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27th June 2016

Notice of meeting

Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Monday, 4th July, 2016 at 2.00 pm,
The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Election of Chairman.	
2.	Appointment of Vice-Chairman.	
3.	Apologies for Absence / Introductions.	
4.	Declarations of Interest.	
5.	To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.	1 - 6
6.	Public Question Time.	
7.	Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales, Future Landscapes Wales.	7 - 30
8.	Annual Report 2015/16:	
8.1.	AONB Unit report.	31 - 32
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9.	AONB Partnership Study Tour 23rd September 2016.	53 - 54
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12.	National Grid Visual Impact Provision (VIP) Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI).	63 - 72

13.	NAAONB Conference.	73 - 74
14.	AONB / Partner Progress:	75 - 80
14.1.	updates on NRW & NAAONB chair's visit.	
14.2.	AONB Officer presentation to Brecon Beacons National Park (view on http://www.breconbeacons.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/221021 Item 26 - from 1:58:31)	
14.3.	Forestry Commission Update.	
15.	Date of next meeting: 2.00pm Monday 7th November 2016.	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION

Local Authority Members with Voting Powers

Gloucestershire:

P. McMahon
P. Molyneux

Herefordshire:

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

Monmouthshire:

D. Blakebrough
D. Dovey
E.J. Hackett Pain
A.E. Webb

Forest of Dean:

G. Davies
B. Hogan

Town / Parish Community Councils with Voting Powers

Councillor B. Evans – Gloucestershire Association of Town / Parish Councils
D. Berry – Herefordshire Association Local Councils
Councillor Trevor Phillips – One Voice Wales

Co-opted Members with Voting Powers

Dr. G. Peterken – Voluntary Conservation Sector in Gloucestershire
A. Thomas - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire
Mr. B. Nash - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire
S. Dereham – Country Land and Business Association
M. Price – National Farmers Union

Co-opted Members without Voting Powers

B. Barron – Wye Valley Society
S. Dereham – River Wye Preservation Trust

A. Lee – Recreation Sector
D. Broadbent – Local Tourism Sector
H. Stace – 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 Shire Hall, Monmouth on Monday, 7th March, 2016 at 2.00 pm

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

Elected Members (with voting powers)

Monmouthshire County Council

County Councillors: D. Dovey, E. Hacket Pain, and A. Webb

Herefordshire Council

Councillors: J. Hardwick and E.J. Swinglehurst

Forest of Dean Council

Councillor G. Davies

Co-opted Members (with voting powers)

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Gloucestershire - Dr. G. Peterken

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire - B. Nash

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire - A. Thomas

One Voice Wales - Councillor T. Phillips

Co-opted Members (without voting powers)

Wye Valley Society – C. Barron

Recreation Sector – A. Lee

Local Tourism Sector – D. Broadbent

Technical Advice Officers

Wye Valley AONB Officer – A. Blake

Monmouthshire County Council – M. Lewis

Gloucestershire County Council – R. Niblett

Monmouthshire County Council – R. Williams

APOLOGIES:

County Councillor D. Blakebrough, Councillor P. McMahon, Councillor P. Molyneux,
Councillor B. Durkin, Councillor B. Hogan, S.W.B Dereham, M. Price, D. Price, H.
Stace, D. Griffiths, H. McDowell and H. Molyneux

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Shire Hall, Monmouth on Monday, 7th March, 2016 at 2.00 pm

1. Declarations of Interest.

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

Councillor P. Cutter
Councillor J. Hardwick
Councillor E.J. Swinglehurst
County Councillor A. Webb
County Councillor D. Dovey
Councillor G. Davies

2. Public Question Time.

No questions were raised by members of the public.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting dated 2nd November 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman. In doing so, it was noted that the following amendment should be made:

Page 1 of the minutes:

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire: Mr. A. Thomas
Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire: Mr. B. Nash

4. Future Landscape Wales Programme - Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales.

We received a report in which the Committee were informed of the progress being made in respect of the Future Landscape Wales programme addressing the review of Designated Landscapes in Wales.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The Marsden Report 'National Landscapes: Realising their Potential - The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales' Final Report was published in October 2015 and had been outlined at the previous meeting.
- The Minister for Natural Resources subsequently established the Future Landscapes Wales programme to take forward the recommendations in the Marsden Report.
- The programme entails four Project Groups that are preparing evidence for a Working Group chaired by Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM that will initially report back to the Minister in April 2016.
- Andrew Blake [AONB Officer] and Matthew Lewis [chair of Technical Officers Working Party (TOWP) and Monmouthshire's Green Infrastructure and Countryside

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Shire Hall, Monmouth on Monday, 7th March, 2016 at 2.00 pm

Manager] are both involved in the Project Groups, alongside other officers and members from across the Welsh AONBs, National Parks and other relevant organisations.

- There is wide political interest in the outcome of the Future Landscapes Wales programme but it is not known how the next government will want to take forward the programme following the Welsh Assembly elections in May 2016.
- The process raises the expectations of what AONBs could and should deliver and whatever occurs post-election it is hoped that this raised profile will be maintained.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- That the Chief Executives of the local authorities within the Wye Valley AONB do not meet to discuss the issues relating to the Wye Valley. However, this does happen between local authorities within the national parks.
- It was noted that there were no representatives with disabilities serving on the Project Groups. This matter would be raised.

We resolved to endorse the involvement of lead officers in the Future Landscapes Wales programme and the opportunities to shape the future of Designated Landscapes in Wales.

5. AONB Unit 2016/17 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 proposed business plan is focused on progressing the new AONB Management Plan, successful delivery of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 and continuing existing activities while developing new initiatives and funding opportunities.
- In the Government's Autumn Statement, George Osborne announced that "Funding for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will [also] be protected". Defra subsequently made a four year grant offer to all AONBs in England.
- The budgets in the Work Programme have been approved by Defra, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the AONB Steering Group.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- In response to a question raised by a Committee Member regarding the importance of the Town Bridge at Chepstow, it was noted that the Wye Valley River Festival dates did not coincide with was the bicentenary celebrations, plans of which were awaited from Chepstow Town Council.

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We resolved to endorse the AONB Unit Work programme 2016/17.

6. Sustainable Development Fund Update.

We received a report regarding the allocations of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) for 2015/16.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The allocation of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) of £60,000 in Wales in 2015/16 has been fully identified.
- The Joint Advisory Committee had previously endorsed the principle of allocating remaining SDF at end of year to specific projects such as the Wye Valley River Festival.
- The Welsh Government has not yet advised what the SDF allocation for 2016/17 will be but a reduction is expected, probably between 5 - 10%, amounting to an SDF allocation in the region of £55,000.
- The SDF Assessment Panel has provisionally approved £26,445 of SDF grants towards projects in 2016/17.
- The remaining £6,000 SDF funding unallocated would be directed towards the Wye Valley River Festival 2016.

Having received the report, we resolved to endorse the allocations of the SDF for 2015/16, including allocation of the remaining funds to the Wye Valley River Festival.

7. Wye Valley River Festival 2016.

We received details of the programme for the Wye Valley River Festival 2016.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Sufficient funding for the Wye Valley River Festival to proceed has been secured from Arts Council of Wales, Arts Council England, the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and many other sources.
- A programme of events between 29th April & 15th May 2016 is being finalised.
- After the Festival fortnight a full evaluation of the Festival will be undertaken to appraise whether to hold a third Wye Valley River Festival in 2018.
- Post cards relating to the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 were available for Committee Members.
- A list of sponsors was available within the report. The total budget equated to in the region of £200,000.

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Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Shire Hall, Monmouth on Monday, 7th March, 2016 at 2.00 pm

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

8. National Association for AONB's.

We received an update report on recent and proposed work of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB).

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Andrew Blake, AONB Officer, represented the Joint Advisory Committee in November 2015 at the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) Annual General Meeting and the National Parks & AONB Chairmen's Conference.
- Rory Stewart, Defra Under Secretary of State, told the National Parks & AONB Chairmen's Conference that "Protected Landscapes are at the heart of what Defra tries to do". The Government subsequently protected funding for England's National Parks and AONBs.
- The theme and dates for the next national AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference is 'natural beauty in relationship to the health and wellbeing of society' on 28th - 30th June 2016 at Lilleshall National Sports & Conferencing Centre, Newport, Shropshire.
- One of the Conference Field Trips on Wednesday 29th June 2016 may possibly be to the Wye Valley (subject to timings and logistics).
- Outstanding Week 2016 is scheduled for 17th - 25th September 2016.
- The National Trust has published a report 'AONBs and Development' appraising the planning system in relation to AONBs, in liaison with the NAAONB.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

9. Partner and AONB Unit progress reports and updates.

We were provided with details of the activity of the AONB Unit and other partners in respect of the following initiatives:

- AONB Management Plan.
- Visits to Wye Valley AONB.
- LEMUR+ placements.
- Mindscape.
- Wales Year of Adventure promotions.
- Undergrounding electricity cables.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Shire Hall, Monmouth on Monday, 7th March, 2016 at 2.00 pm

- The Committee was pleased that schemes with a value of £600,000 had undergrounded 7.6km of electricity cables and further schemes were being considered within the Wye Valley AONB by Western Power.
- It was noted that Defra and the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty were working with National Grid with a view to progressing undergrounding and mitigation schemes of high voltage power cables on large pylons.
- There was a need to influence Government regulators to encourage British Telecom to take forward their undergrounding schemes.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

10. Dates of Joint Advisory Council Meetings for 2016

We resolved that the dates and venues for meetings in 2016 will be as follows:

- 2.00pm Monday 4th July - Forest of Dean District Council Chamber, Coleford.
- 2.00pm Monday 7th November - Forest of Dean District Council Chamber, Coleford.

The meeting ended at 3.05pm.

Agenda Item

WYE VALLEY AONB
OFFICER'S REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th July 2016

FUTURE LANDSCAPES WALES PROGRAMME

Purpose

To seek members' endorsement of the outcomes and proposals to date of the Future Landscapes Wales programme addressing the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales.

Recommendations

That the JAC

- A. Welcomes the options and proposals presented to the Future Landscapes Wales Working Group
- B. Endorses the provisional response to the Briefing Papers
- C. Supports the continued involvement of the AONB Officer in opportunities to shape the future of Designated Landscapes in Wales.

Key Issues

- Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM, chair of the Future Landscapes Wales Working Group delivered an interim report to the outgoing Minister for Natural Resources just before the Welsh Assembly election in May (see Appendix 1)
- The Future Landscapes Wales Project Groups recently presented their current findings to the Working Group (see Appendix 2, Briefing Papers).
- There is a new draft Vision for Wales' Designated Landscapes and a number of proposals that will be considered further in preparation for Lord Ellis-Thomas's final report later in the year.
- A provisional response to the main implications for the Wye Valley AONB is provided below and in Appendix 3.
- The new Minister, the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths AM has endorsed the Future Landscapes Wales programme and attended part of the recent Working Group meeting.

Reasons

The Future Landscapes Wales Project Groups, made of 24 staff from AONBs, National Parks, Welsh Government and some NGOs, have been working over the last 7 months on the four topics in relation to the Designated Landscapes in Wales: Vision; Governance;

Innovation in resourcing; Catalysts of rural development. They presented their initial findings to the Working Group in March. The Working Group includes academics, entrepreneurs, health and well-being specialists, senior figures in non-governmental organisations and senior representatives from designated landscapes, chaired by Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM. Subsequently the Project Groups have liaised further with Working Group members and on 20th June they again met and presented their refined proposals. The Briefing Papers are appended. These are working papers which offer an insight into part of the process at this stage of the programme. Lord Ellis-Thomas will finalise his Report to the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs later in the year. A small task group, which includes the AONB Officer, will support him in drafting this report over the summer.

Implications

The provisional proposals in the Future Landscapes Wales Briefing Papers (see Appendix 2 below) were presented to the Working Group on 20th June. Responses and comments have been requested by Welsh Government by 4th July. It is intended that immediately following the JAC meeting the comments and response of the JAC will be forwarded by the AONB Officer to Welsh Government.

Appendix 3 tabulates the proposals and provisional, considered responses in relation to the most relevant consequences for the Wye Valley AONB. Many of these require only operation changes to implement. Most are acceptable and should be endorsed, however the more significant ones can be summarised as follows:

Vision:

- There is some concern that the term ‘natural beauty’ is not referred to as this remains in the founding legislation. There is the need for some rationalisation and prioritisation of the purpose of the Vision.

Governance:

- The general consensus is that the current system of governance of AONBs and National Parks does not need radical reform but some adjustments and modifications. This should be welcomed, particularly considering the uniqueness and strengths of the cross-border arrangements in the Wye Valley AONB.
- There is a proposal to have more formal representation of the national interest on JACs. This could be accommodated by modifying the 3 representatives of county voluntary conservation sectors to have a broader national remit / expertise.
- There is a proposal to amend the CRoW Act section 85 ‘duty of regard’ to strengthen the requirement of all stakeholders to take account of the Management Plan. This should be welcomed but may require primary legislation.

Innovation in Resourcing:

- The emphasis is on securing resources for 3 areas:
 - Sustainable Land Management, at a landscape scale, to ensure natural and cultural resources in distinctive landscapes are conserved and enhanced for future generations. This requires landscape scale collaboration, best facilitated by a:-
 - Dedicated / Executive Body. The vast majority of models across the globe for delivery and resourcing of landscape scale collaboration in nationally important landscapes receive the majority of their core resourcing through public funding. Consequently this requires

- Governance, that adopts the principles outlined (on pages 3 & 4 of the Briefing Papers), accepting that differing models, arrangements and levels of executive power will affect the resourcing required.

It is recognised that there is no single or simple solution to resourcing and there are a number of challenges to innovation (bulleted on pages 8 & 9 of the Briefing Papers). However every effort will be made to continue to pursue all the existing resourcing opportunities and invest in collaboration, innovation, efficiencies and sharing good practice.

Catalysts for sustainable economic development

- Introduction of an additional Statutory Purpose for Designated Landscapes. This is already being done in practice but may require new legislation.

Background

The previous Minister for Natural Resources, Carl Sargeant, established the Future Landscapes Wales programme in response to the publication of the independent Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales (the Marsden Report), published in October 2015. The Review's purpose was to consider how the devolved area of designated landscapes fit with and deliver emerging Welsh priorities including green growth and natural resource management within the context of the Well Being and Future Generations Act.

Andrew Blake (AONB Officer) and Matthew Lewis (chair of TOWP and Monmouthshire's Green Infrastructure and Countryside Manager) have both been involved in the Future Landscapes Wales Project Groups, alongside other officers and members from across the Welsh AONBs, National Parks and other relevant organisations.

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Rt. Hon. Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas PC

Cadeirydd y Gweithgor Tirweddau'r Dyfodol | Chair of the Future Landscapes Wales Working Group

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Minister for Natural Resources
Welsh Government
Ty Hywel
Pierhead Street
Cardiff Bay CF99 1NA

3 May 2016

Dear Minister

When I accepted the role as Chair of the Future Landscapes Wales working group I agreed to provide you with an interim update prior to the elections to the National Assembly. This note performs that function. It does not pre-judge the conclusions of the Working Group and Project Group activity; they will follow in due course. Instead it illustrates the scope of discussions we have had since January and provides a sense of the broad direction of travel across the whole Future Landscapes Wales programme.

The Marsden report has triggered a significant debate within the Future Landscapes Wales groups about the principles and functions for designated landscapes in a Wales which has a clear focus on the well-being of future generations. Over a relatively short space of time the Future Landscapes Wales programme has taken the Marsden Report, isolated its key themes and recommendations and considered them within the new legislative framework; a context much better understood now than twelve to eighteen months ago. Our deliberations have been driven by an ambitious and collaborative spirit from all participants.

The relationship between people and place has emerged as an important element of well-being; the landscapes of Wales reflect this relationship. Our discussions are considering how designated landscapes both in their present form and any future approaches can be managed to enhance their distinctive qualities using the principles of sustainable management of natural resources as defined in the Environment (Wales) Act in ways which maximise the contribution to the well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

It is clear that new ways of working will need to be adopted. An approach that is underpinned by principles which respect and strengthen the relationship between people and place may lead to better shared outcomes. Such principles are also applicable in areas outside the current designated landscapes.

Flexibility in structures and governance has also been discussed. This approach may better respect the distinctive qualities of landscapes and the balance between national and local interests than the more centrally determined and uniform structures currently available in statute. Possible approaches include, adopting basic standards for governance for any entity associated with an existing area or proposed for a new area. This would then allow for the needs and opportunities of the specific area to determine the precise approach, helping to

Rt. Hon. Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas PC

Cadeirydd y Gweithgor Tirweddau'r Dyfodol | Chair of the Future Landscapes Wales Working Group

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unlock genuinely participatory approaches to landscape management. We have also considered enabling existing statutory authorities or lead bodies to request changes to their structure or status where they can demonstrate that doing so will enhance delivery.

