*, Species diversity*, Health products*, Pharmaceutical products* R: Climate regulation†, Water quality regulation†, Erosion control†, Air quality regulation†, Pollution control†, Pollination†, Disease and pest control†, Soil quality regulation†, Noise regulation†, Water regulation†, Fire hazard regulation†, Flood regulation†, Local climate regulation†, Wild species diversity* C: Recreation & Tourism*, Aesthetic values*, Cultural heritage*, Spiritual values*, Education*, Sense of place*, Health benefits*, Employment*

Table 9: ACTIVITIES & PRESSURES in the Wye Valley AONB

Activities in the AONB	Pressures in the AONB	Positive Impacts in the AONB	Negative Impacts in the AONB	AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association
Enjoyment				
Recreation				
Boating (motorised water craft, including cruise boats, motor launches & jet skis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing use of river, particularly around Symonds Yat and between Chepstow and Tintern Demand for standardised launch facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic generation from pleasure cruises Local spend of users Gives a different perspective to appreciate Special Qualities of AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly designed launch sites and channel engineering can degrade landscape character Wash from boats at speed can damage riverbank 	LMZ 09 SQ3 SQ10 SQ11 SQ12
Canoeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing use of river, particularly between Kerne Bridge and Monmouth Lack of launch facilities Demand for standardised launch facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic generation from canoe hire Local spend of users Health benefits of canoeing Gives a different perspective to appreciate Special Qualities of AONB Provides access for disabled and less abled people into countryside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kerne Bridge and Symonds Yat reaching capacity at peak times Increased use can cause disturbance to other users and wildlife Can be associated with rogue camping Poorly designed launch sites and channel engineering can degrade landscape character 	LMZ 02 LMZ 09 SQ3 SQ10 SQ11 SQ12
Climbing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concentrated on limestone cliffs in Upper and Lower Wye Gorge (SSSIs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic generation from guiding & activity businesses Local spend of users Health benefits of climbing Gives a different perspective to appreciate Special Qualities of AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive use and development of routes can disturb biodiversity and geodiversity Can be associated with rogue camping 	LMZ 09 SQ9 SQ11 SQ12
Cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoted locally and nationally as a sustainable form of transport Vehicle speeds and size of many roads makes cycling dangerous Demand for off- road routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health benefits of cycling Reduced emissions of cycle journeys Economic generation from cycle shops and hire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased off-road cycling can cause disturbance to other users and wildlife Car-borne cyclists can exacerbate parking demand at honey-pots 	All LMZs SQ2 SQ11 SQ12 SQ17

Activities in the AONB	Pressures in the AONB	Positive Impacts in the AONB	Negative Impacts in the AONB	AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirement for standardised infrastructure and facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cycle tracks in Public Estate Forest facilitate greater usage of overall forest area and integration with other users. Local spend of cyclists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly designed routes and infrastructure can degrade landscape character and historic environment features 	SQ22	
Field Sports		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic generation from shooting rights Local spend of participants Management can enhance biodiversity Facilitates appreciation of Special Qualities of AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poaching Disturbance to wildlife Noise from shoots Poorly designed cover crops can degrade landscape character 	All LMZs SQ2 SQ3 SQ4 SQ11 SQ12 SQ17	SQ22 SQ23 SQ24 SQ25 SQ26
Fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salmon stocks depressed Demand for fishing lakes Seasonal elver fishing on tidal river extensively over-fished over decades due to inflated market price of product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic generation from fishing rights Local spend of anglers Gives a different perspective to appreciate Special Qualities of AONB Provides access for disabled and less abled people into countryside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly designed fishing infrastructure, eg. croys, lakes and stands, can degrade landscape character Over-fishing of natural stock depletes biodiversity & economy Potential conflicts with other river users, particularly canoeists 	LMZ 02 LMZ 09 SQ3 SQ10 SQ11 SQ12	
Horse riding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disjointed Bridleway network leading to demand for correct signage, more accessible routes, including carriageways and permissive routes Use of verges for riding Demand for ménages, stables and paddocks Limited Rights of Way budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local spend of horse-riders Facilitates appreciation of Special Qualities of AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly designed ménages, stables and paddocks can degrade landscape character Excessive use of routes can damage surfaces and features Potential (but rare) conflict with other users, eg cyclists and walkers, especially with dogs Over grazing can degrade species rich grassland 	All LMZs SQ2 SQ4 SQ11 SQ12 SQ17 SQ22 SQ26	

Activities in the AONB	Pressures in the AONB	Positive Impacts in the AONB	Negative Impacts in the AONB	AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association	
Rowing and rafting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rowing clubs and courses at Ross and Monmouth Raft Races along various stretches of river 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic generation from regattas and races Local spend of users Health benefits of rowing and rafting Gives a different perspective to appreciate Special Qualities of AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential conflicts with other river users, particularly fishermen 	LMZ 02 LMZ 09 SQ3 SQ10 SQ11 SQ12	
Sight-seeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on honey-pot sites such as Ross-on-Wye, Tintern Abbey and Yat Rock Demand for view-brew-loo facilities High percentage of car use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local spend of sight-seers Facilitates appreciation of Special Qualities of AONB Provides access for disabled and less able people into countryside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape implications of provision of facilities, including car parking Some sites reaching capacity at peak times Can exacerbate erosion to path surfaces and features, including archaeological sites and monuments 	All LMZs SQ2 SQ3 SQ4 SQ11 SQ12 SQ13 SQ14	SQ15 SQ16 SQ17 SQ23 SQ24 SQ25 SQ26
Walking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for way-marked, self-guided trails High percentage of car use to start walk Honey-pot sites such as Haugh Wood, Symonds Yat and Tintern Access for all enhancements Open Access Limited Rights of Way budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local spend of walkers Allows appreciation of Special Qualities of area Dissipated throughout AONB Health benefits of walking Provides access for disabled and less-abled people into countryside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal car parking on verges Potential conflict particularly between dogs and livestock Excessive usage can exacerbate erosion to paths and features Confusion over signage & waymarking can lead to confrontation with other users 	All LMZs SQ2 SQ3 SQ4 SQ11 SQ12 SQ17	SQ22 SQ23 SQ24 SQ25 SQ26 SQ27
4x4 vehicles, trial motorcycles and off-road motorcycles driving off-tarmac	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing legal use of unclassified public roads and lack of clear signage Illegal use of public footpaths, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local spend of driver / riders Facilitates appreciation of some Special Qualities of AONB Provides access for disabled and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confusion over signage & waymarking can lead to confrontation with other users Can exacerbate erosion to path 	All LMZs SQ2 SQ3 SQ4 SQ5	SQ19 SQ20 SQ21 SQ22

Activities in the AONB	Pressures in the AONB	Positive Impacts in the AONB	Negative Impacts in the AONB	AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association	
	bridleways and private land	less-abled people into countryside	surfaces and features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal trails can damage habitats and features • Adversely affects tranquillity in vicinity • Disturbance to other users and wildlife 	SQ11 SQ12 SQ13 SQ14 SQ15 SQ16 SQ17	SQ26
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Wye Valley’ a known brand and destination with estimated 2.5 million visitor days p.a. • Focus on honey-pot sites such as Ross-on-Wye, Tintern Abbey and Yat Rock • High percentage of car use • Increase in day trippers and long term decline in long stay visitor numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic generation for many sectors in local community , including food and accommodation providers • Local spend of tourists & visitors • Facilitates appreciation of Special Qualities of AONB • Can be dissipated throughout AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumulative &/or large scale tourism infrastructure at honey pots can degrade landscape character • Incremental infrastructure improvements to tourism facilities can urbanise and detract from landscape character • Increased pollution from high dependence on private transport 	All LMZs SQ2 SQ3 SQ4 SQ11 SQ12 SQ13 SQ14 SQ15 SQ16	SQ17 SQ19 SQ23 SQ24 SQ25 SQ26 SQ27
Land management					
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farms need to assess their practices and enterprises against legislation and cross-compliance • Diversification to continue employment • Changes in land ownership and land management • Increasing farm sizes through amalgamation • Increasing numbers of new hobby farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic generation of agricultural enterprises and spend of employees • Landscape custodianship of farming • Provision of local food and materials • Diversification allowing farmers to continue farming • Enhanced biodiversity, landscape, historic environment and diffuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential landscape, social and/or biodiversity impacts of new technologies • Inappropriate land management practices may degrade or destroy landscape features including archaeological features (eg overstocking, continuous arable production, under-grazing) • Loss of traditional mixed farming practices 	All LMZs SQ4 SQ5 SQ10 SQ11 SQ12 SQ13 SQ14 SQ18 SQ19 SQ20SQ22 SQ27	

Activities in the AONB	Pressures in the AONB	Positive Impacts in the AONB	Negative Impacts in the AONB	AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing numbers of farmers, particularly hobby farmers, who are not engaged through the usual channels may be hard to reach in terms of encouraging specific management New technologies & practices e.g. biofuels, polytunnels and carbon reduction Traditional farm buildings redundant for modern agricultural use sold off &/or converted, leading to reinvestment in business and modern agricultural buildings 	<p>pollution measures through agri-environment schemes, Catchment sensitive Farming and/or new technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New access established with agri-environment schemes Ecosystem services including pollination, opportunities for recreation and spiritual refreshment, flood storage and water regulation Sensitive barn conversions can deliver positive benefits in terms of the historic environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New farm buildings as permitted development can be out of character and scale in the landscape Poorly designed barn conversions can degrade landscape character &/or impact on protected species roosts/nests (eg. bats and barn owls) Abandonment or inappropriate use of parkland and designed landscapes leading to loss of cultural heritage and character. 		
Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timber prices, particularly for firewood, are buoyant and markets strong Neglect of much private small woodland, also road & bank side trees Degradation of ancient woodland sites by the continuing existence of conifers and other non-native species Spread of species and pathogens, eg. deer, grey squirrel, boar and Chalara, Ramorum, Phytophthora etc. Fragmentation by land use changes Loss of woodland management skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic generation of forestry products, increasing labour and skills resource Large area of woodland in public or voluntary sector ownership (eg , NE, FC, WT, WiT, WG) Restoration to native woodland of plantations on ancient woodland sites' Public access to woodlands facilitates appreciation of Special Qualities of AONB Ecosystem services including carbon sequestration, flooding, water quality & quantity amelioration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of management of much private woodland Trees obscuring views from roads and picturesque viewpoints Deer and squirrels affecting biodiversity and viability of many woods Inappropriate forestry operations &/or timing (insensitive felling operations, inappropriate planting methods and track installations) may degrade or destroy landscape features including archaeological features Impacts of diseases on key tree species can degrade landscape character 	LMZ 01 LMZ 03 LMZ 04 LMZ 09 LMZ 10 LMZ 12 LMZ 13 LMZ 14 LMZ 15 LMZ16 SQ2 SQ3 SQ11 SQ12 SQ13 SQ14	SQ13 SQ14 SQ15 SQ16 SQ17 SQ18 SQ22 SQ23 SQ24 SQ25

Activities in the AONB	Pressures in the AONB	Positive Impacts in the AONB	Negative Impacts in the AONB	AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing potential of the developing wood-fuel market and supply chain and consequential increase in woodland management 			SQ16
Economic & Development				
Telecommunications and other utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications for new masts or power-lines Telecommunications companies not covered by Section 85 of CRoW Act. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased ease of communications in valley. Advances in mast designs can be more sympathetic to surroundings and landscape character Undergrounding of electricity cables enhances landscape character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual intrusion of pylons and standardised masts, particularly when poorly designed and sited 	All LMZs SQ2 SQ11 SQ12
Energy, including renewables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal energy generated in AONB, but traditionally waterpower and wood-fuel Renewable energy promoted locally and nationally as part of sustainable development Demand for woodfuel, energy crops, small scale hydro, solar water heating and small scale / domestic wind turbines and larger Solar (PV) Farm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape and biodiversity benefits of increasing use of coppice Development and use of renewable energy can increase environmental awareness and appreciation Use of historic mill locations for hydro-electricity and the management of woods for wood-fuel can bring in funds for the beneficial management of these features and landscapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New and non-traditional techniques (eg. new energy crops, large scale wind farms, Solar Farms) can degrade landscape character &/or may impact on biodiversity (bats and birds with turbines, habitat loss with PV etc.) Re-use of historic mill locations can cause damage to historic structures and archaeological deposits 	All LMZs SQ2 SQ3 SQ4 SQ10 SQ11 SQ12
Mineral development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mineral reserves and consents for existing Limestone extraction remain at one large scale quarry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to interpret geodiversity, mineral heritage and Special Qualities of AONB Opportunities to use more local stone in buildings and development to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large scale quarries can detract from landscape character and/or damage to landscape features 	LMZ 09 LMZ 10 SQ2 SQ12 SQ3 SQ20 SQ4

Activities in the AONB	Pressures in the AONB	Positive Impacts in the AONB	Negative Impacts in the AONB	AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association
		enhance local character		SQ9
Housing & the built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing allocation demands leading to Market towns encroaching on AONB and in-fill in villages Location of housing and development in places which are dependent on car use Unsympathetic and standardised designs of much modern housing and business premises Lack of Village Design Statements for many settlements Redundant farm buildings being converted to residential dwellings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Places for people to live and work in or near to the spectacular landscape of the AONB, facilitating appreciation of Special Qualities of AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor design of buildings and curtilage can detract from landscape character, eg. dominant rooflines, urbanising rural areas with oversized windows, natural hillsides engineered for car parking & turning points, excessive lighting and inadequate landscaping or screening Poor location of housing and development encouraging car use and requiring additional standardised highway infrastructure 	All LMZs SQ4 SQ11 SQ12 SQ20 SQ26 SQ27
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly locally in market towns or commute (Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff). Highest employment in service industries of tourism, public administration, finance and transport with small numbers in agriculture & forestry Farm incomes declining. Need for growth Movement, such as Transition Towns, towards more sustainable communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment predominantly based on servicing the enjoyment and appreciation of the Special Qualities of the AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demands of hard economics and employment, uncoupled from environmental and community aspects, can have detrimental impact on landscape 	All LMZs SQ11 SQ12 SQ20
Transport & Traffic [inc emissions]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic volumes; A40 busy at all times of the day and, along with A49 and A4136, carries much freight traffic. A466 and B roads are less 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most parts of AONB accessible by road, facilitating appreciation of Special Qualities for people of all levels of personal mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual impact of much transport infrastructure, including standardised concrete curbing, safety barriers, lighting & signage 	All LMZs SQ4 SQ11 SQ12

