



Wye Valley  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
(AONB)

Management Plan

2009-2014

March 2010

# CONTENTS

Part 1	Outline.....	1
1.	Introduction.....	1
1.1	AONB designation.....	1
1.2	What is Natural Beauty? .....	2
1.3	Purpose of the AONB Management Plan .....	2
1.4	Commitment .....	3
2	GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE PLAN .....	6
2.1	Managing Change .....	6
2.2	Sustainability.....	10
2.2	Partnership and Consultation .....	11
2.4	AONBs in the Wider World .....	12
3.	Overview of the AONB .....	15
3.1	Introduction.....	15
3.2	Statement of Significance .....	15
3.3	Changes since designation .....	17
3.4	Responsibility for the AONB.....	18
3.5	The Landscape Character of the AONB .....	19
	Table 1: Wye Valley AONB Landscape Management Zones and Features..	20
	TABLE 2 Land types in the Wye Valley AONB .....	27
3.6	The State of the AONB Report.....	28
3.7	Statistics for the AONB .....	28
	TABLE 3 Special Qualities of the Wye Valley AONB.....	29
	TABLE 4 ACTIVITIES & PRESSURES in the Wye Valley AONB.....	42
Part 2	Strategy .....	53
4.	Introduction.....	53
4.1	Designation .....	53
4.2	The Vision for the Wye Valley AONB in 2029 .....	53
4.3	Themes and aims.....	54
4.5	Interpretation of Strategic Objectives .....	56
	Theme 1 .....	58
5.	Our Unique Landscape – conserved & enhanced.....	58
5.2	Landscape .....	58
5.3	Biodiversity.....	59
5.4	Geodiversity.....	61
5.5	Historic Environment.....	62
5.6	Farming .....	63
5.7	Woodland, Trees and Forestry .....	65
	Theme 2 .....	69
6	Development & Transport – planning and protection .....	69
6.2	Development .....	69
6.3.	Minerals .....	71
6.4	Utilities, Public Services and Renewable Energy.....	72
6.5	Transportation .....	74
	Theme 3 .....	76
7	Vital Communities - living & working in the AONB.....	76
7.2	Community Development.....	76
7.3	Economy and Rural Regeneration .....	78
	Theme 4 .....	79
8	Enjoying the AONB - sustainable tourism, recreation and.....	79

appreciation.....	79
8.2 Sustainable Tourism.....	80
8.3 Recreation & Access.....	81
8.4 Understanding and Appreciation .....	83
Theme 5 .....	84
9 Achieving together – effective management of the AONB.....	84
Partnership, Management and Governance .....	84
Appendix I .....	86
Joint Advisory Committee .....	86
Appendix II.....	87
Technical Officers’ Working Party.....	87
AppendIX III.....	88
Glossary & Referecnes .....	88
Appendix iv.....	97
Acronyms and Abbreviations .....	97

**MAPS**

- Map 1 Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Map 2 Landscape Management Zones in the Wye Valley AONB

# **PART 1 OUTLINE**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 AONB designation**

1.1.1 The valley of the River Wye between Hereford and Chepstow is one of the most significant landscapes in lowland Britain. A rich combination of breath taking views, impressive geology, historic legacies and diverse wildlife led to the designation, in 1971, of the valley and adjoining plateaux and hills as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Wye Valley AONB covers 72km of the lower reaches of the River Wye totalling an area of 326km<sup>2</sup> (128 square miles), being 45km North to South and 11.3 km at its widest (East - West) point. It stretches from Mordiford in the north, just east of the city of Hereford, southwards to the outskirts of Chepstow (see Map 1).

1.1.2 The Wye Valley AONB is unique among the 47 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 14 National Parks in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales in being the only protected landscape to straddle a national boundary; being 64% in England and 36% in Wales. This provides a number of challenges for the management of the Wye Valley AONB.

1.1.3 The primary purpose of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (and National Parks) is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. This was laid out over sixty years ago in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, modified in the Countryside Act 1968 and confirmed for AONBs in the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. Supplementary purposes to the AONB designation were developed by the Countryside Commission and Countryside Council for Wales (AONBs: A Policy Statement CCP 356, 1991) and reiterated by the Countryside Agency in CA 24, November 2001. These further AONB purposes are as follows:- “In pursuing the primary purpose, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries, and of the economic and social needs of the local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment. Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met in an AONB so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses”.

1.1.4 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty share equal status with National Parks in terms of scenic beauty and landscape protection. This was reinforced in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7.

1.1.5 Unlike National Parks, AONBs are not authoritative bodies with their own planning or development control functions and other executive powers. Instead, responsibility for the designated purposes lies chiefly with the local authorities, being Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council. A duty of care for the AONB also lies with government departments and agencies, predominantly Natural England and Countryside Council for Wales, as well as statutory undertakers and, on the grounds

of good citizenship and guardianship at least, with individuals, especially those who own or manage land in the AONB but also the visitors to the area.

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

## **1.2 What is Natural Beauty?**

Natural Beauty is defined as “flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features” in the Countryside Act 1968. These aspects of natural beauty are the components that make a landscape so scenic and distinctive; the wildlife, trees and plants, and the shape of the land with its rivers and hills and rock outcrops. However, landscape is about the relationship between people and place; the interaction between nature and culture. Public appreciation is a key component of natural beauty and considerable provision for recreation and tourism in AONBs were made in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Recent government guidance provides a modern-day definition:

‘The natural beauty of AONBs encompasses everything – ‘natural’ and human – that makes an area distinctive: geology, climate, soil, plants, animals, communities, archaeology, buildings, the people who live in it, past and present, and the perceptions of those who visit it.’ (Countryside Agency, 23)

Consequently the special qualities of the AONB encompass natural beauty, amenity, heritage and landscape assets.

## **1.3 Purpose of the AONB Management Plan**

1.3.1 The particularly fragile balance between the environment, the ecology, and the economic and social well being in the Wye Valley AONB demands constant management and planning. This AONB Management Plan continues the work of maintaining a vision for the Wye Valley AONB established in the previous statutory Management Plan of 2004-2009 and the earlier non-statutory Plans of 1992 and 1981. This latest edition of the AONB Management Plan highlights the main themes, develops the vision and identifies a series of Strategic Objectives for the area. A detailed Action Plan is also produced to ensure that these Strategic Objectives are implemented.

1.3.2 This Management Plan, like its predecessors, is intended to provide guidance and strategic objectives, particularly to those bodies that make up the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee. It also provides guidance to the many landowners, residents and visitors in the area. The Management Plan is thus for all the bodies and individuals whose actions affect the AONB and who can play an important part in helping to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the outstanding landscape of the lower Wye Valley, for the benefit of both current and future generations. However this Plan does not provide all the answers for the next five years. It addresses the implications for the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area. Meanwhile it complements a range of plans, strategies and programmes that cover other aspects in the administrative areas covering the Wye Valley AONB.

1.3.3 This Management Plan, under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, formulates local authority policy and action in relation to the management of the Wye Valley AONB. Regard will be given to this Management Plan, which forms part of the evidence base, for the development of the proposals and policies in the respective Local Development Plans / Local Development Frameworks of the constituent local authorities.

#### 1.4 Commitment

1.4.1 It is intended that the following endorsement will represent a sign of commitment from the many partners to this statutory Management Plan. The extent of this support is a testimony to the wide-ranging nature and relevance of this document and it is hoped that this will be a key to its success.

**We endorse the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan as a framework for maintaining the special character of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) while recognising the need for a thriving future, environmentally, socially and economically, for the area and its people. We will work in partnership with others in the Wye Valley AONB, seeking to reflect and implement the objectives and actions of the AONB Management Plan in all our activities affecting the area.**

Ashley Thomas (signature)  
Chairman  
Wye Valley AONB JAC

#### Funding partners

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

Nigel Riglar (signature)  
Director, Environment,  
Gloucestershire County Council

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

Councillor Giles Howard (signature)  
Cabinet Member, Community Services,  
Monmouthshire County Council

Janette Ward (signature)  
Regional Director,

Natural England (West Midlands)

Dr M I Hill  
Regional Director South and East Region,  
Countryside Council for Wales

(signature)

**JAC member organisations**

Regional Director, Country Land & Business Association (West Midlands)  
Regional Director, National Farmers' Union (West Midlands)  
Regional Director, National Farmers' Union (Wales)  
Chairman, Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC)  
Chairman, Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC)  
Chairman, One Voice Wales  
Chief Executive, Gwent Wildlife Trust  
Chairman, Wye Valley Society  
Chairman, River Wye Preservation Trust

**Government Agencies on JAC**

Regional Director, Natural England (South West)  
Area Manager, Environment Agency (South East Wales)  
Regional Director, Forestry Commission (South West)  
Regional Director, Forestry Commission (West Midlands)  
Deputy Surveyor, Forest Commission (Forest of Dean Forest District)  
Forest District Manager, Forest Commission Wales (Llanymddyfri Forest District)  
Regional Strategy Director, Capital Region Tourism  
Regional Director, English Heritage (South West)

**Other AONB partners: organisations involved in the AONB through AONB Topic Groups, umbrella organisations on the JAC or other AONB initiatives.**

Regional Manager, Cadw (South Wales)  
Chairman, Campaign to Protect Rural England (Herefordshire Branch)  
Chairman, Campaign to Protect Rural England (Forest of Dean District)  
Chairman, Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (Monmouthshire Branch)  
Regional Director, Country Land & Business Association (South West)  
Regional Director, Country Land & Business Association (South Wales)  
Crown Estate Commissioners  
Chairman, The Deer Initiative  
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (Herefordshire & Gloucestershire branches)  
Gloucester Harbour Trustees  
Chairman, Gloucestershire Geoconservation Trust,  
Director, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust  
Chairman, Herefordshire Destination Management Partnership  
Director, Herefordshire Nature Trust  
Director, Herefordshire & Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust  
Chairman, Monmouth Geology Trust  
Chairman, Monmouthshire GreenWeb  
Regional Director, National Farmers' Union (South West)  
The National Trust (England & Wales)

Regional Director, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (Central England)  
Regional Director, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (Midlands)  
Regional Director, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (South Wales)  
Ramblers' Association (Hereford area)  
Ramblers' Association (Gloucestershire area)  
Ramblers' Association (Greater Gwent area)  
Sustrans  
Chairman, West Midlands Regional Forestry Forum  
Regional Manager, The Woodland Trust  
Chairman, Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism Association

## 2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE PLAN

### 2.1 Managing Change

2.1.1 If the beautiful and fascinating place we see as the Wye Valley has come about through a benign process of largely unplanned change and development, why should we be concerned for the future of the natural beauty of the area?

2.1.2 Conserving the beautiful landscape and the character of settlements was a common message coming out of Parish Plans in the AONB, 17 of which were analysed in early 2008 (43% of all parishes/communities in the AONB). A dominant theme coming out of the public meetings and consultation for the previous Management Plan was a wish to keep things ‘just as they are’. Yet the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has always been subject to natural and cultural changes and this will inevitably continue. Our actions inexorably lead to change and we have to embrace and adapt to change. We should not aspire to one fixed date or state in the AONB. The countryside has evolved as a result of land management practices and this evolution will continue as demands from consumers and users continue to change. What we do need to be aware of are the landscape features and special qualities of the area that people value and wish to see remaining in the landscape and what is required to sustain those assets. In the past change has often been quite gradual to those assets. Today the nature, speed and extent of changes induced by modern lifestyles and management practices are more threatening to the natural beauty. Indeed the speed and scale of changes in agriculture and transport in the last fifty years are unprecedented, and along with the impacts of climate change threaten to degrade distinctive landscape features and wildlife habitats; but there are opportunities to adapt and arrest destructive change in places.

2.1.3 **Ecosystem services and functional landscapes:** According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) (2003) ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems. On the basis of this definition the MA provided a simple typology of services that has since been widely taken-up in the international research and policy literatures. Four broad types of service identified are:

- *Provisioning services* which are represented by the output of products such as food, fresh water, fuel, fibre, biochemicals and genetic resources;
- *Regulating services* which cover the mediating role that ecological systems have in affecting climate, the incidence of disease, water quality and quantity, and pollination processes;
- *Cultural services* which include the non-material benefits ecological systems can provide in terms of their spiritual or religious significance, recreation and tourism, aesthetics, educational and scientific value and cultural significance; and,
- *Supporting services* which are the processes that underpin all the other services, such as soil formation, nutrient cycling and primary production.

A fully functioning landscape should continue to provide these services. The activities in a landscape should take account of the impacts they may have on the capacity of the landscape to maintain these services.

2.1.4 The main activities and pressures in the AONB are laid out in Table 4 below. This identifies the impacts that are likely to force change in the Wye Valley AONB over the next five years and beyond. These need to be recognised and managed, or the cumulative effect of all these changes could have a significant detrimental impact on the special qualities of the AONB. Some of the most dominant forces for change are outlined below:-

2.1.5 **Climate change:** The effects of climate change may not be that consistent or significant over the 5 years of this Plan. But climate change is happening now and we are already needing to respond to the impacts regardless of future action to reduce the impact of human induced climate change.

The 2006 Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change emphasised that the longer we put off action on climate change the more dramatic and costly the changes we will have to make. Current forecasting suggests widespread changes in rainfall and temperature patterns over the next 50 years including a 2-5 degree temperature increase, warmer winters with fewer freezing events, a reduction in summer rainfall with more frequent droughts and increases in spring and autumn rainfall in short time periods, often associated with extreme gale or storm events. Sea levels are also expected to rise. Most likely outcomes are:

- Greater fluctuations in water table levels
- Increases in localised flooding, and associated pollution risks, soil erosion and crop damage
- Changes in species distribution (including arrival of non-native species and potentially loss of species for which suitable climate conditions disappear)
- Changes in phenology (timing of natural events such as migratory patterns of winter and summer visiting birds, egg laying dates, emergence of flowers and leaves etc.)
- Increased levels of over wintering pest species
- Potential for new diseases of crops, trees and livestock to establish
- Increased spring and summer fire risks on woodland and common land
- Increased storm damage to, and losses of, field and hedgerow trees
- Introductions of new crops and increased viability of existing crops
- Changing patterns of visitor numbers with increased usage throughout the year and particularly during the ‘shoulder’ seasons of spring and autumn.

There are two aspects to addressing climate change; mitigation – reducing greenhouse gas emissions – and adaptation – changing the way we do things to take account of the inevitable and unavoidable changes that have started to happen. There is a need to ‘act locally’ and to consider the contribution that the AONB and AONB based activities, such as tourism, transport, exploitation of renewable materials, design and siting of housing, etc. can make to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It will also be appropriate to support initiatives to tackle issues in a national and global context. This will include influencing policy and planning documents.

Ecological connectivity and robust habitat networks will allow for the movement of species in the face of climate change. Restored habitats could be utilised to reduce the impacts of extreme events related to climate change. For example, restored woodlands

and wetlands could help alleviate the impacts of flooding. The adoption of an integrated landscape scale approach will create more resilient networks and habitats that improve the adaptive capacity of the countryside and the maintenance of ecosystem services.

Key challenges in tackling adaptation to climate change will be sharing excellence and good practice;

- suggesting tools and mechanisms
- leading by example
- changing behaviour
- identifying responsibilities and areas of influence to drive practical action
- setting appropriate frameworks which coordinate action
- getting the infrastructure right
- ensuring compliance and monitoring and improving performance.

Some measures to adapt to predicted changes might have unintended consequences for the landscape and biodiversity, such as new reservoirs. Therefore sensitive planning is required to reduce negative impacts while endeavouring to secure the positive benefits. This all needs to be backed by monitoring of habitats and species, developing the evidence base and transferring the knowledge to the policy makers.

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

**2.1.7 Agriculture:** Farm incomes remain depressed in some sectors and farmers face many challenges in their role of guardians of the countryside. Many farmers have undertaken successful diversifications that add valuable income streams to the farm business. For many, food production underpins the core business and farms have diverged either becoming larger, yet employing less people, or being more labour intensive smallholdings. There are greater efforts to conserve and enhance wildlife habitats and landscape features alongside increased production. Traditional stone buildings, which form an important part of the rural landscape, continue to be converted, sometimes unsuitably, into dwellings. Imminent reforms and changes of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) are likely to effect the AONB. The cross-compliance of farm payments along with the uptake of agri-environment schemes should start to show benefits in the landscape. However the vagaries of the open market and the advancement of some farming practices may in themselves force change on farming and the landscape that are undesirable or unintentional.

**2.1.8 Forestry:** The concept of multi-purpose forestry has underpinned forestry policy in recent years. Recreational use of the woods remains high. However depressed and fluctuating timber prices have reduced the viability of much woodland management. This has led to an under managed and over mature resource in many

parts of the Wye Valley. Meanwhile buyers of wood products are increasingly demanding assurances about the quality and impacts of forest management. Certification is one way of providing such an assurance and much of the Wye Valley woodlands are already certified. Past activities, such as planting conifers in ancient semi-natural woodland and on heathland, are slowly being reversed. Historically the Wye Valley woodlands were managed for woodfuel in the form of charcoal. The development of modern woodfuel markets could significantly increase the management of these woods once more. But this will need larger access tracks for modern machinery. These changes would revert the continuous covered forest canopy we have become accustomed to recently, to a more dynamic patchwork of different aged coppiced coups and stands of maturing tress for timber. The overall connectivity of woodlands in the valley mean the wildlife habitats are fairly robust.

**2.1.9 Transport:** Private vehicle and HGV use remains the dominant form of transport. The arrival and impacts of ‘post peak oil’ are uncertain within the Plan period. In the meantime incremental changes can erode local distinctiveness and natural beauty and mar the landscape character. For example roads continue to be busier, and consequently noisier. Concrete curbing is installed to prevent increased erosion of verges. Signs proliferate to direct and inform the driver, and these are bigger and brighter to gain attention as vehicle speeds have increased. In Wales bilingual signs are even larger. Street lighting has also increased so that main junctions are fully lit and what were once quiet obscure rural crossroads may now have a mini-roundabout and a dozen street lamps. Sustainable transport options are required which avoid these pitfalls. Initiatives that provide valid alternatives to private vehicle use need to be pursued by all of us.

**2.1.10 Tourism and Recreation:** Visitors support an important part of the local economy, being the largest sector of employment in the AONB. The investment generated by tourism helps to sustain aspects of the local environment. But visitors also bring pressures on the local infrastructure, such as facilities, roads and trails. Modifications to the infrastructure may be required to accommodate visitors’ needs or mitigate against the impacts.

**2.1.11 Development pressures:** These are predicted to continue as more people require more houses in which to live, and may wish to live in the countryside, while working in neighbouring towns and cities. Linked to this is the growth in road traffic. This all has an effect on the tranquillity and undeveloped nature of the area. Conversely, some people may perceive the AONB designation itself as a threat to the modern aspirations and lifestyles of the area’s residents and businesses. Expansion of the market towns adjacent to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the associated growth in traffic could have significant implications for the AONB.

**2.1.12 Quality of life:** As the demographics of the population in the AONB evolves so the requirements of local communities change. This has already led to the loss of local services including the closure of several village shops and rural pubs. Agriculture and forestry remain the dominant land uses but less and less people in the countryside have any connection to the growing or processing of local produce. Most of our rural landscapes are oddly quiet now as they are increasingly occupied by people who do not work in the villages and who are not there during the day. For

those left behind, such as car-less parents, young people and the elderly, the ‘peace and tranquillity of the countryside’, that contributes so much to some peoples’ quality of life, can become a key feature of social isolation emphasising the emptiness and silence of their situation. If we do not want our settlements to be soulless dormitories or week-end resorts we must find ways to sustain, recover or improve the core quality of life for people living and working in the Wye Valley AONB. It is also important to ensure that the quality of life that visitors to the Wye Valley experience here is good too.

2.1.13 It is neither possible nor desirable to ‘fossilise’ a landscape, and we must aim to keep a living, working and functioning countryside. Many of the pressures we face now will erode the assets and character of the area unless we make positive choices about what we want to see happen, and make sometimes difficult decisions to achieve this. Thus the impetus in the AONB needs to focus on the most effective solutions to managing those factors influencing change and to endeavour to conserve the distinctive features and special qualities of the AONB, to maintain the ecosystem services the area provides and to seek to enhance all of these where they are judged to be deteriorating. We must do this for the benefit of current and future generations.

## **2.2 Sustainability**

2.2.1 The concept of ‘sustainability’ or ‘sustainable development’ is based around the definition from the World Commission on Environment and Development’s 1987 Brundtland Report as “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy promotes four simultaneous objectives:-

- **Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone**
- **Effective protection of the environment**
- **Prudent use of natural resources**
- **Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.**

These recognise that change (i.e. development) will occur in many aspects of life and the environment but that where change does occur it must happen in a manner which contributes to a better quality of life for current and future generations, without undermining the quality of the natural environment.

2.2.2 Sustainable management is not in itself a primary objective of AONBs. However, the statutory purpose of AONBs (the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, coupled with the obligation of local authorities regarding the social and economic well-being of local communities) are very close to the principles of sustainability. This includes environmental, economic, cultural and social sustainability. Thus sustainable development principles must form the basis for the planning and management of these areas.

2.2.3 In Wales, the statutory requirement for the National Assembly to pursue sustainable development (Section 121 Government of Wales Act 1998) serves to give heightened importance to the interaction between the conservation of AONBs and the needs of recreation and tourism, the local economy and local communities.

2.2.4 While ensuring that future change of all kinds is managed in ways that respect the landscape, wildlife and the heritage of the people living in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, we must also be careful that we do not follow policies or undertake actions which may cause problems elsewhere, and so be unsustainable in a wider regional, national or global context. Thus sustainable management must encompass the principle of taking the wide scale as well as the long term perspective.

2.2.5 Sustainable management therefore means a future Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which continues to justify its designation as a nationally important area of highly valued functioning landscape with distinctive features and special qualities, which is also a living, working area, with sustainable communities where people want to live and work and where they will continue to want to do so.

2.2.6 None of the objectives of sustainability can be pursued in isolation. They are inter-dependent and must be pursued through partnership and co-operation between many different interests and organisations. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are ideally placed to be test beds and champions of sustainable development. Linkages and dovetailing with other plans and strategies is essential, for example with the Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks and other Strategies, Local Development Plans and Frameworks, Local Transport Plans, Community Plans and local Parish Plans. This will help make progress on issues such as social inclusion and integrated transport initiatives that can contribute to environmental, social and economic goals, benefiting the quality of life for both residents and visitors.

## **2.2 Partnership and Consultation**

2.3.1 We are fortunate in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) that the Wye Valley benefits from a tremendous amount of ‘goodwill’. Pressures for change, and the issues arising from them, are varied and complex. Consensus and partnership must be the way forward. Agreement on common interests and aims, and working together to achieve these aims between all these different interests is the only way to successfully progress the conservation or enhancement of the Wye Valley AONB.