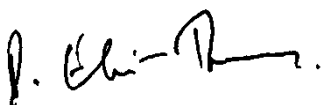
The special qualities of the existing designated landscapes extend beyond a visual amenity interpretation of natural beauty and incorporate the potential for soil, carbon, and water management, and the potential sustainable management of other valuable natural resources. The working group wants a national conversation about Wales' landscapes and their value to the nation. The public should play a part in determining a contemporary interpretation of the special qualities of designated landscapes. The existing designated landscapes should then be able to state clearly the respective special qualities to be enhanced.

The Marsden report drew our attention to the untapped potential for developing new approaches to economic development within these areas. Done effectively such approaches could be replicated across rural Wales. I am pleased to report that these issues are being explored and considered in detail.

Our work is moving in the direction of a flexible, place based, approach which is locally determined within agreed national principles and values. Harnessing the distinctive qualities of landscapes through the sustainable management of natural resources well-being will be maximised. I anticipate us identifying short term actions that can be taken by Government; existing authorities, and partners to improve administration and outcomes, as well as setting a clear direction for the medium to long term.

Wales' landscapes are hugely important and valuable, culturally, socially, environmentally and economically. Our designated landscapes, the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks, contribute to this rich diversity. I am confident that approaches will emerge from the Future Landscapes Wales programme of work to provide a lasting, forward-looking settlement that is grounded in contemporary Welsh legislation.

Yours sincerely,

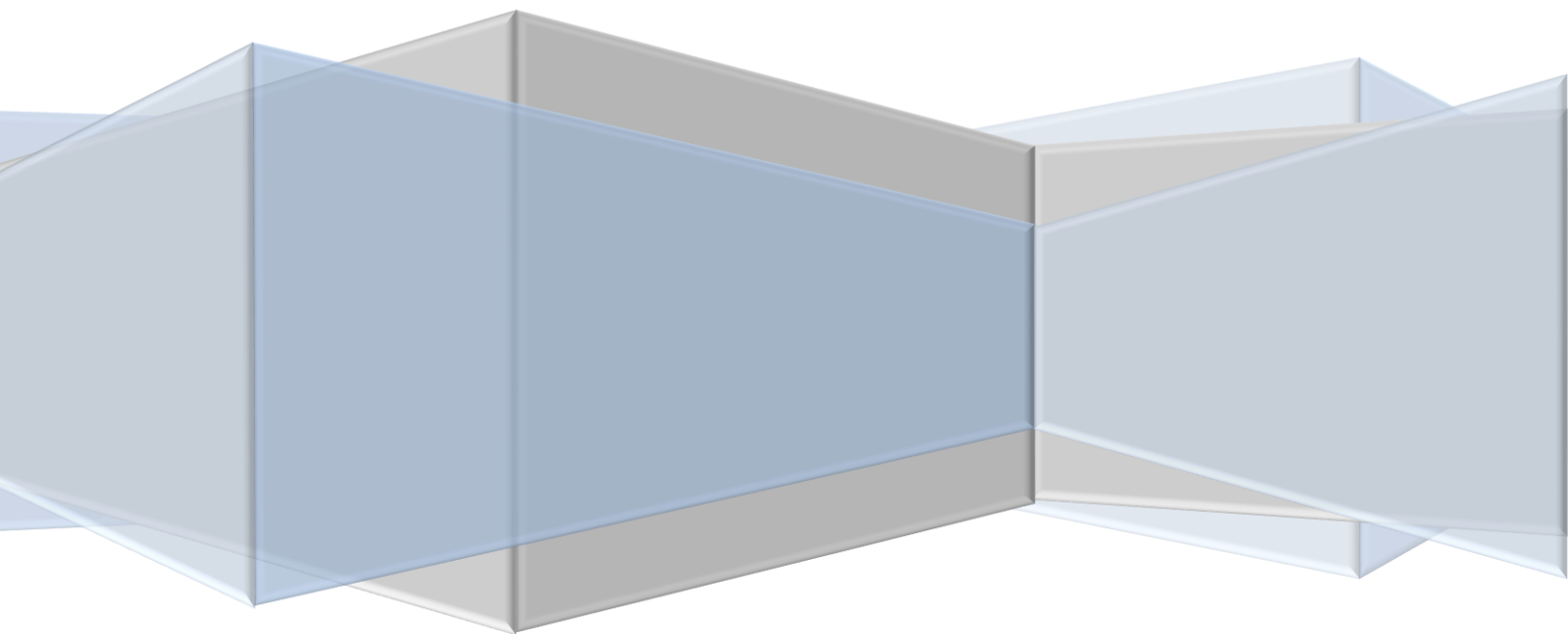


Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas
Chair of the Future Landscapes Wales Working Group

Future Landscapes Wales

Briefing Papers

20th June 2016



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A VISION FOR THE LANDSCAPES OF WALES

INTRODUCTION

Landscapes matter to people. The intrinsic link between people and place forms an important component of our well-being, Landscapes in all their forms (rural, urban, coastal, industrial, designated and non-designated) shape our feelings and identity as individuals, as communities and as a nation.

Wales' landscapes are hugely important and valuable; culturally, socially, environmentally and economically. Our landscapes allows us to understand our past; they inform our present and help express our collective hopes for the future. Unlocking the full potential of all landscapes in Wales, will therefore contribute to the quality of public life, the nation's well-being and help to adapt and respond to contemporary and future challenges. Realising the benefits of resilient landscapes involves the sustainable management of their distinctive qualities; the combined value of which is greater than their individually identifiable values.

DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES

Our designated landscapes, the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks, contribute to the nation's rich diversity, identity and have a vital role to play in the future social, economic and environmental prosperity of Wales.

National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are acknowledged and cherished as important national assets due to their unique combination of distinctive qualities. However, there is an agreed understanding both within and beyond designated landscapes that recent legislative changes provide a platform for these areas to deliver even more; working beyond their traditional remits and boundaries to enhance these distinctive qualities and deliver long-term environmental, social and economic well-being benefits for Wales.

Successive reports acknowledge that designated landscapes provide a pivotal role in Wales. Their designation fosters a distinct management approach that safeguards natural and cultural resources while delivering long-term, well-being benefits, such as prosperity, health and equality. The ethos and management characteristics of the designated landscapes are potential exemplars of how localised involvement, and collaboration can be developed around integrated environmental, cultural and well-being priorities. Through national and local leadership such an approach should be replicated more widely beyond the boundaries of existing designated landscapes to benefit the whole of Wales.

VISION

Wales as a nation values its landscapes for what they provide for the people of Wales and elsewhere. The designated landscapes of Wales deliver both within and beyond their boundaries to safeguard their natural and cultural resources and deliver the maximum well-being benefits for present and future generations whilst enhancing the very qualities that make them both distinctive and cherished.

PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES

New ways of working will need to be adopted to unlock the full potential of designated landscapes if they are to deliver long-term well-being benefits for Wales. This requires a means of coordinating collective effort, underpinned by the following principles that respect and strengthen the relationship between people and place and in turn, lead to better shared outcomes.

- Well-being and the sustainable management of natural and cultural resources underpin all outcomes,
- Sense of place and community resilience is strengthened by an integrated approach to policy and implementation,
- Locally accountable management of the Designated Landscapes strengthens their ownership and management,
- Clarity of purposes of the Designated Landscapes guides outcomes,
- Dedicated bodies for the management of the Designated Landscapes coordinate delivery and provide accountability,
- Inclusiveness and engagement inform priorities, develop aspirations and improves understanding,
- Communicating the intrinsic value of Designated Landscapes promotes long term appreciation of their worth,
- Distinctiveness and cultural values are unique and unreplaceable which are to be managed for the benefit of future generations,
- Designated landscapes will act as hubs working collectively and beyond their boundaries, to improve effectiveness and the benefits they provide to society.

These principles can be equally applicable to non-designated landscapes in Wales, provided those areas are able to take ownership of such an approach.

VISION AND PRINCIPLES: SUPPORTING STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

The vision and principles have been developed and adopted to provide Wales, its landscapes and communities with stronger outcomes which contribute to and underpin the delivery of National priorities:

1. **Principles of Sustainable Management:** Long term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement.
2. **Well-being Goals:** Prosperous, Resilient, Healthier, More equal, Cohesive communities, Vibrant culture and Globally responsible.
3. **Sustainable Management of Natural Resources:** Adaptive management, Collaboration and engagement, Evidence, Long-term, Multiple benefits, Public participation, Scale, Preventative action and Building resilience.
4. **Sustainable Management of Natural Resources:** Carbon stores, Maintaining productive capacity, Reduce risk of flooding, Improve health & equity, Quality & availability of water, Quality and connectivity of habitats and Retain the distinctiveness of our places and historic landscapes.

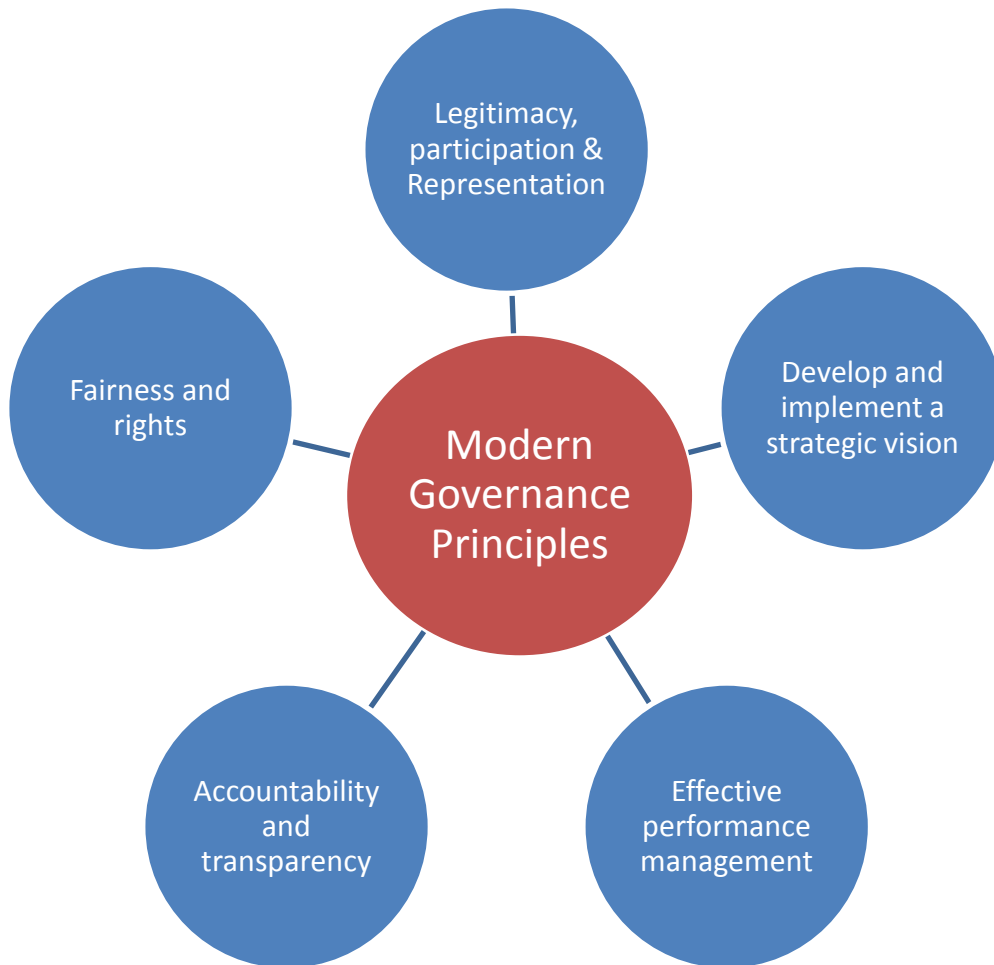
GOVERNANCE OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES

The proposed Vision for Designated Landscapes includes the following *Principles for Managing Designated Landscapes*, which impact on Governance:

- Locally accountable management of Designated Landscapes strengthens their ownership and management;
- Clarity of purpose of the Designated Landscapes guides outcomes;
- Dedicated bodies for the management of the Designated Landscapes coordinate delivery and provide accountability;
- Inclusiveness and engagement inform priorities, develop aspirations and improves understanding.

To evaluate the Governance of Designated Landscapes and any proposed changes we have developed **Principles of Good Governance - Welsh Designated Landscapes**, which are based on the IUCN Principles for Effective Governance, Principles of Natural Resource Management outlined in the Environment Act (Wales) 2016 and the Well-being Goals included in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. These focus on five areas:

- Legitimacy, Participation and Voice;
- Develop and implement a Strategic Vision;
- Effective performance management;
- Accountability and transparency;
- Fairness and rights.



Current Governance Models

Initially we have assessed current models of governance for Designated Landscapes, along with management options for other designated and non-designated sites. The following outlines the main strengths and weaknesses:

National Parks

Strengths

- A strong governance structure exists, which is clear for all to see;
- Presence of both elected members and expert individuals provides a balance between legitimacy, participation and voice (on both a local and national basis). All need to meet standards outlined in Code of Conduct;
- Consistent approach across all National Parks (with some local variation);
- National Park Management Plan provides a clear strategic vision;
- Requirements for audit of both finance and performance;
- Meetings held in public, with audit and performance reports also in public;
- Clear commitment to fairness and rights through equality plans and other requirements.

Weaknesses

- Issues relating to Direct Elections not resolved;
- Not all tiers of democracy represented, i.e. Community Councils not represented;
- Regulatory requirements could be considered excessive and expensive;
- S.62 requirement is weak and many stakeholders ignore their responsibilities;
- Key stakeholders such as land-owners and business owners not represented on decision making body (although there is a route for them to be represented via the appointments process).

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

It is harder to evaluate the Governance structure of AONBs as they are not executive bodies. The host local authorities adopt different partnership models. An assessment of the Governance of AONBs suggests that they operate in a different way to National Park Authorities due to the nature and scale of their responsibilities and areas, therefore many of the governance principles are met through the AONB partnerships and/or their constituent authorities.

Strengths

- Clear democratic control providing legitimacy, with a Code of Conduct for elected members;
- Participation by a wide range of experts, in an advisory capacity and meeting in public;
- Management Plan provides clear strategic vision;
- Their inclusion in the Local Authority governance framework provides a cost effective framework.

Weaknesses

- Decision may be restricted to Local Authority Members (often Cabinet members), with other expert and representative groups restricted to an advisory role;
- There is no current provision for representative by the national interest;
- Governance and funding is dependent on decisions of the Local Authority or Local Authorities;
- S.85 requirement is weak and many stakeholders ignore their responsibilities;
- There is a lack of transparency on costs, performance and fairness as relevant documentation relates to Local Authorities, with no requirement of a public audit of the AONB.

Other Types of Designation (e.g. World Heritage Sites, Biosphere)

There is no one model for managing such sites, however, based on examples such as the Llangollen Canal and Froncysyllte Aqueduct World Heritage Site and information available on the Dyfi Biosphere we make the following comments:

Strengths

- Flexible governance structure;
- Opportunity to include expert views;
- Low cost model as governance structure is based on requirements of host;

Weaknesses

- Governance is based on third party requirements (i.e. the designating body, or host body);
- Little or no accountability to residents of designated area, with limited opportunity to influence decision making;
- Limited requirement for public information, e.g. availability of accounts.

Charitable Trusts

While there are no examples of Charitable Trusts managing designated landscapes in Wales, we can assess how the governance requirements of Charitable Trusts can be applied to the management of designated landscapes.

Strengths

- Membership model, with a requirement to submit Annual Report and Accounts to Charity Commission;
- A Code of Conduct for Trustees.

Weaknesses

- No public accountability, with the public's ability to influence based on paying a membership fee;
- Where publically funded, additional governance requirements would need to be set by Government.

Our assessment indicates that the current models for governing National Parks and AONBs are fit for purpose. However, they could be strengthened by considering the following issues.

Issues to consider

NPA membership

Welsh Government to work with Designated Landscapes, NRW, WLGA and other experts to evaluate and consider the impact of following options:

- Direct elections to replace Local Authority members;
- If direct elections are not adopted, consider appointment of representatives of Town and Community Council;
- Restricting political balance rules to wards either wholly or partly within the National Park (this will be particularly important if Local Government is reorganised into fewer larger Councils); and
- Feasibility of appointments to represent land owners and business owners sectors within the National Park.

