



Environmental Report for the  
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

of the

Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

AONB Management Plan 2009 - 2014

November 2009

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## **Environmental Report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan**

### **Section 1 – Context**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1 A revised Management Plan for the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is being produced to meet the requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, which requires local authorities to produce a Plan that formulates local authority policy for the care of the AONB. As a result of undertaking this process the Management Plan falls under the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive in needing to be assessed to see if adverse impacts on the environment are likely to arise if the guiding principles, aims and strategic objectives are followed through. In addition to this statutory obligation.

1.1.2 The first Wye Valley AONB Management Plan to meet the CROW Act's requirements was published in 2004. The Act requires each Plan to be reviewed at least every five years. The Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), acting for the relevant local authorities in reviewing the Plan during 2007 and 2008, felt that the document was still sound. The production of a revised document allows for updates where necessary and helps to galvanise action in managing the AONB in the future.

1.1.3 The SEA has been undertaken by the Wye Valley AONB Unit along with a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and the drafting of the revised Management Plan. This has allowed for the consideration of the impacts of the aims and strategic objectives as the draft Plan evolved. The SEA is designed to be a transparent process, and this Environmental Report describes the systematic analysis of the potential effects of the Management Plan policies in relation to environmental criteria and clearly summarises the results of this assessment process. This report is subject to public consultation and is available on [www.wyevallevaonb.org.uk](http://www.wyevallevaonb.org.uk).

1.1.4 Any comments received on this Environmental Report will be reported to the JAC along with a commentary indicating the proposed action. This, along with the Habitats Regulation Assessment, will in turn inform and influence any modification to the draft Management Plan following the consultation process.

#### **1.2 Summary**

1.2.1 Carrying out the SEA process has enabled the AONB Unit to test the Management Plan Strategic Objectives against key criteria. The results of this process have provided clear evidence that the Plan's Strategic Objectives are unlikely to have any negative effect upon key, broad environmental criteria. The process has ensured no negative effects and highlights positive effects of the reviewed Management Plan objectives.

### **1.3. The Assessment Process**

1.3.1 A Scoping Report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment was produced in February 2009 and sent to the statutory consultees of Cadw, Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), English Heritage, Environment Agency and Natural England. The SEA regulations require that a scoping report be produced so that the level of detail contained within the Environmental Report is agreed with the statutory consultation bodies. The SEA Methodology was set out in the Scoping Report and is elaborated on in Appendix 1.

1.3.2 Following a five week consultation period comments on the Scoping Report were received from Cadw, CCW and Natural England. Their key comments are contained in Appendix 2.

1.3.3 As part of the SEA process a list of Relevant Plans and Strategies was compiled. The Management Plan cuts across a broad range of sectors and there are many policies and objectives which impact on it. There is no definitive list of plans that should be reviewed but using the guidance available the listed plans and strategies were identified for their relevance to the AONB Management Plan. This list was developed through prior consultation with technical officers of government agencies, local authorities and key stakeholder organisations and was consulted upon further as part of the Scoping Report. The updated version can be seen in Appendix 3. The AONB Partnership will continue to review and update the collated relevant legislation, plans, policies and strategies. The AONB Partnership also operates as a non-statutory consultee, regularly submitting comments based on the Management Plan, on relevant legislation, plans, policies and strategies as part of its ongoing work

1.3.4 The Environmental Baseline data in the SEA was similarly developed through consultation with technical officers and key stakeholders and was consulted upon further as part of the Scoping Report. This will be used for condition monitoring in the AONB and the full list of indicators that have been selected can be found in Appendix 4.

1.3.5 The HRA considered the potential significant effects of the Management Plan on European and international sites within a 5mile/8km radius of the AONB. The HRA report received comments from CCW, Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council, Monmouthshire County Council and Natural England during the statutory three week consultation process. There were some modifications and amendments recommended and incorporated. Generally Natural England and CCW did not disagree with the HRA conclusion that there are no significant adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites as a result of the draft Wye Valley AONB Management Plan and its associated aims and objectives.

### **1.4. Main Objectives of the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan**

1.4.1 The AONB Management Plan sets out, under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, the policy and action in relation to the management of the Wye Valley AONB for the constituent local authorities, being Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council. The CROW Act (Section 85) also requires that all public bodies should

‘have regard’ to the purpose of AONBs. These include relevant authorities, such as government agencies and local planning authorities, parish, town and community councils and the holders of public office. Thus whilst the main purpose of the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan is to formulate local authority policy, or Strategic Objectives, in relation to the AONB, its Strategic Objectives should be used by other relevant bodies to assist them in exercising their functions of due regard to the AONB. The Management Plan is therefore 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.

1.4.2.1 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.

#### 1.4.2.2 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.

#### 1.4.2.3 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.

#### 1.4.2.4 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.

#### 1.4.2.5 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.

#### 1.4.2.6 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.

1.4.3 The AONB Management Plan develops each theme into the 16 topics identified (bulleted) above. For each topic there is a brief outline which elaborates and highlights significant issues, but needs to be read in conjunction with chapters 2 and 3 of the Management Plan. The aim for each topic is given along with the Strategic Objectives, these are the policy proposals for the Management Plan. There are 85 Strategic Objectives in the Management Plan. A detailed Action Plan will also be produced to ensure that these Strategic Objectives are implemented.

## **Section 2 – Baseline**

### **2.1 Character of the AONB**

2.1.1 An overview of the significance of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) can be found in the ‘Statement of Significance’ on pages 13-15 of the draft Management Plan. The landscape of the AONB was originally described in the Wye Valley Landscape Assessment (CCP 487, 1996). The main elements and features that contribute to the landscape character of the Wye Valley AONB have been independently assessed in the three counties of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire / Forest of Dean and Monmouthshire. The various character areas and landscape types identified by the three assessments have been amalgamated into sixteen Landscape Management Zones (LMZs) within the AONB (see Map 2 of the Management Plan). The key features of the sixteen Wye Valley AONB Landscape Management Zones are outlined in Table 1 of the draft Management Plan (pp. 18-24). These have been cross referenced with the Special Qualities [SQ] of the AONB that are crucial to the long-term well being and character of the AONB.

2.1.2 The Special Qualities of the AONB were identified in the 2004-9 Plan and have been modified slightly through the review process. The individual special qualities are listed in Appendix 5, along with their nature, quality, extent and condition (Table 3 of the draft Management Plan, pp. 27-38).

### **2.2 State of environment and current trends**

2.2.1 Data relating to the Wye Valley AONB has been collated by the AONB Unit as part of the Management Plan review process. This is summarised in Appendices 5 and 6. More detailed environmental information continues to be collated for the State of the AONB Report which will be published separately alongside the final version of the Management Plan. Further data is also contained in the ‘Wye Valley – An Evidence Base’ (Centre for Rural Research, 2007) available on [www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk](http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk). The basic trends in data between data collected for the 2004-9 Plan and recently gathered data is indicated in the table in Appendix 6.

### **2.3 Key Environmental Issues and Forces for Change**

2.3.1 The ‘changes or threats’ to the Special Qualities of the AONB have been identified in Appendix 5 and also Table 3 of the draft Management Plan. Management options are also suggested in Table 3 of the draft Management Plan and these identify the management initiatives and the progress required to mitigate against the impacts of the changes or threats.

2.3.2 A range of Activities and Pressures in the AONB were similarly identified in the 2004-9 Plan and have been modified slightly through the review process. These are highlighted under Table 4 of the draft Management Plan (pp. 39-48), cross referenced against the Special Qualities [SQ] of the AONB and their occurrence in the various Landscape Management Zones (LMZ). These need to be understood in terms of their interaction, whether positive or negative, on the ‘changes or threats’ mentioned above.

2.3.3 The key environmental issues and ‘forces for change’ identified through the Management Plan review process can be summarised as follows:-

- Managing change
- Realising Ecosystem services and the functionality of landscapes
- Climate Change adaptation and mitigation
- Standardisation of development and infrastructure design
- Intensification and diversification of agriculture
- Under management of woodlands
- Transport issues and impending ‘peak oil’
- Changing demands of tourism and recreation
- Development pressures
- Maintaining quality of life
- Sustainability
- Maintaining partnerships

These are elaborated on in Chapter 2 of the draft Management Plan (pages 5-11).

## **Section 3 – Environmental Assessment**

### **3.1 Consideration of strategic alternatives**

3.1.1 Part 3 of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, Section 12(2) states that an Environmental Report should:

‘identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of -

(a) implementing the plan or programme; and

(b) reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme.’

Common SEA practice uses alternatives including ‘Do Nothing’, ‘Business As Usual’, ‘Best for Environment’ options, and others specifically developed for the plan being assessed. The appropriateness of these to the task at hand is discussed below.

#### **3.1.2. ‘No Action’ or ‘Do Nothing’ Alternative**

3.1.2.1 The environmental implications of not having an AONB Management Plan have been considered. Without the implementation of an AONB Management Plan the environment of the AONB would continue to receive protection under the wide range of statutory regimes such as the Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive, Town and Country Planning regime etc., which all serve to reduce the likelihood of significant environmental deterioration. The AONB would also continue to be considered in other significant plans, policies, strategies and decisions, because of duties imposed by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Section 85.

3.1.2.2 Whilst in practice there are many organisations that would continue to contribute to the AONB’s protection, there is no single organisation or regulatory mechanism with a complete overview or wide reaching influence over everything with potential to impact on the AONB.

3.1.2.3 It is possible that without the implementation of the AONB Management Plan the cumulative effect of small-scale, or uncoordinated changes in the management of the natural and built environment would threaten the lower Wye Valley’s environmental quality and distinctiveness – factors central to its designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

3.1.2.4 Without the AONB Management Plan to set a framework for the area, it is likely that there would be significant inconsistencies in the conservation and enhancement of the area’s natural beauty, its full range of distinctive features and special qualities and for the whole of the designated area, as well as many missed opportunities for added value.

3.1.2.5 The AONB Management Plan therefore provides a focus for the actions of others and seeks to bring key agencies and the local community together to work to retain, conserve and enhance the existing high quality landscape of the area, add value to existing processes and enable positive change through sustainable solutions and development.

3.1.2.6 Preparation of an AONB Management Plan is required by law; therefore it is not a viable option to 'Do nothing'. In the interests of expediency this alternative has not been examined any further.

### **3.1.3 'Business as Usual' Alternative**

3.1.3.1 This assessment would consider the implications of continuing with the policies outlined in the current Management Plan 2004-2009, assessing them against the SEA Objectives. However, the review process has highlighted the need for revised policies in the light of new forces for change.

