



This Management Plan has been produced for the Wye Valley AONB under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 on behalf of



Forest of Dean District Council

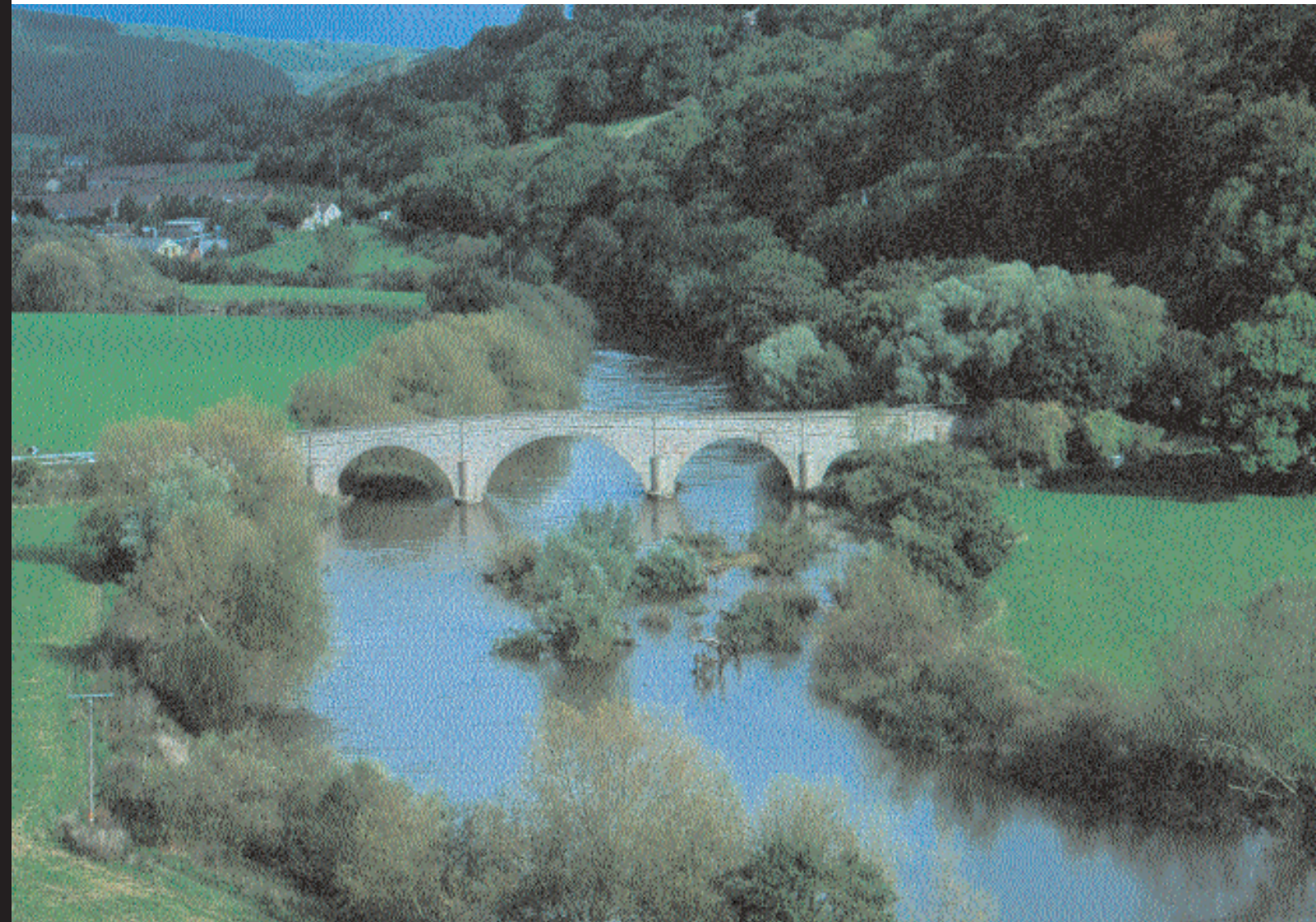


Management Plan Cynllun Rheolaeth Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol Dyffryn Gŵy 2004-2009