Activities in the AONB	Pressures in the AONB	Positive Impacts in the AONB	Negative Impacts in the AONB	AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association
	<p>busy, outside of commuting times, though congestion can be caused by dawdling drivers. Agricultural vehicles can also hold up traffic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on private car use and commuting • Demands for standardised upgrades of road network, from A40 dual carriageway to unsurfaced byways • Rural bus services patchy • Wider issue of pollution and carbon footprint of the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural bus services facilitate access and appreciation of the Special Qualities of the AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low / poor maintenance of existing surfaces & features, inc bridges can detract from landscape character 	SQ22
Waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All waste for landfill exported • Government policy to divert waste from landfill eg. to community composting schemes or small-scale energy-from-waste schemes such anaerobic digestion plants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new landfill sites in AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There may be less local awareness of need to reduce & reuse & recycle. 	
Community and Social				
Local services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viability of village and rural services and facilities • Mobility of residents, including out commuting, increases competition between village, market town and city facilities • Internet consumerism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many good village shops & busy market towns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of local services reduces community coherence and can lead to increasing social isolation • Deliveries of internet purchases may increase vehicle movements 	All LMZs SQ12 SQ21
Local housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of second homes and holiday lets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurs and fresh ideas brought into area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration of young people from area 	All LMZs SQ4

Activities in the AONB	Pressures in the AONB	Positive Impacts in the AONB	Negative Impacts in the AONB	AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractiveness of area for both commuting and retirement • Lack of affordable housing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of potential local work force • Loss of indigenous knowledge and skills • Imbalance in local demographics 	SQ12 SQ20 SQ21 SQ27
Community facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pubs & garages threatened by competition from supermarkets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good village halls & pubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of local services reduces community coherence and increases social isolation 	All LMZs SQ21 SQ27
Other				
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing greenhouse gas emissions leading to anticipated global warming and species migration • Considerable uncertainties over the nature of positive and negative impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New opportunities for agriculture and tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands and other habitats, • River & tidal flooding impacts likely to increase • Water quantity likely to vary more • Increased rainfall may lead to more landslips • Increased vulnerability of historic environment features • Changes to agricultural crops and practices may change landscape character 	All LMZs SQ2 SQ3 SQ4 SQ5 SQ10 SQ13 SQ14 SQ15 SQ16 SQ17 SQ18 SQ19 SQ27
Pollution				
Water pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diffuse and point source pollution from urban (domestic and business) and agricultural sources • Ploughing of floodplain, steep valley slopes and other vulnerable soils • Water abstraction reduces river 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incidents can be used to raise awareness of pollution issues and best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution and litter can degrade wildlife habitats and landscape character • Agricultural pollution may lead to contamination of soil and water • Soil erosion leads to loss of topsoil and sediment loading in river. 	All LMZs SQ3 SQ4

Activities in the AONB	Pressures in the AONB	Positive Impacts in the AONB	Negative Impacts in the AONB	AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association	
	flows and dilution of pollutants				
Light pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding towns on edges of AONB Demand for standardised highway lighting, particularly at junctions Increasing use of 'security' lighting on exterior of buildings, and floodlighting of games pitches and riding arenas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of bad practice can be used to promote best practice Good practice enhances 'Dark Sky' experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly designed and standardised lighting can degrade landscape character Poorly located or directed lighting can confuse motorists, degrade landscape character and waste energy 	All LMZs SQ11 SQ12 SQ20 SQ22 SQ26	
Noise pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy freight & traffic using main roads Domestic / garden noise from lawnmowers, strimmers, chippers etc. Military training flight path down valley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of bad practice can be used to promote best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Localised loss of tranquillity 	All LMZs SQ2 SQ17 SQ3 SQ18 SQ4 SQ19 SQ5 SQ20 SQ11 SQ22 SQ12 SQ23 SQ13 SQ24 SQ14 SQ25 SQ15 SQ26 SQ16	
Visual pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for more obtrusive signage Bi-lingual signs require larger signs to accommodate extra wording Increasing use of plastic for some modern agricultural practices Poor design of large buildings, eg barns and business warehouses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of bad practice can be used to promote best practice Undergrounding of electricity cables removes visual obstructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly designed and situated development in and around AONB can degrade landscape character Agricultural use of extensive areas of plastic can degrade landscape character 	All LMZs SQ11 SQ19 SQ12 SQ20 SQ14 SQ21 SQ15 SQ23 SQ16 SQ24 SQ17 SQ26 SQ18	
Fly tipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persistent levels of localised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fly tipping can damage wildlife 	All LMZs	

Activities in the AONB	Pressures in the AONB	Positive Impacts in the AONB	Negative Impacts in the AONB	AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association	
	flytipping		and the Special Qualities of the AONB	SQ2 SQ3 SQ4 SQ5 SQ11	SQ12 SQ22 SQ25 SQ26 SQ27

PART 2 STRATEGY

7. INTRODUCTION

The following pages develop the strategy for the AONB Management Plan 2020-2025. However, they should not be read in isolation to the preceding Part 1 – Outline.

7.1 Themes and aims

7.1.1 Five main themes were established in the first statutory AONB Management Plan 2004-2009. Following subsequent reviews these five themes have been tried and tested and are continued in this Management Plan for 2020-2025. Each theme is summarised in the five following paragraphs.

7.1.2 Theme 1: Our unique landscape

Conserving and, where necessary, enhancing the natural beauty of *our unique landscape* is the primary theme. This addresses the components of natural beauty: the landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, historic environment and the cultural heritage. The aim for each component is as follows:-

- to conserve and, where necessary, enhance the natural beauty of the landscape in the Wye Valley AONB, with its natural and cultural features and processes and the Special Qualities and features of the Landscape Management Zones.
- to conserve, and where appropriate enhance, the biodiversity of the AONB
- to conserve and enhance sites that are important for the scientific and general understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the geodiversity heritage of the AONB.
- to conserve and sympathetically manage the historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB and promote engagement with and understanding of it.

Additionally the dominant land uses that sustain the landscape need to be considered. The aims for this are:-

- to foster viable farming enterprises that manage the land in ways that conserve and enhance the natural resources and local distinctiveness of the AONB, and
- to ensure woodlands and trees throughout the Wye Valley AONB are managed sustainably in a way that protects and enhances the outstanding ancient woodland character of the area, and provides economic, environmental and social benefits.

7.1.3 Theme 2: Development and Transport

Planning the protection of the AONB through appropriate *development and transport* is the second theme. This addresses the development, infrastructure and protection of the landscape with the aim for each component as follows:-

- Ensure that all development within the AONB and its setting conserves and enhances the AONB.

- Ensure all minerals development in the AONB and its setting is compatible with the aims of AONB designation
- Ensure the most sustainable, effective and efficient use and supply of services and energy within and impacting on the AONB, compatible with the aims of AONB designation
- Ensure transport in the AONB is sustainable and integrated and compatible with the purposes of AONB designation.

7.1.4 Theme 3: Vital communities

Safeguarding rural industries and local socio-economic needs that maintain *vital communities* is the third theme. This addresses the vibrancy of the local communities and the viability of local businesses that sustain the landscape features. The aim is:-

- to engender thriving local communities that have a high quality of life with a healthy economy that supports the natural beauty of the area.

Farming and forestry have already been covered above, but other aspects of the rural economy and rural regeneration also need to be considered. The aim is:-

- to foster viable rural enterprises that derive benefit from and enhance the natural resources and local distinctiveness of the AONB.

Tourism is included under the next theme.

7.1.5 Theme 4: Enjoying the AONB

Promoting and ensuring that the general public are *enjoying the AONB* in sustainable ways is the fourth theme. This addresses the enjoyment of the special landscape features by everybody. The aims are that:-

- Sustainable tourism, based upon the natural beauty and local distinctiveness of the AONB, continues to enrich the lives of visitors, operators and employees while contributing positively to the conservation and enhancement of the area.
- People continue to enjoy active recreation in the Wye Valley that does not detract from the natural beauty of the area.
- People's appreciation and understanding of why the area is designated is increased.

7.1.6 Theme 5: Achieving success together

Managing and governing the AONB effectively to ensure we are *achieving success together* is the fifth theme. This addresses the need to manage and co-ordinate the above aspects to maximise the benefits for everyone. The aim is:-

- to continue proactive and imaginative achievements in the Wye Valley AONB through successful and productive partnerships.

This includes a Charter for Residents and visitors that identifies what you can do to help support the AONB.

7.2 **Structure of the Strategy**

7.2.1 In the following pages each theme outlined above is divided into topics drawn from the bullet points identified. Each topic has a brief outline which highlights significant issues. These must be read in conjunction with Part 1. The aim for that topic is given, based on the Vision. The Strategic Objectives for that topic are then listed; these are the policy proposals for the Management Plan. A separate Action

Plan for the Wye Valley AONB is available which outlines the delivery of this Plan and the monitoring and evaluation programme.

7.2.2 This Management Plan is considered a higher tier plan in relation to the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). The 2015-2020 HRA concludes that there are no likely significant effects on any European sites (SACs & SPAs). However, there are instances where uncertainty remains and the HRA document highlights that in such instances it is acceptable to defer the HRA down to the lower tier plan or project level, when more detail will be available. This will ensure that actions do not compromise the conservation objectives of any European sites.

7.3 Interpretation of Strategic Objectives

7.3.1 All the Strategic Objectives in the Management Plan must be interpreted in the light of:

- the statutory purpose of the Wye Valley AONB designation, that is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty
- the 20 Year Vision for the AONB
- the aim of the theme's topic
- the accompanying text to the topic
- the texts and tables of Part 1 of the Management Plan

7.3.2 Where there are any doubts or conflicts, Strategic Objectives should be interpreted using a 'purposive' approach which returns to the statutory purpose of the AONB designation, '*to conserve and enhance natural beauty*'.

7.3.3 In practical terms this means that:

- where there may be more than one possible interpretation of a Strategic Objective, the one which reflects the aim behind the Strategic Objective, (which will always be to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB) must be applied.
- where there appears to be an irreconcilable conflict between two or more Strategic Objectives, or an action under one Strategic Objective conflicts with another, the interpretation which achieves the statutory purpose of the AONB shall be made.
- where any action, plan or project, decision, (& etc.) could be interpreted as being supported by any particular Strategic Objective (or policies), but its exercise would conflict with conserving and enhancing natural beauty, the statutory purpose to conserve and enhance natural beauty shall override any support provided by the Strategic Objective.

THEME 1

8. OUR UNIQUE LANDSCAPE – conserved & enhanced

This section outlines the aims and strategic objectives for landscape, biodiversity, and heritage, and for farming and woodlands, for the Wye Valley AONB.

8.1 LANDSCAPE

8.1.1 The character and quality of the landscape, crafted by successive generations of land management, underpins the AONB designation and supports a host of environmental, social and economic benefits. From contributing to our health and wellbeing to supporting the tourism industry, the landscape is a changing backdrop to our daily lives. By conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape, and the condition of its characteristic features, the public will continue to benefit from the AONB now and into the future.

8.1.2 A common understanding of what makes each landscape special enables people to plan ahead to conserve and enhance the distinct character and unique sense of place of that landscape, whilst enabling adaptation to changing conditions and supporting the needs of people and local communities. For example, landscape qualities are increasingly used in marketing agricultural products and diversification enterprises, securing financial rewards for those who manage the character of the area which also enhances recreation and rural tourism.

8.1.3 LandMap and the Landscape Character Assessments covering the lower Wye valley identify the characteristics that make the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB so distinctive. These are used to define sixteen Landscape Management Zones (LMZs) in the AONB. Table 1 outlines the Features of each of the AONB Landscape Management Zones. Historic Landscape Character Assessments and National Character Areas in England have also been produced. These can all help inform management and identify the choices and opportunities to plan and monitor proactively for change in a dynamic and evolving landscape.

8.1.4 There are many pressures on the natural beauty and landscape characteristics of the AONB. These are summarised in Table 9. Standardisation, urbanisation, climate change, pest and diseases and the speed and scale of change in modern technology can all have an erosive effect on the distinctive character of an area. Table 1 and Table 8 highlight the ecosystem services that the landscape features and Special Qualities provide as a healthy functioning landscape. Where these are under threat and the landscape is in danger of not functioning, mitigation and positive action should be targeted. There will be significant change to the landscape in the long term from climate change. While not all changes are predictable, the aim of adaptation actions should be to retain a functioning landscape, with a focus on resilience and robustness. The qualities for which the AONB is designated will remain important in the future, but climate change will intensify pressure on ecosystem services and functions. More joined-up action, at local and regional levels, will be needed to make the landscape and ecological network more resilient to changing pressures. In this way the decline in habitats and species, degradation of landscapes and erosion of natural resources can be halted and declines reversed where appropriate. Much of this can be achieved through the landscape approach and the adoption of Green Infrastructure (GI). Green Infrastructure, like the landscape approach, provides a multi-functional approach for environmental and economic issues as well as addressing social, health and well-being and the climate change emergency.

8.1.5 The Guiding Principle of the landscape scale approach identifies the four landscape management strategies of Conserve, Enhance, Restore and/or Create. This will help conserve and enhance the features and Special Qualities that maintain the uniqueness and natural beauty of the AONB. In and around the AONB this should concentrate on and support the characteristic semi-natural habitats linked and connected by a network of habitats such as woods, trees, hedgerows, drystone walls, rivers, ditches and ponds.

AONB Aim: Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape in the Wye Valley AONB with its natural and cultural features and processes and the Special Qualities and features of the Landscape Management Zones.

