



Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm

The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB Management Plan 2014 - 2019

Deadline 7

Date: 08 March 2023

Revision: N/A

Document Reference: 7.24

Application Reference: N/A





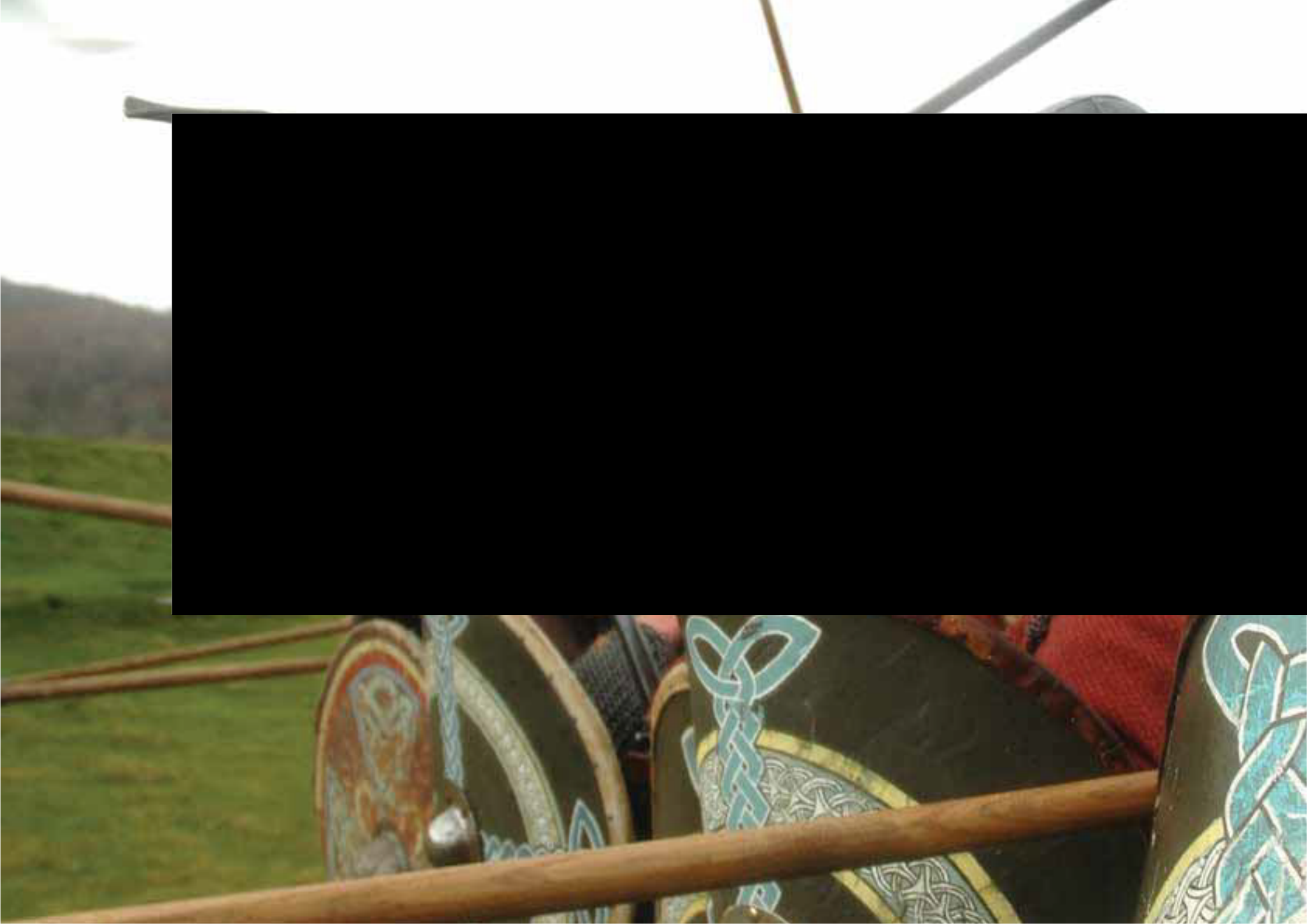
Bryniau Clwyd a
Dyffryn Dyfrdwy
Clwydian Range
and Dee Valley

Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Management Plan 2014 - 2019



J. G. G. G.
2016





Part One

STRATEGY

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Introduction

The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is the dramatic upland frontier to North Wales embracing some of the country's most wonderful countryside.

The Clwydian Range is an unmistakable chain of heather clad summits topped by Britain's most strikingly situated hillforts. Beyond the windswept Horseshoe Pass, over Llantysilio Mountain,

lies the glorious Dee Valley with historic Llangollen, a famous market town rich in cultural and industrial heritage, including the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Llangollen Canal, a designated World Heritage Site.

The Offa's Dyke National Trail traverses this specially protected area, one of the least discovered yet most welcoming and easiest to explore of Britain's finest landscapes.



About this Plan

In 2011 the Clwydian Range AONB was extended to include the Dee Valley and part of the Vales of Llangollen. An interim statement for this Southern extension to the AONB was produced in 2012 as an addendum to the 2009 Management Plan for the Clwydian Range. This Management Plan therefore is the first overarching 5 year strategy for the newly formed Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

It is a plan for all those with an interest in the Clwydian Range

and Dee Valley and has been prepared by the AONB Unit in close collaboration with key partners and stake holders including landowners and custodians of key features. This is a five year plan for the entire community of the AONB not just the AONB Unit. It also recognises that the AONB has an impact on the wider region and can be affected by influences outside of its boundary. It is a Plan for the AONB, its communities, businesses, visitors and organisations and will require all who have an interest in the

AONB to work together to achieve its aspirations. It will ensure that AONB purposes are being delivered whilst contributing to the aims and objectives of other strategies for the area.

This Management Plan is different from its predecessors in that it also begins to tackle the question of what the AONB can produce to meet society's needs whilst ensuring the achievement of AONB's purposes to conserve and enhance natural beauty.



AONB Designation

The Clwydian Range was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in July 1985. In 2011 following detailed work by the Countryside Council for Wales and the three Local Authorities of Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham the AONB designation was extended to include the Dee Valley. This is the most recent landscape designation in Wales and makes the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB the largest of the 5 AONBs in Wales.

1.1 Purpose of the Designation

AONBs together with National Parks recognise our finest landscapes and set a framework for their protection and enhancement. The primary statutory purpose of designating a tract of Countryside as an AONB is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.

The concept of 'natural beauty' includes the protection of flora, fauna and geological as well as landscape features. However, it is very important that the cultural dimension of the landscape, including the historical, spiritual and inspirational elements, as well as the physical human

shaping of the land is fully recognised. In Wales the added dimensions of the language provides an essential element of cultural richness that must be recognised too. These should all be integrated into the management of AONBs.

1.2 The significance of AONB designation

The power to designate an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty comes from the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949. The purposes, duties and management requirements for AONBs are set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. Section 82 of the CRoW Act establishes the primary purpose of AONB designation as the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

Section 85 places a duty on all public bodies to have regard to the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area in undertaking any functions or actions affecting an AONB. It is not the purpose of designation to stop development but the planning authorities will consider any development proposal to ensure that it does not unduly harm the character and appearance of the AONB; it is

sensitively located and designed; and it complements or enhances the special qualities and features of the area.

Section 89 requires the local authorities in whose area an AONB lies to prepare and publish an AONB Management Plan to guide policy development and management actions.

1.3 Who is the Plan for?

The Plan is designed to provide a framework that can inform and guide anyone who undertakes activities that may affect the AONB. These will include:

Relevant Authorities – All public bodies and statutory undertakers – as defined in Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 – that have a duty to have regard for the purposes of AONBs. This plan, in defining the areas special qualities and features sets out an agenda for managing change that will help these bodies fulfil their statutory duties. The Joint Committee of the AONB represents and acts on behalf of the three local Authorities of Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham.

AONB Partnership 2015
The AONB Partnership is an effective resource in the range

and depth of political and professional expertise and experience. It represents the local authorities, landowners, farmers, conservation and recreation interests. The Partnership supports the delivery of the AONB Management Plan through its expertise and experience in a broad range of fields related to landscape management and reports to the Joint Committee.

Partners of the AONB – organisations and individuals that have a key role in delivering and championing the programmes of the AONB – as represented by the AONB Partnership.

Landowners and Land managers – The Plan seeks to work with landowners and land managers and recognises the key role they have to play in realising the overall vision.

Local Communities – The plan commits to working with those who live and work within the AONB and identifies the importance of communities in defining and caring for the landscape. The plan sets out an agenda for working with the communities of the AONB.

Users of and Visitors to the area – Many people benefit from the AONB even if remote from it and this plan recognises the positive impact that the landscape of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley has on people and communities beyond its boundaries.

1.4 Governance

Since the expansion of the AONB to include the Dee Valley, parts of which fall in to Wrexham County Borough Council, a governance review has been undertaken in order to develop a more appropriate working structure that reflects the joint approach between the three Local Authorities of Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham as well as the need to expand to include

other partnerships in the new AONB.

AONB Joint Committee 2014
The three Local Authorities of Denbighshire, Wrexham and Flintshire entered into a legal agreement to jointly discharge their AONB functions by means of a Joint Committee for the AONB in the summer of 2014. The Committee is made up of

Lead members (members of the Authority's Executive or Cabinet) of each Local Authority and has the power to act on behalf of those Local Authorities in delivering the purposes of the AONB. It is supported by an Officer's Working Group of relevant officers from the constituent local authorities and Natural Resources Wales and the AONB Partnership.





Setting the Plan in Context

European Context

2.1 European Landscape Convention

The UK signed up to the European Landscape Convention in 2007. The Convention clearly sets out an agenda for landscape protection and management on a European level and as such is an important element in informing a strategic approach. The Convention asks member states:

a) to recognise landscapes in law as an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity;

b) to establish and implement landscape policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning.

c) to establish procedures for the participation of the general public, local and regional authorities, and other parties with an interest in the definition and implementation of landscape policies.

d) to integrate landscape into their regional and town planning policies and in its cultural, environmental,

agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on landscape.

Specifically the Convention asks each country to undertake to raise awareness of landscape protection, identify special landscape characteristics, and to set and implement objectives for protection, management and planning of the landscape.

2.2 International Union for Conservation of Nature Category V Landscapes

IUCN protected area management categories classify protected areas according to their management objectives. The categories are recognised by international bodies such as the United Nations and by many national governments as the global standard for defining and recording protected areas and as such are increasingly being incorporated into government legislation.

Category V refers to one of six categories of protected areas worldwide and are defined as protected areas where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value: and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature

conservation and other values.

Category V Landscapes recognise the significance of AONBs in global terms and ensures a consistent approach to landscape conservation internationally.

2.3 UNESCO World Heritage site



Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal has become the UK's 28th World Heritage Site, and is only the third World Heritage Site inscription in Wales.

The Dee Valley includes the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Llangollen Canal inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 2009. The designation sits within the 3 Counties of Denbighshire, Wrexham and Shropshire and stretches from Llantysilio in the west to Gledridge in the east. Approximately 90% of the World Heritage Site is within the AONB.

The concept of World Heritage Sites is at the core of the World Heritage Convention. This was adopted in 1972 by UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), to which 193 nations belong. Through the convention, UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification,

protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage sites around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.

The convention required the establishment of a World Heritage List managed by an inter-governmental World Heritage Committee. Sites awarded World Heritage Status are added to this list, and it's a way of recognising that some places – both natural and cultural – are important enough to be the responsibility of the international community as a whole. As a member of the convention, 'state parties' (national governments e.g. UK Government) have pledged to care for their World Heritage Sites

as part of protecting their national heritage.

Inclusion on the World Heritage List leaves the existing rights and obligations of owners, occupiers and planning authorities unaffected but before being given World Heritage Status, a site must be shown to have effective statutory protection and a comprehensive management plan agreed with the owners to ensure its conservation and presentation.

National Context

2.4 The Environment Bill

The Environment Bill emphasises the importance of considering the management of our natural resources, on land and sea, in a more integrated way and places sustainable development at the heart of its approach. It sets out a new statutory framework for the integrated and sustainable management of our natural resources

Critically the Bill makes provision for the production of a State of Natural Resources Report which will identify the condition of our natural resources and how well they are being managed. The State of Natural Resources Report will form the basis of a National Natural Resources Policy that will set priorities for the sustainable management of natural resources

in Wales. This policy will be delivered on a local level through Area Statements produced by Natural Resources Wales and will prioritise action and opportunities for management.

The Bill is expected to receive assent in the Spring of 2016.

2.5 Well Being of Future Generation (Wales Act) 2015

This Act sets about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and to safe guard it for future generations. It requires public bodies listed in the Act, including Local Authorities to think more about the long-term, and to work better with people and communities.

It sets out 7 Well Being Goals for:

- **A more prosperous Wales** -a skilled and educated nation with an economy that generates wealth

and employment within environmental limits

- **A resilient Wales** – a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience.
- **A healthier Wales** – Where peoples physical and mental well being are maximised
- **A more equal Wales** – a society where people can achieve their potential no

matter what their background.

- **A Wales of cohesive communities** - Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
- **A wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language** – A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language
- **A globally responsible Wales** – a nation that considers where it can have a positive impact on global well being.

2.6 The Historic Environment Bill – Wales

Also known as the Heritage Bill this piece of legislation seeks to make improvements to current provision for the protection and management of the Welsh Historic environment. It gives more effective protection to Listed Buildings and Scheduled

Ancient Monuments and strengthens existing frameworks for the management of the historic environment.

In particular the bill will give greater powers for Local Authorities to act where listed

building are under threat or in urgent need of attention. It will also give Welsh Government great scope to respond should protected sites be damaged or destroyed.

2.7 Taking the Long View *Welsh Government Statement for AONBs and National Parks.*

This draft policy statement sets out the Welsh Government’s policy framework for statutory designated landscapes in Wales. It requires designated landscapes to contribute to meeting the challenges of sustainable development through the delivery of their statutory purposes.

It set out a vision for AONBs

and National Parks to be living, working landscapes, exemplars of sustainable development, with vibrant rural communities, extensive recreational opportunities as well as thriving ecosystems rich in biodiversity.

It calls for Protected Landscapes in Wales to be areas where new and innovative solutions to

environmental challenges will be developed, tested and shared.

It specifically promotes an ‘ecosystem approach’ to landscape management which means considering how it regulates our environment and its key services including economic and social wellbeing.

2.8 Water Framework Directive - River Basin Management Plans - 2015

The Directive requires all EU Member States to achieve good ecological status of inland water bodies by 2015. It introduces a system of water management based on river basins rather than political or administrative boundaries.

It calls for the production of River Basin management plans that will protect aquatic species and habitats and safeguard drinking and bathing water.

The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley falls into two River Basin Districts - the Dee and the Clwyd. Natural Resources Wales are currently consulting on the River Dee Basin Management Plan and the River Clwyd Catchment Management Plan due to be completed in 2015. Both plans outline measures to improve the water environment, its rivers, lakes and streams, and encompass all of the issues and pressures on the water

environment. The plans recognise that river basin management can deliver multiple benefits. For example the management of the uplands can not only manage flood waters but can also deliver better water quality and help in carbon capture.

Local Context

Local Development Plans

The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB falls within three local authority areas. They are Denbighshire County Council, Flintshire County Council and Wrexham County Borough.

These councils are the local planning authorities and the 'relevant authorities' under the CRoW Act in respect of AONB

Management Plans. Each council is required to produce a development plan to guide spatial change and growth within their area. These plans are either 'Unitary Development Plans' or 'Local Development Plans'. They provide a framework for local decision-making and the reconciliation of development and conservation interests in order

that land use changes proceed coherently and with maximum community benefit.

Each has policies that respect the purposes of AONB designation and place landscape conservation as a primary consideration within the AONB when considering development proposals.

Geodiversity

Geodiversity has been defined as:

the link between people, landscape and their culture: it is the variety of geological environments, phenomena and processes that make those landscapes, rocks, minerals, fossils and soils which provide the framework for life on earth.

(Stanley, 2001).

With this definition, geodiversity is all around us. It provides the raw materials for industry, buildings, homes and the soils in which our crops grow. It also begins to shape and define habitats so important for biodiversity. Important to the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley, it produces the spectacular landscapes, which are important for our health and well-being.

The eastern edge of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley is dominated by limestone

countryside, from Prestatyn Hillside to Loggerheads and Llanarmon yn Iâl to the impressive escarpment at Eglwysseg. The limestone was deposited in a shallow tropical sea, teeming with life about 350 million years ago when Wales lay south of the equator. The rocks contain many fossils of creatures such as many different types of coral, crinoids, (sea lily), bivalve and brachiopod shellfish, especially the large *Gigantoproductus giganteus* and *Davisiella llangollensis* and rare trilobites. At the far eastern end of the AONB there is the remains of beaches with large sand dunes which formed on the coast of the shallow sea. This sandstone is very high in silica and the deposits were quarried for the glass industry. These limestones and sandstones too have been uplifted from the sea floor to their present position over 400m above sea level.

The limestone areas of the AONB are associated with stone and mineral extraction over centuries with remains of lead mining evident in the landscape and limestone quarries.

The central spine of the Clwydian Range and the slopes of the Dee Valley are dominated by heather clad hills. The hills are Silurian age, mudstones and sandstones deposited in a deep sea 410 million years ago. These deep sea rocks have been folded, faulted and uplifted to their present position by huge Earth movements and now, the highest point, Moel Fferna above the Dee Valley is 630m above sea level.



An Ecosystem Approach

3.1 An Ecosystem Approach

What is the landscape of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley delivering for us and how can we ensure that it can continue to deliver?

Natural Resources Wales is asking the managers of protected landscapes to follow an ecosystems approach when preparing management plans and has produced guidance in order to assist in the adoption of this approach (Ecosystem Approach for Protected Landscapes Management Plan Reviews' Craggatak Consultanting March 2014)

The ecosystem approach comes from the Convention on Biological Diversity 2004. That convention defines the approach as

"a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way".

The ecosystem approach makes explicit the link between the status of natural resource systems and ecosystem services

that support human well-being. It seeks to maintain the integrity and functioning of ecosystems as a whole to avoid rapid undesirable ecological change. It also recognises that the impacts of human activities are a matter of social choice, and are as integral to ecosystem interactions as ecosystems are to human activities.