AONB Membership

Welsh Government to work with Designated Landscapes, NRW, WLGA and other experts to evaluate and consider the impact of the following options:

- Providing opportunities for expert members to make decisions as well as advise; and
- The inclusion of individuals to represent the national interest.

Joint Working

To improve joint working consideration should be given to asking the Designated Landscapes to:

- develop a plan of how to share resources, including staff.
- consider options for developing regional models of shared governance.
- consider ways of working together along the model of National Parks Wales.

Strengthening the Management Plan

Both NPAs and AONBs struggle to get all stakeholders to engage with the process of developing the Management Plan and to take account of the Management Plan once agreed. Consideration needs to be given to:

- sharing good practice on how to engage with a wide range of stakeholders when developing a Management Plan;
- amend s62 / s85 legislation to strengthen the requirement of all stakeholders to take account of the Management Plan.

Accountability and Transparency

Require AONBs to publish an Annual Report and Accounts highlighting performance and expenditure in relation to the AONB, set within a clear audit and reporting framework.

Engagement

All Designated Landscapes to adopt the National Principles for Public Engagement and work together to provide guidance on how to improve engagement in designated landscapes.

New Designation

The Welsh Government and NRW should adopt the Principles of Good Governance - Welsh Designated Landscapes as part of the basis of evaluating the effectiveness of any new designated landscapes. These Principles could also be used to evaluate any proposed changes to their Governance that the Designated Landscapes may wish to propose.

INNOVATION IN RESOURCING

GOAL

Resilient Landscapes with resilient services - Nation to recognise the value of protected landscapes and the contribution they make to Wales, UK and wider world.

Provide rigour and challenge to current thinking on the future of landscapes in Wales. Consider the recommendations of the Marsden Report (including any new and innovative thinking) and advise on a way forward.

REALITY

SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

The sustainable management of the distinctive landscapes of Wales's National Parks and AONBs will enable their natural and cultural resources to be conserved and enhanced for future generation. Successful innovation and resourcing of sustainable land management needs:

- the natural and cultural resources and distinctive qualities to be recognised through consensus
- Landowners and land managers to work collaboratively at a landscape scale

Public, private and 3rd sector resources should all allow communities to shape land-use in a way that respects local traditions and the sense of place. However, there is no single or simple solution to resourcing and there are a number of challenges to innovation:

- the short-termism of much public and project funding
- burdensome bureaucracy
- private investment needs better linking to positive change
- stakeholders can have wide ranging and sometime conflicting interests
- 3rd sector resources, especially single issue focused, need more effective distribution at a landscape scale
- Some AONB units do not have the 'critical mass' to facilitate collaboration or invest in winning additional resources

There are plenty of opportunities for viable land management enterprises; those businesses that nurture what makes a place special, and provide for greater well-being, will ensure a more prosperous and cohesive community. Influencing the next Rural Development Programme (RDP) will also help achieve this. Charities and legacies are often already directed towards positive land management, but sharing that good practice and multiplying those benefits will enable more efficient and effective delivery on a wider scale.

DEDICATED / EXECUTIVE BODY – PUBLIC FUNDING

We have considered the different delivery and resourcing models for landscape scale collaboration in domestic and internationally important landscapes. Very few models receive either very little public funding (e.g. Scottish National Scenic Areas) or none at all (e.g. Germany's Landschaftsschutzgebiet). The vast majority of models had:

- an organisation responsible for delivering work on the ground or providing a co-ordination role – be it a government department (e.g. National Parks in Iceland) or a multi sector partnerships (e.g. French Regional Natural Parks);
- a substantial amount of public funding as a proportion of overall resourcing along with some of the different sources as outlined below (see Options).

A successfully resourced protected landscape has stakeholders that believe it can deliver for them and with them whilst also delivering its agreed collective mission. The task for the protected landscape organisation is to facilitate collaboration and delivery of the agreed management, whilst avoiding any disenfranchised stakeholders from acting in conflict with the collective mission.

GOVERNANCE

Consideration of governance arrangements of designated landscapes will affect their resourcing; key points include:

- Audits – The number of internal and external audits undertaken in relation to National Park Authorities is disproportionate to the size of organisation.
- Costs of *status quo* – staying with current governance arrangements will have cost implications going forward
- Efficiency – Whatever executive body model is responsible for the delivery of policy and services, its administration and costs must be streamlined and proportional to delivery
- Sharing learning from good and bad practice – arrangements should enable any learning from good and bad practice to be shared and implemented, through Protected Landscape and other networks

OPTIONS (see Table 1)

RDP & Agri-environment schemes - Major source of funding for land management dependant on criteria set by Europe and Welsh Government. Often requires working with partners in receipt of agri-environment payments on a contract basis. Need to influence outcomes and measures in next round (2020+).

Collaboration / partnerships - provides opportunities to reduce overheads &/or provide additional capacity to deliver projects. It also engenders greater 'buy-in' and ownership of shared objectives and outcomes.

Volunteering - Volunteering has one of the highest returns on investment and provides a resource multiplier significantly higher than the investment involved. Whilst core funding is required to provide management, recruitment and support, volunteers can reduce cash and staff costs on both small and large scale projects.

Business Sponsorship - There are examples of local initiatives with individual suppliers which sponsor services or projects. National Parks Partnerships is a new venture developed solely by UK National Parks for their own purposes.

Charitable funding / trusts - Charitable trusts can attract additional funding streams not available to Government bodies. Whilst providing an additional source of funding, managing a trust requires additional administration resource and will remain dependent on the public or other funding providers for financial support. Existing charities, such as the National Trust, Wildlife Trusts and RSPB already channel funds into positive land management.

Grant funding – e.g. Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) - An existing source requiring human capacity to prepare bids, seek and develop collaborative partnerships and deliver specific projects. HLF funding is short term (<5 years) and not a sustainable financial model in itself.

Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) - A valuable and flexible source of Government project funding which Protected Landscape organisations use with significant leverage to facilitate and support community based schemes. Requires staff resources and finance to promote, administer and monitor the scheme

Visitor Giving / payback - An additional source of income usually focused on specific projects; useful source of funds but with limitations due the specific project focus and longer-term sustainability.

Legacy funding - A useful source of funding though usually targeted at specific projects. Some of the legacy funding could be used to cover administrative work, but the majority of legacy funding is

used to deliver projects. The Community Foundation in Wales provides a model/vehicle for either individual protected landscapes or a collective fund.

Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) -Requires a landowner and a beneficiary (who is the investor) and needs to meet the 7 principles of PES. Requires development, but may be a potential source of income in the longer term.

Tourism / Bed tax - Common in other countries, but adds an additional financial burden on local businesses that may affect the popularity/competitiveness of an area as a tourism destination; changes in tax legislation are also required.

WILL

Future Landscapes Wales stakeholders will need to:

Short term:

- Continue to pursue all the existing resourcing opportunities [PL bodies & partners]
- Continue to invest in collaboration, innovation, efficiencies and sharing good practice [PL bodies & partners]
- Establish more effective ways to share good (& bad) practice between protected landscape bodies and other stakeholders [PL bodies & partners]
- Develop the arguments and strategy to challenge the short-term nature of grant funding [PL bodies & partners with WG and funding bodies]
- investigate charitable and legacy funding opportunities with the Community Foundation in Wales [CFW]
- negotiate to ensure AONB Partnerships are adequately resourced to achieve their functions [WG & NRW]

Medium term:

- Build a consensus to lobby on the direction and measures for RDP 2020+ [PL bodies & partners, especially CLA, FUW, NFU, NRW, WG]
- monitor the effectiveness of the National Parks Partnership [NPs]
- negotiate reduced burdensome bureaucracy for National Parks [NPAs, WG, Audit Office]
- Continue to pursue all the existing resourcing opportunities [PL bodies & partners]
- Continue to invest in collaboration, innovation, efficiencies and sharing good practice [PL bodies & partners]

Long term:

- Secure appropriate measures in RDP 2020+ for sustainable land management in protected landscapes [WG]
- Continue to invest in collaboration, innovation, efficiencies and sharing good practice [PL bodies & partners]

Table 1- Future Landscapes Wales - Innovation in Resourcing - Options matrix

<u>Funding Resources – Short (S), Medium (M) and Long (L) term</u>	S	M	L
Sustainable Land Management			
Influencing / securing positive land management	✓	✓	✓
Rural Development Programme (RDP), Agri-Environment & LEADER	✓	✓	✓
Collaboration / Partnerships	✓	✓	✓
Volunteering	✓	✓	✓
Business Sponsorship – funding packages, sponsorship	✓	✓	?
Charitable Funding / trusts	✓	✓	?
Corporate Social Responsibility	✓	✓	?
Grant funding, e.g. HLF	✓	✓	?
SDF	✓	✓	
Visitor Giving / Visitor Payback		✓	
Legacy Funding		✓	
Payment for Ecosystem Services			✓
Dedicated / Executive body			
Collaboration / Partnerships	✓	✓	✓
Central Government	✓	✓	✓
Efficiencies	✓	✓	✓
Commercialisation of services		✓	✓

CATALYSTS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

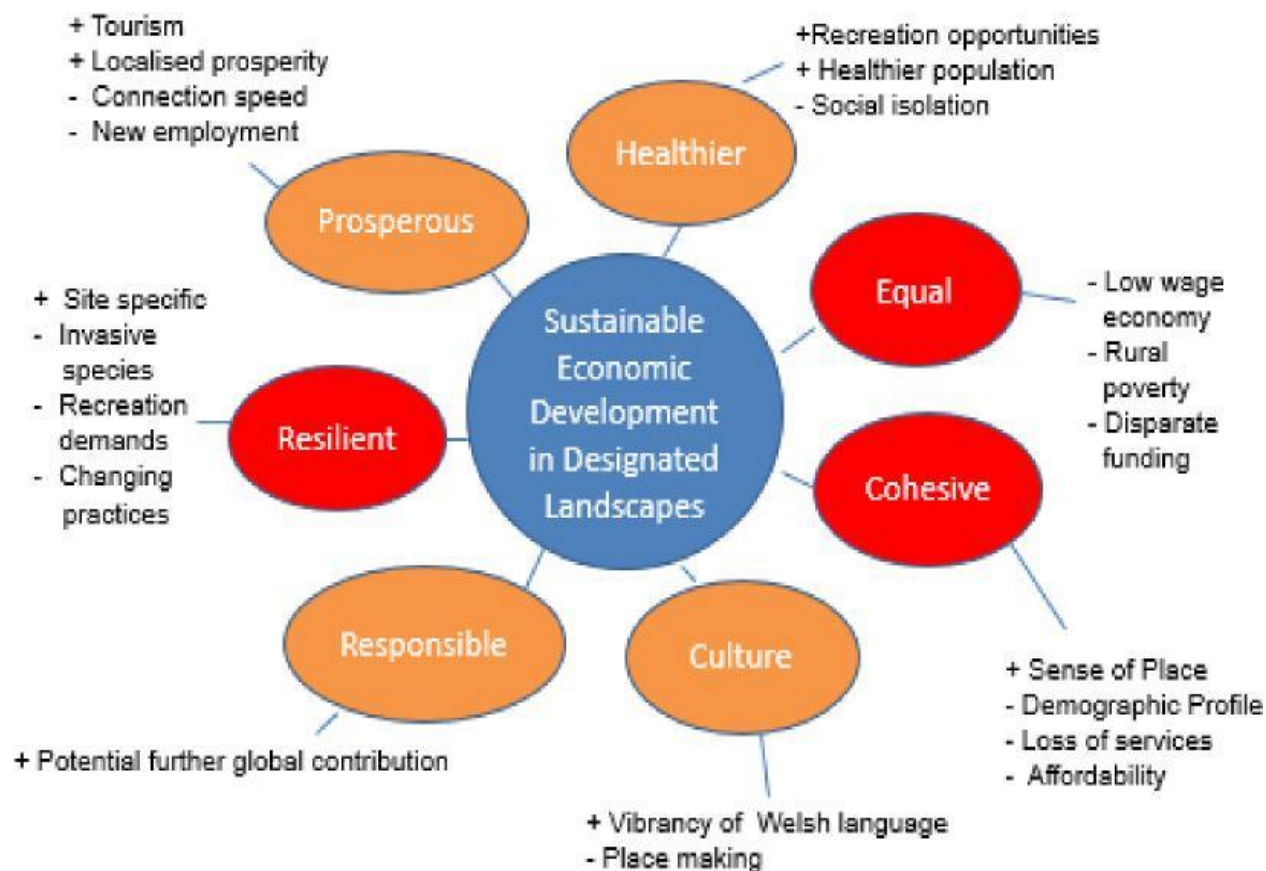
Goal: Specific outcomes to be achieved

If Designated Landscapes (DL's) are to successfully act as catalysts for sustainable economic development, Communities will be inspired, empowered and supported to:

- Develop their own vision and **long term** goals for the future
- **Collaborate** across the Community and with all stakeholders to develop the skills needed to generate wealth and employment
- **Involve** all sections of the Community develop an **integrated** approach that focuses on the needs of current and future generations
- **Prevent** further rural depopulation by creating opportunities for young people to stay in and return to their Community
- Sustain natural resources and the environment for the quality of life and well-being of **future generations**
- Define how we will know when this has been achieved

Reality: Where we are now

Considering through a well-being lens (in very broad brush, Red/Amber/Green colour coded), taking examples from designated landscape management plans as a starting point:



Options:

Place Planning

Meeting the need for innovative, place based collaboration that address economic and environmental challenges (Marsden)

- The concept of Place Planning is an acknowledgment that resources and needs differ significantly from area to area. Communities are usually defined by local scale geography
- Place Plans can represent a cultural shift, enabling appropriate development that supports national, local and community objectives for wellbeing.
- The idea is to empower communities to enhance their influence over development sites, local distinctiveness, new green economy ideas and community infrastructure.
- This will be a community-led approach characterised by greater collaboration between authorities and communities, a better understanding of community needs and responsive delivery.

Green Growth

Helping communities to realise the potential of engaging with the Green Growth agenda

- Marsden recommends landscape authorities should “lead rural enterprise and place-based innovation for green growth and to connect and enhance the green economy to their areas' special assets via ecosystem services”.
- Need to better understand key elements of work already on going to promote green growth in Wales and how designated landscapes can positively engage in the agenda, including:
 - i. Leverage for green growth projects through the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)
 - ii. Development of local initiatives including the potential for place based agri-environmental schemes
 - iii. Maximise the benefits of the DL / National Park brand
 - iv. Sharing of existing best practice such as developing:
 - * Local food supply chains
 - * Community based renewable energy schemes

Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)

Incentives for sustainable management of natural resources

- Local economic opportunities for land managers to benefit from work that maintains and enhances nature's life support services, such as carbon sequestration or upland water storage, and for potential buyers to meet various strategic and operational aims by purchasing them.
- Wales' designated landscapes deliver a complex array of ecosystem services. Bundles of these services may be considered together for investors in natural capital. Public funding will be required to instigate these investments and brokers are also needed. It is an advantage that the DL's have a good understanding of ecosystems and the services they provide locally, and also of the land managers who could benefit from these investments.
- Development of place-specific agri-environment schemes responding to local needs rather than generic pan Wales schemes. This could be by adaptation of the “Glastir” scheme,

operated at local level by DLs or NPAs with a flexibility that would enable focusing on specific ecosystem needs.

Tourism

How communities and the natural environment can better benefit from tourism

- Focus on engaging with tourism providers to identify how they can contribute to sustain the natural assets on which their businesses rely through:
 - i. Green apprenticeships
 - ii. Visitor payback
 - iii. Adventure tourism
 - iv. Contribution to green infrastructure (e.g. cycle paths and bridleways) and promotional improvements.
- Seek greater uptake of alternative markets such as Geoparks, Dark Skies to make the most of green and heritage tourism.
- Facilitate engagement between local businesses, local authorities, Visit Wales and third sector groups within and outside of the boundaries to better understand demand.