3.1.3.2 Owing to the CCW and Natural England guidance requiring an expedient and fit for purpose assessment, it is not viewed as appropriate to examine in detail the environmental effects of continuing with the existing set of Strategic Objectives.

### **3.1.4 'Best for environment' Alternative**

3.1.4.1 The primary purpose of the Management Plan as a whole is to protect and enhance natural beauty, so it should represent the 'Best for environment' option. That said the assessment may indicate where improvements to the environmental performance of individual policies within the Strategy section could be made. Development of alternative policy wording would be the most useful approach to adopt. Development of alternatives will therefore be focused where policies are identified as having an adverse environmental effect.

## **3.2 Compatibility of management plan and SEA environmental objectives**

3.2.1 Developing SEA objectives is not required by law, but it is a recognised method of assessment. The Assessment stage of the process plots in a matrix the SEA objectives against both the aims and the Strategic Objectives contained in the AONB Management Plan to determine their effects (Tables 1 & 2 below). The SEA objectives should therefore be viewed as a checklist for assessing the Plan's environmental impacts and should not be confused with the Management Plan's guiding principles, aims or Strategic Objectives.

3.2.2 The analysis matrix was employed once the Management Plan Strategic Objectives were confirmed in their draft form, rather than at intervals throughout any preceding process. This is because the aims and Strategic Objectives were developed from the 2004-2009 Management Plan which itself went through a comprehensive consultation process.

3.2.3 The SEA objectives in the Scoping Report were adopted from those provided by CCW and Natural England in their respective guidance to AONBs. Following further consultation and peer group review by AONBs in the West Midlands region, the SEA objectives have been prioritised to more closely reflect environmental matters relevant to the Wye Valley AONB. This has reduced the number of SEA Objectives from 11 to 8. These are used to enable the potential impacts of the AONB Management Plan on the environment to be assessed.

3.2.4 The 8 environmental objectives were placed in a matrix (below) against the Management Plan aims (Table 1) and Strategic Objectives (Table 2) and an assessment made against 6 possible outcomes. These outcomes are ‘very positive ++’, ‘some positive +’, ‘some negative -’, ‘very negative --’, ‘no significant effect applicable ~’ and ‘unsure #’.

### **3.3 The SEA environmental objectives**

3.3.1 The 8 SEA environmental objectives are:

1. To safeguard the landscape
2. To safeguard habitats, fauna and flora
3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance
4. To protect and enhance the environmental quality of land, air and water resources through the use of sustainable practices
5. To minimise waste and through re-use, re-cycling and recovery reduce the use of landfill
6. To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and encourage sustainable forms of energy production
7. To safeguard human health and Quality of Life
8. To avoid any significant adverse impacts created by the interrelationships or cumulative effect of the above

3.3.2 It is not immediately obvious where some important issues identified within the AONB Management Plan fall within these objectives and so these are clarified as follows.

3.3.2.1 Impacts relating to ‘geodiversity’ (which includes geology and geomorphology) are assessed under objective 2. The rationale for this is that Biodiversity and Geodiversity are considered together within a number of other policy documents including the Government’s national ‘Planning Policy Statement 9 Biodiversity and geological conservation’.

3.3.2.2 Impacts relating to ‘tranquility’ in the AONB are assessed within objective 4, being viewed as an important ‘environmental quality’ and largely subject to noise quality in the air generated through uses of land and/or water.

### **3.4 The analysis matrix of Aims**

3.4.1 The matrix of AONB Management Plan aims against the environmental objectives of the Strategic Environmental Assessment is in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 Management Plan aims against SEA objectives**

Key:

Very Positive effect	Some positive effect	No significant effect	Some negative effect	Very negative effect	Unsure							
++	+	~	-	--	#							
1. To safeguard the landscape 2. To safeguard habitats, fauna and flora 3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance 4. To protect and enhance the environmental quality of land, air and water resources through the use of sustainable practices 5. To minimise waste and through re-use, re-cycling and recovery reduce the use of landfill 6. To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and encourage sustainable forms of energy production 7. To safeguard human health and Quality of Life 8. To avoid any significant adverse impacts created by the interrelationships or cumulative effect of the above				1. Landscape	2. Biodiversity	3. Heritage	4. Resource quality	5. Waste	6. Energy	7. Quality of life	8. Combinations	

Plan ref.	Management Plan Aims	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
Theme 1 ~ Our Unique Landscape									
L	<i>Landscape:</i> 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.	++	++	++	+	~	+	+	+
B	<i>Biodiversity:</i> Conserve, and where appropriate enhance, the biodiversity of the AONB.	++	++	+	++	~	+	+	+
G	<i>Geodiversity:</i> Conserve and enhance sites that are important for the scientific and general understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the geodiversity heritage of the AONB.	++	++	+	+	~	~	+	+
H	<i>Historic:</i> Conserve the historic environment and promote sympathetic management.	++	+	++	+	~	~	+	+
F	<i>Farming:</i> To foster viable farming enterprises that manage the land in ways that conserve and enhance the natural resources and local distinctiveness of the AONB.	++	++	++	++	~	+	+	+
W	<i>Woodland:</i> 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.	++	++	++	+	+	+	+	+
Theme 2: Development and Transport									
D	<i>Development:</i> Ensure all development within the AONB is compatible with the aims of AONB designation.	++	++	++	+	+	+	+	+
M	<i>Minerals:</i> Ensure all minerals development within the AONB is compatible with the aims of AONB designation.	++	++	++	+	+	~	+	+

Plan ref.	Management Plan Aims	Environmental Objectives							
		1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
U	<i>Utilities &amp; Energy:</i> Ensure the most sustainable, effective and efficient use and supply of services and energy within the AONB, compatible with the aims of AONB designation.	++	+	+	+	+	++	++	+
T	<i>Transportation:</i> Ensure transport in the AONB is sustainable and integrated and compatible with the purposes of AONB designation.	++	+	+	+	~	++	+	+
Theme 3: Vital communities									
C	<i>Community Development:</i> To engender thriving local communities which have a high quality of life with a healthy economy that supports the natural beauty of the area.	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+
E	<i>Economy and Rural Regeneration:</i> To foster viable rural enterprises that derive benefit from and enhance the natural resources and local distinctiveness of the AONB.	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+
Theme 4: Enjoying the AONB									
S	<i>Sustainable Tourism:</i> 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.	++	++	++	+	+	+	++	+
R	<i>Recreation &amp; Access:</i> People continue to enjoy active recreation in the Wye Valley that does not detract from the natural beauty of the area.	+	+	+	+	~	~	++	~
A	<i>Appreciation:</i> Increase people's appreciation and understanding of why the area is designated.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Theme 5: Achieving success together									
P	<i>Partnership:</i> Continue proactive and imaginative achievements in the Wye Valley AONB through successful and productive partnerships.	++	++	++	++	+	+	+	++

### 3.5 The analysis matrix of Strategic Objectives

3.5.1 The Matrix of AONB Management Plan Strategic Objectives against the environmental objectives of the Strategic Environmental Assessment is in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 Management Plan Strategic Objectives against SEA objectives**

Key:

Very Positive effect	Some positive effect	No significant effect	Some negative effect	Very negative effect	Unsure
++	+	~	-	--	#

1. To safeguard the landscape 2. To safeguard habitats, fauna and flora 3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance 4. To protect and enhance the environmental quality of land, air and water resources through the use of sustainable practices 5. To minimise waste and through re-use, re-cycling and recovery reduce the use of landfill 6. To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and encourage sustainable forms of energy production 7. To safeguard human health and Quality of Life 8. To avoid any significant adverse impacts created by the interrelationships or cumulative effect of the above	1. Landscape	2. Biodiversity	3. Heritage	4. Resource quality	5. Waste	6. Energy	7. Quality of life	8. Combinations
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Plan ref.	Management Plan Aims	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
	Theme 1 ~ Our Unique Landscape								
	<i>Landscape:</i>								
WV-L1	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	++	++	++	++	~	+	+	+
WV-L2	Encourage and enhance appropriate action by all on landscape scale habitat connectivity that positively contributes to the linking of habitats as well as allowing wildlife to adapt to the effects of climate change	++	++	++	++	~	+	+	+
WV-L3	Promote and encourage the use of the Landscape Character Assessments and Historic Landscape Characterisation to inform local distinctiveness in development plans, strategies, guidance and landscaping schemes	++	+	++	+	~	+	+	+
WV-L4	Ensure the establishment and collection of sufficiently comprehensive baseline data to monitor landscape condition and direction of change	+	+	+	+	~	~	~	+
WV-L5	Support measures which increase public awareness and appreciation of the natural beauty and importance of the Wye Valley AONB	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	<i>Biodiversity:</i>								
WV-B1	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	++	++	+	++	~	~	+	+
WV-B2	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	++	++	+	++	~	~	+	+
WV-B3	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	++	++	+	++	~	~	+	+
WV-B4	Identify species and diseases considered to be detrimental to the biodiversity value of the AONB and encourage their monitoring, management and, where appropriate, their control	++	++	+	++	~	~	+	+