2.3.2 There is a strong partnership that supports the Joint Advisory Committee and the Wye Valley AONB unit. It is committed to working effectively to achieve ways that not only sustain the area’s natural beauty and enable people to continue to enjoy it, but also to improve the quality of life for people who live and work in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

2.3.3 Local people are a crucial part of the wider partnership in the AONB. Therefore wherever possible the Joint Advisory Committee seeks the views and involvement of Parish and Community Councils, community groups and local individuals from all walks of life. Visitors to the Wye Valley are also stakeholders in the area. The Joint Advisory Committee recognises that careful integration of interests is needed to safeguard the AONB for the future. Even where statutory control is available, it is always preferable to proceed through building understanding,

trust, commitment and co-operation since these are more likely to lead to real conservation of the area's character in the long term.

2.3.4 This Plan has not been prepared in isolation, but rather has been developed in partnership, through a consultation process. The framework for drafting the Plan was based on various groups of officers and individuals with an interest in the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area undertaking initial scoping and review of the 2004-2009 Management Plan (which itself went through an extensive consultation process). Seventeen Parish Plans within the AONB were also scrutinised for issues. Press releases and articles in the AONB newsletter 'Picturesque' highlighted the opportunity for local residents to make known their views, along with representatives from organisations who have an interest in, or influence on, the AONB. The formal public consultation on the draft Plan produced 546 comments from 29 individuals and organisations and from four workshops attended by 68 people from throughout the AONB, at an event in Ross-on-Wye in November 2008. Parallel to the drafting of this Plan was the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessments (HRA). These were reports produced by the AONB Unit and consulted on by the statutory consultees, feeding back into the final draft Management Plan. The SEA and HRA results were put into an Environmental Report and consulted on alongside the Final Draft Management Plan. Comments were received from 12 organisations or individuals supplying 80 suggested amendments. The Finalised Plan and Modifications Report (January 2010) was endorsed by the Joint Advisory Committee and adopted by the local authorities. It is acknowledged that the level of input by local people into the consultation process could be higher and more demographically and statistically valid. Greater engagement with a wider range of people in the local communities in the AONB remains a challenge.

2.3.5 The AONB Unit and Joint Advisory Committee have good working relationships with many individuals and organisations, locally, regionally and nationally. AONB staff, along with the officers from the local authorities and government agencies, pride themselves in their approachable and supportive nature. Consequently the AONB Unit is able to be informed and proactive both practically and politically. This enables positive partnerships to develop and the conservation and enhancement of the AONB to be progressed through consensus and enlightened decisions.

## **2.4 AONBs in the Wider World**

2.4.1 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are part of a family of designated landscapes of the UK, which include the AONBs of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the National Parks of England, Scotland and Wales and the National Scenic Areas of Scotland. Together they cover nearly 5 million hectares or 20% of the UK land area.

2.4.2 The AONBs, together with the other designated landscapes in UK are also part of a global network of protected areas devised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources [IUCN]. Known as 'Category V Protected landscape/ seascape', these areas are defined as:-

A protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value: and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values.

#### Primary objective

To protect and sustain important landscapes/seascapes and the associated nature conservation and other values created by interactions with humans through traditional management practices.

#### Other objectives

- To maintain a balanced interaction of nature and culture through the protection of landscape and/or seascape and associated traditional management approaches, societies, cultures and spiritual values;
- To contribute to broad-scale conservation by maintaining species associated with cultural landscapes and/or by providing conservation opportunities in heavily used landscapes;
- To provide opportunities for enjoyment, well-being and socio-economic activity through recreation and tourism;
- To provide natural products and environmental services;
- To provide a framework to underpin active involvement by the community in the management of valued landscapes or seascapes and the natural and cultural heritage that they contain;
- To encourage the conservation of agrobiodiversity and aquatic biodiversity;
- To act as models of sustainability so that lessons can be learnt for wider application.

#### Distinguishing features

- Category V protected areas result from biotic, abiotic and human interaction and should have the following essential characteristics:
- Landscape and/or coastal and island seascape of high and/ or distinct scenic quality and with significant associated habitats, flora and fauna and associated cultural features;
- A balanced interaction between people and nature that has endured over time and still has integrity, or where there is reasonable hope of restoring that integrity;
- Unique or traditional land-use patterns, e.g., as evidenced in sustainable agricultural and forestry systems and human settlements that have evolved in balance with their landscape.

The following are desirable characteristics:

- Opportunities for recreation and tourism consistent with life style and economic activities;
- Unique or traditional social organizations, as evidenced in local customs, livelihoods and beliefs;

- Recognition by artists of all kinds and in cultural traditions (now and in the past);
- Potential for ecological and/or landscape restoration.

2.4.3 The existence of this worldwide network provides the opportunity to share with others the experience of looking after these special areas.

2.4.4 Within Europe, the European Landscape Convention (ELC) was signed in Florence in 2000 and came into operation in 2004. The ELC definition is: *‘landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’*. The stated aim of the Convention is to promote the protection, management and planning of Europe’s landscape and to organise European co-operation on landscape issues. The definition applies to all landscape: urban and peri-urban landscapes, towns, villages and rural areas, the coast and inland areas. It applies to ordinary or even degraded landscape as well as those areas that are outstanding or protected.

2.4.5 The EUROPARC Federation provides a network for protected landscapes across Europe. It has more than 350 members involved in the policy and practice of managing protected areas across 36 countries.

2.4.6 Within Britain the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) was established in 1998 as an independent organisation to act on behalf of all AONBs. Its role is to raise the profile of AONBs to ensure that their conservation and enhancement is kept on the agenda of all those involved in AONBs at a national level. The Association of National Park Authorities runs a similar kind of programme for National Park staff and members. The two organisations are increasingly working together to share good practice in the planning and management of Britain’s nationally protected landscapes.

2.4.7 The Wye Valley AONB is also engaged regionally through protected landscape fora in the West Midlands, the South West and Wales.

### 3. OVERVIEW OF THE AONB

#### 3.1 Introduction

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

#### 3.2 Statement of Significance

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

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

3.2.3 The Wye Valley is particularly important for its **rich wildlife habitats**. This is reflected in the remarkable juxtaposition of three separate Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), under the European Union's Habitats Directive. The river is a SAC as well as being the first major river to be designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) along its entire length. Nearly a thousand hectares of valley side woodland are also designated a SAC. Nine roosting sites for Greater and lesser Horseshoe bats make a third SAC. Underlying this are 45 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) including 4 National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and 204 County local wildlife sites. The limestone woodlands are renowned as a refuge of rare species and form part of one of the **largest remaining areas of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland in the country**. As a predominantly wooded and riverine environment, the Wye Valley has a greater combination of ancient and natural features than virtually all the other AONBs and National Parks in the UK. The

pastures, hay meadows, hedges and copses within the farmed landscape also provide rich habitats for wildlife. The strong mosaic of these habitats makes the landscape robust and permeable for many species.

3.2.4 The AONB contains an abundance of sites of historic and cultural significance. Many activities **fundamental to the cultural identity of Britain** have an origin in the Wye Valley. This is reflected in the fact that there are 123 Scheduled Monuments (SMs) in the Wye Valley AONB, 10 registered Parks and Gardens, 17 Conservation Areas and 915 Listed Buildings. The river is both the backbone and the border of the historic environment that underlays the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB. The whole of the lower Wye Valley, from Goodrich to Chepstow, has been included in the **Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest** in Wales. Features range from caves with Palaeolithic occupation, ancient forests, Roman and Celtic settlements, defensive structures such as hill forts, Offa's Dyke and Mediaeval castles, secluded early churches and monasteries. Tributaries cascade down side valleys to join the Wye, giving focus to settlements and power to **pioneering industries** including wireworks, papermaking, tanning, tin-plate and quarrying. The river was the main transport route up and down the valley, superseded by the railway and eventually the roads. The scenic qualities of the Wye Valley are important in the history of art. Landscaped parks, gardens and viewpoints inspired some of the great British poets and writers. The Reverend William Gilpin was inspired in 1770 to write his treatise on the notion and depiction of landscape and gave birth to the **'picturesque' movement**. As a result of his work the valley became very popular with visitors.

3.2.5 The lower Wye Valley remains nationally renowned as a **destination for tourism and recreation**. Overnight stays, while common, are outweighed by day trips with many people travelling for less than 2 hours to visit the Wye Valley. Amongst these visitors are some of the **26,000 residents** living and/or working in the market towns, villages and hamlets of the Wye Valley AONB.

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

3.2.7 **Agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction and tourism** are the main industries that operate in the landscape of the lower Wye Valley. Combined together they have to a large extent **crafted the landscape** we see today. Agriculture and forestry are the most apparent land uses with farmland covering 58% of the AONB and woodland 27%. There is a great diversity of enterprises dependant on all these industries, which tend to be characterised by low pay and seasonal employment. The viability of some of these businesses can have significant implication for the natural beauty and social well-being of the area. Limestone extraction continues at two commercial quarries, with a third abutting the AONB boundary. None of these

quarries are operating at full capacity at the moment. Tourism, from the early days of The Wye Tour, has focused on the river corridor and the market towns. It is still predominantly based around **enjoyment of the spectacular scenery** and the contrasting heritage of the Wye Valley. With increasing diversification tourism is spreading throughout the AONB.

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

### 3.3 Changes since designation

3.3.1 The Wye Valley was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1971. The original designation order gives a simple outline of the key features of the lower Wye Valley. There is no consistent baseline information from which to measure what changes have occurred in the landscape over the nearly forty years since the Wye Valley was designated an AONB. Therefore there is the potential for detailed research and analysis of available data to establish this baseline. It is intended that the State of the AONB Report will provide a benchmark for future evaluation.

3.3.2 The following summarises notable changes that have impacted on the AONB.

- The A40 dual carriageway had been constructed by 1971 but subsequent development along the roadside has continued to detract from the natural beauty of the area.
- Most major industry had ceased in the valley by 1971, but development of redundant sites has not always been sympathetic to the heritage or natural beauty of the valley.
- The railway line, closed by 1971, has overgrown significantly providing a tree line where before was a managed transport corridor.
- Agricultural intensification has significantly changed the AONB in some places; field boundaries and orchards have been removed in more intensively farmed areas and much floodplain grassland has been ploughed for arable use.
- *The mixture of gardens, rough ground, churchyard, semi-natural grassland, scattered trees and walls that characterises [many of] the village[s] provides far greater habitat variety than the commercial farmland nearby* (Peterken 2008)
- The number of farmers and people employed in farming has declined steeply.
- Two quarries have closed in the AONB, but major extensions have been granted for the two remaining large quarries.
- There has been a dramatic decline in salmon stocks in the river.

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

### **3.4 Responsibility for the AONB**

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

3.4.2 Central Government responsibility for AONBs remains substantial. This comes through the provision of legislation and the policy context whereby the purposes of the designation can be met. From Whitehall and the Welsh Assembly Government there is also direct involvement, guidance and funding through departmental and agency functions delivered, for example by Natural England, Countryside Council for Wales and the Forestry Commission.

3.4.3 It is anticipated that regional development agencies may play an increasing role in the funding of AONB initiatives over the period of this plan. This creates a number of challenges for the AONB. There are different regional and national funding streams and organisational priorities that abut in the AONB. Co-ordination of strategic and AONB wide initiatives can therefore be complicated and protracted. However the AONB is uniquely placed to advise on these cross-border issues and the implementation and review of national and regional schemes.

3.4.4 The local planning authorities, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council, are central to achieving the purposes of the AONB designation. They deal with all planning issues in the AONB and other local authority functions, such as Rights of Way, countryside services, tourism, public transport, etc. Their responsibility was reaffirmed in the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, section 8.4, by which they are empowered to “take all such action as appears to them expedient for the accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB”. Part of the way they achieve this is by acting jointly through their support for the Joint Advisory Committee.

3.4.5 A Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) has overseen the Wye Valley AONB since 1972. Unlike a National Park Authority the JAC is not a planning authority. The role

of the JAC is one of advising and guiding the statutory authorities regarding particular issues within the AONB. The constitution and membership of the JAC reflects the trans-national and trans-regional nature of the AONB (see Appendix I). While the complex nature of the AONB is an administrative challenge, in practice the JAC has for many years been a strong partnership based on the tremendous goodwill towards the Wye Valley. This committee meets formally three times per annum along with a winter seminar and late summer study tour.

3.4.6 The JAC is supported by a Technical Officers Working Party, which comprises representatives of the four local authorities involved plus a range of relevant Government agencies (see Appendix II). The core costs of managing the Wye Valley AONB are jointly funded by the local authorities in whose area it lies, with grant aid contributions from Natural England and the Countryside Council for Wales. There is a small team of dedicated staff employed by the local authorities on behalf of the JAC consisting of an AONB Officer, an AONB Co-ordination Assistant, an AONB Community Links Officer, an AONB Development Officer and an AONB Information Officer. The AONB staff work from the AONB Office in Monmouth, which is near the geographic centre of the Wye Valley AONB. The budget for the AONB unit is approximately £350,000 per annum, with additional funds depending on varying levels of partnership funding for specific projects and initiatives. The AONB also attracts resources for example by being a target area for agri-environment schemes.

### **3.5 The Landscape Character of the AONB**

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

3.5.2 The key features of the sixteen Wye Valley AONB Landscape Management Zones are outlined in Table 1. These are cross referenced to the Special Qualities [SQ] of the AONB, which are detailed in Table 3.

**Table 1: Wye Valley AONB Landscape Management Zones and Features**

<b>LMZ ID</b>	<b>Landscape Management Zones</b>	<b>LCA ref</b>	<b>Features and link to Special Qualities [SQ]</b>
LMZ01	Woolhope Dome	<i>HC Character Areas:</i> Woolhope Dome <i>Landscape Types:</i> Principal Wooded Hills Wooded Hills and Farmland Principal Timbered Farmlands Principal Settled Farmlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ancient broadleaved &amp; mixed woodland [SQ2, SQ18]]</li> <li>• Varied topography [SQ9]</li> <li>• Hedgerow network often with mature trees [SQ5, SQ18]]</li> <li>• Mixed farming [SQ1]</li> <li>• Traditional orchards with locally distinctive apple &amp; pear varieties [SQ1]</li> <li>• Streams [SQ3]</li> <li>• Irregular field patterns, often linked with semi-natural grassland [SQ4]</li> <li>• Scattered settlement pattern [SQ20]</li> <li>• Commons [SQ29]</li> <li>• Filtered and medium distance views [SQ11]</li> <li>• Grey and brown Silurian limestone soils [SQ6]</li> </ul>
LMZ02	Herefordshire Floodplain (Wye Meadows)	<i>HC Character Areas:</i> Central Herefordshire Archenfield <i>Landscape Types:</i> Riverside Meadows Principal Settled Farmlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floodplain grassland with mature trees [SQ10, SQ18]</li> <li>• Streamside and hedgerow trees, traditionally pollarded [SQ5]</li> <li>• Ditches and wetland habitats [SQ5]</li> <li>• River bank vegetation, mud cliffs and wildlife [SQ3]</li> <li>• River channel islands, beaches and riffles [SQ3]</li> <li>• Minimal settlement [SQ20]</li> <li>• Bridges [SQ3]</li> </ul>
LMZ03	Sollers Hope Ridges and	<i>HC Character Areas:</i> Central Herefordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hedgerows with mature trees [SQ5, SQ18]</li> <li>• Mixed farming [SQ1]</li> </ul>

<b>LMZ ID</b>	<b>Landscape Management Zones</b>	<b>LCA ref</b>	<b>Features and link to Special Qualities [SQ]</b>
	Valleys	Archenfield Leadon Vale <i>Landscape Types:</i> Principal Settled Farmlands Wooded Estatelands Principal Wooded Hills Estate Farmlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fragments of ancient woodland [SQ2, SQ18]</li> <li>• Varied topography [SQ1]</li> <li>• Medium to long distance views [SQ11]</li> <li>• Clustered settlement pattern [SQ20]</li> <li>• Parkland [SQ19]</li> <li>• Narrow lanes with hedges and hedgebanks [SQ5, SQ18]</li> <li>• Remnants of traditional orchards [SQ1]</li> <li>• Red soils of Devonian Old Red Sandstone [SQ7]</li> </ul>
LMZ04	Hentland Ridges and Valleys	<i>HC Character Areas:</i> Archenfield <i>Landscape Types:</i> Principal Settled Farmlands Timbered Plateau Farmland Principal Timbered Farmland Sandstone Farmlands Wooded Estatelands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hedgerows with mature trees [SQ5, SQ18]</li> <li>• Mixed farming [SQ1]</li> <li>• Fragments of ancient woodland [SQ2, SQ18]</li> <li>• Varied topography [SQ1]</li> <li>• Filtered medium distance views [SQ11]</li> <li>• Clustered settlement pattern [SQ20]</li> <li>• Estate parkland [SQ19]</li> <li>• Narrow lanes with hedges and hedgebanks [SQ5, SQ18]</li> <li>• Red soils of Devonian Old Red Sandstone [SQ7]</li> </ul>
LMZ05	Kings Caple Lowlands	<i>HC Character Areas:</i> Archenfield <i>Landscape Types:</i> Principal Settled Farmlands Principal Wooded Hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hedgerows define field boundaries [SQ5, SQ18]</li> <li>• Arable, horticultural and mixed farming [SQ1]</li> <li>• Open aspects with medium distance views [SQ11]</li> <li>• Steep northern wooded slope to river [SQ2, SQ18]</li> <li>• Red soils of Devonian Old Red Sandstone [SQ7]</li> </ul>
LMZ06	Archenfield	<i>HC Character Areas:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hedgerows define field boundaries [SQ5, SQ18]</li> </ul>

<b>LMZ ID</b>	<b>Landscape Management Zones</b>	<b>LCA ref</b>	<b>Features and link to Special Qualities [SQ]</b>
	Lowlands	Archenfield <i>Landscape Types:</i> Principal Settled Farmlands Sandstone Farmlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arable, mixed farming and orchards [SQ1]</li> <li>• Medium distance views [SQ11]</li> <li>• Clustered settlement pattern [SQ20]</li> <li>• A40 cluster of light industrial use</li> <li>• Red soils of Devonian Old Red Sandstone [SQ7]</li> </ul>
LMZ07	Ross-on-Wye	<i>HC Character Areas:</i> Archenfield <i>Landscape Types:</i> Urban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctive Spire and skyline [SQ11]</li> <li>• Devonian Old Red Sandstone buildings and cliffs [SQ7]</li> <li>• Mix of stone and rendered buildings on escarpment overlooking river [SQ20]</li> <li>• Cultural association with Wye Tour and Picturesque Movement [SQ11]</li> </ul>
LMZ08	Walford Lowlands	<i>HC Character Areas:</i> Archenfield <i>Landscape Types:</i> Principal Settled Farmlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hedgerows define field boundaries [SQ5, SQ18]</li> <li>• Arable and horticultural farming [SQ1]</li> <li>• Open aspects with medium distance views [SQ11]</li> <li>• Estate parkland [SQ18, SQ19]</li> <li>• Linear settlement pattern [SQ20]</li> <li>• Red soils of Devonian Old Red Sandstone [SQ7]</li> </ul>
LMZ09	Wye Gorge	<i>HC Character Areas:</i> Archenfield Forest of Dean <i>Landscape Types:</i> Principal Wooded Hills Wooded Hills and Farmland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ancient, semi-natural and mixed broadleaved &amp; coniferous woodland [SQ2, SQ18]</li> <li>• Ancient and extensive tree cover pattern and skyline [SQ2, SQ18]</li> <li>• Steeply sloping topography [SQ1]</li> <li>• Tributaries and cascades [SQ3]</li> <li>• Dramatic limestone cliffs [SQ9]</li> </ul>

LMZ ID	Landscape Management Zones	LCA ref	Features and link to Special Qualities [SQ]
		Principal Settled Farmlands Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings Unenclosed Commons <i>Forest of Dean Character Areas:</i> The Wye Valley - Common Grove to The Slaughter The Wye Valley - Redbrook to Brockweir The Wye Valley - Brockweir to Tutshill Monmouthshire Landscape Character Area: The Wye Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quartz conglomerate outcrops [SQ8]</li> <li>• Narrow floodplain pastures on the valley floor [SQ4]</li> <li>• Hedgerow network often with mature trees [SQ5, SQ18]</li> <li>• Mixed farming [SQ1]</li> <li>• Linear settlements bordering valley floor often at bridging points [SQ20]</li> <li>• Small clusters of historic squatter settlements on valley sides surrounded by intricate pattern of small fields, drystone walls, narrow lanes and small deciduous woodlands [SQ4, SQ5, SQ20, SQ25]</li> <li>• Predominantly unwooded Coppett Hill Common [SQ29]</li> <li>• Long panoramic views from high vantage points and medium ‘picturesque’ views from valley floor [SQ11]</li> <li>• Long history as an important route way and boundary feature, including Offa’s Dyke. [SQ14, SQ15, SQ26]</li> <li>• Rich heritage of local natural resource transport and exploitation [SQ16, SQ25]</li> <li>• Ancient meanders preserved as the course of tributary streams [SQ3, SQ10]</li> <li>• Woodlands and riverine habitats of high ecological and scenic value [SQ2, SQ3, SQ4, SQ5]</li> <li>• Tintern Abbey [SQ15]</li> <li>• Cultural association with Wye Tour and Picturesque Movement [SQ11]</li> <li>• Strong sense of place due to distinctive landform, woodland and river [SQ12, SQ18]</li> </ul>

LMZ ID	Landscape Management Zones	LCA ref	Features and link to Special Qualities [SQ]
LMZ10	Dean Edge Limestone Hills	<i>Forest of Dean Character Areas:</i> Bicknor Hills High Meadow Woods and Staunton Coleford and Christchurch Newland Hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rolling landscape of interlocking convex hills and dry valleys formed from Carboniferous Limestone and Coal Measures [SQ8, SQ9]</li> <li>• Large areas of mixed and coniferous woodland [SQ2, SQ18]</li> <li>• Generally poor soils and hilly landform well suited to pasture [SQ4]</li> <li>• Fields defined by well maintained hedgerows with hedgerow trees and copses on steeper slopes [SQ5, SQ18]</li> <li>• Small villages are well integrated with their surroundings [SQ20]</li> <li>• Scowles and other remnants of mining activity [SQ13, SQ14, SQ16]</li> <li>• Medium and long distance views [SQ11]</li> </ul>
LMZ11	River Trothy Convergence	Monmouthshire Landscape Character Area: River Trothy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flat valley floor convergence of the rivers Monnow, Wye and Trothy [SQ3, SQ10]</li> <li>• Lines of alder and willow enclose river banks [SQ5]</li> <li>• Little settlement [SQ20]</li> <li>• Arable and permanent grassland. [SQ1]</li> </ul>
LMZ12	Llangovan Foothills	Monmouthshire Landscape Character Area: Llangovan Foothills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large fields with mature hedgelines, hedgerow trees and individual field trees [SQ5, SQ18]</li> <li>• Limited settlement and traditional farmsteads [SQ20]</li> <li>• Long distance views [SQ11]</li> </ul>
LMZ13	Devauden Escarpment	<i>Monmouthshire Landscape Character Area:</i> Devauden Escarpment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prominent and steep escarpment [SQ1]</li> <li>• Substantial woodland cover [SQ2]</li> <li>• Mixed farming and pasture with mature hedges [SQ5]</li> <li>• Scattered settlement and clustered villages [SQ20]</li> <li>• Long panoramic views to the north and west [SQ11]</li> </ul>