The natural systems of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley touch our lives every day. Whether living in Mold, Wrexham or Rhyl or in the more rural areas, we rely on these natural systems to support us. They underpin our health, wealth and happiness and give us a sense of place, pride and identity.

Well looked after, the AONB will continue to provide us with some of the essentials of life including clean air and water, food, fuel and raw materials. It helps to regulate our climate, stores flood waters, filters pollution, and provides opportunities for us to improve our health and wellbeing. The Plan therefore needs to consider what benefits

the AONB can provide to meet the needs of society and respond to current issues such as the need to produce more food, improve health and well-being and adapt to the effects of a changing climate.

It is also recognised that the landscape of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley has an influence on ecosystems, communities and economies far beyond the boundary of the designation. For example the river catchment of the Dee has its beginnings in the Clwydian Range and the Berwyn Mountains but extends far beyond through Denbighshire, Wrexham, Flintshire and Cheshire. Activity within these catchments therefore is potentially wide reaching and so where necessary we need to consider these impacts. This is equally true of the communities and businesses outside of the AONB that nevertheless rely on the outstanding quality of the landscape on their doorstep to thrive.

Plants and trees are central to regulating air quality through the recycling of carbon dioxide

The Cultural heritage of the AONB gives the area a distinctive character shaped by communities over generations

Regulating Carbon Capture
- 160 million tons of Carbon is locked into the Welsh uplands

The Dee catchment provides **fresh drinking water** to North Wales and the north West of England

Provision of energy through harnessing hydro, solar or wind

Woodland moorland and ffridd are particularly important in regulating water flow from catchments into rivers and streams

Tranquil and inspirational landscape

Providing timber into local markets at Kronospan

Providing Food
425 farms in the AONB keeping 95,760 ewes and lambs, 11,063 cows and calves

Outdoor Tourism contributes around £40million to the economy of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley

Supporting biodiversity
Over a quarter of the AONB contains internationally important habitats and species

Cultural Services - Access to the outdoors can make a significant contribution to physical and mental health and wellbeing. Cost Physical inactivity in Wales estimated to be around £650m.

Provisioning Services	Regulating Services	Cultural Services	Supporting Services
The products of ecosystems such as water, food and The supply of raw materials.	The results of natural processes such as water purification and air quality.	'Non-material' benefits that result from our interaction with the natural environment.	Functions provided by ecosystems that underpin all of the other services.
Water Supply	Air Quality	Inspiration	Soil Formation
Clean water is essential for life. The hill slopes of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley are part of the Dee and Clwyd catchments supplying water for commercial and domestic use.	Plants and trees are central to the cycle of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. They have an important role to play in regulating levels of air pollution.	The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley is renowned for the beauty of its landscape and its sense of place. The area has provided inspiration for many famous artists and writers. The special qualities of the AONB continue to be a source of inspiration and enables people to escape and find spiritual renewal.	Soil is formed by the interaction between plants. Micro-organisms and the underlying geology. We depend on healthy soils for growing food. Soils are slow to form but can be quickly degraded by poor land management, erosion and the impacts of weather and climate.
Food	Climate Regulation and carbon storage	Tranquility	Biodiversity
Farmers in the AONB produce food and other raw materials. The farmed environment is a major producer of lamb, beef and dairy.	Plants and trees have an influence on the climate at both local and global scales. They absorb and store carbon from the atmosphere. The peaty soils of the upland areas of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley have a key role to play in locking up carbon.	Relative tranquillity is recognised as a special quality of the AONB. It provides a resource and a benefit that is greatly valued in the context of the busy population centres to the North and East.	Plants and animals drive many of the processes that result in a healthy ecosystem, and the benefits we get from it. The richness and diversity of species and habitats are vital to conserve as they support and underpin many of the processes we rely on to sustain our lives. The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley is home to a number of species particularly rare species such as black grouse, hen harrier, water vole, and great crested newts.

Timber	Water and Flood Regulation	Cultural Heritage	Water
<p>Woodlands covers around 13% of the total area of the AONB. Both broad leaved and conifer woodlands contribute to timber markets at Kronospan but many small woodland owners are engaged in coppicing and charcoal production</p>	<p>The water catchment rivers and streams help regulate the flow of water and drainage of the land through storage and reducing surface run-off. The moorlands, woodlands and ffridd are particularly important and if properly managed they can help reduce flooding at times of high rainfall and sustain river flows during droughts</p>	<p>It is the people of the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley that give the area its distinctive character and strong sense of place and personal belonging. This heritage has been a source of inspiration to generations of landscape painters poets and musicians and continues to inspire art music and poetry in eisteddfodau and literature across the area.</p>	<p>We rely on the natural environment and its functions to provide us with fresh water.</p>
Energy	Erosion Regulation	Access and Recreation	Nutrient Recycling
<p>The AONB has good conditions for a range of renewable energy schemes that are compatible with its special qualities.</p> <p>There is scope for developing resources such as woodfuel and hydro in ways that also improve landscape quality and biodiversity.</p>	<p>The fragile peaty soils of the heather ridges and the thin limestone soils are prone to erosion. Erosion is reduced by tree and vegetation cover.</p>	<p>Recreation and tourism is a significant feature of the area with an extensive network of access routes including the Offa's Dyke National Trail</p> <p>Popular beauty spots at Loggerheads, Moel Famau and the visitor attractions such as the World Heritage Site. The area attracts millions of visits each year, which makes a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of both the visitors and residents.</p>	<p>Plants, animals and micro-organisms are essential to the natural cycle of nutrients and help maintain soil and water quality.</p> <p>Increased levels of nutrients such as nitrates and phosphates from sewage and fertilisers can result in poor water quality.</p>





What Makes the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Special?

In setting out a programme of management for the protection and enhancement of the AONB it is first necessary to define those individual features and qualities that make up the special character of the area.

Whilst it is recognised that there are a number of elements within the landscape that are of particular value it is important to identify those features within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley that represent the finest qualities nationally. It is also recognised that this special character is made up of the unique combination of all its Special Features and

qualities where the features may be considered to be the physical attributes, its rolling moorland, woodlands and cliffs and the qualities are the nonphysical attributes and are related to how we interact with it. These are the sensory aspects of the landscape.

The 2009 management planning process for the Clwydian Range undertook consultation with local communities, public bodies and agencies with an interest in the area's management. The individual features and qualities that make up the special character of the area were identified and formed the basis

of the 2009 Management Plan for the Clwydian Range. Similarly the work that took place to deliver the extension to the Clwydian Range into the Dee Valley in 2011 considered the special characteristics of the landscape which were then drawn together into an Interim Statement in 2012. The Special Features and Qualities identified in both pieces of work have been drawn together to form the basis of this plan.

The special features and qualities identified in both pieces of work have been drawn together to form the basis of this plan and are replicated in **Table 1**

Table 1 : Special Qualities of the AONB

Landscape Character and Quality



Tranquility

Tranquillity is associated with an atmosphere of calm and stillness; peace and quiet; and with dark night skies.

Remoteness and Wildness, Space and Freedom

Remoteness and wildness is associated with a feeling of trepidation and sometimes even danger. The sublime. Space and freedom are related to access to the landscape and the uninterrupted and extensive views from the high places within it.

Bro and the link between communities and their landscape

A sense of belonging and attachment to the landscape.

Habitats and Wildlife



Heather Moorland and Rolling ridges

The dramatic moorland ridges of the central Clwydian Range, expansive Llandegla and Ruabon Moors, Llantysilio and North Berwyn.

Broadleaved woodlands and Veteran trees

Bishops Wood, Cwm and Wheeler Valley. Ash dominated Alyn Valley woods and the small copses of the upper Alyn and upland oak woods of the Dee Valley.

River Valleys and the River Dee

The dramatic and powerful river Dee contrasted with the smaller twisting and winding River Alyn and River Wheeler.

Limestone grasslands, cliffs and screes

Graig Fawr, Loggereads and Bryn Alyn – Llanarmon yn Iâl and the spectacular Eglwyseg Escapement.

Historic Environment



Historic Settlement and Archaeology

Historic settlement patterns and conservation areas. The diverse patterns and features in the landscape left by previous generations.

Industrial Features and the World Heritage Site

Limestone quarrying and lead mining, slate quarries and associated tramways and workings – the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and canal, Horseshoe Falls.

Historic Defence Features

The dramatic chain of Iron Age Hillforts of the Clwydian Range, Castell Dinas Bran and Chirk Castle and medieval Motte and Baileys at Tomen y Rhodwydd, Tomen y Fadre and Glyndŵr's Mount, Carrog.

Small historic features

Often unlisted or scheduled a rich mixture of small historic features that are an important part of the rich cultural layer of the landscape – wells, village pumps, boundary stones, waymarkers, milk stands and K6 telephone boxes.

Traditional boundaries

Drystone walls and hedges reflecting traditional skills and craftsmanship and often reflecting local styles and geology.

Access Recreation and Tourism



Iconic Visitor and Cultural Attractions

Sites that have helped to shape the identity of the AONB as a visitor destination – Loggerheads, Moel Famau, Castell Dinas Bran, Valle Crucis Abbey, the Horseshoe Pass and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Horseshoe Falls

The Offa's Dyke National Trail and Promoted Routes

Stretching from Prestatyn Hillside in the north to Llangollen in the South, the National Trail makes the AONB particularly accessible. The Dee Valley Way, North Berwyn Way and a network of community paths. Together with extensive areas of Access Land the landscape of the AONB is particularly accessible.

Culture and People



The Built Environment

The villages and towns, hamlets and scattered settlements.

People and Communities

A rich mix of culture and strong sense of community – the facilities and services that are essential to sustaining rural life.



Responding to Future trends and issues

In setting an agenda for the Special Qualities and Features of the AONB this strategy has drawn from the findings of the State of the AONB Report which identifies issues and the key forces for change impacting on the AONB both locally and nationally.

The State of the AONB Reports establishes some essential baseline data for key indicators that will give an idea of the general condition of the landscape features and its resilience to change. Whilst some data exists from previous plans which allows us to pick up trends in landscape change this is the first time that the southern part of the AONB has been included.

Many of the over-arching forces for change identified in the last AONB Management plan are still relevant although there has been some significant progress in addressing key issues in some areas.

- The Heather and Hillforts Landscape Partnership Scheme focused on issues of agricultural abandonment and lack of management of heathland areas on worked with farmers and land managers to bring significant parts of the Clwydian Range and Llantysilio Mountains into long term management agreements. Black grouse numbers have seen a steady increase in response but in

general upland and farmland bird species in Wales continue to decline – a decline of over 65% in recent years – which is sadly in line with an overall dramatic loss of biodiversity across the UK.

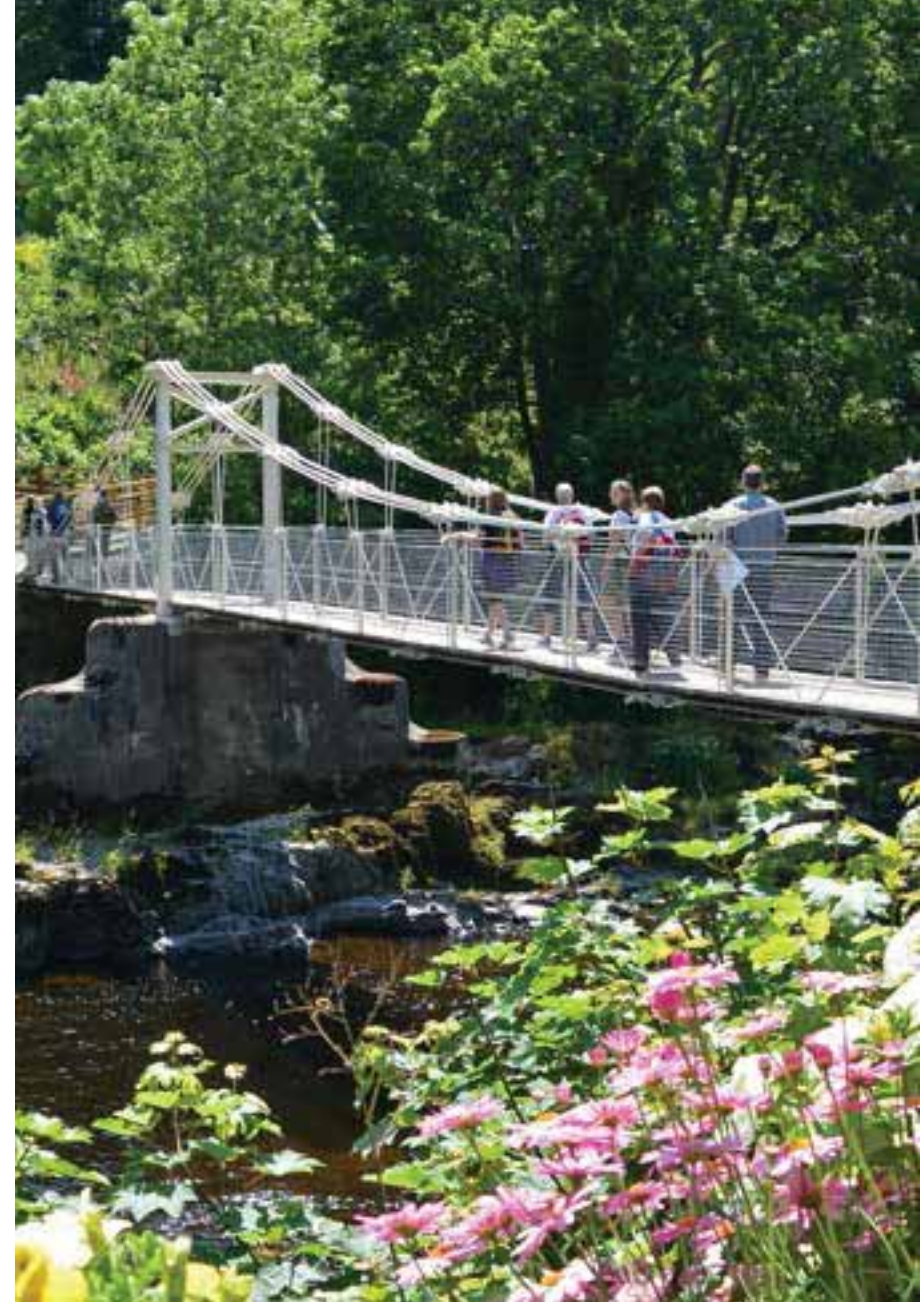
- The visitor economy in the Clwydian Range has expanded with an overall increase in visitors by approximately 6% and a corresponding increase in visitor spend by around 20% to over £19 million. Overall spend across the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley is around £39 million and makes a significant contribution to the employment and economy of the area. Addressing issues of congestion associated

with increased visitors to the AONB will be increasingly important particularly around Loggerheads and Moel Famau and the World Heritage Site at the Trefor Basin and Llantysilio.

- There has been an over-all loss of tranquillity across the AONB with a reduction of undisturbed areas identified on the Wales Tranquil Areas Maps by around 10%. This has been primarily due to an increase in intrusion from major roads and disturbance from light and noise pollution from Wrexham and Rhosllanerchrugog has intensified.
- There is an increasing need to consider renewable forms

of energy production which will bring an increase in applications for wind, solar and hydro development proposals both within and outside the AONB.

- Changes in Agricultural Support – Support for environmental works provided to farmers through Tir Gofal and Glastir have had a significant impact on positive habitat and landscape conservation particularly with regard to management on Common Land. Changes in these support mechanisms may effect the scope of these works in the future.







A Vision for the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB

The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB is a dynamic landscape with flourishing communities and a thriving local economy. This landscape supports a rich biological and cultural resource delivering benefits for the communities, economies and ecosystems far beyond its boundary. The landscape of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley is cherished as a peaceful haven by those living in and visiting the AONB and is treasured for its open spaces and commanding views. Its special features and the benefits they provide are understood and appreciated by all.

The AONB is managed through sound and effective partnerships which ensure that communities and visitors are fully engaged in decision making and are empowered to have a stake in their local landscape and invest in its future.

The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley is a flagship for sustainable development and forward planning and its international protection as a category V protected landscape is influential on an international, national and local stage.



Landscape Quality and Character



Great diversity of landscape, wide-open views, expansive moorland and dramatic ridges, spectacular cliffs and screes, ancient trees and rich woodland, sweeping river valleys and cascading streams; diverse heathlands and rich floristic grasslands;

Historic settlements and distinctive buildings, dramatic monuments and a tapestry of evidence of human settlement: world heritage site, canals aqueducts and waterways;

Dark night skies; clear unpolluted air, peace and tranquillity, remote and wild; ruined abbeys and early churches, picturesque views and ancient ruins; thriving communities, Welsh language and Culture; artistic and literary inspiration, extensive trails and paths;

Cynefin, Belonging.

This section focuses specifically on the qualities of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley and in particular the tranquillity it offers, the wide and expansive views in all directions from almost every corner. From the East, however, views are dominated by the conurbations of Mold, Chester, Wrexham and Merseyside. This has a significant impact on tranquillity, particularly at night, spilling light onto the darker skies to the West.

This section also recognises the vital role that people have played and continue to play in giving the landscape a distinctive character. Generations of communities have shaped the land, farming, building and moulding the landscape to meet their needs. It is people who give an area its flavour, its culture and its heritage, accumulated over many generations.

Special Qualities

- Tranquillity
- Remoteness and Wildness - Peace and quiet with a hint of danger and surprise
- Bro and the link between communities and their landscape - A sense of belonging and attachment to the landscape

Policies

Landscape Quality and Character

- PolSQ1** Conserve and enhance the Special Qualities and distinctive character of the AONB's landscape and associated features including the historical built form.
- PolSQ2** Safeguard the panoramic views, tranquillity and environmental quality of the AONB for the generations of today and the future.
- PolSQ3** Secure the equitable, sustainable use of the area's natural resources to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB.
- PolSQ4** Protect and promote traditional cultural distinctiveness within the AONB including the Welsh language.

Objectives

- LQCO1** Ensure that the natural resources and special qualities of the AONB are recognised and valued.
- LQCO2** Ensure that the impacts of environmental change on the AONB are understood and a strategic response is developed and implemented.
- LQCO3** Minimise the cumulative impacts of small-scale change that may erode the special character of the AONB.
- LQCO4** Protect the tranquillity of the AONB and take steps where possible to reduce noise and light pollution.
- LQCO5** Where possible reduce visual intrusion by screening or removing eyesores.
- LQCO6** Investigate and increase our understanding of the cultural heritage of communities in the AONB.
- LQCO7** Develop Partnerships that will help to stimulate awareness of and interest in the rich cultural dimension to communities in the AONB.