<b>Plan ref.</b>	<b>Management Plan Aims</b>	<b>Environmental Objectives</b>							
		<b>1.</b>	<b>2.</b>	<b>3.</b>	<b>4.</b>	<b>5.</b>	<b>6.</b>	<b>7.</b>	<b>8.</b>
WV-B5	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	+	++	+	+	~	~	+	+
WV-B6	Promote awareness, sources of advice and involvement in biodiversity conservation by landowners, land managers, businesses, local communities, schools and the public including of impacts from outside AONB	++	++	+	++	+	~	+	+
WV-B7	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.	++	++	+	++	+	+	+	+
	<i>Geodiversity:</i>								
WV-G1	Support the identification and monitoring of significant geodiversity conservation features (SSSIs & RIGS), in partnership with geoconservation organisations and the local Record Centres.	++	++	+	+	~	~	~	+
WV-G2	Contribute to the emerging Geodiversity Action Plans (GAPs) and conserve the geodiversity resource in line with GAPs	++	++	+	+	~	~	~	+
WV-G3	Monitor climate change and its effects on the geodiversity resource of the AONB	+	++	+	~	~	~	~	+
WV-G4	Encourage and support measures that create and/or maintain the accessibility and conservation interest of sites of geological importance	~	+	~	~	~	~	+	+
WV-G5	Promote increased understanding and opportunities to appreciate the significance of the geodiversity of the AONB and the need for its protection and management.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	<i>Historic:</i>								
WV-H1	Conserve, protect and enhance the historic environment of the AONB through policy development, offering advice and encouraging sympathetic management	++	+	++	+	~	~	+	+
WV-H2	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	++	+	++	+	~	~	+	+
WV-H3	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	+	+	++	~	~	~	~	+
WV-H4	Maintain the integrity and promote the restoration, where appropriate, of the Historic Parks and Gardens and designed landscapes	++	+	++	+	~	~	+	+
WV-	Promote the understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Plan ref.	Management Plan Aims	Environmental Objectives	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
H5										
	<i>Farming:</i>									
WV-F1	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		++	++	++	++	+	+	+	+
WV-F2	Influence policy on, and encourage the maximum uptake of, agri-environment and other appropriate schemes, including support for small-holders, where they progress the conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty, biodiversity and special qualities of the AONB, particularly through Catchment Sensitive Farming and mixed farming systems		++	++	++	++	+	+	+	+
WV-F3	Seek to mitigate, reduce or remove agricultural activity which significantly diminishes or destroys the special qualities, natural beauty and landscape character of the AONB		++	++	++	++	~	~	+	+
WV-F4	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.		++	++	++	++	+	+	+	+
WV-F5	Promote a wider understanding of the value of farming to the landscape and economy of the AONB		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
WV-F6	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.		++	+	+	+	~	~	+	~
WV-F7	Encourage and support local producers to supply local food and promote and encourage the use of local produce by public bodies, consumers, accommodation providers and local food outlets.		+	+	~	+	+	+	++	+
	<i>Woodland:</i>									
WV-W1	Provide best practice advice to woodland owners and managers on sustainable multipurpose management of the Wye Valley woodland, with gradual PAWS restoration a priority		++	++	++	+	+	+	+	+
WV-W2	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		++	++	++	+	+	+	+	+
WV-W3	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.		++	++	+	++	+	+	+	+
WV-W4	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		++	++	++	+	+	+	+	+

Plan ref.	Management Plan Aims	Environmental Objectives							
		1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
	so that none are lost, and encourage bringing woodland back into management through various techniques such as coppicing								
WV-W5	Support and promote initiatives that encourage employment and skills development for multipurpose woodland management and conservation	++	++	++	+	+	+	+	+
WV-W6	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	+	+	+	+	++	++	+	+
WV-W7	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.	++	++	+	+	~	~	+	+
WV-W8	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	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	<i>Development:</i>								
WV-D1	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	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
WV-D2	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	+	+	+	+	++	++	+	+
WV-D3	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	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
WV-D4	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	++	+	+	~	~	~	+	+
WV-D5	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	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
WV-D6	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	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	<i>Minerals:</i>								

<b>Plan ref.</b>	<b>Management Plan Aims</b>	<b>Environmental Objectives</b>	<b>1.</b>	<b>2.</b>	<b>3.</b>	<b>4.</b>	<b>5.</b>	<b>6.</b>	<b>7.</b>	<b>8.</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		++	++	++	+	+	~	+	+
WV-M2	Encourage quarries to be operated and restored to a standard that is appropriate to the landscape character, geodiversity and biodiversity of the AONB		++	++	++	++	+	~	+	+
WV-M3	Support the working of building stone where there is a clear need for local conservation and heritage purposes where the scale and nature of extraction is not seriously damaging to the special qualities, landscape character or natural beauty of the AONB		+	+	++	+	++	~	+	+
WV-M4	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.		++	++	++	++	+	~	+	+
	<i>Utilities &amp; Energy:</i>									
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		++	+	+	+	+	++	+	+
WV-U2	Encourage further under-grounding of existing and proposed power and telephone lines, where these do not conflict with any SAC, and resist new overhead lines where skylines or important views are affected		++	~	+	~	~	~	+	~
WV-U3	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		++	~	+	+	+	~	+	+
WV-U4	Encourage the use and supply of resources, including water abstraction and investment in infrastructure, that is consistent with the special qualities, SACs, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB, and monitor any adverse impacts		++	++	++	++	+	+	+	+
	<i>Transportation:</i>									
WV-T1	Encourage and promote greater use of more sustainable forms of transport in the AONB and for accessing the area, subject to WV-D4		+	+	+	+	~	++	++	+
WV-T2	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		+	+	+	+	~	++	+	+
WV-T3	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		+	+	+	+	~	++	++	+
WV-T4	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>Plan ref.</b>	<b>Management Plan Aims</b>	<b>Environmental Objectives</b>	<b>1.</b>	<b>2.</b>	<b>3.</b>	<b>4.</b>	<b>5.</b>	<b>6.</b>	<b>7.</b>	<b>8.</b>
WV-T5	Conserve the character of rural roads in the AONB by conserving existing traditional features, reducing excessive signage and sympathetically managing verges for biodiversity		++	++	+	+	+	~	+	+
WV-T6	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.		++	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	<i>Community Development:</i>									
WV-C1	Encourage community led initiatives that maintain the diversity, sustainability and quality of rural community life		+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+
WV-C2	Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the special qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape		+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+
WV-C3	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.		+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+
WV-C4	Support the development of affordable housing appropriate to local need in the AONB, subject to WV-D2, WV-D3 and WV-D4 above		+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+
WV-C5	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		+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+
	<i>Economy and Rural Regeneration:</i>									
WV-E1	Support initiatives that improve the market for products which conserve or enhance the AONB's distinctive landscape, special qualities and strengthens the sense of place of the AONB		+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+
WV-E2	Raise awareness of good practice and encourage local businesses in the AONB to take opportunities to become more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, particularly in ways that sustain the natural beauty of the area		+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+
WV-E3	Support the delivery of local co-operative schemes, advice and training programmes that support the development and expansion of rural micro-businesses, subject to WV-D2, WV-D3 and WV-D4 above		+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+
WV-E4	Raise awareness of the importance of retaining a high quality environment in attracting and retaining entrepreneurs, relocating businesses, inward investment and skilled personnel		+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+
WV-E5	To foster viable rural enterprises that derive benefit from and enhance the natural resources and local distinctiveness of the AONB.		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	<i>Sustainable Tourism:</i>									
WV-S1	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>Plan ref.</b>	<b>Management Plan Aims</b>	<b>Environmental Objectives</b>							
		<b>1.</b>	<b>2.</b>	<b>3.</b>	<b>4.</b>	<b>5.</b>	<b>6.</b>	<b>7.</b>	<b>8.</b>
WV-S2	Promote the improvement of the visitor experience, particularly at the most heavily visited sites, and facilitate the opportunity for visitors to explore and discover other appropriate but less used locations throughout the AONB, thus spreading demand and balancing pressures across sites where this does not conflict with the special qualities of the AONB and the SACs	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+
WV-S3	Ensure adequate provision of co-ordinated tourism data and visitor engagement to inform strategic and practical decision making on conserving or enhancing the special qualities of the AONB	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+
WV-S4	Encourage the mitigation and/or reduction of the adverse impacts of existing tourism activity and attractions, particularly where they are concentrated around certain locations or sites, and/or those that fall outside the aim of conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the special qualities and features of the AONB. Highest priority will be given to addressing the issues in the Symonds Yat and Tintern areas	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+
	<i>Recreation &amp; Access:</i>								
WV-R1	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.	+	+	+	+	~	+	++	+
WV-R2	Assist the resolving of conflicts, real and perceived, between recreation, conservation and local interests, including other economic activities, and between different recreation interest groups in relation to the purposes of the AONB designation.	+	+	+	+	~	~	+	+
WV-R3	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.	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
WV-R4	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	+	+	+	+	~	~	++	+
	<i>Appreciation:</i>								
WV-A1	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	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	<i>Partnership:</i>								
WV-P1	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	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	++

<b>Plan ref.</b>	<b>Management Plan Aims</b>	<b>Environmental Objectives</b>							
		<b>1.</b>	<b>2.</b>	<b>3.</b>	<b>4.</b>	<b>5.</b>	<b>6.</b>	<b>7.</b>	<b>8.</b>
	discussion on important issues affecting the AONB								
WV-P2	Sustain and enhance local and national government funding and support for the AONB Unit	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	++
WV-P3	Utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan through an agreed annual and rolling 3 year work programme	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	++
WV-P4	Encourage Section 85 organisations, under the CRoW Act, to have co-ordinated policies to progress the purposes of the AONB designation and to make commitments in their annual business plans to specific delivery contributions that enable the AONB 3-year work programme	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	++
WV-P5	Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
WV-P6	Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	++
WV-P7	Encourage partners to be champions and ambassadors for the AONB in their contact with other interests, and ensure those interests recognise and consider the Management Plan and AONB work programme when relating to the area	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	++
WV-P8	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	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	++
WV-P9	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	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
WV-P10	Share knowledge and skills in protected area management locally, regionally, nationally and globally as appropriate	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

### 3.6 Assessment Results

3.6.1 The results in Table 2 show no uncertain, partial or very negative effects on the key environmental criteria. The largest proportion of the results (68%) shows that ‘some positive effect’ will occur, and 21% of the matrix suggests ‘very positive effects’ while 11% show ‘no significant effect’.

3.6.2 Early consultation with technical officers and stakeholders in the AONB determined that the need to review any part of the Management Plan would be judged upon the outcome of formal consultation and assessment. This has meant that alternatives would only be developed where

consultation or assessment revealed an adverse effect. As no strategic objectives were identified during the assessment process as ‘negative’ or ‘unsure’ possible alternatives have not been included.

3.6.3 Each section of the management plan appears to contribute positively to the SEA objectives. However, it could be argued that the broad nature of these elements could have differing impacts depending on how they were interpreted. Therefore a further improvement that can be made would be to the context of the aims and strategic objectives. This would remove any potential confusion over interpretation which might lead to uncertainties over impacts. Consequently the following clarification is recommended as an addition to the Management Plan:

#### 3.6.4 Interpretation of policies

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

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*’.

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.

## **Section 4 - Monitoring**

### **4.1 Data Gathering**

4.1.1 Data relating to the Wye Valley AONB has been collated by the AONB Unit as part of the Management Plan review process, as outlined in section 2.2 above. This data is summarised in Appendices 4, 5 and 6.

4.1.2 Monitoring for SEA requirements should seek to make use of existing datasets and existing collection mechanisms wherever possible. However any gaps in the baseline data should also be identified. Some of these gaps may be filled by partner organisations while other gaps might remain. The Management Plan and the Scoping Report both acknowledge that there are some difficulties in obtaining suitably “disaggregated” data for the AONB.

