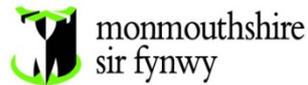


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County Hall
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25th June 2018

Notice of meeting:

Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee

**Monday, 2nd July, 2018 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.	Introduction and New Members.	
4.	Apologies for Absence.	
5.	Declarations of Interest.	
6.	To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.	1 - 10
7.	Public Question Time.	
8.	AONB Management Plan Review.	11 - 14
9.	AONB Good Governance Review - Task Group outcomes and recommendations.	15 - 26
10.	Review of Designated Landscapes.	27 - 28
10.1.	Letter from Hannah Blythyn AM Minister for Environment.	29 - 30
10.2.	Letter from Julian Glover, Chair of Review of Designated Landscapes in England (as mentioned in Government's 25 Year Environment Plan).	31 - 32
10.3.	Terms of Reference for Review of Designated Landscapes in England.	33 - 34
11.	Annual Report 2017/18.	35 - 38

11.1.	AONB Unit Report.	39 - 46
11.2.	Annual Report of Strategy and Development Advisor.	47 - 56
12.	Wye Valley River Festival 2018 Initial Feedback.	57 - 58
13.	AONB Partnership Study Tour 2018.	59 - 60
14.	Project Grant Applications.	61 - 64
15.	NAAONB Update: Conference 24th - 26th July 2018.	65 - 66
16.	AONB / Partner Progress.	67 - 68
17.	Date of next meetings. 2pm at Coleford on Monday 5 th November 2018 and Monday 4 th March 2019.	

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:

P. Cutter
B. Durkin
J. Hardwick
E.J. Swinglehurst

Monmouthshire:

L. Jones
D. Dovey
M. Lane
A.E. Webb

Forest of Dean:

G. Davies
B. Hogan

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

Public Information

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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, 5th March, 2018 at 2.00 pm

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

Elected Members (with voting powers)

Monmouthshire County Council

County Councillors: D. Dovey and M. Lane

Gloucestershire County Council

County Councillor T. Hale

Herefordshire Council

Councillor E.J. Swinglehurst

Forest of Dean District Council

Councillor G. Davies

Co-opted Members (without voting powers)

Wye Valley Society – Mr. C. Barron

Local Wildlife Trusts - Mr. A. Nixon

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: A. Webb, B. Durkin, J. Hardwick and B. Hogan

Mr. B. Nash, Mr. M. Price, Mr. D. Price, Mr. A. Lee, Mr. D. Broadbent, Mr. J. Bisset, Councillor G. Powell and Mr. R. Gething

1. Declarations of Interest

The following Councillors declared interests as Planning Committee Members of their respective authorities in matters that might arise relating to development control issues:

Councillor P. Cutter

Councillor E.J. Swinglehurst

County Councillor D. Dovey

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, 5th March, 2018 at 2.00 pm

2. Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present.

3. Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee meeting dated 6th November 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

4. AONB Unit 2018/19 Work Programme

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

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The table, as set out in the report, establishes the proposed business plan for the AONB Unit in the form of the Work Programme 2018/2019.
- This is focused on delivering the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 and appraising the future prospects for the River Festival, commencing the review for the AONB Management Plan for 2020-2025 and continuing other existing activities while retaining flexibility to pursue new funding opportunities and develop new initiatives.
- Welsh Government has confirmed that the allocation of the Sustainable Development Fund will remain at £55,000 for 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- The budgets in the Work Programme have been approved by the Wye Valley AONB Steering Group and DEFRA, and are being negotiated with Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

We resolved that the Joint Advisory Committee:

- (i) endorses the AONB Unit Work Programme 2018/2019;
- (ii) welcomes the Welsh Government two-year allocation of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF);
- (iii) notes the various additional project funding bids submitted by the AONB Unit in support of the AONB Work Programme.

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, 5th March, 2018 at 2.00 pm

5. AONB Good Governance review with Gower AONB Partnership

We received a report regarding the outcome of the recent Task Group with Swansea City Council and Gower AONB Partnership on the review of the 'Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes'.

Unfortunately, due to adverse weather conditions, the Task Group meeting scheduled to be held on 1st March 2018 had to be postponed.

The Task Group meeting will shortly be re-convened and any outcomes / recommendations arising from this meeting will be presented to the next Joint Advisory Committee meeting in July 2018.

6. Wye Valley River Festival 2018 update

We considered a report regarding the developing programme and sponsorship for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The programme of events for the Wye Valley River Festival is being finalised for the main festival fortnight between 5th & 20th May 2018 based on the theme of 'Woods & Trees'.
- About 300 people will be engaged in a range of school and community workshops planned for the run up to the Festival to create props and build engagement.
- AONB Volunteers and the AONB Youth Rangers have been working in the woods making hurdles and walking staves for the Festival.
- The Arts Council of Wales grant aid has been approved and a number of sponsorships have been secured and further opportunities are being negotiated.
- A new Wye Valley River Festival website is about to go live and tickets for events will be available through the TicketSource website.

Having received the report, it was suggested that the Wye Valley AONB Manager could liaise with appropriate bodies with a view to lighting up Chepstow Castle during the River Festival.

We resolved:

- (i) to welcome the sponsorship and funding secured to date for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 and endorse the developing programme and the work of the AONB Unit and Festival Team.

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, 5th March, 2018 at 2.00 pm

- (ii) that the Wye Valley AONB Manager liaises with appropriate bodies with a view to lighting up Chepstow Castle during the River Festival.

7. Lydbrook Bridge

We received a report regarding the bid by Gloucestershire County Council to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for restoration of Lydbrook Bridge.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Lydbrook Bridge is one of the three remaining former railway bridges spanning the River Wye in the AONB that provides a strategic crossing for walkers, including the Wye Valley Walk.
- Gloucestershire County Council had to close Lydbrook Bridge in February 2016 due to safety issues with the structure.
- The Wye Valley AONB Manager has been assisting Gloucestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council (joint owners of the bridge) with a Heritage Grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the restoration of Lydbrook Bridge.
- The Heritage Grant application totals £1,687,000 and requests 84% support from HLF up to April 2021.
- The AONB Unit is committing £5,000 towards the project, alongside anticipated contributions of £250,000 from Gloucestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council.
- In the meantime, essential safety work will be carried out to the bridge structure this summer to ensure there is no threat to users of the navigation on the river and the footpath that both pass under the bridge.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- County Councillor Hale thanked the AONB Manager for the work that he has undertaken in supporting the HLF bid.
- Phase 1 will commence shortly. This will be to ensure that the structure is made safe, at a cost of £300,000.
- The bridge spans two counties (Gloucestershire and Herefordshire). Both authorities have budget pressures across their respective authorities making it difficult to find appropriate funding for this project.
- The safety works will involve the removal of corroded material and loose material that might cause damage / risk to the public.

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, 5th March, 2018 at 2.00 pm

We resolved to support Gloucestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council in the Heritage Grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the restoration of Lydbrook Bridge.

8. Wild Venison Marketing Feasibility Study

We considered a report regarding the outcomes of the Feasibility Study Investigating the production, marketing and sale of local wild venison in the Lower Wye Valley and southeast Monmouthshire.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- It is widely accepted that deer are more abundant and widespread in the wild now than at any time in the past 1000 years.
- The 'Feasibility Study Investigating the production, marketing and sale of local wild venison in the Lower Wye Valley and southeast Monmouthshire' has been concluded and published on-line.
- The Deer Initiative undertook the study, interviewing nearly 500 people, and proposed eight recommendations.
- The situation regarding feral wild boar was also included in discussions in the report.
- Funding is now being sought to implement some of the recommendations outlined in the feasibility study.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The Forestry Commission and Natural Resources Wales employ wildlife rangers and venison is processed through centralised contracts. Venison could be released into the local supply chain if the demand was available.
- Training of deer stalkers is key to supply good quality venison.
- There is scope for venison to be used more widely in animal food products, dried meat products and in ready meals.
- Concern was expressed that currently, there was little opportunity to purchase venison locally.
- It was noted that meat handling legislation is complex and abattoirs that handle farm animals cannot process game.

We resolved to welcome the 'Feasibility Study Investigating the Production, Marketing and Sale of local Wild Venison in the Lower Wye Valley and southeast Monmouthshire' and endorse the conclusions and recommendations.

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, 5th March, 2018 at 2.00 pm

9. A466 River Views Feasibility Report

We considered a report regarding the outcomes of the A466 River Views Feasibility Study.

- The Joint Advisory Committee had received requests for roadside and riverside vegetation to be managed along the A466 to open up lost views of the river.
- The 'A466 River Views Feasibility Report' has been concluded and published on-line.
- The AONB Trainee Ecological Surveyors undertook the study, identifying 18 places along the A466 where enhancements to views could be made.
- Separate to the report, the section of the A466 between Bigsweir Bridge and The Florence has recently had tree work undertaken which has opened up the views.
- Highway departments, roadside landowners, and other stakeholders should be encouraged to have regard to the report when considering works along the A466.

On behalf of the Joint Advisory Committee, the Chair thanked County Councillor A. Webb and Mr. A Thomas (Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire) for their input to the report.

We resolved to:

- (i) welcome the 'A466 River Views Feasibility Report' and the identified areas where views could be opened up.
- (ii) encourage landowners, Highway departments and other stakeholders to have regard to the report when considering works along the A466.

10. Local Wildlife Trusts' Beavers report

We received a report regarding the latest position in respect of the reintroduction of beavers in the Wye Catchment.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- In the spring of 2018, Forestry Commission England will be releasing a family of beavers into a secure enclosure in the Forest of Dean just outside the AONB boundary near Lydbrook.

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, 5th March, 2018 at 2.00 pm

- Andrew Nixon, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, provided a brief verbal update on the position statements from the local and national Wildlife Trusts on the general approach to beaver releases.
- There are anecdotal stories of beavers already having been present in the Wye Catchment.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- There are reports of beavers being in the Wye catchment in sufficient numbers to be breeding.
- There is support to return beavers to the Wye catchment in a coordinated and licensed way and this is being pursued.
- A meeting is being held with statutory bodies to discuss a way forward for releasing beavers into the Wye that will be properly surveyed and assessed.
- The Forest of Dean beavers will be released in the spring into a 16 acre enclosure, near Lydbrook and will be closely monitored and surveyed.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

11. Pine Marten reintroduction feasibility study update

We received an update report regarding the two year feasibility study into whether pine martens should be reintroduced to the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Pine martens are one of Britain's rarest mammals, and are predominantly restricted to Scotland with low numbers in Wales and South Shropshire.
- In March 2017 the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) received a presentation by Dr Andrew Stringer, Pine Marten Project Manager, on the feasibility study into reintroducing pine martens to the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley.
- The feasibility study is being drafted and current findings indicate that up to 40 Pine Martens could be released over a two year period under the reintroduction proposals.
- A decision on the reintroduction of pine martens to the area will be made later in 2018.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

12. National Association for AONBs

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, 5th March, 2018 at 2.00 pm

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

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) Chairman's Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) was attended by the AONB Manager.
- The 2017 Annual Report for the NAAONB has been published as well as the Latest News bulletin.
- The NAAONB has welcomed the UK Government's 'A Green Future - 25 Year Environment Plan' and is working with DEFRA on implementation.
- The NAAONB has been in discussion with DEFRA around how AONB partnerships and Management Plans can support agri-environmental delivery post Brexit. This was also the focus of the AONB Lead officers' meeting in Birmingham in February 2018.
- The Landscape for Life 2018 National Conference is likely to be held in Kent in late July 2018.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

13. Partner and AONB Unit progress reports and updates

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

- Undergrounding update.
- Offa's Dyke Collaboratory. Leaflets were available for Committee members to take away on:
 - Lancut investigations & Day School.
 - Knighton & Oswestry events.
- Youth Rangers 4th cohort with Foresters' Forest. This was progressing well.
- mindSCAPE with Foresters' Forest.
- Ross Riverside enhancements with Ross Town Council. Ross Town Council were pleased with the progress being made.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

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,
5th March, 2018 at 2.00 pm**

14. Dates of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Group Meetings for 2018/19

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:

Monday 2nd July 2018

Monday 5th November 2018

Monday 4th March 2019

The meeting ended at 3.28 pm.