Habitats and Wildlife



1 special protection area



3 special areas of conservation



5,165 hectares of woodland

The AONB supports a wide diversity of habitats and species reflecting the local variations in geology, topography, soils, land use and climate. The dramatic moorland ridges of the Clwydian Range and rolling hills of the Dee Valley are mixed with spectacular limestone cliffs, meandering and cascading rivers and scattered woodlands. They contain some of the UK's most important habitats and the significance of these areas for conservation

are recognised by designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Area for Conservation and a Special Protection Area.

Farming, especially traditional mixed beef and sheep farming, underpins the landscape character, biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley.

This traditional industry focused on the production of food also provides significant

support for tourism, recreation and access. The balanced grazing of the upland areas together with careful and appropriate management is essential in sustaining a rich and diverse habitat for some of our rarest species. Heathland makes up around a quarter of the AONB area and plays a vital role in regulating the flow of rain water into the major rivers.

Connectivity

It is the combination and variety of features and habitats in the AONB that taken together make the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley special. It is important to consider how these various components interact and function as an overall ecosystem.

The upland areas and river valleys of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley are providing many ecosystem service benefits for people and communities both within and beyond the AONB. Some are well known such as food, fuel, water and biodiversity as well as cultural services such as recreation and tourism. Others are less apparent, but include

flood regulation, soil formation and pollination and are equally critical to human well-being.

The AONB contains valued landscapes and natural habitats and its soils and woodlands store carbon. It is an important source of water and food. Its landscape and natural beauty attract visitors seeking recreation and mental refreshment.

Special Features

- Heather Moorland and Rolling Ridges
- Broadleaved and Veteran trees
- River Valleys and the River Dee
- Limestone grasslands, cliffs and screes.



Policies

Habitats and Wildlife

- PolHW1** Secure natural systems and networks that provide more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.
- PolHW2** Restore, reconnect and expand key habitats and species at a landscape scale in order to increase resilience to environmental change.
- PolHW3** Ensure that the conservation of habitats is an integral part of agricultural and field sports management.
- PolHW4** Ensure that the natural benefits and services of the landscape are properly understood and valued.

Heather Moorland and Rolling Ridges

Most of the moorland within the AONB consists of dry heath although wet heath and blanket bog are also present particularly in the South. Management is primarily for sheep with grouse management also important in the Dee Valley. Although moorland areas in the Clwydian

Range are not designated they are still important habitats for a number of important species. Across the AONB there is a distinctive transitional zone on the lower hillsides where moorland gives way to more fertile low-lying farmland. This upland margin, often known in Wales as

ffridd, has a distinctive habitat composition with elements characteristic of both upland and lowland habitats. Ffridd can often be one of the most diverse habitats within the AONB and it particularly important in connecting more fragmented areas.

Objectives

- HMRO1** Work with the North Wales Bionet Group to maintain or extend the current extent of heather moorland within the AONB.
- HMRO2** Bring areas of heather moorland into positive productive management.
- HMRO3** Continue to monitor black grouse and other upland bird species as an indicator of habitat condition.
- HMRO4** Associate high quality food production with ecosystem management.
- HMRO5** Support and encourage sustainable grouse moors management where it has positive environmental and economic impacts.
- HMRO6** Provide support to farmers and landowners in upland areas to bring moorlands into management schemes.



Limestone Grasslands, Cliffs and Screes

Calcareous grasslands and limestone outcrops exist throughout the AONB most notably to the North around Prestatyn Hillside and the central areas around Llanarmon yn Iâl and Eryrys. The dramatic Eglwyseg Escarpment dominates the Eastern end of the Dee Valley in the South and provides some of the most outstanding features of the AONB. Caves systems at Ffynnon Beuno, Llanarmon yn Iâl and the Alyn Valley are key features of this landscape and in many cases are associated with pre historic occupation such as at

the Lynx cave and Perthichwarae. The second largest limestone pavement in Wales is found at Bryn Alyn.

These areas are associated with shallow, free draining base rich soils supporting rich plant communities. This habitat type contributes greatly to the biodiversity of the AONB. These open areas have traditionally been maintained by grazing livestock but changes in farm practices have led to some areas becoming under-grazed with a subsequent loss of species diversity as scrub encroaches.

Many limestone areas within the AONB are of significant biological and geological interest and as such are afforded protection as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Special Areas of Conservation.

Traditionally these areas have been associated with quarrying and mineral extraction with a few large quarries still in operation, and a wealth of industrial archaeology associated with 19th and early 20th century lead mining.

Objectives

- LGPO1** Maintain the current extent of calcareous grassland and limestone pavement within the AONB.
- LGPO2** Bring all areas of public owned / managed limestone grassland, cliffs and screes into favourable management schemes.
- LGPO3** Provide opportunities for privately owned areas of limestone grassland and pavement to come into favourable management schemes.
- LGPO4** Ensure that recreational pressure is minimised in sensitive areas.



Broadleaved Woodland and Veteran Trees

Many of these woodlands represent a link with the landscape as it appeared following the last ice age and support a diverse range of flora and fauna. Ash woodlands are particularly important in the Alyn Valley where it has been designated SAC. In other parts of the AONB oak woods are significant. The historic parklands, particularly evident in the Dee Valley contain some of the oldest trees in the AONB and are key components of the historic landscape as well as supporting significant biodiversity.



Objectives

- WVTO1** Maintain the current extent of broadleaved woodland and veteran trees within the AONB having regard for other policies within the management strategy.
- WVTO2** Protect veteran trees within the landscape across the AONB.
- WVTO3** Maintain and restore broadleaved woodland towards a favourable condition through the implementation of Biodiversity Action Plans for Mixed Ash Woodlands, Upland Oak Woodlands and Wet Woodlands.
- WVTO4** Develop publically owned woodlands as models of best practice in broadleaf woodland management.

River Valleys

In considering the River Valleys of the AONB it is important to look beyond the water bodies themselves. For example the management of the moorlands and ffridd, maintenance of woodlands and field boundaries can not only manage flood waters but can also deliver better water quality and help in carbon capture. Also we should remember that the water ultimately flows far beyond the boundary of the AONB so the impact of land management

within the AONB is potentially far reaching.

The River Dee is the most dominant of the rivers in the AONB with the Dee catchment extending northwards to include the River Alyn in the heart of the Clwydian Range. The Dee is designated SAC and is important for Atlantic salmon, otter and a range of wetland habitats. The Wheeler is the other significant river forming an important part of the Clwyd Catchment.

The Dee Valley also includes the Llangollen canal which is an additional riparian corridor providing key habitats along its 11 miles stretch.

They are dynamic systems and provide a wide range of ecological niches supporting a diverse flora and fauna. They also form important wildlife corridors, enabling dispersion and migration of species.

Objectives

- RVO1** Continue to monitor the extent of key indicator species such as otter and water vole in order to gauge habitat condition.
- RVO2** Continue to develop a partnership of key agencies and bodies to ensure an integrated and landscape approach to management.
- RVO3** Support and develop a landscape scale approach to a programme of invasive species control particularly in relation to Himalayan balsam.
- RVO4** Raise awareness amongst the general public and landowners/managers of the importance of the river valleys for biodiversity.





The Historic Environment



10
Iron Age
Hillforts

12 historic
parks &
gardens

645
listed
buildings

95
scheduled
ancient
monuments

1
World
Heritage
Site

17
conservation
areas

The AONB has a wealth of archaeological and historic remains that date from the early prehistoric period right through to the Second World War. Sites range from the massive Iron Age Hillforts to the less conspicuous crop marks and finds in the lower areas.

The large number of archaeological sites in the AONB are part of the continuous imprint of human activity that contribute to the landscape character. They represent human activity from around the last ice age 12,000 years ago to the more recent but important industrial landscapes associated with mineral and stone extraction.

Many of these archaeological sites are Scheduled Ancient Monuments and are afforded protection through Cadw. Many other historic features, such as boundary stones, village wells and milestones are not protected and as such are much more vulnerable.

Special Features

- Historic Settlement and Archaeology
- Industrial Features and the World Heritage Site
- Historic Defence Features
- Small Historic Features
- Traditional Boundaries



Policies

The Historic Environment

- PolHE1** To conserve and enhance features and sites of archaeological, cultural or historic importance within the AONB whilst recognising that the whole of the area has an historic dimension.
- PolHE2** Increase our understanding of all aspect of the Historic Environment of the AONB.
- PolHE3** Ensure that the World Heritage Site is conserved and enhanced in the context of its setting within the AONB.

Historic Settlement and Archaeology



Objectives

- HSAO1** Work towards a position where the condition/state of all archaeological sites within the AONB is known and appropriate management work is carried out. Utilise HER information, Pan Wales projects, Glastir agri-environment schemes and the planning process to facilitate this.
- HSAO2** Encourage owners of Historic parks and Gardens within the AONB to maintain and restore existing parkland features as noted in the Register.
- HSAO3** Increase the profile of the Historic Environment through effective and consistent interpretation and information.
- HSAO4** Incorporate information gathered as part of the Historic Environment Record into the continuous management process within the AONB.

Industrial Features and World Heritage Site

The tranquillity and beauty of the AONB today in many places masks the bustling and thriving industry that once dominated many parts of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley during the Industrial Revolution. The drive to win natural resources from the landscape; lead, limestone, slate and sand, saw entrepreneurs and prospectors push high

onto remote hillsides and deep into wooded valleys in search of fortune. The same period saw great innovation in overcoming the natural barriers of the landscape and features such as the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, the Alyn Valley's Leete and tramways from Moel Fferna and Llantysilio and extensive lead works at Minera remain as dramatic

reminders of past ingenuity and determination.

Throughout the AONB remains of winding sheds, engine houses, tramways and limekilns are an important part of the special character of the landscape and offer reminders of past communities.

Objectives

- WHSO1** Secure the integrity of the outstanding universal values of the World Heritage Site.
- WHSO2** Identify and maintain key views to and from the World Heritage Site and the visual and cultural setting in line with other policies in this strategy.
- WHSO3** Take steps to manage the impact of visitor on the historic integrity and setting of the World Heritage Site through the provision of facilities, signage and services in appropriate locations.
- WHSO4** Ensure a consistent or complimentary approach to interpretation, signage and quality of the experience for the World Heritage Site across partnership authorities.
- WHSO5** Raise awareness of the importance of industrial sites and features within the planning and AONB.
- WHSO6** Develop an "at risk " register for key industrial historic sites and work towards programmes that will respond where action is required.



Hillforts and Defensive Structures

The medieval strong holds of Castell Dinas Brân and Chirk Castle associate the Southern part of the AONB with the defence of the Dee Valley by first the Welsh and subsequently the English under Edward I. The impressive chain of Iron Age Hillforts of the Clwydian Range

and Dee Valley point to a much earlier occupation and defensive settlement. Later again the association of Owain Glyndŵr with Corwen and Ederynion give a strong cultural and historical root in defence of national identity.

Objectives

- DFSO1** Ensure the continuation of the achievements of the Heather and Hillforts Project and maintain existing level of work at the 4 hillforts of Penycloddiau, Moel Arthur, Moel y Gaer Llanbedr and Moel Fenlli and aim to include Moel y Gaer, Bodfari and Moel Hiraddug.
- DFSO2** Ensure the structural integrity of historic defensive features and ensure that impacts of visitor pressure is minimised.



Small Historic Features

The landscape and particularly the villages of the Clwydian Range Area and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty contain many small features which cumulatively help enhance the area and give it its character. Some still have a useful function, like post boxes and village greens and parish commons. Others like old fingerpost road signs, no

longer maintained by the Highway Authority, milestones or K6 red telephone boxes no longer have a use and can easily disappear from our landscape.

These everyday features are often taken for granted but our settlement landscapes would be the poorer without them.

Objectives

- SHFO1** Raise awareness of the importance of small historic features within both the planning and highways environments by providing training sessions to professionals.
- SHFO2** Encourage Communities to identify and map features within their communities on a standard database.
- SHFO3** Encourage Communities to adopt these features and act as their champions by raising awareness within community councils and youth groups.



Boundaries

Boundary features in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley largely reflect local circumstances and geology. In the limestone areas the boundaries are predominantly stone built, in the more recently enclosed upland areas boundaries are predominantly fence lines and in the agricultural areas of the lower slopes hedges predominate.



Objectives

- BO1** Using SDF and other funds develop a Countryside Grant schemes to support projects which will maintain and enhance the most important boundaries in the AONB as well as other Special Features.
- BO2** In line with aspirations within The Welsh Historic Environment Strategic Statement (2009) raise the skills base amongst the local workforce to increase the number of people who can carry out the necessary conservation and repair work.
- BO3** Identify the most important boundaries within the AONB.





Access, Recreation and Tourism



772 km
rights
of way

tourism
spend
£39.4M

324 km
promoted
routes

The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley is an historic gateway to Wales, crossed by a number of access corridors. These corridors, including main road routes (such as the A5, A55 and A494), upland passes (including the Horseshoe Pass) and the rail routes, have varied historical significance as well as being highly important for tourism. In 2007 a Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for the Clwydian Range

Health and well-being

The trend across the UK and other developed nations is for physical activity levels to decline. This is associated with widespread use of the private car, an increase in sedentary leisure activities and greater mechanisation in the home, workplace and public places. Illness as an outcome

AONB was prepared, to run up to 2013 and beyond. It formed the basis for the award to the AONB of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas and has been actively used by the AONB team and its partners to guide their tourism related work in the area. This strategy was reviewed in 2014 encompassing the new parts of the AONB in the South. The strategy gives recognition to the value

of physical inactivity has been conservatively calculated to be £1.08 Billion per annum in direct costs to the NHS alone. Indirect costs have been estimated as £8.2 Billion per annum. Studies have shown that in a UK context for every £ spent on developing and promoting access to the

of tourism to the economy, environment and communities of the AONB and its wider area of influence. Sustainable Tourism is defined as tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.

countryside presents a £19 saving to the health service. Investment in infrastructure and action to facilitate increased activity levels amongst local communities through access to the countryside is critical therefore in promoting significantly improved levels of health and wellbeing.

Special Features

- Iconic Visitor and Cultural Attractions
- The Offa's Dyke National Trail and Promoted Route

Policies

Access, Recreation and Tourism

- PolART1** To promote the sustainable use and enjoyment and understanding of the landscape of the AONB in a way that contributes to local prosperity and social inclusiveness.
- PolART2** Ensure the attractiveness of the AONB's landscape and views as a primary basis for the areas tourism are retained.
- PolART3** Ensure that all visitors and residents are able to experience and enjoy the benefits of the special qualities of the AONB within environmental limits.
- PolART4** Ensure that the honey pots and other key access points are managed to a high standard and that they act as models of good practice in access and conservation delivery.
- PolART5** Ensure the Country Parks and the Offa's Dyke National Trail provide effective gateways to the AONB in promoting understanding and awareness of its key qualities and features.

Iconic Visitor and Cultural Attractions

Key sites such as Loggerheads, Moel Famau, Castell Dinas Brân, Valle Crucis, the River Dee and Pontcysyllte aqueduct have been reproduced by early landscape painters such as Richard Wilson, Turner and Edward Pugh, and as such have particular significance in the very early presentation of picturesque landscapes. They have, in part, contributed to a very strong tradition of tourism to these areas within the AONB. These are the sites that help to give an area a

sense of place because of the cultural attachment associated with them. The influence of Loggerheads and Moel Famau on the central Clwydian Range has been significant and spanned generations. It has in part shaped communities and been a corner stone of tourism in this area.

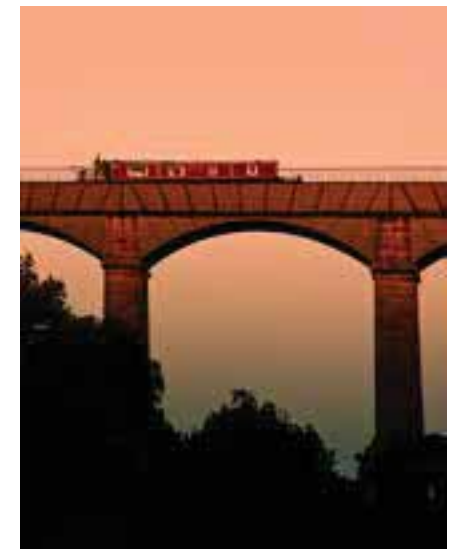
Similarly Castell Dinas Brân, Valle Crucis Abbey, Pontcysyllte and the and the Horseshoe Pass combine to give the Southern part of the AONB a sense of

the sublime and has provoked generations of visitors in search of the picturesque to flock to the Dee Valley.

These sites often act as gateways into the wider landscape of the area and provide links to other key sites. This is particularly true of Loggerheads, Moel Famau and the Llangollen canal which have traditionally been many peoples first experience of the countryside and acted as a spring board for further exploration.

Objectives

- IVCO1** Ensure that visitors and the tourism industry understand the need for, and support the conservation and enhancement of, the special qualities of the AONB as key assets upon which tourism is based.
- IVCO2** Promote and assist convenient and sustainable access into the AONB and special places within it.
- IVCO3** Continue to develop public transport links and develop a strategy to reduce congestion between honey-pots and with other centres of population.
- IVCO4** Investigate ways to reduce congestion around key visitor areas.



- IVCO5** Target information relating to the Countryside Code, behaviour and the impact of visitors on the conservation status of key sites.
- IVCO6** Ensure that both Loggerheads and Moel Famau Country Parks continue to act as exemplars in delivering sustainable tourism and conservation management and manage both sites towards favourable condition through sensitive ecological management.
- IVCO7** Assist tourism businesses to embrace the opportunities and responsibilities of being in a protected area.
- IVCO8** To promote and secure the sympathetic enhancement of the World Heritage Site, its facilities and setting, to create a high quality visitor experience, having regard to the other policies in this management strategy.

The Offa's Dyke National Trail and Promoted Routes

The Offa's Dyke Path National Trail is a key feature of the AONB, running its entire length from Prestatyn Hillside in the North to the Dee Valley in the South. It links many of the AONB's most outstanding features crossing the peaks and hillforts of the Clwydian Range, the dramatic moorland plateau of the Ruabon Mountain before crossing the Eglwyseg Escapement and the

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct towards Chirk Castle.

