

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

April 2016 to March 2017

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Worcestershire County Council in the Wye Valley AONB – April 2016
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1. Introduction

Between April 2016 and March 2017, the Strategic Planning and Development Management teams at Worcestershire County Council (WCC) provided a consultancy role to the AONB Unit, advising on strategic planning issues and development management. This report provides a summary of the main aspects of the work undertaken over that period.

2. Strategic policy consultations

In the last year, WCC supported the AONB Unit in providing a response to the Gloucestershire Draft Minerals Local Plan consultation. The comments suggested improvements to two preferred areas for minerals extraction sites located within the AONB boundary. Further amendments were suggested to the Development Management and Ancillary Developments and Restoration policies in the draft Plan.

WCC has also reviewed Herefordshire County Council's Travellers' Sites Development Plan Document, however no adverse impact on the AONB was identified.

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

3. Planning casework

Planning applications in the AONB

Planning applications requiring consideration by the AONB were identified through lists of relevant applications sent to WCC by the Wye Valley AONB on a weekly basis. Table 1 is a summary of the planning applications within the AONB for 2016-2017.

Table 1 - Summary statistics for planning applications April 2016 to March 2017

(2015-16 figures in brackets)

Local Authority	No. of applications registered	No. of applications considered to be relevant to the Wye Valley AONB	No. of applications consulted with the Unit	No. of responses submitted to the Planning Authority	No. of objections	No. of planning appeals
Herefordshire Council	235 (226)	115 (149)	20	7 (10)	4	1
Forest of Dean District Council	79 (76)	48 (39)	4	4 (2)	3	1
Monmouthshire County Council	186 (144)	127 (86)	11	0 (5)	0	0
Gloucestershire County Council	(0)	0 (0)	0	0 (0)	0	0
Totals	500 (446)	290 (274)	35	11 (17)	7	2

There were 500 planning applications registered, based on the lists of applications provided by the Wye Valley AONB Unit between April 2016 and March 2017. This is a significant increase since last year.

At 290, the number of applications identified as relevant for consideration because of potential adverse impacts on the Wye Valley AONB increased compared to the previous year, when 274 applications were considered.

On 35 occasions, WCC consulted the AONB Partnership Unit on important planning applications, however only 11 applications resulted in written responses, a 30% drop since last year. This decrease may be due to a more targeted approach to our responses and initial consultation with the AONB Unit.

The AONB Unit submitted seven objections to inappropriate proposals within the AONB in the last year. These representations had a good record of success with the majority of applications (5) refused by case officers, who cited the negative impact on the character and appearance of the Wye Valley AONB as among the reasons for refusal.

On one occasion, an application was refused by the Planning Authority but later allowed on appeal. The planning application (P0575/16/FUL), in the Forest of Dean, was for the erection of an agricultural barn at land at Wall Weir, Tidenham Chase in Chepstow. The proposal was considered by both the case officer and the AONB Unit to be a persistent and dominant feature, out of keeping with the landscape of the AONB and detracting from the special qualities of the AONB, including through the generation of noise and light pollution. However, the inspector's appeal decision concluded that "*the proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the AONB*".

The AONB Unit responded to two planning appeals. In addition to the appeal described above, a decision is currently pending on an enforcement appeal for the collection of scrap vehicles at the Doward Farm, Whitchurch (APP/W1850/C/16/3160188).

A summary of the AONB Unit's representations, alongside the planning decision and extracts from the case officer's reports, can be found in Appendix 1.