Landscape Strategic Objectives

WV-L1	Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features <i>[see also WV-L2, WV-P3, WV-P4 and WV-P5]</i>
WV-L2	Encourage and enhance appropriate landscape scale and green infrastructure action by all particularly on consolidating ecosystem services and positively contributing to habitat connectivity that allows wildlife to adapt to the effects of climate change <i>[see also WV-L1, WV-B2, WV-B3, WV-P3, WV-P4, WV-P5 and WV-P7]</i>
WV-L3	Promote and encourage the use of the Landscape Character Assessments and Historic Landscape Characterisation to inform local distinctiveness in development plans, strategies, guidance and landscaping schemes <i>[see also WV-D2, WV-D3, WV-M2, WV-U4, WV-C3 and WV-S4]</i>
WV-L4	Ensure the establishment and collection of sufficiently comprehensive baseline data to monitor landscape condition and direction of change <i>[see also WV-H2, WV-P8]</i>
WV-L5	Support measures which increase public awareness and appreciation of the natural beauty and importance of the Wye Valley AONB <i>[see also WV-A1]</i>

8.2 BIODIVERSITY

8.2.1 The Wye Valley AONB is particularly rich in wildlife and has a high concentration of designated sites covering approximately 10% of the AONB. There are 3 sites of international importance designated as Special Areas of Conservation

(SACs) under the European Union’s Habitats Directive in the AONB. The 3 SACs are the entire River Wye, over 900 hectares of ancient semi-natural woodland in the heart of the Wye Gorge, and a collection of sites in the lower Wye Valley used as roosts by Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bats. Within a 10mile/16km radius of the AONB there is also the Severn Estuary SAC, Special Protection Area (SPA) & Ramsar site downstream from the AONB, the River Usk SAC to the west and Walmore Common Ramsar Site to the east. Of national importance in the AONB are 46 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) including 4 National Nature Reserves (NNRs). The majority of the SSSIs cover ancient semi-natural woodland spread throughout the AONB. The conservation of these sites is overseen by Natural England (NE) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Also of importance in the AONB are 3 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), managed by the respective local authority, and 204 County local/key wildlife sites, a few of which are managed as nature reserves by Gwent Wildlife Trust, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust or Herefordshire Wildlife Trust in their respective counties, and Plantlife and the Woodland Trust, with the rest on private land. Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (section 40) public bodies have a duty to conserve biodiversity. NE and NRW have a duty to report on the condition of SSSIs and whether they are in favourable condition (see Table 5 and Table 6). Species-rich grasslands are an important visual element in the AONB as part of the landscape of small fields, in churchyards, along road verges or other public areas, but they also play a vitally important part in providing the biodiversity of the area, protecting endangered plant species, providing habitat for bees and other pollinators and occupying a vital place in the ecosystem of the area.

8.2.2 Over half of the SSSIs on the English side of the AONB are in their optimal (‘favourable’) condition from a biodiversity perspective (NE 2018). This is due to many factors ranging between local, regional, national and global impacts. Much of the River Wye SSSI in the AONB is of moderate ecological status and good chemical status under the Water Framework Directive. The moderate ecological status is largely due to diffuse inputs from agriculture. The Wye Catchment Partnership has a shared understanding of the principal problems and their causes and acts as a focal hub in delivering action to correct the identified issues, including delivery of the Wye Nutrient Management Plan and Catchment Advisers aiding farmers. Therefore it is particularly important to consider the options where the condition of SSSIs is significantly affected by management of the wider landscape in which they occur. There may also be an intensification of pressure on land and wildlife, and consequently on landscape and natural beauty, from visitor pressure, pests and diseases and climate change.

8.2.3 The aim of management actions and adaptations should be to retain the ecological value, with a focus on resilience and robustness. ‘Making Space for Nature: A review of England’s Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network’, chaired by Professor Sir John Lawton (2010), identified that to make space for nature we need more, bigger, better and joined up sites to create a sustainable, resilient and more effective ecological network. The report, and the 25 Year Environment Plan recognised AONBs as having great potential to establish a coherent and resilient ecological network. The new Environmental Land Management scheme (ELMs) and strategic planning policies are major tools in the creation of better ecological networks. They should ensure that existing wildlife is managed to the highest

standards, that habitat improvement and creation becomes part of sustainable land management systems and businesses, and that land managers are provided adequate reward for the ecosystem services their land management provides.

8.2.4 In 2010 the UK signed up to the Biodiversity 2020 global vision and 5 strategic goals and ‘Aichi’ targets:-

A: Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society.

B: Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use.

C: Improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity.

D: Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystems.

E: Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building.

Progress towards securing UK biodiversity has fallen short of targets and ambitions. Ten measures within the 2020 strategy show a decline in the long-term with a further nine showing decline in the short-term (Defra, 2019). The IPPR (2019) have argued that policy change has been, 'too slow, and limited to certain natural systems', precipitating the 'age of environmental breakdown'.

8.2.5 The UK Government’s 25-Year Environment Plan sets out the ambition to develop a growing and resilient network of land, water and sea that is richer in plants and wildlife. It includes a number of commitments for nature, including publishing a new strategy for nature to replace Biodiversity 2020. The Nature Recovery Network is a major commitment in the 25-Year Environment Plan, intended to improve, expand and connect habitats to address wildlife decline and provide wider environmental benefits for people.

8.2.6 In Wales the focus is on natural resource management, with the overall aim to ensure that Wales has increasingly resilient and diverse ecosystems that deliver economic, environmental and social benefits. The State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR 2016) assessed the extent to which natural resources in Wales are being sustainably managed, and recommended a proactive approach to building resilience. The SoNaR Report shows that overall biological diversity is declining and none of Wales’ ecosystems are currently showing all the attributes of resilience. The extent of some habitats has also declined significantly, which can be seen by the loss of habitats and species. This means that unless action is taken, the benefits derived from natural resources are at risk.

8.2.7 The potential for the Wye Valley AONB to contribute positively to nationally and internationally important habitats and species is evident. The quality of the river and riverine habitat, with migratory fish and otters, are of European importance. Similarly the near continuous woodlands interspersed with species rich grassland make a high quality connected landscape. The Wye Valley is an important European stronghold for both the Lesser Horseshoe bat and the Common Dormouse. There are also many other nationally rare species with a restricted UK distribution that are found within the AONB, for example, the Lower Wye Valley is the second most diverse site for *Sorbus* in the British Isles with 19 taxa (second only to the Avon Gorge which hosts about 23 taxa). There are also species that are of local importance and although

some species have been lost there is still considerable floral diversity in a range of habitats.

8.2.8 The concentration of priority species and habitats in the Wye Valley has led the AONB Partnership to be a leading force facilitating, encouraging and delivering joined-up, collaborative and cooperative initiatives with local partners that maintain and enhance biodiversity, halt further degradation and, where possible, establish restoration. Exemplar initiatives since 2001 include landscape scale projects such as the Woolhope Dome Project, the Ravine WoodLIFE project and the Wye Valley Nature Improvement Area application. The AONB Partnership is well placed to help provide more resilient and coherent ecological networks in and around the AONB, with healthy and well-functioning ecosystems delivering multiple benefits for people and wildlife. Working at a landscape scale, properly planned ecological networks, including large restoration areas, can focus efforts on achieving a shift beyond conservation to enhancement and, where appropriate, restoration.

8.2.9 On-going monitoring of key species and habitats will be crucial to determining the effectiveness of various schemes and initiatives and overall delivery of biodiversity objectives. Where appropriate a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) may be required for a project or plan to identify more precisely the nature, scale or location of the proposal, and its potential effects and necessary changes, in order to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of any European site(s).

8.2.10 The Wye Valley New Naturalist (2008), written by Dr George Peterken provides some useful background on the area.

AONB Aim: Conserve, and where appropriate enhance and restore, the biodiversity of the AONB in robust ecological networks.

Biodiversity Strategic Objectives

WV-B1	Contribute to the delivery of national, regional and local Biodiversity targets and priorities for key habitats and species relevant to the AONB, in partnership with relevant organisations <i>[see also WV-P4 and WV-P7]</i>
WV-B2	Encourage and support measures that contribute to the management of all statutory designated sites and County local/key wildlife sites so that they are in favourable condition and within robust ecological networks <i>[see also WV-L2, WV-B3 and WV-P5]</i>
WV-B3	Promote the adoption of schemes and initiatives that sustain, enhance and/or restore the characteristic biodiversity of the AONB, and that enable ecological systems and natural processes to accommodate and adapt to climate and other environmental change, including through landscape scale habitat connectivity <i>[see also WV-L2, WV-B2, WV-T3 and WV-P5]</i>
WV-B4	Identify species and diseases considered to be detrimental to the

	biodiversity value of the AONB and encourage their monitoring, management and, where appropriate, their control <i>[see also WV-F6 and WV-W4]</i>
WV-B5	Support the identification and monitoring of key indicator species and priority species and habitats, in partnership with conservation organisations, relevant individuals and the Local Biological Record Centres <i>[see also WV-P8]</i>
WV-B6	Promote awareness, sources of advice and involvement in biodiversity conservation by landowners, land managers, businesses, local communities, schools and the public including of impacts from outside the AONB <i>[see also WV-A1]</i>

8.3 GEODIVERSITY

8.3.1 The Wye Valley AONB contains some excellent geology with good and clear examples of geological features in the form of a variety of bedrocks exposed in quarries, cliffs and rock outcrops, and the geomorphology associated with the river. The geology underpins the topography, soils and biodiversity that make the landscape of the Wye Valley so outstanding. Geodiversity, as well as biodiversity, contributes to the delivery of provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting ecosystem services. There are several geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Local Geological Sites (LGS) - formerly known as Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS). It is recognised that there are opportunities to increase the number of LGS/RIGS and generally make geological sites more accessible, intellectually and physically, to the general public.

AONB Aim: Conserve and enhance sites that are important for the scientific and general understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the geodiversity heritage of the AONB.

Geodiversity Strategic Objectives

WV-G1	Support the identification and monitoring of significant geodiversity conservation features (SSSIs & LGS/RIGS), in partnership with geoconservation organisations and the local Record Centres. <i>[see also WV-P7 and WV-P8]</i>
WV-G2	Contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the geodiversity resource in line with Geodiversity Action Plans (GAPs) <i>[see also WV-P5]</i>
WV-G3	Encourage and support measures that create and/or maintain the

	accessibility and conservation interest of sites of geological importance <i>[See also WV-M2 and WV-M3]</i>
WV-G4	Promote increased understanding and opportunities to appreciate the significance of the geodiversity of the AONB and the need for its protection and management <i>[see also WV-A1]</i>

8.4 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

8.4.1 The Wye Valley AONB has a rich heritage that has been host to many activities that have been instrumental in laying the foundations to the cultural identity of Britain. This is recognised in the high number of designated archaeological and heritage conservation sites. The lower part of the AONB is in the Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales (Cadw 1998). There are 126 Scheduled Monuments in the AONB and 10 registered Parks and Gardens. There are also 17 Conservation Areas and 959 Listed Buildings in the built environment of the AONB. Additionally there are many more nationally and regionally important monuments in the AONB that are not designated, along with a number of Unregistered Parks and Gardens (parks and gardens of local interest) and designed landscapes.

8.4.2 Heritage features are a unique, non-renewable asset. Like distinctive landscape features there are no breeding pairs of Iron Age Hill Forts. Similar to the landscape and the biodiversity, the features of the historic environment are under pressure from changes in land management and climate. Indeed, some features of the historic environment in the AONB, including some scheduled sites, are not in the best condition. This is often a reflection of present priorities, as well as changing management practices, with some sites suffering from neglect. Nearly 8% of heritage assets on the English side of the AONB are on the Register of Heritage at Risk. There are existing datasets on the vulnerability of designated historic environment and heritage assets and also the potential to broaden these datasets to encompass undesignated nationally important monuments. The appreciation and preservation of the historic environment is therefore a priority wherever possible, accepting the need for sympathetic management that has regard for other interests such as the SACs and financial viability. The amounts of public, private and charitable finance invested into the management of the historic environment is significant and needs to continue along with properly-considered changes to achieve viable uses that enable the heritage to continue to survive. Therefore management must focus on sustainability rather than a cycle of repair and decay.

8.4.3 The Statement of Significance in Section 2.1.4 contains a brief summary of the historic environment of the Wye Valley. The Wye Valley National Character Area profile sections on ‘Key Characteristics’ and ‘Landscape Through Time’ provide further detail. The Offa’s Dyke Conservation Management Plan (2019) provides a condition assessment of the iconic historic monument, noting that in the AONB only

7% of the scheduled sections, and 18% of unscheduled sections, are in Favourable condition. The heritage of the Wye Valley is also closely linked with the neighbouring Forest of Dean. There are numerous publications and articles elaborating on many aspects of local history, including ‘Overlooking the Wye, A guide to the heritage of the Wye Valley’ a legacy publication of the £3million ‘Overlooking the Wye’ Heritage Lottery Funded Landscape Partnership Scheme.

AONB Aim: Conserve and sympathetically manage the historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB and promote engagement with and understanding of it

Historic Environment Strategic Objectives

WV-H1	Initiate and encourage schemes, policy development, advice and sympathetic management through partnerships and positive action to conserve, enhance and promote the historic environment, in conjunction with landowners, national agencies and other relevant organisations <i>[see also WV-P4, WV-P5 and WV-P7]</i>
WV-H2	Promote establishment of baseline data to monitor change and improve the local databases of historic landscape assessments, conservation areas, locally important buildings, buildings at risk, ancient trees, heritage features and sites in the AONB in conjunction with Local Planning Authorities, local archaeological trusts and individuals <i>[see also WV-L4, WV-P8]</i>
WV-H3	Promote the understanding and enjoyment of the cultural heritage and historic environment <i>[see also WV-A1]</i>

8.5 FARMING

8.5.1 Agriculture occupies about 60% of the land in the AONB and continues to be an important part of the rural economy and a provider of rural landscape management. There is a wide variety of farm enterprises in the AONB ranging from soft fruit under polytunnels to High Nature Value Farming on unimproved grassland, from broiler chicken units to pedigree Hereford beef herds and from organic apple juice to turf production. Supplementing the agricultural businesses are renewable energy production and a complete spectrum of farm diversification businesses and re-developments of farm buildings. The majority (53%) of the AONB is farmed intensively.

8.5.2 Farming practices have crafted the land for millennia. Agricultural businesses have always adapted to remain profitable and the viability of enterprises enables land managers to conserve and enhance their holdings and their interests. However modern agriculture has evolved and many of the traditional habitats and practices that have

created some of the distinctive features of the AONB are often commercially redundant. The future viability of farming and forestry is fundamental to the appearance of the Wye Valley landscape and many of the problems can only be solved by policy changes. For example the Wye is a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) Priority area, providing opportunities and incentives for landowners to reduce agricultural inputs polluting the river. The increasingly globalised nature of agricultural commodities, volatile farm gate prices, consumer confidence, the increasing costs of fuel and fertiliser and of welfare, hygiene, bio-security and traceability initiatives, together with the opportunities for farmers to act co-operatively, all have implications for the viability of farming. These trends have particularly influenced stock farming, which plays a pivotal role in the maintenance of the Wye Valley's agricultural landscapes.

8.5.3 The production of food and fuel are key ecosystem services but must also be viable businesses. Influences on these include the effects of climate change and the ability to adopt new agricultural practices. Both can impact on the visual quality and landscape character of the area through the use of different technologies, crops, crop production and crop protection practices. These could include the use of photovoltaic (PV) arrays, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), new irrigation techniques or plastic crop covers. The latter, either as mulch or polytunnels, can have a dramatic impact on the landscape. Farm-scale polytunnels are not necessarily acceptable in the AONB where conservation and enhancement of the natural and scenic beauty have great weight in planning policy. The potential adverse impacts to landscape, biodiversity, soil and water quality that these changes could bring require more research and close monitoring.