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd July 2018

AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

Purpose

To outline the programme for the preparation and publication of the AONB Management Plan 2020-2025.

Recommendations

That the JAC

- A. Welcomes the delegation by the four local authorities to the AONB Partnership for the preparation and production of the AONB Management Plan by the AONB Unit.
- B. Endorses the programme for the review of the AONB Management Plan.

Key Issues

- The current Wye Valley AONB Management Plan (2015-2020) needs to be reviewed, under the CRoW Act Section 89, by the end of 2020.
- The Wye Valley AONB Memorandum of Understanding 2018-2021, signed by the four local authorities, delegates the Management Plan review to the AONB Partnership.
- The proposed Management Plan review programme is appended.
- In due course, the Local Authorities and the JAC will need to decide the extent of Management Plan review required, whether an appropriately 'light touch' approach should be taken or a comprehensive review is needed and justified.
- Defra, Natural England and the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) have produced outline guidance on the next round of AONB Management Plan reviews. The Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are currently reviewing their own guidance.

Reasons

Sections 89-90 of the Countryside & Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 require local authorities to review adopted and published AONB Management Plans at intervals of not more than five years. The CRoW Act also requires local authorities to 'act jointly' in the preparation and review of AONB Management Plans.

Herefordshire Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council and Monmouthshire County Council have formally delegated the publishing, reviewing and monitoring of the AONB Management Plan to the AONB Partnership. This was included in the Wye Valley AONB Memorandum of Understanding 2018-2021, signed by the four local

authorities earlier this year. The previous three statutory AONB Management Plans have been produced by the AONB Unit on behalf of the local authorities.

The joint Defra, Natural England and the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) guidance produced in 2011 stated that

Individual AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards should decide the extent of a review required. An appropriately “light touch” approach may be taken by some, whilst others may decide a comprehensive review is needed and justified. AONB Partnership and Conservation Boards will know those areas of their Plans or themes which are constants and do not need re-visiting. They will also have a good idea of the deficiencies and issues to be addressed under the review.

Implications

The review of the current Wye Valley AONB Management Plan (2015-2020) must be complete by the end of 2020. Attached is the proposed programme for the Management Plan review. The Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and Technical Officers Working Party (TOWP) will oversee the review conducted by the AONB Unit. The review will involve a wide range of stakeholders and public consultation. Key local authority members and officers will be closely involved in the process and each local authority will ultimately approve and adopt the final Plan individually. AONB Management Plans also fall under the requirements of European Directives on Habitats Regulation Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessments. Consideration will also be given to undertaking a broader Sustainability Appraisal for the Management Plan given the importance of the social and environmental context in this area. Formal guidance is awaited from Welsh Government on whether a Health Impact Assessment may also be required, but potentially that could also be wrapped into the same overall appraisal.

Work will commence shortly at an officer level on the Management Plan review. It is yet to be determined whether a ‘light touch’ approach should be taken rather than a comprehensive review. The revised Management Plan will need to be updated and address, and be relevant to, changed context and priorities but could also retain tried and tested policies which do not need changing.

Background

The CRoW Act 2000 (Sections 89 and 90) require local authorities to publish AONB Management Plans, at not more than five years 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

TASK	WHO	EXPECTED TIMETABLE
FORMALITIES AND NOTIFICATION		
Authorisation from local authorities to undertake review on their behalf [CRoW s89(9)]	JAC	July 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	July 18
Announce requirement for SEA, HRA & SA	Partnership	July 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-Aug 18
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	July-Oct 18
Consult on scoping report for SEA & HRA	With statutory agencies	Nov 18
Publish update to State of the AONB report	AONB Team	Nov 18
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 (Working Groups, Area groups, etc) – detailed issues, policies and updated actions.	Partnership	Autumn 18
Assess effects of objectives, policies & actions and for SEA and develop alternatives. (Stage B) Element of independent review required, inc LA Scrutiny	AONB Team	Winter 18/19
Collate new draft plan. Prepare Environmental Report for SEA & HRA (Stage C) and non-technical summary.	AONB Team	Winter 18/19

Approve Draft for Consultation	JAC	March 19
CONSULTATION & APPROVAL OF FULL PLAN		
Run public consultation on new draft plan and SEA report (Stage D) for 12 week period.	AONB Team/ Partnership	March-May 19
Consider comments from consultation and amend plan	AONB Team	June-August 19
Report on consultation and suggested amendments [CRoW s89(10)]	Partnership	August 19
Send to Natural England & NRW/WG [CRoW s90(1b)] for formal observations	AONB Team	August 9
Consider comments from formal observations and amend plan [CRoW s90(1c)]	AONB Team	Sept 19
JAC Endorsement of Adoption Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025	TOWP/JAC	Oct/Nov 19
Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 formally approved by local authorities	Local authorities	Nov-Dec 19
Design & publication of Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025	AONB Team	Early 20
Send approved Plan to Secretary of State	AONB Team	By March 20
Publish Statement on how SEA taken into account and changes.	AONB Team	March 20
Implement and monitor Plan and its effects (SEA Stage E).	Partnership	March 20+

Agenda Item

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd July 2018

AONB GOOD GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Purpose

To receive the outcomes of the recent Task Group with Swansea City Council and Gower AONB Partnership on the review of the 'Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes'.

Recommendations

That the JAC welcomes the outcomes of the Task Group meeting of 24th April 2018 and

- A. welcomes the identification of 'what we do well'
- B. Accepts the 20 recommendations that build on 'what we could do better'.

Key Issues

- The JAC agreed to review the 'Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes' as outlined in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* through a joint Task Group with Gower AONB Partnership.
- The Task Group met on Tuesday 24th April at the Wye Valley AONB Office and concluded a number of aspects of 'what we do well' and 'what we could do better'.
- The outcomes of the Task Group are attached and 20 recommendations proposed that address the findings of 'what we could do better'.
- There are no significant or radical changes proposed to governance arrangements but there are implications for the future capacity of the AONB Unit to deliver all the recommendations beyond this financial year.

Reasons

The JAC agreed to pursue a joint initiative with the Gower AONB Partnership to undertake a review of current AONB governance against the 'Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes' as outlined in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* and make recommendations for change to their respective AONB Partnerships. The 'Principles of Good Governance' are based on those of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) - Governance of Protected Areas (2013).

Implications

Two tables are appended. The first is the outcomes of the Task Group discussions, listing "What we do well" and "What we could do better" against the 'Principles of Good

Governance for Designated Landscapes’. The second table (with a thick border) identifies the 20 Recommendations which address “What we could do better”. These are also outlined below.

Recommendations

1. Prepare brief ‘JAC contact report’ for nominees to feedback to their respective nominating bodies annually (or after each JAC?)
 - 2a. Increase level of information for, & communication with, general public about AONB, JAC, Management Plan, AONB Unit & actions.
 - 2b. Highlight need to enhance national profile of AONBs through Review of Designated Landscapes in England & Wales.
3. Ensure AONB Partnership retains relevant, broad & active participation (through ‘relevant, broad & active’ meetings, actions & outcomes) and appropriate projects
4. Communicate & disseminate JAC procedures, opportunities & outcomes, including:-
 - Public Questions
 - JAC agenda setting
 - JAC papers
5. Make web links to JAC minutes more accessible
6. Review guidance and criteria for all JAC co-opted nominees to emphasise ‘national’ connections
7. review criteria for 3 co-opted ‘County Voluntary Conservation Sector representatives’ to align more to a national context
8. Promote actions of AONB Unit & partners more regularly – through website, social media & press (local & commercial).
9. Establish more training events, seminars etc. for LAs/Town/Parish/Community councils & Gov/agencies
10. Highlight need for more training through Review of Designated Landscapes in England & Wales.
11. Review Vision as part of AONB Management Plan review
12. Address connection between ‘national’ & ‘local’ agendas & outcomes through Review of Designated Landscapes in England & Wales and AONB Management Plan review
13. Report to JAC on achievements of Section 85 Bodies
14. Progress ‘land management’ engagement through projects, AONB Farming Awards, Wye Catchment Partnership, NAAONB and development of post-Brexit agri-environment schemes with Welsh Government & Defra

15. Strengthen collaboration with local Ambassador schemes and diversify effectiveness of AONB Volunteers
16. Publish annual JAC attendance figures and enforce JAC Agreement Clause 9(5) – “review appointment if 3 or more consecutive meetings missed”.
17. Grant & bid risk assessments &/or SWOT analyses prepared by AONB Unit and shared with project partners, TOWP & JAC as appropriate
18. Consolidate policy to use local produce wherever possible.
19. Work with Local authorities and other partners to deliver Equalities Plans/policies
20. Develop engagement projects with ‘hard to reach’ sectors and communicate opportunities & outcomes

Overall this review identifies a number of small and/or administrative changes to the governance procedures of the Wye Valley AONB but does not recommend any significant or radical changes to the governance arrangements. It is considered that several of these Recommendations can be adopted and implemented swiftly without any major increases in workload or changes in direction of practices. However, there are a number of the Recommendations that relate to issues of communication, public relations and promotion of AONB and JAC activity. The JAC has previously noted that under current budget forecasts it is proposed that the AONB Information Officer post ends at the end of this financial year, reducing the AONB Unit by one member of staff, down to a 4 person team. While this is intended to save money it will significantly reduce the capacity of the AONB Unit to deliver these Recommendations on behalf of the AONB Partnership. This will need further attention at the next JAC in November.

Background

The Task and Finish group was established with 3 members each from Gower & Wye Valley AONB Partnerships, supported and facilitated by both AONB lead officers. The Wye Valley AONB Partnership members were:

Chris Barron	JAC / Wye Valley Society
David Broadbent	JAC / Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism
Cllr David Dovey	JAC / Monmouthshire County Council
Andrew Blake	AONB Manager

The Task Group met at the Wye Valley AONB office, Hadnock Road, Monmouth on Tuesday 24th April 2018. The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB lead officer also attended and advised, providing some peer-review scrutiny.

The group received presentations on the different governance arrangements and structures for the three AONBs. They then discussed the ‘Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes’ as outlined in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* report (page 11. Table 1.) and considered how they may be applied to the existing governance arrangements for Gower AONB Partnership and Wye Valley AONB Partnership.

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Key areas*	Principles*	Task Group conclusion: What we do well	Task Group conclusion: What we could do better
<i>Legitimacy, participation and voice</i>	• <i>Acceptance in society</i>	+ Broad representation on JAC & good attendance + Events for public & partners + Public value of 'landscape' 'countryside' 'natural beauty' + Have strong 'brands'	➤ Feedback to nominating bodies. ➤ Challenge People's preconceptions of what an AONB is. ➤ Promote message of AONB to public. ➤ Resolve issue of acronym & recognition of 'AONB'.
	• <i>Representation and participation</i>	+ Good attendance at events + JAC debates & discussions open & decisions based on consensus	➤ Promote message & outputs/outcomes of AONB Partnership & JAC to public.
		+ Strong volunteer support groups	➤ Hard to get Land management representation but diversification helps, eg tourism
		+ AONB & JAC events open & accessible	➤ Do we promote accessibility/openness enough eg Public Questions? ➤ JAC agenda setting could be more open. Make public more aware of process. ➤ JAC minutes could be easier to find for public. ➤ Produce a 'briefing' on JAC meeting for members to feedback to nominating bodies. ➤ no 'national level' representation on AONBs.
	• <i>Active dialogue and consensus</i>	+ JAC debates & discussions open & decisions based on consensus	➤ Move beyond 'dialogue' to action & feedback. ➤ dynamic 'tweeting' & use of social media for messages from JAC.
• <i>Subsidiarity</i>	+ Close to respective organisations at right level.	➤ not all parts of LAs, Town/Community councils & Welsh Gov/agencies recognise or understand AONB.	
<i>Developing and implementing a strategic vision for the area</i>	• <i>Inspiring and consistent vision</i>	+ Management Plan (& every AONB has one)	➤ is it inspiring or just good/right? ➤ is Vision generic or relevant and place specific?
	• <i>Consistent with national outcomes</i>	+ Ties in with Wellbeing & future generations + Positive involvement in Public sector agenda + Integrity of national voice (DLs/PLs/NAAONB)	➤ challenge to relate national outcomes/agendas to the local level.
	• <i>Reflect obligations</i>	+ Try to please everybody most of the time! + Reporting structure + Balance competing obligations	➤ report on achievements of Section 85 Bodies (& lack of them?). ➤ ensure LA CEOs & senior officers reflect obligations