Management Plan *Cynllun Rheolaeth*

Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol Dyffryn Gŵy

2004-2009



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Management Plan *Cynllun Rheolaeth*

Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol Dyffryn Gŵy

2004-2009

Croeso i Gynllun Rheolaeth Ardal o Brydferthwch Naturiol Arbennig Dyffryn Gwy (ABNA). Fel cadeirydd Cydbwyllgor Ymgynghorol ABNA Dyffryn Gwy, mae'n bleser mawr gen i gyflwyno'r Cynllun Rheolaeth Statudol cyntaf. Mae Dyffryn Gwy, a benodwyd yn ABNA ym 1971 ac yn pontio'r ffin rhwng Lloegr a Chymru, yn gaffaeliad mawr ac y mae'n fraint cael gofalu amdano. O dan adran 89 Deddf Hawl Tramwy Gwledig 2000, mae'r pedwar awdurdod lleol yn gosod eu polisi ar gyfer rheolaeth yr ABNA ac yn arddangos eu cyfrifoldebau gweithredol mewn perthynas a'r ABNA yn y ddogfen hon. Ond mae gan bob un ei ran wrth lunio dyfodol yr ardal wledig hynod brydferth hon, yn enwedig ar yr adeg yma o bwysau uchel a newidiadau cyson i'r Brydain wledig.



Welcome to the Management Plan for the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As chairman of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee it gives me great pleasure to introduce this first statutory Management Plan. The Wye Valley, designated an AONB in 1971 and straddling the English Welsh border, is a tremendous asset that we have the honour and pleasure of caring for. For the four local authorities this document, under section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, formulates their policy for the management of the AONB and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it. But everyone has a part to play in shaping the future of this outstanding piece of countryside, particularly at a time of such great pressure and change for rural Britain.

Mae'r cynllun rheolaeth yma ar gyfer pob un sydd â diddordeb yn Nyffryn Gwy. Mae'r ddogfen llawn gymaint ar gyfer yr unigolion hynny sydd yn byw ac yn gweithio yn yr ABNA ag y mae ar gyfer y rhai sydd yn ymweld â'r ardal ac yn mwynhau'r ardal, yn ogystal â busnesau, awdurdodau lleol, asiantaethau stadudol a mudiadau gwirfoddol sy'n gweithredu o fewn ardal yr ABNA. Mae'n arwyddocaol fod gan yr holl gyrff cyhoeddus ddyletswydd o dan y Ddeddf Hawl Tramwy Gwledig 2000 i roi sylw i gadw ac ehangu prydferthwch naturiol yr ABNA. Yn y cynllun rheolaeth hwn gwelwch safonau arbennig wedi eu rhestru sydd yn cyfrannu at bwysigrwydd rhyngwladol y tirwedd hwn. Mae'r ddogfen yn arddangos y weledigaeth ar gyfer yr ABNA gyda pholisïau, ar ffurf amcanion strategol yn ogystal â thargedau a gweithrediadau er mwyn cadw ac ehangu'r ardal dros y bum mlynedd nesaf.

This management plan is for everybody with an interest in the Wye Valley. It is as much for the individuals who live and work in the AONB, as it is for those that visit and enjoy the area, as well as the businesses, local authorities, statutory agencies and voluntary organisations who operate in the AONB. Significantly all the public bodies now have the duty, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. Inside this management plan you will find listed the special qualities that contribute to the international importance of this landscape. The document lays out the vision for the AONB with policies, in the form of strategic objectives, along with targets and actions, to conserve and enhance the area over the next five years.

Ar ran y Cydbwyllgor Ymgynghorol, hoffwn ddiolch i bob unigolyn a'r mudiadau hynny sydd wedi cyfrannu at greu y cynllun rheolaeth yma. Credaf y gallant fod yn falch iawn o'r canlyniad. Gobeithiaf y gallwn fod yn falch o'r holl yr ydym yn ei gyflawni wrth weithredu'r cynllun rheolaeth yma ac ein bod yn datblygu cadwraeth yr ardal hynod naturiol a phrydferth hon. Edrychaf ymlaen felly at weld pawb sydd â diddordeb yn yr ABNA yn defnyddio'r ddogfen hon er mwyn arwain eu gweithrediadau a sicrhau ein bod yn trosglwyddo ardal sydd yn dal i fod yn deilwng o'i harwyddnod cenedlaethol, i'r genhedlaeth nesaf.