8.5.4 The paradox is that many agricultural practices create and support natural beauty, and farmers and rural businesses need to be economically viable so that they can conserve and enhance the landscape, otherwise the businesses and the active environmental land management they underpin, will cease. Farming needs to be able to realise social and economic needs while delivering a whole range of ecosystem services including healthy food, pollination, biodiversity, high landscape quality, high air and water quality, high animal welfare standards and opportunities for public recreation and spiritual refreshment. Therefore farmers must be supported for taking a positive role in the land management of a nationally protected landscape. Farmers are already engaged in many initiatives including the Campaign for the Farmed Environment, Catchment Sensitive Farming and agri-environment schemes. Nearly half of the AONB in England is currently covered in agri-environment agreements. The trend should be to increase the coverage and effectiveness of schemes in the AONB. Thus agricultural practices that conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the area, including biodiversity, and protect environmental resources e.g. soil and water and the River Wye, and take account of the landscape character should continue to be encouraged as a high priority, for example High Nature Value (HNV) farming. Utilising local markets, environmental grants and reducing costs via smart use of water, energy and nutrients are all important, alongside increasing production and environmental enhancements. Conversely, agricultural activity that significantly diminishes or destroys the natural beauty, landscape character and ecosystem services of the AONB should not be supported.

8.5.5 Currently farming in the UK is entering a time of considerable change with Brexit potentially having an impact on market access, welfare standards and future subsidy arrangements and the need to decarbonise processes. It is anticipated that there will be a move towards a system of payment for ‘public goods’ in areas such as environmental and animal welfare standards and incentivising sustainability. Designated landscapes are high value landscape targeting information should identify to applicants the specific actions and benefits that agri-environment scheme options can deliver in these designated landscapes. In this way agri-environment schemes will continue to conserve and enhance the AONB.

8.5.6 There are also the ‘small landowners’, ‘small-holders’ or ‘hobby farmers’ who do not depend on land management for their income. However collectively they are the main private custodians of the distinctive small-field landscapes of the Wye Valley and a disproportionately large amount of the key sites for biodiversity and ecology. These people often own and manage High Nature Value farmland with semi-natural species rich grasslands and orchards and practice more traditional forms of farming, such as low intensity grazing and hay-making. They, too, need support and practical help and are often outside the existing agri-environment schemes.

AONB Aim: To foster viable farming enterprises that manage the land in ways that conserve and enhance the natural resources and local distinctiveness of the AONB.

Farming Strategic Objectives

WV-F1	Encourage farmers and landowners to develop and adopt sustainable management practices that conserve or enhance the features, Special Qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB <i>[see also WV-E2 and WV-P5]</i>
WV-F2	Influence policy on, and encourage the maximum uptake of, agri-environment and other appropriate schemes, including support for small-holders, where they progress the conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty, biodiversity, historic environment and Special Qualities of the AONB, particularly through Catchment Sensitive Farming and mixed farming systems <i>[see also WV-P3, WV-P4, WV-P5 and WV-P7]</i>
WV-F3	Seek to mitigate &/or reduce, or as a last resort remove, agricultural activity which significantly diminishes or destroys the Special Qualities, natural beauty and landscape character of the AONB <i>[see also WV-D3]</i>
WV-F4	Support the development of and funding for new skills, farming practices and farm-based activities that are compatible with the aims of AONB designation, and encourage and support traditional skills such as hay making, hedge laying, dry stone walling, woodland and coppice management, riparian tree works etc. that contribute to the maintenance of the Special Qualities of the AONB

	<i>[see also WV-W3, WV-E1 and WV-E3]</i>
WV-F5	Promote a wider understanding of the value of farming to the landscape and economy of the AONB <i>[see also WV-A1]</i>
WV-F6	Support all appropriate measures to control diseases of agricultural crops, trees and livestock, which threaten the commercial viability of farming systems that conserve the landscape character, ensuring that the measures remain compatible with the conservation and enjoyment of natural beauty <i>[see also WV-B4 and WV-W4]</i>
WV-F7	Encourage and support local producers to supply local food and promote and encourage the use of local produce by public bodies, consumers, accommodation providers and local food outlets. <i>[see also WV-E1]</i>

8.6 WOODLAND, TREES AND FORESTRY

8.6.1 Woodlands in the Wye Valley are one of the dominant landscape features with significant connectivity across the landscape. They provide a multitude of ecosystems services and environmental, social and economic benefits. The majority of woodlands in the Wye Valley AONB are ancient woodland of high nature conservation value, and therefore irreplaceable. However there are also sizeable conifer plantations. Forestry and woodland occupies about 26% of the AONB, i.e. about 8440ha. Over 900ha, about 3% of the AONB, are internationally protected as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The highest proportions of ancient and semi-natural woodland (ASNW) and planted ancient woodland sites (PAWS) are in the Wye Gorge, Dean Edge Limestone Hills (Highmeadow) and Woolhope Dome. The woodland proportion varies enormously between landscape management zones. The productive areas of woodland in the AONB are on the flatter land of the Dean and Trellech plateaux and the Woolhope Dome. The majority of the woodland in productive management is in the Public Forest Estate which covers 4,962ha or 15% of the AONB, managed by the Forestry England and Natural Resources Wales (NRW). A further 1,650ha of private woodland (5% of the AONB) are in some level of grant scheme. The administrative complexity of the AONB means that there are a range of relevant woodland strategies and plans, for England and Wales respectively.

8.6.2 Britain's trees are under unprecedented threat. Over the last ten years there has been a significant increase in the number of pests and diseases attacking our trees. There are imported pests diseases creating problems with Ash, Larch, Oak, Pine, Spruce and Horse Chestnut trees. Current threats include Ash Dieback (*Chalara fraxinea*), Alder Phytophthora (*Phytophthora cambivora* x *fragariae*) and Ramorum Blight (*Phytophthora ramorum*) which all having an effect, some dramatically, on the landscape character of the AONB. Close monitoring and swift remedial action are required to control the worst impacts of these threats. This increase in pests and

diseases has dramatically highlighted how dependant we have become on a limited range of tree species. The ancient woodlands of the Wye Valley have a much richer species diversity than plantation woodland. Species diversification is very much at the core of woodland adaptation and ensuring resilience in the future. Climate change may also significantly affect the Wye Valley woodlands. However their extensive connectivity across the landscape may afford some opportunities for species and habitat migration and/or adaptation.

8.6.3 The Wye Valley woodlands would have been managed, predominantly coppiced, on an industrial scale over at least the past 500 years. Much of this would have been low-grade hardwood timber turned into charcoal on site and fed into the local blast furnaces and industrial works along the valley. Currently nationally only 30% of woodlands are managed and the woodlands in the AONB are no exception. This is partly due to volatile timber prices in recent years, making the relatively low-grade hardwoods on the steep slopes of the Wye Valley woodlands particularly unprofitable. The development of modern woodfuel and biomass markets could increase the management of these woods once more. But in the meantime many of the woodlands receive little management and they remain a significant carbon sink.

8.6.4 With this lack of active management, however, come a range of problems. The neglect of woodlands has resulted in a general loss of biodiversity particularly those species that are dependent on the cyclic light to shade development in woods. Other problems include invasion by species such as cherry laurel, Himalayan Balsam, increasing deer, boar and grey squirrel populations and the general loss of woodland management skills. Deer populations can have a significant detrimental impact on the economic and conservation value of the Wye Valley woodlands and continued collaborative management is needed. Increases in grey squirrel populations are also recognised as having a significant impact on the longevity of trees such as beech which not only affect the productivity and biodiversity but also the landscape character of the woodlands. However effective control is not so well advanced. The impact of “wild” boar is still being evaluated. The division of woods and marketing of small individual plots is another trend that needs monitoring.

8.6.5 Employment levels in woodland management in the AONB are uncertain due to the scarcity of comprehensive figures for the AONB. However, there are a wide range of professions locally connected to the woodlands and the use of timber and woodland products. These range from foresters, arboricultural and silvicultural advisors, coppice workers and charcoal makers through stalkers, butchers and game dealers to carpenters, wood turners, joiners and cabinet makers. The viability of the enterprises and markets for woodland produce are essential to ensure the ongoing management of the woodland.

8.6.6 The other significant use and value of the woodlands is for recreation, health and well-being. In Japan, the health benefits of spending time in forests has its own word, *shinrin-yoku*, which means "forest bathing". The heavily wooded nature of the lower Wye Valley is a key factor in the area's popularity as a tourism and recreation destination. The Public Forest Estate in England and Wales (respectively managed by Forestry England & Natural Resources Wales) and Woodland Trust woodlands are open to, and popular with, walkers, with various further promoted and permissive

routes for horse riders and cyclists. Similarly most (but not all) Nature Reserves have public access, these are managed by Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, and the respective Wildlife Trusts in Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Gwent. However high levels of recreational use can at times conflict with practical woodland management, such as felling operations or deer culling. The woodland resource also provides good educational and well-being opportunities, particularly through community woodland activity, Forest Schools and the establishment and development of creative and therapeutic initiatives such as the previous AONB InsideOUT and MindSCAPES projects and the ‘Woods & Trees’ themed Wye Valley River Festival 2018.

8.6.7 The woodlands of the Wye Valley therefore require multipurpose management, with sound advice, support and initiatives to secure the benefits for local landscape character and biodiversity and for amenity, health, the local economy and linking or expanding existing sites. Riparian tree corridors and/or wet woodland can help with some flooding issues and be an important resource for watercourse management and biodiversity, but are under threat due to lack of management and tree health related problems. New woodlands and natural flood management measures would be an important asset in those areas to help with water management. Wherever possible woodlands need to be brought back into management, woodland owners should be encouraged to undertake active and appropriate management of their sites including the use of coppice management. The only way of increasing the area of ancient woodland with semi natural characteristics is through PAWS restoration. To make the most of these remnants, it is good practice to change the woodland canopy structure gradually, rather than removing non-native tree species in one go. Where replanting or new planting is proposed the planting of ‘the right tree in the right place’ must be encouraged (including using native species and consideration of local provenance). However, appropriate management is required as trees themselves and modern forestry operations can cause significant damage to individual heritage assets.

8.6.8 Single trees and small groups of trees in parkland or in hedgerows also make a significant contribution to the landscape character of the AONB. Such trees are usually of high conservation value, especially ancient / veteran trees. They are often part of a link between woodlands or other semi-natural habitats. Individual and hedgerow trees, such as ancient pollards, need appropriate management and maintenance to minimise damage and loss. Ancient trees are living relics of incredible age that inspire in us feelings of awe and mystery, contributing to both biodiversity and cultural history. The impact of Chalara Ash Dieback is likely to result in the loss of large numbers of woodland, hedgerow and wayside Ash trees. A planting programme is required to ensure there are mature single and hedgerow trees in the future. We also need to be mindful of not only orchard fragments on the edge of settlements, but also of solitary veteran fruit trees, particularly as they may hold a rare genetic resource.

8.6.9 The Woodlands of the Lower Wye, Origins, History and Management booklet (AONB 2007) - available on www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk - provides useful information on the Wye Valley woodlands.

AONB Aim: To ensure woodlands and trees throughout the Wye Valley AONB are managed sustainably in a way that protects and enhances the outstanding ancient woodland character of the area, and provides environmental, social and economic benefits.

Woodland, Trees and Forestry Strategic Objectives

WV-W1	Provide best practice advice to woodland owners and managers on sustainable multipurpose management of the Wye Valley woodlands, including sensitive PAWS restoration, encouraging ‘the right tree in the right place’ and the ecosystems approach <i>[see also WV-P4, WV-P5 and WV-P7]</i>
WV-W2	Develop and support tree, woodland and forestry initiatives and policy that conserve, restore and/or enhance the Special Qualities, biodiversity and natural beauty of the area, ensuring no net loss of semi-natural woodland cover unless there are overriding nature or heritage conservation benefits <i>[see also WV-P3, WV-P4 and WV-P5]</i>
WV-W3	Support the development of employment and skills and markets for local timber and woodland produce <i>[see also WV-F4, WV-E1 and WV-E3]</i>
WV-W4	Support the monitoring, management and where appropriate, control of diseases, pests and other threats, which may cause substantial mortality in tree species and woodland habitats and seek to mitigate the landscape impact of any loss <i>[see also WV-B4, WV-F6 and WV-P8]</i>
WV-W5	Increase understanding, awareness and enjoyment of trees and the special nature of the Wye Valley woodlands and promote them as a resource for appropriate educational, community, recreational and health opportunities <i>[see also WV-A1]</i>

THEME 2

9. DEVELOPMENT & TRANSPORT – planning and protection

This section outlines aims and strategic objectives for planning and development, minerals, utilities, public services, renewable energy and transport infrastructure in the Wye Valley AONB.

9.1 DEVELOPMENT

9.1.1 The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) does not have direct responsibility for the preparation of land use planning policies nor the determination of planning applications. This is the responsibility of the statutory planning authorities under specific Town and Country Planning legislation.

9.1.2 National policy for AONBs is contained in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and in England in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Local development management policies are set out in the Local Plans, Local Development Plans and emerging Neighbourhood Development Plans and are based on an up-to-date evidence base. The PPW and NPPF provide specific planning guidance for plan makers and decision takers in relation to AONBs and both confirm that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs and that AONBs have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty (equal to National Parks). The ‘great weight test’ (PPW section 6.3.5 and NPPF section 172) is significant and one of the most stringent legal tests that can be applied under planning law. In relation to major development, both PPW (section 6.3.10) and the NPPF (section 172) state that planning permission should be refused for major developments in AONBs except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest, and set a series of 3 tests that have to be assessed. Whether a proposed development is major development, to which NPPF 172 policy applies, is a matter for the relevant decision taker, taking into account the nature, scale and setting of the proposal in question and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated. Elsewhere in the NPPF “major development” is defined by The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, as housing development of 10 or more homes or 0.5 hectares or more, or non-residential development with a floorspace greater than 1,000m² or 1 hectare. Both the NPPF and PPW recognise that development affecting AONBs includes impact on the setting of the AONB.