The AONB is also well served by an extensive network of rights of way, which have been actively maintained, identified and promoted for various kinds of access, with some promoted as named trails. The River Dee provides a major facility for recreation.



Objectives

- ODPO1** Continue a programme of Rights of Way improvement across the AONB through the use of the Community Miles initiative and other area access improvement works focusing on increasing opportunities to access the countryside.
- ODPO2** Provide increased opportunities where appropriate for cycling and horse riding in the AONB and promote these opportunities.
- ODPO3** Ensure each Local Access Forum has a good understanding of the needs of the AONB through regular liaison.
- ODPO4** Raise awareness of the acknowledged health and well-being benefits provided by the AONB and develop initiatives promoting physical activity particularly walking and cycling.
- ODPO5** Understand and work towards removing physical and psychological barriers to access enabling all sectors of society to participate in and benefit from outdoor access and recreational opportunities.
- ODPO6** Investigate ways to promote the Trail with local tourism businesses and to develop initiatives that will strengthen business links.
- ODPO7** Strengthen links between the National Trail and nearby settlements and places of interest utilising the wider Rights of Way Network and Public Transport.
- ODPO8** Monitor erosion in key areas and develop a programme of measures that will reduce the impact of the Trail on the landscape by limiting width or depth of path as appropriate.
- ODPO9** Identify key indicator sites to monitor visitor user numbers within the AONB.



Culture and People



18,960
residents

29.9%
Welsh Speakers



19.9%
of population in
AONB living
with long term
limiting illness

Special Features

- The Built Environment
- People and Communities

Policies

Culture and People

- PolCP1** Ensure that new development adopts the highest standards of design and is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the AONB.
- PolCP2** Retain and improve essential services and facilities for local people.
- PolCP3** Ensure that local businesses and communities feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for their surroundings.

Objectives

- BEO1** Ensure new development in and around the AONB is sympathetically located in the landscape, and is well designed to complement the character and appearance of the area and its setting, particularly in respect of visual impact, scale, materials and landscaping.
- BEO2** Conserve and enhance the character and local distinctiveness of historic villages, buildings and gardens within the AONB.
- BEO3** Promote action to reduce the visual impact of prominent existing development in the AONB.

People and Communities

Communities need to be at the heart of any vision. Rural communities need economic and social sustainability. There are two key areas that need support. The first is local facilities such as shops, pubs, schools and youth clubs, which provide vital services for the community and local employment, and includes more recent necessities of life such as mobile phone and internet access.

The second is countering rural exclusion by which opportunities are limited by issues such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing and poor public transport. A lack of affordable housing for local people is another important factor. Communities may also have specific needs for particular groups, including older and younger people and the less able. It is also important that the

local communities feel that they are part of the AONB and they have a part to play in formulating policy and the decision making process. Communities should directly benefit from being in the AONB through projects that are targeted at communities and their environs through the Sustainable Development Fund.

Objectives

- PCO1** Help local communities to retain and enhance access to essential community services and facilities.
- PCO2** Support the development of affordable housing for local people in appropriate locations, whilst maintaining the highest standards of design and landscaping.
- PCO3** Foster a sense of place and local pride to secure social well-being.
- PCO4** Ensure that the governance of the AONB promotes effective partnerships and fosters opportunities for communities to engage in the management of the AONB.









Part Two STATE of the AONB REPORT

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Introduction

In setting an agenda that will ensure the special qualities and features of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley are **preserved, it is first necessary to make an assessment of their current extent and condition.** It is also important that the issues impacting upon them **are identified and that factors likely to impact upon them in the future are anticipated.**

The State of the AONB Report **identifies where possible the extent and condition of each feature and the factors impacting on them.** It also

seeks to identify an ideal state for these features and begins to establish indicators that **will help to define what we are aiming for in pursuing the good health of the AONB.** It is an on-going process that relies on constant data gathering and monitoring and should be able to respond to changing demands on the environment. There is a requirement for up to date information that will lead to informed responses to environmental change.





Tranquility, Remoteness & Wilderness

Resource / Special Feature	Description	Issues	State
Tranquility, Remoteness and Wilderness	<p>Intrusion</p> <p>A variety of factors can have an impact on the Tranquility, Remoteness and Wilderness of the AONB. Traffic noise, light pollution, the impact of quarrying and utility installations can all have an effect on the tranquility of the AONB and peoples enjoyment of the landscape.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light from the major settlements, particularly to the east and north of the AONB, have a significant impact on dark night skies. • Light and noise pollution from transport, development and recreation erodes tranquillity – A55, A494, A5, A542 • Intrusive and degrading elements such as power lines / phone lines, transmitters, masts and wind turbines can have a significant impact. • Cumulative effects of small scale change can lead to a degradation of landscape character. • Permitted development completed within the AONB could also impact the landscape. • Accommodating visitor access and destination sites within sensitive locations. 	<p>Further intrusion mapping required</p> <p>Extent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illuminated bollards and signs within Denbighshire – 80 within AONB Wrexham - unknown Flintshire - unknown • Street lights 1,350 directly adjacent to or within AONB in Denbighshire.

Roads

The principle roads and communication routes in the AONB primarily cross the Clwydian Range in an east – west direction, and run in an east – west direction along the Dee Valley and Morwynion Valley. The most significant road is the dualled A55 EuroRoute which passes through the narrowest part of the AONB at Rhullt. Other important routes are the A5 and A494 Trunk Roads and the A542 Horseshoe Pass, A5104, A5151, A541, A539 and A525. However, the bulk of the network within the AONB is made up of smaller roads and lanes, many of which add to the character of the area.

- Possible environmental impact of major road improvement schemes in the AONB.
- Potential loss of rural character and features as a result of highway maintenance, signage and minor improvement works.
- Increasing traffic related to people working at a considerable distance from where they live, increasing commuter traffic, and use of cars for recreational visits.
- Raising awareness of the AONB through threshold / village signs.

- Length and class of roads in the AONB:

Dualled EuroRoute	1.6km
Trunk Road	35.0km
A Road	49.2km
B Road	23.6km
Minor roads	338.8km
Unclassified County Roads	60.9km
Total length of road	509.1km
- No. of AONB threshold signs – 16
- No. of AONB branded village signs – 21

Minerals

The limestone and slate geology of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley has been exploited for its mineral wealth for centuries. This has left its mark on the landscape; many abandoned or worked out mineral sites have been assimilated into the landscape over time but others still scar the area. There are two active slate quarries in the AONB, other sites are dormant but have old planning permissions. Given the scale of mineral operations and their potential impact on a wide area, including important views out of the AONB, there is a need to have regard to both active and dormant quarries outside the designated area.

- Restoration and aftercare of quarries, including these which are outside the AONB but visible from it or impact on views into the area.
- Dormant sites – need to pursue Prohibition Notices under s102 of T&CP Act 1990.

Within AONB:

- No. of active quarries – 2
- Area of active quarries – 41.5 ha % of total AONB area – 0.11%
- No. of dormant quarries - unknown
- Area of dormant quarries - unknown % of total AONB area - unknown
- No. of confirmed Prohibition Orders - unknown

Within 3km of AONB:

- No. of active quarries - 8
- Area of active quarries – 203.38 ha
- No. of dormant quarries - unknown
- Area of dormant quarries - unknown
- No of confirmed Prohibition Orders – unknown

Utilities and Energy

Overhead power transmission lines and communications masts are the most prominent utility infrastructure within the AONB. The largest power lines cross the AONB at its narrowest point near Rhuallt and travel through the AONB down the Morwynion Valley. Given the topography of the AONB it is an attractive location for communications infrastructure. The most prominent installations are the masts at Moel y Parc and Cynr y Brain, but there are also prominent masts at Gwaenysgor, Moel Gelli, Craig-y-dduallt, Coed Mawr and Barber's Hill.

A relatively new feature of regional energy infrastructure is the development of major onshore and off-shore wind farms.

- Overhead cables and wires can degrade landscape character.
- Reluctance to share masts leads to duplication and an increase impact on the local landscape.
- Mobile phone coverage 'blackspots' lead to pressure for additional communication masts.
- Cumulative impact of large scale wind farm development in the setting of the AONB degrades landscape character and sense of tranquillity.
- The need to moving towards zero carbon development without harming the AONB.

Extent:

- Length of National Grid high-voltage overhead cable (400kv) – 17.46km
- Length of 132kv overhead power lines – 1.38km
- Length of 33kv overhead power lines – 44.76km (87.85)
- Length of 33kv undergrounded power lines – 6.19km (12.15%)

Communication masts:

- Moel y Parc (TV)
- Moel y Gelli (Emergency Services)
- Gwaenysgor
- Bryn Alyn
- Cynr y Brain
- Moel Gelli
- Craig-y-dduallt
- Coed Mawr
- Barber's Hill

Wind turbines:

- 1 46m high wind turbine consented within the AONB
- 50m+ high wind turbines within 15km – 122

Land Management Practices

Land Management Practices are continually changing, adapting to government policy, climate change and agricultural improvements. These changes in management have the ability to impact on the landscape of the AONB.

- Impact of European and Welsh Government agricultural and forestry policies can have a significant impact on landscape character and views
- It is important that habitat improvements and creation becomes a part of viable land management systems and businesses.

- 6,441.35 ha of the AONB is Common Land (16.55% of total AONB area)
- 7,786.98ha (20% of total AONB area) of land in the AONB in Glastir Agri-environment scheme in 2013.
 - 5,232.24ha (67%) Entry Level
 - 793.75ha (10%) Glastir Advanced
 - 1,760.99ha (23%) Glastir Commons

Climate Change

The AONB has evolved over time, shaped by geological forces, climate and human activity, and this evolution is ongoing. Climate change is expected to have a major influence in the coming decades, and we need to manage this process, taking action to adapt to the impacts and make the best of the opportunities.

Although the global climate has been relatively stable for thousands of years, recent extreme weather events and longer terms trends suggest it is now changing due to human activity. Climate change is expected to continue, causing hotter, drier summers, warmer wetter winters, more extreme weather and sea level rise in Wales and the rest of Britain.

Global climate change is projected to continue, causing hotter drier summers, warmer, wetter winters, more extreme weather, droughts, heat waves, heavier rainfall, and accelerating sea-level rise in Wales and the rest of Britain over coming decades.

- Modern agricultural practices and equipment leads to larger fields with fewer internal boundaries and wider gateways, which can degrade the local landscape character.
- Geometrical forestry planting and harvesting, and heather cutting patterns can add intrusive lines into the landscape.
- Lack of buffer strips along watercourses.

- Adaption and mitigation measures may impact upon the AONB and its setting.
- Reduction in air and water quality impacting on the health of the population and ecosystem.
- Seasonal reduction / increase in water flow.
- Pressure for inappropriate flood defences with dredging and development degrading the local landscape character.
- Long dry spells of weather could lead to increased fire risk, particularly on heathlands.

Protection:

- 8,028.37 ha of AONB designated as SAC (20.62% of AONB land area)
- 9,097.34 ha of AONB designated as SSSI (23.36% of AONB land area)
- 2,555.05 ha of AONB designated as SPA (6.56% of AONB land area)
- 21.33 ha of AONB designated as LNR (0.05% of AONB land area)
- 3,451.92 ha of AONB designated as Wildlife Sites (8.87% of AONB land area)

- 9,428 ha (24.2% of AONB area) is heather moorland.
- Total area of AONB covered by woodland 5,165.24 ha (13.27% of AONB area).

Bro/Welsh Language

'Bro' is a Welsh word which describes a sense of belonging and community cohesion within an area. It is an intangible concept which is difficult to define, but is nonetheless a valid component of sustainable Welsh communities. The Welsh language is part of the traditional character and cultural make-up of the AONB. The use of Welsh is greater than the Wales average (21.3%) and remains a significant feature of the area. The greatest proportion of Welsh language users live in the western and south western parts of the AONB.

Picturesque and romantic movement

The story of the picturesque movement in the AONB goes back to the late 18th century, particularly in the Dee Valley around Llangollen, painted by Turner and Wilson amongst others. Richard Wilson also has close links to the Loggerheads area. The ladies of Llangollen established the Dee Valley as a centre for picturesque appreciation from their home at Plas Newydd. Poets and authors such as Wordsworth, Gerald Manley Hopkins and Mendelssohn have also taken inspiration from the AONBs landscape.

Eisteddfodau

Building on these artistic traditions, Llangollen is known throughout the world for the International Eisteddfod, held annually in the town since 1947. Corwen was the location of the first public National Eisteddfod in 1919.

- Community involvement and participation in local events and traditions.
- Inward and outward migration is changing the makeup of communities
- Need to raise community awareness of the AONB and the benefits it brings, especially in the south.
- Need to raise local business awareness of the AONB and the benefits it brings.
- Sustaining the Welsh language
- Lack / loss of facilities to celebrate cultural associations.
- Visitor pressure degrading landscape character at key locations.
- Loss of significant views depicted in art or prose due to vegetation encroachment, or insensitive development.
- Percentage of population speaking, reading and writing Welsh in the AONB (2011):
 - North – 26.7%
 - West – 37.2%
 - East – 24.2%
 - South – 29.1%
- No. of active community groups – Unknown
- No. of community shows – 6
- No. of community publications – Unknown
- Cylch Meithryn / Ty a Fi clubs – 7
- Welsh medium primary schools in the AONB – 2



Natural Environment

Resource / Special Feature	Description	Issues	State
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Natural Environment</p>	<p>Natural Benefits and Services</p> <p>The landscape of the AONB is important for the resources it offers which benefit everyone, such as water, food and locations for quiet enjoyment.</p> <p>These benefits, known collectively as Ecosystem Services indicate that the landscape of the AONB not only provides a rich variety of habitats and species, but also contributes positively towards the production of food, the control of climate and recreational provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for natural systems and networks that are fit for purpose, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people. • There is a need to identify all the benefits and services delivered by the natural system. • Lack of data and knowledge makes it difficult to manage within environmental limits. • There is no baseline for assigning a value to the services and benefits received from the natural system. 	<p>Catchment Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dee Catchment • Clwyd Catchment

Habitat Resilience

Habitat resilience is a habitats ability to respond to natural or manmade disturbance through fast recovery or by resisting damage.

- Resilience and condition of the natural system is not fully understood.
- Attention given to priority habitats at the expense of other locally important sites, such as road verges and other corridors.
- There is a need for the expansion of and connectivity between wildlife rich habitats.

Designations / SAC

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) are legal protections for sites of European importance for habitats and birds, to protect against damaging activities. These designations form part of a larger European network called Natura 2000.

Sites of national importance are designated and given protection as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Land designated as a County Wildlife sites are often the finest local examples of habitats, and are given material consideration in the planning process.

These and other designations provide a level of protection for important sites against potentially damaging activity.

- Need to bring sites into favourable conservation status.
- Visitor pressure in key conservation areas.
- Designations do not address all conservation interests.

Extent:

- There are 22 SSSI's in the AONB, covering 9,097.34 ha (23.36% of total AONB area).
- There are 3 SAC's covering 8,028.37 ha (20.62% of AONB)
- There is 1 SPA covering 2,555 ha (6.56% of AONB)
- There are 162 Wildlife Sites covering 3,451.92 ha (8.87% AONB)
- There is 1 LNR covering 21.33 ha (0.05% AONB)
- There are 73 RIGS sites covering 676.45 ha (1.74% AONB)

Condition:

NRW continue to monitor the condition of SSSIs, SACs and SPAs. All geological SSSIs are in favourable condition.

Limestone Grassland, cliffs and screes

Calcareous grasslands typically occur on shallow base-rich soils derived from the underlying limestone rocks. They are characterised by a short species-rich turf containing a variety of grasses and herbs. In the AONB calcareous grassland primarily occurs in the north from Prestatyn to Cwm, centrally along the Alyn Valley, including the second largest limestone pavement in Wales at Bryn Alyn, and in the south around the Eglwyseg rocks where large areas of scree are also located.

Limestone pavement is an area of limestone which lies wholly or partly exposed on the surface of the ground and has been fissured by natural erosion. They can be wooded or open and both types exist within the AONB.

There are a number of geologically and archaeologically important caves associated with the Limestone areas of the AONB. Caves studied have been found to be important archaeologically for human and animal activity. Cave systems at Tremerechion, Llanarmon-yn-Iâl and Loggerheads are among the more well known. In 2015, there is currently a Cadw funded project running to discover more about Limestone caves in north east Wales.

Scree slopes on the Eglwyseg rocks are an important geological feature, across which the Offa's Dyke National Trail passes.

- Under-grazing encouraging scrub encroachment.
- Over-grazing resulting in loss of species diversity
- Enrichment of soils from fertilisers, herbicide application, ploughing and re-seeding from agricultural purposes.
- Acidification and nitrogen enrichment caused by atmospheric deposition.
- Recreational pressure bringing about floristic changes associated with soil compaction.
- Recreational pressure on Limestone geological SSSI features such as Eglwyseg scree slopes and Panorama Drive limestone grassland.
- Invasion by no-native plant species.
- Limited knowledge of underground systems.
- Removal of Limestone rocks for rockeries.
- Quarrying.

Extent:

- Limestone Pavement: 1.88ha (13.82% of Limestone Pavement in Wales – Wales total 13.6 ha)
- Scree: 22.89 ha

Indicators:

- There are 12 SSSIs in the AONB containing Geological features.
- There are 73 RIGS sites in the AONB covering 676.45 ha (1.74% of the AONB).
- 315.52 ha (88.23%) within SAC, SSSI or Wildlife Site.
- 230.3 ha (64.4%) international and national designation with commitments to maintain / restore favourable condition (SAC and SSSI).

Limestone Cave systems indicators:

- No. Caves in the AONB - unknown
- 4 cave systems protected as SSSI; Alyn Gorge Caves (Alyn Valley Woods & Alyn Gorge Caves SSSI), Cae Gwyn & Ffynnon Beuno Caves, Tremerechion Caves (both Ffynnon Beuno & Cae Gwyn Caves SSSI) and Minera Caves (Ruabon / Llantysilio Mountains & Minera SSSI).

Limestone Habitats Favourable

Management:

- 1.05 ha (0.29% resource) are within DCC Countryside Service owned / managed sites.
- 5.47 ha (1.53% resource) are within NWWT managed sites.

Condition:

- NRW continue to monitor the condition of SSSIs and SACs.
- All geological SSSIs are in a favourable condition.