On behalf of the Joint Advisory Committee I would like to thank all those individuals and organisations who contributed to the production of this management plan. I think they can be proud of the result. I hope we can be proud of the achievements we make in implementing this management plan and progressing the conservation of this outstandingly natural and beautiful area. I therefore look forward to everyone with an interest and an involvement in the AONB using this document to guide their actions and ensuring we hand onto the next generation an area still worthy of its national designation.

Cadeirydd Cydbwyllgor Ymgynghorol ABNA
Dyffryn Gwy

Chairman of the Wye Valley AONB
Joint Advisory Committee

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Photo: M.E.Bramwell



Photo: Courtesy of Stagecoach



Photo: Peter Flower



Photo: AONB Unit

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Photo: AONB Unit



Photo: Linda Wright



Photo: AONB Unit



Photo: Linda Wright

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Photo: Woolhope Jigsaw

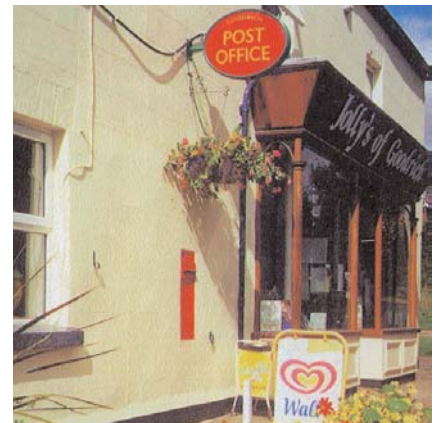


Photo: Goodrich Jigsaw



Photo: AONB Unit



Photo: AONB Unit



Photo: AONB Unit

Part 1 Outline

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 AONB designation

1.1.1 The valley of the River Wye between Hereford and Chepstow is one of the most significant landscapes in lowland Britain. A rich combination of breath taking views, impressive geology, historic legacies and diverse wildlife led to the designation, in 1971, of the valley and adjoining plateaux and hills as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Wye Valley AONB covers 72km of the lower reaches of the River Wye totalling an area of 326km² (128 square miles), being 45km North to South and 11.3 km at its widest (East - West) point. It stretches from Mordiford in the north, just east of the city of Hereford, southwards to the outskirts of Chepstow (see Map 1).

1.1.2 The Wye Valley AONB is unique among the 50 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 14 National Parks in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales in being the only protected landscape to straddle a national boundary; being 64% in England and 36% in Wales. This provides a number of challenges for the management of the Wye Valley AONB.

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

the demand for recreation should be met in an AONB so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses".

1.1.4 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty share equal status with National Parks in terms of scenic beauty and landscape protection. This was clarified by a ministerial statement and an amendment to Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 7 in 2000.

1.1.5 Unlike National Parks, AONBs are not authoritative bodies with their own planning or development control functions and other executive powers. Instead, responsibility for the designated purposes lies chiefly with the local authorities, being Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council. A duty of care for the AONB also lies with government departments and agencies, predominantly the Countryside Agency and Countryside Council for Wales, as well as statutory undertakers and, on the grounds of good citizenship and guardianship at least, with individuals, especially those who own or manage land in the AONB but also the visitors to the area.

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



Photo: AONB Unit

1.2 What is Natural Beauty?

1.2.1 Natural Beauty is defined as "flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features" in the Countryside Act 1968. These aspects of natural beauty are the components that make a landscape so scenic and distinctive; the wildlife, trees and plants, and the shape of the land with its rivers and hills and rock outcrops. However, landscape is about the relationship between people and place; the interaction between nature and culture. Public appreciation is a key component of natural beauty and considerable provision for recreation and tourism in AONBs were made in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. A wider concept of "natural beauty and amenity" is outlined in the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (CAX 84, April 2002) as encompassing "the physical landscape but also the less tangible aspects such as remoteness or tranquillity and aspects of landscape experience which appeal to senses other than sight, such as sound or smell" (CAX 84, p57). It is therefore very important that the cultural dimension of the landscape, including the historical, intellectual and spiritual elements, as well as the physical human shaping of the land are fully recognised. These cultural factors impact and shape the natural beauty as much as the natural features of a location influence and shape the culture. Consequently the special qualities of the AONB identified in the State of the AONB Report, encompass natural beauty, amenity and landscape elements.