9.1.3 The AONB designation does not prohibit development unnecessarily. Some people may feel that planning legislation and development control is restrictive on what they want to see developed. However research in Wales showed that nationally 84.5% of planning applications were approved in AONBs (broadly similar to National Parks), compared with 85.3% approved in non-AONB areas. Therefore the process should be seen as a positive process that aims to secure and enhance development that is good enough for the mutual benefit for present and future generations, in an area that is internationally recognised for its landscape importance. Section 2 of the NPPF includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which aims to make decision-making on developments easier. But the footnote to the section (para 11, footnote 6) makes clear that the AONB policies in the NPPF (sections 172) take precedent over this presumption. Consequently proposals must be carefully assessed for their effect on those features and Special Qualities that make the designated area so distinctive. High quality design, including the inclusion of Green Infrastructure, that takes account of landscape character, scale and setting, can help enhance the area.

9.1.4 All four local planning authorities have adopted Local Development Frameworks or Plans. Local Plans include policy references to the AONB in Core

Strategies and in specific Development Plan Documents (DPD) as relevant, and specifically cross-reference this AONB Management Plan. In England, Neighbourhood Development Plans also make reference to the AONB and the Management Plan. This AONB Management Plan therefore forms part of the evidence base and is a material consideration in these documents and the planning process.

9.1.5 There are about 750 planning applications per annum in the AONB (whereas there are over 13,450 dwellings). These range from porch extensions of a few square meters to over 50 hectares of polytunnels. The AONB unit and JAC only tend to consider planning applications that are likely to have a significant impact on the AONB. This is judged to be if the proposed development will form a dominant new feature in the landscape and/or if it damages or impacts on several Special Qualities simultaneously. However the JAC is not a statutory consultee. On average the AONB Manager makes comments on about 1% of applications, usually objecting or raising concern about likely significant detrimental impacts on the AONB. The JAC's comments are sought on large scale developments when they coincide with the JAC's meeting cycle, or if deadlines are tight then key members may be consulted.

9.1.6 Many of the planning applications are approved by the local planning authority on the grounds that the development has negligible impact on the AONB. These decisions would take into account current policy and any material considerations, which may include setting a precedent and any cumulative impacts. The range of aspects for which the AONB is important is much more than visual. Natural beauty includes wildlife, geology, heritage, landscape character, scenic beauty, environmental quality and opportunities for enjoyment, and in assessing a planning application the collective impact of these factors needs to be taken into account.

9.1.7 However it is a commonly expressed concern that it is often the incremental effect of developments collectively that encroaches on and erodes the landscape features and Special Qualities of the AONB. In some areas the integrity of the AONB is challenged by incremental and cumulative development, where one poor development is used to justify the next. The Landscape Character Assessments for each county go some way towards addressing these issues along with Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), such as Herefordshire Council's on Polytunnels. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA) are an essential tool in the planning process for identifying impacts on landscape character and visual impacts from major developments. The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) includes a chapter on cumulative effects assessment. GLVIA3 should be used for Environmental Statements and may also be useful in relation to smaller scale developments. Both NPPF and PPW emphasise that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the AONB. Therefore developments that do not provide any enhancement to the AONB should be resisted.

9.1.8 The impacts on the landscape of 'Permitted Development Rights', which include many agricultural buildings and renewable energy installations, is another cause of some public concern. Planning infringements and retrospective applications can also have a detrimental impact locally. Light and noise pollution, and actions

such as agricultural improvement of species-rich grassland, removal of hedges or stone walls, hard surfacing of previously unsealed lanes, changes to drainage etc. are also frequently identified as eroding the character of the area. The level and effectiveness of development management and planning enforcement by the local planning authority is a key factor in controlling this. More effective monitoring of the overall efficacy of the planning system in protecting the AONB designation is required.

9.1.9 There are areas outside of the control of the planning system which can also have an erosive effect or a visual impact on the AONB eg the extensive use of plastic or synthetic mulch. Infrastructure associated with public utilities services and highways are often criticised by people for their standardised approach and lack of attention to local distinctiveness. The duty on all public bodies to have regard for the purposes of AONB designation, in Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, can be used to improve the AONB. An example of this is the regulator Ofgem reimbursing the electricity distribution companies for burying underground some of their overhead electricity cables in AONBs.

AONB Aim: Ensure all development within the AONB and its setting conserves and enhances the AONB

Development Strategic Objectives

WV-D1	Ensure a consistent and coherent framework of planning policies relating to the AONB is fully reflected in the statutory land use planning documents and their effectiveness monitored <i>[see also WV-D4 and WV-P4]</i>
WV-D2	Encourage and support high standards of design, materials, energy efficiency, drainage and landscaping in all developments, including Permitted Development, to ensure greater sustainability and that they complement, conserve and enhance the local landscape character and distinctiveness including scale and setting and minimise the impact on the natural environment <i>[see also WV-L3, WV-D4, WV-U1, WV-U3, WV-T2, WV-S4 and WV-P5]</i>
WV-D3	Resist inappropriate development which will create a persistent and dominant feature out of keeping with the landscape of the AONB and/or if it damages Special Qualities in the AONB, including through high levels of noise and/or light pollution or any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site or other sites designated as environmentally important <i>[see also WV-L3, WV-F3, WV-U1, WV-U3, WV-T2 and WV-S4]</i>
WV-D4	Encourage the use of Section 106 or Section 38 Agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy to provide opportunities for developments to contribute to enhancing or conserving the natural beauty of the AONB <i>[see also WV-D1, WV-D2 and WV-P4]</i>
WV-D5	Encourage and support public involvement in the future planning of

	settlements and the countryside throughout the AONB for example through Neighbourhood Development Plans* <i>[see also WV-C4, WV-P6 and WV-P7]</i>
	* subject to Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) being carried out at appropriate plan or project level as set in the HRA document.

9.2 MINERALS

9.2.1 The geology of the Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire parts of the AONB include considerable quantities of carboniferous limestone. Herefordshire contains more Devonian sandstone and Silurian limestone. These resources have been quarried for centuries to provide building stone, lime for local blast furnaces, agricultural lime and aggregate. As well as stone there is a considerable heritage in the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean of mineral extraction, including iron ore, quartz conglomerate for millstones, and coal.

9.2.2 Mineral extraction is now concentrated on limestone aggregate extraction from one large scale quarry in the AONB, at Stowfield Quarry, just west of Coleford, while Clearwell Quarry is adjacent to the AONB boundary. Minerals can only be worked where they occur. However, the environmental impacts of quarries, not only in but adjacent to the AONB, can be considerable. These can be through the long term effect on the landscape and hydrology and/or through the daily operations which can be noisy and dusty and generate considerable lorry traffic. Conversely, quarries provide employment and can be restored to give valuable exposures of the geology, create special habitats for wildlife, as is happening at Livox Quarry south of Tintern, and potentially new recreational facilities.

9.2.3 There are several large disused quarries that are re-vegetating and naturalising over time, and a myriad of small redundant quarries many of which are completely overgrown. All quarries, working and disused, are of value to geoconservation and several are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or Local Geological Sites (LGS) - formerly known as Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS). Building stone from local quarries is also important for local architectural and heritage reasons. Historic England and Cadw are keen to see local quarries temporarily reopened for close stone matches for specific building conservation or renovation permissions.

9.2.4 Government guidance on mineral applications in AONBs is given in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in England and in Wales in Planning Policy Wales, Mineral planning guidance and Minerals Technical Advice Note (MTAN) 1, all of which emphasise that minerals development should avoid AONBs (NPPF 205a & PPW 5.14.35). The Minerals Planning Authorities (MPAs) covering the AONB are Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council. Each MPA is responsible for planning for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates in accordance with the NPPF and PPW. All issues such as the impacts of

quarrying on environmental constraints will be balanced through the statutory plan process.

AONB Aim: Ensure all minerals development in the AONB and its setting is compatible with the aims of AONB designation

Minerals Strategic Objectives

WV-M1	Encourage a consistent and coherent framework of mineral planning policies that recognise the AONB and SACs as primary constraints to new quarries and extensions to existing quarries* <i>[see also WV-P4]</i>
WV-M2	Encourage quarries to be operated and restored to a standard that is appropriate to the landscape character, geodiversity and biodiversity of the AONB <i>[see also WV-L3, WV-G3, WV-P4 and WV-P5]</i>
WV-M3	Support the working of building stone where there is a clear need for local conservation and heritage purposes where the scale and nature of extraction is not seriously damaging to the Special Qualities, landscape character or natural beauty of the AONB <i>[see also WV-G3, WV-E1 and WV-P5]</i>
	* subject to Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) being carried out at appropriate plan or project level as set in the HRA document.

9.3 UTILITIES, PUBLIC SERVICES AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

9.3.1 The topography of the Wye Valley provides some challenges for the delivery of modern services and utilities. Yet the landscape also offers opportunities and alternatives along with lessons that can be learned from previous generations. The early industries in the Wye Valley were based entirely on the natural resources available and were powered by water and wood. The potential remains to make good use of small-scale hydroelectric schemes on the tributaries of the Wye and of wood fuel. The target for the UK of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 will necessitate a significant increase in energy generation from renewable sources. Opportunities exist for small domestic wind turbines and for solar power, both for water heating and small-scale photovoltaic electricity generation. Agriculture and horticulture also have the ability to provide renewable energy crops. However landscape impacts occur from large scale changes to crops or ‘solar farms’.

9.3.2 Most public utility services, notably gas, water, electricity and telephone lines tend to follow the road network. Over-ground wires can cross the valleys and the river where they are very conspicuous. The scattered settlement and heavily wooded nature of some parts of the AONB also mean that over-ground connections, particularly telephones and electricity, are disrupted by storms and flooding. The

under-grounding of cables is being pursued by the electricity distribution network companies under the Ofgem Section 85 scheme. This can provide both landscape and service supply enhancements.

9.3.3 The rate of consumption of resources is a fundamental aspect of sustainable development. The conservation of energy and water are crucial factors that affect the AONB. Excessive water use and abstraction can have a significant impact on the river, its biodiversity and the surrounding landscape. On-farm water storage is becoming necessary to facilitate irrigation. The waste of resources has both short term and long term effects. For example excessive lighting causes light pollution but also the resultant CO₂ emissions from the electricity generation contributes to climate change. The development of renewable energy does not negate the need for efficient use of resources. Similarly national planning policy on waste is to divert waste from landfill and to ‘reduce & reuse & recycle’. This provides opportunities to promote more sustainable alternatives to exporting all waste from the AONB, such as community composting schemes or small-scale energy-from-waste schemes like anaerobic digestion plants.

9.3.4 Mobile phones and Broadband have transformed modern life, but the topography and rurality of the AONB means that coverage is not consistent. In the aspiration to reach comprehensive high speed Broadband and mobile phone coverage, the balance has to be reached so that the valley sides don’t end up bristling with masts to achieve this. Mast sharing is an option but may not always provide the best environmental result in every case, as they tend to need to be taller with each sharing. Masts can use optimum designs or involve innovative solutions, such as incorporation in church towers or farm buildings, which when accompanied by adequate landscaping where appropriate, minimises the landscape impacts in the AONB.

AONB Aim: Ensure the most sustainable, effective and efficient use and supply of services and energy within the AONB, compatible with the aims of AONB designation

Utilities, Public Services and Energy Strategic Objectives

WV-U1	Support and promote the development of renewable forms of energy generation that do not impact negatively on the landscape features and Special Qualities of the AONB <i>[see also WV-D2, WV-D3 and WV-P5]</i>
WV-U2	Encourage further under-grounding of existing and proposed power and telephone lines, where these do not conflict with any SAC, and resist new overhead lines where skylines or important views are affected <i>[see also WV-D3 and WV-P4]</i>
WV-U3	Encourage the highest standards of equipment design and siting for high-speed broadband and mobile phone installations and resist new structures that either do not share masts and / or do not utilise appropriate designs at suitable locations* <i>[see also WV-D2 and WV-P5]</i>

WV-U4	Encourage the use and supply of resources, including water abstraction and investment in infrastructure, that is consistent with the Special Qualities, SACs, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB, and monitor any adverse impacts <i>[see also WV-L3 and WV-P5]</i>
	* subject to Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) being carried out at appropriate plan or project level as set in the HRA document.

9.4 TRANSPORTATION

9.4.1 The Wye Valley, like almost every other area in the UK, has a dominance of private car use and lorry freight, with nearly 20,000 cars and vans based in the AONB and over 70% of journeys to work taken in a vehicle. This use predominantly concentrates on the two trunk roads in the AONB, the A40 dual carriageway and the A49. The other key routes in the AONB are the A466, A4136, B4224, B4228, B4229 B4234 and B4293, which link the main towns and villages in and around the AONB. There are then a network of smaller rural roads and country lanes that link the scattered settlements and rural businesses. Barely a couple of miles outside the AONB are both the M48 and M50, allowing for a two way flow of produce, visitors and commuters to and from the conurbations of Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff, and beyond. Surveys indicate that over 90% of visitors to the AONB come by car. However, while some areas in the AONB reach car and parking capacity at peak periods, other places remain under-used and relatively peaceful with moderately sized car parks retaining spaces virtually all year.

9.4.2 Accessibility to the road network can be an issue, for example due to extreme weather causing landslips, particularly in the lower Wye Valley, flooding or snowdrifts or the closure of the old Severn Bridge. These can have significant knock-on effects for both the landscape and the local economy. The infrastructure associated with maintaining road traffic, and accommodating any increase, is controlled primarily by the need to meet requirements of road safety for drivers travelling within the legal speed limits. Sensitively improved transport infrastructure in the AONB can enhance economic development in the area. However recurring signage, lighting and standardised material can have a significant detrimental impact on natural beauty and local distinctiveness. Road noise is also a factor, affecting tranquillity in some places and quality of life in others.

9.4.3 There are alternatives to the car. Appropriately designed and located development, which includes live-work units and encourages or allows home working, with good links to public transport or cycle routes, can reduce car dependence. Indeed 13% of journeys to work by residents in the AONB are on foot or by bike and another 12% work from home. However, most day-to-day travel options face problems of one sort or another, particularly in such a rural landscape. The local authorities are cutting back funding of the rural bus services. But the willingness of people to use public transport is also strongly influenced by public perceptions, as

much as reality, about variable standards in terms of connections, frequency, reliability, access and comfort. The AONB Unit, along with the local authorities, continue to promote the use of the local bus services and the network throughout the AONB. However, for many rural businesses and attractions there is no regular local bus service. Demand response buses are popular where they operate, but have proved difficult to sustain when relying on volunteer drivers.

9.4.4 Rail links exist at either end of the AONB at Hereford and Chepstow. These can provide useful staging posts for the non-car traveller. Further afield there are also stations at Abergavenny, Gloucester, Ledbury, Lydney and Newport. The railway line that once did go through the valley was closed to passengers before the Beeching cuts. There are also coach stations in Chepstow, Monmouth, Ross and Hereford which likewise provide access to the area. However frequency of both rail and coach services can be limited to some of these destinations.