From 2015 to 2018 there is to be significant investment into Limestone features in the AONB through the Limestone Legacy project which has received NRW competitive bid funding.

Heather moorlands and Rolling Ridges

Dominated by heather, bilberry and western gorse with ideally a diverse range of age communities. It has a distinct range of bird life associated with it, including grouse, stonechat and whinchat.

The uplands of the North Berwyn, Llantysilio, Ruabon and Llandegla mountains in the south of the AONB are predominantly heathland. Heather moorland is also found in large blocks along the ridge of the Clwydian Range between Llandegla and Bodfari.

- Conversion to grassland through ploughing, reseeding, liming and fertilisation for agricultural purposes.
- The division of common through internal fences and subsequent loss of hefted flocks.
- Under-grazing / abandonment.
- Localised over-grazing caused by lack of heathland management and structure.
- Poorly managed burning / wildfires.
- Inappropriate methods of supplementary feeding.
- Bracken invasion.
- Heavy recreation pressure causing erosion, particularly illegal off road vehicle use in the south of the AONB.
- Lack of appropriate rotational heather management.
- Afforestation.
- Nitrogen enrichment caused by atmospheric deposition.

Ideal state:

Upland heath in 'favourable condition' is typically dominated by a range of dwarf shrubs such as heather, bilberry, crowberry, bell heather and western gorse. They are generally structurally diverse, containing stands of vegetation with heather at different stages of growth, including areas of mature heather. This habitat supports an important assemblage of birds, a diverse invertebrate fauna and, in some cases, assemblages of rare and local mosses and liverworts.

Extent:

- 9,428 ha (24.2% of AONB area) (includes degraded areas / potential for restoration / expansion).

Indicators:

- 9,317.2 ha (98.9%) has some form of designation conferring a level of protection.
- 7,776.6 ha (82.48%) is protected as SSSI or SAC.

Favourable management:

- 683.51 ha (7.25% resource) are within DCC Countryside Service owned / managed sites.

Condition:

- The majority of the heathland areas in the AONB are currently being managed through cutting and burning of heather, and cutting and bruising of bracken.
- Bracken extent unknown. Between 2008 and 2012, in the Heather and Hillforts project area, 1,029 ha of bracken were sprayed, and 270.5 ha cut / bruised. Bracken dominated heathland reduced from 788 ha to 303 ha.
- Between 2008 and 2012, in the Clwydian Range and Llantysilio mountains, mature / degenerate heather reduced from 384 ha to 367 ha

The Heather and Hillforts project Landscape Partnership Scheme ran from 2008 to 2012, focusing on the Clwydian Range and Llantysilio mountains heathland areas. Significant work was undertaken to reduce the extent of bracken through aerial spraying, as well as work with landowners and graziers to improve the condition of heathland. Heather condition surveys were carried out in 2005 and 2010, showing an improvement in the age structure of heather as well as a reduction in the extent of bracken cover.

Woodland and Veteran Trees

Many of these woodlands represent a link with the landscape as it appeared following the last ice age and support a diverse range of flora and fauna. Ash woodlands are particularly important in the Alyn Valley where it has been designated SAC. In other parts of the AONB oak woods are significant.

Veteran trees are trees which, because of their size and age are considered of exceptional cultural, landscape and nature conservation value. Veteran trees are often associated with parkland, and are usually found in more lowland areas. There are few in the north of the AONB and are found in greater number in the south. Some fine examples can be found on the Eglwyseg (Yew / Field Maple), at the Horseshoe Falls, at Trevor Church and Chirk Castle.

- Grazing preventing natural regeneration.
- Loss due to localised quarrying.
- Lack of specific woodland management and cessation of traditional management.
- Fragmentation of ownership.
- Invasion by naturalised species leading to a change in structure and composition (sycamore and beech).
- Loss of species such as red squirrel.
- Development pressures.
- Effects of air pollution.
- Acidification of base-rich soils through the scavenging effect of commercial conifers.
- Many semi-natural woodlands have declined as a result of replanting with exotic conifers.

Pests and diseases

- Present / future tree diseases could have a significant impact on the local landscape character.
- Phytophthora Ramorum – Bilberry and Larch (is listed as an EU controlled organism).
- Chalara fraxinea – Ash dieback.
- Phytophthora Alni – alder.
- Canopies opened by disease may be subject to higher rates of wind-throw, and invasion by unrepresentative species becomes more likely.

Ideal state:

A woodland in 'favourable condition' has a varied structure with at least three age classes spread across the average life expectancy of the commonest trees, areas of open space – both temporary and permanent relatively undisturbed mature / old growth stands, understory and some build-up of fallen and standing dead wood. It should be comprised predominantly of native species and there should not be signs of rapid loss of native trees and shrubs. There should also be signs of seedlings growing through to saplings to young trees at sufficient density to maintain canopy density.

Extent:

- Broadleaved (including mixed) woodland: 1809.43 ha (4.65% of AONB area) of which 795.8 ha (2.04% of AONB) is Semi Natural Ancient Woodland or Replanted Ancient Woodland.

Indicators:

- 199.9 ha (11.04%) are within international and national designation (SAC and SSSI).

Favourable management:

- 54.79 ha (3.03% resource) are within Country Parks and DCC Countryside Service managed sites.
- 17.72 ha (0.98% resource) are within NWWT managed sites.

Condition:

Woodland SSSIs

- NRW continue to monitor the condition of all SSSIs and SACs.

River Valleys

River valleys are not only important for the watercourse itself but also the bank and associated land or riparian zone. They are dynamic systems and provide a wide range of ecological niches supporting a diverse flora and fauna. They also form important wildlife corridors, enabling dispersion and migration of species.

There are three significant river valleys in the AONB. The River Dee from Corwen to Newbridge, the River Alyn from Cilcain to Llanferres and the River Wheeler from Bodfari to Melin-y-Wern.

- Water pollution from sewage, acidification, urban drainage, agricultural runoff and mine and industrial damage.
- Loss of bank-side vegetation through overgrazing and poaching. This can also lead to erosion of river margins and siltation of the river channel with losses of fish spawning gravels and habitat diversity.
- Modification of the shape and course.
- Potential loss of indicator species such as otters, water voles and fresh water pearl mussel.
- Invasive non-native species such as Himalayan balsam, Chinese mitten crabs and mink competing with native species.
- Recreational impacts such as walking, angling, boating and canoeing can cause disturbance to both the habitat and resident species.

Ideal state:

The morphology of rivers and streams and their associated plant and animal assemblages vary according to their geographical area, underlying geology and water chemistry. However, all rivers in their natural state are dynamic systems, continually modifying their form. A healthy river will have good water quality, free from outside pollution, and marginal and bankside vegetation that supports an array of wild flowers and animals and provides corridor links between fragmented habitats. Rivers which display a mosaic of features such as riffles and pools and exposed sediments can support a diverse range of plant and animal species.

Extent:

- 62.77 km (34.53 km River Dee, 19.55 km River Alyn and 8.69 km River Wheeler).

Indicators:

- The River Dee is designated at SAC and SSSI.
- 3.31 km (16.93%) of River Alyn are within SAC.
- 1.43 km (16.46%) of River Wheeler passes through wildlife sites.

Favourable management:

- 1.06 km (8.16%) of the River Alyn falls within Loggerheads Country Park.
- 1.73 km (5.01%) of the River Dee falls within Tŷ Mawr Country Park, and Denbighshire Countryside Sites.

Condition:

- Otters are known to be present on all three rivers. Water voles have been recorded on the Llangollen Canal, and at either end of the Wheeler valley with extensive field ditches giving population potential to expand. There is only one pocket of water vole records in the Alyn valley, though further surveys may reveal more.

River Valleys

- Inappropriate land drainage and flood defence works.
 - Climate change may affect the habitat and species through flooding and temperature change.
 - Abstraction and discharge of water for hydro-power generation.
 - Meeting the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and Catchment Management Plans.
- Invasive species are known to be present on all three river systems, both mink and Himalayan balsam in particular, although Japanese Knotweed is more widespread on the River Dee. The River Dee also has populations of Signal Crayfish.
 - All three rivers have wet woodland and meadow habitats supported by back channels in many places providing good bank-side cover and corridors for wildlife.
 - A number of rights of way cross and run parallel to all three rivers, in particular the Alyn indicating recreation pressure is present. Recreation pressure on the River Dee is significant; it is popular for fishing, canoeing and rafting. A number of businesses use and are dependent on access to the river.



The Historic Environment

Resource / Special Feature	Description	Issues	State
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">The Historic Environment</p>	<p>Historic Settlement and Archaeology</p> <p>There are a number of historic settlements within the AONB. Llangollen is the largest with a population of around 3,000. The town was granted its charter in 1284 and straddles the Dee via an arched bridge built in about 1500. The historic core of the town lies on the southern side, focusing on the church and the river crossing. Later development occurred largely as a result of the woollen industry. Since early times, the town has been an important stopping place, especially for people travelling from London to Ireland. Until the early 1800s, roads were notoriously hazardous but Telford's new road to Holyhead (now the A5) had a profound effect on the development of early 19th century Llangollen and North Wales in general, allowing the London mail coaches to travel faster and more safely.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterioration and lack of funding for the upkeep of structures and monuments. • Erosion of sites following archaeological excavations. • Lack of awareness of ancient monuments and sites. • Lack of facilities for study groups. • Inappropriate land management. • Lack of archaeological data. • Damage from metal detection. • Off Road Motorcycle and 4x4 damage, particularly on the Llantysilio and North Berwyn mountains. • Historic Parks and Gardens are privately owned; dependant on landowners to maintain and enhance. • Not all open to the public. 	<p>Protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled Ancient Monuments are nationally important archaeological sites or historic buildings, afforded protection against unauthorised change. • There are 95 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the AONB, the protection of which are overseen by Cadw. Many of these sites provide evidence of past mining, quarrying and settlements. • Scheduled Ancient Monuments cover 156.04 ha (0.4% of the AONB). • There are 17 Conservation Areas in the AONB, covering 88.85 ha (0.23% of the AONB). • There are 645 Listed Building in the AONB. • Valle Crucis Abbey, Eliseig's Pillar and Llangar church are guardianship sites and managed by Cadw.

The Historic Environment

The Cistercian Abbey of Valle Crucis lies near the confluence of the Eglwyseg and the Dee rivers, north of Llangollen. The fragmentary 9th century cross, the Pillar of Eliseg, is set on a small circular mound which is a Bronze Age Barrow, just to the north of the Abbey.

Historic parks and gardens form an important and integral part of the historic and cultural fabric of an area. They are listed in the Cadw / ICOMOS Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales. The registered sites are Penbedw, Golden Grove, St Beuno's, Colomendy, Valle Crucis, Bryntysilio, Llantysilio Hall, Vivod, Plas Newydd, Trefor Hall, Chirk Castle and Argoed Hall. Although not protected in the same way as Listed Buildings they are graded in a similar way. It is anticipated that legislation in the new Heritage Bill to be announced shortly will give more weight to this designation

- Not statutorily protected; need to engage with and support landowners.
- No arrangements for monitoring the condition of Historic parks and gardens.
- No Management / Enhancement Plans.

Ideal state:

- Sites are maintained in a favourable condition. Cadw are currently reappraising their monument condition surveys and are developing a Monuments at Risk methodology, as yet information is not available for the AONB but this will be extremely valuable information in the future.

State:

- Sites are visited by Cadw every 5 or 10 years.
- SAM condition data is not consistently available yet, but Cadw are working towards this.
- Of the 645 Listed Buildings in the AONB, 56 are considered to be 'at risk'.

Understanding:

- Recent archaeological work on Eliseg's Pillar has been undertaken by Bangor and Chester Universities, this has identified that the pillar sits on a pre-existing Bronze Age burial mound.
- Excavations have also taken place at Penycloddiau by Liverpool University, Moel y Gaer Bodfari by Oxford University and at Fron Newydd near Caer Drewyn by Bangor University.

Extent:

- There are 12 Historic Parks within the AONB covering 611.67 ha (1.57% of the AONB). The essential settings of 14 Historic Parks are within the AONB covering a total of 1,152.01 ha (2.96% of the AONB).
- 9 more Historic Parks and Gardens are directly adjacent to the AONB.

Industrial Features and World Heritage Site

When Thomas Telford finished Pontcysyllte Aqueduct in 1805, it was the tallest canal boat crossing in the world. On 27 June 2009, UNESCO made this masterpiece of civil engineering a World Heritage Site, along with 11 miles of canal including Chirk Aqueduct and the Horseshoe Falls at Llantysilio, near Llangollen. Pontcysyllte represents a 'masterpiece of human creative genius' and is an outstanding example of a construction that 'illustrated a significant stage in human history'.

Construction work on the Llangollen Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal began in 1795 and was completed in 1808. The canal gave access to the Ruabon collieries and stimulated the growth of the limekilns and pottery works at Froncysyllte and Tref-y-nant.

World Heritage Status means that the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal has been inscribed on the World Heritage List, offering it increased awareness. This awareness leads to an increase in the level of protection and conservation given to inscribed sites. It is one of 28 properties inscribed in the UK. Worldwide there were 1,007 World Heritage Sites in 2014.

The Vale of Llangollen Railway was opened in 1861. For nearly a century, the railway took over much of the traffic formerly carried by road and canal. The Llangollen Railway Society now operates the line between Llangollen and Corwen.

- Prevention from decay and need for on-going maintenance.
- Inappropriate methods or materials for repairs through lack of understanding, skills or materials, or changing modern standards.
- Vegetation growth in the World Heritage Site and the Buffer Zone affecting views in and out.
- Maintenance of effective protection of the Site and Buffer Zone through designations and planning policies.
- Management of visitor pressure.
- Need to develop the presentation of the Outstanding Universal Value – how to get the story across.
- Site surveys not followed up.
- Sites being lost to land use change.
- Some industrial remains are in poor condition.
- Much of the industrial heritage of the Alyn Valley is outside the public estate.
- Lack of awareness of archaeological heritage, the relationship of quarries, inclines and associated works which together have cultural integrity.

Protection:

- The World Heritage Site is afforded protection as such.
- Much of the World Heritage site is owned by the Canal and Rivers Trust.

Extent:

- The World Heritage site covers 62.62 ha within the AONB (0.16% of the AONB).
- The World Heritage Site Buffer Zone covers 3,129.54 ha within the AONB (8.04% of the AONB).

Status:

- Not currently on UNESCO's list of World Heritage in Danger. 46 sites listed in 2014.

Industrial Archaeology

Protection:

- Some of the key industrial sites are protected as scheduled. The canal and many associated monuments are scheduled. The Nant y Pandy tramway and slate works at Glyndyfrdwy are scheduled but in poor condition. Parts of the Minera lead mines at Meadow shaft are a SAM as is the Hoffman kiln in the Minera Quarries.

Loggerheads was the focal point for lead mining in the 18th and 19th century and remnants of this industrial past remain along the river and in the woods. There was extensive lead mining in the Alyn Valley, Prestatyn Hillside, Bryn Alyn, and areas of Esclusham Mountain, World's End and Minera.

The name Loggerheads derives from a dispute over mineral rights which was eventually settled in the high court. The boundary stone adjacent to the A494 and boundary stones within the Park mark the position the legal boundary was determined to be.

There was extensive slate quarrying in the south of the AONB, on the Llantysilio and North Berwyn mountains. Only the Berwyn quarry on the Horseshoe Pass remains open today.

There are a number of features associated with these mines, such as the Leete at Loggerheads, and tramways from the Moel y Faen quarry to Llangollen canal, and Moel Fferna to Glyndyfrdwy through Nant y Pandy, where there are extensive ruins relating to slate working.

- Some sites unrecorded or with no scheduled protection.
- Some sites recommended for scheduling in the Metal Mines survey of the 1990s have not taken place.
- The vast majority of industrial (and indeed all other periods of site) are undesignated. They are noted on the HER Historic Environment Record which is set to become statutory in the new Planning Bill.

Condition:

- The Glyndyfrdwy slate works buildings and parts of the tramway are in a poor condition.
- Key features like the Leete at Loggerheads Country park, Cascade Woods lead mining site and others are unprotected.

Hillforts and Defensive Structures

The chain of Iron Age Hillforts along the ridgeline of the Clwydian Range are its most high profile and unique archaeological sites. These 6 hillforts, between Moel Hiraddug near Dyserth and Moel Fenlli near Llanferres, provide one of the highest concentrations in Western Europe.

Moel y Gaer is one of the summits of Llantysilio Mountain, on the north side of the river Dee and west of the Horseshoe Pass. There is evidence for human activity here dating back to at least the Bronze Age (2,300 – 1,200 BC), with a large burial cairn on the summit of Moel Gamelin. Several centuries later, during the Iron Age (1200 BC – 74 AD), Moel y Gaer was chosen as the site for a small hillfort.

- Erosion to the hillforts and other defensive structures through recreation and sheep scrapes.
- Damage through inappropriate land management, such as quarrying, tree planting and over grazing.
- Ploughing / Agricultural pressure.
- Damage from metal detection.
- Increased awareness and access could lead to increased erosion issues.

Extent:

- 10 Iron Age Hillforts in the AONB, covering 105.14 ha (0.27 % of total AONB).
- 3 Motte and Bailey castles.
- Small remnants of a 12th century castle at Dyserth.
- 2 later 13th Century stone castles.

Protection:

- 5 Iron Age Hillforts are owned by the Local Authorities.
- All Iron Age Hillforts are designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Castell Dinas Brân, a medieval castle located within the earthworks of an earlier Iron Age Hillfort, towers over the town of Llangollen giving it a strong sense of place and historic context. Similarly, Caer Drewyn Iron Age Hillfort, along with the 6th century church at St Mael and St Sulien and associations with Owain Glyndŵr give the town of Corwen a strong historical root. Pen y Gaer Hillfort is located near Garth adjacent to Trefor Hall woods.

Completed in 1310, Chirk is the last Welsh castle from the reign of Edward I that is still lived in. Features from its 700 years include the medieval tower and dungeon, 17th century Long Gallery, grand 18th century state apartments, servants' hall and historic laundry.

Motte and Bailey castle sites are found at Tomen y Rhodwydd near Llandegla, Tomen y Faerdre near Llanarmon-yn-Iâl and Glyndŵr's Mount near Llidiart y Parc.