4. Conclusions

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

Appendix 1 – Summary of responses to strategic consultations in the period April 2016 – March 2017

Consulting authority	Consultation document	Summary of Unit response
National consultations		
None		
County or Unitary level consultations		
Gloucestershire County Council	Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan	<p>Preferred Area at Stowe Hill / Clearwell – We could suggest expanding this requirement to include other special qualities of the Wye Valley AONB and ask for any developments to be compliant with the AONB Management Plan – during the operational period and in the restoration plans.</p> <p>Preferred Area at Stowfield – a proposed extension to the existing Stowfield Quarry located in the AONB. This area is surrounded by mature woodland which masks the site at ground level – however the area may be seen from higher ground within the AONB. Another issue associated with this allocation will be the loss of habitats as a result of tree removal to accommodate the site extension.</p> <p>Again I would suggest expanding this requirement to include other special qualities of the Wye Valley AONB and ask for the developments to be compliant with the AONB Management Plan. This could help to reduce issues such as impact on tranquillity of the AONB through the increased scale of operations, car movements, etc.</p> <p>Policy DM09</p> <p>The Unit welcomes the Plan's recognition of the importance of protecting the AONB through Policy DM09 Landscape. The Unit agrees with the criteria set out to protect these landscapes and other special qualities; however we would like clarification over whether these criteria are mutually exclusive. It is not clear whether the potential development would need to meet all of the criteria or only some, depending on circumstances. The Unit would strongly advise that this policy states that each criterion must be satisfied for mineral developments within the AONB. It is unclear why "major development" is distinguished within this policy. As per The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the winning and working of</p>

		<p>minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits is classed as major development. Therefore any minerals development should only be permitted under exceptional circumstances. The Unit would suggest the deletion of the wording "proposals classified as 'major development'" from the last paragraph of this policy. This would strengthen this policy and help to protect the special qualities of the Wye Valle AONB.</p> <p>Policy MW07 Ancillary Developments</p> <p>Part 17 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 states that some types of development associated with mineral developments can be allowed under permitted development rights. The Unit notes that the reasoned justification of Policy MW07 recognises that the removal of permitted development rights may be justified in some locations such as AONBs, meaning that all forms of ancillary minerals development will require planning permission. The Unit supports this approach, which would allow much more control over any future development associated with mineral developments with the AONB. We are therefore disappointed that Policy MW07 itself does not remove permitted rights for all ancillary developments within AONBs.</p> <p>The Unit notes the temporary nature of ancillary developments within minerals sites. Nerveless they can still generate significant negative impacts on the special qualities of the Wye Valley AONB. The Unit feels that Policy MW07 could be strengthened by including a criterion which protects the AONB from adverse impacts on its landscape character and other special qualities.</p> <p>Policy MR01 Restoration, aftercare and facilitating beneficial after-uses</p> <p>The restoration of mineral sites can offer opportunities to enhance the landscape character, improve recreational opportunities and contribute to the general attractiveness of the AONB. To achieve this, any restoration proposals should be prepared with the AONB Management Plan and associated guidance in mind. The Unit questions whether Policy MR01 in its current form is detailed enough to ensure that these objectives are met.</p>
Herefordshire County Council	Herefordshire Local Plan Traveler's Sites	No impact identified

	Consultation	
District Level consultations		
None		
Neighbourhood Plans		
None		

Appendix 2 Summary of Planning Applications - April 2016 to March 2017

Herefordshire

Application details	AONB comments	Planning decision	Justification
<p>P163707/F</p> <p>Proposed residential development of 10 open market family homes and 5 affordable homes.</p> <p>Land opposite Mill House Farm Fownhope Herefordshire</p>	<p>The AONB Unit is not able to form a response at this stage as we do not believe that adequate information is provided by the applicant. We recommend that the Council request a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), a comprehensive landscaping and green infrastructure plan and a justification of the policy context before a decision can be made on this proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - does not adequately address how the development would comply with national or local planning policy. The key policy considerations are the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031, the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 and the Fownhope Neighbourhood Development Plan. - Section 115 of the NPPF states that Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have the 'highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty'. The applicant states that the adjacent development "is highly visible and makes a detrimental impact on the setting of the village". However there is a lack of any assessment of the landscape visualisation or possible impacts on views and landscape features. There is no justification as to how or why this proposal will not also be highly visible and make a detrimental impact on the setting of the village. - Section 116 of the NPPF relates to major development in AONBs, which the previous application for this site was determined to be. The Design and Access Statement refers back to the LVIA and other supporting documents of the previous application without modification. We can only assume therefore that the applicant believes this application is also major development. Where a development is considered to be major then the applicant is required to 	<p>Pending but recommended for approval.</p>	<p>It is accepted that the scheme layout proposes mitigation, compensation and enhancement, which could potentially reduce localised adverse effects in the longer-term. It follows from the above, that having regard to the provisions of the NDP, CS and NPPF, the scheme is not held to represent major development. It is, however, held to represent an approach to development that has regard to the sensitivity of the local landscape within the AONB context. The scheme is considered to respond positively overall to the requirement to conserve landscape and scenic beauty in accordance with NPPF 115.</p>