9.4.5 The other main alternative is cycling, which is a sustainable and practical means of making journeys, and one of the best forms of exercise. The lower Wye Valley is popular with road cyclists, including being on the Land's End to John O'Groats route. However the A466 is at times and in certain places busy, fast and narrow so can be regarded as quite a dangerous road for less experienced cyclists and drivers. Sustrans Regional Route 423 links Ross-on-Wye with Monmouth, including the off-road sections that are very family friendly of the Town & Country Trail in Ross-on-Wye and the Peregrine Path between Monmouth and Symonds Yat East. A further off-road section is proposed linking Ross with Walford and Kerne Bridge. There were also approved sections of off-road cycleways in the Lower Wye Valley, linking Monmouth to Redbrook and Tintern to Tidenham, but they have not been implemented due to planning and/or funding complications. Other off-road recreational routes have been developed predominantly along bridleways, forest rides and green lanes. More extensive recreational cycle routes exist in the Forest of Dean based on the historic tramroads and railways.

9.4.6 Walking is a popular recreational activity in the AONB but also remains a valid part of most journeys and can be the main form of transport for local journeys. When in good condition, the roadside pavements and the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network can make a considerable contribution to improving the prospects for walkers, and their health. Likewise horse riding and carriage driving makes good use of the quieter roads and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network. Historically the river itself was an important transport corridor and the right of navigation on the Wye can still play a role in journeys up and down and across the valley.

9.4.7 The local authorities in England are committed to progressing their respective Local Transport Plans through their Local Enterprise Partnerships and other key national &/or regional stakeholders. In Wales the National Transport Plan is supported by the local authorities and delivery partnerships such as the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority. These are based on the modal hierarchy, which balances the priorities of active travel, walking and cycling, with public transport and private motor vehicles. The challenge, as ever in the AONB, is to secure a consistent and comprehensive approach to achieving sustainable and integrated transport in the AONB. The result should be attractive transport choices for local people and visitors

in the Wye Valley that nurtures their health and well-being while providing improved access, social equity and economic opportunities.

9.4.8 Transport corridors should be managed as linear features to act as corridors for wildlife as well as vehicles. Vegetated verges can support a diverse range of rough grassland and scrub species if managed in the right way. Depending on the flowers present, grassland verges may be best cut either once in late summer or twice; in both spring and early autumn. This ensures that tall plants do not cause unnecessary visual obstruction for vehicles, whilst allowing rare and native species to thrive and set seed. It is also desirable to remove the cuttings as this reduces soil nutrients, allowing rare wildflowers that thrive on poor soil to emerge. There are various schemes in each County for registering important roadside verges for biodiversity, usually through the local authority or wildlife trust.

9.4.9 In 2011 the AONB Unit consulted on Highway Design Guidelines for the AONB, in which four Guiding Principles were outlined:

1. Unless there is an overriding safety issue, do as little as possible.
2. Highway improvements should take account of the traffic flow and character of the road to ensure the proposals are not over specified.
3. Unless there is an overriding reason, copy the style and materials that have been used over time
4. Consult with AONB Unit

The informality and apparent 'naturalness' of many of the roads in the AONB is fundamental to the appeal of the area. Any sort of engineering feature, even white lines, detracts from their 'fit' into the landscape.

AONB Aim: Ensure transport in the AONB is sustainable and integrated and compatible with the purposes of AONB designation.

Transportation Strategic Objectives

WV-T1	Encourage and promote greater use of more sustainable and smarter forms of transport in the AONB and for accessing the area, including from railway station, so as to afford modal shift from the car for visitors and residents, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3 <i>[see also WV-R1, WV-P3 and WV-P5]</i>
WV-T2	Ensure the design of transport infrastructure and traffic management and control schemes are consistent with the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB, and monitor their effectiveness <i>[see also WV-D2, WV-D3 and WV-P5]</i>
WV-T3	Conserve the character of rural roads in the AONB by conserving existing traditional features, reducing excessive signage and lighting and sympathetically managing verges for biodiversity, unless there are proven public safety grounds <i>[see also WV-B3, WV-D2, WV-D3, WV-P3 and WV-P5]</i>

THEME 3

10 VITAL COMMUNITIES - living & working in the AONB

This section outlines aims and strategic objectives for community development and the economy and rural regeneration in the Wye Valley AONB. Agriculture and forestry, while being a traditional part of the local economy have been covered under the Unique Landscape section due to the dominant influence these industries have on the landscape and land use of the AONB. Tourism also makes a significant contribution to the vitality of the local economy, but is dealt with under the next section: Enjoying the AONB.

10.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

10.1.1 There are 33 Parish and Town Councils on the English side and 7 Town or Community Councils on the Welsh side wholly or partially in the Wye Valley AONB. They have a duty, under section 85 of the CRoW Act, to have regard to the purposes of the AONB. There is frequently more than one village within each of the Town, Parish or Community Councils. Each village or settlement has its own identity, residents and facilities. Many also have their own traditions and celebrations. These give distinctiveness and unique cultural aspects to the local communities and reinforce local community life. However it must be recognised that individuals usually belong to a multitude of ‘communities’, for example by being members of the local church, on the Parish Council, users of the local pub and/or shop, local business people, parents at the local school, part of a neighbourhood watch scheme, sports club etc.

10.1.2 The statistics for the socio-economic makeup of the AONB, based on the 2011 census, are outlined in the State of the AONB Report. The age profile of the local population in the AONB is slightly older than the national average. From this it can be inferred that the Wye Valley AONB is a popular place for retired people, which is likely to put pressure on local housing and the availability of affordable housing for younger people. Thus the effects of rural disadvantage, social exclusion and lack of affordable housing may affect a significant fraction of households in and around the AONB.

10.1.3 As a predominantly rural area people in the Wye Valley AONB encounter many of the problems familiar throughout rural Britain. The viability of village shops, pubs and local public transport depends on continued support from all sectors of the local community. Additionally however, local wages are lower than the national average yet the area is popular for retirement, second homes and for commuting to Birmingham, Bristol or Cardiff. Nearly 60% of the working population of the AONB are in professional or skilled occupations. Therefore the cost of housing can prevent local people from being able to continue to live in the area. This has been compounded with the scarcity of affordable housing, the increase in second homes and the use of houses as holiday lets. Meanwhile, access to jobs may also be more difficult for some people where public transport provision is not comprehensive.

10.1.4 A Charter for Residents and Visitors is included in this Management Plan with actions that all residents, visitors and businesses can take to help care for this internationally important protected designated landscape. There are a range of opportunities that can be progressed for a more sustainable quality of life in the AONB. For example some village halls host post offices and local cinema clubs as well as their usual wide range of activities. Many local shops and food outlets sell more local produce which helps re-connect people in local communities with the surrounding farmland. Farmers Markets and organic vegetable box schemes have already enhanced and widened this linkage and appreciation for some. The community links with woodland produce need to be developed further. There are several renewable energy options appropriate to the Wye Valley with various incentives and grants available for schemes in housing, shops, farms, schools and other groups within communities. The need for sustainable integrated transport is also recognised.

10.1.5 Communities need actively to identify what they value in their locality and participate in setting priorities for its sustainable management. This may include supporting local / cultural distinctiveness and the Welsh language or local accents and dialects. Commitment by local people to the protection of, and pride in, the Wye Valley is strong. Parish, Community and Neighbourhood Development Plans, as well as the AONB Management Plan, provide fresh opportunities to express these priorities and commitments. Involvement of young people, schools, and the elderly and less vociferous members of local communities needs to be included in these processes as well as the participation of the Town, Parish and Community Councils and other local representative and resident organisations. Where appropriate a special effort should be made to include part-time residents, letting them know that their views are welcomed and respected, and the skills and experience they might bring to the community is valued. The outcomes then need to be developed into a coherent plan with close liaison with the local authorities and other statutory and voluntary organisations.

AONB Aim: To engender thriving local communities which have a high quality of life with a healthy economy that supports the natural beauty of the area.

Community Development Strategic Objectives

WV-C1	Encourage community led initiatives that maintain the diversity, sustainability and quality of rural community life and/or that stimulate investment, local employment and retain or improve facilities and services for local people, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3 <i>[see also WV-P3, WV-P5 and WV-P7]</i>
WV-C2	Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape <i>[see also WV-A1 and WV-P7]</i>

WV-C3	Support the development of affordable housing appropriate to local need in the AONB, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3* <i>[see also WV-L3 and WV-P5]</i>
WV-C4	Encourage and promote local community plans and strategies to contain coherent objectives relating to the protection, conservation, enhancement and management of the AONB and monitor their effectiveness <i>[see also WV-D5 and WV-P6]</i>
	* subject to Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) being carried out at appropriate plan or project level as set in the HRA document.

10.2 ECONOMY AND RURAL REGENERATION

10.2.1 The economy plays an important role in the maintenance of an attractive countryside. The AONB landscape and the designation itself are an economic asset which can yield returns many times higher than the cost of its conservation and enhancement. The vitality of the AONB is dependent on the contribution of a vast range of businesses beyond the obvious land uses of agriculture, horticulture, forestry and mineral extraction. There is also employment in leisure and tourism, retail, energy production, light industrial, offices and storage plus other providers such as nursing homes, schools, art galleries etc. In total over 14,270 of the residents of the AONB are in employment. There are also locations within and adjacent to the AONB where manufacturing development, for example of clean, high technology industry, are situated. The natural services and materials provided by the environment are essential for many of these businesses. The best businesses understand the value to be gained from managing resource and supply chain impacts on the natural capital. They also know the risks to their brand image, security of resources and their bottom line if they do not. The strength of the rural economy is also a critical factor in combating rural disadvantage and social exclusion, as well as making a major contribution to the national economies of England and Wales. For example the role of the horse in the local economy covers the full spectrum from local grazing, vets, saddlers and livery through local equestrian events to the activities of Chepstow racecourse and the training of national winners.

10.2.2 Given the proximity of towns and cities to the AONB the economy cannot be expected to be at all self-contained. This also applies to people within the AONB spending their money outside it. The city of Hereford and market towns of Chepstow, Coleford and Monmouth surrounding the AONB, and Ross-on-Wye largely in the AONB are the focus for much of the area's economic and social life. These towns still provide significant local services, although there are considerable competitive pressures from the facilities of Bristol, Birmingham, Cardiff, Cheltenham and Gloucester.

10.2.3 Farming, forestry and quarrying have already been covered in earlier sections and tourism is covered in the next section. However the diversity of businesses makes

for a mixed and viable rural economy and all the businesses and enterprises operating in or relying on the resources of the AONB are important for the environmental, social and economic well-being of the area. Similarly people need to recognise that a high quality environment is a key factor in both attracting new rural entrepreneurs and relocating businesses and retaining and attracting inward investment and skilled personnel. The accommodation of sensitive growth in the AONB shows that the designation can be an enabler of high quality development and enterprise.

AONB Aim: To foster viable rural enterprises that derive benefit from and enhance the natural resources and local distinctiveness of the AONB

Economy and Rural Regeneration Strategic Objectives

WV-E1	Support initiatives that improve the market for products which conserve or enhance the AONB’s distinctive landscape, Special Qualities and strengthens the sense of place of the AONB <i>[see also WV-F7, WV-W3, WV-M3 and WV-P7]</i>
WV-E2	Raise awareness of good practice and encourage local businesses in the AONB to take opportunities to become more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, particularly in ways that sustain the natural beauty of the area <i>[see also WV-F1, WV-P5 and WV-P7]</i>
WV-E3	Support the delivery of local co-operative schemes, advice and training programmes that support the development and expansion of rural micro-businesses, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3 <i>[see also WV-F4, WV-W3 and WV-P5]</i>
WV-E4	Raise awareness of the value of the AONB and the importance of retaining a high quality environment in attracting and retaining entrepreneurs, relocating businesses, inward investment and skilled personnel <i>[see also WV-A1 and WV-P7]</i>

THEME 4

11. ENJOYING THE AONB - sustainable tourism, recreation and appreciation

This section outlines strategic objectives for sustainable tourism; recreation and access; and understanding and appreciation in the Wye Valley AONB.

11.1 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

11.1.1 The Wye Valley is one of the few inland rural areas with its own tourism heritage, dating back over 250 years. Indeed the Wye Valley is arguably the birthplace of British tourism, with the introduction of the Wye Tour in the 1700s made popular in 1770 by Reverend William Gilpin. Some of Britain's finest artists and writers of the time, including Turner, Coleridge and Wordsworth, came to make the Wye Tour and the associated Picturesque Movement, highly fashionable. The Tour highlighted the dramatic natural scenery, historic monuments and the intense industrial activity of the time. People went on the Wye Tour in the 18th and early 19th centuries to experience and appreciate the sublime and picturesque qualities of the Wye Valley. To a large extent the desires are the same today for visitors to the AONB. The Wye Valley continues to offer a great range of opportunities for enjoyment and appreciation of the tranquil and spectacular scenery and the features of the historic environment. These include activities as diverse as day-tripper sightseeing, canoeing, climbing, fishing, walking and cycling. Many are inspired to share their experiences through social media and photography. Thus it remains nationally renowned as a destination for tourism and recreation in an outstandingly beautiful landscape.

11.1.2 Visitor numbers in the Wye Valley AONB are calculated at 1.58million tourists per annum (STEAM 2013), enjoying 2.3 million tourist days per annum, with over 1.3million being day visitors. They arrive in over 300,000 vehicles but also spend nearly £134million in the local economy. The value of tourism to the local economy is therefore significant; both in terms of direct spend (over £100million) and indirect spend (over £33million) and supporting over 2,250 full-time equivalent jobs. However 44% of spend came from visitors staying in non-serviced accommodation (self-catering, caravan, camping etc.) compared to 29% of spend coming from day visitors.

11.1.3 The importance and vulnerability of tourism was highlighted during the foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001 when a wide range of businesses were seriously affected and to a lesser extent during recent wet summers. . Visit Britain data suggests that UK tourism spending has been growing steadily since the recession in 2008-9, but dipped in 2018. Tourists now expect value and an authentic experience (as well as wi-fi...or a digital detox). Trends such as late booking and discounting is reducing margins for many businesses. Rising costs generally are also exacerbating competitiveness.

11.1.4 It has to be recognised that the majority of tourism businesses are very small scale. The accommodation sector is made up of a large number of generally small enterprises, with caravan and camping/glamping sites contributing very significantly to the bed spaces for the area (but consequently vulnerable to poor weather). Therefore the 'industry' is composed of a multitude of potentially competing small enterprises and somewhat weather dependant.