Will

A detailed action plan has been prepared identifying what, when in terms of short, medium and long term and who. A detailed version is appended but in brief it has been broken into 6 key areas:

1. Statutory Purpose
2. Governance
3. Measuring success
4. Place Plans
5. Green Growth
6. Payment for Ecosystems Services (PES)

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Future Landscapes Wales
Catalysts for Economic Development
Short, Medium and Long Term Action Plan

Action	Short term	Medium Term	Long Term	SD Principles	Who*
<u>Introduction of Third Statutory Purpose</u> <i>To promote integrated resource management with economic and community development which supports the over-all cultural heritage of the area. (Marsden)</i>				Long Term	WG
<u>Governance</u> <i>Ensure that a review of governance structures for Designated Landscapes facilitates the engagement of business interests and expertise.</i>				Collaborate Involve	WG
<u>Measuring Success</u> <i>Develop a series of indicators drawing on the National SD indicators in order to measure success in relation to achieving Goals: – What will a Prosperous Wales look like? – What will a Resilient Wales look like?</i>				Integrate	PG
<u>Place Planning</u> <i>Produce a robust Toolkit in order to facilitate a consistent approach to the production of Place Plans whilst recognising they will need to be different according to local needs and involve future generations of the community.</i>				Involve	DL
<i>Produce a series of Case Studies of successful Place Plans to highlight success factors and learning points.</i>				Collaborate	DL
<i>Develop an Action Plan that will support the production of Place Plans beyond Designated Landscapes.</i>				Involve	PG
<i>Look at the opportunities to link Place Plans to Tourism Growth particularly in respect of alternative markets such as Dark Skies and Geo Parks.</i>				Involve Integrate	PG
<u>Green Growth</u> <i>Investigate work already taking place and how Designated Landscapes can contribute positively such as Green Apprenticeships.</i>				Collaborate	PG

<i>Investigate opportunities to strengthen the DL brand both locally and nationally within the tourism sector.</i>				<i>Collaborate</i>	<i>PG/DL</i>
<i>Review funding priorities of SDF schemes in order to ensure they are being effective in supporting local economic initiatives based on local priorities and need. Link to Place Planning.</i>				<i>Prevention</i>	<i>DL</i>
<i>Identify opportunities for increased resources into SDF as a key pump primer for further investment – look at local Visitor Payback models, use of plastic bag tax proceeds, etc.</i>				<i>Integrate</i>	<i>DL</i>
<i>Drawing on best practice and ecosystems services principles, implement a place specific pilot agri-environment scheme responding to local needs as a potential replacement for generic pan Wales schemes.</i>				<i>Long Term</i>	<i>DL</i>
<i>Establish a network of DL officers to share best practice to develop local food supply chain initiatives and community based renewable energy schemes</i>				<i>Collaborate</i>	<i>DL</i>
<i>Meet with the Green Growth energy team to address perceptions of barriers to renewable energy development in National Parks.</i>				<i>Prevention</i>	<i>NPW</i>
<i>Engage in dialogue about the urgent needs for broadband connectivity whenever possible.</i>				<i>Prevention</i>	<i>ALL</i>
<i><u>Payments for Ecosystem Services</u> Establish public / private sector partnerships in order to establish a mechanism to effectively promote the product to the commercial market.</i>				<i>Collaborate</i>	<i>WG</i>
<i>Develop and recruit the marketing and sales skills necessary to develop the market to serious funders.</i>				<i>Involve</i>	<i>WG</i>
<i>Engage with the Future Generations Commissioner to discuss the value of DLs as laboratories for practical sustainability.</i>				<i>Involve</i>	<i>DL</i>

*Key:

- WG** = Welsh Government
- DL** = Designated Landscapes
- PG** = (New) Project Group
- NPW** = National Parks Wales
- SD** = Sustainable Development

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th July 2016

ANNUAL REPORT

Purpose

To present the table of achievements for the Wye Valley AONB Unit and the Annual Report on contracted Planning consultants' work for the AONB Unit for 2015/16.

Recommendations

That the JAC welcome the Annual Reports of AONB achievements for 2015/16

Key Issues

- The 2015/16 Work Programme Report for the AONB Unit is appended, along with a summary financial report below.
- Despite a number of staffing issues and illness the AONB Unit has maintained a high standard of activity and achievement.
- Worcestershire County Council Planning department were contracted to provide advice to the AONB Unit on strategic planning documents and development issues, and where necessary prepare appropriate responses for the AONB Unit. The annual report for the contracted work is appended.
- The expectation that the AONB Unit, on behalf of the AONB Partnership, comments on Planning Applications has increased in recent years as has the number of pre-application enquiries.

Reasons

The Work Programme Report for the AONB Unit 2015/16 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 as part of the annual grant claims to the two central government funding partners.

The number of planning application in 2015/16 has significantly increased compared to the previous year. Similarly the expectation and number of requests for the AONB Unit to respond to either current planning applications, on behalf of the AONB Partnership, or to give pre-application advice has continued to increase. This may in part be due to pressures on the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and the fact that the LPAs have started charging for pre-application advice.

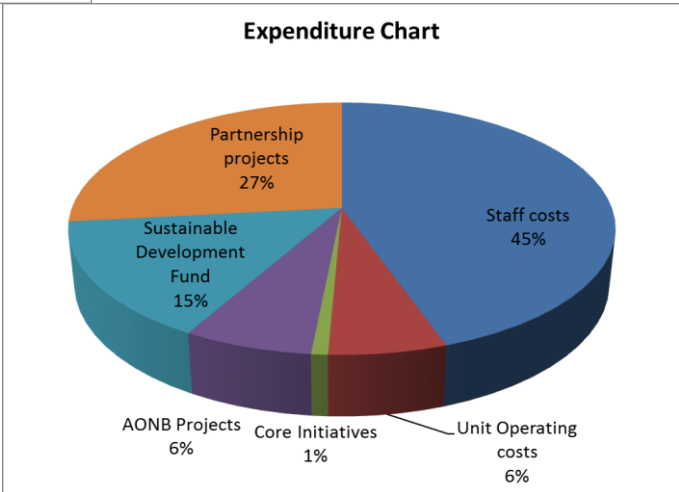
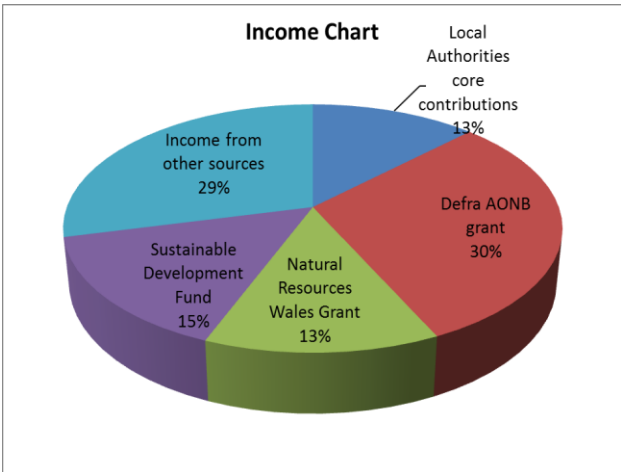
Implications

The continuing partnership with the Malvern Hills AONB over the use of The Planning Company has enabled a co-ordinated approach to be taken to strategic consultations in Herefordshire, Forest of Dean and Gloucestershire relating to the two AONBs. The new contract with Worcestershire County Council Planning Department is working well.

There are a number of highlights outlined in the 2015/16 table of achievements for the AONB Unit Work Programme Report. The AONB Management Plan is complete and currently going

through the final adoption stage. The development of the Wye Valley River Festival engaged local communities and levered resources into the area to increase people’s appreciation and understanding of the area. The third cohort of Youth Rangers started (supported with a range of funding), and the mindSCAPE project (with Big Lottery funding) has gone from strength to strength. The AONB Unit has maintained appropriate levels of activity and output despite various staff being affected by ill health and necessitating prolonged absences from work.

Wye Valley AONB Unit Accounts 2015-2016		2014/15	2015/16
Income		£	£
	Local Authorities core contributions	51,850	50,848
	Defra AONB grant	122,001	122,001
	Natural Resources Wales Grant	52,210	52,211
	Sustainable Development Fund	70,000	61,000
	Income from other sources	201,416	115,944
	TOTAL	497,477	402,004
Expenditure			
	Staff costs	181,893	179,713
	Unit Operating costs	23,117	24,042
	Core Initiatives	7,649	3,388
	AONB Projects	20,566	26,400
	Sustainable Development Fund	70,332	61,000
	Partnership projects	193,920	107,462
	TOTAL	497,477	402,004



WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

AONB Unit Work Programme Report for 2015/2016

Task for AONB Unit	Work Progressed / Achieved	Key Officer/s (see footer)	By when
<p>AONB Management Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise and distribute Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Monitor and review Management Plan Achieve - average 100 downloads of Plan from website per annum and average 10 requests for printed copies of Plan per annum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) completed Consultation on the Environment Report concluded that there are no further changes necessary. Finalised AONB Management Plan approved by JAC Local Authority adoption processes commenced Management Plan design for publication commenced 	AONBO	Mar 2016
<p>AONB Strategy & Development Advisor Extend contract for year to support AONB Officer. Commenting on 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, including the cumulative impact of small scale development. Annually engage in development and consultation stages of at least 1 national or local strategy or Local Development Frameworks/Plan to ensure policy results in landscape and biodiversity gain</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract commenced with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Planning Department, shared with Malvern Hills AONB Partnership. 6 monthly review meetings held. Over the year, WCC officers have developed their knowledge base and increased their familiarity and confidence in responding to strategy documents and planning application consultations on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB. Planning applications considered 274, responses drafted 17. 3 Planning appeals have followed AONB Unit objections to application. 2 were upheld in favour of the AONB, 1 permitted. 	AONBO	March 2016
<p>AONB Farming Awards Promote & publicise 9th Awards. For farmers and landowners to promote best practice in land management that makes 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, supermarkets etc. Site visits of all farm entries for short-listing Site visits by the judges to the short-listed farms for the AONB Farming Awards 2015 Present the AONB Farming Awards 2015 prizes at the Monmouthshire Show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment visits made to farms by AONB Development Officer and Judging Panel visited 4 shortlisted farms. Cllr Phil Cutter presented Ann and Jim Herbert, of Lewstone Farm Herefordshire, with the first prize of £400, the Farming Awards Trophy and the winning certificate at the Monmouthshire Show 2015. 2014 Winner, Severdale Farm and Hanley Farm Shop, hosted Open Farm Sunday event assisted by AONB staff and LEMUR+ Placement 	DO	Aug 2015

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

AONB Unit Work Programme Report for 2015/2016

Task for AONB Unit	Work Progressed / Achieved	Key Officer/s (see footer)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve winner in Open Farm Sunday event. 			
Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate project applications for 2015/2016 grants for the SDF Assessment Panel Service SDF Assessment Panel for allocating funds for 2014/2015 Review SDF application processes and Assessment Panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £61,000 allocated leveraging in match funding totalling £187,788.84 with £144,753.84 cash and £43,035.00 in kind 10 projects supported including: Wye & Usk Foundation River Clean up, Savoy Youth Theatre Promenade Sensory Theatre, Wildlife Bioblitz Monmouth, Dixton Church Interpretation Boards, Wye Valley AONB Youth Rangers, Wye Valley River Festival – development and educational element, Deer Initiative project, Gwent Wildlife Trust Cattle grazing Project, Future Landscapes Wales. Review SDF Assessment Panel on-going Harewood End Agricultural Society launched their book celebrating 125 years of farming in Herefordshire (with SDF support in 2014/15). 	AONBO/ CLO	May 2015 Nov 2015 Jan 2016
Picturesque Produce and distribute the Spring and Autumn edition of the AONB newsletter, 'Picturesque' incorporating interpretation programme 'Wye So Special' to provide information and interpretation to increase residents' and visitors' awareness and appreciation of the AONB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to staffing issues and illness only 1 edition of Picturesque (Winter 2015) produced and distributed. Emphasis for PR has focused on remaining AONB staff working with Twitter #wyebeauty and Facebook pages: Wye Valley AONB & Wye Valley River Festival. 	IO/CLO/ ALL	Sept 2015 March 2016
JAC Seminar & meetings Organise Annual Seminar on key issue for AONB Partnership members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to staff shortages and illness no Seminar held 	AONBO	Feb 2016
JAC Tour Organise JAC Annual Study Tour of key sites &/or issues for AONB Partnership members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 people attended the annual AONB Partnership Tour, with a good turn out of Town, Parish and Community Council representatives. The Study Tour visited Symonds Yat Rock; Lancaut Church and the work of the Forest of Dean Buildings Preservation Trust and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust; Youth Hostel Association St Briavel's Castle, also lunch there. Tarmac operations at Stowfield Quarry; Braceland and the mindSCAPE project; Biblins Bridge and Forestry Commission activities, including their involvement in the Wye Valley River Festival 2016. 	DO/AONBO/ FAO	Sep 2015
Exhibitions & Outreach Promote the AONB through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stands at the Wye Valley River Festival, Monmouthshire Show, Hereford Country Show and other relevant shows. Local exhibitions, celebrity book signings and other local appropriate / prestigious events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to staff shortages and illness only the Monmouthshire Show and Magna Carta event at the Speech House were attended 	ALL	Mar 2016
MindSCAPE Year 2 of £165,000 Big Lottery funded 4 year initiative enabling people living with dementia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 2 has seen the project continue to grow from strength to strength, both in terms of community awareness, participation and referrals, but also in terms of developing practical skills working with people with dementia and their carers and understanding the impact that the project has on their lives. Particularly 	DO/IO	Mar 2016

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Task for AONB Unit	Work Progressed / Achieved	Key Officer/s (see footer)	By when
<p>to access the landscape and to reconnect with the landscape, through arts and creative environmental activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage project and submit reports & claims for Big Lottery • Supervise contractor to organise regular creative sessions, workshops and social activities at Bracelands woodland site, near Coleford in Gloucestershire, for participants who are living with dementia and their carers and families. <p>http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/index.php/mindscape/</p>	<p>those of carers, some of whom have experienced bereavement or the stress and upheaval of their loved ones moving into full time residential care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48th mindSCAPE session took place in March 2016. Since the start of the project we have worked with 33 people: 17 carers and 16 people with dementia. After 18 months (Jan 2016), 90% of respondents reported that the project made them feel less isolated • Examples of activities delivered this year include; working with leather, going on a 'poetry walk', working with an artist from the RSPB, printmaking using objects found in nature, using natural materials to felt-make, and trying mindful mediation and dance/movement. This year we have linked mindSCAPE to other community projects and initiatives including: The Sculpture Trust de-commissioning of 'Place - The Giants Chair', visiting the sculpture on site at Beechenhurst, the Arts Council Funded 'Story of Objects' and singing for dementia with 'Mindsong'. • 'mindSCAPE hub' monthly coffee morning/ information drop in sessions delivered in partnership with Crossroads care and other dementia providers. • External evaluation of the project undertaken by national organisation 'Dementia Adventure'. This two day process comprised of an audit of the mindSCAPE project and venue (Bracelands Adventure Centre) and interviews with staff, volunteers and participants. Feedback from participants with dementia and their carers was extremely positive and highlighted the success of the programme in terms of quality of workshops, staffing and volunteers • Presentation on mindSCAPE given to the National Assembly for Wales Cross Party Group on Rural Affairs and case study included in National Parks & AONBs 'So much more than the View' publication. 		
<p>Wye Valley River Festival 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit bids to Arts Councils and other sources for Festival development. • Organise main communities to start developing event ideas within their areas. • Establishing website to promote up and coming events. • Develop business sponsorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research & Development (R&D) Phase successfully concluded engaging 150 people through four creative exploratory workshops that brought together artists, conservation experts and community producers. The R&D phase was supported by the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), Arts Council England, Arts Council of Wales and Shire Hall Monmouth. • Plans progressed well for the Wye Valley River Festival 2016, with the dates set for 29th April - 15th May 2016. Festival Choir commenced rehearsals. Over 500 children at 11 schools received conservation visits and Festival Banner making workshops. • Working budget of £200,000 secured with funding from the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), Arts Council England, Arts Council of Wales, supported by the Welsh Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund, Big Lottery, Environment Agency, Ernest Cook Trust, Forestry Commission England, New Grove Trust,, Ross Town Council and in-kind support from Hereford River Carnival, The Shire Hall, Monmouth, Mon Teas, National Museum of Wales, Chepstow Racecourse, numerous volunteers and local communities • A business sponsorship package was launched; main business sponsor Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire and media sponsors Sunshine Radio and Live 24-Seven. • Majority of consents and licences secured. Special thanks to land owners at Hereford Council, Ross Town Council, The Tump Lydbrook, the Slaughters Biblins, Vauxhall Fields Monmouth, Redbrook Bridge, Llandogo Riverside, Old Station Tintern and Chepstow Racecourse who granted access for River Festival events. 	CLO/DO/ ALL	May 2015