1.3 Purpose of the AONB Management Plan

1.3.1 The particularly fragile balance between the environment, the ecology, and the economic and social well being in the Wye Valley AONB demands constant management and planning. This AONB Management Plan continues the work of maintaining a vision for the Wye Valley AONB established in the first Management Plan published in 1981 with a subsequent plan published in 1992. This latest edition of the AONB Management Plan highlights the main themes, develops the vision and identifies a series of Strategic Objectives for the area. A detailed Action Plan is provided to help ensure that these Strategic Objectives are implemented.

1.3.2 This Management Plan, like its predecessors, is intended to provide guidance, strategic objectives and targets, particularly to those bodies that make up the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee. It also provides guidance to

the many landowners, residents and visitors in the area. The Management Plan is thus for all the bodies and individuals whose actions affect the AONB and who can play an important part in helping to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the outstanding landscape of the lower Wye Valley, for the benefit of both current and future generations. However this Plan does not provide all the answers. It addresses the implications for the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area. Meanwhile it complements a range of plans, strategies and programmes that cover other aspects in the administrative areas covering the Wye Valley AONB.

1.3.3 The 1981 and 1992 Management Plans were voluntary and non-statutory documents. This Management Plan, under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, formulates local authority policy and action in relation to the management of the Wye Valley AONB.



Photo: AONB Unit

1.4 Commitment

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

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

JAC Chairman

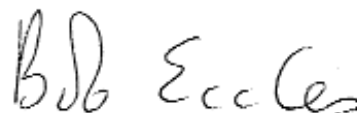


Funding partners

Leader of the Council, Forest of Dean District Council



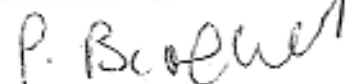
Portfolio Holder, Sustainable Development of the Environment,
Gloucestershire County Council



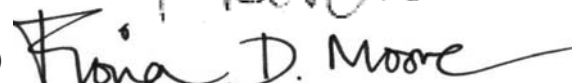
Cabinet Member (Environment), Herefordshire Council



Cabinet Member (Environment), Monmouthshire County Council



Regional Director, Countryside Agency (West Midlands)



Area Manager, Countryside Council for Wales (South Wales)



JAC member organisations

Chairman, Council for the Gloucestershire Countryside

Chairman, Gwent Committee for the Environment

Chairman, Campaign to Protect Rural England (Herefordshire Branch)

Chairman, Country Land & Business Association (West Midlands)

Regional Director, National Farmers' Union (West Midlands)

Regional Director, National Farmers' Union (Wales)

Trust Manager, Gwent Wildlife Trust

Chairman, Lower Wye Valley Society

Chairman, River Wye Preservation Trust

Regional Director, Central Council for Physical Recreation – Outdoor Pursuits Division

Chairman, Wye Valley Tourism

Government Agencies on JAC

Regional Director, Countryside Agency (South West)

Area Manager, Environment Agency (South East Wales)

Regional Manager, Rural Development Service, DEFRA (West Midlands)
Conservator, Forestry Commission (South West)
Conservator, Forestry Commission (West Midlands)
Conservator, Forestry Commission (Wales)
Deputy Surveyor, Forest Commission (Forest of Dean)
Forest District Manager, Forest Commission (Llanymddyfri)
Area Manager, English Nature (Herefordshire & Worcestershire Team)
Regional Director, English Sports Council (West Midlands)
Director, Sports Council for Wales
Regional Director, Heart of England Tourist Board
Regional Strategy Director, Capital Region Tourism
Regional Director, English Heritage (South West)