The site of Gop Cairn at Trelawnyd, not technically a defensive structure but hinting at nearby settlement, is thought to date to the Neolithic period from about 3000BC. It is a vast mound, constructed on the top of a hill, perhaps marking burials in a nearby cave.

- Dinas Brân Castle, owned by Denbighshire County Council, is designated as a SAM, SSSI and it is also within the buffer zone of the WHS and within the Historic landscape of the Vale of Llangollen
- Chirk Castle is jointly managed by Cadw and the National Trust.
- Tomen y Rhodwydd, Tomen y Faerdre and Glyndŵr's Mount are all SAMs.
- Remains of Dyserth Caslte are a SAM.

Condition:

- Erosion work was carried out on Moel Fenlli, Moel Arthur, Penycloddiau, Moel y Gaer Llanbedr, Moel y Gaer Llantysilio and Caer Drewyn as part of the Heather and Hillforts scheme. Erosion repair work has taken place at Tomen y Rhodwydd and extensive stabilisation work was carried out at Owain Glyndwr's Motte.
- Management plans were drawn up for the six monuments within the Heather and Hillforts project area.
- Prior to work taking place in Heather and Hillforts, condition surveys were carried out on the 6 hillforts, this work was repeated in 2012 and an improvement in condition was demonstrated at each of the sites. Continual monitoring will be needed to maintain this.

Understanding:

The Heather and Hillforts project, from 2008 to 2012, greatly increased our understanding of 6 hillforts in the AONB. A programme of archaeological digs (at Moel y gaer Bodfari, Penycloddiau, Moel y Gaer Llanbedr) and community archaeology events have developed a greater understanding within the local community.

Small Historic Features

These are features that are unique to the AONB. They are unlikely to be listed and conserved but they are part of the fabric of the landscape. Examples: Red telephone boxes, water troughs, milestones, stone stiles and gate posts, old wells, old road signs, named rocks, milk stands and World War I and II relics.

- These features tend to 'disappear' and part of this is because there is not a comprehensive list held anywhere. They also disappear through being modernised or through road improvement schemes.

The Clwydian Range Archaeology Group (CRAG) was established during Heather and Hillforts, and now runs successfully as an independent voluntary group who have made important discoveries on land adjacent to Moel Arthur Hillfort. Recent archaeological work has also been undertaken on Moel y Gaer Bodfari by Oxford University and Penycloddiau by Liverpool University. Bangor University have been excavating at Fron Newydd adjacent to Caer Drewyn as well as at the small defended settlement of Moel Fodig, just outside the AONB.

Extent:

- 23 K6 Red Phone Boxes.
- 15 Trig Points.
- Total number of features unknown.
- % loss of features identified unknown.

The new Heritage Bill is likely to contain a section on proposals to produce robust 'local lists' of these types of features.

Boundaries

The main types are native hedgerows on slopes and dry stone walls in the limestone and upland shale areas. The other types are hedgerows on a stone retaining wall (Clawdd Wall). These linear features are valuable wildlife habitats, which act particularly well as wildlife corridors between habitats.

An unusual feature unique to Corwen within the AONB is boundaries using upright slate slabs – an example of this can be seen at Gro Isa just north of Corwen next to the River Dee.

- Loss of hedges and walls due to agricultural improvement.
- Loss due to lack of maintenance.
- Loss of skill to maintain in a traditional way.
- Expense of maintenance.
- Modern maintenance not suitable.

Extent:

- Length of traditional boundaries in the AONB unknown.
- 12 km of hedgerow have been restored through the AONB countryside grant scheme between 2007 and 2014.
- 0.5 km of dry stone wall have been rebuilt through the AONB countryside grant scheme between 2007 and 2014.

Need survey of boundaries with those that have greatest impact on the landscape prioritised for action.

% of boundaries in good condition unknown.

Access and Leisure

Resource / Special Feature	Description	Issues	State
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Access and Leisure</p>	<p>Iconic Visitor and Cultural Attractions</p> <p>The Vale of Llangollen and Dee Valley forms a striking gateway to North Wales as the topography changes rapidly from flat Shropshire Plain to a steep sided Welsh Valley, with accompanying changes in building styles and materials, culture and way of life. The area has a special role as a gateway to and cultural window on Welsh life and marks the English-Welsh borderlands.</p> <p>Further north, the Clwydian Range is the first chain of hills inside the Welsh border. With strong cultural links to Liverpool and the North West of England, the area is heavily visited.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No coherent identity for the area, there are three distinct tourism units – the Clwydian Range, the Dee Valley and the World Heritage Site. • There is no coordination of visitor management. • Interpretation and awareness of the culture and history of the area is low. • People pass through the area travelling to west Wales. Need to raise awareness of the area and encourage people to stop in the AONB. • Lack of high quality facilities – public transport, car parking, cafes, toilets, information. • Localised degraded environment due to congestion, litter and vandalism. 	<p>Provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36 Caravan Parks / Camp Sites in the AONB. • Number of tourism businesses – unknown • Number of AONB threshold signs - ? • Number of Car Parks in the AONB – unknown. • Number of Public Toilets in the AONB – 8 • 4 Country Parks in the AONB – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loggerheads • Moel Famau • Tŷ Mawr • Minera Lead Mines <p>Extent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Country Parks covering 1,007.05 ha (2.59% of AONB). • 1 Country Park Visitor Facilities currently closed. • There are 20 sites (including Country Parks) in the AONB managed by AONB / Local Authorities. These cover 1075.78 ha (2.76% of the AONB) • Natural Resources Wales estate (formerly Forestry Commission) covers 1299.37ha (3.34% of the AONB). <p>Condition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minera Lead mines currently closed to the public.

'Honey-pot' sites

The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal is a feat of civil engineering of the Industrial Revolution, completed in the early years of the 19th century. The property is inscribed as a World Heritage Site and is recognised as an innovation ensemble that inspired many projects all over the world.

Loggerheads Country Park provides an important link to the wider Clwydian Range and is seen as a base from which to explore.

Moel Famau is a significant tract of heather moorland in the Clwydian Range. The Jubilee Tower is on the summit. Tŷ Mawr Country Park and farm lies on the banks of the River Dee beneath the arches of the Cefn Viaduct.

Minera Lead Mines Country Park is a starting point for the Clywedog Trail and accessing the beautiful countryside of Minera Mountain.

Offa's Dyke National Trail and the Panorama Drive, which run along the foot of Eglwyseg Rocks, offer stunning high level views. The Horseshoe Pass is a popular tourist viewpoint and scenic drive.

- Existing and new development where there has been a lack of attention to design, character, materials and integration within key views and at key locations which contribute to visitor experience.
- Access for the less able is challenging.
- Lack of / closure of visitor facilities.
- Traffic management, congestion and car parking.
- Poor public transport links and infrastructure.
- Busy road crossings.
- Some industrial remains are in poor condition.
- Visitor pressure in key conservation areas.

The Offa's Dyke Trail and Promoted Routes

The AONB has an extensive network of paths, bridleways and byways. Some have great historical significance including the Leete Path and old Drovers' Roads. The network brings specific economic benefit to the local economy. There are a great many publications promoting primarily walking opportunities.

- On-going maintenance of promoted routes.
- Erosion in sensitive areas.
- Impact of access on stock and farming, particularly by dogs.
- Limited Rights of Way for horse riders and cyclists.
- Congestion in honey pot areas.
- Blocked and unusable paths restrict opportunities.
- Number of unsupported promoted routes.
- Distribution of available material.

Extent:

- 772.6 km of Public Rights of Way
- 324.4 km of Rights of Way and permissive routes promoted by AONB / Local Authority publications. (42% of the network).
- 114 km of Promoted Cycle Routes on Public Rights of Way / permissive paths. (14.8% of the network).
- Length of blocked / unusable paths unknown.

Open Access

Access Land comprises mountain, moor, heath and down, common land and all land over 600m in height.

Access Land is an important component of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley, and provides access to areas, particularly hilltops, not served by the Rights of Way network. It is found throughout the AONB, but the majority is found in the south, covering the large extents of open moorland on the Ruabon, Llantysilio and North Berwyn mountains.

A number of permissive access routes have been developed to guide walkers to points of interest and significance, such as Liberty Hall south of Corwen, and the summit of Moel Gyw.

Adventure Activities

There is growing concern that people's lifestyles are becoming too sedentary. They seek to 'destress' through adventure experiences such as rock climbing, caving, kayaking, white water rafting, mountain bikes, horse riding etc.

The landscape of the AONB supports adventure activity businesses, including the mountain Biking centre at Coed Llandegla.

- Uncertainty with the public to where access land areas are.
- Disturbance to nesting birds and other wildlife. Adventure activities
- Population health issues increasing.
- Conflict between user groups using the resources of the area, in particular the River Dee.
- Litter, noise, damage.
- Mountain biking pressure on bridleway network and wider countryside.
- Impact of access on key conservation sites.
- Significant car parks serving the network include Loggerheads, Moel Famau and Tŷ Mawr Country Parks, Car Parks in Corwen and Llangollen, and Llantysilio Green.
- Number of Laybys suitable for parking unknown
- 3 Railway stations serving the AONB (Prestatyn, Ruabon and Chirk)
- 10,380.18 ha of Access Land (26.67% of AONB area), of this
 - 6441.35 ha is common land.
 - 3938.83 ha are mapped as open country.
- Number of adventure activity providers unknown.
- Tourism spend in the AONB in 2012 - £39.4 million.



Health and Well-being – Deprivation

In general, the AONB is not an area with high levels of deprivation when assessed against most deprivation indicators, including income levels, educational attainment, employment, health, housing quality and physical environment. Overall, the AONB is within the least deprived 25% areas of Wales (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2005). However, one aspect in which the AONB demonstrates notably high levels of deprivation is access to services, which is a result of the sparsely populated rural character of the area. As the population is older than the average, access to local and specialist health care, and support services, all contribute to a sense of community wellbeing.

Although still below the Welsh average, levels of limiting long term illness have increased in the AONB between 2001 and 2011.

- Maintaining and improving access to local services.
- People living in deprived areas do not get a benefit from the AONB.
- 2 Communities First Areas within the AONB
- 7 Communities First Areas within 3km of AONB.
- Percentage of LSOA's (Lower-level Super Output Areas) in AONB within the most deprived quartile in Wales for access to services – 26.3% (10 of 38)
- Percentage of people with limiting long-term illness
 - East 17.2%
 - North 21.7%
 - West 19.5%
 - South 21.2 %
 - Wales 22.7%



Culture and People

Resource / Special Feature	Description	Issues	State
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Culture and People - The Built Environment</p>	<p>Settlement</p> <p>The settlement pattern of the Clwydian Range is characterised by villages and hamlets on either side of the main ridge, such as Llanbedr DC, Cilcain and Nannerch, and along river valleys, including Bodfari and Llanferres. Most of these villages are compact and nucleated in form. These settlements are supplemented by scattered farmsteads and isolated dwellings which extend higher up the slopes.</p> <p>The settlement patterns in the south of the AONB are found primarily along river valleys. Smaller villages include Bryneglwys, Glyndyfrdwy, Carrog, Pentredŵr and Froncysyllte. The towns of Llangollen and Corwen both straddle the River Dee. Similar to the Clwydian Range, scattered farmsteads and isolated dwellings are found higher up the slopes.</p> <p>A number of larger settlements adjoin the AONB, including Prestatyn, Meliden, Dyserth, Gwernymynydd, Trefor, Cefn Mawr and Chirk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development in the AONB and its setting is not always in sympathy with the local landscape character and settlement pattern. 	<p>No. of AONB villages / settlements defined in development plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denbighshire 23 • Flintshire 6 • Wrexham 2 <p>Total – 31</p>

Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are designated by local planning authorities to protect areas of special architectural or historic interest where it is desirable to preserve or enhance their character or appearance. They are one indicator of the quality of the built environment. Designations should be underpinned by up to date Character Appraisals, and planning authorities should prepare Management / Enhancement Plans. Designation also brings some additional controls on development, but these can be increased via Article 4 Directions if permitted development is harming the special character of the area.

- Incomplete / out of date Conservation Area Character Appraisals.
- Lack of Management / Enhancement Plans for Conservation Areas.
- No arrangements for monitoring the condition of Conservation Areas.

Extent:

- There are 17 conservation areas in the AONB, covering 88.85 ha (0.23% of AONB)
 - Denbighshire 9
 - Flintshire 6
 - Wrexham 2
- % of AONB villages / settlements recognised in development plans which are Conservation Areas - 41.9% (13 of 31)
- % of Conservation Areas with an up to date Character Appraisal unknown
- % of Conservation Areas with a Management / Enhancement Plan unknown
- No. of Article 4 Directions unknown

Listed Buildings

Buildings of special architectural or historical interest are Listed by Cadw. There are strict controls over development of Listed Buildings and their setting to ensure their special character is conserved or enhanced. The number and grade of Listed Buildings in an area is another indicator of the quality of the local built environment. Local authorities are advised to undertake 5 yearly surveys of the condition of Listed Buildings in their area to identify buildings at risk.

- Concerns over the number of listed buildings at risk.
- There is a need to update and maintain the Buildings at Risk list for each Local Authority.
- The Jubilee Tower at Moel Famau is one of the most prominent and distinctive Listed Buildings in the AONB, but is in need of restoration / conservation to secure its long term future.

Extent:

- There are 645 Listed Buildings in the AONB
- 56 are considered to be 'at risk'.
- Significant Listed Buildings include Chirk Castle, Llangollen Bridge and the Jubilee Tower.

Development Control

The control of development in the AONB is an important means by which the character and appearance of the area can be maintained or improved. Development proposals outside the area can also have an impact on important views in or out of the AONB.

The three local planning authorities (LPA's) consult the Joint Committee on planning applications which might impact on the AONB.

- Need to maintain Joint Committee activity in respect of responding to development proposals.
- Maintain and develop the Joint Committee's credibility and influence as a planning consultee.
- Three LPA's; need to ensure consistent approach across administrative boundaries.
- Urbanisation of villages and poor urban design.
- Need for a more proactive response to unauthorised development in the AONB.

- No. of planning applications referred to the JAC
 - 2011/12 – 199
 - 2012/13 – 212
 - 2013/14 – 221
- % of JAC comments adopted by LPA's
 - 2011/12 – 68%
 - 2012/13 – 72%
 - 2013/14 – 74%
- No. of possible unauthorised development cases referred to LPA's
 - 2011/12 – 13
 - 2012/13 – 21
 - 2013/14 – 10

Planning Policy and Guidance

Within a plan led system for the control of development, relevant and up to date planning policy and guidance is an essential component of protecting and conserving the character and appearance of the AONB.

The local planning authorities publish Local Development Plans (LDPs). Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) notes complement development plans. The Joint Committee has prepared non-statutory Development Guidelines for the AONB. National planning policy is set by the Welsh Government, and the Joint Committee is usually consulted on proposed changes to national policy.

- Clear and robust policies required to conserve and enhance the AONB.
- Need for Joint Committee to engage with LDP process; WG guidance no longer requires LDP's to include national AONB policies.
- Three LPA's; need to ensure consistent approach to AONB policy and guidance across administrative boundaries.
- No specific SPG for the AONB to conserve and enhance local distinctiveness. Nonstatutory Development Guidelines cannot be adopted by the LPA's.
- Need to maintain AONB profile and Joint Committee activity in respect of responding to planning and other policy consultations.

- Local Development Plans:
- Denbighshire LDP 2006 – 2021 (adopted 2013)
 - Flintshire LDP 2015 – 2030 (In preparation: adoption planned in 2018)
 - Wrexham LDP 2 2013 – 2028 (In preparation: adoption planned in 2018)

- Unitary Development Plans (now superseded by Local Development Plan system):
- Flintshire UDP 2000 – 2015 (adopted 2011)
 - Wrexham UDP 1996 – 2011 (adopted 2005)

Sense of place

Community, belonging, attachment and a sense of place. Associated with this is the Welsh language, strong community values and a sense of local pride which are all a part of the natural beauty of an area. There is an understanding that 'the land makes us what we are'.

- Lack of awareness of the AONB and its purposes within parts of the local communities.
- Unfocused community and voluntary actions that contribute to local distinctiveness.

Population

The AONB is sparsely populated but there is some variation across the area, the Dee Valley is the most populous mainly due to the larger towns of Llangollen and Corwen. However, there are a number of larger and more populous settlements in close proximity to the Clwydian Range such as Mold, Ruthin, Prestatyn, Chirk and the Wrexham urban fringe.

The age profile of the AONB shows an older population than Wales, Denbighshire and Flintshire.

The number of families with dependent children has risen between 2001 and 2011, particularly in the western area of the AONB.

- As life expectancy increases, there will be increasing numbers of older people in society. A sharp rise in the number of over 80s will see a generation keen to relax but potentially reluctant (or unable) to travel far.
- Over the past fifteen years, a sustained rise in the birth rate has caused a mini baby boom.
- Grandparents will be 'younger' than ever before; and retiring baby boomers will prioritise their leisure time.
- Pressures and opportunities arising from the close proximity of the AONB to a much larger population.

- Resident Population (2011) -18,690
 - 8,000 of these within the Dee Valley
- Population Density (2011)
 - North – 0.7 (persons per km sq)
 - West – 0.4
 - East – 0.4
 - South - 0.4
 - Wales 1.5
- Families with dependent children
 - North – 378
 - West – 839
 - East – 426
 - South - 301

Housing

The AONB is an attractive area in which to live. It is also within easy commuting range of large employment centres such as Deeside, Chester, Wrexham and beyond. This influences the local housing market by pushing up house prices, often beyond what many local people can afford. The number of social / rented council and housing association properties in the AONB is limited. The problems of availability and affordability for local people are compounded by a higher percentage than the Welsh average of second / holiday homes in parts of the AONB.

- Increasing the number and range of affordable homes in the AONB to meet local needs.
- High levels of demand for council / housing association accommodation in some areas.
- Need for robust planning policies to ensure that new housing development addresses affordability and local need issues.

- 368 Council Houses in Denbighshire and Flintshire areas of AONB. (Wrexham CBC Council House numbers unknown).
- No. of dwellings unknown
- Council / Housing Assoc Waiting Lists unknown
- Second homes in the AONB unknown

Employment

A high proportion of AONB residents are economically active when compared to the Welsh average but most commute out of the area to nearby towns and other centres of employment. The area does not therefore exhibit high levels of economic selfcontainment, which can impact on community cohesion. The public sector is the largest source of employment, but agriculture and forestry continues to be an important employer when compared to the Welsh average.