LMZ ID	Landscape Management Zones	LCA ref	Features and link to Special Qualities [SQ]
LMZ14	Trellech Sandstone Plateau	<p><i>Monmouthshire Landscape Character Areas:</i>            Chepstow Parkland            Trellech Grange            Trellech forest and commons            Tredunnock            Trellech Plateau</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High hills and ridges with inward looking basin [SQ1]</li> <li>• Flat or gently rolling plateau centred on the settlement Trellech.[SQ1]</li> <li>• Large woodland blocks of relict ancient forest and modern conifer plantations eg. Chepstow Park Wood [SQ2]</li> <li>• Mixed arable and pastoral farming [SQ1]</li> <li>• Red soils of Devonian Old Red Sandstone [SQ7]</li> <li>• Strong network of thick hedges, hedge banks, drystone walls and tree lines [SQ5]</li> <li>• Woodlands enclose fields of permanent pasture and enclaves of unimproved and semi-improved grassland [SQ4]</li> <li>• Sparse settlement outside Trellech with large farmsteads and hamlets [SQ20]</li> <li>• Estates with associated parkland [SQ19]</li> <li>• Distinctive settlement pattern related to small fields and common land [SQ4]</li> <li>• Intricate network of narrow winding lanes with remnant stone walls and mature hedges [SQ5, SQ25]</li> <li>• Springs, streams, wetland, marshland and bogs found, most notable at Cleddon bog [SQ3, SQ10]</li> <li>• Distinct sense of place from the relationship of the woodland, pasture and settlement [SQ12]</li> <li>• Evidence of early occupation, Iron Age enclosure of Gaer and medieval village of Trellech [SQ13, SQ14, SQ15]</li> <li>• Long views and vistas across the Severn and towards the Brecon Beacons from high land [SQ11]</li> </ul>

LMZ ID	Landscape Management Zones	LCA ref	Features and link to Special Qualities [SQ]
LMZ15	Dean Edge Limestone Plateau	<i>Forest of Dean Character Areas:</i> Tidenham Chase St Briavels Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gently undulating plateau with expansive views [SQ11]</li> <li>▪ Strong field pattern of large or moderately sized arable and pasture fields [SQ1]</li> <li>▪ Distinctive stone walls and ancient hedgerows [SQ5]</li> <li>▪ Dispersed isolated farms which are located at the end of lanes and often associated with modern barn complexes [SQ20]</li> <li>▪ Villages sited at the edge of the plateau [SQ20]</li> <li>▪ Redundant Limestone quarries located across the landscape [SQ9]</li> <li>▪ Small enclosures of semi-natural, unimproved grasslands, winding lanes, small woodlands and 'squatter' cottages on St Briavels Common [SQ4, SQ5, SQ20, SQ25]</li> <li>▪ Heathland landscapes at Tidenham Chase [SQ19]</li> </ul>
LMZ16	Caerwent Limestone Plateau / Hinterlands	<i>Monmouthshire Landscape Character Area:</i> Caerwent Hinterland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gently rolling landscape with occasional narrow winding steep-sided valleys [SQ1]</li> <li>▪ Ancient, semi-natural and mixed coniferous and deciduous woodland [SQ2]</li> <li>▪ Mixture of arable and pastoral farming with traditional farmsteads and large country estates [SQ20]</li> <li>▪ Remnant parkland of large country estates [SQ19]</li> <li>▪ Long views towards the Severn Estuary are possible [SQ11]</li> <li>▪ Nucleated village of St Arvans [SQ20]</li> <li>▪ Chepstow Racecourse an important landscape at a local level [SQ19]</li> </ul>

**TABLE 2 Land types in the Wye Valley AONB**

This is a reworking of the exercise developed by Dr George Peterken and used in the previous Management Plan and for the AONB Nature Conservation Strategy 1999. Listed are all the land types that could be differentiated on the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 maps, then tallied for each of the 326 intersections of the 1km grid that fall within the AONB. Each intersection represents 100 ha, e.g., the area of conifer woodland is estimated at 2,000 ha. The accuracy of the estimates diminishes with the area of each land type. Thus, there is a level of confidence that the area of farmland (including orchards) is 62-63% of the AONB, but the area of marshland is unlikely to be exactly 100 ha, though it must be very small, and some very small habitats (e.g., heaths) failed to coincide with a grid intersection.

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

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

Aggregated land types	Land Types	Number of grid intersections for each land type	Number of grid intersections for each aggregated land type	Proportion of AONB %
Woodland	Broadleaved	31	83	25.4
	Mixed	24		
	Conifer	20		
	Scrub	8		
Non-intensive	Marsh	1	23	7.1
	Small fields	19		
	Parkland	3		
Farmland	Undifferentiated	199	203	62.3
	Orchards	4		
Open water	Rivers	4	5	1.5
	Pools	1		
Development	Rural houses	3	12	3.7
	Roads	4		
	Urban	5		
TOTAL		326		100

### **3.6 The State of the AONB Report**

3.6.1 Reporting on the state of the AONB provides a baseline for determining and understanding the special qualities and the pressures on the AONB. The State of the AONB Report establishes a foundation for measuring change – beneficial or adverse – in the state or condition of the AONB. Therefore it forms the starting point for associated monitoring procedures.

3.6.2 The State of the AONB Report is available separately and complements the following sections:

3.6.3 **Special Qualities** – Table 3 identifies the special qualities of the AONB and their nature, quality, extent and condition. These have been cross referenced with the features of the Landscape Management Zones in Table 1 that are crucial to the long-term well being of the AONB.

3.6.4 **Changes or threats**- these are identified in Table 3 and represent the social, environmental and economic facets of the AONB and its communities that are significant sources of pressure for change on the special qualities of the AONB.

3.6.5 **Management options** – these are also in Table 3 and identify the management initiatives and the progress required to mitigate against the impacts of the changes or threats

3.6.7 **Activities / Pressures** These are highlighted under Table 4. These need to be understood in terms of their interaction, whether positive or negative, on the special qualities of the AONB and their occurrence in the various Landscape Management Zones. Many of the ‘changes or threats’ identified in Table 3 arise directly from these activities and pressures.

### **3.7 Statistics for the AONB**

3.7.1 The fundamental challenge with the use of any statistics for the AONB is the correlation of the data with the AONB boundary. The boundaries of the AONB do not generally follow any standard geographical data collection unit (such as Wards, Parishes or Local Authority Areas). Therefore there is virtually no data collected that relates directly to the AONB. Therefore it is important to ensure that monitoring by partners is coordinated as far as possible in order to avoid wasting effort through slightly different methodologies or monitoring subjects being pursued in different areas where they could have been linked up. Currently it is extremely difficult to gain consistently accurate statistical information for the AONB. However, to try and address this data shortfall the Centre for Rural Research (CRR) at the University of Worcester has prepared An Evidence Base for the Wye Valley 2007. This is available as a download on [www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk](http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk).

3.7.2 The population of the Wye Valley AONB, based on 2001 census data is 26,374, up from 24,370 in 1991, with 11,129 households up from 9,429 households in 1991.

**TABLE 3 Special Qualities of the Wye Valley AONB**

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Headline Indicator	Trend	
1	<b>Overall Landscape</b>							
16 Landscape Management Zones (see Table 1) with key feature	Outstanding (see county Landscape Character Assessments and LandMap)	Whole AONB	CQC headline indicator for both JCAs is Maintaining and Enhancing	Sustainable-land management &/or ownership that conserves or enhances key landscape characteristics and features	Support for sustained and viable land management and maintenance of key features (e.g. information & advice for landowners & managers, grants for appropriate management and skills development)	Character is classed as being 'maintained' in the two National Character Areas in which the AONB falls	→	
				Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy landscape features; (including neglect, addition of inappropriate features, on going loss & decline of elements that define landscape character resulting in increased uniformity and loss of distinctiveness)	Development Control, PRoW and Planning enforcement		% of AONB / LMZs / land use types in Agri-environment schemes & woodland grant schemes	↗
					Liaison with user groups			
				Interpretation & education				
	<b>Biodiversity</b>							
2. Woodlands	Diversity of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and Planted Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) including 35 SSSIs. Some plantation	25% woodland cover in AONB. 6083 ha of Ancient woodland >2ha covers 18.65% of AONB. SSSIs cover 1679 ha. 5%	Varied; much ASNW under managed, some PAWS being restored [in English part of AONB 67% of SSSIs meet NE PSA targets, sites ranging from 0-100%. ##% PFE SSSIs meet PSA	Changes in land management, including neglect of much private small woodland and road & bank side trees	Support for viable processing & markets for wood products	% of overall woodland (ha) is managed under a Forestry Commission Woodland Grant Scheme agreement	↗	
				Ongoing degradation of ancient woodland sites by the continuing existence of conifers and other non-native species, including continued replanting of ASNW with conifers	Liaison with landowners			
				Degradation of features of the historic environment			% of SMs and Listed	↘

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Headline Indicator	Trend
2. Woodlands	woodland. ## SMs and ## Listed Buildings within woodlands.	of AONB. Public Forest Estate (PFE) cover 16% of AONB	targets]	Changes in land management, including neglect of much private small woodland and road & bank side trees	Support for viable processing & markets for wood products	Buildings at high or medium risk within woodlands	↗
				Ongoing degradation of ancient woodland sites by the continuing existence of conifers and other non-native species, including continued replanting of ASNW with conifers	Liaison with landowners		
				Degradation of features of the historic environment			
				Fragmentation of ancient woodland sites by land use changes			
				Climate change	Favour resilient native species		
Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	913.62ha 3% of AONB	Unfavourable to fair; [woodland SAC / SSSI condition; CCW, in English part of AONB ##% of SSSIs meet NE PSA targets, sites ranging from 0-100%;	Degradation through neglect	Support for viable processing & markets for wood products minimal intervention woodland	% of Wye Valley Woodlands SSSIs are in favourable or recovering condition	↗	
			Degradation by specific alien &/or expanding species (eg. cherry laurel, Himalayan balsam, deer, grey squirrel)	Research of impacts and remedial action			
3. The river & tributaries (see also 23. Water quality and quantity)	Main river SAC and SSSI, 6 SMs and 70 Listed Buildings within Flood	45 miles (72km) of main river (1.3% of AONB) and a similar length	Of 11 SAC features 5 are in unfavourable condition, 36% of SSSI meets NE PSA target	Degradation of natural processes, including constraints on flooding	Maintenance and/or restoration of natural processes	% of river SSSI in favourable or recovering condition	↗
					Reinstatement of natural extent of floodplain.		
					Co-ordination with flooding initiatives outside of AONB		

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Headline Indicator	Trend		
3. The river & tributaries (see also 23. Water quality and quantity)	Zone 3. Nationally important for water based recreation and one of the key reasons why people visit the AONB	of tributaries and streams	[condition of salmon & white clawed crayfish unfavourable, sediment levels & diffuse pollution of concern] (NE, CCW), Water quality is good, although river & many streams suffering from some pollution.	Degradation of natural processes, including constraints on flooding	Maintenance and/or restoration of natural processes	% of SMs and Listed Buildings at high or medium risk within flood zone	↘		
					Reinstatement of natural extent of floodplain.				
					Co-ordination with flooding initiatives outside of AONB				
				Land use impacts may degrade or destroy features e.g. loss of riverside grassland, siltation from poor soil management, loss of historic environment features, engineering for recreational interests etc.	Development Control & Planning Enforcement				
					Liaison with user groups				
					Co-ordinate best practice of farming initiatives eg. Catchment Sensitive Farming work				
					Interpretation & education				
				Invasive alien species	Eradicate or control				
				Diffuse Pollution, including the leaching of chemicals from agricultural land	Co-ordinate best practice of farming initiatives			% of river length is classified as of 'good' water quality	↗
				Point source pollution, including increased development overflowing old drainage and sewerage systems	Development Control, Licensed discharges to river & Planning Enforcement				
					Liaison over incidents & sources				
				Changes through climate change and altered seasonal rainfall.	More sustainable use of land and water				
Spread of disease, such as <i>Phytophthora</i> infection of riparian alders	Disease control								
	Interpretation & education								
4. Small field pattern of un/semi-improved grassland, often bounded by	Very few SSSIs, ## CLWS Target area for HLS	4.4% of AONB inc 250 ha Hewelsfield & St Briavels Common	Prone to neglect [Hewelsfield & St Briavels Common Parish Grassland survey]	Continuing degradation through neglect and/or Change in ownership &/or land management (including overgrazing)	Support for viable land use (e.g. grazing projects, flying flocks, extensive livestock grazing, harvesting hay &/or grass seed) and sustained maintenance (e.g. hedge laying & drystone walling skills)	% of farmed land (ha) is managed under some form of agri-environment	↗		
					Promote initiatives to enhance connectivity				

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Headline Indicator	Trend	
4.	drystone walls or old hedges	Very few SSSIs, ## CLWS Target area for HLS		Prone to neglect [Hewelsfield & St Briavels Common Parish Grassland survey]	Continuing degradation through neglect and/or Change in ownership &/or land management (including overgrazing)	Support for viable land use (e.g. grazing projects, flying flocks, extensive livestock grazing, harvesting hay &/or grass seed) and sustained maintenance (e.g. hedge laying & drystone walling skills) Promote initiatives to enhance connectivity Promotion, recognition and designation of resource for both biodiversity and historic environment Support the promotion of local food production and marketing as a means to help encourage/maintain sensitive land use in the AONB.	scheme LAA PI 197 % of un-/semi improved grassland SSSIs are in favourable or recovering condition	↗ ↗
5.	Boundary habitat diversity & connectivity, e.g. between grassland & woodland, farmland & heathland, tidal river & ASNW, hedges &/or drystone walls, lanes, banks, verges and fields & woods	Varied, locally or regionally important as landscape &/or habitat, heritage &/or socio-economic feature	Throughout AONB	Varied	Damage and degradation through change in ownership &/or land management, including removal, inappropriate activity, road widening	Support for sustained management and maintenance (e.g. information & advice for landowners & managers, grants for appropriate management and hedge laying & drystone walling skills,) Development Control & Planning Enforcement Research to progress conservation and enhancement of features and characteristics	LAA PI 197 % of hedgerows and field margins under some form of agri-environment scheme	↗ ↗
<b>Geological</b>								

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Headline Indicator	Trend
6. Silurian Rocks	Grey / Brown rocks and soils (series of alternating limestones and shales)	Woolhope Dome	Exposures in small old quarries	Little used as a traditional building material	Geoconservation, including interpretation & access	x% of geological SSSIs (by land area) are in favourable or recovering condition	→
7. Devonian - Lower Old Red Sandstone	Good; creates fertile red soils of South Herefordshire (see Soil Quality below)	Underlies about 60% of AONB	Good Outcrops, eg Wilton Road, Ross	Vernacular building material, although rarely used in modern architecture due to softness of rock	Conserve access to specific quarries where appropriate	x% of geological SSSIs (by land area) are in favourable or recovering condition	→
					Geoconservation, including interpretation & access		
8. Quartz Conglomerate in Upper Old Red Sandstone including	Good, (Quartz Conglomerate overlain by Tintern Sandstone)	Prominent seams between Tintern and Ross	Good Outcrops, eg Coppett Hill & Doward	Traditionally used locally in drystone walls, limited modern use	Conserve prominent exposures	x% of geological SSSIs (by land area) are in favourable or recovering condition	→
9. Carboniferous Limestone	Good (overlain by Carboniferous Coal Measures)	Underlies about 25% of AONB south of Ross	Good Outcrops, especially cliffs and quarries	Quarrying; two working quarries in, and one bordering, AONB	Development Control, liaison & Planning Enforcement	x% of geological SSSIs (by land area) are in favourable or recovering condition	→
				Loss of working small quarries	Increase demand for local stone and vernacular building style		
					Geoconservation, including interpretation & access		
10. Riverine geomorphology	Good, incised meanders & superimposed drainage globally important examples for	Along length of river	Good	Natural processes, including flooding and movement of meanders	Maintenance and/or restoration of natural processes	x% of geological SSSIs (by land area) are in favourable or recovering condition	→
					Reinstatement of natural extent of floodplain.		
				Invasive alien species	Eradicate or control		
				Land use impacts may degrade or destroy features e.g. siltation,	Development Control & Planning Enforcement		

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Headline Indicator	Trend	
	educational purposes			engineering for recreational interests or flood defence	Development Control & Planning Enforcement Liaison with user groups Interpretation & education			
<b>Visual and Sensory</b>								
11.	Picturesque, extensive & dramatic views.	72 viewpoints identified. 20 included in Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme including 4 SMs at Piercefield.	Throughout AONB but majority overlooking the Wye	Varied; some spectacular, some overgrown, some inaccessible, health & safety poor at some [Assessment of Historic & Picturesque Viewpoints in AONB, 2001]. Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme restoring some.	Changes in ownership &/or land management may degrade or block both physical access to viewpoints and/or the view window Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy the landscape viewed from a viewpoint	Liaison with owners and site user & interest groups Interpretation & education Liaison with owners	Significance of identified change in view from fixed point photography and map regression (tbc)	~
12.	Overall sense of tranquillity, sense of remoteness and naturalness / wildness	Varied	Much of AONB	Poor to good, with localised disturbance from heavy traffic and individual vehicles and military aircraft [CPRE & CCW maps]	Changes in land management including new or expanding development and intensification of use (i.e. inappropriate tourism and recreation or increasing road or air traffic) change driven by new standards and legislation e.g. street lighting, highway construction may lead to loss of tranquillity and sense of remoteness	Liaison with owners and site user groups Development Control & Planning Enforcement Interpretation & education	% of the AONB is classified as 'tranquil' (green on CPRE & CCW Maps)	➔

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Headline Indicator	Trend	
<b>Historic Environment</b>								
13.	Prehistoric sites from Palaeolithic to Iron Age	Palaeolithic occupation at Arthur's Cave # SMs	Standing stones at 3 sites. 11 Iron Age hillforts spread through -out AONB	Varied	Neglect or continuing unsympathetic management may degrade or destroy archaeological features eg. damage to archaeological horizons through deep ploughing, irresponsible treasure hunting or continued neglect which may lead to tree and shrub root damage	Scheduled monument consents, Development Control, PRoW and Planning enforcement Liaison with owners and site user groups Interpretation & education	% of Scheduled Monuments classified as 'At High or Medium Risk'  No. SMs benefiting from grant aid	↘  ↗
14.	Roman and early Medieval sites including Offa's Dyke	Romano-British settlements and industry, Offa's Dyke early medieval boundary of unique cultural and historical importance	Throughout AONB, Offa's Dyke on eastern crest of Lower Wye Valley	Varied, Offa's Dyke very well preserved in some places	Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy archaeological features visitor access, Offa's Dyke Path National Trail erosion	Development Control, PRoW and Planning enforcement Liaison with owners and site user groups Interpretation & education	% of SMs classified as 'At High or Medium Risk'  No. SMs benefiting from grant aid	↘  ↗
15.	Mediaeval	Landscape of	Lower Wye	Fair to good	Changes in the visiting regime	Liaison with owners and site user groups	% of	

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Headline Indicator	Trend
15. Defensive and Ecclesiastical sites and associated landscapes	Outstanding Historic Interest in Cadw Register of Historic Landscapes. Goodrich & Chepstow Castles and Tintern Abbey in state ownership.	Valley from Ross to Chepstow	Fair to good	and increases in popularity of various sites.	Liaison with owners and site user groups	Scheduled Monuments classified as 'At High or Medium Risk'	↘
					Interpretation & education		No. SMs benefiting from grant aid
16. Post-medieval industrial sites and associated landscapes	Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Cadw Register of Historic Landscapes	Throughout AONB.	Some sites under management, others suffering from neglect	Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy archaeological features	Development Control & Planning Enforcement	% SMs 'At High or Medium Risk'	↘
				Changes in the visiting regime and increases in popularity of various sites.	Liaison with owners and site user groups		No. SMs grant aided
					Interpretation & education	% of LBs 'At Risk'	↘
						No. LBs grant aided	↗

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Headline Indicator	Trend
17. Railway heritage	Line closed 1958	Disused line through length of AONB	Redundant track bed with decaying infrastructure	Further neglect of structures	Restoration of route to enhance existing network of rights of way	% of SMS 'At High or Medium Risk'  No. SMS grant aided  % of LBs 'At Risk'  No. LBs grant aided	⬇️  ➡️  ⬇️  ➡️
18. Ancient trees	Significant numbers of ancient pollards and mature trees in hedges, woods and parkland	Through-out AONB	Poor	Neglect or Inappropriate management may damage or destroy trees	Liaison with owners	% recorded losses to AONB Veteran Tree Survey	➡️
					Interpretation & education		
19. Historic parks and gardens	10 registered parks and gardens;	Through-out AONB	Fair to good ## on EH 'risk register'	Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy historic features (including the	Development Control & Planning Enforcement	% of registered parks and	⬇️
					Liaison with owners and site user groups		

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Headline Indicator	Trend
19. Historic parks and gardens	Sufton Court, Hill Court, The Kymin, Troy House, High Glanau, The Argoed, Wyncliffe Court, Piercefield, Itton Court, Mounton House, plus 48 of local significance in AONB	Through-out AONB	Fair to good ## on EH 'risk register'	degradation of identified designed landscape)	Development Control & Planning Enforcement Liaison with owners and site user groups Interpretation & education	gardens classified as 'At High or Medium Risk'	⬇
20. Vernacular architecture: Farmsteads Commoners cottages, Estate houses	Varied – no one dominant style due to varying geology	Through-out AONB, dependant on geology	Varied, dependant on geology & building materials	Inappropriate management may degrade or destroy historic features	Development Control & Planning Enforcement Liaison with owners and user groups Interpretation & education	% of Listed Buildings classified as 'At Risk'	⬇
<b>Language</b>							
21. Welsh language & accent; Forest of Dean & South Herefordshire dialects & accents	Usage diminishing. Welsh taught in schools in Monmouthshire	Varied through-out AONB	N/a	Loss of local identity can further erode traditional usages Influences of universal education and media	Encourage & support local events and traditions Encourage promotion of local traditions in local schools	N~a	~
<b>Environmental</b>							
22. Air quality	Good	Through-out AONB	Good except for A40 corridor	Increase in road traffic pollution	Encourage & support positive programmes for integrated and sustainable transport, to	t.b.c.	