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

Chairman, Herefordshire Partnership Environment Ambition Group
Chairman, Council for the Protection of Rural England (Forest of Dean Branch)
Chairman, Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (Monmouthshire Branch)
Chairman, Country Land & Business Association (South West)
Chairman, Country Land & Business Association (South Wales)
Regional Director, National Farmers' Union (South West)
Director, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
Director, Herefordshire Nature Trust
Chairman, South Herefordshire Tourism Association
Chairman, Forest of Dean Tourism Association
Chairman, Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire
Regional Manager, Cadw (South Wales)
Regional Manager, The Woodland Trust
Regional Director, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (Central England)
Regional Director, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (Midlands)
Regional Director, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (South Wales)
Regional Manager, Rural Development Service, DEFRA (Gloucestershire)
Regional Manager, Rural Development Service, DEFRA (South Wales)
Parish/Community Councils umbrella organisations
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (Herefordshire & Gloucestershire branches)
Forestry & Timber Association
The Deer Initiative
Ramblers' Association (Hereford area)
Ramblers' Association (Gloucestershire area)
Ramblers' Association (Greater Gwent area)
The National Trust (England & Wales)
Crown Estate Commissioners
Sustrans
Chairman, Gloucestershire Geoconservation Trust,
Director, Herefordshire & Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust
Chairman, Monmouth Geology Trust.
Gloucester Harbour Trustees

1.5 Consultation

1.5.1 A wide range of individuals and organisations with an interest in the Wye Valley AONB have participated in the development of this Management Plan. Initially the 1992 Management Plan was reviewed by the various AONB Topic Groups, particularly those dealing with the landscape, nature conservation, woodland and tourism aspects.

1.5.2 In June 2001 over one hundred delegates representing organisations and individuals involved with the Wye Valley AONB participated in "Protecting Tomorrow's Landscape Today: a Conference on the Vision for the Wye Valley AONB" in Ross-on-Wye. Keynote speakers included the President of the Country Land and Business Association, the Chief Executive of the Woodland Trust, and Edward Holdaway, a leading expert on protected landscapes. Workshop sessions addressed the three objectives of the AONB designation and formulated the essence of the vision for this document.

1.5.3 Throughout 2001 over 1000 photographs were taken by local people as part of the Wye Valley Views Jigsaw project. A camera was given to each of the 40 parish and community councils in the AONB to photograph important features and issues of local value or concern. From these photographs, each parish or community council created a montage of their area. These pieces of the 'jigsaw' were put together to form the image on the inside back page of this document. Each parish and community council also provided some written comment on the features and issues photographed, which has also aided the development of this Management Plan.

1.5.4 During April, May and June 2002 over 160 local people attended fourteen public meetings throughout the AONB entitled "Wye Valley Views". The AONB Officer and other AONB staff were on hand to discuss issues and interests with individuals and in group sessions. The two key questions asked by the AONB staff were how did people think the Wye Valley should be in five years time and how could an AONB Management Plan help in getting there. Many of the people attending had not had previous contact or involvement with AONB staff. The meetings therefore achieved their objective of gaining the views of local people.

1.5.5 "Wye Valley Views" feedback forms were available at the public meetings. The form was reproduced in the Spring 2002 edition of

'Picturesque', the AONB newsletter. There was also a downloadable version on the AONB website. In total 132 forms were returned and analysed (see Appendix I). In addition the feedback form in the AONB's annual publication "Discover the Wye Valley on foot and by bus" contained a question on management plan issues, which elicited twenty-six responses, largely from tourists and visitors. These views, from both the public meetings and the feedback forms, can not be considered as a statistically valid sample of the resident or visiting population of the AONB. However, they were extremely useful in providing qualitative comment for the drafting of this Management Plan.

1.5.6 A preliminary draft of the AONB Management Plan was considered at a day long seminar by the AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), technical officers and other key partners in January 2003. A Consultation Draft was subsequently approved by the JAC.

1.5.7 The Consultation Draft was the subject of an eight-week public consultation period in May and June 2003. An 'AONB Forum' evening seminar to discuss the draft Management Plan was held in mid May. Forty five people attended and discussed issues in workshop sessions. Seventy nine organisations and individuals submitted responses on the Consultation Draft amounting to 620 separate comments. The comments and feedback from the public consultation period were considered by the Wye Valley AONB Officer and necessary amendments to the Management Plan made. The AONB Joint Advisory Committee endorsed these amendments in December 2003.

1.5.8 The Management Plan was finalised for adoption by the local authorities in time for the statutory deadline, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, of March 2004.