Key areas*	Principles*	Task Group conclusion: What we do well	Task Group conclusion: What we could do better
		+ Well scrutinised Management Plan, including public consultation	➤ broaden recognition of AONB & Management Plan, including through Management Plan consultation.
	• <i>Adaptive management and innovation</i>	+ Agility of AONB teams + Breadth of AONB partnership	➤ keep abreast or ‘ahead of the curve’ in land use change & landscape management.
<i>Effective performance management</i>	• <i>Management effectiveness</i>	+ Good scrutiny by JAC of work programme + AONB partnerships’ breadth bring leverage	➤ get fuller buy in from partners.
	• <i>Learning culture, skills and knowledge</i>	+ AONBs’ ‘power to convene’ provides opportunity for insight & innovative collaboration + AONB partnerships’ breadth bring insight + sharing between AONBs	➤ raise knowledge, skills & understanding of LA Cllr, Town/Parish/Community councils & other AONB Partnership members/bodies. ➤ skills development & training for AONB Partnership members/bodies.
	• <i>Advocacy and outreach</i>	+ knowledge transfer, including local history & landscape management + Ambassador schemes	➤ make full use of local Ambassador schemes.
	• <i>Acknowledging and addressing weakness or poor performance</i>	+ report progress against Management Plan	➤ chase / follow up lack of attendance at JAC. ➤ ensure Management Plan is recognised throughout LAs & Sect 85 bodies.
	• <i>Efficient use of financial resources</i>	+ measure & report to funders + AONB Unit leverage of budgets & report to JAC + Public surveys + deliver Management Plan... with modest budgets + governed by LA accountability	➤ highlight leverage, outputs & outcomes to public & partners in public, private & voluntary sectors.
<i>Accountability and transparency</i>	• <i>Integrity and commitment</i>	+ experience & dedication of AONB staff & within Partnerships	➤ chase / follow up lack of attendance at JAC. ➤ ensure LAs, Town/Community councils & Welsh Gov/agencies recognise & understand AONB and reflect obligations (eg Section 85)
	• <i>Decision making and reporting</i>	+ JAC decisions invariably based on consensus + report progress against Management Plan & to funders	➤ JAC agenda setting could be more open. Make public more aware of process. ➤ JAC minutes could be easier to find for public.

<i>Key areas*</i>	<i>Principles*</i>	Task Group conclusion: What we do well	Task Group conclusion: What we could do better
			➤ Produce a ‘briefing’ on JAC meeting for members to feedback to nominating bodies.
	• <i>Allocation of resources</i>	+ experience & capacity to bid for grants + cost/benefit analysis of risk of bids + sound priorities & network base	➤ [issue of AONB contribution being part of un-hypothecated LA grant] ➤ refine processes & procedures for risk assessing bids & grants.
	• <i>Communication</i>	+ AONB & JAC events open & accessible + Strong volunteer groups & Ambassador schemes	➤ Do we promote accessibility/openness enough eg Public Questions? ➤ JAC agenda setting could be more open. Make public more aware of process. ➤ JAC minutes could be easier to find for public. ➤ Produce a ‘briefing’ on JAC meeting for members to feedback to nominating bodies. ➤ Social media (balanced with traditional formats & 1:1).
<i>Fairness and rights</i>	• <i>Ethical and fair decision making</i>	+ JAC decisions invariably based on consensus + support local produce & producers	➤ support local produce & producers.
	• <i>Impartial and without discrimination</i>	+ LA policies & grant conditions	➤ relate more to ‘hard to reach’ sectors not usual AONB visitors/users.
	• <i>Respectful of language and culture</i>	+ LA policies & grant conditions	➤ engage with and relate more to ‘hard to reach’ sectors not usual AONB visitors/users.
	• <i>Respect rights</i>	+ LA policies & grant conditions	➤ identify where rights might be infringed.
	• <i>Active engagement</i>	+ AONB volunteers + walking for health + school / young people programmes + know what we have to offer visitors/users	➤ understand & relate more to ‘hard to reach’ sectors not usual AONB visitors/users, including removing barriers (psychological &/or physical).

* from the ‘Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes’ as outlined in Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales (May 2017): (see page 11. Table 1. in <http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/170508-future-landscapes-delivering-for-wales-en.pdf>)

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Key areas*	Principles*	Task Group conclusion: What we could do better	Recommendations	Who to action
<i>Legitimacy, participation and voice</i>	• <i>Acceptance in society</i>	➤ Feedback to nominating bodies.	1. Prepare brief ‘JAC contact report’ for nominees to feedback to their respective nominating bodies annually (or after each JAC?)	AONB Unit (& JAC Clerk)
		➤ Challenge People’s preconceptions of what an AONB is. ➤ Promote message of AONB to public. ➤ Resolve issue of acronym & recognition of ‘AONB’.	2a. Increase level of information for, & communication with, general public about AONB, JAC, Management Plan, AONB Unit & actions.	AONB Unit
	• <i>Representation and participation</i>	➤ Promote message & outputs/outcomes of AONB Partnership & JAC to public.	2b. Highlight need to enhance national profile of AONBs through Review of Designated Landscapes in England & Wales.	
		➤ Hard to get Land management representation but diversification helps, eg tourism	3. Ensure AONB Partnership retains relevant, broad & active participation (through ‘relevant, broad & active’ meetings, actions & outcomes) and appropriate projects	AONB Unit / TOWP / JAC
		➤ Do we promote accessibility/openness enough eg Public Questions? ➤ JAC agenda setting could be more open. Make public more aware of process.	4. Communicate & disseminate JAC procedures, opportunities & outcomes, including:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Questions • JAC agenda setting • JAC papers 	AONB Unit, JAC Clerk & JAC members
		➤ JAC minutes could be easier to find for public.	5. Make web links to JAC minutes more accessible	AONB Unit, JAC Clerk & JAC members
		➤ Produce a ‘briefing’ on JAC meeting for members to feedback to nominating bodies.	See 1. above	
		➤ no ‘national level’ representation on AONBs.	6. Review guidance and criteria for all JAC co-opted nominees to emphasise ‘national’ connections	AONB Unit / TOWP / JAC

Key areas*	Principles*	Task Group conclusion: What we could do better	Recommendations	Who to action
			7. review criteria for 3 co-opted 'County Voluntary Conservation Sector representatives' to align more to a national context	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Active dialogue and consensus</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Move beyond 'dialogue' to action & feedback. ➤ dynamic 'tweeting' & use of social media for messages from JAC. 	8. Promote actions of AONB Unit & partners more regularly – through website, social media & press (local & commercial).	AONB Unit & JAC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Subsidiarity</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ not all parts of LAs Town/Community councils & Welsh Gov/agencies recognise or understand AONB. 	9. Establish more training events, seminars etc. for LAs/Town/Parish/Community councils & Gov/agencies 10. Highlight need for more training through Review of Designated Landscapes in England & Wales.	AONB Unit
<i>Developing and implementing a strategic vision for the area</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Inspiring and consistent vision</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ is it inspiring or just good/right? ➤ is Vision generic or relevant and place specific? 	11. Review Vision as part of AONB Management Plan review	AONB Partnership
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consistent with national outcomes</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ challenge to relate national outcomes/agendas to the local level. 	12. Address connection between 'national' & 'local' agendas & outcomes through Review of Designated Landscapes in England & Wales and AONB Management Plan review	AONB Partnership
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reflect obligations</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ report on achievements of Section 85 Bodies (& lack of them?). 	13. Report to JAC on achievements of Section 85 Bodies	JAC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adaptive management and innovation</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ keep abreast or 'ahead of the curve' in land use change & landscape management. 	14. Progress 'land management' engagement through projects, Farming Awards, Wye Catchment Partnership, NAAONB and development of post-Brexit agri-environment schemes with Welsh Government & Defra See also 3. above	AONB Partnership
<i>Effective performance management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Management effectiveness</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ get fuller buy in from partners. 	See 1 - 5 above	AONB Unit / TOWP / JAC

Key areas*	Principles*	Task Group conclusion: What we could do better	<u>Recommendations</u>	Who to action	
	• <i>Learning culture, skills and knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ raise knowledge, skills & understanding of LA Cllr, Town/Parish/Community councils & other AONB Partnership members/bodies. ➤ skills development & training for AONB Partnership members/bodies. 	See 1, 2 & 9. above	AONB Unit / TOWP / JAC	
	• <i>Advocacy and outreach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ make full use of local Ambassador schemes. 	15. Strengthen collaboration with local Ambassador schemes and diversify effectiveness of AONB Volunteers	AONB Unit	
	• <i>Acknowledging and addressing weakness or poor performance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ chase / follow up lack of attendance at JAC. 	16. Publish annual JAC attendance figures and enforce JAC Agreement Clause 9(5) - review appointment if 3 or more consecutive meetings missed.	JAC	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ensure Management Plan is recognised throughout LAs & Sect 85 bodies. 	See 8 - 13. above	AONB Unit / TOWP / JAC	
	• <i>Efficient use of financial resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ highlight leverage, outputs & outcomes to public & partners in public, private & voluntary sectors. 	See 1, 2, 8, 14. above	AONB Unit / TOWP / JAC	
<i>Accountability and transparency</i>	• <i>Integrity and commitment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ chase / follow up lack of attendance at JAC. 	See 16. above	JAC	
	• <i>Decision making and reporting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ JAC agenda setting could be more open. Make public more aware of process. ➤ JAC minutes could be easier to find for public. ➤ Produce a 'briefing' on JAC meeting for members to feedback to nominating bodies. 	See 1, 4 & 5. above	AONB Unit / TOWP / JAC	
		• <i>Allocation of resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [issue of AONB contribution being part of un-hypothecated LA grant] 	See 12. above	AONB Unit / TOWP / JAC
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ refine processes & procedures for risk assessing. 	17. Grant & bid risk assessments &/or SWOT analyses prepared by AONB Unit and shared with project partners, TOWP & JAC as appropriate	AONB Unit / TOWP / JAC

Key areas*	Principles*	Task Group conclusion: What we could do better	<u>Recommendations</u>	Who to action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communication</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Do we promote accessibility/openness enough eg Public Questions? ➤ JAC agenda setting could be more open. Make public more aware of process. ➤ JAC minutes could be easier to find for public. ➤ Produce a 'briefing' on JAC meeting for members to feedback to nominating bodies. ➤ Social media (balanced with traditional formats & 1:1). 	See 1 – 5 & 8. above	AONB Unit / TOWP / JAC
<i>Fairness and rights</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ethical and fair decision making</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ support local produce & producers. 	18. Consolidate policy to use local produce wherever possible. See also 14. above	AONB Unit
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Respect rights</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ identify where rights might be infringed. 	19. Work with Local authorities and other partners to deliver Equalities Plans/policies	AONB Partnership
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Impartial and without discrimination</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ relate more to 'hard to reach' sectors not usual AONB visitors/users. 	20. Develop engagement projects with 'hard to reach' sectors and communicate opportunities & outcomes See also 2, 3, 8, 15, 17 & 19. above	AONB Partnership
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Respectful of language and culture</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ engage with and relate more to 'hard to reach' sectors not usual AONB visitors/users. 	See 20. above	AONB Partnership
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Active engagement</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ understand & relate more to 'hard to reach' sectors not usual AONB visitors/users, including removing barriers (psychological &/or physical). 	See 20. above	AONB Partnership

* from the 'Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes' as outlined in Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales (May 2017): (see page 11. Table 1. in <http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/170508-future-landscapes-delivering-for-wales-en.pdf>)

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd July 2018

REVIEW OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES

Purpose

To advise members of the on-going Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales and the forthcoming Review of Designated Landscapes in England.

Recommendations

That the JAC welcomes the continued positive attention on AONBs and contributes as appropriate to the on-going Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales and the forthcoming Review of Designated Landscapes in England.

Key Issues

- The Welsh Government Minister, Hannah Blythyn AM, wrote to the AONB lead officers in Wales (see attached letter) seeking further input into the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales.
- The Welsh AONB lead officers are meeting together over the Summer and with Natural Resources Wales, the National Association for AONBs and the Welsh National Parks to collate a response to the Minister's request.
- In January 2018 the Westminster government published their '25 Year Plan for the Environment', setting out an approach to protect habitats and landscapes in England including undertaking a review National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).
- Environment Secretary Michael Gove MP launched the Review of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) in late May to be led by writer and journalist Julian Glover (see attached letter)
- The Terms of Reference are published (see Appendix 3) and the Review panel, listed below, who are due to report back to Government during 2019.