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

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Task for AONB Unit	Work Progressed / Achieved	Key Officer/s (see footer)	By when
<p>Youth Rangers Years 4 of £80,000 Your Heritage funded 6 year initiative which aims to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness and understanding of the Wye Valley AONB's heritage among young people and their communities. Deliver a structured programme of activity for young people that will increase their skill set in heritage conservation. Inspire young people to develop their skills beyond the life of the scheme. <p>Develop a model of excellence when engaging young people in heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage young people directly through their labour to manage heritage sites. <p>http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/index.php/youth-rangers/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second cohort of Wye Valley AONB Youth Rangers completed their 2 years with a 'graduation event' at Bracelands and a Summer Camp at 'Humble by Nature' The third cohort of Wye Valley AONB Youth Rangers recruited. A taster event was hosted in September and further taster and familiarisation events carried out over Half Term week in October. Further promotional events in local Secondary Schools also took place. Monthly events held; January - First aid outdoors & land management, February - charcoal project, coppicing & filming, March - All about deer, monitoring & tracking Negotiations with Forestry Commission and a Youth Ranger programme included in the successful Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership Stage 1 bid to Heritage Lottery Fund. 	DO/CLO	Mar 2016
<p>Deer Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene & service Deer Management Groups and Deer Monitoring and Impacts Project Coordinate deer surveys in the Woolhope Dome and Lower Wye Valley Assist co-ordination of collaborative deer cull through the Deer Management Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deer Initiative concluded Deer Monitoring & Impact Project, of which the AONB Officer chaired the Steering Group. Lower Wye Valley Deer Management Group meetings held, chaired by AONB Officer. Discussions with Forestry Commission, Natural England and Deer Initiative about reinvigorating the Woolhope Dome Deer Management Group. Deer population survey co-ordinated for Woolhope Dome and Lower Wye Valley. 	AONBO	Mar 2016 June 2015 Nov 2015
<p>Habitat Conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Phase 1 and priority BAP habitat surveys Ongoing audit of the ancient tree survey Development of projects with the help of LEMUR+ students. Organise monthly volunteer task days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Links Officer held 8 volunteer sessions, including work tasks at Highbury Woods National Nature Reserve, Joan's Hill Farm, Staunton Meend Common, Ty Mawr, Broome Farm and River Litter picks with Wye & Usk Foundation. Phase 1 Habitat mapping continued. CLO and LEMUR+ Trainees attended Bioblitz event in Monmouth in June 2015 and various Monmouthshire Botany Group events. Discussions held with Ross Town Council over management of Ross Riverside (part of asset transfer from Herefordshire Council) 	DO/CLO	Mar 2016
<p>Website and social networking Upgrading and management of www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk and social</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website re-design contract tendered and let. Unfortunately company subsequently went into administration. Rescue company took over assets and have continued with contract. Due to AONB staff shortages and ill health contract completion has been delayed. 	ALL	Mar 2016

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

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Task for AONB Unit	Work Progressed / Achieved	Key Officer/s (see footer)	By when
networking sites e.g. facebook and twitter. Maintenance of www.wyevalleywalk.org and hosting of www.overlookingthewye.org.uk & www.wyevalleyriverfestival.org.uk websites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB staff working with Twitter #wyebeauty and Facebook pages: Wye Valley AONB & Wye Valley River Festival. Film produced with NRW highlighting NRW's work in the Wye Valley AONB. 		
Work placements Support the needs of student placements/group projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEMUR+ trainees on 9 month & 3 month placements. Host PhD research post on 'Corporeal Connections in the Contemporary Landscape' and provide technical assistance with PhD dissertation and evaluation of data regarding the cultural significance of the AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two trainee placements hosted on the LEMUR+ (Learning Environments in Marine, Urban & Rural areas) programme, funded by Heritage Lottery Fund 'Skills for Life'. Sophie Marley (nee. Anderson) on a 9 month placement and Stephen Shutt on a 3 month placement. They supported AONB staff with a variety of activities and were trained in and carried out Phase 1 Habitat Surveys in the Woolhope Dome area, working alongside the LEMUR+ trainees with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, who co-ordinate the placements. Sophie given a 12 week contract to continue her placement with the Unit until February 2016. Shortlisting and Interviews undertaken for both the 9 month and 4 month LEMUR+ placements for 2016. The 9 month placement commences in April and the 4 month placement starts in May 2016. Greg Dunn continued his PhD research, including leading a Guided Walk and using AONB Volunteers as part of research. Regular meetings held with his Professor and tutor from Birmingham City University. 	DO	Mar 2016
Undergrounding Continue working with Western Power to promote schemes within the AONB.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Development Officer attended 3 meetings with Western Power Distribution. Review of scheme in the Wye Valley AONB undertaken: since 2006, 35 schemes put forward, of which 9 have been successfully completed with an estimated value of just over £600,000. A total length of 7.6km of cable has been moved underground. 	DO	Mar 2016
Landscape scale conservation Develop and support partnership projects that deliver landscape scale conservation activity and initiatives within and adjoining the AONB.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wye Catchment Management Partnership events and meetings attended by AONB Officer & AONB Development Officer. River Trothy Living Landscapes project developed with Gwent Wildlife Trust Wye Valley Woodlands project developed with Gwent Wildlife Trust and Woodland Trust Discussion held with Forestry Commission, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Environment Agency & Wye & Usk Foundation on potential Wye Valley project 	DO	Mar 2016
Wye Valley Walk Support Wye Valley Walk Partnership Monitor counters along Walk Manage Passport scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to staff shortages and illness no Wye Valley Walk Partnership hosted Analysis of people counter on Redbrook Bridge identified peak usage of 1,367 on 06/09/2015. Average usage per day was 246. Passports continued to be issued, despite staff shortages and illness. Elsie and Margaret Stockwell, both in their 80s, received certificates for completing the Wye Valley Walk over 4 years, walking the 136 mile route in carefully planned week-long sections, staying in self-catering cottages and using 2 cars so that each day they had a car at the finishing point. They said "The walk is so beautiful and we had as much fun planning it as in walking it. It was a life affirming adventure". 	FAO	Mar 2015
Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote guided walks, events, children's activities and countryside craft /rural skills courses Give talks/presentations to local groups Regular press releases and magazine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 Guided walks supported or led including for Herefordshire Walking Festival, Ross Walking Festival and Chepstow Walking Festival. Talks given to St Weonards Retirement Group, Ross/Hereford Ramblers AGM, Gwent Wildlife Trust - Usk Branch Media profile built up, particularly focusing on Wye Valley River Festival and Youth Rangers 	ALL	Mar 2016

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Task for AONB Unit	Work Progressed / Achieved	Key Officer/s (see footer)	By when
articles / advertorial			
Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host AONB Tourism Co-ordination Group and liaise with Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism Destination Partnership. Comment on national AONB policy documents when required Attend National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) and Europarc seminars Attend meetings or receive minutes of Local Nature Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Officer participated in Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism Destination Management Partnership and drafting of Destination Management Plan Diane McCrean, newly appointed chair of Natural Resources Wales (NRW), visited the AONB in March 2016 along with NRW Principal Landscape Adviser and NAAONB Chairman and NAAONB Chief Executive Officer, Howard Davies, who is also a NRW Board Member. AONB Officer represented the AONB at AONB and National Park Chairmen one day Conference in London. Five representatives from the AONB Partnership attended the national AONB Landscapes for Life Conference, with theme of 'Sharing, Learning, Inspiring' in Winchester. Ashley Thomas was presented with a 'Landscapes for Life Award' at the conference. 	AONBO/DO	Mar 2016
Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with AONB Family on taking Future Landscapes Programme forward With the three National Parks and 4 other AONB's in Wales, including publish promotional calendar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Welsh Protected Landscapes, the 5 AONBs (Anglesey, Clwydian Range and Dee Valley, Gower, Llŷn and Wye Valley) and 3 National Parks (Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia) collaborated on a joint project to promote the outstanding natural and cultural heritage of Wales' protected landscapes, as part of Visit Wales' Year of Adventure. Short videos were produced of each landscape. The Wye Valley video received 22,450 views, 311 'shares' and 138 'likes' on Facebook. AONB Officer contributed to Future Landscapes Wales programme, attending collaborations workshops and development seminars and participating in 'Innovation in resourcing' Project Group. 	ALL	Aug 2015
Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing updating of the AONB GIS Monitor and review implementation of the AONB Management Plan 2015/2020 Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 1 Habitat Survey ongoing, focusing predominantly in the Woolhope Dome area Data collation for AONB Management Plan ongoing 	DO	Mar 2016
Governance <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"> Three JAC meetings held plus 3 TOWP meetings & 2 Steering Group meetings. All bids and claims submitted on time. Staffing issues due to ill health resolved with agency cover for AONB Finance & Admin Officer and AONB Information returning to work on reduced hours. 	AONBO/FAO	Jun, Oct, Feb, Jan, May 2016
Funding and resources Continue investigating funding and development opportunities. Investigation into external funding and securing sources for strategic and partnership projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going, including discussions with Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership scheme, Arts Council, Herefordshire Community Foundation, Community Foundation for Wales etc. 	DO	Mar 2016
Walking with Offa / Irresistible Offa <i>Investigate opportunities for future cross</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irresistible Offa Partnership continued to meet and Business Plan produced for potential Phase 2 Investigation of new bids to either LEADER Co-operation, INTERREG Atlantic Area &/or HLF. 	AONBO	Mar 2016

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

AONB Unit Work Programme Report for 2015/2016

Task for AONB Unit	Work Progressed / Achieved	Key Officer/s (see footer)	By when
<i>border partnership projects along the corridor of Offa's Dyke, promoting walking and sustainable tourism.</i>			
<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"> • All interpretation installed under Overlooking the Wye was checked and cleaned • Contract of minor repairs and maintenance let for Overlooking the Wye interpretation infrastructure • Discussions with various organisations, including Forest of Dean Buildings Preservation Trust, about further development of legacy projects • Discussions with various partners over a potential archaeological project focused on Offa's Dyke. 	AONBO	Mar 2016

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**A Summary of
Strategy and Planning Advisory Work
by Worcestershire County Council
in the Wye Valley AONB**

April 2015 to March 2016

**A summary of Strategy and Planning Advisory work undertaken by
Worcestershire County Council in the Wye Valley AONB – April 2015
to March 2016**

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1. Introduction

In April 2015, the Strategic Planning and Development Management teams at Worcestershire County Council (WCC) took on the consultancy role of advising the AONB Unit on strategic planning issues and development management. This report provides a summary of the main aspects of the work undertaken in 2015-2016.

2. Strategic consultation work

During the last monitoring year the AONB Unit responded to one consultation on a significant planning and strategy document.

Between 25th March and 20th May 2015, Forest of Dean District Council consulted on its Allocations Plan Publication Version March 2015. Three allocated sites fell within the AONB area. They were the Staunton Road site in Coleford, and the Former Tinplate Works and Land at Stowfield sites in Lydbrook. The AONB Unit supported these allocations in principle, as they would contribute to employment generation and economic growth of the local area. Comments were made on the plan to ensure that any future development in these areas had regard to the Wye Valley AONB landscape and special qualities. A brief summary of the Unit's response is included in Appendix 1 of this report.

3. Planning Casework

Planning applications in the AONB

Planning applications requiring consideration by the Wye Valley AONB Partnership were identified through lists of relevant applications sent to WCC by the AONB Unit on a weekly basis. Table 1 is a summary of the planning applications within the AONB for 2015-2016.

Table 1 - Summary statistics for planning applications April 2015 to March 2016

Local Authority	No. of applications registered	No. of site visits	No. of applications considered to be relevant to the Wye Valley AONB	No. of proposed responses drafted by WCC for the AONB to consider**
Herefordshire Council	226	0 (7)	149 (58)	10 (6)
Forest of Dean District Council	76	0 (2)	39 (16)	2 (1)
Monmouthshire District Council	144	0 (5)	86 (54)	5 (2)
Gloucestershire County Council	0	0 ()	0 (5)	0 (0)
Totals	446	0 (14)	274 (133)	17 (9)

(2014-15 figures in brackets)

** Only comprehensive draft responses are counted in these sums.

There were 446 planning applications registered, based on the lists of applications provided by the Wye Valley AONB Unit between April 2015 and March 2016. There is no comparable data from last year's assessment.

At 275, the number of applications identified as relevant for consideration because of potential adverse impacts on the Wye Valley AONB has more than doubled compared to the previous year, when only 133 applications were considered. This increase is consistent across all planning authorities. The reasons associated with this increase may include:

- the increase in the number of planning applications submitted to the Local Planning Authorities.
- the change to the applications recording system associated with the new consultation contract
- WCC officers' increased familiarity with the AONB landscape and relevant issues, which led to more detailed scrutiny of planning applications at the beginning of the reporting year, which has since levelled out with experience.

Whilst WCC has not completed any site visits in this reporting year, on a number of occasions we have asked the AONB Unit to undertake a site visit on our behalf.

WCC provided the AONB Unit with written responses to 16 planning application consultations. This is double the number of applications responded to last year, but is consistent with the numbers for the 2013-2014 reporting year.

It needs to be noted that over the last year WCC contacted the AONB Unit about a number of proposals which WCC felt had the potential to lead to negative impacts on the AONB, but was advised that no further action was required. These applications did not lead to a formal response and therefore they are not counted in this summary. WCC is exploring ways of recording these consultations for the benefit of next year's consultancy report.

Objections

The AONB Unit objected to three planning applications in the last monitoring year.

Two applications were refused by the Local Planning Authority (*P1287/15/FUL in.... [insert LPA] and 151160 in....[insert LPA]*) with the latter decision being challenged at appeal. The appeal was dismissed, and is discussed in the section below. On both occasions the negative visual impacts on the AONB landscape and heritage setting were quoted as one of the reasons for refusal.

One application was approved despite the AONB Unit's holding objection (*DC/2015/01331 for Installation of a 30.5m lattice telecoms tower at Near Pen-y-Garn Farm, Penallt, in Monmouthshire*). The AONB Unit placed a holding objection on the proposal until the applicant considered mitigation measures and alternative designs for the mast in order to minimise its impact on the Wye Valley AONB. The Officer Report states that:

"Given the position within the AONB the proposal has been advertised as major development in the local press accordingly. In terms of national interest, the proposal does form part of a wider project to deliver superfast broadband to private residents and business in rural areas. The project will also overlap with neighbouring local authorities and therefore given this regional importance it is considered to be justified". The Planning officer was also of the view that despite the mast introducing a strong vertical element onto a distinctive and prominent landform and causing a significant change to the landscape, *"it is considered that on balance a Green Infrastructure (GI) Bond would help to satisfactorily reduce the adverse impact on landscape*

character. A sum of £7000 would help to improve the connectivity between other important GI Assets, by improving the quality of the PROW network"¹.

Planning Appeals

One planning appeal was made for an application objected to by the AONB Unit during the 2015/16 monitoring year.

Planning Appeal Ref. APP/W1850/W/15/3135704 related to application no. 151160, for the proposed retention of existing hard surface and driveway for storage of sugar beet and straw at land adjacent To Home Farm, Pencraig, Ross-on-Wye. The appeal was **dismissed** on 1 April 2016.

The Planning Inspector stated that the main issues in this case were the effect of the scheme on the character and appearance of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the impact on the setting of nearby heritage assets. The Appeal Decision letter included the following reasons for refusal:

"The effect on the AONB

3. The hardstanding and roadway were installed as a temporary measure during works by a statutory undertaker and the land is due to be reinstated to its original state as an agricultural field. They are in an area of attractive countryside and are very noticeable from the lane which leads to Goodrich and, beyond, to the River Wye. They intrude into a park-style landscape of agricultural land with isolated trees, and have the effect of despoiling it by introducing a large, flat, hardsurfaced feature. In addition, they are sited on the top of a narrow ridge; vehicles such as lorries and agricultural plant associated with delivering and collecting produce would be seen on the skyline from lower positions, and would be widely visible in the landscape from higher vantage points.

4. The National Planning Policy Framework states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs. Core Strategy Policies SS6 and LD1 seek to conserve and enhance landscapes and the AONB. In this case the scheme would significantly harm the AONB and would be contrary to these policies".

Conclusions

This was the first year that Worcestershire County Council had provided consultancy to the Wye Valley AONB. Over the last year, WCC officers have developed their knowledge base and increased their familiarity and confidence in responding to strategy documents and planning application consultations on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB. This has resulted in a more targeted approach as this consultancy contract has progressed. We expect this trend to continue over the next consultancy period.