Photo: AONB Unit

2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE PLAN

2.1 Managing Change

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

2.1.2 A dominant theme coming out of the public meetings and Wye Valley Views questionnaire in 2002 was a wish to keep things 'just as they are' (see Appendix I). Yet the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has always been subject to natural and cultural changes and this will inevitably continue. Our actions inexorably lead to change and we have to embrace and adapt to change. We should not aspire to one fixed date or state in the AONB. What we do need to be aware of are the distinctive attributes and special qualities of the area that people value and wish to see remaining in the landscape and what is required to sustain those features. In the past change has often been quite gradual to those features. Today the nature, speed and extent of changes induced by modern lifestyles and management practices are more threatening to the natural beauty. Indeed the speed and scale of changes in agriculture and transport in the last forty years are unprecedented, and threaten to destroy distinctive landscape features and wildlife habitats; but there is always the opportunity to arrest destructive change in places.

2.1.3 The main activities and pressures in the AONB are laid out in Table 7 below. This identifies the impacts that are likely to force change in the Wye Valley AONB over the next five years and beyond. These need to be recognised and managed, or the cumulative effect of all these changes could have a significant detrimental impact on the special qualities of the AONB. Some of the most dominant forces for change are outlined below:-

2.1.4 Climate change: The Tyndal Centre for Environmental forecasting suggest widespread changes in rainfall and temperature patterns over the next 50 years including 2-5 degree temperature increase, warmer winters with fewer freezing events, a reduction in summer rainfall with more frequent droughts and increases in spring and autumn rainfall in short time periods, often associated with extreme gale or storm events. Most likely outcomes are:

- Greater fluctuations in water table levels
- Increases in localised flooding, and associated pollution risks, soil erosion and crop damage
- Reduction in range and quantity of maritime species, i.e. bluebells
- Increased levels of over wintering pest species
- Changes in migratory patterns of winter and summer visiting birds
- In migration of European species, eg. Spanish Bluebells
- Increased spring and summer fire risks on woodland and common land
- Increased storm damage to, and losses of, field and hedgerow trees
- Introductions of new crops and increased viability of existing crops
- Changing patterns of visitor numbers with increased usage throughout the year and particularly during the 'shoulder' seasons of spring and autumn.

There is a need to 'act locally' and to consider the contribution that the AONB and AONB based activities, such as tourism, transport, exploitation of renewable materials, design and siting of housing, etc. can make to reducing CO₂. It will also be appropriate to support initiatives to tackle issues in a national and global context.

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

2.1.6 Agriculture: Farm incomes are lower than they have been for decades. Farms have become larger yet employ less people. In the interests of increased crop production many wildlife habitats and landscape features have been radically altered. Traditional stone buildings, which form an important part of the rural landscape, have fallen into disuse or have been converted, sometimes unsuitably, into dwellings. There are some encouraging signs that the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) will shift the balance away from production subsidies and increase

environmentally sensitive land management. But the CAP changes may in themselves force change on farming and the landscape that are undesirable or unintentional.

2.1.7 Transport: Vehicle use is still increasing and set to continue to grow on present forecasts. Roads become busier, and consequently noisier. They are widened to accommodate the increased traffic. Concrete curbing is installed to prevent further erosion of verges. Signs proliferate to direct and inform the driver, and these are now bigger and more prominent to gain attention as vehicle speeds have increased. To comply with Welsh language legislation signage in Wales should be bi-lingual, necessitating even larger signs. Street lighting has also increased so that all main junctions are fully lit and what were once quiet obscure rural crossroads may now have a mini-roundabout and a dozen street lamps. These often incremental changes erode local distinctiveness and natural beauty and mar the landscape character. Sustainable transport options are required which avoid these pitfalls. Initiatives that provide valid alternatives to private vehicle use need to be investigated and pursued by all of us.