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Headline Indicator	Trend	
22. Air quality	Good		Good except for A40 corridor	Increase in road traffic pollution	encourage more walking and cycling, especially for short journeys as well as better public transport	t.b.c.		
					Encourage more sustainable & less transport dependant lifestyle			
				Inefficient use of wood-fuel	Encourage & support most efficient use of wood-fuel			
23. Water quality and quantity (see also 3. River and tributaries)	Main River SAC also in EC Freshwater Fish Directive (78/659 EEC) and, along with all streams, are Fisheries Ecosystem class 2. Water resources under EC Water Framework Directive	Through-out AONB	Good [River and most streams meet Fisheries Ecosystem Class targets; River meets targets for EC Freshwater Fish Directive plus at abstraction points meets Surface Water for Abstraction for Public Supply Directive (75/440/EEC) targets]	Changes in land use may increase point or diffuse pollution e.g. soil run off, chemical leaching, etc.	Development Control & Planning Enforcement	% of river length classified as of 'good' water quality	↗	
					Liaison with land owners			
					Interpretation & education			
				Falling water table may impact on water quality through low flow events, increased concentration of pollutants, and reduced surface area for oxygen diffusion.	More sustainable use and management of water		Water levels maintained	→
24. Soil quality	1,2 &3	Throughout AONB	Fair, although some areas of high erosion risk	Changes in land use may degrade or contaminate soils e.g. erosion and soil run off, chemical leaching, quarrying & extraction, loss of soil diversity and loss through development, etc.	Development Control & Planning Enforcement	t.b.c		
								Soil erosion risk mapping and risk management
								Liaison with land owners
								Interpretation & education on soil conservation

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Headline Indicator	Trend	
<b>Access and Recreation</b>								
25.	Old tracks: often in sunken ways &/or bounded by drystone walls	Some in Rights of Way network, some County Road (Highways), some other highways, remainder private. No formal cataloguing and assessment	Through-out AONB	Variable	<p>Degradation of surface and/or boundary features due to changes in levels of usage &amp;/or ownership or management, eg. deep rutting and waterlogging, hard surfacing, widening, etc.</p> <p>Blockage and/or obstruction</p> <p>Unclear classification</p>	<p>Liaison with landowners/managers, including over sympathetic repair &amp; consolidation of route and boundaries</p> <p>Promote alternative route(s) to relieve pressure (with or without route closure)</p> <p>Use of Traffic Regulation Order, PRow Enforcement &amp; Development Control</p> <p>Interpretation and education</p> <p>Liaison with user groups</p> <p>PRow Enforcement &amp; Development Control</p> <p>Liaison with land owners</p> <p>Research and dedication for designation of lanes as 'byways' to protect their character, surface and boundary features.</p> <p>Proper signage and waymarking</p>	<p>% of rights of way are classified as 'easy to use'</p> <p>% of rights of way are classified as 'easy to use'</p> <p>% of SM 'At High or Medium Risk'</p> <p>% of rights of way are classified as 'easy to use'</p> <p>% Positive</p>	<p>↗</p> <p>↗</p> <p>↘</p> <p>↗</p> <p>↗</p>
26.	Offa's Dyke Path	National Trail	Monmouth to Chepstow	Premier national walking route	<p>Erosion due to excessive usage leading to damage to Offa's Dyke earthwork</p> <p>Blockage and/or obstruction</p>	<p>Realignment of sections of the route off the Offa's Dyke earthwork, minimising landscape and other harm</p> <p>Repair &amp; consolidate route</p> <p>PRow Enforcement &amp; Development Control</p> <p>Liaison with land owners</p>	<p>% of rights of way are classified as 'easy to use'</p> <p>% of SM 'At High or Medium Risk'</p>	<p>↗</p> <p>↘</p>
27.	Wye Valley Walk	Regional Route	Through length of AONB [T1.1-76]	Good	Degradation of route due to erosion and excessive usage and/or river flooding and/or landslips	<p>Repair &amp; consolidate route</p> <p>Liaison with land owners</p> <p>Promote alternative route(s) to relieve pressure (with or without route closure)</p> <p>interpretation and education</p> <p>liaison with user groups</p>	<p>% of rights of way are classified as 'easy to use'</p> <p>% Positive</p>	<p>↗</p> <p>↗</p>

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Extent	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Headline Indicator	Trend
27. Wye Valley Walk	Regional Route	Through length of AONB [T1.1-76]	Good	Degradation of route due to erosion and excessive usage and/or river flooding and/or landslips	Repair & consolidate route	feedback from Route Guide	↗
					Liaison with land owners		
					Promote alternative route(s) to relieve pressure (with or without route closure) interpretation and education liaison with user groups		
					Blockage and/or obstruction		
Some sections still on Permissive Paths	Liaison with land owners	Upgrade route to Public Right of Way					
28. Access land	Good	Forestry Commission woodland and Woodland Trust holdings eg. Haugh Wood, Chase Wood & lower Wye Valley woods	Good	Changes in legislation or sale removing access rights	Securing long term access rights	% of AONB	→
29. Small commons; largest are Coppet Hill, Broadmoor, Staunton Meend, Whitelye, The Hudnalls	Generally good	12 scattered through -out AONB	Generally good	Obstruction to access	Enforcement & Development Control	% of AONB	→
					Liaison with commoners, site users and neighbouring land owners		

**TABLE 4 ACTIVITIES & PRESSURES in the Wye Valley AONB**

<b>Activities in the AONB</b>	<b>Pressures in the AONB</b>	<b>Positive Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>Negative Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association</b>
<b>Enjoyment</b>				
<b>Recreation</b>				
Boating (motorised water craft, including cruise boats, motor launches & jet skis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing use of river, particularly around Symonds Yat and between Chepstow and Tintern</li> <li>Demand for standardised launch facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic generation from pleasure cruises</li> <li>Local spend of users</li> <li>Gives a different perspective to appreciate special qualities of AONB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poorly designed launch sites and channel engineering can degrade landscape character</li> <li>Wash from boats at speed can damage riverbank</li> </ul>	LMZ 09 SQ3 SQ10 SQ11 SQ12
Canoeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing use of river, particularly between Kerne Bridge and Monmouth</li> <li>Lack of launch facilities</li> <li>Demand for standardised launch facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic generation from canoe hire</li> <li>Local spend of users</li> <li>Health benefits of canoeing</li> <li>Gives a different perspective to appreciate special qualities of AONB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kerne Bridge and Symonds Yat reaching capacity at peak times</li> <li>Increased use can cause disturbance to other users and wildlife</li> <li>Can be associated with rogue camping</li> <li>Poorly designed launch sites and channel engineering can degrade landscape character</li> </ul>	LMZ 02 LMZ 09 SQ3 SQ10 SQ11 SQ12
Climbing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concentrated on limestone cliffs in Wye Gorge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic generation from guiding &amp; activity businesses</li> <li>Local spend of users</li> <li>Health benefits of climbing</li> <li>Gives a different perspective to appreciate special qualities of AONB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excessive use and development of routes can disturb biodiversity and geodiversity</li> <li>Can be associated with rogue camping</li> </ul>	LMZ 09 SQ9 SQ11 SQ12
Cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoted locally and nationally as a sustainable form of transport</li> <li>Vehicle speeds and size of many roads makes cycling dangerous</li> <li>Demand for off road routes</li> <li>Requirement for standardised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health benefits of cycling</li> <li>Reduced emissions of cycle journeys</li> <li>Economic generation from cycle shops and hire</li> <li>Cycle tracks in Public Estate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased off road cycling can cause disturbance to other users and wildlife</li> <li>Car borne cyclists can exacerbate parking demand at honey pots</li> <li>Poorly designed routes and</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ2 SQ11 SQ12 SQ17 SQ25

<b>Activities in the AONB</b>	<b>Pressures in the AONB</b>	<b>Positive Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>Negative Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association</b>	
	infrastructure and facilities	Forest facilitate greater usage of overall forest area and integration with other users. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local spend of cyclists</li> </ul>	infrastructure can degrade landscape character and historic environment features		
Field Sports		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic generation from shooting rights</li> <li>Local spend of participants</li> <li>Management can enhance biodiversity</li> <li>Facilitates appreciation of special qualities of AONB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poaching</li> <li>Disturbance to wildlife</li> <li>Noise from shoots</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ2 SQ3 SQ11 SQ12 SQ17	SQ25 SQ26 SQ27 SQ28 SQ29
Fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salmon stocks declining</li> <li>Demand for fishing lakes</li> <li>Seasonal elver fishing on tidal river extensively over-fished over decades due to inflated market price of product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic generation from fishing rights</li> <li>Local spend of anglers</li> <li>Gives a different perspective to appreciate special qualities of AONB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poorly designed fishing infrastructure, eg. croys, lakes and stands, can degrade landscape character</li> <li>Over fishing of natural stock depletes biodiversity</li> <li>Potential conflicts with other river users, particularly canoeists</li> </ul>	LMZ 02 LMZ 09 SQ3 SQ10 SQ11 SQ12	
Horse riding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disjointed Bridleway network leading to demand for correct signage, more accessible routes, including carriage ways and permissive routes</li> <li>Use of verges for riding</li> <li>Demand for ménages, stables and paddocks</li> <li>Limited Rights of Way budgets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local spend of horse-riders</li> <li>Facilitates appreciation of special qualities of AONB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poorly designed ménages, stables and paddocks can degrade landscape character</li> <li>Excessive use of routes can damage surfaces</li> <li>Potential (but rare) conflict with other users, eg cyclists and walkers, especially with dogs</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ2 SQ11 SQ12 SQ17 SQ25 SQ29	
Rowing and rafting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rowing clubs and courses at Ross and Monmouth</li> <li>Raft Races along various</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic generation from regattas and races</li> <li>Local spend of users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential conflicts with other river users, particularly fishermen</li> </ul>	LMZ 02 LMZ 09 SQ3	

<b>Activities in the AONB</b>	<b>Pressures in the AONB</b>	<b>Positive Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>Negative Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association</b>	
	stretches of river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health benefits of rowing and rafting</li> <li>• Gives a different perspective to appreciate special qualities of AONB</li> </ul>		SQ10 SQ11 SQ12	
Sight-seeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on honey-pot sites such as Ross-on-Wye, Tintern Abbey and Yat Rock</li> <li>• Demand for view-brew-loo facilities</li> <li>• High percentage of car use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local spend of sight-seers</li> <li>• Facilitates appreciation of special qualities of AONB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape implications of provision of facilities, including car parking</li> <li>• Some sites reaching capacity at peak times</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ2 SQ3 SQ11 SQ12 SQ13 SQ14	SQ15 SQ16 SQ17 SQ26 SQ27 SQ28 SQ29
Walking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand for way-marked, self guided trails</li> <li>• High percentage of car use to start walk</li> <li>• Honey-pot sites such as Haugh Wood, Symonds Yat and Tintern</li> <li>• Access for all enhancements</li> <li>• Open Access</li> <li>• Limited Rights of Way budgets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local spend of walkers</li> <li>• Allows appreciation of special qualities of area</li> <li>• Dissipated throughout AONB</li> <li>• Health benefits of walking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal car parking on verges</li> <li>• Potential conflict particularly between dogs and livestock</li> <li>• Excessive usage can exacerbate erosion to paths and features</li> <li>• Confusion over signage &amp; waymarking can lead to confrontation with other users</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ2 SQ3 SQ11 SQ12 SQ17	SQ25 SQ26 SQ27 SQ28 SQ29
4x4 cars, trial motorcycles and off road motorcycles driving off-tarmac	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing legal use of unclassified public roads and lack of clear signage</li> <li>• Illegal use of public footpaths and bridleways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local spend of driver / riders</li> <li>• Facilitates appreciation of some special qualities of AONB</li> <li>• Provides access for disabled and less abled people into countryside</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confusion over signage &amp; waymarking can lead to confrontation with other users</li> <li>• Can exacerbate erosion to path surfaces and features</li> <li>• Illegal trails damage habitats and features</li> <li>• Adversely affects tranquillity in vicinity</li> <li>• Disturbance to other users and</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ2 SQ3 SQ4 SQ5 SQ11 SQ12 SQ13 SQ14 SQ15	SQ19 SQ20 SQ21 SQ22 SQ25 SQ29

Activities in the AONB	Pressures in the AONB	Positive Impacts in the AONB	Negative Impacts in the AONB	AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association	
			wildlife	SQ16 SQ17	
<b>Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Wye Valley’ a known brand and destination with estimated 2.5 million visitor days p.a.</li> <li>• Focus on honey-pot sites such as Ross-on-Wye, Tintern Abbey and Yat Rock</li> <li>• High percentage of car use</li> <li>• Increase in day trippers and long term decline in long stay visitor numbers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic generation for many sectors in local community , including food and accommodation providers</li> <li>• Local spend of tourists &amp; visitors</li> <li>• Facilitates appreciation of special qualities of AONB</li> <li>• Can be dissipated throughout AONB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large scale tourism infrastructure at honey pots can degrade landscape character</li> <li>• Incremental infrastructure improvements to tourism facilities can urbanise and detract from landscape character</li> <li>• Increased pollution from high dependence on private transport</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ2            SQ19 SQ3            SQ26 SQ11           SQ27 SQ12           SQ28 SQ13           SQ29 SQ14 SQ15 SQ16 SQ17	
<b>Land management</b>					
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farms need to assess their practices and enterprises against legislation and cross-compliance</li> <li>• Diversification to continue employment</li> <li>• Changes in land ownership and land management</li> <li>• Increasing farm sizes through amalgamation</li> <li>• Increasing numbers of new hobby farmers</li> <li>• Increasing numbers of farmers, particularly hobby farmers, who are not engaged through the usual channels may be hard to reach in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic generation of agricultural enterprises and spend of employees</li> <li>• Landscape custodianship of farming</li> <li>• Provision of local food and materials</li> <li>• Diversification allowing farmers to continue farming</li> <li>• Enhanced biodiversity, landscape, historic environment and diffuse pollution measures through agri-environment schemes</li> <li>• New access established with agri-environment schemes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential landscape, social and/or biodiversity impacts of new technologies</li> <li>• Inappropriate land management practices may degrade or destroy landscape features (eg overstocking, continuous arable production)</li> <li>• Loss of traditional mixed farming practices</li> <li>• New farm buildings as permitted development can be out of character and scale in the landscape</li> <li>• Poorly designed barn conversions can degrade landscape character</li> <li>• Abandonment or inappropriate use</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ4 SQ5 SQ10 SQ11 SQ12 SQ13 SQ14 SQ18 SQ19 SQ20 SQ23 SQ24 SQ25	

<b>Activities in the AONB</b>	<b>Pressures in the AONB</b>	<b>Positive Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>Negative Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association</b>
	terms of encouraging specific management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New technologies &amp; practices e.g. biofuels, polytunnels and carbon reduction</li> <li>• Traditional farm buildings redundant for modern agricultural use so often sold off from farmland, leading to barn conversions and requirement for modern agricultural buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecosystem services including flood storage</li> </ul>	of parkland and designed landscapes leading to loss of cultural heritage and character.	
Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current low value of timber and lack of viable markets for wood products</li> <li>• Neglect of much private small woodland, also road &amp; bank side trees</li> <li>• Degradation of ancient woodland sites by the continuing existence of conifers and other non-native species</li> <li>• Spread of species and pathogens, eg. deer, boar and Ramorum Blight (Sudden Oak Death)</li> <li>• Fragmentation by land use changes</li> <li>• Loss of woodland management skills</li> <li>• Increasing potential of the developing wood-fuel market and supply chain and consequential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic generation of forestry products</li> <li>• Large area of woodland in public or voluntary sector ownership (eg CCW, NE, FC, WT, WiT)</li> <li>• Restoration to native woodland of plantations on ancient woodland sites'</li> <li>• Public access to woodlands facilitates appreciation of special qualities of AONB</li> <li>• Ecosystem services including carbon sequestration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of management of much private woodland</li> <li>• Trees obscuring views from roads and picturesque viewpoints</li> <li>• Deer and squirrels affecting biodiversity and viability of many woods</li> <li>• Inappropriate forestry operations &amp;/or timing (insensitive felling operations, inappropriate planting methods and track installations)</li> </ul>	LMZ 01    SQ13 LMZ 03    SQ14 LMZ 04    SQ15 LMZ 09    SQ16 LMZ 10    SQ17 LMZ 12    SQ18 LMZ 13    SQ22 LMZ 14    SQ23 LMZ 15    SQ24 LMZ16    SQ17 SQ2        SQ25 SQ3        SQ26 SQ11       SQ27 SQ12       SQ28 SQ13 SQ14 SQ16

<b>Activities in the AONB</b>	<b>Pressures in the AONB</b>	<b>Positive Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>Negative Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association</b>
	increase in woodland management			
<b>Economic &amp; Development</b>				
Telecommunications and other utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications for new masts</li> <li>• Telecommunications companies not covered by Section 85 of CRoW Act.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased ease of communications in valley.</li> <li>• Advances in mast designs can be more sympathetic to surroundings and landscape character</li> <li>• Undergrounding of electricity cables enhances landscape character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual intrusion of pylons and standardised masts, particularly when poorly designed and sited</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ2 SQ11 SQ12
Energy, including renewables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal energy generated in AONB, but traditionally waterpower and wood-fuel</li> <li>• Renewable energy promoted locally and nationally as part of sustainable development</li> <li>• Demand for woodfuel, energy crops, small scale hydro, solar water heating and small scale / domestic wind turbines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape and biodiversity benefits of increasing use of coppice</li> <li>• Development and use of renewable energy can increase environmental awareness and appreciation</li> <li>• Use of historic mill locations for hydro-electricity and the management of woods for wood-fuel can bring in funds for the beneficial management of these features and landscapes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New and non-traditional techniques (eg. new energy crops, large scale wind farms) can degrade landscape character</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ2 SQ3 SQ10 SQ11 SQ12
Mineral development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mineral reserves and consents for existing Limestone extraction at 2 large scale working quarries, (Consent ends at one in 2011),</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to interpret geodiversity, mineral heritage and special qualities of AONB</li> <li>• Opportunities to use more local stone in buildings and development to enhance local character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large scale quarries can detract from landscape character and/or damage to landscape features</li> </ul>	LMZ 09 LMZ 10 SQ2 SQ3 SQ9 SQ12 SQ20
Housing & the built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing allocation demands leading to Market towns encroaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Places for people to live and work in or near to the spectacular landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor design of buildings and curtilage can detract from landscape</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ11

<b>Activities in the AONB</b>	<b>Pressures in the AONB</b>	<b>Positive Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>Negative Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association</b>
	<p>on AONB and in-fill in villages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location of housing and development in places which are dependant on car use</li> <li>• Unsympathetic and standardised designs of much modern housing and business premises</li> <li>• Lack of Village Design Statements for many settlements</li> <li>• Redundant farm buildings being converted to residential dwellings</li> </ul>	<p>of the AONB, facilitating appreciation of special qualities of AONB</p>	<p>character, eg. urbanising rural areas with natural hillsides engineered for car parking &amp; turning points, with excessive lighting and without adequate landscaping or screening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor location of housing and development encouraging car use and requiring additional standardised highway infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p>SQ12 SQ20 SQ29</p>
<p>Employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly locally in market towns or commute (Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff). Highest employment in service industries of tourism, public administration, finance and transport with small numbers in agriculture &amp; forestry</li> <li>• Farm incomes declining.</li> <li>• Need for growth</li> <li>• Movement, such as Transition Towns, towards more sustainable communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment predominantly based on servicing the enjoyment and appreciation of the special qualities of the AONB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demands of hard economics and employment, uncoupled from environmental and community aspects, can have detrimental impact on landscape</li> </ul>	<p>All LMZs SQ11 SQ12 SQ20</p>
<p>Transport &amp; Traffic [inc emissions]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic volumes; A40 busy at all times of the day and, along with A49 and A4136, carries much freight traffic. A466 and B roads are less busy, outside of commuting times, though congestion can be caused by dawdling tourists. Agricultural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most parts of AONB accessible by road, facilitating appreciation of special qualities for people of all levels of personal mobility</li> <li>• Rural bus services facilitate access and appreciation of the special qualities of the AONB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual impact of much transport infrastructure, including standardised concrete curbing, safety barriers, lighting &amp; signage</li> <li>• Low / poor maintenance of existing surfaces &amp; features, inc bridges can detract from landscape</li> </ul>	<p>All LMZs SQ11 SQ12 SQ22 SQ23 SQ25</p>

<b>Activities in the AONB</b>	<b>Pressures in the AONB</b>	<b>Positive Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>Negative Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association</b>
	<p>vehicles can hold up traffic on minor roads.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliance on private car use and commuting</li> <li>• Demands for standardised upgrades of road network, from A40 dual carriageway to unsurfaced byways</li> <li>• Rural bus services patchy</li> <li>• Wider issue of pollution and carbon footprint of the area.</li> </ul>		character	
Waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All waste for landfill exported</li> <li>• Government policy to divert waste from landfill eg. to community composting schemes or small-scale energy-from-waste schemes such anaerobic digestion plants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No new landfill sites in AONB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There may be less local awareness of need to reduce &amp; reuse &amp; recycle.</li> </ul>	SQ22 SQ23
<b>Community and Social</b>				
Local services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viability of village and rural services and facilities</li> <li>• Mobility of residents increases competition between village, market town and city facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many good village shops &amp; busy market towns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of local services reduces community coherence and can lead to increasing social isolation</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ12 SQ21
Local housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantity of second homes and holiday lets</li> <li>• Attractiveness of area for both commuting and retirement</li> <li>• Lack of affordable housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurs and fresh ideas brought into area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Migration of young people from area</li> <li>• Loss of potential local work force</li> <li>• Loss of indigenous knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Imbalance in local demographics</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ12 SQ20 SQ21

<b>Activities in the AONB</b>	<b>Pressures in the AONB</b>	<b>Positive Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>Negative Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association</b>
Community facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pubs &amp; garages threatened by competition from supermarkets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good village halls &amp; pubs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of local services reduces community coherence and increases social isolation</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ21
<b>Other</b>				
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing greenhouse gas emissions leading to anticipated global warming and species migration</li> <li>• Considerable uncertainties over the nature of positive and negative impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New opportunities for agriculture and tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands and other habitats,</li> <li>• River &amp; tidal flooding impacts likely to increase</li> <li>• Water quantity likely to vary more</li> <li>• Increased rainfall may lead to more landslips</li> <li>• Increased vulnerability of historic environment features (e.g. wetter ground conditions on monuments causing greater poaching, increased decay of redundant farm buildings, erosion or damage of bank side archaeological features and structures such as bridges, watermills, wharves and forges.</li> <li>• Changes to agricultural crops and practices may change landscape character</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ2 SQ3 SQ4 SQ5 SQ10 SQ13 SQ14 SQ15 SQ16 SQ17 SQ18 SQ19 SQ22 SQ23 SQ24
<b>Pollution</b>				
Water pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diffuse and point source pollution from urban (domestic and business) and agricultural sources</li> <li>• Ploughing of floodplain, steep valley slopes and other vulnerable soils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incidents can be used to raise awareness of pollution issues and best practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pollution and litter can degrade wildlife habitats and landscape character</li> <li>• Agricultural pollution may lead to contamination of soil and water</li> <li>• Soil erosion leads to loss of topsoil</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ3 SQ22 SQ23 SQ24

<b>Activities in the AONB</b>	<b>Pressures in the AONB</b>	<b>Positive Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>Negative Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water abstraction reduces river flows and dilution of pollutants</li> </ul>		and sediment loading in river.	
Light pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanding towns on edges of AONB</li> <li>Demand for standardised highway lighting, particularly at junctions</li> <li>Increasing use of 'security' lighting on exterior of buildings, and floodlighting of games pitches and riding arenas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples of bad practice can be used to promote best practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poorly designed and standardised lighting can degrade landscape character</li> <li>Poorly located or directed lighting can confuse motorists, degrade landscape character and waste energy</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ11 SQ12 SQ20 SQ25 SQ29
Noise pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heavy freight &amp; traffic using main roads</li> <li>Domestic / garden noise from lawnmowers, strimmers, chippers etc.</li> <li>Military training flight path down valley</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples of bad practice can be used to promote best practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Localised loss of tranquillity</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ2      SQ17 SQ3      SQ18 SQ4      SQ19 SQ5      SQ20 SQ11     SQ25 SQ12     SQ26 SQ13     SQ27 SQ14     SQ28 SQ15     SQ29 SQ16
Visual pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demand for more obtrusive signage</li> <li>Bi-lingual signs require larger signs to accommodate extra wording</li> <li>Increasing use of plastic for some modern agricultural practices</li> <li>Poor design of large buildings, eg barns and business warehouses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples of bad practice can be used to promote best practice</li> <li>Undergrounding of electricity cables removes visual obstructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poorly designed and situated development in and around AONB can degrade landscape character</li> <li>Agricultural use of extensive areas of plastic can degrade landscape character</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ11      SQ19 SQ12      SQ20 SQ14      SQ21 SQ15      SQ26 SQ16      SQ27 SQ17      SQ29 SQ18

<b>Activities in the AONB</b>	<b>Pressures in the AONB</b>	<b>Positive Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>Negative Impacts in the AONB</b>	<b>AONB Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) and Special Quality [SQ] association</b>	
Fly tipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persistent levels of localised flytipping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fly tipping can damage wildlife and the special qualities of the AONB</li> </ul>	All LMZs SQ2 SQ3 SQ4 SQ5 SQ11	SQ12 SQ25 SQ28 SQ29

## **PART 2 STRATEGY**

### **4. INTRODUCTION**

The following pages develop the strategy for the AONB Management Plan 2009-2014. However, they should not be read in isolation to the preceding Part 1 – Outline.