	demonstrate that exceptional circumstances exist and that the development is in the public interest.		
<p>P160665/F</p> <p>Portal frame agricultural type building for the purpose of rearing goats</p> <p>Baysham Farm Baysham Ross-On-Wye Herefordshire HR9 6QR</p>	<p>Objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual Impact: The proposal is likely to create a persistent and dominant feature out of keeping with the landscape of the AONB. - Location: there is insufficient evidence as to why this new agricultural building is proposed to be located away from other farm buildings in the middle of an agricultural field in the open countryside. The exposed location will make the building visible from many locations within the AONB. - Materials: There is nothing to suggest that this development in any way conserves or enhances the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB. - Scale: the proposed barn appears very large for the location in the middle of an agricultural field and isolated from other buildings. - Access: The AONB Unit would like the new access to be shown on the application plans to allow for the full assessment. The new roads and openings can create some unnecessary hardstanding and impact on the landscape character of the area. - Light Pollution: In respect of this application, there are approximately 16 roof lights proposed with this development. This together with any potential enteral lighting can be a cause of significant light pollution to the AONB. We would like the applicant to provide further information regarding their plans for security and night time lighting and consideration of its potential impact on the AONB. - Section 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires "great weight" to be given to AONB status. The AONB Unit does not consider these considerations to offset the potential damage to the landscape character and special qualities of the AONB. In conclusion, we do not believe that this open countryside site is the most appropriate location for such a development. 	Refused	<p>The erection of a large, isolated agricultural building in this vicinity is not considered to conserve or enhance the character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In the absence of any evidence to justify the proposed location, I give significant weight to preserving the AONB in the planning balance. The proposed building is considered to be sited in a way that would be detrimental to the wider Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.</p>