11.1.5 Visitor surveys consistently identify that the landscape of the Wye Valley is the most important factor in the decision to visit the area. However the rich cultural and industrial heritage and the valley's long history as a visitor destination and place of creative inspiration are also notable factors. Many features of the Wye Tour survive as important elements of the visitor experience in the Wye Valley today, not least journeying down the Wye by boat/canoe. Especially iconic are Goodrich Castle,

Tintern Abbey, Chepstow Castle and the range of popular viewpoints. There are a small number of other visitor attractions and two companies offer short river cruises on the Wye from Symonds Yat East and West.

11.1.6 Many of the tourism businesses in the Wye Valley work together through local associations such as Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association Visit Monmouthshire and Visit Herefordshire. The Wye Valley AONB spans the two countries and their respective agencies are Visit England and Visit Wales. The three main county based tourism campaigns have all used the Wye Valley brand name, namely; ‘Visit Herefordshire and the Wye Valley’ in Herefordshire, ‘Visit Wye Valley and Vale of Usk’ in Monmouthshire, and ‘Wye Valley and Forest of Dean’ in the Forest of Dean. The AONB Partnership has been a key player in maintaining sufficient cross border co-ordination and collaboration to drive the promotion of the Wye Valley as a destination in its own right, particularly for sustainable tourism. Key elements that make tourism more sustainable in the Wye Valley AONB include visitors staying in the locality rather than using it as a touring base, using local products and spending time getting to know local heritage, communities, ways of life, etc.

AONB Aim: Sustainable tourism based upon the natural beauty and local distinctiveness of the AONB continues to enrich the lives of visitors, operators and employees while contributing positively to the conservation and enhancement of the area

Sustainable Tourism Strategic Objectives

WV-S1	Encourage and promote the AONB as a sustainable tourism destination with forms of tourism activity and development that are based on the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the Special Qualities and features of the AONB <i>[see also WV-P5 and WV-P7]</i>
WV-S2	Promote the improvement of the visitor experience, particularly at the most heavily visited sites, and facilitate the opportunity for visitors to explore and discover other appropriate but less used locations throughout the AONB, thus spreading demand and balancing pressures across sites where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the AONB and the SACs <i>[see also WV-A1, WV-P3 and WV-P7]</i>
WV-S3	Ensure adequate provision of co-ordinated tourism data and visitor engagement to inform strategic and practical decision making on conserving or enhancing the Special Qualities of the AONB <i>[see also WV-P8]</i>
WV-S4	Encourage the mitigation and/or reduction of the adverse impacts of existing tourism activity and attractions, particularly where they are concentrated around certain locations or sites, and/or those that fall outside the aim of conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the

Special Qualities and features of the AONB. Highest priority will be given to addressing the issues in the Symonds Yat and Tintern areas [see also WV-L3, WV-D2 and WV-D3]
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11.2 RECREATION & ACCESS

11.2.1 Recreation is a major activity in the AONB, both socially and economically. Most fly-fishermen in the country will have fished on the Wye, most canoeists learned to run rapids at Symonds Yat. Many rock climbers will have climbed in the Wye Gorge. Many coach tours have visited Tintern Abbey. Many walkers will have trodden on the Wye Valley Walk and the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. Many cyclists pedalling from Land's End to John O'Groats will have travelled up the A466. Many artists and photographers will have captured the mist floating in the Valley. All these people will have enjoyed the fresh air, the picturesque and sublime natural beauty and the historic features of the AONB, either consciously or subconsciously. This is a primary element of the visitor experience. Significant health benefits and social opportunities are also gained through these recreational activities. There is a need to ensure that all people in society have access to the benefits offered by the area along with sufficient resources to manage and maintain that access. Thus the Wye Valley AONB should continue to be a place where residents and visitors alike enjoy activities that result in the enjoyment of the countryside and the Special Qualities of the AONB.

11.2.2 The health and economic benefits of access and recreation are important. But there are conflicts, real and perceived, between some types of activities, for example between canoeists and fishermen on the river, and variously between walkers, horse riders, various types of cyclists and trail motorbike riders and 4x4 drivers on Public Rights of Way. Specific issues emerge with the popularity of some paths and trails and sections of riverbank where users can cause severe erosion from over use. Overuse is also a problem to the nature conservation value of the area, particularly where European designated species and habitats are. Conflict sometimes emerges when there is confusion over signage and rights of access. Where public access is provided, private landowners often incur costs in maintaining the public service of that provision. When dialogue can be entered into between the various interests and users, invariably a consensus can be reached and positive solutions progressed. It is often the case that recreational users have a high appreciation of the Wye Valley (although not necessarily that it is an AONB) but not such a high appreciation of the needs of landowners and other users, nor of the impacts of their activity on other users and the area. In cases of severe conflict an appropriate authority may consider regulation of an activity through the use of banning, licensing or zoning. However, lawful users should not be penalised because of clearly illegal activities by others. For example providing for small scale low impact wild camping should not be confused with unauthorised, noisy or messy rogue camping. The provision of facilities for minority groups needs careful consideration by appropriate authorities and providers. But this should be on a wider basis than just within the AONB. Similarly public access needs to adapt and modernise to meet the needs of the 21st century user.

11.2.3 There are a range of statutory and voluntary organisations and private individuals with interests in the recreational activities occurring in the AONB. Various bodies and strategies bring these organisations and interests together. On the river the navigation authority for the tidal stretch, demarcated as downstream of Bigsweir Bridge, is the Gloucester Harbour Trustees. Upstream of Bigsweir Bridge the navigation authority is the Environment Agency and the Wye Navigation Advisory Committee which, through the Wye Waterways Plan, takes a leading role in resolving conflicts and defining what activities are acceptable on the river. Some recreational providers have formed associations to help advance their common interest, for example The River Wye Canoe Hire Association. On land each county, under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, has a Local Access Forum (LAF), and a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). However these are based on administrative boundaries and do not cover the AONB as a whole.

11.2.4 The purposes of AONB designation emphasise that the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty takes primacy over the needs of and demand for recreation, which itself should be consistent with the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses of the area. However, there is potential to integrate recreational access and public educational facilities through agri-environmental schemes and ROWIP delivery. Woodlands and forests can play an important role in absorbing tourism and recreation pressure. There are also opportunities to make links to health, equality and well-being strategies. These can all help to both enhance opportunities for everyone and deflect unsustainable visitor pressures away from the AONB honeypots or very sensitive habitats. There are huge benefits that we all get through contact with nature. Recreation in the AONB also helps people to reconnect with nature, recreating a relationship with the natural environment and ensuring fairer access to its goods and services. Recreation also helps our well-being through its positive impact on mental and physical health, and it improves education, encourages social activity and reduces crime.

AONB Aim: People continue to enjoy active recreation in the Wye Valley that does not detract from the natural beauty of the area

Recreation & Access Strategic Objectives & Targets

WV-R1	Encourage and promote recreational pursuits and responsible access compatible with the AONB purposes, particularly linking sustainable transport and town and village facilities. Associated development and new access to land should be subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3 <i>[see also WV-T1, WV-A1 and WV-P3]</i>
WV-R2	Assist the resolving of conflicts, real and perceived, between recreation, conservation and local interests, including other economic activities, and between different recreation interest groups in relation to the purposes of the AONB designation <i>[see also WV-P1 and WV-P5]</i>
WV-R3	Support appropriate levels of sustainable design, repair, signage and

	<p>maintenance on public rights of way, recreational trails and sites, using materials in keeping, in order to conserve and enhance the character and natural beauty of the AONB <i>[see also WV-P4 and WV-P5]</i></p>
WV-R4	<p>Assist in identifying gaps in access and recreational provision, including for under-represented and minority groups, and work with appropriate bodies and stakeholders to support and promote access enhancements and improved access for all, where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the AONB and the SACs <i>[see also WV-P5, WV-P7 and WV-P8]</i></p>

11.3 UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION

11.3.1 Both residents and visitors in the Wye Valley AONB highly value the scenic beauty. Most of the historic environment and the strong cultural and artistic heritage is founded on the outstanding geology and topography that contributes so significantly to the natural beauty of the area. Many of the local business are either directly or indirectly dependent on the landscape. But some people have little idea what or where the AONB is. Some have nearly lost connection with the natural environment. There is much that can be done to reconnect people and nature and the landscape. Amongst those that do know what or where the AONB is there is still considerable misunderstanding as to the roles and responsibilities in the AONB. This applies to some organisations as well as to individuals. Moreover many people are uncertain about how they could positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area. Likewise it is unclear to some people how the AONB positively contributes to people’s lives or businesses. Some may see this purely in terms of a market value. However, while some services of and in the AONB do have a market value, some of which may be calculable through a natural capital approach, others will have a ‘non-use’ value. Non-use value refers to the value that people attach to the environment even if they never have and never will use the environment for recreation or economic gain.

11.3.2 There is a rich legacy of cultural and landscape associations from artists, writers and musicians that can be explored and enjoyed by local people and visitors to gain a strong sense of the landscape and their role in it. The Special Qualities of the AONB continue to inspire artists, crafts people, writers, musicians, performers and other creative practitioners. Their work in turn develops strong connections between people and the landscape, increasing understanding, appreciation and wellbeing. This can help widen the base of people who care about the landscape and become involved in safeguarding its future. Activities such as the Wye Valley River Festival enable land managers and local communities to work with artists on creative solutions to communicating messages about the area’s natural beauty. A vibrant cultural industry can bring strength to the social fabric and local economy of the AONB.

11.3.3 More effective information is required to increase the overall appreciation of the landscape and the designation, and to engage people more in understanding, contributing to and benefiting from the AONB.

AONB Aim: Increase people’s appreciation and understanding of why the area is designated

Appreciation and Understanding Strategic Objectives

WV-A1	<p>Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness</p> <p><i>[See also WV-L5, WV-B6, WV-G4, WV-H3, WV-F5, WV-W5, WV-C2, WV-E4, WV-S2, WV-R1, WV-P5, WV-P6, WV-P7 and WV-P8]</i></p>
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THEME 5

12 ACHIEVING TOGETHER – effective management of the AONB

12.1 PARTNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

12.1.1 The current AONB Partnership of the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and the AONB Unit, supported by the Technical Officers Working Party (TOWP) and various Topic Groups have proved remarkably effective and resilient. This governance structure offers the benefits of local accountability through elected members and access to specialists with both local and national knowledge, supported by dedicated professional staff. Over the decades since designation these structures have seen significant alterations in AONB status nationally and locally, with Local Government Re-organisations; the development of the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB); regionalisation and de-regionalisation; fresh legislation and the impacts of austerity on public sector funding and agencies. The Wye Valley AONB Unit and JAC have at times been a leading agent in the NAAONB and some of the national and regional developments around these changes. Meanwhile the AONB Partnership has co-ordinated a broad range of practical and strategic achievements in the Wye Valley AONB, variously involving the public, private and voluntary sectors. With the administrative complexity of the AONB, the AONB Partnership is recognised as one of the very few organisations locally with a true cross-border remit. Consequently the AONB Unit and its partnerships have a considerable amount of experience and expertise in cross-border working and project development and delivery at both local and landscape scales.

12.1.2 The AONB Unit is an established team, currently with five core members of staff augmented at times with project staff, trainees and placements depending on

resources. The local authorities have commissioned the AONB Partnership to operate as a cross-border co-ordinating body, engaging with local communities and other partners to collaboratively develop and deliver both localised projects and AONB wide initiatives. The AONB Unit staff report to the JAC and are employed through the local authorities and work on behalf of the AONB Partnership to carry out the preparation and review of the Management Plan, to advocate its policies and work in partnership to deliver a range of actions defined in the agreed annual Action Plan. To achieve this the AONB Unit:

- Builds knowledge in order to inform and realise the ambitions of the Management Plan.
- Provides value to partners, providing helpful advocacy, advice and support and leading activity where appropriate.
- Carries out timely, inclusive and authoritative reviews of the AONB Management Plan on behalf of local authorities.
- Leads on the delivery of the AONB Management Plan and generates partnerships and collaboration in support.
- Builds capacity, motivation and professionalism and retains expertise and high quality staff.
- Actively seeks finance and other resources to support the delivery of the Management Plan.

The JAC ensures that the AONB Unit is effective, efficient and authoritative, recognised and valued by partners and policy makers as a professional body delivering significant added value and enabling action on the ground. For example the AONB staff both actively lead project steering groups and contribute to county Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) and other fora. The activity of the AONB Unit has complemented economic regeneration initiatives in the area such as LEADER programmes and drawn in project funding from a wide range of sources.

12.1.3 An independent assessment “The Value of AONB partnerships” by Land Use Consultants (LUC 2013) concluded that:-

AONB partnerships

- are embedded within, and trusted by, local communities.
- excel at using small sums of public money to draw extra money and resources into rural communities
- are flexible, adaptable and respond to change
- are helping facilitate new ways of working in the public sector
- work together and recognise the benefits of acting together as a Family

12.1.4 In 2018 the JAC undertook a detailed review of governance processes and structures against the ‘Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes’ as outlined in Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales (2017). The review identified a number of aspects of ‘what we do well’ and 20 recommendations proposed to address the findings of ‘what we could do better’. These did not recommend any significant or radical changes to the governance arrangements but were mostly small and/or administrative changes to procedures. However more resources and capacity is needed to fully deliver all the recommendations.

12.1.5 The pressures on local and central government budgets mean that the AONB Partnership will need to continue to evolve and adapt. This will entail broadening

partnerships, particularly with the private and voluntary sectors, leveraging in more resources from non-governmental sources and aligning projects and the capacity to deliver them accordingly. In Wales particularly, but not exclusively, proposals will also need to deliver benefits under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (WFG) goals of:

- A healthier nation
- A nation of cohesive communities
- A prosperous nation
- A nation of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible nation
- A resilient nation
- A more equal nation

12.1.6 Full engagement with the AONB Partnership will enable public bodies to demonstrate that they are delivering part of their ‘duty of regard for the AONB’ and are in line with the WFG legislation, as they will be working with the long term perspective; with approaches that take an integrated approach; planning to take action now in order to prevent problems occurring or getting worse in future; involving all parts of the community; and collaborating with other organisations in order to achieve these wider benefits.