¹ <http://idox.monmouthshire.gov.uk/WAM/doc/Report-384927.pdf?extension=.pdf&id=384927&appid=1001&location=VOLUME4&contentType=application/pdf&pageCount=1&sid=>

Appendix 1 – Summary of responses to strategic consultations in the period April 2015 – March 2016

Consulting Authority	Consultation Document	Summary of Unit Response
National Consultations		
None		
County or Unitary level consultations		
None		
District Level Consultations		
Forest of Dean District Council	Allocations Plan Publication Version	<p>We note that the following sites allocated in the Plan fall within the AONB area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy AP 61 - Staunton Road, Coleford Employment / Hotel Site • Policy AP 82 - Former Tinsplate Works, Lydbrook • Policy AP 17 - Land At Stowfield, Lydbrook <p>The Partnership supports the above policies in principle as contributing to employment generation and economic growth of the local area. All these locations are on previously development land and should not impose further on the outstanding landscape of the Wye Valley.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this, we feel that Policy AP82 Former Tinsplate Works, Lydbrook should also refer to the Wye Valley AONB and needs to respect its landscapes and contribute to the wider role of the Wye Valley AONB.</p> <p>In regard to Land At Stowfield, Lydbrook we support the redevelopment/regeneration of the former cable works for mixed uses such as residential, employment, recreation facilities or tourist accommodation as proposed in the Plan. We feel that any works on this site should contribute to the wider landscape, cultural heritage and activities of the Wye Valley AONB. Development proposals should explore the possibility of enhancing access to the River Wye and restoration of the old railway viaduct adjacent to this site to encourage water-based recreation. Proposals should also consider how to increase connectivity to this riverine area and maintain and enhance its attractiveness, for the benefit of future site occupiers and visitors to the Wye Valley.</p>
Neighbourhood Plans		
None		

Appendix 2 Summary of Planning Applications with written responses - April 2015 to March 2016

Herefordshire Council

Application Details	AONB Comments	Planning Decision
<p>151160</p> <p>Proposed retention of existing hard surface and driveway for storage of sugar beet and straw</p> <p>Land adj. Home Farm, Pencraig, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 6HR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objection • The site is in an elevated position with expansive views in all directions. This proposal is likely to create a dominant feature out of keeping with the landscape of the AONB and damage special qualities in the AONB, particularly SQ 11: Picturesque, extensive & dramatic views. This is contrary to the AONB Management Plan Strategic Objective WV-D4. • Section 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires "great weight" to be given to AONB status. No such justification appears to have been provided in support of the application. • The existing hard surface and driveway were installed by National Grid to for a time limited period in the national interest, with appropriate mitigation and compensation. Part of that mitigation would be the reversion of this site to arable agriculture. Recommend refusal. • However, if the council is minded to grant permission we request that a condition is put in place requiring a landscaping scheme to be implemented. 	<p>Refused</p> <p>(this application was appealed – appeal dismissed)</p>
<p>151264</p> <p>To convert an existing barn to an eco-dwelling at Losito Stud Barn at Losito Stud, Harris Lodge, Whitchurch, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 6EG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not considered that the proposed eco-dwelling would have an adverse impact on the character of the AONB in this location, providing that the design is of a similar scale to that of the existing barn. Request that the AONB Partnership is consulted on any Reserved Matters application received. 	<p>Refused</p>
<p>151502</p> <p>Sanctuary Cottage, Hoarwithy, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR2 6QQ</p> <p>Proposed erection of detached garage and railings to boundary with highway.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for detached garage and removing boundary vegetation and replacing with railings. Concern that railings are inappropriate in this location and would be detrimental to the AONB, they would also increase visibility of the proposed garage which would otherwise be reasonably well screened by the existing vegetation. Response drafted requesting retention of vegetation 	<p>Approved</p>

<p>151627</p> <p>Proposed erection of two detached cottages with new vehicular access</p> <p>Land adjoining Bryants Court Cottage, Goodrich, Herefordshire</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for outline permission to develop 2 houses on the edge of Goodrich village. The proposal might be acceptable but concern over views from public footpaths to north and south of the site, and whether the development would break the skyline in views from the west (A40). Response drafted to request Visual Assessment. 	<p>Approved</p>
<p>152287</p> <p>Proposed 9 no. two bedroom dwellings, turning, car parking and associated works.</p> <p>Land at Kirby's Yard, Old Monmouth Road, Whitchurch, Hereford, HR9 6DJ</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AONB Partnership consider the proposal largely acceptable, and recognise it as a visual improvement to the current structure. However, an appropriate landscaping scheme is needed to soften the visual impact on the landscape of the AONB at this location. • A carefully designed landscaping scheme should be provided for this site. In particular, a screen of native trees should be planted alongside the proposed timber noise barrier fence along the A40 to enhance the existing treeline. The trees should be allowed to mature and form a single corridor with the existing trees along this stretch of the road. This will subsequently enhance the biodiversity, visual screening and landscape in this location as well and enhancing the reduction of noise & dust from the dual carriageway for the proposed dwellings. 	<p>Withdrawn</p>
<p>151752</p> <p>Proposed erection of 2 no new detached dwellings.</p> <p>Land adjacent to Seven Acres, Kings Caple, Herefordshire, HR1 4TZ</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership has no objection to this proposal subject to the applicant preserving the current mature tree cover on the site and ensuring that the development is sufficiently screened from wider views. • From the information submitted by the applicant it is not obvious if the existing tree cover is planned to be preserved. The site has a number of mature large and smaller trees which must not be removed as part of this development. They create a natural boundary between the settlement of Kings Caple and open countryside and are an important part of the local landscape. The two proposed dwellings should be nested amongst these features to minimise the visual impact of new structures. Where trees will become part of the private gardens, their preservation in perpetuity should be ensured through the use of Tree Preservation Orders. 	<p>Approved</p>
<p>152399</p> <p>Proposed extension to existing agricultural building</p> <p>Little Canwood, Canwood Road, Checkley, Herefordshire</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant proposes an extension which account to approximately 50% of the existing agricultural building. This is in addition to another large agricultural building sited to the South-East from this structure. The site lies in the open countryside and whilst there are a few building structures in close proximity they are all well screened by the existing trees and hedgerows. • The Partnership would see this extension acceptable subject to the landscaping plan which aims to screen the scale of the structure from the immediate and long distance views. In particular, an extensive screening with the native hedgerows and trees to the north and west of the building will be required. 	<p>Approved</p>

<p>153616</p> <p>Proposed development of five dwellings with new accesses, drainage, woodland and hedgerow planting.</p> <p>Land south east of The Old Vicarage, Holme Lacy, Herefordshire, HR2 6LU</p>	<p>The biggest drawback is the lack of diversity whether it comes to the development layout or design. Home Lacy seems like a mixture of both ribbon and clustered houses of varied styles and periods. There are number of homes placed alongside main roads but they are intersected with smaller internal roads. I think this should be reflected in the site design to avoid it looking like an "estate". The proposed site have a repetitive feel of "dwelling, garage – dwelling, garage" site layout. This should also be rethought.</p> <p>The site design could be improved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some diversity in the design between the buildings • The design seems quite blocky but perhaps some diversity in the roofline and structure could enhance this development <p>The proposed blocky windows and doorframes which are only decorative features but they don't improve the appearance but rather make houses look heavy in this location.</p>	<p>Approved</p>
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Forest of Dean District Council

Application Details	AONB Comments	Planning Decision
<p>P1287/15/FUL</p> <p>Erection of an agricultural shed</p> <p>Land At Wall Weir, Miss Graces Lane, Tidenham Chase, Chepstow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objection • The Photographs and Landscape Assessment submitted by the applicant underplays the sensitive location of the site. The Partnership would like to see consideration of the impact of this proposal from various viewpoints (short and long-distance) from which the new structure may be visible. • The AONB Partnership would like to see information on the size, materials and placing of these panels as well as evidence that they are not going to impact on long-distance views within the AONB. • In respect of this application, there is no information on whether any external lighting is proposed. The Partnership would like the applicant to clarify this and, if lighting is proposed, details of the type and placing of these lights should be provided. • The Partnership notes that the site is proposed to be used for increased commercial activity such as timber production and livestock rearing. We would like to see some indication of the resultant volume of traffic and potential business visits to be able assess any potential impact on tranquillity. 	<p>Refused</p>
<p>P1287/15/FUL (Revalidation)</p> <p>Erection of an agricultural shed</p> <p>Land At Wall Weir, Miss Graces Lane, Tidenham Chase, Chepstow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New information did not address the AONB points as above • The response resubmitted 	<p>Refused</p>

<p>P1428/15/AG</p> <p>Erection of an open fronted barn to house machinery/plant to maintain grounds</p> <p>Hudnalls Farm The Common St Briavels Lydney Gloucestershire GL15 6SQ</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The barn is approximately 126 m2. It is proposed to have a light colour steel roof. The barn is located on the slope and will potentially impact on the wider landscape of the AONB. Response drafted to request the dark colour of the roofing material. 	<p>Refused</p>
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Monmouthshire County Council

Application Details	The AONB Comments	Planning Decision
<p>DC/2015/01331</p> <p>Installation of 30.5m lattice telecoms tower to supply broadband to the surrounding area, as part of a contract awarded by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to supply superfast broadband to a number of rural areas in Monmouthshire, where traditional means are unavailable.</p> <p>Near Pen-y-Garn Farm Penallt NP25 4AP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holding objection The application appears to fail to have regard to the Strategic Objectives and policy proposals set out in the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan and does not adequately seek to address the conservation and enhancement of the unique character and special qualities of the landscape. We 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. Mast sharing may be an option. We failed to find any information within the application documents to demonstrate which alternative sites had been considered and why this is the most appropriate site for the development. It is not clear what alternative designs or mitigation measures have been considered which result in this being the optimum solution. We do not observe that any aspects of this application assist in the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area. We also consider that, in line with Policy EP4 of the Monmouthshire County Council Adopted Local Development Plan 2011-2021, a mast of this height within the AONB is major development which requires a comprehensive justification in the national interest. 	<p>Approved</p>
<p>DC/2015/00470</p> <p>Erection of a timber stable block, with field enclosures.</p> <p>Stanley Cottage, Gethley Road, Parkhouse NP25 4PU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We consider that some improvements could be made to the proposed scheme to reduce its impact on the landscape. We consider that the building may be better located slightly to the north/north east in the 'bend' of the field and tree-line with existing mature trees on at least two sides. We note the proposed hedge planting but consider that a landscaping plan should be required prior to determining the application. The proposed external lighting, if it is necessary, should be reduced to an absolute minimum and we would recommend a condition relating to lighting on site. 	<p>Approved</p>

<p>DC/2015/00097</p> <p>Development of 9 affordable and 6 private dwellings together with new accesses, car park for Trellech Primary School and ancillary works.</p> <p>Land at Monmouth Road/Greenway Lane Trellech NP25 4PA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership is concerned with the impact that this development might have on long-distance views and the wider landscape of the AONB. In particular, we are concerned about the northern edge of the site being visible from Monmouth Road. The Partnership would like to see a more in-depth visual assessment submitted for this site which considers both short and long distance views towards the development and identifies how this visual impact is going to be mitigated through site design and landscaping. • We welcome the retention of the central part of the site as public open space, we are concerned with the size of some of the dwellings on part of the site adjacent to Greenway Lane. As indicated, the dwellings, associated infrastructure, car parking and garages will create extensive areas of hard surfacing and materials that may benefit from being 'broken up' by an increase in structural planting and green spaces between the dwellings. • The Partnership would like to see this site developed in a way which preserves the village/rural feel, which could be achieved through the introduction of further landscaping, including locally distinctive trees and hedgerows within the development. 	Approved
<p>DC/2015/00097 (revalidation)</p> <p>Development of 9 affordable and 6 private dwellings together with new accesses, car park for Trellech Primary School and ancillary works.</p> <p>Land at Monmouth Road/Greenway Lane Trellech NP25 4PA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The additional information provided did not address the AONB comments. The response as above still stands. 	Approved
<p>DC/2015/01336</p> <p>Proposed change of use from the storage and maintenance of commercial vehicles, to the storage and repair of light motor vehicles. Storage and repair of up to two HGV motor vehicles and a trailer. Retention of a portable office, ancillary parking areas and vehicle wash area (Revised scheme).</p> <p>Land and existing Workshops, New Barn Workshop Site, St Arvans, Chepstow, NP16 6HE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the application represents an improvement over the existing situation and should not have a significant impact on AONB. Significant planning history on this site, but this application could regularise and improve the situation if properly implemented 	Pending

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th July 2016

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 23rd September 2016 for the Study Tour.
- B. Encourage a good attendance on the Tour.
- C. Extends an invitation to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority for a hosted visit to the Wye Valley AONB.

Key Issues

- Traditionally the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour is held on the last Friday of September, but in recent years this has clashed with various local authority meetings.
- This year the date is set at 23rd September when there appear to be no conflicting Council meetings.
- The programme is still being finalised but will focus predominantly on projects and management issues in the Monmouthshire part of the AONB.
- Initial invitations for expressions of interest to attend will be sent out shortly.
- It was intended to invite the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (NPA) to join the Tour, however the date clashes with a full NPA meeting. A separate invite will be made to visit the Wye Valley AONB.
- The Tour falls within 'Outstanding Week' 17th – 25th September, which is the second year of this week celebrating AONBs.

Reasons

The Annual Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour is hosted by the JAC and has gained a good reputation over recent years and is achieving 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.

Through the Future Landscapes Wales programme, the AONB Officer was invited to give a presentation to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA) in April. The presentation is available to view on the BBNPA webcast-site (Item 26 - from 1:58:31) http://www.breconbeacons.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/221021. During the meeting the AONB Officer invited the BBNPA to join the AONB Partnership Tour. Unfortunately in ensuring that the Tour date did not clash with any Wye Valley local authority appointments the date chosen, 23rd September, is a full NPA meeting.

Implications

The programme for the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour on 23rd September is still being finalised, however the Tour will focus on projects and management issues mainly in the Monmouthshire part of the AONB. 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. As always an adequate lunch and transport will be included in the total cost of not more than £15 per person.

A separate event will be arranged in liaison with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

Background

Each year the JAC hosts the Annual Study Tour. The 2015 Wye Valley AONB Partnership Study Tour started at Symonds Yat Rock. The first visit was to Lancaut Church and the work of the Forest of Dean Buildings Preservation Trust and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. Youth Hostel Association staff gave a tour of St Briavel's Castle followed by a delicious lunch there. Afterwards Tarmac staff hosted the group at Stowfield Quarry where expansive views over the quarry operations were appreciated. Next the Tour went into the woods at Braceland to the mindSCAPE project log circle, where the project co-ordinator from ArtSpace Cinderford explained the work with dementia sufferers and their carers. The Tour conclude on the river bank by Biblins Bridge with various Forestry Commission staff outlining activities, including their involvement in the Wye Valley River Festival 2016.

Outstanding Week - 2015 was the first year of what is intended to be an annual week celebrating AONBs. The AONB Partnership Tour falls within the 2nd Outstanding Week: 17th – 25th September 2016.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th July 2016

UNDERGROUNDING OF OVERHEAD POWERLINES

Purpose

To update members on the undergrounding work of overhead powerlines and seek their approval for a further three proposed schemes.

Recommendations

That the JAC endorses the programme of undergrounding work including the new schemes at Coppett Hill, Reddings Farm and Penterry.

Key Issues

- Western Power Distribution (WPD) work in collaboration with the AONB Unit on identifying a programme of undergrounding electricity power-lines in the AONB.
- WPD require the JAC to approve new undergrounding schemes prior to further investigation and evaluation work taking place.
- The new proposed schemes requiring JAC approval are for power lines across Coppett Hill and between Penterry and Reddings Farm near Tintern (see attached maps).
- Two previously approved schemes are still being investigated for potential undergrounding.

Reasons

Western Power Distribution (WPD) have a budget of £8million for undergrounding across all their regions (South Wales, the South West of England and the Midlands) in the current funding round to 2023. The AONB Development Officer continues to work in partnership with WPD to identify potential undergrounding schemes throughout the AONB. The Wye Valley AONB falls both the WPD South Wales and Midland Regions. Decisions on which schemes should proceed, within the corresponding Regional budget available, are taken by an area focus group attended by the respective protected landscapes in the Region.

WPD require that proposed undergrounding schemes are endorsed by the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee prior to allocation of their budget for evaluation and, if viable, implementation.

Implications

There are three new undergrounding schemes that are proposed to Western Power Distribution for inclusion in the current budget period, Coppett Hill, Penterry Church and Reddings Farm. The schemes are all 11KV powerlines. Penterry Church and Reddings Farm are close to each other, near Tintern, but are separate schemes.

Penterry Church (Map 1)

The proposed scheme at Penterry Church, running from point A to point B on the map, passes across the front of the church and is a visible feature in the view into the valley below. This scheme has been costed at approximately £88,000 by Western Power.

Reddings Farm (Map 1)

The scheme near Reddings Farm is an off shoot of the powerline passing Penterry Church and crosses the Wye Valley Walk. The removal of the powerlines, which are currently a highly intrusive feature, will benefit walkers heading in both directions along the path. This scheme is yet to be priced up.