4.1.3 A selection of headline indicators across the range of AONB Special Qualities has been chosen (see Appendix 5 and Table 3 below). These are based primarily on the appropriateness of the datasets in terms of availability, frequency and disaggregation possibilities etc. to ensure the effects are discernable and attributable at the scale of the AONB. It is not proposed that the environmental performance of all the 85 Strategic Objectives could or should be monitored.

4.1.4 Where data in Appendix 4 is indicated as being collected by, or the responsibility of a relevant authority, it would be expected that they will be funding and managing the collection and analysis of this data. This is part of the process of demonstrating to the AONB Partnership, and ultimately Defra and the Welsh Assembly Government, that the relevant authority is complying with their Section 85 duty and having appropriate regard to the AONB.

### **4.2 Monitoring and evaluation**

4.2.1 The environmental impacts on the various Special Qualities in the AONB were considered within the Statement of Key Issues section of the Scoping Report. Included within this a range of headline indicators were proposed as a way of measuring change. The table below identifies the headline indicators and how they could be used to monitor how the AONB Management Plan is influencing the SEA environment objectives over time.

**Table 3 SEA Environmental Indicators**

<b>Special Qualities [SQ]</b>	<b>Headline Indicator</b>	<b>SEA environmental objectives correlation</b>	<b>Trend</b>
1	16 AONB Landscape	Character is classed as being ‘maintained’ in the two National Character Areas in	1. To safeguard the landscape →

Special Qualities [SQ]		Headline Indicator	SEA environmental objectives correlation	Trend
1	Management Zones with key feature	which the AONB falls		→
		% of AONB / LMZs / land use types in Agri-environment schemes & woodland grant schemes		↗
2.	Woodlands	% of overall woodland (ha) is managed under a Forestry Commission Woodland Grant Scheme agreement	1. To safeguard the landscape 2. To safeguard habitats, fauna and flora 3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance 4. To protect and enhance the environmental quality of land, air and water resources through the use of sustainable practices	↗
		% of SMs and Listed Buildings at high or medium risk within woodlands	3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	↘
		% PAWS in restoration	1. To safeguard the landscape 2. To safeguard habitats, fauna and flora	↗
		% of Wye Valley Woodlands SSSIs are in favourable or recovering condition	2. To safeguard habitats, fauna and flora	↗
3.	The river & tributaries	% of river SSSI in favourable or recovering condition and 'Ecological Status under Water Framework Directive	2. To safeguard habitats, fauna and flora 4. To protect and enhance the environmental quality of land, air and water resources through the use of sustainable practices	↗
		% of SMs and Listed Buildings at high or medium risk within flood zone	3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	↘
		% of river length is classified as of 'good' water quality	4. To protect and enhance the environmental quality of land, air and water resources through the use of sustainable practices	↗
4.	Small field pattern of un/semi-improved grassland, often bounded by drystone walls or old hedges	% of farmed land (ha) is managed under some form of agri-environment scheme  LAA PI 197	1. To safeguard the landscape 2. To safeguard habitats, fauna and flora 3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	↗

Special Qualities [SQ]	Headline Indicator	SEA environmental objectives correlation	Trend
		4. To protect and enhance the environmental quality of land, air and water resources through the use of sustainable practices 8. To avoid any significant adverse impacts created by the interrelationships or cumulative effect of the above	
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	LAA PI 197	1. To safeguard the landscape 2. To safeguard habitats, fauna and flora 3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	↗
6. Silurian Rocks	x% of geological SSSIs (by land area) are in favourable or recovering condition	1. To safeguard the landscape 2. To safeguard habitats, fauna and flora 3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	→
7. Devonian - Lower Old Red Sandstone	x% of geological SSSIs (by land area) are in favourable or recovering condition		→
8. Quartz Conglomerate in Upper Old Red Sandstone including	x% of geological SSSIs (by land area) are in favourable or recovering condition		→
9. Carboniferous Limestone	x% of geological SSSIs (by land area) are in favourable or recovering condition		→
10. Riverine geomorphology	x% of geological SSSIs (by land area) are in favourable or recovering condition		→
11. Picturesque, extensive & dramatic views.	Significance of identified change in view from fixed point photography and map regression (tbc)	1. To safeguard the landscape 8. To avoid any significant adverse impacts created by the interrelationships or cumulative effect of the above	~
12. Overall sense of tranquillity, sense of remoteness and naturalness / wildness	% of the AONB is classified as 'tranquil' (green on CPRE Map)	1. To safeguard the landscape 3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance 4. To protect and enhance the environmental quality of land,	→

Special Qualities [SQ]	Headline Indicator	SEA environmental objectives correlation	Trend
		air and water resources through the use of sustainable practices	
13. Prehistoric sites from Palaeolithic to Iron Age	% of Scheduled Monuments classified as 'At High or Medium Risk'	3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	↘
	No. Scheduled Monuments benefiting from grant aid		↗
15. Mediaeval Defensive and Ecclesiastical sites and associated landscapes	% of Scheduled Monuments classified as 'At High or Medium Risk'  No. Scheduled Monuments benefiting from grant aid		↘
16. Post-medieval industrial sites and associated landscapes	% of Listed Buildings are classified as 'At Risk'		↗
17. Railway heritage	% of Scheduled Monuments classified as 'At High or Medium Risk'  % of Listed Buildings classified as 'At Risk'		↘
18. Ancient trees	% recorded losses to AONB Veteran Tree Survey	1. To safeguard the landscape 2. To safeguard habitats, fauna and flora 3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and	↗

Special Qualities [SQ]	Headline Indicator	SEA environmental objectives correlation	Trend
		settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	
19. Historic parks and gardens	% of registered parks and gardens classified as 'At High or Medium Risk'	1. To safeguard the landscape 2. To safeguard habitats, fauna and flora 3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	↘
20. Vernacular architecture: Farmsteads Commoners cottages, Estate houses	% of Listed Buildings classified as 'At Risk'	1. To safeguard the landscape 3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	↘
21. Welsh language & accent; Forest of Dean & South Herefordshire dialects & accents	N~a	7. To safeguard human health and Quality of Life	~
22. Air quality	t.b.c.	4. To protect and enhance the environmental quality of land, air and water resources through the use of sustainable practices	
23. Water quality	% of river length classified as of 'good' water quality	4. To protect and enhance the environmental quality of land, air and water resources through the use of sustainable practices	↗
24. Soil quality	t.b.c	4. To protect and enhance the environmental quality of land, air and water resources through the use of sustainable practices	
25. Old tracks: often in sunken ways &/or bounded by drystone walls	% of rights of way are classified as 'easy to use'	7. To safeguard human health and Quality of Life	↗
26. Offa's Dyke Path	% of rights of way are classified as 'easy to use'	7. To safeguard human health and Quality of Life	↗

Special Qualities [SQ]	Headline Indicator	SEA environmental objectives correlation	Trend
	% of Scheduled Ancient Monument classified as 'At High or Medium Risk'	3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	↘
27. Wye Valley Walk	% of rights of way are classified as 'easy to use'	7. To safeguard human health and Quality of Life	↗
	% Positive feedback from Route Guide	7. To safeguard human health and Quality of Life	↗
	Average and peak usage from counters	7. To safeguard human health and Quality of Life	↗
28. Access land	% of AONB	7. To safeguard human health and Quality of Life	→
29. Small commons; largest are Coppet Hill, Broadmoor, Staunton Meend, Whitelye, The Hudnalls	% of AONB	3. To preserve, enhance and manage sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	→

4.2.2 All the 41 headline indicators, making up the environmental baseline for the AONB Special Qualities, will need to be considered to evaluate the effectiveness of the AONB Management Plan. Clear definitions will need to be developed over who will be responsible for the frequency of collection and how the data will be presented. It is important to get an effective monitoring process in place to contribute to the information used to guide the deployment of resources. Developing the evidence base will be an important step in helping to predict environmental effects of likely management action more accurately in the future.

4.2.3 The AONB Partnership, having been informed by responses to the consultation on the Management Plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment, will need to develop an approach to ensure the required data is collected in an integrated way. The AONB Unit is committed to collecting the relevant information for condition monitoring and liaison will be ongoing with relevant partners over collecting further information in order to establish a fuller environmental baseline.

### 4.3 Technical Review

4.3.1 From Table 3 it can be seen that the Headline Indicators correlate well with five of the SEA Environmental Objectives but there are clear gaps in correlation with the following three:-

5. To minimise waste and through re-use, re-cycling and recovery reduce the use of landfill
6. To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and encourage sustainable forms of energy production
8. To avoid any significant adverse impacts created by the interrelationships or cumulative effect of the above

4.3.2 Collection of data around these SEA Objectives will help contribute to the AONB's Environmental Baseline but it is likely that some gaps will exist. The AONB Unit certainly does not have the resources to measure, collect, collate or pay for such additional data. Therefore careful consideration has to be given to the selection of indicators and datasets and some basic principles should be followed, as outlined in Table 4.

**Table 4 Attributes of datasets to consider when selecting for monitoring and indicators**

<b>Dataset attribute</b>	<b>Issues to consider</b>
1. Resolution / disaggregation	The geographical scale at which data is collected will affect how this can be disaggregated to the AONB. Rarely is data collected or collated using the AONB boundary. But the greater the resolution the more useful the data will be.
2. Frequency of collection and update	This affects its usefulness for identifying adverse effects rapidly enough to make remedial action effective, with more frequent updates being the most useful.
3. Continuing availability	Long-term datasets are more valuable monitoring tools than 'one-off' specially commissioned data.
4. Specificity / confidence	Specificity refers to whether the data is sufficiently specific to be measuring the effect of the policy directly, or whether it is an indirect indicator of effect. This has implications for the level of confidence that can be attributed to the interpretation of any indicator. Numerous organisations are collecting data relevant to the AONB which could be used as indicators of environmental change. However, difficulties arise in attributing the environmental change to specific sources, making it problematic to identify which plan or strategy is actually impacting on the environment, whether positively or negatively.
5. Cost of collection	Costs should not be onerous so as to prevent ongoing collection and data management, which may therefore affect 2 & 3 above.

4.3.3 It should be noted that there is a national debate covering all Protected Landscapes about what could be used as indicators to measure progress of AONB Management Plans. This includes further issues such as how to measure certain qualities (e.g. beauty); what changes can be attributed to active management and which are a result of other processes; can changes be related solely to inclusion within management plans (e.g. visitor behaviour); over what period would we expect measurable change to happen? In addition there are often changes and/or refinements to the existing methodologies for data gathering which can affect condition monitoring. The above issues about the use of indicators will not be resolved quickly, so it needs to be recognised that further research at a national level is necessary. Consequently the monitoring and evaluation process will need to evolve with any changing methodologies.