AONB Aim: Continue proactive and imaginative achievements in the Wye Valley AONB through successful and productive partnerships

Partnership, Management and Governance Strategic Objectives & Targets

WV-P1	Maintain and develop effective partnerships and administrative arrangements to lead and co-ordinate the management of the AONB and develop the AONB Partnership as an effective forum for initiating and promoting discussion on important issues affecting the AONB <i>[see also WV-R2, WV-P5, WV-P6, WV-P7 and WV-P9]</i>
WV-P2	Sustain and enhance local and national government funding and support for the AONB Unit to add value to delivery of the AONB purposes <i>[see also WV-P3 and WV-P4]</i>
WV-P3	Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan <i>[see also WV-L1, WV-L2, WV-B1, WV-B2, WV-B3, WV-B4, WV-G1, WV-G2, WV-G3, WV-F2, WV-W2, WV-T1, WV-T3, WV-C1, WV-S2, WV-R1 and WV-P2]</i>
WV-P4	Encourage Section 85 organisations, under the CRoW Act, to have co-ordinated policies to progress the purposes of the AONB designation and to make commitments in their annual business plans to specific delivery contributions that enable the AONB work programme <i>[see also WV-L1, WV-L2, WV-B1, WV-B2, WV-B3, WV-B4, WV-H1, WV-</i>

	<i>F2, WV-W1, WV-W2, WV-D1, WV-D4, WV-M1, WV-M2, WV-U2, WV-R3 and WV-P2]</i>
WV-P5	Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas <i>[see also WV-L1, WV-L2, WV-B2, WV-B3, WV-G2, WV-H1, WV-F1, WV-F2, WV-W1, WV-W2, WV-D2, WV-M2, WV-M3, WV-U1, WV-U3, WV-U4, WV-T1, WV-T2, WV-T3, WV-C1, WV-C3, WV-E2, WV-E3, WV-S1, WV-R2, WV-R3, WV-R4, WV-A1 and WV-P9]</i>
WV-P6	Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB <i>[see also WV-D5, WV-C4, WV-P1 and WV-P9]</i>
WV-P7	Encourage partners to be champions and ambassadors for the AONB in their contact with other interests, and ensure those interests recognise and consider the Management Plan and AONB work programme when relating to the area <i>[see also WV-L2, WV-B1, WV-G1, WV-H1, WV-F2, WV-W1, WV-D5, WV-C1, WV-C2, WV-E1, WV-E2, WV-S1, WV-S2, WV-R4, WV-A1 and WV-P1]</i>
WV-P8	Develop and co-ordinate the acquisition and analysis of data across the AONB, to inform priority setting, planning, implementation and monitoring of change affecting the natural beauty, including developing a better understanding of the likely impacts of climate change on the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB and supporting mitigation and adaption actions <i>[see also WV-L4, WV-B5, WV-G1, WV-H2, WV-W4, WV-S3 and WV-R4]</i>
WV-P9	Share knowledge and skills in protected area management locally, regionally, nationally and globally as appropriate <i>[see also WV-P5 and WV-P6]</i>

12.2 A CHARTER FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

The following of actions are ways that all residents, visitors and businesses can help to deliver this Management Plan and help to care for this internationally important protected landscape.

12.2.1 **Take pride in the Wye Valley – promote its Special Qualities, Features and places to family, friends and visitors**
Promoting what you find special about the Wye Valley is the best way of encouraging commitment and action by others to the area.

12.2.2 **Don't delay in addressing Climate Change**

Make climate change a factor in the decisions you make around what you eat, how you travel, and what you buy and use. Talk about climate change with your friends, family and colleagues. And demand that politicians and companies make it easier and cheaper to do the right thing for the climate. Transformation is Essential.

12.2.3 Buy local products and services from farmers and woodland managers who actively manage their land to benefit the environment

The landscape and wildlife value of the area's woodlands, grasslands, heathlands, hedges and field margins are dependent on traditional management. Money invested in products and services that help support this management is money invested in conserving and enhancing the AONB and its local economy.

12.2.4 Get out there and enjoy it

Being out and about in such outstandingly natural and beautiful landscapes is good for your health and general well-being, so take full advantage of this asset on your doorstep.

12.2.5 Respect other users – follow the Countryside Code

Through responsible behaviour we can all use and enjoy the countryside without damaging the enjoyment or livelihoods of others.

12.2.6 Slow down for people, horses and wildlife

Traffic spoils enjoyment of the Wye Valley for a great many of its residents. Speeding cars kill people, horses and wildlife, and ancient greenways and their rare plants are damaged by inconsiderate driving and parking.

12.2.7 Manage your land for wildlife

Fields, woodland, paddocks and gardens support valuable and threatened wildlife. A few simple measures and sensitive management can enhance their wildlife value for everyone's benefit.

12.2.8 Maintain the rural nature of your property

The use of traditional materials and skills, such as drystone walling, helps retain the AONB's valued rural feel, which is in danger of being gradually eroded through the use of inappropriate and urban materials and features.

12.2.9 Help prevent the spread of invasive and harmful plant and animal species

Introduced plant, animal and fish species spread rapidly in the Wye Valley countryside, competing with our native wildlife and leading to its loss.

12.2.10 Avoid using the car where possible and consider using renewable energy in your home

Emissions from non-renewable fossil fuels contribute to climate change and lead to degradation of valuable habitats such as bogs and heathland and the possible gradual loss of wildlife such as primroses and bluebells.

- 12.2.11 **Reduce, reuse and recycle, and dispose of all litter responsibly**
Litter spoils enjoyment of the countryside for the majority of residents and can pose a lethal risk for wildlife. Less rubbish also means less pressure for landfill sites and fewer collection vehicles in the AONB.
- 12.2.12 **Use less water**
Demands for water lead to high levels of water extraction from the Wye. This damages the wildlife in the AONB's rivers, streams and wetlands, as well as recreational enjoyment of the Wye.
- 12.2.13 **Get involved – support local conservation organisations**
With your financial and practical support, local conservation organisations can take action to care for the area such as monitoring threatened wildlife, undertaking practical conservation tasks and lobbying government.
- 12.2.14 **Have a say**
Your views can influence care of the area – use consultation processes operating at Community/Parish/Town, district, county and AONB level to steer policy and action that affects the area. Meanwhile, help report damage to geological, ecological, archaeological and historic features.

13. MONITORING & METRICS

13.1 A framework of indicators and metrics has been developed by the National Association for AONBs to demonstrate the range and value of work delivered by AONB teams. These metrics are taken as a useful indicator of progress of the AONB Unit in delivering the AONB Management Plan alongside the statistics gathered for the State of the AONB Report. Resources currently do not allow for collation of data from all possible projects by all partners and stakeholders engaged in activity across the Wye Valley AONB.

13.2 The six indicators describe the following areas of work:

- 1) Caring for natural beauty,
- 2) Caring for heritage,
- 3) Engaging with people,
- 4) Power to convene,
- 5) Sustainable development, and
- 6) Value for money.

The first three indicators align closely with the indicator framework developed by DEFRA for reporting progress against the performance of the 25 Year Environment Plan. Where appropriate the link to Management Plan Themes and aims is listed.

1. Caring for natural beauty - Land where natural beauty has been conserved or enhanced through the work of AONB Unit

- a) Hectares of habitat conserved or enhanced for biodiversity [WV-B]
- b) Hectares of land conserved for geodiversity [WV-G]

- c) Hectares of land where the heritage asset condition or setting has been conserved or enhanced [WV-H]
- d) Hectares of landscape enhanced via the removal of overhead power lines [WV-U]

2. Caring for heritage - Heritage assets where the condition or setting has been conserved or enhanced by the work of AONB Unit

- a) Number of Scheduled Monuments where the condition or setting has been conserved or enhanced [WV-H]
- b) Number of other designated sites where the condition or setting has been conserved or enhanced [WV-H]
- c) Number of non-designated heritage assets where the condition or setting has been conserved or enhanced [WV-H]

3. Engaging with people - People directly engaged through the work of AONB Unit

- a) Number of volunteers [WV-C]
- b) Attendance at events convened/ organised by AONB Unit [WV-P]
- c) Number of young people (<18yo) engaged with via school visits, activities, etc. [WV-A]
- d) Number of people engaged with via activities linked to the Health & Well-being agenda [WV-C / WV-R / WV-A]
- e) Number of members of the public engaged with during Management Plan Review [WV-C / WV-P]
- f) Number of people engaged with via AONB promotional publications – Newsletter distributions, etc. [WV-C / WV-A]

4. Power to convene - Number of partnerships/ initiatives influenced by the AONB Unit to deliver AONB Management Plan objectives

- a) Number of partnerships where the AONB Unit is part of the project/team/ steering group lead [WV-L / WV-P]
- b) Number of partnerships where the AONB Unit is a supporting partner [WV-L / WV-P]

5. Sustainable development – Strategies, plans, policy, guidance documents, development and land management schemes appraised or developed by AONB Unit

- a) Number of strategies, plans, policy or guidance documents appraised or developed by the AONB Unit [WV-L / WV-D / WV-M]]
- b) Number of Major ‘development schemes’ appraised – LPA planning applications [WV-D]
- c) Number of non-Major ‘development schemes’ appraised – LPA planning applications [WV-D]
- d) Number of other ‘development schemes’ appraised – Highways, Environment Agency, BT, DNO, private sector, etc [WV-D / WV-U / WV-P]
- e) Number of National Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) appraised [WV-D]
- f) Number of ‘land management schemes’ appraised – woodland management, Catchment Sensitive Farming, Countryside Stewardship, Natural Flood Management, etc [WV-F / WV-W]

6. Value for money - Total value of work delivered directly or secured by the work of AONB Unit

- a) Amount of Local Authority funding received (Core funding) [WV-P]
- b) Amount of non-Local Authority funding received (Core funding) [WV-P]
- c) Value of other 'external' grants or contributions received for projects / noncore activity [WV-P]
- d) Value of external projects substantially influenced / generated by the AONB Team [WV-L / WV-P]
- e) Value of volunteer days [WV-P]

APPENDIX I

JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) comprises of representatives from the following organisations:

Local Authorities:

- Forest of Dean District Council (2 councillors)
- Gloucestershire County Council (2 councillors)
- Herefordshire Council (4 councillors)
- Monmouthshire County Council (4 councillors)

Co-opted members - umbrella organisations:

- Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC)
- Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC)
- One Voice Wales
- Country Land & Business Association (CLA)
- National Farmers Union (NFU)
- A voluntary conservation sector representative for Gloucestershire
- A voluntary conservation sector representative for Herefordshire
- A voluntary conservation sector representative for Monmouthshire

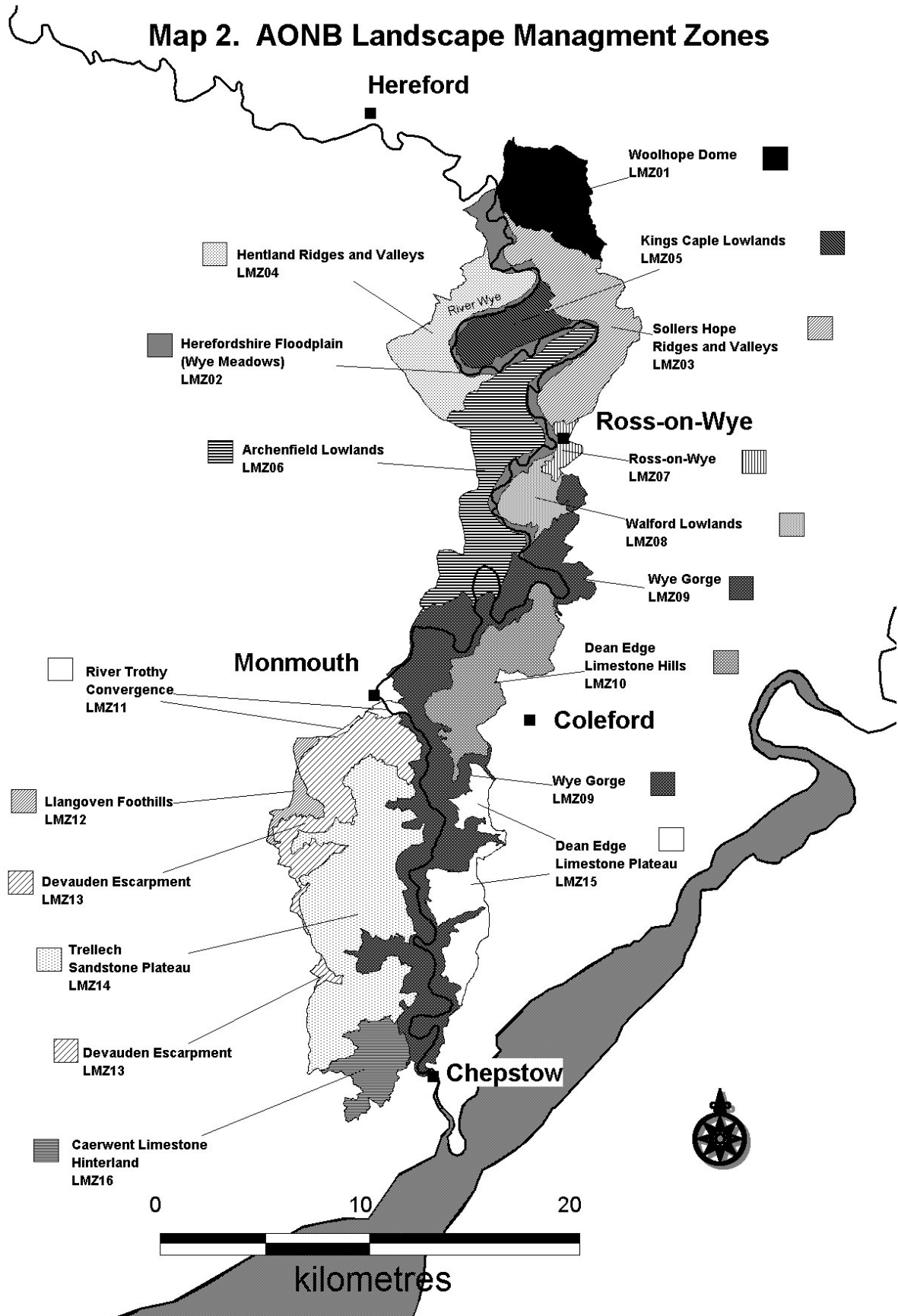
Non-voting co-opted members:

- A representative of the local Wildlife Trusts,
- Wye Valley Society,
- River Wye Preservation Trust,
- A Recreation interests' representative
- A Tourism interests' representative

The JAC is supported by a Technical Officers Working Party (TOWP), which comprises lead officers from the four local authorities and a range of Government agencies, including:-

- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Forestry England
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Natural Resources Wales

Map 2. AONB Landscape Management Zones



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