- Lack of economic selfcontainment resulting in fewer people 'embedded' in their local area and reduced sense of community.
- Fewer local jobs than the working population.
- Reduction in the number of active agricultural holdings and the overall increase in the average holding size.
- Resources to deliver AONB Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.

- No. of working residents unknown
- No. of jobs in the AONB unknown
- % of population economically active (2011)
 - East 70% • North 67% • West 67%
 - South 68% • Wales 66%
- % of residents living and working in the AONB unknown
- % of residents employed in agriculture or forestry (2011)
 - East 5.4% • North 5.6%
 - West 9.3% • South 4%
- No. of active agricultural holdings unknown.
- Average size of agricultural holding unknown.
- No. of tourism related businesses supporting the AONB unknown
- % of population retired (2011)
 - East 20% • North 20%
 - West 21% • South 18%
- Levels of long term unemployment (2011)
 - East 0.9% • North 1.6% • West 1.2%
 - South 1.7% • Wales 2.4%

Facilities and Services

Access to local facilities and services such as schools, shops, post offices, community meeting places and public transport all contribute to a sense of community wellbeing. Access to such services in the AONB can be limited. Rural services are in decline and continue to be under threat given the economic outlook and the viability of providing such facilities in isolated and sparsely population areas.

- Maintaining key existing rural facilities and services that meet the needs of local people, and preventing the further loss of such facilities.
 - Review of education provision and the number of rural schools.
 - Developing access to new facilities and services such as high speed broadband and mobile phone coverage.
 - Ensuring effective public transport network links to service centres.
- 40 places of worship in the AONB.
 - Facilities in Denbighshire area of AONB.
 - 57 Pubs / hotels / bars.
 - 118 shops.
 - No. of primary schools in AONB – 14
 - Nos. on school roll unknown
 - No. of settlements with a public house – 21 (68%)
 - No. of settlements with a community hall – 17 (55%)
 - No. of settlements with a shop / PO – 13 (42%)
 - No. of settlements with a regular daily bus service – 19 (61%)
 - Broadband 'notspots' – Unknown
 - No. of mobile blackspots – unknown.



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Part Three

ACTION PLAN

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Landscape Quality and Character

	Objectives	Policy Ref	Actions	Lead	Partners	Timescale
LQCO1	Ensure that the natural resources and special qualities of the AONB are recognised and valued	PoLSQ1	Support Cadwyn Clwyd Renewable Energy Pilot projects and other appropriate community based projects which seek to mitigate the impact of climate change and reduce the carbon footprint of the AONB without harming the special qualities and features of the area or its character and appearance.	Cadwyn / AONB	Landowners NRW	Yr 1
			Support the Natural Response to Flood Risk project in the Clwyd Catchment particularly in relation to management works within the Clwydian Range	Cadwyn / AONB	Landowners NRW	Yr1, Yr2
LQCO2	Ensure that the impacts of environmental change on the AONB are understood and a strategic response is developed and implemented	PoLSQ1 PoLSQ2 PoLSQ3	Engage with the National Grid's Visual Impact Provision (VIP) programme to reduce the impact of high voltage transmission in the AONB and its setting.	AONB		Yr2
			Promote mast sharing to reduce clutter and impact on the local landscape character of the AONB.			Yr3
			Work with the industry to apply the seven 'Holford Rules' and develop guidance for mitigation measures.			Annual
LQCO3	Minimise the cumulative impacts of small-scale change that may erode the special character of the AONB.	PoLSQ3	Prepare guidance on the introduction of renewable energy technologies into the AONB and its setting, to reduce the impact on the local landscape character			Yr3
			Encourage and support energy conservation measures in order to help meet national and regional targets for energy consumption.			Annual
LQCO4	Protect the tranquillity of the AONB and take steps where possible to reduce noise and light pollution.	PoLSq1 PoLSQ2	Identify those special qualities of the AONB that are sensitive to change and monitor their state.			Yr2

LQCO5	Ensure that the impacts of environmental change on the AONB are understood and a strategic response is developed and implemented	PoISQ2	Conduct fix point photography monitoring of key viewpoints across the AONB.	AONB AONB LAs	AONB NWTRA	Yr3
			Establish a monitoring programme from key viewpoints across the AONB			Yr3
			Work with the 3 Highways Authorities and Trunk roads Agency to rationalise road traffic signage and agree a set of guidelines for signage in the AONB.			Yr2
LQCO6	Investigate and increase our understanding of the cultural diversity of communities within the AONB	PoISQ1 PoISQ4	Organise community reminiscence days to engage with communities and draw upon their wealth of knowledge about the area. - 1 per year			Annual
			Support the research and recording of the area's social history			Annual
LQCO7	Develop partnerships that will help to stimulate awareness of and interest in cultural diversity within the AONB.	PoISQ1 PoISQ4	Hold an annual AONB Forum to stimulate discussion on the areas special qualities and ensure community participation	AONB	LAs	Annual
			Maintain an AONB Partnership as part of the governance structure for the AONB	AONB	LAs	Annual
			Work with Cadwyn Clwyd's Local Action Groups to ensure that cultural diversity is reflected in RDP programmes relating to sense of place	AONB	LAs	Annual
			Work with Menter Iaith to support and raise awareness of the Welsh language within the communities of the AONB	AONB	Cadwyn Clwyd	Yr2

Heather Moorland and Rolling Ridges

	Objectives	Policy Ref	Actions	Lead	Partners	Timescale
HMRO1	Work with North Wales Bionet Group to maintain or extend the current extent of heather moorland within the AONB	PolHW1 PolHW2	Where possible, restore areas of former heathland particularly around Coed Moel Famau, Coed Nercwys, Moel Findeg and Moel Famau	NRW / AONB	LAs	Annual
HMRO2	Bring areas of heather moorland into positive productive management.	PolHW1 PolHW2 PolHW3	Continue to support the graziers on the Clwydian Range, Llantysilio Mountain and North Berwyn in the management of heathland through cutting and burning through Glastir Commons schemes and other means.	NRW AONB Landowners	WG	Annual
			Continue to work with Coleg Cambria Llysfasi to provide training courses in upland management as part of their National Diploma course – 2 events per year.	AONB Coleg Cambria		
HMRO3	Continue to monitor black grouse and other upland bird species as an indicator of habitat condition	PolHW2	Monitor Black Grouse populations and other upland birds every year at key lek sites across the AONB in order to inform and target specific management.	RSPB	AONB NRW	Annual
HMRO4	Associate food production with ecosystem management.	PolHW3 PolHW4	Work with farmers and graziers to associate lamb from the upland areas with quality landscapes.	AONB	Cadwyn Clwyd Graziers AONB Food Trail	Yr2, Yr3
			Engage producers and retailers with the Clwydian Range Food Trail Project to promote local produce and give added value to produce associated with positive conservation works.	Cadwyn Clwyd		Annual
HMRO5	Support and encourage sustainable grouse moors management where it has positive environmental and economic impacts	PolHW3 PolHW4	Support the North Wales Moors partnership on Y Berwyn	RSPB	NRW AONB	
HMRO6	Provide support to farmers and landowners in upland areas to bring moorlands into management schemes.	PolHW3 PolHW4	Attend graziers meeting where appropriate	AONB		Annual
			Provide practical support for burning in upland areas wherever possible	AONB		Annual



Limestone Grassland, Cliffs and Scree

	Objectives	Policy Ref	Actions	Lead	Partners	Timescale
LGPO1	Maintain the current extent of calcareous grassland and limestone pavement and scree within the AONB.	PoIHW1 PoIHW2	Ensure that the conservation objectives of each site are understood and incorporated into project plans.	NRW	AONB, Bionet	Annual
			Plot and record cave systems and limestone pavement in the AONB and identify features at risk.	AONB		Yr4
			Support and promote projects through the North Wales Bionet Group and Glastir	NRW		
LGPO2	Bring all areas of public owned / managed limestone grassland, cliffs and scree into favourable management schemes.	PoIHW1 PoIHW2	Carry out targeted scrub control to restore areas of former calcareous grassland habitat at Prestatyn Hillside, the Alyn Valley and Eglwyseg as part of the Limestone Legacy Project.	AONB	NRW	Yr2,3,4,5
LGPO3	Provide opportunities for privately owned areas of limestone grassland and pavement to come into favourable management schemes.	PoIHW3 PoIHW4	Develop a Landscape Partnership Scheme Project for HLF to address issues of visitor impacts on areas of limestone grassland, cliffs and scree particularly around Eglwyseg and the Panorama.	AONB	WCBC NRW DCC	Yr2
			Ensure that land managers understand the importance of calcareous habitats and their sensitivity to grazing levels and the enrichment of soils from fertilisers, herbicide application, ploughing and re-seeding.			Annual
LGPO4	Ensure that recreational pressure is minimised in sensitive areas	PoIHW1 PoIHW4	Reduce the impact of the Offa's Dyke National Trail on the Eglwyseg Scree through path repair and consolidation.	AONB	NRW	Yr2,3
			Assess the floristic changes that recreational pressure associated with soil compaction brings about.			Yr3
			Develop the Countryside Grant Scheme to include funding of all special features of the AONB including limestone grassland restoration projects.			Annual

Broadleaved Woodland and Veteran Trees

	Objectives	Policy Ref	Actions	Lead	Partners	Timescale
WVTO1	Maintain the current extent of broadleaved woodland and veteran trees within the AONB.	PolHW1 PolHW2	Support measures to reduce the impacts of pests and diseases on the local landscape character (<i>Phytophthora Ramorum</i> – Bilberry and Larch - Ash dieback, and <i>Phytophthora Alni</i> – Alder)	NRW	AONB Landowners	Annual
			Support appropriate planting programmes that strengthen woodland resilience to environmental change.			Annual
WVTO2	Protect Veteran Trees within the landscape across the AONB	PolHW1 PolHW2	Record the current extent and condition of veteran trees in the AONB.	AONB	Landowners NRW	Yr3
			Identify funding to develop a programme of Parkland Tree Planting across appropriate parts of the AONB.			Yr3
WVTO3	To maintain and restore broadleaved woodland towards a favourable condition through the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plans for Upland Mixed Ash Woodlands, upland oak woodlands and wet woodlands.	PolHW1 PolHW2 PolHW3	Bring all areas of public owned / managed broadleaved woodland into favourable management schemes such as Glastir or SSSI Section 15.	AONB / NRW	Las/NT	Yr3
			Implement actions within existing section 15 management agreements and Glastir schemes.	NRW	Landowners	Yr2
			Develop the Countryside Grant Scheme to include funding of all special features of the AONB including small woodlands under 2 ha.	AONB		Annual
WVTO4	Develop publically owned woodlands as models of best practice in broadleaf woodland management.	PolHW1 PolHW2 PolHW4	Develop management programmes for all Local Authority owned woodlands in particular Bishops Wood, Coed Alex, Alyn Valley Woods, Riverside Woods Llangollen, Corwen Cynwyd Railway line and Coed Pen y Pigyn and along the Dee corridor at Tŷ Mawr including Jeffrey's Wood.	AONB	NRW	Yr2

River Valleys

	Objectives	Policy Ref	Actions	Lead	Partners	Timescale
RVO1	Continue to monitor the extent of key indicator species such as otter and water vole in order to gauge habitat condition.	PolHW1 PolHW2	Meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and Catchment Management Plans	NRW	AONB/	Annual
RVO2	Continue to develop a partnership of key agencies and bodies to ensure an integrated and landscape approach to management.	PolHW1 PolHW2	Support the Alyn and Wheeler Living Landscapes Project and its work on riparian connectivity and invasive species.	NWWT	AONB – NRW - NEWWildlife	Yr1,2,3
		PolHW3	Develop the Countryside Grant Scheme to include funding of all special features of the AONB including water courses	AONB		Annual
RVO3	Support and develop a landscape scale approach to a programme of invasive species control particularly in relation to Himalayan balsam.	PolHW1 PolHW2 PolHW3	Continue to work in partnership with others to control invasive species within the Alyn and Wheeler Living Landscapes Project.	NWWT	NRW, AONB Las	Annual
			Support the DINNS Partnership in addressing invasive species throughout the Dee catchment.	NWWT	NRW, AONB Las	Annual
			Support Big Dee Day to tackle invasive non-native plants and animals, such as Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam.			Annual
RVO4	Raise awareness amongst the general public and landowners/ managers of the importance of the river valleys for biodiversity.	PolHW1 PolHW2 PolHW4	Devise and run an exemplar demonstration project on good catchment management	Cadwyn Clwyd	NRW, AONB	Yr3
			Hold an annual workshop on pollution control and good management for landowners, local councillors and professionals.	NRW	AONB	Yr3,4,5

Historic Settlement and Archaeology

	Objectives	Policy Ref	Actions	Lead	Partners	Timescale
HSAO1	Work towards a position where the condition/state of all archaeological sites within the AONB is known and appropriate management work is carried out. Utilise HER information, Pan-Wales projects, Glastir agri-environment schemes and the planning process to facilitate this.	PoIHE1 PoIHE2	Produce a schedule of historic site enhancements to prioritise works and promote good practice across all types and ages of assets. Target Project Action by the use of an 'At risk' register.	AONB	WCBC, DCC FCC	Yr3
			Conduct CPD sessions with planners and Highway officers to explain Archaeology and the Planning system and the importance of these small features in maintaining the character of settlements	AONB	Cadw, WCBC, DCC, FCC	Yr2, Yr4
			Work with Denbighshire Agricultural Estate at Caer Drewyn to establish an appropriate stocking rate and continue to control scrub around the hillfort.	DCC	AONB	Yr2
HSAO2	Encourage owners of Historic parks and Gardens within the AONB to maintain and restore existing parkland features as noted in the Register.	PoIHW1	Work with registered Historic parks and gardens landowners and other relevant agencies to undertake appraisals and to prepare and implement management plans to conserve and enhance the sites.	AONB	LAs	Annual
HSAO3	Increase the profile of the Historic Environment through effective and consistent interpretation and information.	PoIHE2	Raise awareness of the importance of industrial sites and features within the planning process and AONB.	AONB	Cadw	Annual
			Through the Our Picturesque Landscape Project devise and run an engagement programme for both residents (including schools, Town and Community Councils and Community Groups) and visitors, promoting awareness and understanding of the Historic Environment of the AONB and the historical links between sites.	AONB	Cadw LAs	Yr3, Yr4, Yr5
HSAO4	Incorporate information gathered as part of the Historic Environment Record into the continuous management process within the AONB.	PoIHE2	Ensure all decisions regarding the Historic Environment are evidence based.	LAs	AONB	Annual
			Ensure LANDMAP data and the Historic Environment Record are utilised to guide the determination of planning applications and inform agri-environment schemes.	NRW AONB	LAs	Annual

Industrial Features and the World Heritage Site

	Objectives	Policy Ref	Actions	Lead	Partners	Timescale
WHSO1	Secure the integrity of the outstanding universal values of the World Heritage Site.	PolHE1 PolHE3	Work in partnership to achieve the aspirations of the World Heritage Site Landscape Management Plan.	WHS Steering Group		Annual
WHSO2	Maintain key views to and from the WHS and the visual and cultural setting.	PolHE3	Establish an HLF project with Canal and Rivers Trust and Wrexham County Borough Council to preserve the key views from and into the WHS	AONB	CRT, WCBC DCC, NRW	Yr2
WHSO3	Take steps to limit the impact visitor pressures on the historic integrity and setting of the World Heritage Site	PolHE1 PolHE3	Work with Cadw and local landowners to formalise access to the Horseshoe Falls from Llantysilio.	AONB	DCC Cadw	Yr1
WHSO4	Ensure a consistent approach to interpretation, signage and quality of the experience across partnership authorities.	PolHE2 PolHE3	Work with the World Heritage Site partnership to develop an Interpretation and strategy for the whole corridor.	CRT	AONB CRT	Yr3
WHSO5	Raise awareness of the importance of industrial sites and features within the planning and AONB.	PolHE1 PolHE2	Through the Our Picturesque Landscape Partnership project assess and restore key features associated with lead mining limestone quarrying particularly, Minera and Eglwyseg.	AONB	WCBC Landowners	Yr3
			Work towards the reconsolidation of industrial features on Prestatyn Hillside.	AONB	Prestatyn TC	Yr4
			Through the Our Picturesque Landscape Project provide high quality interpretation for key industrial sites within the AONB – in particular the Leete at Loggerheads, Devil's gorge and Minera Lead mines.	AONB	WHS Steering Group	Yr3
WHSO6	Develop an "at risk " register for key industrial historic sites and work towards programmes that will respond where action is required.	PolHE1 PolHE2	Establish an HLF project to identify and respond to sites at risk.	AONB	LAs Cadw	Yr3



Hillforts and Defensive Structures

	Objectives	Policy Ref	Actions	Lead	Partners	Timescale
DFSO1	Ensure continuation of the achievements of the Heather and Hillforts Project and maintain existing levels of work at the 4 hillforts of Penycloddiau, Moel Arthur, Moel y Gaer Llanbedr and Moel Fenlli and aim to continue programme to include Moel y Gaer Bodfari and Moel Hiraddug.	PolHE1	Monitor the impact of the Offa's Dyke National Trail on the Hillforts of the Clwydian Range.	AONB	NRW DCC / FCC	Yr3
		PolHE1	Continue to support a partnership approach to tackling off road vehicular trespass and its impacts on the hillforts, particularly on Llantysilio Mountain - work with Police, NRW and Local Authorities.	DCC RoW	AONB NWP NRW	Annual
DFSO2	Ensure the structural integrity of historic defensive features and ensure that impacts of visitor pressure is minimised.	PolHE1	Complete the reconsolidation of the masonry at Castell Dinas Bran around the gatehouse.	DCS	AONB Cadw	Yr2
		PolHE1	Through the Our Picturesque Landscape project take steps to minimise erosion into Castell Dinas Bran particularly from the eastern access point.	AONB	Cadw DCS	Yr4