#### **4.1 Designation**

4.1.1 The purposes of the AONB designation are:-

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

#### **4.2 The Vision for the Wye Valley AONB in 2029**

4.2.1 The following vision encapsulates how we want the AONB to be in 20 years time:-

*The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be a landscape*

- *that continues to evoke inspiration in a wide range of people*
- *where some degree of change is accepted and its impacts accommodated through positive management including effective adaptation to and mitigation of climate change*
- *where the distinctive mix of steep valley sides and rolling hills, covered with ancient and semi-natural woodland, mixed farmland, and scattered settlement dominate the landscape along with the meandering river*
- *where the natural and historic assets are in good order, in fully compatible uses, and not denigrated by unsuitable change*
- *with a robust mosaic of inter-connected semi natural habitats for native wildlife, particularly around grassland, wetland and woodland*

- *providing functioning services and resources for society, including flood storage, food, timber, tourism and minerals*
- *which provides work for local people, who make good use of the varied resources the area has to offer*
- *where both visitors and residents are able to enjoy the area, particularly for sustainable tourism, recreation and informed appreciation of the historic and natural environment, with minimal conflict or disturbance from other users*
- *where association with the Wye Valley continues to benefit the surrounding villages, market towns and counties*
- *supported by the good will, pride and endeavour of local people, visitors, and the public, private and voluntary sectors*
- *worthy of its designation as an internationally important protected landscape.*

### **4.3 Themes and aims**

4.3.1 Five main themes were established in the AONB Management Plan 2004-2009. Following the review of that Plan the five themes have been continued in this Management Plan for 2009-2014. Each theme is summarised in the five following paragraphs.

#### **4.3.2 Theme 1: Our unique landscape**

Conserving and, where necessary, enhancing the natural beauty of *our unique landscape* is the primary theme. This addresses the components of natural beauty: the landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, historic environment and the cultural heritage.

The aim for each component is as follows:-

- to conserve and, where necessary, enhance the natural beauty of the landscape in the Wye Valley AONB, with its natural and cultural features and processes where the special qualities and features of the Landscape Management Zones are significantly better protected in vibrant, good condition and measurably enhanced from their 2009 status.
- to conserve, and where appropriate enhance, the biodiversity of the AONB
- to conserve and enhance sites that are important for the scientific and general understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the geodiversity heritage of the AONB.
- to conserve the historic environment of the AONB and promote sympathetic management.

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

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

#### 4.3.3 Theme 2: Development and Transport

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

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

#### 4.3.4 Theme 3: Vital communities

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

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

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

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

Tourism is included under the next theme.

#### 4.3.5 Theme 4: Enjoying the AONB

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

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

#### 4.3.6 Theme 5: Achieving success together

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

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

#### 4.4 **Structure of the Strategy**

4.4.1 In the following pages Each theme outlined above is divided into topics drawn from the bullet points identified above. Under each topic there is a brief outline. This elaborates and highlights significant issues, but needs to be read in conjunction with Sections 2 and 3. The aim for that topic is then given, based on the Vision. The strategic objectives for that topic are then listed, these are the policy proposals for the management plan. A separate Action Plan for the Wye Valley AONB is available which outlines the delivery of this Plan.

4.4.2 Therefore the structure of the Strategy, with the five themes and related topics, is:-

- Theme 1: Our Unique Landscape – conserved and enhanced  
Landscape  
Biodiversity  
Geodiversity  
Heritage  
Farming  
Woodlands, Trees & Forestry
- Theme 2: Development & Transport – planning and protection  
Development  
Minerals  
Utilities, Services and energy  
Transportation
- Theme 3: Vital Communities – living and working in the AONB  
Community Development  
Economy and Rural Regeneration
- Theme 4: Enjoying the AONB – sustainable tourism, recreation and appreciation  
Sustainable Tourism  
Recreation & Access  
Appreciation & Understanding
- Theme 5: Achieving Together – effective management of the AONB  
Partnership, Management & Governance

#### 4.5 **Interpretation of Strategic Objectives**

4.5.1 All the strategic objectives in the Management Plan must be interpreted in the light of:

- the statutory purpose of the Wye Valley AONB designation, that is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty
- the 20 Year Vision for the AONB
- the Aim of the theme's topic
- the accompanying text to the topic
- the texts and tables of Sections 2 and 3 of the Management Plan

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

4.5.3 In practical terms this means that:

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

## THEME 1

### **5. OUR UNIQUE LANDSCAPE – conserved & enhanced**

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

#### **5.2 LANDSCAPE**

5.2.1 The LandMap and Landscape Character Assessments covering the lower Wye valley identify the characteristics that make the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB so distinctive. These are used to define sixteen Landscape Management Zones in the AONB. Table 1 outlines the Features of each of the AONB Landscape Management Zones. Historic Landscape Character Assessments have also been produced which will help inform AONB monitoring.

5.2.2 There are many pressures on the natural beauty and landscape characteristics of the AONB. These are summarised in Table 4. Standardisation, urbanisation, climate change and the speed and scale of change in modern technology can all have an erosive effect on the distinctive character of an area. Tables 1 and 3 highlight where mitigation and positive action can be targeted at conserving or, where appropriate, enhancing the features and special qualities that create the uniqueness and natural beauty of the AONB. The Countryside Quality Counts system which analyses the England National Character Areas (NCAs)(formerly Joint Character Areas (JCAs)) has identified that the headline indicator for the NCAs covering the Wye Valley is 'Maintaining and or Enhancing' the character.

5.2.3 Habitat connectivity in the landscape is important for a functioning landscape that positively contributes to the linking of habitats as well as allowing wildlife to adapt to the effects of climate change. In the Wye Valley this should help support and conserve its characteristic semi natural habitats linked and connected by a network of habitats such as woods, trees, hedgerows, rivers, ditches and ponds.

**AONB Aim:** Conserve and, where necessary, enhance the natural beauty of the landscape in the Wye Valley AONB where the special qualities and features of the Landscape Management Zones are significantly better protected in vibrant, good condition and measurably enhanced from their 2009 status.

#### **Landscape Strategic Objectives**

<b>WV-L1</b>	Promote and develop policies and initiatives to protect, conserve, restore or enhance the features and elements that create the special qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features
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<b>WV-L2</b>	Encourage and enhance appropriate landscape scale action by all particularly on linking of habitats and positively contributing to habitat connectivity that allows wildlife to adapt to the effects of climate change
<b>WV-L3</b>	Promote and encourage the use of the Landscape Character Assessments and Historic Landscape Characterisation to inform local distinctiveness in development plans, strategies, guidance and landscaping schemes
<b>WV-L4</b>	Ensure the establishment and collection of sufficiently comprehensive baseline data to monitor landscape condition and direction of change
<b>WV-L5</b>	Support measures which increase public awareness and appreciation of the natural beauty and importance of the Wye Valley AONB

### 5.3 BIODIVERSITY

5.3.1 The Wye Valley AONB is particularly rich in wildlife and has a high concentration of designated sites covering approximately 10% of the AONB. In the AONB there are 3 sites of international importance designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) under the European Union's Habitats Directive. The 3 SACs are the entire river Wye, over 900 hectares of ancient semi-natural woodland in the heart of the Wye Gorge, and a collection of sites in the lower Wye valley used as roosts by Greater and lesser Horseshoe bats. Within a 5mile/8km radius of the AONB there is also the River Severn SAC, Special Protection Area (SPA) & Ramsar site downstream from the AONB. Of national importance in the AONB are 45 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) including 4 National Nature Reserves (NNRs). The majority of the SSSIs cover ancient semi-natural woodland spread throughout the AONB. The conservation of these sites is overseen by Natural England (NE) and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW). Of local importance in the AONB are 3 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), managed by the respective local authority, and 204 County local wildlife sites, a few of which are managed as nature reserves by Gwent Wildlife Trust, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust or Herefordshire Nature Trust in their respective counties, and Plantlife and the Woodland Trust, with the rest on private land. Local Authorities have a national indicator (NI 197) to target increases in positive management of their County local wildlife sites. Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (section 40) public bodies also have a duty to conserve biodiversity.

5.3.2 NE and CCW have a duty to report on the condition of SSSIs and whether they are in favourable condition. About a third of these designated sites in the AONB are not in their optimal ('favourable') condition from a biodiversity perspective (NE 2008). This is due to many factors ranging between local, regional, national and global impacts. Therefore it is particularly important to consider the options where their condition is significantly affected by management of the wider landscape in which they occur. The need for landscape scale action is emphasised in the England Biodiversity Strategy (Defra 2002).

5.3.3 The English and Welsh Biodiversity Strategies are part of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) process that identifies the ‘priority’ habitats and species that are important, particularly in relation to their rate of decline over the past 50 years. The nationally important habitats and species are outlined in the UKBAP. Locally each county has a Local BAP (LBAP). Some of the priority habitats and species in the UKBAP and LBAP have a significant presence in the Wye Valley AONB, while others are no more significant than in other parts of the country. The State of the AONB Report contains lists of the BAP priority species and habitats. From these the potential for the AONB to contribute positively to habitat and species BAPs is evident. The Wye Valley is an important European stronghold for both the lesser horseshoe bat and the common dormouse. Indeed, given the concentration of priority LBAP species and habitats in the AONB the area should be a test-bed and pace-setter for LBAP delivery. A large number of plant species of conservation significance have occurred in the AONB in the past. There are also many other nationally rare species with a restricted UK distribution that are found within the AONB, for example, rare species of whitebeam trees (*Sorbus* Spp) within the gorge woodlands. The ongoing monitoring of key indicator species and habitats will be crucial to determining the effectiveness of various schemes and initiatives and overall BAP delivery.

5.3.4 The AONB Nature Conservation Strategy (1999) provides some useful background on the area as does the Wye Valley New Naturalist (2008), both written by Dr. George Peterken.

**AONB Aim:** Conserve, and where appropriate enhance, the biodiversity of the AONB.

### **Biodiversity Strategic Objectives**

<b>WV-B1</b>	Contribute to the delivery of national, regional and local Biodiversity Action Plan targets and priorities for key habitats and species relevant to the AONB, in partnership with relevant organisations
<b>WV-B2</b>	Encourage and support measures that contribute to the management of all statutory designated sites and County local wildlife sites so that they are in favourable condition
<b>WV-B3</b>	Promote the adoption of schemes and initiatives that sustain, enhance and/or restore the characteristic biodiversity of the AONB, including through landscape scale habitat connectivity
<b>WV-B4</b>	Identify species and diseases considered to be detrimental to the biodiversity value of the AONB and encourage their monitoring, management and, where appropriate, their control
<b>WV-B5</b>	Support the identification and monitoring of key indicator species and BAP priority species and habitats, in partnership with conservation organisations, relevant individuals and the Local Biological Record Centres

<b>WV-B6</b>	Promote awareness, sources of advice and involvement in biodiversity conservation by landowners, land managers, businesses, local communities, schools and the public including of impacts from outside AONB
<b>WV-B7</b>	Encourage research and measures that enable biodiversity, ecological systems and natural processes to accommodate and adapt to climate and other environmental change, including through landscape scale habitat connectivity.

## 5.4 GEODIVERSITY

5.4.1 The Wye Valley AONB contains some excellent geology with good and clear examples of geological features in the form of a variety of bedrocks exposed in quarries, cliffs and rock outcrops, and the geomorphology associated with the river. The geology underpins the topography, soils and biodiversity that makes the landscape of the Wye Valley so outstanding. There are several geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS). It is recognised that there are opportunities to increase the number of RIGS and generally make geological sites more accessible, intellectually and physically, to the general public

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

### Geodiversity Strategic Objectives

<b>WV-G1</b>	Support the identification and monitoring of significant geodiversity conservation features (SSSIs & RIGS), in partnership with geoconservation organisations and the local Record Centres.
<b>WV-G2</b>	Contribute to the emerging Geodiversity Action Plans (GAPs) and conserve the geodiversity resource in line with GAPs
<b>WV-G3</b>	Monitor climate change and its effects on the geodiversity resource of the AONB
<b>WV-G4</b>	Encourage and support measures that create and/or maintain the accessibility and conservation interest of sites of geological importance
<b>WV-G5</b>	Promote increased understanding and opportunities to appreciate the significance of the geodiversity of the AONB and the need for its protection and management.
	See also WV-M3

## 5.5 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

5.5.1 The Wye Valley AONB has a rich heritage that has been host to many activities that have been instrumental in laying the foundations to the cultural identity of Britain. This is recognised in the high number of designated archaeological and heritage conservation sites. The lower of part of the AONB is in the Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales (Cadw 1998). There are 123 Scheduled Monuments in the AONB and 10 registered Parks and Gardens. There are also 17 Conservation Areas and 915 Listed Buildings in the built environment of the AONB. Additionally there are some nationally and regionally important monuments in the AONB that are not designated, along with a number of Unregistered Parks and Gardens (parks and gardens of local interest).

5.5.2 Heritage features are a unique, non-renewable asset. Like distinctive landscape features there are no breeding pairs of Iron Age Hill Forts. Similar to the landscape and the biodiversity, the features of the historic environment are under pressure from changes in land management and climate. Indeed, some features of the historic environment in the AONB, including some scheduled sites, are not in the best condition. This is often a reflection of present, as well as changing, management practices, while some sites, especially sites of early industrial importance, suffer from neglect. There are existing datasets on the vulnerability of designated historic environment assets and also the potential to broaden these datasets to encompass undesignated nationally important monuments. The appreciation and preservation of the historic environment is therefore a priority wherever possible, accepting the need for sympathetic management that has regard for other interests such as the SACs. The amounts of public and private finance invested into the management of the historic environment is significant and needs to continue.

5.5.3 The Statement of Significance in Section 3.2.4 contains a brief summary of the historic environment of the Wye valley and there are numerous publications and articles elaborating on many aspects of local history.

**AONB Aim:** Conserve the historic environment and promote sympathetic management

### Historic Environment Strategic Objectives

<b>WV-H1</b>	Conserve, protect and enhance the historic environment of the AONB through policy development, offering advice and encouraging sympathetic management
<b>WV-H2</b>	Initiate and encourage schemes and positive action to conserve, enhance and promote the historic environment in conjunction with national (EH & NE and Cadw & CCW) and other relevant agencies
<b>WV-H3</b>	Promote establishment of baseline data to monitor change and improve the local databases of historic landscape assessments, conservation areas, locally important buildings, & buildings at risk, ancient trees, heritage features and sites in the AONB in conjunction with Local Planning

	Authorities, local archaeological trusts and individuals
<b>WV-H4</b>	Maintain the integrity and promote the restoration, where appropriate, of the Historic Parks and Gardens and designed landscapes
<b>WV-H5</b>	Promote the understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment

## 5.6 FARMING

5.6.1 From the figures in Table 2, Agriculture occupies 57.8% of the land in the AONB. There is a wide range of farm enterprises in the AONB ranging from broiler chickens to Hereford beef units and from organic apple juice to turf production. Supplementing the agricultural businesses are a complete spectrum of farm diversification businesses and re-developments of farm buildings. The great majority (54%) of the AONB is farmed intensively.

5.6.2 Farming practices have crafted the land for millennia. Rapid changes in modern agriculture have overwhelmed and threatened many of the traditional habitats and practices that have created some of the distinctive features of the AONB. The future viability of farming and forestry is fundamental to the appearance of the Wye Valley landscape and many of the problems can only be solved by national and European policy changes. The increasingly globalised nature of agricultural commodities, volatile farm gate prices, consumer confidence, the increasing costs of fuel and fertiliser and of welfare, hygiene, bio-security and traceability initiatives, together with the opportunities for farmers to act co-operatively, all have implications for the viability of farming. These trends have particularly influenced stock farming, which plays a pivotal role in the maintenance of the Wye Valley's agricultural landscapes.

5.6.3 The production of food is a key ecosystem service but must also be a viable business. Influences on this include the effects of climate change and the ability to adopt new agricultural practices. Both can impact on the visual quality and landscape character of the area through the use of different crops, crop production and crop protection practices. These could include the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), new irrigation techniques or plastic crop covers. The latter, either as mulch or polytunnels, can have a dramatic impact on the landscape. Farm-scale polytunnels are not normally acceptable in the AONB where protection of the natural beauty takes priority over economic benefits. The potential adverse impacts to landscape, biodiversity, soil and water quality that these changes could bring require more research and close monitoring.

5.6.4 The paradox is that agricultural practices create and support natural beauty, and farmers and rural businesses need to be economically viable so that they can conserve and enhance the landscape, otherwise the businesses and the active environmental land management they underpin, will cease. The Government wants British agriculture to produce as much food as possible. The only requirements are that consumers want what's produced and that the way it's produced sustains our

environment and safeguards our landscape (Hilary Benn MP 2009). Farming needs to be able to realise social and economic needs while delivering a whole range of ecosystem services including healthy food, biodiversity, high landscape quality, high air and water quality, high animal welfare standards and opportunities for public recreation and spiritual refreshment. Therefore farmers must be supported for taking a positive role in the land management of a nationally protected landscape. Farmers are already engaged in many initiatives including the Campaign for the Farmed Environment, Catchment Sensitive Farming and agri-environment schemes. Nearly half of the AONB in England is covered in agri-environment agreements. The trend should be to increase the coverage and effectiveness of schemes in the AONB. Thus agricultural practices that retain or restore the natural beauty of the area, including biodiversity, and protect environmental resources e.g. soil and water and the River Wye, and take account of the landscape character should continue to be encouraged as a high priority. Conversely, agricultural activity that significantly diminishes or destroys the natural beauty or landscape character of the AONB should not be supported.

5.6.5 The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy will significantly influence agricultural policy and practice over the next few years. The process of ‘decoupling’ and ‘modulation’, supporting a general move away from production support mechanisms to those providing enhanced environmental benefits, is likely to continue.

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

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

**Farming Strategic Objectives**

<b>WV-F1</b>	Encourage farmers and landowners to identify and develop sustainable management practices that conserve or enhance the features, special qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB
<b>WV-F2</b>	Influence policy on, and encourage the maximum uptake of, agri-environment and other appropriate schemes, including support for small-holders, where they progress the conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty, biodiversity and special qualities of the AONB, particularly through Catchment Sensitive Farming and mixed farming systems
<b>WV-F3</b>	Seek to mitigate, reduce or remove agricultural activity which significantly

	diminishes or destroys the special qualities, natural beauty and landscape character of the AONB
<b>WV-F4</b>	Support the development of funding and for new skills, farming practices and farm-based activities that are compatible with the aims of AONB designation, and encourage and support traditional skills such as hay making, hedge laying, dry stone walling, etc. that contribute to the maintenance of the special qualities of the AONB.
<b>WV-F5</b>	Promote a wider understanding of the value of farming to the landscape and economy of the AONB
<b>WV-F6</b>	Support all appropriate measures to control diseases of agricultural livestock, which threaten the commercial viability of grazing systems, ensuring that the measures remain compatible with the conservation and enjoyment of natural beauty.
<b>WV-F7</b>	Encourage and support local producers to supply local food and promote and encourage the use of local produce by public bodies, consumers, accommodation providers and local food outlets.

## **5.7 WOODLAND, TREES AND FORESTRY**

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

5.7.2 The Wye Valley woodlands would have been managed, predominantly coppiced, on an industrial scale over at least the past 500 years. Much of this would have been low-grade hardwood timber turned into charcoal on site and fed into the

local blast furnaces and industrial works along the valley. Currently nationally only 30% of woodlands are managed and the woodlands in the AONB are no exception. This is partly due to the low timber prices in recent years, making the relatively low-grade hardwoods on the steep slopes of the Wye Valley woodlands particularly unprofitable. The development of modern woodfuel markets could significantly increase the management of these woods once more. But in the meantime many of the woodlands are becoming neglected.