## **Section 5 - Conclusions**

5.1 The SEA process seeks to ensure that the impacts of a plan on the environment are considered. The AONB Management Plan is primarily about improving the landscape and environment of the AONB and consequently the SEA process has not made large changes to its content. The process has acted as a checking mechanism to ensure the impacts of proposed aims and strategic objectives on the differing elements of the environment are considered and nothing is overlooked. It also starts to identify the best way to measure change to ensure the predicted effects are the ones that happen.

5.2 The process is intended to be open and transparent and allow people to see that the environment and all it brings to the quality of life is being adequately considered. The consultation process and the consultation on the AONB Management Plan allows scrutiny of the combined procedure. Comments received will be used to inform the finalising of the AONB Management Plan before formal adoption by the Local Authorities.

**Section 6 - Consultation**

**This Environmental Report and AONB Management Plan are available for public consultation between 6<sup>th</sup> November and 6th December 2009. Any comments on the document should be returned to:**

By post: Wye Valley AONB Office, Hadnock Road, Monmouth NP25 3NG

By email: [office@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk](mailto:office@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk)

To arrive by the morning of Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009

If you wish to have a copy of this document in any other format to help with understanding please contact the Wye Valley AONB Office:

Telephone: 01600 713977

Email: [office@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk](mailto:office@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk)

This document is also available on the AONB web [www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk](http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk)

## Appendix 1 - Stages in the Assessment Process

The five detailed stages in the SEA process are summarised below:

SEA process	AONB Management Plan Review process
<b>Stage A Context, Baseline and Scope</b>	
Key Issues	Identified through technical officer seminars & workshops in 2007 & 2008, reviewing 2004-9 AONB Management Plan
Environmental Baseline & Predicting Trends	Publication of Wye Valley AONB An Evidence Base (Centre for Rural Research, University of Worcester 2007) AONB Unit collating State of the AONB Report throughout 2008 & 2009 Pre-consultation draft Management Plan circulated amongst local authorities, government agencies and JAC in June & July 2008
Relevant Plans and Policies	Collated and defined through public consultation phase of draft Management Plan October 2008-January 2009
Objectives	
Scoping Report	Published January 2009
Consultation	5 week consultation with Cadw, CCW, English Heritage, Environment Agency, Natural England to end of March 2009
<b>Stage B Developing alternatives and assessing effects</b>	
Developing and refining the Environmental Assessment assessing and evaluating the effects of the AONB Management Plan, consideration of options developing strategic alternatives, scenario building,	April 2009, alongside preparation and consultation with CCW & Natural England on HRA
<b>Stage C Preparation of Environmental Report</b>	May - October 2009
<b>Stage D Consultation and decision-making</b>	
Consulting the public and Consultation Bodies on the plan and the Environmental Report	4 week consultation November / December 2009, with summary of issues raised from SEA & HRA consultation presented to JAC in November 2009 and endorsement of finalised Management Plan for adoption by local authorities, CCW & Natural England
<b>Stage E Monitoring</b>	
Developing methods and responding to adverse effects	July 2009 onwards

## Appendix 2 - Comments received on SEA Scoping report.

### Cadw

- All relevant Welsh plans, policies, programmes and strategies have been accurately identified
- Cadw does not consider it necessary to mention the registered historic landscape here. As the AONB covers both England and Wales and English Heritage have a different method of landscape assessment, it seems inappropriate to include it in the baseline, and it does occur later on.
- Cadw considers that the ‘Headline Indicators’ for the historic environment are all too negative. Given the AONB unit’s great success in raising grant aid and undertaking conservation work, Cadw would like to see indicators identifying the number of Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings and registered parks and gardens benefiting from grant aid. These could be included in the plan cycle as an indicator.

### Countryside Council for Wales

- CCW appreciates that the production of the AONB Management Plan involves more limited resources that would be the case for a Local Development Plan and the process, due to the nature of the plan itself, is likely to be more straight forward and sympathetic to the aims of SEA. However, this CCW consider that the scoping report is fairly basic. It would recommend, therefore, updating and reconsulting CCW when more information is available (such as an analysis of the key trends in the baseline data and more thought on the visions and objectives of the plan itself).
- *The context scope:* This section of the scoping document should take the opportunity to set out a clear vision of the plans’ purpose and objective. It should also clearly identify how the SEA process sits within the timetable for plan production and how the plan intends to incorporate the findings and outcomes of the SEA. CCW would also expect a reference to the requirement to take into account the findings of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process that will need to be carried out under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, as amended (a “HRA”). This should be clearly referenced in the draft plan and the Environmental Report where appropriate.
- *Review of Plans, Policies and Programmes:* CCW recommends that the following, additional plans, policies and programmes are included within this review:

#### International and European Level.

- Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals 1979
- Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats 1979
- EC Directive to promote Energy from Renewables Energy 2001/77/EEC
- Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks 2007/60/EC
- EU Freshwater Directive 78/659/EEC
- Environmental Liability Directive 2004/35/EC

#### UK Level

Climate Change- the UK Programme 2006  
Air Quality Strategy for the UK 2007  
UK Climate Impacts Programme 2002  
Sustainable and Secure Buildings Act 2004  
Water Resources for the Future (Environment Agency)  
Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change 2006  
Air Quality and Climate Change- a UK perspective 2007  
Consultation on Planning Policy Statement- Planning and Climate Change 2006  
Earth Science Conservation in Great Britain 1990  
Ancient/Listed Buildings and Archaeological Areas Act 1990  
Protection of Badgers Act 1992  
Hedgerow Regulations 1997

National (Wales) Level

Relevant Water Resource Management Plans (Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water)  
Relevant Drought Management Plans  
Welsh Assembly Government Integration Tool 2002  
Wales Transport Strategy 2007  
Priority Habitats in Wales (CCW) 2003  
Draft Wales Soils Action Plan 2007  
Cultural Strategy for Wales 2002  
Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013  
Ministerial Interim Planning Policy 02/2005 Planning for Retailing and Town Centres  
Planning for Climate Change- consultation document Dec 2006.  
Register of special and outstanding historic landscapes  
Better Woodlands for Wales 2005  
Consultation Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change 2006  
Draft Strategy for Wales on Integrated Coastal Zone Management 2006

Regional Level

Relevant Regional Spatial Strategies in England  
Available SEA consultation documents for the neighbouring authorities Local Development Plans  
and other relevant regional plans  
Historic landscape management plans (if available)  
Documents already produced to aid the production of Severn Estuary Shore Line Management Plan 2  
eg the Gwent Levels Foreshore Management Plan and the Severn Estuary Coastal Habitat

Management Plan (both Environment Agency Documents)  
 WAG Severn Estuary Marine Aggregate Dredging Policy  
 Severn Trent Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP)

- *Environmental baseline:* CCW would normally expect the scoping document to at least start to identify the likely trends indicated within the baseline data and include some sort of assessment of the implications of not implementing the plan (often referred to as the “do nothing” evaluation). We do note that this has been done to some extent in section 6, “Statement of Issues” but we must emphasise that this is a key part of the initial stages of the SA process as it allows the relative environmental effects of the various alternatives to be effectively assessed, and should be clearly set out within the report.
- The report acknowledges that there are some difficulties in obtaining suitably “disaggregated” data for the area but it should also seek to identify where there are gaps in the baseline data. Some of these gaps may be filled by partner organisations while others might remain and either influence the confidence, scope and nature of the assessment or be incorporated into the final monitoring strategy for the plan itself.
- CCW recommend considering the following additional data sets in the baseline analysis:
  - Historic Features – Landscape Characterisations for the Lower Wye Valley Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest
  - Biodiversity - Habitat connectivity mapping (CCW/Forest Research data)
  - Rivers – Consider a much wider suite of environmental indicators for water perhaps by referencing the criteria used to assess “Ecological Status” under the Water Framework Directive.
  - Economic – Consider using the various indicators for contributions made to the local economy from specific recreational activities such as angling and cycling rather than total visitor spend.
  - LANDMAP aspect layers for the area should also be reference in additional to any other landscape criteria available (such as Special Landscape Areas or landscape characterisations).
- *Environmental and Sustainability Objectives:* CCW note that objectives E1 to E11 and sustainability objectives S1 to S9 are taken from the standard objectives in the Natural England Guidance and as such, provide an excellent starting point for developing a suite of objectives specific to the Wye Valley AONB SEA. However, we would expect some rationalisation and justification for why specific objectives have been adopted. We would also expect some of the objectives to be modified and adapted to suit the specific issues and qualities of the Wye Valley AONB itself and at least an explanation of what a specific objective will mean in the context of the plan. Given that this information is not available in the current scoping report it is not possible for CCW to comment meaningfully on the selection of objectives made in the current scoping report and we look forward to receiving more detail at the appropriate time.
- *Statement of key issues:* The table of special qualities, indicators, threats and trends is a useful tool for clarifying the likely key issues to be tackled by the SEA. It is a little confusing, due to the use of unexplained acronyms and (assumed) references to tables in other documents (the management plan itself?) which should be clearly identified. The subject headings themselves do not correspond with the recommended topic areas identified in the Regulations. This is not strictly a requirement but where subjects (such as human health, population, climatic factors) are not covered some justification should be made as to why they have been “scoped out”. It is also worth noting that indicators and targets should be measurable, reasonable, relevant and reactive to the plan in question. For example, while it is appreciated that “Landscape” is often a difficult subject to

quantify objectively, changes to landscape character may be difficult to measure and the % of the AONB in Agri-environment or Woodland Grant/Better Woodlands for Wales schemes is not particularly reactive to the plan. This is particularly important for the SEA of an AONB which is primarily a “landscape” designation. Some more detailed comments are included below but we strongly recommend you refer to the CCW topic guidance notes for SEA practitioners available on our website.

*Biodiversity:*

There is no reference to the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC or the wider issue of European Protected Species.

The Conservation Objectives and relevant performance indicators contained within the Wye Valley Woodlands SAC and River Wye SAC management plans should be referenced and cross referenced with the HRA. If necessary, the parameters for ecological status as set out in the Water Framework Directive should also be used where appropriate.

Boundary Habitat. We welcome the acknowledgement of the important role of habitat functionality and connectivity identified in this table. CCW are currently developing an Eco-connectivity Toolkit with the south Wales Regional Biodiversity Action Groups which will help inform and guide the practical elements of this process.