Coppett Hill (Map 2)

The proposed scheme on Coppett Hill is on the highly visible 11KV powerline which runs diagonally in a north to south direction across the Hill. The proposal for undergrounding runs from point A on the map at the high point, diagonally across and down the hill to the houses on the western edge of the common and across the B4239 to the edge of Goodrich village at point C, and includes an off shoot of the powerline to point C in the direction of Kerne Bridge. Should this longer scheme be unfeasible, a shorter scheme from point A to point B, only including the powerlines where they cross the common, is to be considered.

There are currently two undergrounding schemes being pursued; New Grove Meadows and Brampton Abbots are both still active and are being considered alongside schemes submitted by other protected landscapes in the South Wales and West Midlands regions.

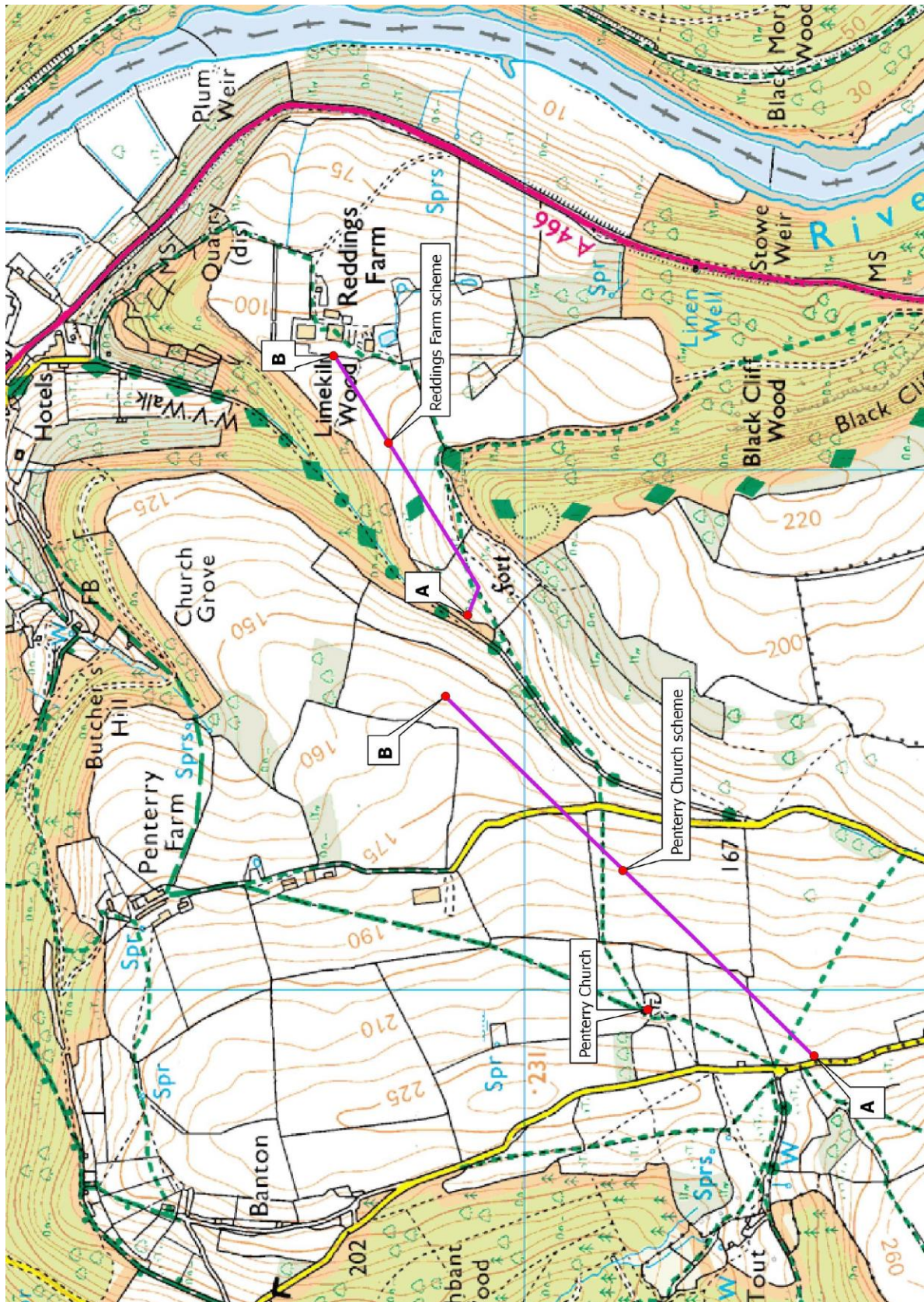
Background

As part of its Section 85 'Duty of Regard to the AONB' OFGEM, the official regulator for gas and electricity industry, provided a framework for allowing power distribution companies the discretionary option to underground overhead power lines.

Western Power Distribution (WPD) works with AONB and National Park partners across South Wales, the South West of England and the Midlands on undergrounding schemes that affect 'iconic sites' and manage a separate working group for AONB's across region.

Map 1: Penterry Church and Reddings Farm

These lines are close to each other, near Tintern, but are separate schemes.



Map 2: Coppett Hill



TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th July 2016

WYE VALLEY RIVER FESTIVAL 2016 INITIAL EVALUATION

Purpose

To inform members of the achievements and the initial evaluation of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016.

Recommendations

That the JAC welcomes the success of the Wye Valley River Festival 2014

Key Issues

- The Wye Valley River Festival journeyed through the AONB from Hereford to Chepstow between 29th April and 15th May 2016, celebrating nature, culture, landscape and life along the River Wye, and the global connections that water brings us.
- There were over 28,000 visits or acts of engagement in over 30 Wye Valley River Festival events, although not all the main outdoor events were blessed with good weather.
- This second Festival was organised by the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit and a professional Festival Management team with an overall budget of £200,000 working with arts professionals and conservationists in collaboration with local communities.
- 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, Environment Agency, Shire Hall Monmouth, and a significant range of smaller donations.
- A great many people dedicated 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 and whether the original proposal to establish a biennial Festival remains a viable option.

Reasons

The central theme of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 was 'Global Arteries' and how our river and the water flowing through it connects us to other rivers and people around the world. The Festival aimed to inspire and challenge, to change the way we look at ourselves and our complex and universal relationship with water, 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 across the globe.

Implications

Generally the consensus and anecdotal feedback is that the Festival was successful in spreading the message about the importance of the River Wye both as our local environment and as a global water artery, using innovative and creative outdoor art. There was nearly too much water at some events but that did not dampen what has been an incredibly vibrant and involving community event. Artists and conservationists have worked with more than 1,520 schoolchildren in preparing for the Festival, making the wonderful Festival flags. More than 1000 origami birds were made by local people of all ages for an avian art installation at Tintern Old Station. Over 220 individual singers, musicians and amateur actors came together from riverside communities to perform at the events alongside seasoned professionals. In excess of 25,000 people were engaged in Festival events where people were entertained by 17 local youth theatre groups, choirs and bands and a host of professional artists. 170 torchbearers from the local communities joined together to bless the waters of the Wye at the different events along the river. The overall budget was £200,000 and there is plenty to view on www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk ; on Twitter: @wybeauty #wyevalleyriverfestival; on Facebook: www.facebook.com/wyevalleyriverfestival and on the Wye Valley TV and WyeEye websites.

A full evaluation of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 is underway. About 150 audience feedback forms are currently being analysed and 20% of Festival performers, participants and crew have also responded to a formal survey. The evaluation is being conducted by the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) at University of Gloucestershire. The Evaluation Report will be presented to the JAC, probably at the next meeting in November.

The Wye Valley River Festival also hosted Articulture's 'Landowners & Landscape Outdoor Arts' conference in Shire Hall Monmouth on Friday 6th May.

Attendees included :

- David Alston, Arts Director, Arts Council of Wales
- Karine Decorne, Director, Migrations
- Carolyn Robertson, Project Manager, RSPB
- Eleri Wynne, RSPB
- Joe Roberts, Recreation Manager, Natural Resources Wales
- Haf Leyshon, Engagement Officer, Coed Cadw/Woodland Trust
- Dr Ffion Reynolds, Heritage & Arts Manager, Cadw
- Sunita Welch, Education Manager, Brecon Beacons National Park
- Andrew Stumpf, Head of Wales, Canal & River Trust
- Neville Rookes, Welsh Local Government Association
- Gerwyn Evans, Visit Wales
- Simon Coates, Creative Associate, National Theatre Wales

On Friday May 13 at the Wye Valley Sculpture Garden, Tintern a talk on The Art of Sustainability: Rivers, Local meets Global included a live link to Brazil and Professor Henrique Chaves, from Brasilia University, in conversation with Simon Evans from the Wye and Usk Foundation.

Background

The Wye Valley River Festival 2016 was 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, The Arts Council England, Arts Council of Wales, supported by the Welsh Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund, Big Lottery, Environment Agency, Ernest Cook Trust, Forestry Commission England, New Grove Trust,, Ross Town Council and in-kind support from Hereford River Carnival, The Shire Hall, Monmouth, Mon Teas, National Museum of Wales, Chepstow Racecourse, numerous volunteers and local communities; main business sponsor Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire and media sponsors Sunshine Radio and Live 24-Seven. Special thanks to land owners at Herefordshire Council, Ross Town Council, The Tump Lydbrook, the Slaughters Biblins, Vauxhall Fields Monmouth, Redbrook Bridge, Llandogo Riverside, Old Station Tintern and Chepstow Racecourse who granted access to make these events possible.

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th July 2016

NATIONAL GRID VISUAL IMPACT PROVISION

Purpose

To inform members of the opportunities to develop projects in Walford, Goodrich and Marstow Parishes through the National Grid Visual Impact Provision (VIP) and Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI).

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- National Grid surveyed all AONBs and National Parks which have National Grid overhead electricity lines or substations within their area.
- National Grid set up the Visual Impact Provision (VIP) to mitigate the visual impact of National Grid's infrastructure and enhance the quality of the affected landscapes in 30 National Parks and AONBs
- The Wye Valley AONB has 4.1km of National Grid overhead high voltage powerlines, in the Parishes of Walford and Marstow and 2.5km of lines already underground (see attached maps).
- The Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) allows the AONB Partnership to apply for 75% funding to deliver significant benefits that enhance the landscape and reduce the visual impact on the ground of the National Grid infrastructure (see appended fact sheets).
- The scheme does not relate to the smaller pylons that go through Walford and Marstow and over the river as these are Wester Power Distribution cables.
- National Grid are working in 4 other National Parks & AONBs to underground dominant powerlines currently on pylons.

Reasons

The Visual Impact Provision (VIP) was established by National Grid to use a £500 million allowance set up by Ofgem for electricity transmission owners to mitigate the landscape and visual impacts of existing electricity infrastructure in nationally protected landscapes in Great Britain. For National Grid, which is the electricity transmission owner in England and Wales, this means considering the landscape and visual impacts of existing electricity infrastructure in or adjacent to 21 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and 9 National Parks. In addition to the small number of major capital engineering projects which will come forward for funding from the provision, part of the allowance is also made available for funding smaller localised visual improvements and landscape enhancements, through the Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI).

Overall the objective of the initiative is to reduce the visual impact of National Grid's existing infrastructure and enhance the quality of the affected landscapes. Where the visual impacts of the electricity transmission line cannot be directly screened or otherwise mitigated it may be possible to shift emphasis away from the transmission line by enhancing the landscape in other ways.

Called the Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI), National Grid state that, “Where visual impacts cannot be directly screened or otherwise mitigated it may be possible to shift emphasis away from the powerline by enhancing the landscape in other ways.” Grants of up to £200,000 may be available over 5 years for suitable schemes that can raise 25% match funding and are co-ordinated through the AONB Partnership.

Implications

National Grid pylons extend through the Wye Valley AONB in parishes of Walford and Marstow in with 4.1km being overhead on pylons and 2.5km already underground. These pylons are also visible from parts of the parishes of Ross Town Council and Goodrich. The attached Map 1 below shows the estimated visibility of the National Grid infrastructure within a 3km zone in the Wye Valley AONB. The scheme does not relate to the smaller pylons that go over the river as these are Wester Power Distribution cables.

The Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) provides interesting opportunities for the management of landscape features in parts of the parishes of Walford, Goodrich, Marstow and Ross. However it is recognised that adequately mitigating the scale of the National Grid infrastructure is a significant challenge. The attached ‘What could be funded’ sheet provides some ideas. The Wye Valley AONB Unit have commenced discussions with local partners, including Walford Parish Council, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, English Heritage, Natural England and Forestry Commission. Other potential partners will be the farmers and landowners, Goodrich & Marstow Parish Councils, Coppett Hill Common Trust and Ross Town Council. Close liaison will also be maintained with other AONB Partnerships and National Park Authorities to share good practice over their proposals and schemes.

The Wye Valley AONB Unit will co-ordinate proposals over the coming months with the intention of negotiating the match funding and submitting applications for the agreed projects. Examples of the type of projects that may be eligible include (see attached sheet):-

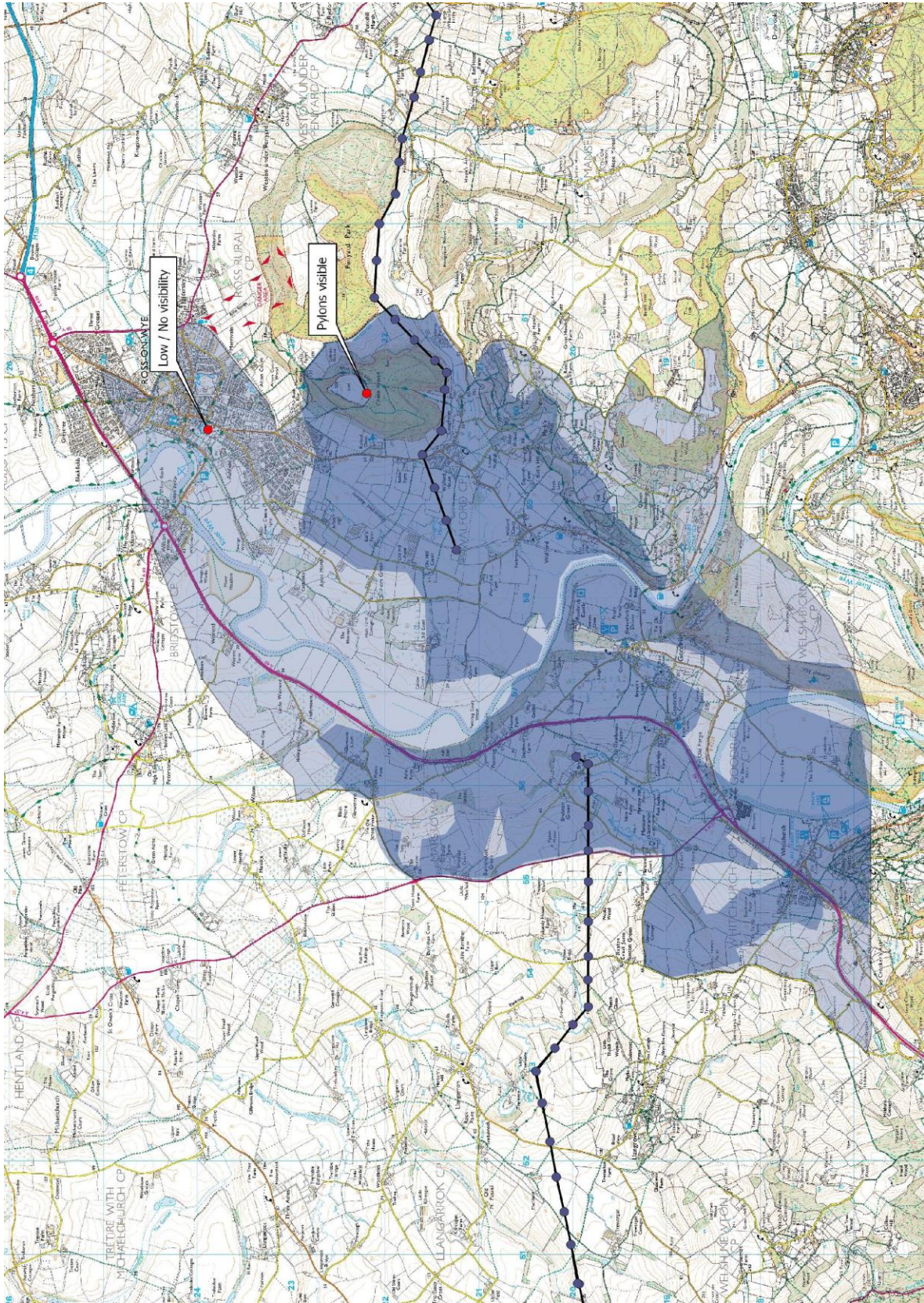
- Localised tree planting and/or woodland creation
- Management, re-planting and/or planting of new hedgerows
- Changes to trails, footpaths, cycleways and riding routes
- Projects that enhance the special qualities of landscape and may also benefit biodiversity
- Projects that enhance the special qualities of landscape and may also benefit cultural heritage

Nick Critchley, Wye Valley AONB Development Officer, will lead on drawing the project proposals together and preparing the applications to National Grid. Details of the VIP and LEI are available on National Grid’s website <http://www2.nationalgrid.com/UK/In-your-area/Visual-Impact-Provision/> .