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

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

5.7.5 The other significant use and value of the woodlands is for recreation. The heavily wooded nature of the lower Wye Valley is certainly a key factor in the area’s popularity as a tourism and recreation destination. The Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust woodlands are open to, and popular with, walkers, with various further promoted and permissive routes for horse riders and cyclists. The woodland resource also provides good educational opportunities, particularly through the establishment and development of Forest Schools.

5.7.6 Single trees and small groups of trees in parkland or in hedgerows also make a contribution to the landscape character of the AONB. Such trees are usually of high conservation value, especially ancient / veteran trees. They are often part of a link between woodlands or other semi-natural habitats. Individual and hedgerow trees, such as ancient pollards, need appropriate management and maintenance to minimise damage and loss. A planting programme is required to ensure there are mature single and hedgerow trees in the future.

5.7.7 Current imported diseases of trees such as Alder Phytophthora (*Phytophthora cambivora x fragariae*) and Ramorum Blight (*Phytophthora ramorum*) also have the

potential to affect dramatically the landscape character of the AONB. In the longer term climate change may also significantly affect the Wye Valley woodlands. However their extensive connectivity across the landscape affords good opportunities for species and habitat migration and/or adaptation.

5.7.8 The Woodlands of the Lower Wye, Origins, History and Management booklet (AONB 2007) and the AONB Woodland Management Guidelines (1996) provide a good back ground to the Wye Valley woodlands.

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

### Woodland, Trees and Forestry Strategic Objectives

<b>WV-W1</b>	Provide best practice advice to woodland owners and managers on sustainable multipurpose management of the Wye Valley woodland, with gradual PAWS restoration a priority
<b>WV-W2</b>	Support the management of woodlands and trees in the AONB that conserve, restore and/or enhance the special qualities, biodiversity and natural beauty of the area, ensuring no net loss of semi-natural woodland cover unless there are overriding nature or heritage conservation benefits
<b>WV-W3</b>	Support initiatives for the planting of ‘the right tree in the right place’ which respect the local landscape character and biodiversity and provide benefits for amenity, health, the local economy and linking or expanding existing sites.
<b>WV-W4</b>	Work in partnership to develop tree, woodland and forestry initiatives in line with relevant regional and national strategies and EU Directives, including effective protection for semi-natural woodlands so that none are lost, and encourage bringing woodland back into management through various techniques such as coppicing
<b>WV-W5</b>	Support and promote initiatives that encourage employment and skills development for multipurpose woodland management and conservation
<b>WV-W6</b>	Support the development of existing and new markets for local timber and woodland produce through improved storage, marketing, entry into national certification schemes and product development, eg woodfuel
<b>WV-W7</b>	Support the monitoring, management and where appropriate, control of diseases, pests and other threats, which may cause substantial mortality in tree species and woodland habitats and seek to mitigate the landscape impact of any loss.
<b>WV-W8</b>	Increase understanding, awareness and enjoyment of trees and the special nature of the Wye Valley woodlands and promote them as a resource for

	appropriate educational, recreational and health opportunities
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## **THEME 2**

### **6 DEVELOPMENT & TRANSPORT – planning and protection**

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

#### **6.2 DEVELOPMENT**

6.2.1 The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) does not have direct responsibility for the preparation of land use planning policies nor the determination of planning applications. This is the responsibility of the statutory planning authorities under specific Town and Country Planning legislation. The most relevant legislation for the AONB is the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act, and in England Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS 7) and the Minerals Planning Policy Statements (MPSs). Planning Policy Wales is the key guide to Welsh implementation. Government policy is that in general, policies and development control decisions affecting AONBs should favour conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. In all cases the environmental effects of new proposals will be a major consideration, though it will also be appropriate to have regard to the economic and social well-being of the areas. There are also Regional Spatial Strategies that will relate to the AONB and could have significant implications particularly in terms of housing allocations in and around the AONB. All four local planning authorities have been preparing their Local Development Frameworks or Plans, with varying degrees of robustness towards development control policies for the AONB. This AONB Management Plan forms part of the evidence base and is a material consideration in these documents.

6.2.2 There are about 750 planning applications per annum in the AONB. These range from porch extensions of a few square meters to over 50 hectares of polytunnels. The AONB unit and JAC only tend to consider planning applications that are likely to have a significant impact on the AONB. This is judged to be if the proposed development will form a dominant new feature in the landscape and/or if it damages or impacts on several special qualities simultaneously. A Planning Protocol has been developed between the AONB Unit and the local planning authorities. The mechanisms for considering planning applications are:-

- the AONB Officer receives the weekly planning lists and considers whether the full plans of any application need viewing. This tends to be about 10% of all applications.
- a local planning authority may send applications it considers significant to the AONB office for comment.
- members of the public contact the AONB office to raise concern about specific planning applications

The AONB Officer makes comment on about 1% of applications, usually objecting or raising concern about likely significant detrimental impacts on the AONB. The JAC's comments are sought on large scale developments, when they co-incide with the JAC's meeting cycle, or if deadlines are tight key members may be consulted.

6.2.3 Many of the planning applications are approved on the grounds that the development has negligible impact on the AONB. These decisions would take into account current policy and any material considerations, which may include setting a precedent and any cumulative impacts. However it is a commonly expressed concern that it is often the incremental effect of such developments collectively that encroaches on and erodes the landscape features and special qualities of the AONB. ‘The Wye Valley Landscape – An assessment of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’ (Countryside Council for Wales and the Countryside Commission 1996) stated that ‘Inappropriate development is more of a problem for the dispersed settlements such as Barbadoes Green and The Narth. Here some of the older buildings with their low key materials and setting within a cover of native trees, shrubs and woodland edge offer a model for new development’. The Landscape Character Assessments for each county go some way towards addressing these issues along with Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), such as Herefordshire Council’s on Polytunnels. The impacts on the landscape of ‘Permitted development rights’, which include many agricultural buildings, causes some public concern. Planning infringements and retrospective applications can also have a detrimental impact locally. Light and noise pollution, and actions such as removal of hedges or stone walls, hard surfacing of previously unsealed lanes, changes to drainage etc. are also frequently identified as eroding the character of the area. The level and effectiveness of development control and planning enforcement by the local planning authority is a key factor in controlling this. The overall efficacy of the local planning authorities in protecting the AONB designation should be monitored.

6.2.4 There are areas outside of the control of the planning system which can also have an erosive effect or a visual impact on the AONB eg the extensive use of plastic or synthetic mulch. Infrastructure associated with public utilities services and highways are often criticised by people for their standardised approach and lack of attention to local distinctiveness. The duty on all public bodies to have regard for the purposes of AONB designation, in Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, can be used to improve the AONB. An example of this is the regulator Ofgem reimbursing the electricity distribution companies for burying underground some of their overhead electricity cables in AONBs.

**AONB Aim:** Ensure all development within the AONB is compatible with the aims of AONB designation

### **Development Strategic Objectives**

<b>WV-D1</b>	Ensure that a consistent and coherent framework of planning policies relating to the protection, conservation and management of the AONB is fully reflected in the statutory land use planning policies and monitor their effectiveness
<b>WV-D2</b>	Encourage and support high standards of design, materials, energy efficiency, drainage and landscaping in all developments, including Permitted Development, to ensure that they complement and enhance the landscape and local character of the AONB

<b>WV-D3</b>	Promote the recognition and reinforcement of local character and distinctiveness in design, scale, setting and materials used in all development in the AONB, using local landscape character assessments
<b>WV-D4</b>	Resist inappropriate development which will create a persistent and dominant feature out of keeping with the landscape of the AONB and/or if it damages special qualities in the AONB, including through high levels of noise and/or light pollution or any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site
<b>WV-D5</b>	Encourage the use of Section 106 or Section 38 Agreements “and the Community Infrastructure Levy” to provide opportunities for developments to contribute to enhancing or conserving the natural beauty of the AONB
<b>WV-D6</b>	Encourage and support public involvement in the future planning of settlements and the countryside throughout the AONB for example through Parish Plans and Village Design Statements

### 6.3. MINERALS

6.3.1 The geology of the Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire parts of the AONB include considerable quantities of carboniferous limestone. Herefordshire contains more Devonian sandstone and Silurian limestone. These resources have been quarried for centuries to provide building stone, lime for local blast furnaces, agricultural lime and aggregate. There is a considerable heritage in the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean of mineral extraction, including coal, iron ore and quartz conglomerate, for millstones.

6.3.2 Mineral extraction is now concentrated on limestone aggregate extraction from two large scale quarries in the AONB. At Livox Quarry just south of Tintern the consent ends in 2011, while Stowfield Quarry, just west of Coleford, and one adjacent to the boundary, at Clearwell will continue through the Plan period. Minerals can only be worked where they occur. However, the environmental impacts of quarries, not only in but adjacent to the AONB, can be considerable. These can be through the long term effect on the landscape and/or through the daily operations which can be noisy, dusty, loud and generate considerable lorry traffic. On the other hand quarries provide employment and can be restored to give valuable exposures of the geology, create special habitats for wildlife and new recreational facilities

6.3.3 There are several large disused quarries that are revegetating and naturalising over time, and a myriad of small redundant quarries many of which are completely overgrown. All quarries, working and disused, are of value to geoconservation and several are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS). Building stone from local quarries is also important for local architectural and heritage reasons. English Heritage and Cadw are keen to see local quarries temporarily reopened for close stone matches for specific building conservation or renovation permissions.

6.3.4 Government guidance on mineral applications in AONBs is given in Minerals Planning Statement 1 (MPS 1) in England and in Wales in Minerals Planning Policy Wales and Minerals Technical Advice Note (MTAN) 1, all of which emphasise that applications in AONBs should be subject to the most rigorous examination. Major developments should not take place in AONBs except in exceptional circumstances. The Minerals Planning Authorities (MPAs) in the AONB are Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council. The Regional Planning bodies in England use the MPSs to forecast demand broken down for each region, and separate provisions are made for Wales. These are then apportioned by a regional aggregates working group, or working party in Wales, between each MPA, which consequently forms part of the national need. Each MPA is required to identify whether, or not, it can meet its share of the regional apportionment at an acceptable environmental cost. The MPA determines the constraints to new quarries, or extensions to existing quarries through the Minerals Core Strategy process. While respecting the AONB designation, it must be remembered that each MPA in the Wye Valley AONB is operating in different regions and therefore working to a different regional apportionment, rather than considering the AONB as a whole.

**AONB Aim:** Ensure all minerals development within the AONB is compatible with the aims of AONB designation

### **Minerals Strategic Objectives**

<b>WV-M1</b>	Encourage a consistent and coherent framework of mineral planning policies relating to the protection, conservation and management of the AONB and monitor their effectiveness
<b>WV-M2</b>	Encourage quarries to be operated and restored to a standard that is appropriate to the landscape character, geodiversity and biodiversity of the AONB
<b>WV-M3</b>	Support the working of building stone where there is a clear need for local conservation and heritage purposes where the scale and nature of extraction is not seriously damaging to the special qualities, landscape character or natural beauty of the AONB
<b>WV-M4</b>	Regard the AONB and SACs as primary constraints to new quarries, or extensions to existing quarries, for limestone aggregates that adversely impact on the special qualities, landscape character or natural beauty of the AONB.

## **6.4 UTILITIES, PUBLIC SERVICES AND RENEWABLE ENERGY**

6.4.1 The topography of the Wye Valley provides some challenges for the delivery of modern services and utilities. Yet the landscape also offers opportunities and alternatives along with lessons that can be learned from previous generations. The

early industries in the Wye Valley were based entirely on the natural resources available and were powered by water and wood. The AONB unit commissioned a feasibility study on renewable energy in 2002. This identified the potential for small-scale hydroelectric schemes on the tributaries of the Wye, the use of wood fuel, small domestic wind turbines and the opportunities for solar power, both for water heating and photovoltaic electricity generation. Agriculture and horticulture also have the ability to provide renewable energy crops. A key government target is to meet 20% of UK energy needs from renewable sources by 2020.

6.4.2 Most public utility services, notably gas, water, electricity and telephone lines tend to follow the road network. Where over ground wires cross the valleys and the river they can be very conspicuous, The scattered settlement and heavily wooded nature of some parts of the AONB also mean that over ground connections, particularly telephones and electricity are disrupted by storms and flooding. The under-grounding of cables is being pursued by the electricity distribution network companies under the Ofgem Section 85 scheme. This can provide both landscape and service supply enhancements.

6.4.3 The rate of consumption of resources is a fundamental aspect of sustainable development. The conservation of energy and water are crucial factors that affect the AONB. Excessive water use and abstraction can have a significant impact on the river, its biodiversity and the surrounding landscape. The waste of electricity often results, in the short term, in light pollution and ultimately in climate change. The development of renewable energy does not negate the need for efficient use of resources. Similarly national planning policy on waste is to divert waste from landfill and to reduce & reuse & recycle. This provides opportunities to promote more sustainable alternatives to exporting all waste from the AONB, such as community composting schemes or small-scale energy-from-waste schemes like anaerobic digestion plants.

6.4.4 Mobile phones have revolutionised modern life. But the topography of the AONB means that coverage is not consistent. The balance has to be reached between comprehensive mobile phone coverage for all operators against the valley sides bristling with masts to achieve this. Mast sharing is an option but may not always provide the best environmental result in every case, as they tend to need to be taller with each sharing. Masts can use optimum designs or involve innovative solutions, such as incorporation in church towers or farm buildings, which when accompanied by adequate landscaping where appropriate, minimises the landscape impacts in the AONB.

**AONB Aim:** Ensure the most sustainable, effective and efficient use and supply of services and energy within the AONB, compatible with the aims of AONB designation

**Utilities, Public Services and Energy Strategic Objectives**

WV-U1	Support and promote the development of renewable forms of energy generation that do not impact negatively on the landscape features and special qualities of the AONB
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<b>WV-U2</b>	Encourage further under-grounding of existing and proposed power and telephone lines, where these do not conflict with any SAC, and resist new overhead lines where skylines or important views are affected
<b>WV-U3</b>	Encourage the highest standards of equipment design and siting for telecommunication masts and resist new structures that either do not share masts and / or do not utilise appropriate designs at suitable locations
<b>WV-U4</b>	Encourage the use and supply of resources, including water abstraction and investment in infrastructure, that is consistent with the special qualities, SACs, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB, and monitor any adverse impacts

## 6.5 TRANSPORTATION

6.5.1 The Wye Valley, like almost every other area in the UK, has a dominance of private car use and lorry freight, with over 16,000 cars and vans based in the area. This use predominantly concentrates on the two trunk roads in the AONB, the A40 dual carriageway and the A49. The other key routes in the AONB are the A466, A4136, B4224, B4228, B4229 B4234 and B4293, which link the main towns and villages in and around the AONB. There are then a network of smaller rural roads and country lanes that link the scattered settlements. Barely a couple of miles outside the AONB are both the M48 and M50, allowing for a two way flow of visitors and commuters to and from the conurbations of Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff. Recent surveys indicate that over 90% of visitors to the AONB would have come by car. However, while some areas in the AONB reach car and parking capacity at peak periods, other places remain under-used and relatively peaceful with moderately sized car parks retaining spaces virtually all year.

6.5.2 Accessibility to the road network has been an issue in recent years, for example due to a series of landslips in the lower Wye Valley and the occasional week-end closure of the old Severn Bridge for repairs. These can have significant knock-on effects for both the landscape and the local economy. The infrastructure associated with maintaining road traffic, and accommodating any increase is controlled primarily by the need to meet requirements of road safety for drivers travelling within the legal speed limits. However recurring signage, lighting and standardised material can have a significant detrimental impact on natural beauty and local distinctiveness. Road noise is also a factor, affecting tranquillity in some places and quality of life in others.

6.5.3 There are alternatives to the car. Appropriately designed and located development, which includes work-life units and encourages or allows home working, with good links to public transport, can reduce car dependence. However, most options face problems of one sort or another, particularly in such a rural landscape. The local authorities fund and promote extensive rural bus services. But the willingness of people to use public transport is strongly influenced by public perceptions, as much as reality, about variable standards in terms of connections,

frequency, reliability, access and comfort. The AONB unit, along with the local authorities, continue to promote the use of the local bus services and the network throughout the AONB. However, for many rural businesses and attractions there is no regular local bus service. Demand response buses are popular where they operate, but have proved difficult to sustain when relying on volunteer drivers.

6.5.4 Rail links exist at either end of the AONB at Hereford and Chepstow. These can provide useful staging posts for the non-car traveller. Further afield there are also stations at Abergavenny, Gloucester, Ledbury, Lydney and Newport. The railway line that once did go through the valley was closed to passengers before the Beeching's cuts. There are also coach stations in Chepstow, Monmouth, Ross and Hereford which likewise provide access to the area. However frequency of both these services can be limited to some of these destinations.

6.5.5 The other main alternative is cycling. The Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) received a feasibility study on a Wye Valley Cycleway in 2003. Localised and focused opposition has continued to any such proposals. However the JAC welcomes initiatives by local people to develop local routes on existing ex-railway tracks, but only when there is no compulsory purchase orders or pressure on landowners. The JAC wishes to be presented with proposals to develop local routes, even if only one constituent authority is involved. The JAC would only support proposals that meet the objectives and do not affect the AONB adversely. The Town & Country Trail in Ross-on-Wye and the Peregrine Way between Monmouth and Symonds Yat East have been developed in such a manner.

6.5.6 Walking is a popular recreational activity in the AONB but also remains a valid form of transport for some local journeys. The good condition of roadside pavements and the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network can make a considerable contribution to improving the prospects for walkers. The river itself was historically an important transport corridor and can still play a role in journeys up and down and across the valley, likewise horse riding.

6.5.7 The local authorities are committed to progressing their respective Local and/or Regional Transport Plans through Local and/or Regional Transport Partnerships. These can be based on the modal hierarchy, which gives priority to walking first, followed by cycling, public transport and private motor vehicles, in that order. The challenge, as ever in the AONB, is to secure a consistent and comprehensive approach to achieving sustainable and integrated transport in the AONB. The result should be attractive transport choices for local people and visitors with improved access, social equity and economic opportunities in the Wye Valley.

**AONB Aim:** Ensure transport in the AONB is sustainable and integrated and compatible with the purposes of AONB designation.

### Transportation Strategic Objectives

<b>WV-</b>	Strategic Objective
<b>WV-T1</b>	Encourage and promote greater use of more sustainable forms of transport in the AONB and for accessing the area, subject to WV-D4

<b>WV-</b>	Strategic Objective
<b>WV-T2</b>	Support appropriate traffic management and control schemes, including control or provision of parking, that help to reduce adverse impacts of motor traffic in the AONB
<b>WV-T3</b>	Encourage and promote the design of transport infrastructure that is consistent with the special qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB, and monitor their effectiveness
<b>WV-T4</b>	Encourage full consideration of the impact on the special qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB of proposals for transport management schemes, including air, road, rail and water systems in and adjacent to the AONB
<b>WV-T5</b>	Conserve the character of rural roads in the AONB by conserving existing traditional features, reducing excessive signage and sympathetically managing verges for biodiversity
<b>WV-T6</b>	Seek to reduce, and resist the further extension of, street lighting, junction lighting and traffic sign illumination in the rural areas of the AONB unless there are proven public safety grounds.

### **THEME 3**

#### **7 VITAL COMMUNITIES - living & working in the AONB**

7.1 This section outlines aims and strategic objectives for community development and the economy and rural regeneration in the Wye Valley AONB. Agriculture and forestry, while being a traditional part of the local economy have been covered under the Unique Landscape section due to the dominant influence these industries have on the landscape and land use of the AONB. Tourism also makes a significant contribution to the vitality of the local economy, but is dealt with under the next section: Enjoying the AONB.

#### **7.2 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

7.2.1 There are 33 Parish and Town Councils on the English side and 7 Town or Community Councils on the Welsh side wholly or partially in the Wye Valley AONB. There is frequently more than one village within each of the Town, Parish or Community Councils. Each village or settlement has its own identity, residents and facilities. Many also have their own traditions and celebrations. These define the local communities and reinforce local community life and unique cultural aspects. However it must be recognised that individuals usually belong to a multitude of

‘communities’, for example by being members of the local church, on the Parish Council, users of the local pub and/or shop, local business people, parents at the local school, part of a neighbourhood watch scheme, etc.

7.2.2 The statistics for the socio-economic make up of the AONB are outlined in Evidence Base (CRR 2007). The age profile of the AONB, Table 2.1.3b shows a slightly older local population than the national average. From this it can be inferred that the Wye Valley AONB is a popular place for retired people, which is likely to put pressure on local housing and the availability of affordable housing for younger people. Thus the effects of rural disadvantage, social exclusion and lack of affordable housing may affect a significant fraction of households in and around the AONB.

7.2.3 As a predominantly rural area people in the Wye Valley AONB encounter many of the problems familiar throughout rural Britain. The viability of village shops, pubs and local public transport depends on continued support from all sectors of the local community. Additionally however, local wages are lower than the national average yet the area is popular for retirement, second homes and for commuting to Birmingham, Bristol or Cardiff. Therefore the cost of housing can prevent local people from being able to continue to live in the area. This has been compounded with the scarcity of affordable housing, the increase in second homes and the use of houses as holiday lets. Meanwhile, access to jobs may also be more difficult for some people where public transport provision is not comprehensive.

7.2.4 Communities need actively to identify what they value in their locality and participate in setting priorities for its sustainable management. Commitment by local people to the protection of, and pride in, the Wye Valley is strong. Parish Plans and statutory Community Plans, as well as the AONB Management Plan, provide fresh opportunities to express these priorities and commitments. Involvement of young people and schools, and the elderly and less vociferous members of local communities needs to be included in these processes as well as the participation of the Town, Parish and Community Councils and other local representative and resident organisations. The outcomes then need to be developed into a coherent plan with close liaison with the local authorities, regional agencies and other statutory and voluntary organisations.

7.2.5 There are a range of opportunities that can be progressed for a more sustainable quality of life in the AONB. For example village halls can host post offices and local cinema clubs beyond their usual wide range of activities. Local shops and food outlets can sell more local produce which will help re-connect people in local communities with the surrounding farmland. Farmers Markets and organic vegetable box schemes have already enhanced and widened this linkage and appreciation for some. The community links with woodland produce need to be developed further. There are several renewable energy options appropriate to the Wye Valley and government grants are available for schemes in housing, shops, farms, schools and other groups within communities. The need for sustainable integrated transport is also recognised. This is dealt with in the Transportation section above.

**AONB Aim:** To engender thriving local communities which have a high quality of life with a healthy economy that supports the natural beauty of the area.