<p>P163251/O</p> <p>Erection of 19 no. one, two, three and four bedroom dwellings, parking, landscaping, drainage and other associated engineering works. Vehicular access to be provided from Springfield Road</p> <p>Land at Bivia Court Goodrich Herefordshire HR9 6JB</p>	<p>Objection</p> <p>The AONB Unit objects to this proposal as it has potential to cause noticeable harm to the local landscape and the AONB. The application does not apply relevant AONB policies, underplays the sensitivity of the landscape and fails to adequately address the context of the landscape features screening the site. We are of the view that the Council should consider this application as major development under NPPF 116. I continue to be unclear as to how this development would 'conserve and enhance the outstanding natural beauty of the area', which is the purpose of AONB designation.</p>	<p>Pending</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>P170784/F</p> <p>Proposed Stables</p> <p>Land adjacent to Seigewood Cottage Woolhope Hereford Herefordshire HR1 4Q</p>	<p>We recognise that the site is visible from the road to the west. However, the scale and clustering of this development is unlikely to have significant detrimental impact on the natural beauty of the AONB. However there are opportunities to enhance the landscape with planting of a hedgerow and/or some native trees along the 'existing' post & rail fence. The trees would complement the scattered mature trees in the adjoining fields and hedgerows. Adequate protection from grazing by the horses will be necessary.</p>	<p>Pending</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>APP/W1850/C/16/3160 188</p> <p>Doward Farm, The Doward From Horse Pool Lane To Doward Farm, The Doward Whitchurch</p>	<p>The private collection of random scrap and curious cars is visible in the open countryside and negatively affects the landscape character of undulating pasture, woodland, occasional dwellings and dramatic hills. The use of the site for the storage of scrap/old cars does not contribute to the conservation or enhancement of the natural and scenic beauty of the Wye Valley AONB, nor to the historic environment.</p> <p>We believe this development is in contravention of the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraph 115 of the NPPF: requires "great weight" to be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. • Policy LD1 of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-31: • Wye Valley AONB Management Plan policies WV-D2 and WV-D3 	<p>Enforcement Appeal Pending Decision</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>P160612/O</p> <p>Outline application for 31 no. new dwellings.</p> <p>Land at Bivia Meadow Goodrich Herefordshire HR9 6JB</p>	<p>Objection</p> <p>The AONB Unit objects to this proposal as it has potential to cause significant harm to the local landscape and the wider AONB. The application fails to apply relevant AONB policies, fails to acknowledge the sensitivity of the area to a great enough extent, and does not demonstrate that the development would be sustainable. The Design and Access Statement recognises that the proposed development is in open countryside but does not adequately address how the development would comply with national and local planning policy. The key policy considerations are the National Planning Policy Framework, the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 and the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2015-2020. The proposed development does not constitute an exceptional circumstance for development in the AONB in accordance with section 116 of the NPPF, as well as conflicting with the Local Plan.</p>	<p>Withdrawn</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>P162474/O</p> <p>Outline planning application for the erection of 4 x 2 bed 3 x 3 bed and 2 x 4 bed dwellings. Access, landscaping, layout and scale</p> <p>Land adjacent to The Claytons Bridstow Herefordshire</p>	<p>Objection</p> <p>We note that this application is in effect two separate developments that both separately and together extend the built-up area into open countryside albeit opposite two existing modern developments of part of the scattered village of Bridstow. The capacity of the single track road is not our expertise, but we question the logic for directing a further 12 or more cars down this narrow country lane. We note that beside the proposed site(s) are large 'species poor intact' hedgerows which beyond visibility splays are to be retained. The AONB Unit believes that this proposal would benefit from a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment based on the proposed management regime for the remaining hedgerows. This will help to assess the scale of the visual impact and help in presenting some mitigating alternatives for the proposal.</p> <p>We would also like to stress that any development within the AONB should conserve and/or enhance the character of the area, rather than copy the layout, design and materials of urban developments. With this in mind we have some concerns regarding the density of the proposed development. The reduction of density and</p>	<p>Refused</p>	<p>The Claytons development has a significant adverse landscape impact and is detrimental to the character and appearance of the AONB. The NPPF is clear that the mistakes of the past should not justify further or new unacceptable development. As such to further increase residential development hereabouts would compound and exacerbate the landscape harm and detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the AONB.</p> <p>It is considered the proposals resultant harm to the character and appearance of the Wye</p>

	diversifying the form, roofline and siting of these dwellings could make development have less impact on the AONB, and the local road network.		Valley AONB would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal.
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Forest of Dean

Application details	AONB comments	Planning decision	Justification
P0692/16/OUT Outline application for erection of a new dwelling. 3 Wye Villas Redbrook Monmouth NP25 4LT	We do not object in principle to the proposal to develop this plot. However we would like to be consulted at the detailed design stage and reserve the right to object to the application if the style and materials of this new dwelling are not sympathetic to the location.	Refused	The proposed scheme for a single dwelling could be accommodated on the site without harming the overall character of the site, subject to further details of landscaping and design of the dwelling submitted.
P0575/16/FUL & APP/P1615/W/16/3158 656 Erection of an agricultural barn. Land At Wall Weir Tidenham Chase Chepstow	Objection. We still have serious concerns about this development. While some the design features of the barn have been clarified we still do not think that the Landscape Assessment has adequately assessed the impact of the barn on the landscape or mitigation of views such as from the A466. In our submission to the previous application PO1287 we stated the follow, which we still uphold: 'The AONB Partnership notes that the Photographs and Landscape Assessment submitted by the applicant underplays the sensitive location of the site and the potential negative impact that the new agricultural structure may have on the wider landscape of the AONB. The assessment mentions that there might be "possible distant glimpses of the site in winter months from the A466" but fails to mention how this impact is going to be mitigated. The Partnership would like to see consideration of the impact of this proposal from various viewpoints (short and long-distance) from which the new	Refused but Appeal allowed	Refusal: It is considered that the proposed development would create a persistent and dominant feature out of keeping with the landscape of the AONB and detract from the special qualities in the AONB, including noise and light pollution. Appeal: The proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to the character