Reasons

The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales has identified that although parity broadly exists between National Parks and AONBs in terms of planning policy, there is an inequality of status, profile and resourcing. Welsh Government Minister, Hannah Blythyn has requested the AONB lead officers and others involved in the Future Landscapes Wales programme to report in September on how this should be addressed, while being realistic about the levels of current and future resourcing.

A review of National Parks and AONBs in England was announced in the DEFRA 25 Year Environment Plan in March, and in late May the Terms of Reference were published (see below and Appendix 3). The Review is to be led by the writer and journalist Julian Glover, supported by an expert panel of advisors consisting of Nicola Blackwood, Lord Cameron of Dillington, Jim Dixon, Sarah Mukherjee and Dame Fiona Reynolds. The Review panel is to report during 2019, the 70th anniversary year of the formative National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Implications

The Terms of Reference for the ‘Glover Review’ (see Appendix 3) are to examine and make recommendations on:

- the existing statutory purposes for National Parks and AONBs and how effectively they are being met
- the alignment of these purposes with the goals set out in the 25-Year Plan for the Environment
- how to improve individual and collective governance of National Parks and AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets
- the financing of National Parks and AONBs
- how to enhance the environment and biodiversity in existing designations
- how to build on the existing eight-point plan for National Parks and to connect more people with the natural environment from all sections of society and improve health and wellbeing
- how well National Parks and AONBs support communities
- the case for extension or creation of new designated areas
- the review will also take advice from Natural England on the process of designating National Parks and AONBs and extending boundary areas, with a view to improving and expediting the process.

This is a cross-government review, with implementation led by the Defra Secretary of State.

The tone and framework for the Review is very positive, focusing on helping Designated Landscapes to deliver more, and potentially having more of them. It represents the biggest opportunity for positive change for AONBs since the work leading up to changes in the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, and potentially since the original 1949 Act.

Julian Glover has hosted an initial meeting with The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) and a select few AONB lead officers. The forthcoming NAAONB ‘Landscapes for Life’ Conference will also hold several briefings focused on the Review. The AONB Manager intends to be fully involved in the Review and share the experience and lessons learned from the on-going Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales and the Future Landscapes Wales programme. He will present a paper on this at the NAAONB conference.

It is likely that the in due course the ‘Glover Review’ will make a call for written evidence, as well as offering some invitations to discussions with the review panel. The Terms of Reference also mention visits by the panel. These are unlikely to involve all AONBs, but it is possible that the Wye Valley’s cross-border context and involvement in the Future Landscapes Wales programme will be of interest. It is anticipated that the JAC will have the opportunity to make a collective view on issues. In addition individuals and constituent organisations may choose to make their own input.

Meanwhile the Welsh AONB lead officers will be meeting together over the Summer and with Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the NAAONB and the Welsh National Parks to collate a response to the Welsh Government Minister’s request.

Background

For more information on the Review of Designated Landscapes in England visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-parks-review-launched>



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Hannah Blythyn AC/AM
Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd
Minister for Environment

Mr Andrew Blake
Wye Valley AONB Officer
aonb.officer@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk

CC: Howard Davies
Chief Executive, National Association of AONBs
howard.davies@landscapesforlife.org.uk
Clare Pillman
Chief Executive, Natural Resources Wales
Clare.Pillman@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

14 May 2018

Dear Mr Blake,

I am inviting you to share your views with me on the issues which need to be addressed to provide greater parity for the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) with the National Parks in Wales.

One of the key observations made during the Review of Designated Landscapes and the Future Landscapes Wales Programme was although parity broadly exists between National Parks and AONBs in terms of planning policy, there is an inequality of status, profile and resourcing. Whilst this may be a strength in allowing flexibility of governance and the formation of partnerships in the AONBs, it is also a potential weakness in terms of the stewardship of these equally valuable landscapes. I have made a commitment to continue discussions with the AONBs to address this.

The AONB officers, along with the National Association of AONBs and colleagues in Natural Resources Wales, are best placed to advise me on how this should be addressed. I'm inviting you to work together to prepare a brief paper, for discussion with me later this year, on the action you believe necessary to address the issues observed during the review.

I am prepared to support you to overcome these issues; however, you must be realistic in your deliberations about the levels of current and future resourcing.

I am committed to ensuring our AONBs and National Parks are equally valued for their natural beauty by our people, communities and country – and, that our designated landscapes deliver rich ecosystems, vibrant and resilient communities and opportunities for outdoor recreation for all of the people of Wales.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Hannah.Blythyn@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Hannah.Blythyn@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

My lead official on this matter is John Watkins, Head of Landscape and Outdoor Recreation. You should contact him if you have any questions in regard to this invitation. Please send me your paper of suggested actions by early September. My office will confirm a date and venue for me to meet with you and your colleagues to discuss your proposals.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hannah Blythyn'.

Hannah Blythyn AC/AM
Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd
Minister for Environment



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Andrew Blake
Wye Valley
Wye Valley AONB Unit
Hadnock Road
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NP25 3NG

1 June 2018

Dear Andrew,

As I expect you already know, Michael Gove announced on Sunday that he has asked me to lead the Review of Designated Landscapes - a commitment of the Government's 25-Year Plan for the Environment.

I'm honoured to accept. The review is a chance to renew the mission of our National Parks and AONBs almost 70 years after the first - the Peak Park where I live - was set up. I care about the beauty of our landscapes, their history and their biodiversity. I admire the work done by early campaigners such as John Dower and Sir Arthur Hobhouse. If we can capture even a fraction of their energy and idealism in this new review, I'll be proud.

Our Terms of Reference stress that there is no intention to diminish protections: but I think there are things that we can do to make a successful system even better. I'll be supported by an advisory panel with strong experience in landscape, biodiversity, heritage, farming and rural issues who will provide advice, challenge and energy and we will set out more about that very soon. I am looking forward to getting out and meeting people - and learning from them. I want this Review to be a collaborative process, drawing on the expertise that exists in those with a passion for these special places.

I'm currently finalising arrangements and will be able to share more details of how I hope the review will work soon. My colleagues will be in touch to lay out further arrangements for visits and engagements. I can't wait to get started and with your help I know we can make the Review a success. I enclose with this letter a copy of the Terms of Reference.

Yours sincerely,

Julian Glover

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Review of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs): Terms of Reference

Introduction:

Our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are a great success. England is a more beautiful and more diverse place because previous generations took the care to campaign for their creation.

In 1945, the government set up a committee under Sir Arthur Hobhouse, who recommended that Britain establish national parks to preserve and enhance their natural beauty and provide recreational opportunities for all members of the public. In 1949, the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act established these national parks, which the minister of the day described as “the most exciting Act of the post-war Parliament.” That legislation created a statutory framework for National Parks and AONBs. In brief, National Parks’ purposes are to conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks. For AONBs, the primary purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.

Now, as the oldest National Park approaches its 70th anniversary, comes a chance to renew this mission.

That is the context in which this Review takes place. It aims not to diminish the character or independence of our designated landscapes, or to impose new burdens on them and the people who live and work in the areas they cover. Instead, its purpose is to ask what might be done better, what changes could assist them, and whether definitions and systems - which in many cases date back to their original creation - are still sufficient.

At the outset, it is also important to state one thing the review will not do: propose reductions in either the geographic extent or the protections given to England’s designated landscapes.

Some context:

In January 2018 the Government published a 25-Year Plan for the Environment. It set out an approach to protect landscapes and habitats in England and committed to undertaking a Review National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

The publication of these terms of reference to guide that Review is the next step.

Scope:

The Review will consider National Parks and AONBs in England, including the role of these areas in relation to other places designated for environmental purposes. Landscapes in Wales and Scotland are under devolved administrations and therefore do not fall under the scope of this Review.

The Review will respect the cultural and visual heritage of people, farms and businesses in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Objectives:

In the context of meeting both local and national priorities and wider environmental governance, the Review will examine and make recommendations on:

- The existing statutory purposes for National Parks and AONBs and how effectively they are being met
- The alignment of these purposes with the goals set out in the 25-Year Plan for the Environment
- The case for extension or creation of new designated areas
- How to improve individual and collective governance of National Parks and AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets
- The financing of National Parks and AONBs
- How to enhance the environment and biodiversity in existing designations
- How to build on the existing eight-point plan for National Parks and to connect more people with the natural environment from all sections of society and improve health and wellbeing
- How well National Parks and AONBs support communities

Expanding on work already underway, the review will also take advice from Natural England on the process of designating National Parks and AONBs and extending boundary areas, with a view to improving and expediting the process.

Activity:

The Review will be led by Julian Glover and supported by an experienced advisory group.

The Review will draw on existing evidence and that submitted by interested groups and individuals during the course of the Review. The review team will also visit people and places in a range of designated landscapes.

Cross-Government involvement:

This is a cross-Government Review, with Defra providing the secretariat and appointing a lead to undertake the Review.

Recommendations will be made to the Government. Implementation will be led by the Defra Secretary of State.

Expected Timetable:

The Review will report in 2019 (the 70th Anniversary of the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act).

A more detailed timetable will be developed following commencement of the Review.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd July 2018

ANNUAL REPORT

Purpose

To present the annual reports for 2017/18 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 2017/18

Key Issues

- The 2017/18 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 issues were resolved.
- The AONB Unit has levered in nearly £8 for every £1 of local authority contribution during 2017/18.
- 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 Unit, on behalf of the AONB Partnership, has made fewer comments on Planning Applications but has been more involved in pre-application enquiries and Neighbourhood Development Plans during the year.

Reasons

The Work Programme Report for the AONB Unit 2017/18 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 enabled a co-ordinated approach to be taken to strategic consultations in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire relating to the two AONBs.

Implications

The number of planning application in 2017/18 has increased slightly compared to the previous year. However the AONB Unit responded to fewer planning applications, on behalf of the AONB Partnership, but was involved in more pre-application advice and liaison with case officers. Similarly engagement with the development of Neighbourhood Development

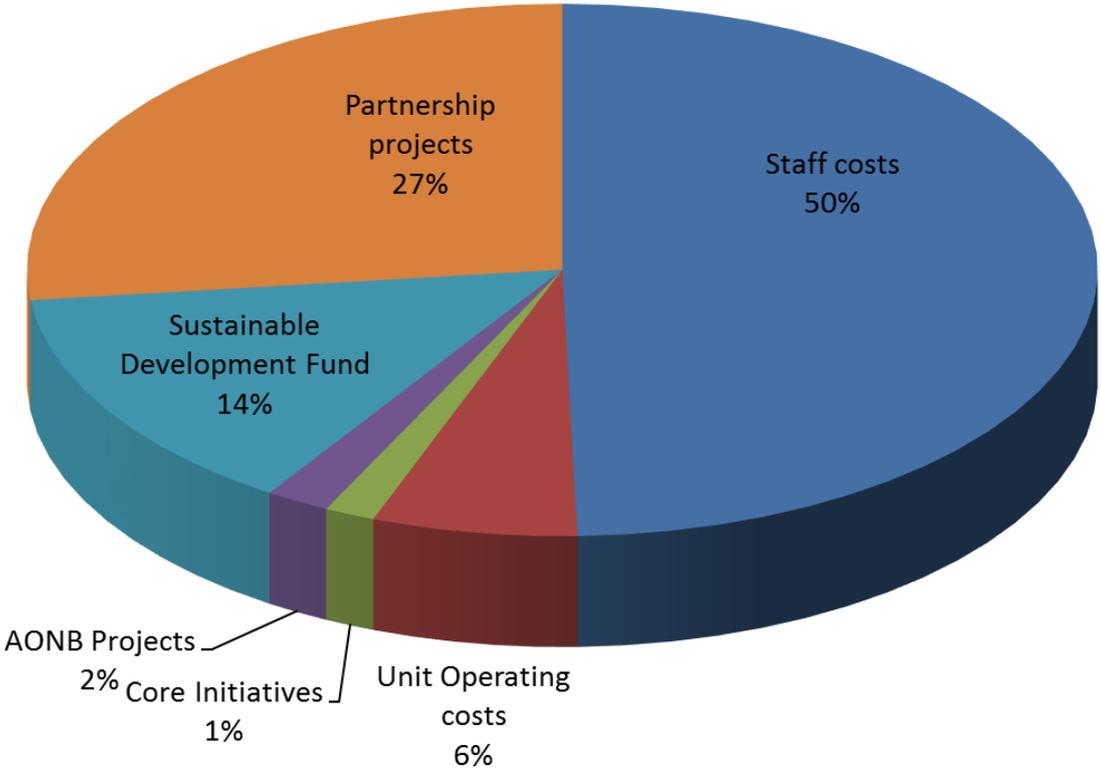
Plans has increased. These are proving to be effective and robust policy documents that add a further level of protection locally to the AONB. Overall the shared contract with Worcestershire County Council Planning Department and collaboration with the Malvern Hills AONB continues to work well. It is proposed to review the arrangement towards the end of the current financial year.