*Geology:*

While we welcome the recognition of the importance of the geology of the AONB in this section it is unclear how the proposed headline indicators (condition of geological SSSIs) is actually relative to the majority of the issues identified.

*Visual and Sensory:*

Picturesque. We are unsure of the relevance of this indicator.

Tranquillity. CCW welcome the identification of this as a key issue but we would recommend also considering specific indicators such as light pollution, urbanisation of rural roads and settlements in addition to an overall tranquillity indicator. The Welsh Tranquillity maps are now complete and will also be available shortly.

*Historic Environment:*

We note that the importance of the landscape of outstanding historic interest is correctly identified as a element in the plan but we would expect to see some measure, such as the number of development carrying out an Assessment of Significant Impacts from Developments on Historic Landscapes (ASIDoHL), included as an indicator.

*Environmental:*

We note that many of the indicators here ‘to be confirmed’ we strongly recommend you reference the relevant strategies and policy documents for air quality, water quality, soils etc. to identify key indicators which will be meaningful to the plan itself. In addition there are a number of potential threats and changes not listed here such as quarrying and an increase in certain forms of tourism under air and water quality, and possible positive effects in relation to carbon take up by carbon rich soils (for example peat) and the opportunities to implement sustainable alternatives/actions to reduce negative effects.

- It would also be useful to reference the indicators identified (where relevant) in the various Community Strategies covered by the plan area and perhaps a greater emphasis on indicators which measure positive impacts from the plan rather than ones which measure potential deterioration or adverse effects. There are also a large number of potential issues and indicators. It should be one of the aims of the SEA development process to refine these down to a smaller number of key indicators that can accurately measure the impact of the plan.

- The changes or threats identified seem to be slightly arbitrary and it may be that effective consultation with key stakeholder groups will help refine these.
- It is important that the SEA identifies possible “alternatives” to the preferred plan to assess what would happen in the absence of the plan and also to measure the likely environmental impacts of the alternatives. You should start to consider what other forms of plan could be implemented that might further minimise the negative effects and enhance the positive. While we appreciate that this is not as straight forward for an AONB management plan, where the function should be primarily to enhance the features of the AONB and implement the vision, it should none the less be carried out.
- Finally, there is also a need to consider the scope of the monitoring strategy that will be put in place to measure the impact of the plan and the effectiveness of the SEA recommendations influence on the plan.

## Natural England

- Agreed that the Scoping Report had closely followed national guidance produced by Natural England about how the SEA process should be conducted for AONB Management Plans. Recommended some additions be made as follows:
- *Stages in the process:* some stages seem to be missing and consultation also included key stakeholders apart from those in the AONB Partnership.
- Severn Tidal Energy consultation could be considered a programme/strategy.
- *The environmental baseline:* could include
  - Historic features: veteran trees and HLC as baseline data.
  - Land management: WGS and agricultural census data to look at land use.
  - Geology: condition as well as numbers/area of RIGGs.
  - Rivers: water quality, Catchment Sensitive Farming data and water abstraction figures.
  - Landscape isn't mentioned as such: could use CQC/CQeL (for England only) or fixed point photography as data.
  - Development: quarries, mineral sites and highways data.
- *Statement of key issues:* could include as indicators
  - 1: numbers of new developments inside and outside the AONB and number of diversification schemes awarded.
  - 2: PAWS and ASNW areas as headline indicators and BAP species/habitats
  - 3: abstraction levels.
  - 4: hedgerow stats from agri-environment scheme data
  - 9: numbers/size of quarries.
  - 21: are there WAG statistics on this?
  - 26 & 27: numbers from counters and Wye Valley Walk passports

### Appendix 3 - Review of relevant plans and policies

A review of relevant plans and policies was undertaken as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. This focused on the main directives, plans and strategies that influence those aspects of the AONB that the new Management Plan is seeking to address. The table below is organised to reflect the most appropriate level for the relevant plans and policies even though some documents like cultural strategies, parish plans, village design statements, conservation management plans could be produced and adopted at a more local level.

<b>1. International Plans, Policies, Programmes and Strategies.</b>
<b>1.1 International and European</b>
The Convention of Wetlands of International Importance especially as a Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) (February 1971 as amended):
EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) (April 1979):
EU Waste Framework Directive (75/442/EEC) (as amended by 91/156/EEC) (March 1991):
EU Urban Waste Water Directive (91/271/EEC) (May 1991):
EU Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) (Dec 1991):
The EC Habitats Directive- the Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/CEE) (May 1992):
Agenda 21 (June 1992):
The UN Convention on Climate Change (March 1994):
The EC Directive on Ambient Air Quality and Management (The Air Quality Framework Directive) (96/62/EC) (Sept 1996):
Kyoto Protocol (Dec 1997):
The European Biodiversity Strategy (Feb 1998):
EU Waste to Landfill Directive (99/31/EC) (April 1999):
European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) (May 1999):
The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) (Oct 2000):
Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice (EU Sixth Environment Action Programme) (Jan 2001):
EU Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC) (June 2002):
The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (Sept 2002):
European Landscape Convention (UK ratified February 2006)
European Sustainable Development Strategy (renewed June 2006):
The UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) (June 1998)
Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals 1979
Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats 1979

EC Directive to promote Energy from Renewables Energy (2001/77/EEC)
Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks (2007/60/EC)
EU Freshwater Directive (78/659/EEC)
Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)
<b>2. National Plans, Policies, Programmes and Strategies</b>
2.1 UK
UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK Biodiversity Partnership and the UK Government Jan 1994):
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by Schedule 9 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000):
Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000:
Energy White Paper Our energy future- creating a low carbon economy (DTI Feb 2003):
Securing the Future: UK Sustainable Development Strategy (DEFRA March 2005):
Climate Change: The UK Programme (HM Government March 2006):
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (DEFRA July 2007):
The UK Government sustainable development strategy – securing the future (2005)
The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations (as amended August 2007)
Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
UK Climate Impacts Programme (2002)
Sustainable and Secure Buildings Act 2004
Water Resources for the Future (Environment Agency)
Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change (2006)
Air Quality and Climate Change- a UK perspective (2007)
Consultation on Planning Policy Statement- Planning and Climate Change (2006)
Earth Science Conservation in Great Britain (1990)
Ancient/Listed Buildings and Archaeological Areas Act 1990
Protection of Badgers Act 1992
Hedgerow Regulations (1997)
2.2 England

Working with the Grain of Nature: A Biodiversity Strategy for England (2002)
Rural Strategy ~ Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (2004)
Planning Policy Statements; PPS 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development), PPS1 annex on Climate Change, PPS 2 (Planning and Nature Conservation) PPS 3 (Housing), PPS 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) PPS 9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation)
Planning Policy Guidance; PPG 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) PPG 16 (Archaeology and Planning)
Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning (2005)
The Historic Environment: a Force for Our Future (DCMS 2001)
Heritage Protection for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century - Government White Paper (March 2007)
Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change (Consultation 2006)
2.3 Wales
Planning Policy Wales (Welsh Assembly Government March 2002):
Planning Policy Wales Companion Guide (Welsh Assembly Government June 2006):
People, Places, Futures- The Wales Spatial Plan (Welsh Assembly Government Nov 2004):
People, Places, Futures- The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update Consultation (Welsh Assembly Government January 2008):
Better Homes for People in Wales: A National Housing Strategy for Wales (Welsh Assembly Government 2001):
Wise about Waste: The National Waste Strategy for Wales (Welsh Assembly Government 2002):
Wales: A Better Country (Welsh Assembly Government 2003):
Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales (Welsh Assembly Government December 2003):
Sustainable Development Scheme and associated Action Plan: Starting to Live Differently (Welsh Assembly Government March 2004)
Landfill Allowance Scheme (Wales) Regulations (Welsh Assembly Government August 2004):
Wales: A Vibrant Economy- The Welsh Assembly Government Strategic Framework for Economic Development (Consultation document) (Welsh Assembly Government 2005):
Energy Wales: Route Map to a Clean, Low-Carbon and More Competitive Energy Future for Wales (Consultation document) (Welsh Assembly

Government 2005):
Play in Wales: Play Policy Implementation Plan (Welsh Assembly Government Feb 2006):
Environment Strategy for Wales (Welsh Assembly Government May 2006):
Climbing Higher: a strategy for sport and physical activity (Welsh Assembly Government Jan 2007):
Welsh Coastal Tourism Strategy (Draft Final Strategy Consultation Document) (Welsh Assembly Government Jan 2007):
TAN 1- Joint Housing Land Availability Studies (Welsh Assembly Government June 2006):
Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 01/2006- Housing (Welsh Assembly Government June 2006):
TAN 2- Planning and Affordable Housing (Welsh Assembly Government June 2006):
TAN 5- Nature Conservation and Planning (Welsh Assembly Government Nov 1996):
Draft Revised TAN 5- Nature Conservation and Planning (Consultation Document) (Welsh Assembly Government January 2006):
TAN 6- Agricultural and Rural Development (Welsh Assembly Government June 2000):
TAN 8- Renewable Energy (Welsh Assembly Government July 2005):
Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 01/2005- Planning for Renewable Energy (Welsh Assembly Government Jan 2005):
Draft Ministerial Interim Planning Policy on Climate Change (Consultation Document) (Welsh Assembly Government Dec 2006):
TAN 11- Noise (Welsh Assembly Government Oct 1997):
TAN 12- Design (Welsh Assembly Government 2002):
Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 01/2008- Planning for Good Design (Welsh Assembly Government Jan 2008):
TAN 13- Tourism (Welsh Assembly Government Oct 1997):
Draft Revised TAN 13- Tourism (Consultation Document) (Welsh Assembly Government July 2006):
TAN 14- Coastal Planning (Welsh Assembly Government March 1998):
TAN 15- Development and Flood Risk (Welsh Assembly Government July 2004):
TAN 16- Sport and Recreation (Welsh Assembly Government March 1998):
Draft Revised TAN 16- Sport, Recreation and Open Space (Consultation Document) (Welsh Assembly Government July 2006):
TAN 18- Transport (Welsh Assembly Government March 2007)
TAN 19- Telecommunications (Welsh Assembly Government August 2002):
TAN 20- The Welsh Language (Welsh Assembly Government June 2000):
TAN 21- Waste (Welsh Assembly Government Nov 2001):
Minerals Planning Policy Wales (Welsh Assembly Government Dec 2000):
MTAN Wales 1- Aggregates (Welsh Assembly Government March 2004):
Draft Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 02/2006- Planning, Health and Wellbeing (Consultation draft) (Welsh Assembly Government July 2006):
Welsh Office Circular 60/96 Planning and the Historic Environment- Archaeology (Welsh Office 1996):
Welsh Office Circular 61/96 Planning and the Historic Environment- Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas (Welsh Office 1996):