	<p>structure may be visible.’</p> <p>We continue to have concerns about the scale and setting of is development, the potential for inappropriate lighting and light pollution, and the overall impact on the sense of tranquillity in this very sensitive location.</p>		and appearance of the AONB
<p>P1102/16/FUL</p> <p>Erection of 9 houses and 2 flats on land formerley used as an oil distribution depot and a horse and pony sanctuary.</p> <p>Gregory Farm Brockweir Chepstow NP16 7NG</p>	<p>Objection on the grounds off:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - significant concerns regarding the scale and design of this development. While it is debatable whether the development would constitute ‘major development’, it is not clear whether the applicant has considered the impact of this proposal on the AONB. There is a lack of any reference to the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan or the Special Qualities outlined in the Management Plan. - Height and density - The AONB Unit feels that this new proposal will dominate the houses in Brockweir and therefore change the character of this small historic settlement. The AONB Unit suggests that the number and height of the proposed dwellings is reduced to integrate the new development within its setting. <p>Design: The design of houses seems quite uniform – an element of diversity in design would enhance the quality of this development Whilst some use of roughcast render is acceptable it should be interweaved with local stone to integrate the site within the village. The introduction of canopies over a number of glass patio doors are not traditional within the village. The use of stone walls or indigenous hedging, as opposed to timber rail and boarding, to mark the boundaries of the development is preferable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscaping – the proposals for landscaping are very limited. - Views – "Picturesque, extensive & dramatic views" are one of the Special Qualities set out in the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan (SQ 11). The development should minimise the introduction of dominant or incongruous features into the landscape of the AONB. The major concern regarding views to Brockweir is the height of the proposed development, which will be visible above the existing dwellings particularly from the bridge over the River Wye and from the meadows of the Old Station Tintern, a popular visitor destination and country park. This development would change the character of these picturesque views of this historic village. 	Refused	Adverse impact on the Brockweir Conservation Area and the significant harm to the character, appearance, heritage asset, flood risk and biodiversity.

<p>P1417/16/FUL Construction of two detached dwellings. Hillside Road Redbrook Monmouth</p>	<p>Objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the site is outside the settlement boundary, the proposed dwellings are quite large and modern in nature and the site is on steep slopes overlooking the Wye and share access with Redbrook Primary School and the village hall. - Designing capacity for 8 cars does not seem to be in the spirit of sustainable development. - The Landscape and Visual Amenity Assessment has significant omissions and fails to recognise the impact of this development on the AONB. - We do not consider that 'great weight' has been given to the AONB designation as required under para 115 of the NPPF. The proposed development impacts on a number of the AONB Special Qualities including SQ4. Species-rich grassland, including small field pattern of un/semi-improved grassland, often bounded by drystone walls or old hedges. - Consequently we recommend refusal of the application which fails to conserve or enhance the Wye Valley AONB and the setting of Redbrook and is in conflict with NPPF section 115, Policy CSP.1 of the Core Strategy and the AONB Management Plan. 	<p>Refused</p>	<p>It is clear that the application has an adverse impact on the landscape character of the area and would be visible from a wide area, resulting in the loss of an area of open space, which separates elements of built development. The proposal fails to demonstrate how it accords with the Wye Valle AONB Management Plan and respect the local landscape character contrary to guidance with Section 11 of the NPPF and Policy CSP.1 of the Core Strategy.</p>
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Monmouthshire

Application details	AONB comments	Planning decision	Justification
None			