There are a number of highlights outlined in the 2017/18 Annual Report of achievements for the AONB Unit Work Programme. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), between the constituent local authorities, was signed covering the 3 years 2018-2021, giving the AONB Partnership some medium term security and stability. The preparations for the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 engaged an increasing number of people in the local communities and levered substantial resources into the area to increase people's appreciation and understanding of the area. The third cohort of Youth Rangers 'graduated' and the fourth cohort recruited, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund through the Forests' Forest Landscape Partnership. The mindSCAPE project entered its final year of Big Lottery funding and continued to attract national recognition. The recruitment of the replacement AONB Information Officer enabled renewed focus on communications and interpretation over the report period. A number of funding bids and collaborations were developed that it is hoped will bear fruit in due course.

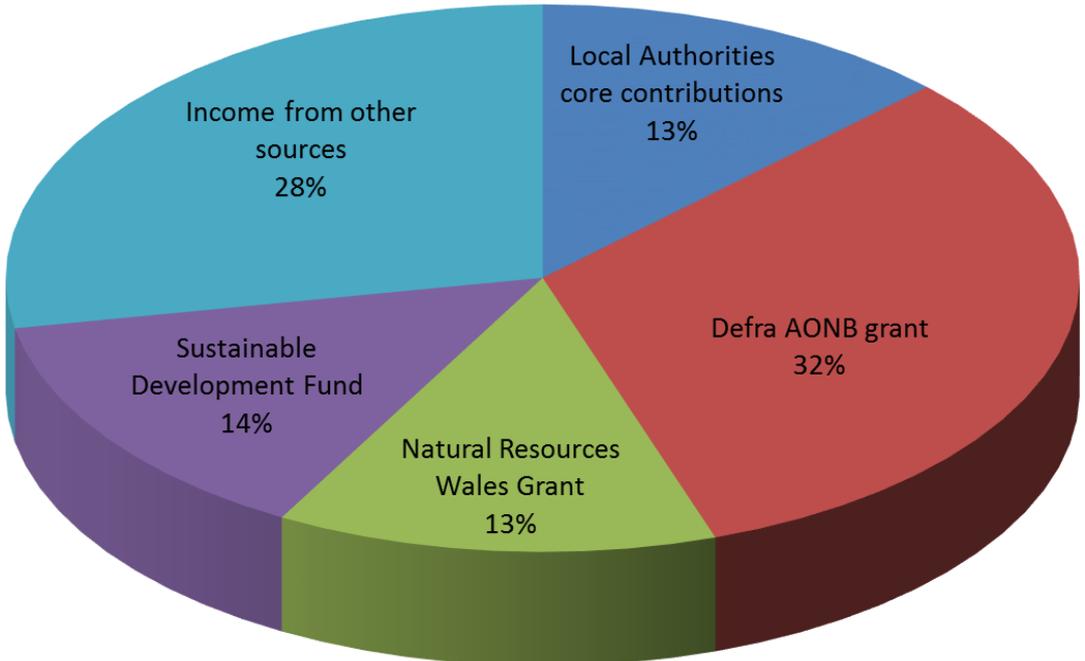
The overall turnover of the AONB Unit was lower in 2017/18 than the previous year as the 2016/17 figures included the main income and expenditure of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016. Despite this the leverage of the AONB Partnership in 2017/18 means that for every £1 of local authority contribution, the AONB Unit has brought in nearly £8.

Wye Valley AONB Unit Accounts 2017/2018		2016/17	2017/18
Expenditure		£	
	Staff costs	<i>198,603</i>	194,945
	Unit Operating costs	<i>21,942</i>	24,334
	Core Initiatives	<i>7,601</i>	6,000
	AONB Projects	<i>9,921</i>	7,605
	Sustainable Development Fund	<i>70,000</i>	55,000
	Partnership projects	<i>230,095</i>	105,539
	TOTAL	<i>538,163</i>	393,423
Income			
	Local Authorities core contributions	<i>50,848</i>	50,002
	Defra AONB grant	<i>122,001</i>	126,234
	Natural Resources Wales Grant	<i>52,210</i>	52,210
	Sustainable Development Fund	<i>70,000</i>	55,000
	Income from other sources	<i>243,104</i>	109,977
	TOTAL	<i>538,163</i>	393,423

Expenditure Chart



Income Chart



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WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)
Annual Report on Work Programme for AONB Unit 2017/2018

AONB Partnership Initiatives	AONB Unit Work Progressed / Achieved
<p>AONB Management Plan 2015-2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise and distribute Wye Valley AONB Management Plan Monitor use of Plan in Planning Applications, Public Inquiries etc Evaluate Plan review options for 2020+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 available on AONB website http://www.wyevallyeaonb.org.uk/index.php/about-us/management-and-guidance/management-plan-2015-2020/ AONB Management Plan referred to in planning application responses and reports.
<p>AONB Strategy & Development Advisor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renew contract for year to support AONB Manager 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 development 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. 568 planning applications were registered in the AONB. 22 planning applications assessed by the contracted Planning consultants 3 responses submitted by the AONB Manager on behalf of the AONB Partnership. The protocol with Monmouthshire County Council, whereby the AONB Manager is consulted on draft Planning Committee Reports, continued efficiently. Three applications were commented on through this protocol. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training held by Wye Valley & Malvern Hills AONB Managers for 30 Herefordshire Council Planning officers and WCC AONB planning advisors. AONB Manager provided advice for 4 Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs)
<p>AONB Farming Awards</p> <p>Promote & publicise 10th 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"> Seek sponsorship for the AONB Farming Awards from local businesses etc. Site visits of all farm entries for short-listing And judging Present the prizes at the Monmouthshire Show Involve winner in Open Farm Sunday event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Award criteria changed to allow entries from anyone managing land within the AONB. 4 nominated landowners for 2017 AONB Farming Awards: Square Farm, Monmouth; Coppett Hill Common Trust; Cherry Orchard Farm, Penallt, and Gadr Farm, Llangovan. Judging panel consisted of AONB Manager, NFU Wales and Farming4Wildlife representatives and 2015 winner. Coppett Hill Common Trust was the winner. The Award was presented in the Countryside Matters Ring at the Monmouthshire Show on 1st July Display boards of previous winners produced for the Monmouthshire Show, installed around the Countryside ring. Banners also produced which were attached to the ring to advertise the awards. Coppett Hill Common visited during AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour, with Trust members explaining their work. Judging panel and dates for 2018 confirmed. The Award will be presented in the Countryside Matters Ring at the Monmouthshire Show on 7th July

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)
Annual Report on Work Programme for AONB Unit 2017/2018

AONB Partnership Initiatives	AONB Unit Work Progressed / Achieved
<p>Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)</p> <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"> • Full spend of £55,000 in 2017/18 • 11 projects supported • 2 PR opportunities • Final SDF report to come in late May 2018 with leverage figures • Our expectation is that figures will be similar to 16/17 totals of £170,174.84 with £149,705.24 cash and £20,469.60 In kind • 5 projects led / managed / partnered by AONB Unit • 6 independently led projects were assisted / supported by AONB staff
<p>Picturesque Produce and distribute regular on-line editions of the AONB newsletter, 'Picturesque' to provide information and interpretation to increase subscribers' awareness and appreciation of the AONB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AONB Information Officer recruitment successful and new person in post from June 2017. • Picturesque has not been priority, but focus has been on new website and social media promotion
<p>AONB Partnership events 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 • Complete evaluation of AONB Perceptions Questionnaire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29 attendees for AONB Partnership tour on 22nd September 2017. The tour included Ross-on-Wye riverbank, Goodrich Castle visitor centre, Coppett Hill Common Trust, Garren and Gamber brooks with AONB trainee ecologists and Lydbrook Bridge. • Evaluation of responses to AONB Perceptions Questionnaire completed & reported on in 2016/17 • Seminar delivered as part of Offa's Dyke Collaboratory, on Lancaut Archaeological Investigations, 16th March 2018.
<p>Exhibitions & Outreach Promote the AONB through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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"> • AONB stand at Monmouthshire Show and Foresters' Forest LP events • 5 Talks and presentation were given including to The Valley's That Changed the World familiarisation visit, Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism Association, Monmouth Chamber of Commerce and Monmouth Breast Cancer support group. Presentation to Offa's Dyke Collaboratory in Knighton on Lancaut archaeological investigation.
<p>MindSCAPE Final (4th) year of £165,000 Big Lottery funded initiative enabling people living with dementia to access and reconnect with the landscape, through arts and creative environmental activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage final year of project and submit reports & claims for Big Lottery • Supervise contractor organising regular creative sessions, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 activities run fortnightly throughout 2017/18 • 22 people (people living with dementia and carers) engaged with the project during 2017/18. <p>Summary of questionnaire statistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 100% Have made friends ○ 93% less isolated ○ 86% less stressed

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)
Annual Report on Work Programme for AONB Unit 2017/2018

AONB Partnership Initiatives	AONB Unit Work Progressed / Achieved
<p>workshops and social activities at appropriate sites for participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host final year seminar to promote findings and success of scheme. • Develop legacy project & exit strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 93% More positive/happy ○ 50% more fit/active ○ 60% More able to do 'mindscape activities' at home ○ 93% more creative ○ 100% more part of their community • Events delivered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Raised awareness of the project by running a practical workshop in the grounds of Hawkwood College Stroud in May 17 (8 attendees) ○ Consulted with dementia colleagues and trailed activity resource guide at the Meaningful Activities Network meeting (Coleford – 20 attendees) and at two of the Dementia Education teams Community Dementia Link worker CPD events in Cheltenham (Sept/Dec 17 totalling 25 attendees) ○ Delivered a successful day conference to share learning and celebrate the project (Oct 17 – 46 attendees) ○ Annual report produced and circulated amongst Councillors, Assembly Members and other AONBs.
<p>Wye Valley River Festival 2018</p> <p>Submit applications to Arts Councils and other funders of the Festival</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Research & Development phase for events and ideas • Develop business sponsorship for 2018 • Commence outreach programme including with schools, young people and intergeneration opportunities • Consolidate preparations for Festival 5th May – 15th May 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous small meetings with production team, partners and performers/artists around Festival theme of 'Woods & Trees' • Development of programme for 5th – 20th May 2018 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ local communities engaged: Hereford, Fownhope, Ross, Lydbrook, Symonds Yat, Monmouth, Redbrook, Llandogo, Tintern & Chepstow. ○ 2 local Partnership sites: Yat Rock (FC) & Tintern Abbey (Cadw) • 9 schools engaged with the project • Pilgrimage Walks scoped and prepared with volunteers • Total raised from other sources £110,000 to date, Total raised in kind-£27,000
<p>Youth Rangers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclude structured programme of activity for 3rd Cohort of young people (14-16 year olds) that will increase their skill set in landscape and heritage conservation and management. • Develop the next phase of the scheme, linking with the Foresters Forest LP and other funding sources to continue the model of engaging young people in conservation and heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 activities delivered, including drystone walling, farm visits, forestry & green-wood work, charcoal making, climbing & crag-clean, caving, summer camp, graduation & bush-craft event. • HLF Foresters' Forest Project started March 2017 continuing project to 2022 • 4th Cohort recruited with 20 enrolled in October 2017. • AONB staff & Youth Ranger Leader volunteers received 'Lowland Leader' training.
<p>Deer Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene & service Deer Management Groups and Deer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Wye Valley Deer Management Group met 1st November. • Local Wild Venison Supply and Demand Feasibility Study commissioned with funding