Small Historic Features

	Objectives	Policy Ref	Actions	Lead	Partners	Timescale
SHFO1	Raise awareness of the importance of small historic features within both the planning and highways environments by providing training sessions to professionals.	PolHE1	Ensure LANDMAP data and the Historic Environment Record are utilised to guide the determination of planning applications and inform agri-environment schemes.	NRW	AONB	Annual
		PolHE2	Conduct CPD sessions with planners and Highway officers to explain Archaeology and the Planning system and the importance of these small features in maintaining the character of settlements	AONB	LAs	Yr3,4,5
SHFO2	Encourage Communities to identify and map features within their communities on a standard database which is compatible with the HER.	PolHE2	Encourage the use of the Civic Trust Wales historic characterisation tool kit in the AONB's settlements.	AONB	LAs	Annual
		PolHE2	Visit Local Communities to discuss recording of features	AONB	Cadwyn Clwyd	Yr3,4,5
SHFO3	Encourage Communities to adopt these features and act as their champions by raising awareness within community councils and youth groups.	PolHE2	In line with <i>The Welsh Historic Environment: a Celebration</i> (2009) Establish an Historic Environment Champion from within the AONB Partnership.	AONB	AONB	Yr2

Boundaries

	Objectives	Policy Ref	Actions	Lead	Partners	Timescale
BO1	Using SDF and other funds develop a Countryside Grant schemes to support projects which will maintain and enhance the most important boundaries in the AONB as well as other Special Features	PolHE1	Continue to support through SDF a grant scheme to facilitate boundary improvement.	AONB	Landowners	Annual
BO2	In line with aspirations within <i>The Welsh Historic Environment Strategic Statement</i> (2009) raise the skills base amongst the local workforce to increase the number of people who can carry out the necessary conservation and repair work.	PolHE1 PolHE2	Continue to work with Llysfasi College students and staff to provide training courses in Countryside Skills	AONB	Coleg Cambria	Annual
		PolHE1 PolHE2	Continue to offer training days for Countryside Volunteers in hedge laying and dry stonewall construction.	AONB	DVSC AVOW FLVC NRW	Annual
BO3	Incorporate information gathered as part of the Historic Environment Record into the continuous management process within the AONB.	PolHE2	Gather information on current condition of boundaries within the AONB.	AONB	AONB	Yr3



Iconic Visitor and Cultural Attractions

	Objectives	Policy Ref	Actions	Lead	Partners	Timescale
IVCO1	To ensure that visitors and the tourism industry understand the need for, and support the conservation and enhancement of, the special qualities of the AONB as key assets upon which tourism is based.	PolART1	Maintain Sustainable Tourism Charter status for the AONB.	AONB	Cadwyn, FCC / DCC, WCBC	Yr2
		PolART2	Co-ordinate the development and implementation of Destination Management Plans that affect the AONB.	DCC, FCC, WCBC	AONB, VW	Annual
		PolART1	Hold an Annual Tourism Forum	AONB	LAs	Annual
		PolART1	Work with Visit Wales and other Protected Landscapes to promote sustainable tourism in Wales		LAs	Annual
IVCO2	Promote and assist convenient and sustainable access into the AONB and special places within it.	PolART2 PolART3	Utilise countryside sites such as Tŷ Mawr Country Park and Loggerheads to act as gateways to the AONB through good quality interpretation and information provision.	AONB	LAs	Annual
IVCO3	Continue to develop public transport links and develop a strategy to reduce congestion between honey-pots and with other centres of population.	PolART3	Work with the public transport staff and companies to co-ordinate public transport to and from AONB access hubs.	AONB Cadwyn	Cadwyn, CRT, WCBC, DCC, FCC	Annual
IVCO4	Investigate ways to reduce congestion around key visitor areas.	PolART1	Prepare a Visitor Management Plan for the World Heritage Site and consider ways to reduce congestion that will reduce the impact on residents and improve the visitor experience.	CRT	AONB, WCBC, DCC	Yr3
		PolART4	Implement the scheme for the development of additional car parking at Loggerheads and implement car park improvements at Tŷ Mawr country Park	AONB	Cadwyn, DCC	Yr2
IVCO5	Target information relating to the Countryside Code, behaviour and the impact of visitors on conservation status of key sites.	PolART1	Collect and disseminate data on actual and potential users recreational needs and aspirations.	AONB	NRW, NFU, FUW	Yr3
IVCO6	Assist tourism businesses to embrace the opportunities and responsibilities of being in a protected area.	PolART1	Develop an AONB Tourism Ambassador scheme.	AONB	DCC, FCC, WCBC	Yr2
		PolART1 PolART3	Provide support to business groups in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley and continue to develop the Sustainable Tourism Forum of businesses and officers.	AONB	DCC, FCC, WCBC	Annual

The Offa's Dyke National Trail and Promoted Routes

	Objectives	Policy Ref	Actions	Lead	Partners	Timescale
ODPPRO1	Continue a programme of Rights of Way improvement across the AONB through the use of the Community miles Initiative and other area access improvement work focusing on increasing opportunities to access the countryside.	PolART1	Seek safe and convenient access for horses, cyclists and walkers when creating new routes in the AONB.	AONB	DCC RoW	Yr2
ODPPRO2	Provide increased opportunities where appropriate for walking, cycling and horse riding in the AONB and promote these opportunities	PolART1	Create digital files of all promoted routes within the AONB and make them accessible on the web.	AONB	DCC, FCC, WCBC	Yr2,3,4
ODPPRO3	Work with the Local Access Forums to ensure an effective partnership with access users and landowners.	PolART3	Provide support to farmers and landowners in dealing with recreational pressure.	AONB	FUW, NRW, NFU	Annual
ODPPRO4	Raise awareness of the acknowledged health and well-being benefits provided by the AONB and develop initiatives promoting physical activity particularly walking and cycling.	PolART3	Continue to develop through partners volunteer and events programme activities that encourage the use of the countryside. Develop and promote Health Walks and Green Gyms close to AONB settlements	AONB		Annual
ODPPRO5	Using SDF and other funds develop a Countryside Grant schemes to support projects which will maintain and enhance the most important boundaries in the AONB as well as other Special Features	PolART3	Ensure least restrictive access is applied on all promoted trails in the AONB	AONB	DCC, FCC, WCBC, NRW	Annual
		PolART3	Continue to provide opportunities for underrepresented groups to experience the special qualities of the AONB.	AONB	NRW	Annual
ODPPRO6	Investigate ways to promote the trail with local tourism businesses and to develop initiatives that will strengthen business links.	PolART5	Through the Walking with Offa project provide support to tourism businesses in order to ensure that they are able to maximise the potential of the National Trail to the economy of the area.	AONB	Cadwyn, DCC, CRT, WCBC	Annual
ODPPRO7	Strengthen links between the Trail and nearby settlements and places of interest utilising the wider Rights of Way Network and Public Transport.	PolART5	Through the Walking with Offa cross border collaboration project with other Protected Landscapes work with business groups to increase awareness of the Offa's Dyke Path as a gateway to the AONB.	AONB	Cadwyn, DCC, CRT, WCBC	Annual
ODPPRO8	Monitor erosion in key areas and develop a programme of measures that will reduce the impact of the trail on the landscape by limiting width or depth of path as appropriate.	PolART3	Carry out erosion control measures on the Offa's Dyke National Trail at Cynr y Brain, Egwyseg, Moel Famau and the hillforts of the Clwydian Range in order to reduce the impact of the trail on the landscape and conservation features of the area.	AONB	NRW	Yr2,3,4,5
ODPPRO9	Identify key indicator sites to monitor visitor user numbers within the AONB	PolART5	Produce an annual monitoring report for key sites such as Tŷ Mawr Country Park, Loggerheads and People Counter data for the trails in the AONB.	AONB	DCC, NRW, DCC	Annual

The Built Environment

	Objectives	Policy Ref	Actions	Lead	Partners	Timescale
BEO1	Ensure new development in and around the AONB is sympathetically located in the landscape, and is well designed to complement the character and appearance of the area and its setting, particularly in respect of visual impact, scale, materials and landscaping.	PolCP1	Prepare guides for development at gateway locations to complement the AONB and strengthen local landscape character.	AONB	FCC, DCC, WCBC	Yr3
		PolCP1	To work with the local planning authorities to prepare and adopt formal Supplementary Planning Guidance and design guides for development in the AONB.			Yr4
		PolCP1 PolCP3	Facilitate an annual meeting with interested parties on the built environment.			Annual
		PolCP1	Undertake characterisations studies of all settlements, initially focusing on the larger settlements and pressure points, to identify sensitivities and opportunities for change			Yr3,4,5
		PolCP1	Consider and comment on >100 planning applications and other development proposals in and around the AONB each year, and to seek >85% adoption of the JC's views.			Annual
		PolCP1	Increase awareness and understanding of development issues in the AONB by assisting with planning committee member training and development programmes and continued professional development for officers.			Annual
BEO2	Conserve and enhance the character and local distinctiveness of historic villages, buildings and gardens within the AONB	PolCP	Work with the local authorities to undertake 5 yearly reviews of the Buildings at Risk register and condition surveys covering the AONB and take action to reduce the number of buildings at risk	AONB	DCC, FCC, WCBC Cadw, LAs	Yr2
		PolCP	Carry out and/or updating Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for all Conservation Areas within the AONB, including boundary reviews and an assessment of the overall condition of the areas.			Annual
		PolCP	To promote the use of Article 4 Directions to control permitted development in Conservation Areas which is harmful to the character and appearance of the area as identified by Conservation Area Appraisals.			Annual
			Ensure that Historic Parks and Gardens are protected from inappropriate development which would harm the character or recognised special features of the registered site			Annual
BEO3	Promote action to reduce the visual impact of prominent existing development in the AONB.	PolCP1	Develop guidance for the setting and design of agricultural and forestry buildings in the AONB to enhance local landscape character	AONB	LAs, CLA	Yr4
		PolCP1 PolSQ2	Work with National Grid to reduce the impact of pylons in the Molwynion Valley and Tremerchion area through their Visual Improvement Project	AONB	Landowners	Yr3,4,5
		PolSQ2	Work with Scottish Power to under- ground overhead lines where-ever possible	Scottish Power	AONB	Annual

People and Communities

	Objectives	Policy Ref	Actions	Lead	Partners	Timescale
PCO1	Help local communities to retain and enhance access to essential community services and facilities.	PolCP3	Support and promote appropriate social / community ownership and enterprise projects and initiatives such as 'The Pub's the Hub' which will maintain and improve access to local facilities and services.	Cadwyn Clwyd	AONB	Annual
		PolCP2	Resist development proposals that involve the loss of community facilities such as local shops and public houses.	AONB FCC,DCC, WCBC	AONB	Annual
		PolCP2	Identify current broadband provision across the AONB and work with communities and other agencies to secure the best possible coverage/speed of service, address broadband 'not-spots', and to promote the WG Superfast Scheme.	Cadwyn Clwyd	AONB	Yr3
		PolCP3	Promote a profitable, high quality local food processing economy as a way of revitalising rural incomes; and to raising awareness among residents, businesses and visitors about the benefits to the landscape, economy and social fabric of purchasing locally sourced goods.	Cadwyn Clwyd, AONB	Food Trail	Annual
		PolCP2	Support initiatives that provide essential community services through the medium of Welsh.	AONB	Menter laith	Annual
PCO2	Support the development of affordable housing for local people in appropriate locations, whilst maintaining the highest standards of design and landscaping.	PolCP2	Support the local authorities in carrying out housing needs and affordability surveys in areas of high demand for affordable housing indicated by LA/HA waiting lists.	LAs		Annual
		PolCP2	Work with local planning and housing authorities to promote affordable housing schemes for local people, to secure affordable units as part of any new market housing development, and to encourage the provision of affordable housing for local people through conversions and the development of individual new dwellings in villages and hamlets.	FCC,DCC, WCBC	AONB	Annual
		PolCP3	Promote opportunities to encourage local businesses to become more environmentally and economically sustainable, particularly in ways that conserve the special qualities of the AONB.	AONB, Cadwyn Clwyd		Yr3,4,5
PCO3	Foster a sense of place and local pride to secure social well-being.	PolCP3	Support a Community Ambassador Scheme to improve communication with communities.	Cadwyn Clwyd	AONB	Yr2,3,4,5
		PolCP3	Hold an annual Forum.	AONB		Annual
PCO4	Ensure that the governance of the AONB promotes effective partnerships fosters opportunities for communities to engage in the management of the AONB	PolCP3	Produce a volunteer programme of events twice per year.	AONB	DCC,NRW	Annual
		PolCP3	Liaise with community and Town Councils on an annual basis.			
		PolCP3	Maintain and develop the AONB Partnership.			
		PolCP3	Develop a Young Ranger Scheme with a programme of activity across the AONB.			







APPENDIX

How the Plan is Delivering for
Wellbeing of Future Generations
Goals in Wales



How the Plan is Delivering for Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals in Wales

Wellbeing Goals	Management Plan Objectives	
<p>A prosperous Wales</p> <p>An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change);</p> <p>and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.</p>		<p>LQC001 Ensure that the natural resources and special qualities of the AONB are recognised and valued.</p> <p>HMR02 Bring areas of heather moorland into positive productive management.</p> <p>HMR04 Associate food production with ecosystem management.</p> <p>HMR05 Support and encourage sustainable grouse moors management where it has positive environmental and economic impacts.</p> <p>B02 In line with aspirations within The Welsh Historic Environment Strategic Statement (2009) raise the skills base amongst the local workforce to increase the number of people who can carry out the necessary conservation and repair work.</p> <p>IVC06 Assist tourism businesses to embrace the opportunities and responsibilities of being in a protected area.</p> <p>ODPR06 Investigate ways to promote the trail with local tourism businesses and to develop initiatives that will strengthen business links.</p>
<p>A resilient Wales</p> <p>A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).</p>		<p>LQC03 Minimise the cumulative impacts of small-scale change that may erode the special character of the AONB.</p> <p>LQC04 Protect the tranquillity of the AONB and take steps where possible to reduce noise and light pollution.</p> <p>LQC05 Ensure that the impacts of environmental change on the AONB are understood and a strategic response is developed and implemented.</p> <p>HMR01 Work with North Wales Bionet Group to maintain or extend the current extent of heather moorland within the AONB.</p> <p>HMR03 Continue to monitor black grouse and other upland bird species as an indicator of habitat condition</p> <p>HMR06 Provide support to farmers and landowners in upland areas to bring moorlands into management schemes.</p> <p>LGP01 Maintain the current extent of calcareous grassland and limestone pavement and scree within the AONB.</p> <p>LPG02 Bring all areas of public owned / managed limestone grassland, cliffs and screes into favourable management schemes.</p> <p>LPG03 Provide opportunities for privately owned areas of limestone grassland and pavement to come into favourable management schemes.</p> <p>LPG04 Ensure that recreational pressure is minimised in sensitive areas</p>

		<p>WVT01 Maintain the current extent of broadleaved woodland and veteran trees within the AONB.</p> <p>WVT02 Protect Veteran Trees within the landscape across the AONB.</p> <p>WVT03 To maintain and restore broadleaved woodland towards a favourable condition through the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plans for Upland Mixed Ash Woodlands, upland oak woodlands and wet woodlands.</p> <p>WVT04 Develop publically owned woodlands as models of best practice in broadleaf woodland management.</p> <p>RV01 Continue to monitor the extent of key indicator species such as otter and water vole in order to gauge habitat condition.</p> <p>RV02 Continue to develop a partnership of key agencies and bodies to ensure an integrated and landscape approach to management.</p> <p>RV03 Support and develop a landscape scale approach to a programme of invasive species control particularly in relation to Himalayan balsam.</p> <p>RV04 Raise awareness amongst the general public and landowners/managers of the importance of the river valleys for biodiversity.</p> <p>WHS03 Take steps to limit the impact visitor pressures on the historic integrity and setting of the World Heritage site.</p> <p>WHS05 Raise awareness of the importance of industrial sites and features within the planning and AONB.</p> <p>DFS02 Ensure the structural integrity of historic defensive features and ensure that impacts of visitor pressure is minimised.</p> <p>IVC04 Investigate ways to reduce congestion around key visitor areas.</p>
A healthier Wales	A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.	<p>IVC02 Promote and assist convenient and sustainable access into the AONB and special places within it.</p> <p>ODPR04 Raise awareness of the acknowledged health and well-being benefits provided by the AONB and develop initiatives promoting physical activity particularly walking and cycling.</p>
A more equal Wales	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).	<p>IVC03 Continue to develop public transport links and develop a strategy to reduce congestion between honey-pots and with other centres of population.</p> <p>ODPR01 Continue a programme of Rights of Way improvement across the AONB through the use of the Community miles Initiative and other area access improvement work focusing on increasing opportunities to access the countryside.</p> <p>ODPR02 Provide increased opportunities where appropriate for walking, cycling and horse riding in the AONB and promote these opportunities.</p> <p>ODPR05 Understand and work towards removing physical and psychological barriers to access enabling all sectors of society to participate in and benefit from outdoor access and recreational opportunities.</p> <p>ODPR07 Strengthen links between the Trail and nearby settlements and places of interest utilising the wider Rights of Way Network and Public Transport.</p>

<p>A Wales of cohesive communities</p>	<p>Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.</p>	<p>LQC06 Investigate and increase our understanding of the cultural diversity of communities within the AONB.</p> <p>PCO1 Help local communities to retain and enhance access to essential community services and facilities.</p> <p>PCO2 Support the development of affordable housing for local people in appropriate locations, whilst maintaining the highest standards of design and landscaping.</p> <p>PCO4 Ensure that the governance of the AONB promotes effective partnerships fosters opportunities for communities to engage in the management of the AONB.</p>
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</p>	<p>A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.</p>	<p>LQC07 Develop partnerships that will help to stimulate awareness of and interest in cultural diversity within the AONB.</p> <p>HSA03 Increase the profile of the Historic Environment through effective and consistent interpretation and information.</p> <p>SHF01 Raise awareness of the importance of small historic features within both the planning and highways environments by providing training sessions to professionals.</p> <p>SHF02 Encourage Communities to identify and map features within their communities on a standard database which is compatible with the HER.</p> <p>SHF03 Encourage Communities to adopt these features and act as their champions by raising awareness within community councils and youth groups.</p> <p>PCO3 Foster a sense of place and local pride to secure social well-being.</p> <p>BE02 Conserve and enhance the character and local distinctiveness of historic villages, buildings and gardens within the AONB.</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales</p>	<p>A globally responsible Wales. A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).</p>	<p>LQC02 Ensure that the impacts of environmental change on the AONB are understood and a strategic response is developed and implemented.</p> <p>WHS01 Secure the integrity of the outstanding universal values of the World Heritage Site.</p>



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