### **Community Development Strategic Objectives**

<b>WV-C1</b>	Encourage community led initiatives that maintain the diversity, sustainability and quality of rural community life
<b>WV-C2</b>	Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the special qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape
<b>WV-C3</b>	Encourage initiatives in the local community that stimulate investment, enhance local employment opportunities and retain and improve facilities and services for local people, subject to WV-D2, WV-D3 and WV-D4 above.
<b>WV-C4</b>	Support the development of affordable housing appropriate to local need in the AONB, subject to WV-D2, WV-D3 and WV-D4 above
<b>WV-C5</b>	Encourage and promote local community plans and strategies to contain coherent objectives relating to the protection, conservation and management of the AONB and monitor their effectiveness

## **7.3 ECONOMY AND RURAL REGENERATION**

7.3.1 The economy plays an important role in the maintenance of an attractive countryside. The vitality of the AONB is dependant on the contribution of a vast range of businesses. Beyond the obvious land uses of agriculture, horticulture, forestry and mineral extraction there is also tourism development, retail, leisure, light industrial, office and storage uses. Economic development in the rural areas also comprises other uses that are employment generators such as nursing homes, schools and art galleries. There are locations within the AONB, particularly in Ross-on-Wye where manufacturing development, particularly of clean, high technology industry, can be accommodated. The strength of the rural economy is also a critical factor in combating rural disadvantage and social exclusion, as well as making a major contribution to the national economies of England and Wales. For example the role of the horse in the local economy covers the full spectrum from local grazing, vets, saddlers and livery through village gymkhanas to the activities of Chepstow racecourse.

7.3.2 Given the proximity of towns and cities to the AONB the economy cannot be expected to be at all self-contained. This also applies to people within the AONB spending their money outside it. The city of Hereford and market towns of Chepstow,

Coleford and Monmouth surrounding the AONB, and Ross-on-Wye largely in the AONB are the focus for much of the area's economic and social life. These towns still provide significant local services, although there are considerable competitive pressures from the facilities of Bristol, Birmingham, Cardiff, Cheltenham and Gloucester.

7.3.3 Farming, forestry and quarrying have already been covered in earlier sections and tourism is covered in the next section. However all the businesses and enterprises operating in or relying on the resources of the AONB are important for the environmental, social and economic well-being of the area. Similarly people need to recognise that a high quality environment is a key factor in both attracting new rural entrepreneurs and relocating businesses and retaining and attracting inward investment and skilled personnel.

**AONB Aim:** To foster viable rural enterprises that derive benefit from and enhance the natural resources and local distinctiveness of the AONB

### **Economy and Rural Regeneration Strategic Objectives**

<b>WV-E1</b>	Support initiatives that improve the market for products which conserve or enhance the AONB's distinctive landscape, special qualities and strengthens the sense of place of the AONB
<b>WV-E2</b>	Raise awareness of good practice and encourage local businesses in the AONB to take opportunities to become more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, particularly in ways that sustain the natural beauty of the area
<b>WV-E3</b>	Support the delivery of local co-operative schemes, advice and training programmes that support the development and expansion of rural micro-businesses, subject to WV-D2, WV-D3 and WV-D4 above
<b>WV-E4</b>	Raise awareness of the importance of retaining a high quality environment in attracting and retaining entrepreneurs, relocating businesses, inward investment and skilled personnel

## **THEME 4**

### **8 ENJOYING THE AONB - sustainable tourism, recreation and appreciation**

8.1 This section outlines strategic objectives for sustainable tourism; recreation and access; and understanding and appreciation in the Wye Valley AONB.

## **8.2 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

8.2.1 The Wye Valley is one of the few inland rural areas with its own tourism heritage, dating back over 250 years. People went on the Wye Tour in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to experience and appreciate the sublime and picturesque qualities of the Wye Valley. To a large extent the desires are the same today for visitors to the AONB. The Wye Valley continues to offer a great range of opportunities for enjoyment and appreciation of the tranquil and spectacular scenery and the features of the historic environment. These include activities as diverse as day-tripper sight seeing, canoeing, climbing, fishing, walking and hiking. Thus it remains nationally renowned as a destination for tourism and recreation.

8.2.2 Visitor numbers in the lower Wye Valley, estimated in the early 1990s at 2.5 million visitor days per annum, were higher than several National Parks, such as Exmoor (1.4m) or the Northumberland Coast (1.5m). However, estimations of visitor numbers using a different methodology and based on figures from the early 2000s (just after the foot & mouth disease outbreak) arrived at a figure of 750,000 visitors per annum. The value of tourism to the local economy is significant; both in terms of local employment and visitor spend into the local economy. Feedback from the Wye Valley Walk and other surveys suggests that visitor spend is between £20 and £40 per day. The importance and vulnerability of tourism were highlighted during the foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001 when a wide range of businesses were seriously affected, and to a lesser extent during the wet summers of 2007 & 2008. It also has to be recognised that the majority of tourism businesses are very small scale. Therefore the 'industry' is composed of a multitude of potentially competing small enterprises.

8.2.3 Many of the tourism businesses in the Wye Valley work together through local associations such as Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association. The Wye Valley AONB spans three regional tourist board areas; Visit Heart of England, covering Herefordshire and the West Midlands, Capital Region Tourism, in Monmouthshire and south Wales, and South West Tourism, in Gloucestershire. The three main local authority tourism brochures all use the Wye Valley brand name, namely; Wye Valley and Golden Valley, in Herefordshire, Wye Valley and Vale of Usk, in Monmouthshire, and Wye Valley and Forest of Dean in the Forest of Dean. Much of Gloucestershire County Council's tourism promotion focuses on the Cotswolds, one of our neighbouring AONBs. There is sufficient cross border co-ordination and promotion driven largely by the tourism providers and the reality of the Wye Valley as a destination in its own right. However, where co-ordination breaks down is over the gathering of statistics and data, which is usually collected on district, county or regional administrative areas.

8.2.4 The AONB Unit commissioned a Wye Valley visitor survey in 2004 using Heritage Lottery Funding. This identified that 80% of visits to the AONB were day visits and 20% staying visits (10% being by overseas visitors). However, 53% of visits were repeat visits with 67% of day visitors visiting up to 7 times a year. Average visitor spend was £30 per person per trip.

8.2.5 Therefore the complexities and variables of local tourism are considerable. But there are ample opportunities to progress more co-ordinated and more sustainable

tourism initiatives, including low-carbon, green and eco-tourism ventures, undertaking environmental audits such as Green Audits and Integrated Quality Management, the provision of sustainable transport facilities and services for tourists, and further enhancing the local economy through supporting local farmers and producers. The protection and enhancement of the historic built environment can also play an important role, promoting tourism directly and indirectly and potentially helping to divert concentrations of visitors away from more vulnerable and pressurised sites and historic environments.

**AONB Aim:** Sustainable tourism based upon the natural beauty and local distinctiveness of the AONB continues to enrich the lives of visitors, operators and employees while contributing positively to the conservation and enhancement of the area

### **Sustainable Tourism Strategic Objectives**

<b>WV-S1</b>	Encourage and promote those forms of tourism activity and development that are based on the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the special qualities and features of the AONB
<b>WV-S2</b>	Promote the improvement of the visitor experience, particularly at the most heavily visited sites, and facilitate the opportunity for visitors to explore and discover other appropriate but less used locations throughout the AONB, thus spreading demand and balancing pressures across sites where this does not conflict with the special qualities of the AONB and the SACs
<b>WV-S3</b>	Ensure adequate provision of co-ordinated tourism data and visitor engagement to inform strategic and practical decision making on conserving or enhancing the special qualities of the AONB
<b>WV-S4</b>	Encourage the mitigation and/or reduction of the adverse impacts of existing tourism activity and attractions, particularly where they are concentrated around certain locations or sites, and/or those that fall outside the aim of conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the special qualities and features of the AONB. Highest priority will be given to addressing the issues in the Symonds Yat and Tintern areas

## **8.3 RECREATION & ACCESS**

8.3.1 Recreation is a major activity in the AONB, both socially and economically. Most fly-fishermen in the country will have fished on the Wye, most canoeists learned to run rapids at Symonds Yat. Many rock climbers will have climbed in the Wye Gorge. Many coach tours have visited Tintern Abbey. Many walkers will have trodden on the Wye Valley Walk and the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. All these people will have enjoyed the fresh air, the picturesque and sublime natural beauty and

the historic features of the AONB, either consciously or subconsciously. Significant health benefits and social opportunities are also gained through these recreational activities. There is a need to ensure that all people in society have access to the benefits offered by the area. Thus the Wye Valley AONB should continue to be a place where residents and visitors alike enjoy activities that result in the enjoyment of the countryside and the special qualities of the AONB.

8.3.2 There are conflicts, real and perceived, between some types of activities, for example between canoeists and fishermen on the river, and variously between walkers, horse riders, various types of cyclists and trail bike and 4x4 drivers on Public Rights of Way. Specific issues emerge such as the popularity of sections of the Offa's Dyke Path where severe erosion is occurring by walkers to the Offa's Dyke Scheduled Monument. Conflict sometimes emerges when there is confusion over signage and rights of access. Where public access is provided private landowners often incur costs in maintaining the public service of that provision. When dialogue can be entered into between the various interests and users, invariably a consensus can be reached and positive solutions progressed. It is often the case that recreational users have a high appreciation of the Wye Valley (although not necessarily that it is an AONB) but not such a high appreciation of the needs of landowners and other users, nor of the impacts of their activity on other users and the area. In cases of severe conflict an appropriate authority may consider regulation of an activity through the use of banning, licensing or zoning. However, lawful users should not be penalised because of clearly illegal activities by others. The provision of facilities for minority groups needs careful consideration by appropriate authorities. But this should be on a wider basis than just within the AONB.

8.3.3 There are a range of statutory and voluntary organisations and private individuals with interests in the recreational activities occurring in the AONB. Various bodies and strategies bring these organisations and interests together. On the river the navigation authority for the tidal stretch, demarcated as downstream of Bigsweir Bridge, is the Gloucester Harbour Trustees. Upstream of Bigsweir Bridge the navigation authority is the Environment Agency and the Wye Navigation Advisory Committee which, through the Wye Waterways Plan and along with the Wye Management Advisory Group, takes a leading role in resolving conflicts and defining what activities are acceptable on the river. On land each county, under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, has a Local Access Forum, and a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. However these are based on administrative boundaries and do not cover the AONB as a whole.

8.3.4 The purposes of AONB designation emphasise that the conservation of natural beauty takes primacy over the needs of and demand for recreation, which itself should be consistent with the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses of the area. However, there is potential to integrate recreational access and public educational facilities funded through agri-environmental schemes and ROWIP delivery. There are also opportunities to make links to Health, Social Care & Wellbeing Strategies, to deliver the Outdoors for All Diversity Action Plan and to influence forward plans for recreation provision, for example in growth areas. These can all help to both enhance opportunities and deflect unsustainable visitor pressures away from the AONB honeypots.

**AONB Aim:** People continue to enjoy active recreation in the Wye Valley that does not detract from the natural beauty of the area

### **Recreation & Access Strategic Objectives & Targets**

<b>WV-R1</b>	Encourage and promote outdoor recreational pursuits and responsible access compatible with the AONB purposes - particularly promoting sustainable transport and town and village facilities. Associated development and new access to land should be subject to WV-D2, WV-D3 and WV-D4 above.
<b>WV-R2</b>	Assist the resolving of conflicts, real and perceived, between recreation, conservation and local interests, including other economic activities, and between different recreation interest groups in relation to the purposes of the AONB designation.
<b>WV-R3</b>	Support appropriate levels of sustainable design, repair, signage and maintenance on public rights of way, recreational trails and sites, using materials in keeping, in order to conserve or enhance the character and natural beauty of the AONB.
<b>WV-R4</b>	Assist in identifying gaps in access and recreational provision, including for under-represented and minority groups, and work with appropriate bodies and stakeholders to support and promote least restrictive access, where this does not conflict with the special qualities of the AONB and the SACs

## **8.4 UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION**

8.4.1 Both residents and visitors in the Wye Valley AONB value the scenic beauty. Most of the historic environment and the strong cultural and artistic heritage is founded on the outstanding geology and topography that contributes so significantly to the natural beauty of the area. Many of the local business are either directly or indirectly dependent on the landscape. But some people have little idea what or where the AONB is. Amongst those that do know what or where the AONB is there is still considerable misunderstanding as to the roles and responsibilities in the AONB. This applies to some organisations as well as to individuals. Moreover many people are uncertain about how they could positively contribute to the conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty of the area. Likewise it is unclear to some how the AONB positively contributes to people's lives or businesses. More effective information is required to increase the overall appreciation of the designation, and to engage people more in understanding, contributing to and benefiting from the AONB.

**AONB Aim:** Increase people's appreciation and understanding of why the area is designated

### **Appreciation and Understanding Strategic Objectives**

<b>WV-A1</b>	Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the special qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses and measure effectiveness
	See also WV-L5, WV-B6, WV-G3, WV-H5, WV-F5, WV-W8, WV-D6, WV-C2, WV-E4 and WV-P6 for policies on raising awareness, appreciation and understanding about elements of the Wye Valley AONB.

## **THEME 5**

### **9 ACHIEVING TOGETHER – effective management of the AONB**

#### **PARTNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

9.1 The current AONB structures of the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and the AONB Unit, supported by the Technical Officers Working Party (TOWP) and various Topic Groups have proved remarkably effective and resilient. Over the years these structures have seen significant alterations in AONB status nationally and locally, with Local Government Re-organisation; the development of the National Association for AONBs; regionalisation and legislation. Indeed the Wye Valley AONB Unit and JAC have been lead agents in some of these changes. Meanwhile the AONB Unit and partners of the JAC have consistently co-ordinated a broad range of practical and strategic achievements in the Wye Valley AONB, variously involving the public, private and voluntary sectors. Indeed, with the administrative complexity of the AONB, a considerable amount of experience of cross-border working has been developed within the AONB Unit and its partnerships.

9.2 The AONB Unit is an established team, currently with five full time members of staff. This allows the AONB unit to operate effectively as a cross-border co-ordinating body, engaging with local communities and other partners to develop and deliver both localised projects and AONB wide initiatives. This has complemented economic regeneration initiatives in the area such as LEADER programmes.

9.3 In 2008 the JAC modified its membership to include Parish, Town and Community Council representatives, and refined the voluntary sector nominees. Further significant alterations to the constitution of the AONB are not considered appropriate at this stage.

**AONB Aim:** Continue proactive and imaginative achievements in the Wye Valley AONB through successful and productive partnerships

#### **Partnership, Management and Governance Strategic Objectives & Targets**

<b>WV-P1</b>	Maintain and develop effective partnerships and administrative arrangements to lead and co-ordinate the management of the AONB and develop the JAC as an effective forum for initiating and promoting discussion on important issues affecting the AONB
<b>WV-P2</b>	Sustain and enhance local and national government funding and support for the AONB Unit
<b>WV-P3</b>	Utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan through an agreed annual and rolling 3 year work programme
<b>WV-P4</b>	Encourage Section 85 organisations, under the CRoW Act, to have co-ordinated policies to progress the purposes of the AONB designation and to make commitments in their annual business plans to specific delivery contributions that enable the AONB 3-year work programme
<b>WV-P5</b>	Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas
<b>WV-P6</b>	Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB
<b>WV-P7</b>	Encourage partners to be champions and ambassadors for the AONB in their contact with other interests, and ensure those interests recognise and consider the Management Plan and AONB work programme when relating to the area
<b>WV-P8</b>	Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation
<b>WV-P9</b>	Develop and co-ordinate the acquisition and analysis of data across the AONB, to inform priority setting, planning, implementation and monitoring of change affecting the natural beauty
<b>WV-P10</b>	Share knowledge and skills in protected area management locally, regionally, nationally and globally as appropriate

# **APPENDIX I**

## **JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) comprises of representatives from the following organisations:

### Local Authorities:

- Forest of Dean District Council (2 councillors)
- Gloucestershire County Council (2 councillors)
- Herefordshire Council (4 councillors)
- Monmouthshire County Council (4 councillors)

### Co-opted members - umbrella organisations:

- Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC)
- Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC)
- One Voice Wales
- Country Land & Business Association
- National Farmers Union
- A voluntary conservation sector representative for Gloucestershire
- A voluntary conservation sector representative for Herefordshire
- A voluntary conservation sector representative for Monmouthshire

### Non-voting co-opted members:

- Gwent Wildlife Trust representing the local Wildlife Trusts,
- Wye Valley Society,
- River Wye Preservation Trust,
- A Recreation interests representative
- A Tourism interests representative

The JAC is supported by a Technical Officers Working Party, which comprises representatives of the four local authorities and a range of Government agencies (see Appendix II).

## **APPENDIX II**

### **TECHNICAL OFFICERS' WORKING PARTY**

The Technical Officers Working Party, which supports the Joint Advisory Committee of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) comprises representatives of:-

the four local authorities:

- Forest of Dean District Council
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Herefordshire Council
- Monmouthshire County Council

and the following Government agencies:

- Cadw
- Capital Region Tourism (Cardiff & South East Wales)
- Countryside Council for Wales
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission England  
(South West and West Midlands Regions  
and Forest of Dean Forest District)

- Forestry Commission Wales (Llanymddyfri Forest District)
- Government Office for West Midlands
- Natural England
- Sports Council for Wales
- Sport England

## APPENDIX III

### Glossary & References

Term used	Definition / Explanation
Affordable Housing	Low cost housing for sale or rent, often from a housing association, provided to meet the needs of local people who cannot afford accommodation through the open market.
Aggregates	Sand and gravel, crushed rock and other bulk materials used in the construction industry for purposes such as making concrete, mortar, asphalt or roadstone, drainage or bulk filling.
Agri-environment Schemes	A range of schemes operated by DEFRA designed to encourage environmentally friendly farming and public enjoyment of the countryside, includes Countryside Stewardship in England and Tir Gofal in Wales.
Alder Phytophthora	A fatal fungal infection of trees believed to be a relatively recent hybrid of fungi <i>Phytophthora cambivora</i> and <i>Phytophthora fragariae</i> , the plant pathogen is capable of inflicting widespread damage to trees in the Alder family.
Alien species.	Plant or animal species that has either been transported accidentally through human activity, or purposefully introduced, from their historically known native ranges into new ecosystems where they did not evolve. Also known as non-indigenous, exotic, invasive or introduced species.
Amenity	The pleasant or normally satisfactory aspects of a location, which contribute to its overall character and the enjoyment of residents or visitors.
Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland	An ancient woodland site, believed to have had continuous woodland cover since 1600 AD, composed principally of native tree species that have not obviously been planted.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	Area designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, with the primary purpose of designation being to conserve natural beauty.
Biodiversity	The common term for "biological diversity", the variety of life and the natural processes of which living things are a part. The term includes living organisms, the genetic differences between them and the communities in which they occur.
Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs)	A plan, programme or strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Biodiversity Action Plans are a key means by which the UK Government commitment to the Convention on Biological Diversity at Rio de Janeiro (1992) is to be met.
bio-fuels	currently methane, alcohols and biodiesel, all of which may be made from sustainable agricultural crops, producing valuable by-products
Bridleway	A public right of way for walkers and those on horseback, or leading a horse, together with permission by parliament for use by pedal bicyclists, provided they give way to walkers and horse riders. A bridleway may also have higher rights (see Public Rights of Way)
Broadleaved Trees	Trees belonging to the botanical group Angiospermae, carrying broad leaves, which usually shed all their foliage at the end of the growing season. Also known as deciduous or hardwood trees.
Browsing	A method of feeding by herbivores in which the leaves and peripheral shots are removed from trees and shrubs.
Buffer Zone	The region near the border of a protected area providing a zone of transition between areas managed for different objectives.
Byway	A Byway open to all traffic (BOAT) is a Public Right of Way open to all users.
Carrying Capacity	Attempts made to measure the maximum amount of use that a resource can accommodate. Ecological capacity is the maximum level of use consistent with no reduction in the valued ecological attributes of an area; Physical capacity is the maximum level of use that can be accommodated in space or time;

<b>Term used</b>	<b>Definition / Explanation</b>
	Perceptual capacity refers to the point at which enjoyment falls due to feelings of overcrowding. Burton (1974).
Catchment Abstraction Management Plans (CAMs)	Implemented by Environment Agency since 2001 for every catchment in England and Wales to provide both a consistent approach to local water resource management and greater public involvement in water management.
Climate change	The anticipated impact of modern human activity on the global environment leading to an estimated 3 –8 degree centigrade rise in temperatures in the UK over the next 100 years, with additional environmental consequences.
Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)	European Union wide policy that supports agriculture through price support, market management and measures to improve the agriculture industry. Undergoing a Mid term review, introducing decoupling and more modulation and cross compliance.
Common Land	Defined in section 22 of the Commons Registration Act 1965 as land subject to rights of common (as defined in this Act) whether those rights are exercisable at all times or only during limited periods
Community Strategy	Defined in the Local Government Act 2000 as provision of a new duty and responsibility for Local Authorities to work closely with others to improve the local quality of life and promote well being. A Community Strategy links the work of key stakeholders in a Local Authority area across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.
condition monitoring	Monitoring condition of the AONB to assess changes over time. Differs from performance monitoring that monitors completion of actions etc within the plan
Coniferous Woodland	Wooded land on which more than 75% of the tree crown cover consists of coniferous species.
Conservation	The management of the human use of the biosphere so that it may yield the greatest sustainable benefit to current generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations: Thus conservation is positive; embracing preservation, maintenance, sustainable utilisation, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment.
Conservation Area	Defined by section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance.
Coppice	Woodland which has normally been regenerated from shoots formed at the cut stumps of the previous crop trees, root suckers, or both i.e. by vegetative means. Coppice is normally grown on a short rotation i.e. 5 – 25 years to yield small diameter material.
County Road	General purpose highways on ‘List of Streets’ maintained by local highways authority, includes minor roads and some not sealed or actively maintained.
Countryside	The term used for all land outside the built-up area boundaries defined in local plans. The rural environment and its associated communities.
Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (2000)	Contains measures to improve public access to the open countryside and registered common land while recognising the legitimate interests of those who own and manage the land concerned; it amends the law relating to rights of way; it amends the law relating to nature conservation by strengthening protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest including tougher penalties and by providing extra powers for the prosecution of wildlife crime; it provides a basis for the conservation of biological diversity; and it provides for better management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including the requirement for local authorities to produce AONB management plans every five years and places a duty on public bodies to have regard to the purposes of AONB designation.
Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS)	An agri-environment scheme administered by DEFRA, which enabled farmers and land managers to enter ten year management agreements to maintain or enhance certain landscapes and features. Replaced by Environmental Stewardship in 2005
Cross Compliance	The linking of a farmer's eligibility for agricultural subsidies to environmental conditions and good farming practice.
Decoupling	Breaking the link between farm subsidies and production to reconnect farmers to their markets, reduce damaging environmental impacts and cut red tape.