Background

The Visual Impact Provision (VIP) is a clear example of the CRoW Act Section 85 ‘Duty of Regard for AONBs’ being implemented. The ‘Duty’ rests with Ofgem as a Public Body and they have enacted the Duty through their control of the electricity distribution suppliers. The £500m allocation by Ofgem to help reduce the impact of existing transmission lines in English and Welsh AONBs and National Parks represents a major opportunity to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and environmental heritage within these protected landscapes.

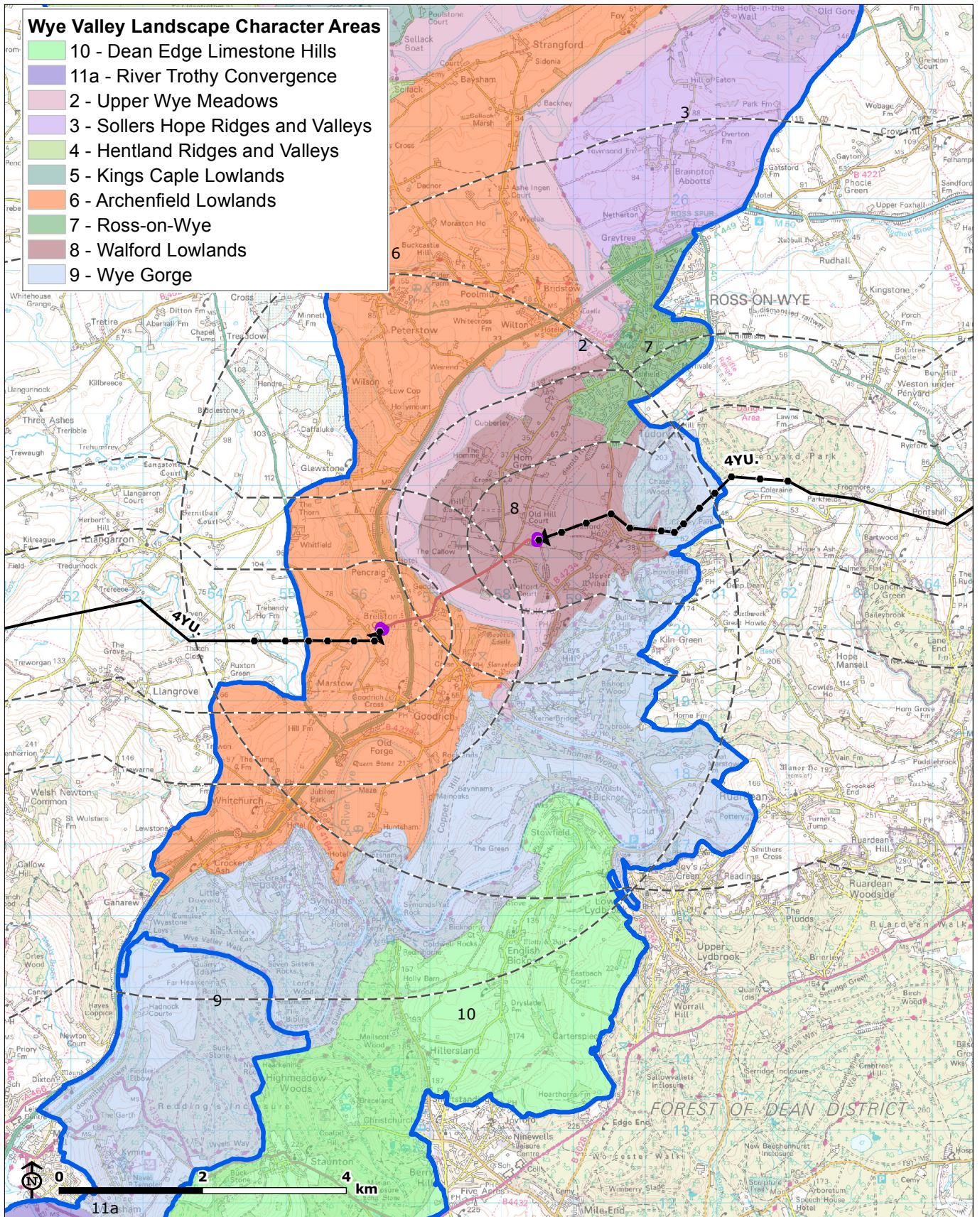
Map 1: Visibility of National Grid infrastructure within 3km in the Wye Valley AONB



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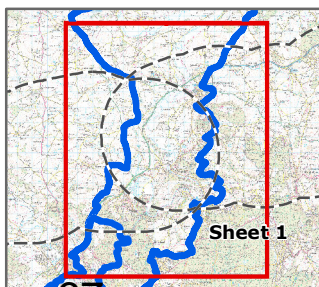
Wye Valley Landscape Character Areas

- 10 - Dean Edge Limestone Hills
- 11a - River Trothy Convergence
- 2 - Upper Wye Meadows
- 3 - Sollers Hope Ridges and Valleys
- 4 - Hentland Ridges and Valleys
- 5 - Kings Caple Lowlands
- 6 - Archenfield Lowlands
- 7 - Ross-on-Wye
- 8 - Walford Lowlands
- 9 - Wye Gorge



- AONB Boundary
- Overhead line sub-section (OHL)
- Tower
- Underground cable route
- Substation

Source: Natural England, National Grid, LUC



NATIONAL GRID
VIP PROJECT FIELD SURVEY

Figure 1:Wye Valley AONB Overhead Line (OHL) Sub-sections and Landscape Character Section 4YU Sheet 1

GILLESPIES

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Questions and Answers

LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE (LEI)

Here you can find answers to some of the questions you might have about the LEI.

Q How close does our project need to be to National Grid infrastructure?

A There is no fixed limit on the distance of eligible projects but as a guide, most visual impact occurs within 3km.

Q Can we apply for a project impacted by distribution lines owned by companies other than National Grid?

A No, projects must only relate to areas affected by existing National Grid infrastructure.

Q How can we tell which lines are National Grid lines and whether or not they are eligible?

A Your local AONB Partnership or National Park Authority should know whether or not they are near National Grid lines and if they fall within the AONB or National Park boundary.

Q Can we submit an application as part of a consortium?

A We welcome projects which will be delivered by a consortium. However, the applicant organisation must be either the AONB Partnership or National Park Authority so we advise you contact them early in process of developing your application.

Q How much can we apply for?

A You can apply for up to £200,000 in a single application, which is the maximum 75% grants. Most importantly, your budget should represent value for money, be well costed and be within your organisation's capabilities to deliver.

Q Where should the 25 percent matched contribution come from?

A The matched contribution could be from your own reserves, other secured funds or in-kind contributions of any resources such as equipment, land or volunteer time.

Q Can we submit more than one application?

A An organisation can only have three live grants at any one time. So, although you can submit any number of applications at one time, we recommend that you focus on submitting high-quality applications for the projects that are most important to your area. If you have a number of small but related projects, we advise that you bundle these together into one application.

Q How much should we spend on putting together our application and planning our project?

A It is up to individual groups and the AONB Partnerships and National Parks Authorities how much time or funds they commit to developing their applications. We have tried to make the application process as straightforward as possible to keep upfront costs to a minimum.

Q Will you fund a feasibility study?

A The LEI will only fund projects that are feasible. We realise that further studies may be required as part of project delivery and in projects where they are required, they should be included and costed as part of the submission. However, we would not envisage funding feasibility studies as discreet projects within the LEI programme.

Q What value should we put on in-kind matched donations?

A Applicants can specify what rates they allocate to in-kind contributions at a level they believe to be fair. Some people use the national minimum wage (£6.70 in 2015) whilst others use the average national wage, which is closer to £14 an hour but varies widely by region. Alternatively, local equivalent labouring rates could be used.

Has your question not been answered?

The Landscape Enhancement Initiative is administered on behalf of the National Grid by TrustCSR, a specialist grant making organisation that supports the development and delivery of effective community investment programmes.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact nationalgrid@thetrustpartnership.com or phone **01285 841912** (Available 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday, excluding Bank and Public Holidays)

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What could be funded

LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE (LEI)

Here are examples of projects that the LEI is likely to fund in the future.

Localised tree planting and / or woodland creation

With the aim to:

- Screen or filter specific views of pylons or sections of 400 kV OHL (overhead line)
- Re-focus or channel views affected by 400 kV OHL (overhead line)
- Where appropriate increase tree cover to filter views and / or enhance general visual amenity of areas affected by 400 kV OHL;
- Enhance the quality, condition and / or special qualities of the landscape.



Management, re-planting and / or planting of new hedgerows

With the aim to:

- Enhance the quality / condition of the landscape;
- Screen or filter specific views of pylons or sections of 400 kV OHL;
- Restore characteristic landscape features where appropriate, e.g. reinstatement of historic field boundaries.



Changes to trails, footpaths, cycleways and riding routes

These might include:

- Localised diversions which may move people away from 400 kV OHL infrastructure and / or re-focus people's views away from the OHL;
- New trails which may offer alternative routes for walkers, cyclists or horse riders with the aim to re-focus views away from 400 kV OHL infrastructure and/ or allow people to appreciate the landscape with fewer views of the OHL.



Projects that enhance the special qualities of landscape and may also benefit biodiversity

- Landscape works which enhance the landscape and also biodiversity. Such enhancements may include habitat creation; in particular where such habitats are considered to contribute towards the special qualities of the AONB or National Park.



Projects that enhance the special qualities of landscape and may also benefit cultural heritage

- Landscape works which enhance the landscape and also the setting of cultural heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments which may be affected by 400 kV OHL infrastructure.



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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th July 2016

NATIONAL AONB CONFERENCE

Purpose

To update members on the recent Landscapes for Life 2016 national AONB Conference.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- Three representatives from the AONB Partnership are attending the national AONB Landscapes for Life Conference.
- Sharing, Learning, Inspiring are the themes of the conference, between Tuesday 28th and Thursday 30th June 2016, based in Lilleshall National Sports and Conferencing Centre.
- The Wye Valley AONB is hosting a Field Trip on Wednesday 29th June.
- Verbal feedback will be given by those attending.

Reasons

The theme of Landscapes for Life Conference 2016 is Sharing, Learning, Inspiring and it will bring delegates together to discuss the case for natural beauty in relationship to the health and wellbeing of society. National Association for AONB's 18th Annual Conference is in Lilleshall National Sports and Conferencing Centre, Shropshire. The Field trips are hosted by the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley, Shropshire Hills, Malvern Hills and Wye Valley AONBs.

Implications

Clr Phil Cutter, Andrew Blake and Nick Critchley, AONB Development Officer, are attending. They will give some verbal feedback on the presentations and discussion.

The Wye Valley AONB will feature prominently in the conference:-

- The work of Greg Dunn's PhD will form part of the Briefing session on the first day.
- Field Trip 5; the Wye Valley Well-being Triathlon will see 18 delegates experience some of the recreational, health and well-being initiatives and opportunities in the heart of the picturesque Wye Valley. They will be canoeing, walking and cycling along the River Wye, hearing about the Wye Valley River Festival and visiting Goodrich Castle and the mindSCAPE project.
- On the final morning Hannah Eaton-Wall, manager of ArtSpace Cinderford and contracted lead on the mindSCAPE project, will give a plenary presentation, on how natural beauty enables people living with dementia, their carers (both family and professional), to reconnect with the landscape in a sociable and creative way with particular reference to mindSCAPE.

The conference blog is <http://landscapesforlifeevents.org.uk/> which has details about the full conference programme, themes, speakers and sponsors. The Blog will be regularly updated during the week.

Background

The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) organises that annual Landscapes for Life Conference, which each year is hosted by a different grouping of AONBs.

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4th July 2016

AONB REPORTS

Purpose

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

FOR INFORMATION

The AONB Officer will give a brief verbal report on the following AONB initiatives:-

- a. LEMUR+ placements and Phase 1 Habitat mapping on The Doward
- b. Youth Rangers; 3rd cohort
- c. MindSCAPES, into year 3
- d. AONB Farming Awards 2016 – applications close on 4th July.
- e. Ross Riverside, collaboration with Ross Town Council
- f. Wye Valley Woodland project with Deer Initiative, Gwent Wildlife Trust, NRW and Woodland Trust
- g. Potential historic / archaeological project along Offa's Dyke, in partnership with Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, Nexus Heritage, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and University of Chester.

Forestry Commission - Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Deer Project Area. Report attached.

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Herefordshire and Gloucestershire (including the Wye Valley AONB) Deer targeting Project Area**Specification of Requirements:**

1. The Forestry Commission, in partnership with Natural England, has offer a contract to The Deer Initiative, to support the collaborative and coordinated management of wild deer (i.e. not farmed or in deer parks) in England in order to help achieve better outcomes for woodland and other habitats associated with woodland. We want to see: more natural regeneration, more diverse ground flora, better structural diversity more successful planting and restocking and easier establishment of productive and diverse woodland.
2. We also want wild deer to be part of sustainable forestry in England, sustainable forestry being defined in the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS). However, wild deer continue to have increasing negative impacts on woods and forests and we aim to help landowners reduce these impacts.
3. We want to support landowner and land manager collaboration and cooperation to improve woodlands, contain invasive deer species and ensure sustainable, well managed deer populations.
4. Woodland management objectives will vary, but high densities of wild deer impair environmental and economic outcomes and this work will help landowners tackle this. The work will contribute to our priority of **protecting** the nation's trees, woodlands and forests and is significant in helping achieve Biodiversity Strategy outcomes.
5. Protecting woodland is a long term undertaking and many of the outcomes we seek will take time to achieve. We want this work to show clear trends of change towards positive outcomes for woodlands in the future.
6. This contract is for supporting and developing collaboration and coordination between private landowners and others in managing wild deer. It does not include deer management on the Public Forest Estate (managed by Forest Enterprise England, FEE) but FEE is an important partner in deer management at both national and local levels.
7. Our intention is to award this contract for a period of four years.
8. The Forestry Commission, in partnership with Natural England, will provide an initial indication of priority areas with concentrations of woodland in England where deer are having greatest negative impacts. This will include priority UK BAP habitat and protected areas e.g. SSSIs and SACs. It may also include other areas that deer are using. See the below map of the local target under Geographical Area
9. The DI will be required to identify within these areas and suggest other woods where current deer management activity is unsuccessful in controlling deer populations and where populations may be spreading for the first time, e.g. Muntjac spread.
10. The DI will identify the areas where both negative impacts and the need for greater levels of management should be addressed.

Collaborative working in action areas:

Extend, improve and support local stakeholders' (especially landowner, land manager, stalker) understanding of:

- a) The negative impacts of deer in woodland and how to assess and record these.
- b) The spread of deer and in particular Muntjac into areas under threat and methods to arrest this.
- c) The need for and methods of deer management.
- d) Signpost appropriate technical training for land owners and land managers aimed at improving the highest standards of effectiveness, efficiency, animal welfare and human safety in deer management.
- e) Ensure that before each species' open season, cull targets are agreed between key local stakeholders, the Forestry Commission and Natural England based on population data and impact data and that targets aim to reduce the negative impacts of deer on woodland while achieving a sustainable deer population.
- f) Lead the design and implementation of co-ordinated management activity, liaison and communication with relevant local stakeholders to achieve agreed cull targets to best practice standards. This will include challenging some deer managers' objective of maintaining high deer numbers.
- g) Consult with stakeholders and agree responses to specific issues, e.g. action to arrest the spread of Muntjac in some areas.

Measures:

- Active and effective deer management programmes operating in action areas including action plans for Muntjac where appropriate.
- Agreed cull targets being achieved.
- Increasing numbers of landowners and land managers either actively engaged or willing to allow deer management on their land.
- Increasing area of contiguous land where deer management is taking place within action areas.
- Completion and return of Deer Impact Assessment (DIA) data records established as standard practice. The volume and quality of records centrally collected increases and is used as evidence.
- Increasing levels of signposting achieved for landowners and land managers in technical training.
- National organisations facilitating and help support delivery within a target area.

Effective Resource:

- Signpost opportunities for financial support, investment and business advice that will help increase and sustain deer management at levels that ensure woodland is not negatively impacted by deer.

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