Welsh Assembly Government Integration Tool (2002)
Wales Transport Strategy (2007)
Priority Habitats in Wales (CCW 2003)
Draft Wales Soils Action Plan (2007)
Cultural Strategy for Wales (2002)
Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013
Ministerial Interim Planning Policy 02/2005 Planning for Retailing and Town Centres
Planning for Climate Change (consultation document Dec 2006)
Register of special and outstanding historic landscapes (Cadw)
Better Woodlands for Wales (2005)
Draft Strategy for Wales on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (2006)
<b>3. Regional Plans, Policies, Programmes and Strategies.</b>
3.1. West Midlands
Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (West Midlands Regional Assembly, 2004)
Regional Sustainable Development Framework (Sustainability West Midlands, West Midlands Regional Assembly, 2008)
Connecting to Success ~ the West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy (Advantage West Midlands, 2007)
Restoring the Regions Wildlife ~ Regional Biodiversity Strategy for the West Midlands (Regional Biodiversity Partnership, 2005)
Growing Our Future ~ The West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework (West Midlands Regional Assembly, Forestry Commission, 2004)
West Midlands Regional Historic Environment Strategy (in preparation 2008)
Regional Culture Strategy (Culture West Midlands, 2007)
Regional Energy Strategy (Energy West Midlands, 2004)
West Midlands Health and Well Being Strategy (West Midlands Regional Assembly, 2008)
Regional Housing Strategy (West Midlands Regional Assembly, 2005)
Regional Rural Delivery Framework (Rural Accord West Midlands, 2006)
Regional Visitor Economy Strategy (Advantage West Midlands, 2004)
Regional Water Resources Strategy (Environment Agency, 2005)
3.2. South West England
South West Sustainability Framework (2000) - Sustainability South West

South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) 2006-2026 - South West Regional Assembly
Our Environment, Our Future Regional Strategy for the SW Environment (2004) -The South West Regional Assembly
South West Biodiversity Action Plan (1997) South West Biodiversity Partnership
South West Nature Map (2004) South West Biodiversity Partnership
Regional Economic Strategy for South West England 2006-2015 (2006) The SW Regional Development Agency
South West Integrated Regional Strategy (2004) The South West Regional Assembly
The Way Ahead- Delivering Sustainable Communities in the South West (2005) The South West Regional Development Agency
SW Rural Delivery Framework (2005) The South West Regional Assembly
Regional Housing Strategy 2005-2016 and Sustainable Communities South West (2005)– South West Housing Body
Regional Waste Strategy for South West – Rubbish to Resource 2004-2020 –(2004) South West Regional Assembly
Regional Tourism Strategy South West – Towards 2015 (2005) South West RDA
Strategy for sustainable Food and Farming – Making a difference SW Delivery Plan (2004) – SWRDA/GOSW
Strategy for the Historic Environment in the South West (2004) – English Heritage
South West Culture Strategy (2000) Culture South West
SW Regional Woodlands and Forestry Framework 2005- 2015 (2005) Forestry Commission
Regional Renewable Energy Strategy for South West England 2003-2012 (2003) SWRDA/GOSW
State of the Region 2006 (2007) South West Observatory
State of the South West Environment Report (2006) Environment Agency
Developing the Regional Transport Strategy (2004) South West Regional Assembly
Rural Development Programme England (RDPE) South West Implementation Plan 2007-2013 – South West Regional Development Agency
SW Strategic Plan for Water Related Sport and Recreation – Environment Agency –consultation
3.3 South East Wales
South East Wales Strategic Planning Guidance Volume 1 (South East Wales Strategic Planning Group Jan 2000):
South East Wales Strategic Planning Guidance Volume 2 (South East Wales Strategic Planning Group July 2001):
South East Wales Regional Housing Apportionment- Memorandum of Understanding (June 2007):
Severn Estuary Shoreline Management Plan (Severn Estuary Coastal Group with DEFRA and NAW Autumn 2001):
South East Wales Regional Waste Plan (Welsh Assembly Government with local authorities March 2004):
Consultation Draft of revision of South East Wales Regional Waste Plan (South East Wales Regional Waste Group due 2007-2008):
Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2004-2009 (Countryside Council for Wales, English Nature, the Countryside Agency with local authorities 2004):
South East Wales Regional Development Strategy (South East Wales Economic Forum 2005):

South East Wales Transport Alliance: Outline of the Regional Transport Plan (South East Wales Transport Alliance Jan 2007):
South East Wales Transport Alliance Regional Transport Plan (South East Wales Transport Alliance due March 2008):
<b>4. County local Plans, Policies, Programmes and Strategies.</b>
4.1 Herefordshire
The Community Strategy for Herefordshire (2006)
Herefordshire Local Area Agreement (2006)
Herefordshire Local Transport Plan second edition (2006)
Herefordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2007 - 2011)
Herefordshire Core Strategy Issues Paper (2007)
Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (2007)
Joint Municipal Waste Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire 2004 – 2034 (2004)
Polytunnels SPD (2008)
4.2 Gloucestershire
Forest of Dean Core Strategy – 2 <sup>nd</sup> preferred options (2008)
Forest of Dean District Local Plan (adopted 2005)
Gloucestershire Local Area Agreement (2007)
Our Place – Our Future A Sustainable Community Strategy for Gloucestershire (2007)
Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan second edition (2006)
Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (2000)
Gloucestershire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2006)
Gloucestershire Minerals and Waste Core Strategies ~ preferred options stage (2008)
Gloucestershire Minerals and Waste Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment (2008)
Gloucestershire Structure Plan (1999) – policies apply until the adoption of the RSS in 2008
4.3 Monmouthshire
Monmouthshire Unitary Development Plan (Monmouthshire County Council June 2006):
A Community Strategy for Monmouthshire 2004- 2008 (The Monmouthshire Partnership August 2004):

Monmouthshire Local Transport Plan (Monmouthshire County Council August 2000):
Monmouthshire LANDMAP (Draft Landscape Study) Volumes 1-6 (Monmouthshire County Council October 2001) and Volume 7 (Dec 2003):
Draft Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Monmouthshire (Monmouthshire County Council 2004):
Monmouthshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan (Monmouthshire Biodiversity Partnership July 2005):
Adventa Local Development Strategy- Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (Adventa in partnership with Monmouthshire County Council 2007):
Local Air Quality Management Progress Report (Air Quality Consultants Ltd on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council 2007)
Draft Housing Strategy for Monmouthshire 2007-2012 (August 2007):
Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) (Monmouthshire County Council in partnership with Monmouthshire Local Access forum, October 2007):
Review of Monmouthshire Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy 2008-2011 Consultation Draft (Monmouthshire County Council January 2008):
Monmouthshire Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011 Consultation Document (Monmouthshire County Council January 2008):
5. Other Plans, Policies, Programmes and Strategies.
5.1 Wye & Severn River and Catchment
Severn Estuary Shoreline Management Plan (December 2000) and SMP2 Review (2008)
Severn Estuary Strategy (2001)
Gwent Levels Foreshore Management Plan (Environment Agency)
Severn Estuary Coastal Habitat Management Plan (Environment Agency)
Severn River Basin Management Plan (Environment Agency – in consultation 2008)
Severn Estuary Marine Aggregate Dredging Policy (WAG)
Wye Waterway Plan (Environment Agency Wales 2006)
Wye Catchment Flood Management Plan (Environment Agency – in consultation 2008)
Wye Catchment Abstraction Plan (Environment Agency – in consultation 2008)
Drought Management Plan
Water Resource Management Plan (Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water)
Water Resource Management Plan (Severn Trent)

**Appendix 4 - Environmental Baseline data and condition monitoring indicators**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Baseline Data</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>AONB option</b>
Landscape	National Character Area condition LandMap county Landscape Character Assessments  Fixed point photography	NE CQC/CQUL (England only) CCW/LA (Wales only) Each county different methodology  AONB archive including 2001 Jigsaw	Use Use Consider compatibility beyond combined LMZ  Develop methodology
Historic Features	No. scheduled monuments and condition Condition/Location of Dry stone walls No. Listed buildings and condition No./area of Parks and gardens and condition No./area of Conservation Areas Historic Landscape Characterisation  Register of Outstanding Historic Landscapes  No. of Assessment of Significant Impacts from Developments on Historic Landscapes (ASIDoHL)	Cadw & EH data AONB sample survey 2003-2008 Cadw, EH & LA data Cadw, EH & LA data LA data Cadw & EH data (each county different methodology) Cadw / CCW  Cadw / CCW	Use Use Use Use Use Consider compatibility  Consider comparative data on English side Consider comparative data on English side
Land Management	Area / % of land managed under agri- environment schemes Area / % of woodland under grant / management schemes Area / % PAWS in restoration Area of Land under positive conservation management	WAG & NE / Magic data FC FC / WT Reserve / Trust ownership data	Use Use Use Use
Biodiversity	No./area of SACs, SSSIs and condition No./area of NNRs, LNRs and County Wildlife Sites, No./area of BAP Priority habitats Number of BAP priority species Habitat connectivity mapping  No. Veteran trees	WAG & NE / Magic data LA, WAG & NE / Magic data LA / LBRC data LA / LBRC data CCW/Forest Research data  AONB data	Use Use Use Use Use Consider comparative data on English side Use
Geology	No./area of Regionally Important Geological Sites Condition of RIGs.	CCW / NE / LAs CCW / NE / LAs	Use Use

Rivers	Water quality and water abstraction figures Ecological Status SAC condition Catchment Sensitive Farming	Environment Agency Water Framework Directive WAG & NE / Magic data EA & NE / Magic data	Use Use Use Consider comparative data on Welsh side
Social	Population data	Census data	Use
Economic	Number of people employed in sectors (inc.farming) Number of people participating in outdoor activities Visitor numbers Visitor Spend	Defra / census data Collected by operators? Collected by site managers Collected by county  AONB collate for Wye Valley Walk	Use Consider collation Consider collation Consider dis-aggregating for AONB Use
Access	PROW classified as Easy to use Number of people recorded on PROW with visitor counters Length of PROW Area of Open Access land	LAs LAs LAs LAs / CCW / NE	Use Use Use Use
Development	Planning GIS DATA: Number of significant planning applications recorded eg. new telecoms, polytunnels, quarries, highways etc Change of use from agriculture to another use Number of significant developments approved (by type)	LAs / AONB collated data  LAs / AONB collated data LAs / AONB collated data LAs / AONB collated data	Use  Use Use Use