<b>Term used</b>	<b>Definition / Explanation</b>
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)	Central government body with the aim of sustainable development, which means a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come, including: a better environment at home and internationally, and sustainable use of natural resources; economic prosperity through sustainable farming, fishing, food, water and other industries that meet consumers' requirements; thriving economies and communities in rural areas and a countryside for all to enjoy.
Entry Level Scheme (ELS),	Agri-environment scheme introduced in 2005 with the aim to encourage a large number of farmers across a wide area of farmland to deliver simple yet effective environmental management.
Environmental Impact Assessment	Defined under the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988, where developers are required to provide in addition to a planning application, an environmental statement, evaluating the likely environmental impact of the development, together with an assessment on how impacts may be mitigated.
Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)	Operated from 1987 to 2005 offering incentives to encourage farmers to adopt agricultural practices, which would safeguard and enhance parts of the country of particularly high landscape, wildlife or historic value. There were 22 ESAs in England, covering some 10% of agricultural land. The Wye Valley was not an ESA. Replaced by Environmental Stewardship.
Erosion	It is the act or operation in which soil or rock at the earth's surface is worn away (weathered) by the chemical or mechanical action of water, wind or man. It can also refer to a gradual process of removing something which can be accelerated by human activity.
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG).	Charity that exists to provide farmers, landowners and other clients with the opportunity for environmental gain through cost effective, quality solutions. FWAG has local groups throughout England, Scotland and Wales, with over 90 Farm Conservation Advisers. FWAG provides farmers and landowners with practical advice on making adjustments to farm operations and enhancing farm features in order to support wildlife, landscape, archaeology, access and other conservation issues.
Food Miles	The distance food travels from farm to plate.
Footpath	A public right of way for walkers, which may also have higher rights (see Public Rights of Way)
Forest	An extensive track of land covered mainly with trees and undergrowth, sometimes intermingled with pasture.
Fragmentation	The breaking-up of continuous tracts of ecosystems, reducing the size of homogenous areas and creating barriers to the migration or dispersal of organisms.
General Permitted Development Order	The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 grants rights to carry out certain limited forms of development without the need to make an application for planning permission (the thresholds for GDP are generally smaller in AONBs).
Genetically Modified Organism (GMOs)	The modification of the genetic characteristics of a plant or animal by the insertion of a gene or modified gene from another variety or species.
Geographical Information System. (GIS)	Computer based systems for managing, analysis and presenting geographically referenced data.
Geomorphology	The branch of physical geography which deals with the form of the earth, the general configuration of its surface and the distribution of land and water etc. together with the natural processes that contribute to the evolution of landscapes.
Grassland	Any plant community in which grasses and/or legumes comprise the dominant vegetation.
Grazier	Commoners who exercise their right to 'common of pasture' turning their stock onto a common to graze, and/or grazing undertaken by the landowners own or landowners' nominee stock.
Grazing	A method of feeding by herbivores characterised by the repeated removal of only a part (usually the leaf) of the plant (most commonly herbage such as grass and

<b>Term used</b>	<b>Definition / Explanation</b>
	clovers).
green	Often used instead of ‘sustainable’ but implies something different in terms of ‘green’ tourism, which is concerned with the environment as an attraction rather than ‘sustainable’ tourism that considers the environment, economy and social impact of tourism on an area.
Green Lane	A term with no legal definition which is often used to describe routes, normally bounded by walls or hedges, which appear to have no ‘sealed’ surface i.e. macadam or concrete, irrespective of whether they are rights of way or entirely private.
Habitat	A place in which a particular plant or animal lives, or the wider interaction of plants and animals that are found together.
Heath	A tract of uncultivated, generally nutrient poor land, with an open character, whose vegetation is dominated by dwarf shrubs, most typically belonging to the family Ericaceae – Heathers. Depending on levels of moisture heaths are further subdivided as dry heath, heather moor and moss-moor. Heath under 300 metres above sea level is referred to as Lowland Heath.
Hedgerow	Lines of trees and/or shrubs which delineate the boundaries of fields.
Heritage	Historic or cultural associations.
Higher Level Scheme (HLS)	Agri-environment scheme introduced in 2005 to concentrate on the more complex types of management needed to achieve the objectives of the ELS where land managers need advice and support, where agreements need to be tailored to local circumstances and where management needs to be carefully targeted.
Highway	Any way over which the public have a right to pass and repass, including footpath, bridleway, restricted byway and carriageway.
Highway Authority	The Highways Act 1980 defines a Highway Authority as the body responsible for maintaining all highways maintainable at public expense and keeping them free of obstruction, including responsibility for public rights of way. The Highway Authorities in the Wye Valley are Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire County Councils.
Hilary Benn MP (2009)	“I want British agriculture to produce as much food as possible. No ifs. No buts. The only requirements are that consumers want what’s produced and that the way it’s produced sustains our environment and safeguards our landscape.” The Right Hon Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for the Environment at NFU Conference 16 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2009
Historic Parks and Gardens	Parks and Gardens containing historic features dating from 1939 or earlier and registered by Cadw or English Heritage in three grades as with historic buildings.
Honeypot Site	Features or facilities which attract significant numbers of visitors through their reputation or position.
Infrastructure	Anything, whether buildings, apparatus or services, essential to the development and use of land. Planning permission can be withheld if infrastructure required by a development is not provided, including infrastructure needs arising outside the proposed site.
Interpretation	Interpretation is an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first hand experience and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information. It is the art of explaining the place of man in his environment, to increase visitor or public awareness of this relationship and to awaken a desire to contribute to environmental conservation.
LandMap	The Welsh GIS based approach to landscape character assessment; where qualities and influences on the landscape are recorded and evaluated into a nationally consistent data set. Information is collected in a structured way defined by five methodological chapters; the Geological Landscape, Landscape Habitats, Visual & Sensory, Historic Landscape and Cultural Landscape. Giving all five layers equal consideration ensures no aspect of the landscape is overlooked and promotes sustainable landscape decision-making.
Landscape	An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.

<b>Term used</b>	<b>Definition / Explanation</b>
Landscape Assessment	Non statutory document setting out the special qualities of the landscape, tracing its evolution and forces for change
Landscape Character	A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from one another, rather than better or worse.
Landscape Character Area	Are unique individual geographical areas in which landscape types occur, which share generic characteristics with other areas of the same type but have their own particular identity.
Landscape Character Assessment	Is a method for identifying, understanding and expressing the different patterns and features i.e. woodlands, hedgerows, building styles and historic artefacts which give a place a distinctive character.
Landscape Feature	A prominent eye-catching element, e.g. wooded hill top or church spire.
LEADER +	European Community initiative for assisting rural communities in improving the quality of life and economic prosperity of their area. Local initiatives have been 'Herefordshire Rivers' and Adventa in Monmouthshire.
Listed Building	A building of architectural or historical importance, graded according to its merit (I, II*, II) and subject to special controls.
Local Access Forum	Set up under CRoW Act to represent a balance of local interests and views, providing independent guidance to the relevant local authorities and the Countryside Agency on how to make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable for open air recreation in ways that address social, economic and environmental interests. Each county has one covering their respective areas of the Wye Valley.
Local Authority	An administrative unit of local government, specifically any body listed in section 270 of the Local Government Act 1972 or section 21(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
Local Distinctiveness	Essentially the sum of points of connection between the place and the person. Local distinctiveness is fundamentally about giving professionals a mandate to care for landscape detail, by linking meaning and identity. It is an expression of how landscapes are valued as places which have a distinctiveness and significance that communities cherish as their own and seek to find alternatives to the spread of uniformity in the countryside.
Local Nature Reserve	Site acquired, declared and managed by local authorities in co-operation with EN in order to protect its wildlife value for the benefit of the local community.
Local Planning Authority	The Local Authority, normally the local borough or district council, which is empowered by law to exercise planning functions.
Local Produce	Local production and local producers from within a radius up to 30 miles of a market, or 50 miles in the case of large cities or remote areas, but never more than 100 miles.
Local Transport Plan	A plan produced by the Highway Authority setting out future proposals for transport infrastructure over the following 5 years and attracting possible Government funding.
Meadow	Land, usually level and low lying, devoted to grasses and short herbs, which is mown annually for hay.
Methodology	The specific approach and techniques used for a given study or project.
Modulation	Modulation involves the transfer of money paid to farmers from direct CAP agricultural support payments to a wider range of rural development measures.
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	Designated by English Nature or Countryside Council for Wales under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to protect and conserve nationally important areas of wildlife habitat and geological formations and to promote scientific research.
National Parks	National Parks are extensive areas each with their own managing authority to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities. There are currently ten National Parks in England and Wales plus the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads that has equivalent status. In October 1999, the Countryside Agency began the process of designating the New Forest and South Downs as National Parks. Sister designation to AONBs, National Parks are living and working landscapes with an increasing focus on supporting the communities and economic activity that underpin their natural beauty.

<b>Term used</b>	<b>Definition / Explanation</b>
National Trail	Routes based on Public Rights of Way through the nation's finest and most characteristic countryside, allowing an extensive journey on foot, horseback or by bicycle and capable of attracting tourist use from home and abroad.
Natural Beauty	Legislation and associated guidance defines natural beauty as including the physical elements of flora, fauna, geology and physiographic or geomorphological, the cultural and heritage elements, together with less tangible values such as intactness, rarity, wildness, remoteness, tranquillity and the appeal to the physical senses.
Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)	Legislation that extends the CROW biodiversity duty to public bodies and statutory undertakers to ensure due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. It contains provisions to clarify the use of mechanically propelled vehicles on public rights of way. It made small change to the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 to define the meaning of "statutory undertaker", currently undefined in this Act and refined the definition of "natural beauty".
Nature Conservation Strategy for the Wye Valley AONB	A non-statutory document published in 1999 by the AONB unit with Countryside Council for Wales and English Nature outlining the priorities and actions needed to ensure the wildlife of the AONB is conserved and enhanced.
Organic Agriculture	A method of production, which puts the highest emphasis on environmental protection and, with regard to livestock production, animal welfare considerations. It avoids or largely reduces the use of synthetic chemical inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, additives and medical products. The word 'organic' may only be applied to products that have been obtained in accordance with EC Regulation 2092/01
Parkland	A large piece of ground usually comprising woodland, pasture and formal gardens, currently or once attached to a country house or mansion.
Pasture	An area of land dominated by grass, which is used only for grazing, as distinct from a meadow that is mown. Pasture may be enclosed fields or unenclosed common land.
Permanent Pasture	Any pasture composed of perennial or self-seeding annual plants kept indefinitely for grazing.
Permissive Path	A route where the landowner has granted permission for public use, usually for foot access but occasionally for horse riders, but which is not dedicated as a public right of way.
Peterken 2008	The Wye Valley, by Dr. George Peterken. Collins New Naturalist Library 2008
Planning Policy Statements (PPS)	A series of numbered documents issued by the Departments for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) setting out government policy and advice on planning issues.
Planted Ancient Woodland Sites	Ancient Woodland Sites in which the former tree cover has been replaced, often with non-native trees. PAWS often retain important ancient woodland features including characteristic flora, fauna and archaeology.
Pollard	A tree having its top cut off at some height above the ground to promote new and multiple growth, either to avoid the reach of browsing animals or to create aesthetically pleasing forms.
Precautionary Principle	Principle applied, to err on the side of caution where significant environmental damage may occur, but where knowledge on the matter is incomplete, or when the prediction of environmental effects is uncertain.
Protected Area	A geographically defined area which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives.
Public Right of Way	A route where the public has a right to walk, and in some cases ride horses, bicycles, motorcycles, wheeled carriages or drive motor vehicles which is designated either a footpath, a bridleway, Restricted Byway, Carriage or Cart Road used mainly as a Footpath (CR/F) or Bridleway (CR/B) or a byway open to all traffic (BOAT). These are shown on the 'Definitive Map' held by the county Highway Authority. A route may also have higher rights eg. be a County Road or other Highway; or simply be incorrectly signed or waymarked and/or have private rights of access.
Public Forest Estate	Woodland owned or leased by the government and primarily managed by the Forestry Commission.
Public Transport	Methods of transporting passengers including buses, trains and taxis but not car passengers.

<b>Term used</b>	<b>Definition / Explanation</b>
Quiet Lane	Section 208 of the Transport Act 2000 makes provision for local traffic authorities to designate roads for which they are responsible as Quiet Lanes, enjoying voluntary speed restrictions and promotion for non-motorised traffic.
Recreation	Any pursuit engaged upon during leisure time, other than pursuits to which people are normally highly committed i.e. shopping, housework, child care etc.
Regional Planning Guidance	Policy guidance and advice issued for each region in England by the Secretary of State on the basis of advice provided by Regional Planning Bodies.
Regional Route	Longer named paths, promoted on the initiative of Local Authorities, signed and fully waymarked, and based on public rights of way, offering more than a days travelling, perhaps following a theme or feature that offer tourism potential, such as the Wye Valley Walk
Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS)	Non-statutory sites of regional geological or geomorphological importance recognised by English Nature, Countryside Council for Wales and local authorities.
Renewable energy	Energy generated from resources that are non-fossil fuels, and are unlimited, rapidly replenished or naturally renewable such as wind, water, sun, wave and refuse. Thus the technology includes wind turbines, wave generators, biofuels, solar power, wood fuel burners and boilers etc.
Rights of Way Improvement Plans	Sections 60 to 62 of the CROW Act require local highway authorities to prepare and publish Rights of Way Improvement Plans for improving rights of way in their areas, taking into account the needs of the public including people with disabilities.
Riparian	Of or relating to, or located on, the banks of a stream or river.
Run-off	Portion of rainfall, melted snow or irrigation water that flows across the ground's surface and is eventually returned to streams.
Rural Development Regulation	Known as the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy and is concerned with: Modernisation of farms Safety and quality of food products Fair and stable incomes for farmers Environmental challenges Supplementary or alternative job-creating activities to arrest rural depopulation Improvement of living and working conditions and the promotion of equal opportunity. EEA The programme for England under European Regulation EC 1257/1999 is aimed at diversifying farming and forestry businesses and increasing competitiveness, developing new food and non-food products, ensuring the sustainable management of Less Favoured Areas and significantly increasing the areas covered by environmental schemes.
Rural Regeneration	The process of undertaking initiatives for public benefit in areas of social and economic deprivation, through the maintenance or improvement of the physical, social and economic infrastructure and by assisting people who are at a disadvantage because of their social and economic circumstances.
Scheduled Monument (SAM)	A structure identified by Cadw and English Heritage for protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
Second Home	A fixed property which is the occasional residence of a household that usually lives elsewhere.
Section 106 agreement	A binding agreement between a local planning authority and a developer associated with a grant of planning permission and regarding matters linked to the proposed development.
Sense of Place (Genius Loci)	Concept used to describe the memories and feelings of connectedness evoked by places where people live and work. The essential character of an area: 'Genius Loci' literally means 'spirit of the place'.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Area identified by Countryside Council for Wales and English Nature under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 for protection by reason of the rarity of its nature conservation, wildlife features or geological interest.
Sites and Monument	A database of sites of archaeological interest and potential within a particular area,

<b>Term used</b>	<b>Definition / Explanation</b>
Record (SMR)	usually a county.
Social Exclusion	A summary term describing the collective difficulties experienced by people and/or areas which suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, inadequate housing, poor skills, low income etc.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	Site designated according to the Habitats Directive 93/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora. SAC defines a site of Community Importance designated by member states through a statutory, administrative and/or contractual act, where the necessary conservation measures are applied for the maintenance or restoration, at a favourable conservation status, of the natural habitats and/or the populations of the species for which the site is designated. All candidate SACs in UK are SSSIs.
Special Wildlife Sites	Categorisation developed by County Wildlife Trusts to identify the best places for wildlife outside legally protected areas.
Species	Organisms are named and classified by a system of taxonomy according to similarities in structure and origin. Species are the taxonomic group whose members can interbreed.
Statutory	Denotes something that is defined in legislation.
Statutory Undertaker	Statutory undertakers are organisations authorised by statute or licensed by central government to perform various public undertakings. Section 98 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 defines a statutory undertaker as any person authorised by any enactment to carry out any railway, light railway, tramway, road transport, canal, inland navigation, dock, harbour or pier undertaking or any relevant airport operator. The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 defines as Statutory Undertakes all utilities namely electricity, gas, water, telephone, cable telephone, television and other telecommunications companies.
Sudden Oak Death	Popular name given to the fungus <i>Phytophthora ramorum</i> , which infects foliar (leaf) hosts such as <i>Rhododendron</i> and <i>Viburnum</i> and fatally infects bark canker hosts, principally oaks. First identified in Germany in 1993, and then US in 2001, SOD possibly threatens a number of British Deciduous varieties.
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	Documents prepared to support and amplify policies in the Local Development Plan or Framework. Such guidance must be consistent with national and local planning policy
Sustainable	When equal consideration is made of the environmental, social and economic impacts of a development or project.
Sustainable Development	The widely used definition is "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".
Sustainable Drainage Plans (SUDS)	Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) note 25 - Development and flood risk seeks to ensure that flood risk is considered on a catchment scale. It directly identifies the potential for SUDS to reduce flooding downstream of developments and promotes the development of teamwork to encourage the incorporation of sustainable drainage in developments. It suggests that local authorities should work closely with the Environment Agency, sewerage undertakers, navigation authorities and prospective developers to enable surface water run-off to be controlled as near to the source as possible through SUDS.
Sustrans	A sustainable transport charity, working on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport in order to reduce motor traffic and its adverse effects.
Tir gofal	Agri-environment scheme in Wales, working on a whole farm approach.
Tourism	Describes the activity of people taking trips away from home and the industry which has developed in response to this activity.
Town and Country Planning System,	System by which all forms of development is planned and controlled. Currently based on the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Local Development Frameworks (LDF) in England and Wales Spatial Strategy and Local Development Plans (LDP) in Wales
Traffic Management	Measures designed to improve the local environment through the reduction of accidents, injuries, congestion and pollution.

<b>Term used</b>	<b>Definition / Explanation</b>
Tranquillity	Composite feature which seeks to characterise elements of wildness, solitude, peace and quiet, relating principally to low levels of built development, traffic, noise and artificial lighting.
Unimproved Grassland	Grassland consisting of native grasses and herbs which have not been significantly affected by treatment with mineral fertilizers, pesticides, intensive grazing or drainage.
Utilities	Organisations performing a public service i.e. Water, gas, electricity etc.
Veteran Tree	Tree which by virtue of its great age, size or condition, is of exceptional value whether in cultural terms, for its landscape contribution or for the benefit of wildlife. 'Great age' is further defined as an individual tree older than half the natural lifespan for that species.
Viewpoint	Publicly accessible positions from which particularly impressive scenic views can be enjoyed. Viewpoints are often associated with interpretive material.
Viewshed	A North American concept for a discrete area which may be mapped or viewed from one or more viewpoints which has inherent scenic qualities and/or aesthetic values as determined by those who view it. The immediate foreground of a viewshed often enjoys more consideration than the far distance or background. Building on the concept of the 'Viewshed' recent work in England has developed the concept of a Strategic View which either: contains clear views of readily recognisable natural and/or built elements has a role in defining the visual attractiveness, context or sense of place of an area contain good examples of landscape unique to the area
Wetland	Transitional areas between wet and dry environments; wetlands range from permanently or intermittently wet land to shallow water and water margins. The term can include marshes, swamps, bogs, some shallow waters and the intertidal zones. When applied to surface waters, it is generally restricted to areas shallow enough to allow the growth of rooted plants.
Whole Farm Conservation Plans	Plans that consider individual farms as a whole, producing tailor-made conservation plans considering farm type, location and any particular wildlife value, identifying adjustments to management practices that can significantly benefit wildlife.
Wildlife Corridor	A continuous feature, normally broadly linear, which facilitates the movement of wildlife through rural or urban environments.
Woodland Grant Scheme	A scheme administered by the Forestry Commission to provide grants to help create new woodlands and to encourage the good management and regeneration of existing woodlands.
World Heritage Site	A UNESCO Convention on the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage which encourages the designation of cultural and natural heritage sites.
Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	One of the 50 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and covers 326 square kilometres of south Herefordshire, eastern Monmouthshire and western Gloucestershire for which this management plan has been produced

## APPENDIX IV

### Acronyms and Abbreviations

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, often specifically used in reference to the Wye Valley AONB
ASNW	Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BL	Business Link
Cadw	Cadw
CAMS	Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CC	Chambers of Commerce
CCC	County Community Councils, e.g. Community First in Herefordshire
CCW	Countryside Council for Wales
CFL	County Food Links organisations
CLA	Country Land and Business Association
CPRE	Council for the Protection of Rural England
CPRW	Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales
CR/B	Carriage or Cart Road used mainly as Bridleway
CR/F	Carriage or Cart Road used mainly as a Footpath
CRoW	Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000
CRT	Capital Region Tourism
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DCLG	Departments for Communities and Local Government
DI	Deer Initiative
DMGs	Deer Management Groups
DMPs	Destination Management Partnerships
DNO	(electricity) Distribution Network Operators
EA	Environment Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EH	English Heritage
EHT	Earth Heritage and Geoconservation Trusts
FC	Forestry Commission
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
GIS	Geographical Information System
GOSW	Government Office South West
GOWM	Government Office West Midlands
HA	Highways Agency
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle, eg any lorry or truck over 3 tons axle weight
HC	Herefordshire Council
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
HNT	Herefordshire Nature Trust
HW	Heartwoods
JAC	Joint Advisory Committee
LAA	Local Area Agreement

LAs	Local Authorities
LA-LCC	Local Authorities – Landscape, Countryside & Conservation services
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LBRCs	Local Biological Records Centres
LHA	Local highways authority
LMZs	(AONB) Landscape Management Zones
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LWVS	Lower Wye Valley Society
MPAs	Mineral Planning Authority
MPC	Mobile phone companies
NAAONB	National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
NE	Natural England
NFU	National Farmers Union
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NT	National Trust
ODI	Offa's Dyke Initiative
PAWS	Planted Ancient Woodland Site
PCTs	Primary Care Trusts
PT&CCs	Parish, Town and Community Councils
PGP	Hewelsfield and St. Briavels Parish Grassland Project
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
PRoW	Public Rights of Way
RDAs	Regional Development Agencies
RDPE	Rural Development Programme England
RIGS	Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites
RUG	Recreational user groups
RWPT	River Wye Preservation Trust
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SMR	Sites and Monuments Register
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TOWP	Technical Officers' Working Party
VHE	Visit Heart of England
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
WDI	Wales Deer Initiative
WT	Woodland Trust
WiT	County Wildlife or Nature Trusts
WVG	Wye Valley Graziers Association
WVFTA	Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism Association
UC	Utilities companies