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Annual Report on Work Programme for AONB Unit 2017/2018

AONB Partnership Initiatives	AONB Unit Work Progressed / Achieved
<p>Monitoring Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>from Monmouthshire LEADER, Natural England and AONB Sustainable Development Fund.</p>
<p>Habitat Conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Phase 1 and priority BAP habitat surveys • Liaise over national roadside verge initiatives with local authorities and Highways Agency • Organise monthly volunteer task days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 conservation activities took place in a variety of locations, with a wide variety of partners. Approximately 70 volunteers took part in these sessions. The work ranged from, hedge planting, vegetation management, drystone walling, coppicing. We worked with a diverse range of partners from the Deer Initiative, NRW, Community Councils, Wildlife Trusts, Plantlife. Also worked regularly with 'Dads Can' Project from Monmouthshire Housing to re-instate 30meters drystone wall. • Work continues in partnership with Ross Town Council to manage bankside vegetation and erosion along the SSSI/SAC riverfront and amenity park. • AONB Ecological Survey Trainees continued Phase 1 Habitat Survey work in Monmouthshire and south Herefordshire, including digitisation on QGIS. Trainees have undertaken a comparison of Phase 1 surveys in Monmouthshire producing a report of their findings. • A466 River Views Feasibility Report produced by AONB Ecological Survey Trainees covering roadside views of the river Wye between Monmouth and St Arvans. • Restoration of drystone walls a regular Youth Ranger/ volunteer activity.
<p>Website and social media</p> <p>Upgrading and management of www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk and social networking sites e.g. facebook and twitter. Maintenance of www.wyevalleywalk.org and hosting of www.overlookingthewye.org.uk & www.wyevalleyriverfestival.co.uk websites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new website and social media promotion developed • Facebook 'Likes' for Wye Valley AONB https://www.facebook.com/wyevalley.aonb/ increased from 942 to 1,139 over year. The highest reach was 3,402 people.
<p>Work placements</p> <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"> • 2 Ecological Survey trainees hosted by the AONB Unit on contract extensions to the LEMUR + scheme, to undertake additional project work (see 'Habitat Conservation' above). • PhD student in final stages of completion of work.
<p>Undergrounding</p> <p>Continue working with Western Power to identify power-lines within</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were 3 undergrounding schemes completed, in Goodrich and 2 schemes in Tintern. A further scheme in Goodrich has been approved by the steering group -

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)
Annual Report on Work Programme for AONB Unit 2017/2018

AONB Partnership Initiatives	AONB Unit Work Progressed / Achieved
<p>the AONB suitable for undergrounding.</p>	<p>Western Power are currently undertaking detailed assessments of the proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Development Officer attended the Annual WPD Stakeholder workshop. • The Development Officer attended Wales undergrounding group meetings on May 15th and Sept 11th; also West Midlands undergrounding group meetings on June 29th.
<p>Landscape scale conservation Develop and support partnership projects that deliver landscape scale conservation activity and initiatives within and adjoining the AONB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop scheme around Little Doward & South Herefordshire with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust & others • Develop options for a possible Landscape Partnership scheme in the north of the AONB between Woolhope and Sellack • Scope for appropriate projects and prepare applications for National Grid Visual Improvement Programme (VIP) for area between Ross & Goodrich <p>Work with partners in Monmouthshire on Long Forest and Usk to Wye initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An AONB wide Landscape scale schemes in relation to Veteran & Riparian Trees was developed and an expression of interest submitted for consideration as part of the Woodland Trust Trees Outside Woodlands project. • Development Officer represents AONB on the Herefordshire Meadows Group Steering Group, assisting with the delivery of Natural England Feasibility Fund group. • Lower Wye Valley Green Infrastructure and Natural Flood Management partnership project developed with Monmouthshire County Council, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Wye & Usk Foundation and Woodland Trust. • Water Environment Grant application prepared with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and Wye & Usk Foundation
<p>Wye Valley Walk Support Wye Valley Walk Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor counters along Walk • Manage Passport scheme • Facilitate future options for Lydbrook Bridge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 counters along Wye Valley Walk in AONB recorded 114,594 movements in 2017. Feedback remained largely positive despite monitoring of website and Passport scheme being hindered by staff vacancy in first half of year. • AONB Manager prepared £1.7million Heritage Lottery Fund application on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council for the restoration of Lydbrook Black Bridge – currently closed and causing a diversion of Wye Valley Walk.
<p>Public Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AONB Community Links Officer (CLO) has given 4 talks to local schools. • Well-being Walking event and lunch attended by 70 people, led by CLO • 5 guided walks with Chepstow Walkers are Welcome, Monmouth Walkers are Welcome and Lower Wye Ramblers. • 1 talk given on Wye Valley Habitats • 10,000 copies of AONB Map & Guide distributed to key tourism outlets
<p>Partnership Influence & attend partnerships as appropriate; eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Destination Management Partnership • Visit Herefordshire Leisure and Recreation Forum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AONB staff engaged in Strategic Partnership of the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association and the Visit Herefordshire Tourism and Leisure Forum. • AONB Manager attended Monmouthshire Public Service Board seminar • AONB Manager &/or AONB Development Officer attended meetings of Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (NAC), Wye Catchment Partnership, Monmouthshire

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Annual Report on Work Programme for AONB Unit 2017/2018

AONB Partnership Initiatives	AONB Unit Work Progressed / Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Wye Catchment Management Partnership Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC) Monmouthshire Environment Partnership, Herefordshire Wildlife Link 	<p>Environmental Partnership Board, Welsh Assembly Rural Affairs Cross Party group and Future Landscapes Wales Working Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Links Officer represents AONB on 'Creative Canopy' Arts Council England sponsored network in Forest of Dean Community Links Officer on Wye Beaver liaison group.
<p>Collaboration</p> <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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Protected Landscapes in Wales collaborated through on-going Future Landscapes Wales programme. The Protected Landscapes in Wales also collaborated over the Scenic Wales calendar, with 200 copies distributed to AONB Partnership members. AONB Manager attended AONB Lead Officers meeting on Birmingham. AONB Manager attended the National Parks Wales Seminar in Brecon, Welsh Protected Landscapes Legislation training in Llanelli and strategic planning workshop with National Association for AONBs. AONB Manager and Information Officer attended NAAONB Landscapes for Life conference. A long standing JAC member (from CLA & River Wye Preservation Trust) received a Landscapes for Life Award.
<p>Monitoring</p> <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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Ecological Survey Trainees continued Phase 1 Habitat Survey work in Monmouthshire and south Herefordshire, including digitisation on QGIS. Trainees have undertaken a comparison of Phase 1 surveys in Monmouthshire producing a report of their findings. Under development is a drystone walling project of further survey and awareness raising.
<p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service and set agendas for JAC, TOWP and Steering Group 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, 3rd July 2017, 6th November 2017 & 5th March 2018, preceded by TOWP meetings on 14th June 2017, 11th Oct 2017 & 7th Feb 2018, AONB Annual report 2016-17 presented to JAC in July 2017 AONB Steering Group held on 11th Oct & 7th Feb with AONB Unit budgets and spend profile presented and scrutinised.
<p>Funding and resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiate a new Memorandum of Understanding between the core funding partners for 2018 - 2021 Continue investigating funding and development opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 2018 – 2021 signed between four constituent local authorities. Application successful for Monmouthshire LEADER funding to produce an AONB app through a partnership project with Cadw investigating and interpreting links between

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Annual Report on Work Programme for AONB Unit 2017/2018

AONB Partnership Initiatives	AONB Unit Work Progressed / Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigation into external funding and securing sources for strategic and partnership projects 	<p>Tintern Abbey and the wider landscape.</p>
<p>Offa's Dyke Collaboratory <i>Investigate opportunities for future cross border partnership projects along the corridor of Offa's Dyke, promoting archaeological projects and investigation into landscape significance of the 8th century monument</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Manager is on steering group for Offa's Dyke Collaboratory, and gave presentation at ODC event at Offa's Dyke Centre, Knighton on archaeological investigation of Lancaut peninsular.
<p>Overlooking the Wye legacy <i>Continue to develop heritage & Community projects as part of the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination, on behalf of Forest of Dean Building Preservation Trust, of archaeological investigations of Lancaut Church & Spital Meend hillfort. AONB team hosted day school at Chepstow Drill Hall on Lancaut archaeological investigations, on behalf of Offa's Dyke Collaboratory and Forest of Dean Building Preservation Trust. 90 people attended.

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

April 2017 to March 2018

**A summary of strategy and planning advisory work undertaken by
Worcestershire County Council in the Wye Valley AONB – April 2017
to March 2018**

Contents

- 1. Introduction..... 3
- 2. Strategic policy consultations..... 3
- 3. Planning casework..... 3
- 4. Conclusions..... 4

- Appendix 1 – Strategic policy consultations April 2017 to March 2018..... 5
- Appendix 2 – Summary of planning applications April 2017 to March 2018..... 7

1. Introduction

Between April 2017 and March 2018, 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 as required. 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 supported the Wye Valley AONB Unit in providing a response to the *Herefordshire Local Plan – Rural Areas Site Allocations Development Plan Document: Issues and Options Paper*. The comments stated that the AONB Unit was supportive of the Plan because it would provide further certainty in terms of the location and quality of new developments. The comments highlighted the importance of taking into account the impact on the natural and historic landscapes of the Wye Valley AONB when defining the settlement boundaries and setting criteria to allocate new sites for development.

A brief summary of the Unit's policy response is included in Appendix 1 of this report.

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 2017-2018.

Table 1 - Summary statistics for planning applications April 2017 to March 2018
(2016-17 figures in brackets)

Local Authority	No. of applications registered	No. of applications considered relevant to Wye Valley AONB	No. of applications consulted with the AONB Unit	No. of responses submitted to the Planning Authority
Herefordshire Council	327 (235)	188 (115)	17 (20)	2 (7)
Forest of Dean District Council	85 (79)	50 (48)	2 (4)	0 (4)
Monmouthshire County Council	155 (186)	121 (127)	3 (11)	1 (0)
Gloucestershire County Council	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Totals	568 (500)	359 (290)	22 (35)	3 (11)

There were 568 planning applications registered, based on the lists of applications provided by the Wye Valley AONB Unit between April 2017 and March 2018. This is a small increase since last year.

At 359, the number of applications identified as relevant for consideration because of potential impacts on the Wye Valley AONB increased compared to the previous year, when 290 applications were considered.

On 22 occasions, WCC consulted the AONB Unit planning applications of potential adverse impact, however written responses were provided to only three of these applications, a significant drop since last year. This decrease is due to a more targeted approach to our responses and more effective initial consultation with the AONB Unit, combined with their closer liaison with respective LPA case officers.

The AONB Unit responses stated various concerns in relation to the proposed developments, but none of them was an outright objection.

On two occasions, the comments submitted by the AONB Unit were noted by the case officers but the assessment of all matters relating to the proposals led to the approval of planning applications. One planning application remains undecided.

A summary of the AONB Unit's representations, alongside the planning decision and extracts from the case officers' reports, can be found in Appendix 2.

4. Conclusions

This report covers the third year of the Worcestershire County Council consultancy work provided for the Wye Valley AONB Unit. This year saw an even more targeted approach to the WCC advice, as a result of improved systems such as WCC consulting on its proposed approach to the application with the AONB Unit at an early stage, and increased familiarity among WCC officers of the AONB's policies and guidance, and of relevant AONB issues.