## Appendix 5 - Special Qualities, Changes or threats and Headline Indicators

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Changes or threats	Headline Indicator	Trend	
1	Overall Landscape 16 AONB Landscape Management Zones with key feature	Outstanding (see county Landscape Character Assessments and LandMap)	Sustainable-land management &/or ownership that conserves or enhances key landscape characteristics and features 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)	Character is classed as being 'maintained' in the two National Character Areas in which the AONB falls  % of AONB / LMZs / land use types in Agri-environment schemes & woodland grant schemes	→  ↗
	Biodiversity				
2.	Woodlands	Diversity of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and Planted Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) including 35 SSSIs. Some plantation woodland. ## SMs and ## Listed Buildings within woodlands.  Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	Changes in land management, including neglect of much private small woodland and road & bank side trees Ongoing degradation of ancient woodland sites by the continuing existence of conifers and other non-native species, including continued replanting of ASNW with conifers Degradation of features of the historic environment Fragmentation of ancient woodland sites by land use changes Climate change Degradation through neglect Degradation by specific alien &/or expanding species (eg. cherry laurel, deer, boar, grey squirrel)	% of overall woodland (ha) is managed under a Forestry Commission Woodland Grant Scheme agreement  % of SMs and Listed Buildings at high or medium risk within woodlands  % PAWS in restoration  % of Wye Valley Woodlands SSSIs are in favourable or recovering condition	↗  ↘  ↗  ↗
3.	The river & tributaries	Main river SAC and SSSI, 6 SMs and 70 Listed Buildings within Flood Zone 3	Degradation of natural processes, including constraints on flooding Land use impacts may degrade or destroy features e.g. loss of riverside grassland, siltation from poor soil management, loss of historic environment features, engineering for recreational interests etc. Invasive alien species Diffuse Pollution, including the leaching of chemicals from agricultural land	% of river SSSI in favourable or recovering condition and 'Ecological Status under Water Framework Directive'  % of SMs and Listed Buildings at high or medium risk within flood zone  % of river length is classified as of 'good' water quality	↗  ↘  ↗

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Changes or threats	Headline Indicator	Trend	
		Point source pollution, including increased development overfilling old drainage and sewerage systems			
		Changes through climate change and altered seasonal rainfall.			
		Spread of disease, such as <i>Phytophthora</i> infection of riparian alders			
4.	Small field pattern of un/semi-improved grassland, often bounded by drystone walls or old hedges	Very few SSSIs, ## SWS / LWS Target area for HLS	Continuing degradation through neglect and/or Change in ownership &/or land management (including overgrazing)	% of farmed land (ha) is managed under some form of agri-environment scheme  LAA PI 197	↗
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	Damage and degradation through change in ownership &/or land management, including removal, inappropriate activity, road widening	LAA PI 197	↗
	Geological				
6.	Silurian Rocks	Grey / Brown rocks and soils (series of alternating limestones and shales)	Little used as a traditional building material	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)	Vernacular building material, although rarely used in modern architecture due to softness of rock	x% of geological SSSIs (by land area) are in favourable or recovering condition	→
8.	Quartz Conglomerate in Upper Old Red Sandstone including	Good, (Quartz Conglomerate overlain by Tintern Sandstone)	Traditionally used locally in drystone walls, limited modern use	x% of geological SSSIs (by land area) are in favourable or recovering condition	→
9.	Carboniferous Limestone	Good (overlain by Carboniferous Coal Measures)	Quarrying; two working quarries in, and one bordering, AONB Loss of working small quarries	x% of geological SSSIs (by land area) are in favourable or recovering condition	→
10.	Riverine	Good, incised meanders &	Natural processes, including flooding and movement of	x% of geological SSSIs (by land area) are	→

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Changes or threats	Headline Indicator	Trend
10. geomorphology	superimposed drainage globally important examples for educational purposes	meanders Invasive alien species Land use impacts may degrade or destroy features e.g. siltation, engineering for recreational interests or flood defence	in favourable or recovering condition	➔
	Visual and Sensory			
11. Picturesque, extensive & dramatic views.	72 viewpoints identified. 20 included in Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme including 4 SMs at Piercefield.	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	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	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	% of the AONB is classified as 'tranquil' (green on CPRE Map)	➔
	Historic Environment			
13. Prehistoric sites from Palaeolithic to Iron Age	Palaeolithic occupation at Arthur's Cave # SMs	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 visitor access, Offa's Dyke Path National Trail erosion	% of Scheduled Monuments classified as 'At High or Medium Risk' No. Scheduled Monuments benefiting from grant aid	⬇️ ⬆️
15. Mediaeval Defensive and Ecclesiastical sites and associated landscapes	Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Cadw Register of Historic Landscapes. Goodrich & Chepstow Castles and Tintern Abbey in state ownership.	Changes in the visiting regime and increases in popularity of various sites.	% of Scheduled Monuments classified as 'At High or Medium Risk' No. Scheduled Monuments benefiting from grant aid % of Listed Buildings are classified as 'At Risk'	⬇️ ⬆️ ⬇️
16. Post-medieval	Landscape of Outstanding Historic	Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy	% of Scheduled Monuments classified as	⬇️

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Changes or threats	Headline Indicator	Trend
16. industrial sites and associated landscapes	Interest in Cadw Register of Historic Landscapes	archaeological features	‘At High or Medium Risk’	↗
		Changes in the visiting regime and increases in popularity of various sites.	No. Scheduled Monuments benefiting from grant aid % of Listed Buildings classified as ‘At Risk’	
17. Railway heritage	Line closed 1958	Further neglect of structures	% of Scheduled Monuments classified as ‘At High or Medium Risk’ % of Listed Buildings classified as ‘At Risk’	↘
18. Ancient trees	Significant numbers of ancient pollards and mature trees in hedges, woods and parkland	Neglect or Inappropriate management may damage or destroy trees	% recorded losses to AONB Veteran Tree Survey	→
19. Historic parks and gardens	10 registered 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	Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy historic features (including the degradation of identified designed landscape)	% of registered parks and 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	Inappropriate management may degrade or destroy historic features	% of Listed Buildings classified as ‘At Risk’	↘
Language				
21. Welsh language & accent; Forest of Dean & South Herefordshire dialects & accents	Usage diminishing. Welsh taught in schools in Monmouthshire	Loss of local identity can further erode traditional usages	N~a	~
		Influences of universal education and media		
Environmental				
22. Air quality	Good	Increase in road traffic pollution	t.b.c.	
		Inefficient use of wood-fuel		
23. Water quality	Main River SAC and in EC	Changes in land use may increase point or diffuse	% of river length classified as of ‘good’	↗

Special Qualities [SQ]	Recognition	Changes or threats	Headline Indicator	Trend
23. Water quality	Freshwater Fish Directive (78/659 EEC)& along with all streams are Fisheries Ecosystem class 2,	pollution e.g. soil run off, chemical leaching, etc.	water quality	↗
		Falling water table may impact on water quality through low flow events, increased concentration of pollutants, and reduced surface area for oxygen diffusion.		
24. Soil quality	1,2 &3	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.	t.b.c	
Access and Recreation				
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	Degradation of surface and/or boundary features due to changes in levels of usage &/or ownership or management, eg. deep rutting and waterlogging, hard surfacing, widening, etc.	% of rights of way are classified as 'easy to use'	↗
		Blockage and/or obstruction		
		Unclear classification		
26. Offa's Dyke Path	National Trail	Erosion due to excessive usage leading to damage to Offa's Dyke earthwork	% of rights of way are classified as 'easy to use'	↗
		Blockage and/or obstruction	% of Scheduled Ancient Monument classified as 'At High or Medium Risk'	↘
27. Wye Valley Walk	Regional Route	Degradation of route due to erosion and excessive usage and/or river flooding and/or landslips	% of rights of way are classified as 'easy to use'	↗
		Blockage and/or obstruction		
		Some sections still on Permissive Paths		
			Average and peak usage from counters	↗
28. Access land	Good	Changes in legislation or sale removing access rights	% of AONB	→
29. Small commons; largest are Coppet Hill, Broadmoor, Staunton Meend, Whitelye, The Hudnalls	Generally good	Obstruction to access	% of AONB	→



**Appendix 6 - Environmental Baseline data and trends**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Data</b>	<b>AONB Baseline</b>	<b>Trend from 2004</b>
Landscape	Area of AONB	32,735 hectares	→
	National Character Area condition	Character is classed as being 'maintained' in the two National Character Areas in which the AONB falls.	→
	LandMap	The evaluation matrices (volume 6, final report), values the Wye Valley as outstanding for 4 out of the 5 'History Aspect Areas' and outstanding for 6 out of the 9 'Cultural Aspect Areas' (the remaining 3 ranking as high).	→
	county Landscape Character Assessments	Landscape Character Areas create 16 Landscape Management Zones (LMZ) in AONB.	→
Historic Features	No. scheduled monuments	123	↗
	Dry stone walls and condition	27,504 metres of wall surveyed. 58.6% condition categories A & B	↗
	No. Listed buildings	915	↗
	No. of Registered Parks and gardens	10	→
	No. of Conservation Areas	17	→
	Register of Outstanding Historic Landscapes	Lower Wye Valley	→
Land Management	Area / % of land managed under agri-environment schemes	87.22km <sup>2</sup> (26% of AONB)	↗
	Area / % of woodland under grant / management schemes	1,649.26 hectares (19.94% of total AONB woodland area) + Public Forest Estate 4,961.48 ha (59.99% of total AONB woodland area; 15.2% of AONB)	↗
	Area of Land under positive conservation management	15,331 ha (46.83% of AONB)	↗
Biodiversity	No. of SACs and condition	3 varying from 'unfavourable declining' to 'favourable'	↗
	No. of SSSIs and condition	45 varying from 'unfavourable declining' to 'favourable' (10% of total AONB)	↗
	No. of NNRs	4	↗
	No. of LNRs	3	↗

	No. of County Local Wildlife Sites	204	↗
	No. of Veteran trees on AONB register	2048	↗
Social	Population data	26,374	↗
Economic	Number of people employed & by in sector, eg. farming	12,194 1,241	→ ↘
	Visitor numbers	Estimated 2.5 million visitor days per annum Estimated 750,000 visitors per annum	↘
	Visitor Spend	£20 and £40 per day from the Wye Valley Walk feedback	↗
Access	Number of people recorded on Wye Valley Walk with visitor counters	Approx. 9,000 per annum	↗
Development	No. of planning applications per annum	750	→