Appendix 1 – Summary of responses to strategic consultations in the period April 2017 – March 2018

Consulting authority	Consultation document	Summary of Unit response
National consultations		
None		
County or Unitary level consultations		
Herefordshire County Council	Herefordshire Local Plan – Rural Areas Site Allocations Development Plan Document: Issues and Options Paper	<p>We welcome the Herefordshire Rural Areas Site Allocation Development Plan (RASA DPD) because it will offer further interpretation of policies RA1 and RA2 of the adopted Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy. It will provide further certainty in terms of the location and quality of new developments in these locations.</p> <p>The AONB Unit is supportive over the defining of settlement boundaries within the RASA DPD. Boundaries which fall within or in the setting of the AONB should be very carefully considered and take into account their impact on the natural and historic landscapes of the Wye Valley AONB, which is accorded the highest status of protection by Paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework. It is very important that the boundaries reflect the historic settlement patterns and protect these settlements from overdevelopment and coalescence.</p> <p>Any allocations which could be considered major development in the AONB must apply the tests in Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The landscape and visual impact on the Wye Valley AONB will be essential criteria in allocating new sites for development within these Parish areas. Sites should be allocated only where the impacts on the local landscape character and the AONB's Special Qualities can be minimised. The location, distribution and size of the allocations should be informed by the Strategic Objectives of the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2015-20, particularly WV-D2 and WV-D3.</p> <p>The AONB Unit considers that Local Green Space should be designated where appropriate, in consultation with the local community and stakeholders. Where green space is proposed for allocation within the AONB or its setting, the AONB Unit should also be consulted.</p>
District Level consultations		

None

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs)

The AONB Manager provided information to the following NDPs:-

Woolhope

Ross

Goodrich & Welsh Bicknor

Hewelsfield & Brockweir

Appendix 2 Summary of Planning Applications - April 2017 to March 2018

Herefordshire Council

Application details	AONB comments	Planning decision	Justification
<p>P163707/F</p> <p>Proposed residential development of 10 open market family homes and 5 affordable homes.</p> <p>Land opposite Mill House Farm Fownhope Herefordshire</p>	<p>We recognise that the site has been allocated for housing, albeit less than proposed in this application. It remains for the Council to determine whether this constitutes major development under Section 116 of the NPPF. The principle issue is the scale and density of development and the sensitivity of the design in the context of the local landscape character.</p> <p>We acknowledge the modifications to the site design, layout and landscaping and the use of house designs and colours which reflect the vernacular architecture. The Design & Access Statement states “Sustainable Development are specifically addressed by the submitted and updated Landscape Character and Visual Analysis, Landscape Report and Landscape Management Plan”. However there appears to be no references to the sustainability criteria of the Neighbourhood Plan Policy FW16: b) “Utilising physical sustainability measures associated with buildings that include, in particular, orientation of buildings, the provision of energy and water conservation measures, cycle and recycling storage... and renewable energy infrastructure such as photovoltaic panels”. We believe the housing layout and designs should be modified further to make the buildings more sustainable in energy use without losing their vernacular reference. We would also welcome further assurances that the detail of the type and colour of materials would not be diluted subsequent to any approval of the development. Of particular concern are the types and colours of stonework, brickwork and rendered walls of the prominent two storey houses. This will be crucial to ensure this development blends into its wider setting (for example, as in View 17 and 38).</p> <p>The proposal includes traditional orchard planting. This will help to soften the edge of the development and will be an enhancement to the local area and this prominent ‘gateway’ to the village. However,</p>	<p>Approved with conditions</p>	<p>The site is now less than 1ha in extent and is for fewer than half the number of dwellings. Mitigation remains in the form of orchard and wildflower meadow planting to north-east and north-west.</p> <p>The CS has reaffirmed Fownhope as a main village where proportionate growth may be sought and even more importantly, the Parish has adopted a NDP, which amongst other things, identifies the application site as a housing allocation</p> <p>Overall, on this matter, officers are of the opinion that the proposal is not major development. Accordingly NPPF 116 is not applicable. This is not to diminish the importance of NPPF 115 and Development Plan policies which confirm the great weight that goes to conservation of</p>

	<p>there does not appear to be any information about how this will be managed neither as grassland nor as orchard. A viable and sustainably resourced management plan is required. We also consider that there should be a condition on protection of this orchard to ensure that the settlement boundary is not extended further in a north-westerly direction, as there will be no coherent link to any further development. We would also suggest that front gardens are protected by conditions and trees on the site are protected through Tree Preservation Orders.</p> <p>Finally, we are concerned that there is no assessment of how lighting will affect the views at dawn/dusk and night time. This should be considered as part of this application and any lighting should be minimised and controlled by appropriate conditions.</p> <p>If the Council are minded to approve this application in the AONB then we would expect the above observations to be taken into account, to ensure that the development is as sustainable as possible with the minimum detrimental impact on the Wye Valley AONB.</p>		<p>landscape and scenic beauty in such areas.</p> <p>It is accepted that the scheme layout proposes mitigation, compensation and enhancement, which could potentially reduce localised adverse effects in the longer-term. The scheme is considered to respond positively overall to the requirement to conserve landscape and scenic beauty in accordance with NPPF 115.</p>
<p>P180131/F Application for variation of a condition 4 of planning permission P150509/F (Proposed 13 bedroom extension to existing nursing home, newfreestanding 25 bedroom EMI care unit with associated car/cycle parking, biomass boiler building, new access road and landscaping scheme). To incorporate design changes. Hazelhurst Nursing Home Bishopswood Ross-On-Wye</p>	<p>We are disappointed that the applicant has found it necessary to elevate the building and widen the access road in places. We continue to view this as a large development in the AONB but acknowledge that the lower EMI Unit has been approved. As previously stated, when viewed from Coppett Hill the landscape has little capacity to absorb any more large structures without significant detrimental impact on the AONB.</p> <p>If the Council is minded to grant planning permission, the landscaping scheme must be rigorously implemented, monitored and enforced, especially to ensure that mature trees grow up around the EMI Unit. Additionally there should be further specimen, parkland and/or woodland tree planting around the EMI Unit and to the south and east of the Unit to provide more screening of the building from neighbouring properties and glimpsed views from the B4234, Wye Valley Walk etc.</p> <p>In determining this application, the Council will need to balance the harm to the nationally important landscape of the AONB against</p>	Approved	<p>The approved scheme showed a length of approximately 70 metres at 3.6 metres (252 square metres) and a length of some 105 metres at 5.5 metres (577.5 square metres). The proposal is now that it would have a uniform width of 4.8 metre (840 square metres). Therefore the amount of hardsurface is almost equivalent to that approved (possibly some 10.5 square metres more). It is my opinion, that this change would not have a negative landscape impact. In fact, I think it would be an improvement in that the previous 5.5 metre width would have been more intrusive</p>

Herefordshire HR9 5QX	any social and economic benefits of the scheme. Under section 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) the Council must give 'great weight' to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB.		being on the steeper gradient and in many respects the change in width would have drawn attention to it.
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Monmouthshire County Council

Application details	AONB comments	Planning decision	Justification
DC/2017/00868 A telecoms mast Tump Farm Whitebrook NP25 4TU	<p>The application fails to have regard to the Wye Valley AONB and the Strategic Objectives set out in the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan. The design and location is of a standard lattice mast in an exposed position in open countryside on the lip of the valley beside the regional recreational asset of the Wye Valley Walk and in view of the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. We do not consider that this adequately seeks to address the conservation and enhancement of the unique character and Special Qualities of the landscape. Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 recognises that some change to the outstanding landscape of the Wye Valley is inevitable; however it needs to be carefully managed to sustain the distinctive landscape features and Special Qualities of the area. We recognise that Mobile phones have revolutionised modern life and that the topography and rurality of the AONB means that coverage is not consistent. There are already a number of examples of effective technical options and/or positioning of masts that have improve mobile phone coverage in the AONB without having significant negative impact on the landscape.</p> <p>The AONB Management Plan suggests that masts should 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. Similarly the AONB Management Plan suggests that mast sharing may be an option. Alternatively, there may be locations slightly further to the east or on the English side of the where a mast may be better screened by woodland. However, we failed to</p>	Pending	N/A

	<p>find any information within the application documents to demonstrate whether alternative sites had been considered and why this is the most appropriate site for the development. There needs to be some justification from the applicant that the site has been chosen from a rigorous assessment of a selection of sites as having the least landscape and visual impact to meet the topographic requirements which would enable this technology to function effectively. Again, it is not clear what alternative designs or mitigation measures have been considered which result in this being the optimum solution.</p> <p>We therefore object to this application on the grounds that a mast in this location would have a significant detrimental impact on the Special Qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB. There are significant details lacking and the form and location of the development has not been adequately justified as being in the best location in the AONB. We consider that Monmouthshire County Council could be in contravention of Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 should they determine to approve this application.</p>		
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Forest of Dean District Council

Application details	AONB comments	Planning decision	Justification
None			

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd July 2018

WYE VALLEY RIVER FESTIVAL 2018 INITIAL EVALUATION

Purpose

To inform members of the achievements and the initial evaluation of the third Wye Valley River Festival.

Recommendations

That the JAC welcomes the success of the Wye Valley River Festival 2018

Key Issues

- The third Wye Valley River Festival journeyed between Hereford and Chepstow during 5th & 20th May 2018, celebrating nature, culture, landscape and life along the River Wye, and the woods and trees of the Wye Valley.
- There were about 30,000 visits or acts of engagement in 30 Wye Valley River Festival events at 25 different venues and only one outdoor event had any rain.
- The Welsh Government Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport, Lord Elis-Thomas, opened the Museum of the Moon at Cadw's Tintern Abbey.
- This third Festival was organised by the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit and the professional Festival Management team with an overall budget of nearly £200,000 working with arts professionals in collaboration with local communities and conservationists.
- A wide variety of organisations and communities supported the Festival including many hours of volunteer time and sizable financial contributions from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), Arts Council of Wales, Arts Council England, Forestry Commission and Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership, Shire Hall Monmouth, Cadw, Environment Agency and a significant range of smaller donations and in-kind contributions.
- A great many people dedicated a huge amount of time and energy to making the Wye Valley River Festival such a broad, innovative and enjoyable series of events.
- A full evaluation of the Festival is being undertaken to appraise lessons learned as well as a review of the three Festivals held in line with the original business plan.
- Once the evaluation is complete future prospects for any further Wye Valley River Festivals will need to be determined.

Reasons

The main theme of the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 was 'Woods & Trees'. The Festival aimed to inspire and challenge, to change the way we look at ourselves and how we relate to our environment, locally and globally. The programme of events created spaces for celebration, wonder and entertainment and to provoke thought regarding our precious River Wye and its connections through woods and trees across the globe.

Implications

Generally the consensus and anecdotal feedback is that the Festival was a phenomenal success. It managed to spread an inspiring and entertaining message about the importance and complexity of the Wye Valley woodlands, using innovative and creative outdoor art. During the second week the Museum of the Moon in Tintern Abbey became a national sensation. Meanwhile artists have worked with 11 Primary Schools and about 500 children in preparing artworks for the Festival. A care home and 2 school worked on an inter-generational project.

Over 150 singers, musicians and amateur actors came together from riverside communities to perform at the events alongside seasoned professionals. About 30,000 people were engaged in Festival events where people were entertained by local youth theatre and circus groups, choirs and bands and a range of professional and local artists. Two world premieres were performed on the first day of the Festival. Over 300 torchbearers from the local communities joined together to celebrate their place, in Monmouth and Llandogo. The overall budget was about £200,000 and the new Festival website was created www.wyevalleyriverfestival.co.uk. There was plenty of social media activity on Twitter: @wyebeauty #wyevalleyriverfestival; and Facebook: www.facebook.com/wyevalleyriverfestival, which now has 2,625 followers. Also the Festival Documenter website <http://www.mywye.co.uk/> has a range of short videos from the Festival and a gallery of great images <http://www.mywye.co.uk/festival-18-photos.html>.

The Welsh Government Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport, Lord Elis-Thomas, attended the launch of Like Jerram's Museum of the Moon at Cadw's Tintern Abbey and spoke to the assembled 100 invited guests. Two legacies remained after the end of the Festival; Marchant Barron's poems at The Kymin (until 30th June) and the Arborealists Exhibition in Monmouth Museum (until September 2018).

A full evaluation of the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 is underway. About 300 audience feedback forms are currently being analysed by Fuze Research. Meanwhile 50 Festival performers, participants and crew have also responded to a formal survey. These will be combined into the Festival Evaluation Report, which will be presented to the JAC, probably at the next meeting in November. The report will also compare the three Wye Valley River Festivals (2014, 2016 & 2018) against the original objectives in the 3-Festival Business Plan.

Background

The Wye Valley River Festival 2018 is a Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership initiative with funding from the Sustainable Development Fund, a Welsh Government Initiative in the Wye Valley AONB, Arts Council England, Arts Council of Wales, supported by the Welsh Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund, Visit Wales, Forestry Commission, Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Environment Agency, Cadw, Ross Town Council and Monmouth Town Council. In-kind support from Cadw, Hereford River Carnival, The Shire Hall, Monmouth, Natural Resources Wales and numerous volunteers & local communities. Sponsorship from County Marquees, Severn Area Rescue Service (SARA), Griffiths Engineering, Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire, Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association, Hillside Brewery, Green Man at Abbey Mill, the aMazing Hedge Puzzle & Wye Valley Butterfly Zoo, Wild Trail bars. Special thanks to land owners at Symonds Yat Rock, Lydbrook Tump, Shire Hall, Monmouth, Tintern Abbey and Llandogo Riverside who granted access to make these events possible.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd July 2018

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 21st September 2018 for the Study Tour.
- B. Encourage a good attendance on the Tour.

Key Issues

- This year the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour will be held on Friday 21st September.
- The programme is still being finalised but will focus predominantly on projects and management issues in the northern part of the AONB in Herefordshire.
- Initial invitations for expressions of interest to attend will be sent out shortly.
- The Tour falls within 'Outstanding Week' 15th – 23rd September, which is the fourth year of this week promoting and celebrating AONBs.

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.

Implications

The date of 21st 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. Unfortunately the date clashes with a Brecon Beacons National Park Authority meeting so an invitation cannot be extended to our neighbouring Designated Landscape in Wales. The programme for the Tour is still being finalised, however the Tour will focus on projects and management issues in the northern part of the AONB in Herefordshire. 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. An adequate lunch and transport will be 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 2017 AONB Partnership Tour. There was a good spread of representation from throughout the AONB even though the Tour was focused on the part of the AONB between Ross-on-Wye and Lydbrook. The Tour visited the riverside at Ross, Goodrich Castle, Coppett Hill Common, Brelston Green and Lydbrook Bridge. Feedback from attendees of the Tour was extremely positive.

The 2016 Tour visited sites in and around Tintern in Monmouthshire. The 2015 Study Tour visited Symonds Yat Rock, Lancaut Church, St Briavel's Castle Youth Hostel, Stowfield Quarry, the mindSCAPE project log circle at Braceland and the river bank by Biblins Bridge.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS’
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd July 2018

PROJECT GRANT APPLICATIONS

Purpose

To inform members of the latest situation with regards to three grant applications submitted on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have approved funding for a Natural Flood Management and Green Infrastructure project covering 4 Wye tributaries in the Monmouthshire part of the AONB.
- Gloucestershire County Council submitted a Heritage Grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the restoration of Lydbrook Black Bridge totalling £1.5million.
- The Wye & Usk Foundation submitted an application for the Water Environment Grant, entitled Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR) which includes most of the English part of the AONB.

Reasons

In 2017 Natural Resources Wales (NRW) launched a collaboration funding stream up to December 2019 to support the sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR). The AONB Unit worked with Monmouthshire County Council, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Monmouthshire Meadows, National Farmers Union (NFU) Cymru, Woodland Trust and NRW to develop a project covering 4 catchments of the Lower Wye Valley between Penallt and St Arvans. The project will take a catchment approach, over 54km² of the Wye Valley AONB, developing practical sustainable solutions addressing land management, water run-off, access and invasive weed issues through an Integrated Natural Flood Management and Green Infrastructure Strategy. A key focus is on resolving where surface water run-off and flooding impact on people’s ability to access and enjoy the countryside. Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam also dominate in some places.

The JAC has previously endorsed its support for Gloucestershire County Council’s Heritage Grant application for the restoration of Lydbrook Black Bridge, also known as Stowfield Viaduct. The AONB Manager had worked closely with GCC staff and the local Black Bridge Steering Committee in drafting the bid.

The Wye & Usk Foundation (WUF), Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and the AONB Unit worked on a Water Environment Grant partnership bid covering most of the catchment of the River Wye in England. WUF submitted the application, entitled Restoring Our Amazing

River (ROAR) in May 2018. The Water Environment Grant (WEG) was launched by DEFRA, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Rural Payments Agency under the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). The scheme will fund up to 100% multi-year projects that start in 2018/19 and run to March 2021. WEG will provide support to restore habitats, landscapes and other features (including river and water), address diffuse and other water pollution, and recover species populations including the threat from non-native species. It is aimed at a wide range of potential projects from river restoration and in-river barrier removal through to advice for landowners and control of invasive species through to work which improves water quality. It can support feasibility studies, information sharing and delivery of catchment scale improvements. Projects need to demonstrate they meet Water Framework Directive objectives as set out in river basin management plans, including those for water dependant protected sites (such as the River Wye SAC and SSSI).

Implications

The Lower Wye Valley Catchments Green Infrastructure and Natural Flood Management project has secured £68,000 from the NRW SMNR Collaboration Funding towards a total project of £136,400 until December 2019. The Natural Flood Management and Green Infrastructure project will focus on the 4 Wye tributaries in the Tintern area and is a partnership between the AONB Unit and MCC with NFU Wales, Gwent Wildlife Trust, NRW, Monmouthshire Meadows and the Woodland Trust. The aim is to work with landowners, land managers, interested parties and the public to develop practical sustainable solutions to address land management, water run-off, countryside access and invasive weed issues. MCC will have inputs from countryside access, biodiversity, highways and local flood management teams. A project officer will be employed by MCC and seconded to the AONB Unit until Dec 2019. Recruitment will proceed as soon as possible. Once an officer is appointed there will be full local consultation as community involvement is central to the scheme. The project also builds on discussions with NRW's local forestry team about how to deliver a more joined up approach to resolve some of these issues. It is anticipated that the project will deliver smaller scale actions during the project and be a pilot which is intended to identify agreed solutions to some of the bigger issues which may lead to subsequent bids for capital grants etc.

The Lydbrook Bridge HLF application was submitted by Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) in March. The AONB Manager had worked closely with GCC staff and the local Black Bridge Steering Committee in drafting the bid. Following negotiations subsequent to the application submission the total bid has reduced to £1,468,500 on account of the safety works currently being undertaken by Gloucestershire County Council. The application is due to be determined at the HLF Board meeting on 26th June, therefore the result of the application may be announced by the time of the JAC meeting. If the application is not successful a revised approach will need to be taken to the conservation of all the former railway bridges over the River Wye in the AONB.

The Wye & Usk Foundation, working with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and the AONB Unit, submitted an application for the Water Environment Grant, entitled Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR). The bid is for £1,188,905 which includes most of the English part of the AONB as well as the adjacent Garren & Gamber catchment. The overall project is based on the work of Wye Catchment Partnership, the Site Improvement Plan for the River Wye SAC and the River Restoration Plan for the Wye and Lugg SSSI's. Through targeted farm advice, ROAR aims to encourage more sustainable agricultural land use in south Herefordshire and

address the issue of excess soil loss from farmland, fragmented habitats and unfavourable pollution levels in the lower Lugg, Garren & Gamber and the Wye Valley AONB. The project aims to further extend the area of the River Wye SAC able to support successful salmon spawning from upstream of Ross-on-Wye to the junction with the Lugg. The project will also address the need to increase levels of sensitive and sustainable tree management along the banks of the River Wye and its tributaries. A further outcome is to enhance the extent of floodplain meadow habitat along the Lugg and the Wye. DEFRA is expected to make an announcement on successful WEG schemes in August 2019.

Background

Further detail on the HLF & WEG applications can be found through the links below.

Lydbrook Bridge

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-rights-of-way/major-projects/lydbrook-bridge/>

HLF Heritage Grants

<https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/heritage-grants>

Water Environment Grant (WEG): guidance and forms

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-environment-grant-weg-handbooks-guidance-and-forms>

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd July 2018

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AONBs

Purpose

To update members on recent work of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) including the forthcoming Landscapes for Life Conference and Bowland Award.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) has been meeting with DEFRA to discuss the role AONBs play in delivering the DEFRA agenda.
- The theme and dates for the national AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference is "Shaping the Long View" on 24th - 26th July in Canterbury.
- Two representatives from the AONB Partnership are attending the AONB Landscapes for Life Conference and the Wye Valley River Festival is submitted for the Bowland Award.

Reasons

The NAAONB champions the 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland as nationally protected landscapes cared for by locally accountable partnerships that promote and support effective long term management to keep these nationally designated landscapes special. The NAAONB is a Charity with its interest focused on AONBs, but flexible enough to extend that interest to active engagement with National Parks and other areas not yet designated. The NAAONB Board and core team work closely with DEFRA and Welsh Government to harness the collective experience, enthusiasm and goodwill of the AONB Family. They bring the AONB Family together as a cohesive entity providing leadership and strategic direction, celebrating the unique identity of the individual members and AONBs, and working with others to achieve shared objectives.

Implications

Landscapes for Life Conference 24th -26th July, Canterbury

The annual National AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference (L4L2018) will take place in at the University of Kent, Canterbury from 24th -26th July in association with the Kent Downs AONB. With a theme of "Shaping the Long View", keynote speakers include Merrick Denton-Thompson, President of the Landscape Institute, Julian Glover, Chair of the Review of Designated Landscapes in England and Emeritus Professor Allan Buckwell, Senior Fellow at the IEEP. Andrew Blake, AONB Manager will also give a presentation on the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales. There will be much informed, enthused and energised delegate participation and discussion about Defra's 25 YEP, the Review of Designated Landscapes and what the UK's landscapes might look like after Brexit. Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer, will also attend the conference. The conference is an excellent opportunity to meet and network with fellow landscape professionals from across the UK.

The Bowland Award, a bronze sculpture of a hen harrier, is awarded annually for the best project, best practice or outstanding contribution to the wellbeing of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Wye Valley River Festival has been entered for the Award.

AONB Family Post Brexit Agri-Environment Offer

The NAAONB has collated proposals from the AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards via Basecamp for a post Brexit agri-environment offer for Defra. The final document summarised the principles that the AONB Family network have all agreed and an appendix of proposed trials/pilots.

All Wales Conservation Delivery

The NAAONB is leading on a programme to establish how Welsh Designated Landscapes can help deliver on the challenges highlighted in the State of Nature Resources Report, the emerging Area Statements, WTW's Conservation Strategy, and commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The aim of the programme is to maximise the collaboration within and between designated landscapes in a coherent, integrated and collaborative way, such that the impacts is amplified beyond that which would be possible by working at a single designated landscape level. The project will operate across the whole of Wales, focussing on the AONBs and National Parks, but where appropriate working beyond designated landscape boundaries.

HLF Resilience Fund

The NAAONB application to the HLF Resilience Fund was submitted on Friday 30th March. The bid is to build on the Future Landscape work – building resilience and securing assets. There are two prime elements to the bid: improving sustainability/governance of NAAONB And Personal/professional development for up to 40 AONB staff. The NAAONB expect a decision from HLF shortly.

Diary Dates

Outstanding Week - 15th-23rd September – Nationwide

Chairmen's Conference and NAAONB AGM - 29th November - London

Background

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) is the charity (Number 1,158,871) and trusted voice for the AONB Family. It works to ensure that the natural beauty of all the 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, is understood and supported at all levels. NAAONB Newsletter is available to sign up for by clicking on <http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk/our-news/newsletter/>

The NAAONB Core Messages are:-

- People are passionate about Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and care deeply about their future.
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are some of the most outstanding, beautiful and cherished landscapes in Britain. They need to be cared for, now and in the future.
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are dynamic, living landscapes that underpin the economy and the health and wellbeing of society.
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are vibrant landscapes, which offer a wealth of opportunities for everyone to enjoy them and help look after them.
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are designated as special landscapes which provide a range of benefits for people and wildlife.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd July 2018

AONB & PARTNER REPORTS

Purpose

To advise members of activity of the AONB Unit and Partners, relating to:-

- a. Offa's Dyke Collaboratory
- b. Farming Awards
- c. mindSCAPE
- d. Youth Rangers
- e. WG Access Grant
- f. The Ash Project <http://www.theashproject.org.uk/>
- g. Undergrounding

FOR INFORMATION

The AONB Manager will give a brief verbal update on the following projects:

- a. Offa's Dyke Collaboratory
- b. Farming Awards
- c. mindSCAPE
- d. Youth Rangers
- e. WG Access Grant
- f. The Ash Project <http://www.theashproject.org.uk/>
- g. Undergrounding

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