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

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

2.1.10 Quality of life: As the demographics of the population in the AONB evolves so the requirements of local communities change. This has already led to the loss of local services

including the closure of several village shops and rural pubs, although in other villages these have been reopening. Agriculture and forestry remain the dominant land uses but less and less people in the countryside have any connection to the growing or processing of local produce. Most of our rural landscapes are oddly quiet now as they are increasingly occupied by people who do not work in the villages and who are not there during the day. For those left behind, such as car-less mothers, young people and the elderly, the 'peace and tranquillity of the countryside', that contributes so much to some peoples' quality of life, can become a key feature of social isolation emphasising the emptiness and silence of their situation. If we do not want our settlements to be soulless dormitories or week-end resorts we must find ways to sustain, recover or improve the core quality of life for people living and working in the Wye Valley AONB. It is also important to ensure that the quality of life that visitors to the Wye Valley experience here is good too.

2.1.11 It is neither possible nor desirable to 'fossilise' an area, and we must aim to keep a living and working countryside. Many of the pressures we face now will erode the character of the area unless we make positive choices about what we want to see happen, and make sometimes difficult decisions to achieve this. Thus the impetus in the AONB needs to focus on the most effective solutions to managing those factors influencing change and to endeavour to conserve the distinctive attributes and special qualities of the AONB and to seek to enhance these where they are judged to be deteriorating. We must do this for the benefit of current and future generations. This is what is meant by the catchphrase used for the AONB's 30th anniversary in 2001; *"Protecting tomorrow's landscape today"*.



Photo: Woolhope Jigsaw

2.2 Sustainability

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

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

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

2.2.2 The need to afford the highest level of protection to our finest landscapes – AONBs and National Parks – is highlighted in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy published in 1999. However, in placing them at the heart of their approach, the Government has emphasised that in all cases the conservation of the natural heritage should be integrated with the local needs for economic and social well being, and at the same time consider the longer term implications of decisions. Thus sustainable development principles must form the basis for the planning and management of these areas. It is therefore sustainable management that is most important in our finest landscapes.

2.2.3 Sustainable management is not in itself a primary objective of AONBs. However, the statutory purpose of AONBs (the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, coupled with the obligation of local authorities regarding the social and economic well-being of local communities) are very close to the principles of sustainability. This includes environmental, economic, cultural and social sustainability.

2.2.4 In Wales, the statutory requirement for the National Assembly to pursue sustainable development (Section 121 Government of Wales Act 1998) serves to give heightened importance to

the interaction between the conservation of AONBs and the needs of recreation and tourism, the local economy and local communities.

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

2.2.6 Sustainable management therefore means a future Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which continues to justify its designation as a nationally important area of high landscape quality and distinctive character and which is also a living, working area for people.

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

2.3 Partnership and Consultation

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

2.3.2 There is a strong partnership that supports the Joint Advisory Committee and the Wye Valley AONB unit. It is committed to working effectively to achieve ways that not only sustain the area's natural beauty and enable people to continue to enjoy it, but also to improve the quality

of life for people who live and work in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

2.3.3 Local people are a crucial part of the wider partnership in the AONB. Therefore wherever possible the Joint Advisory Committee seek the views and involvement of Parish and Community Councils, community groups and local individuals from all walks of life. Visitors to the Wye valley are also stakeholders in the area. The Joint Advisory Committee recognise that careful integration of interests is needed to safeguard the AONB for the future. Even where statutory control is available, it is always preferable to proceed through building understanding, trust, commitment and co-operation since these are more likely to lead to real conservation of the area's character in the long term.

2.3.4 This Plan has not been prepared in isolation, but rather has been developed in partnership, through a consultation process outlined in Section 1. Local residents and visitors had the opportunity to make known their views, together with representatives from organisations who have an interest in, or influence on, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is acknowledged that the level of local input into the consultation process could have been higher and more statistically valid. However the views received were useful in providing qualitative information for drawing up the draft Plan. Greater engagement with a wider range of people in the local communities in the AONB remains a challenge.

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

2.4 AONBs in the Wider World

2.4.1 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are part of a family of designated landscapes of the UK, which include the AONBs of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the National Parks of England, Scotland and Wales

and the National Scenic Areas of Scotland. Together they cover nearly 5 million hectares or 20% of the UK land area.

2.4.2 The AONBs, together with the other designated landscapes in UK are also part of a global network of protected areas. They are within a worldwide category of protected areas, known as 'Protected Landscapes'. This has been devised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources [IUCN]. Known as 'Category V areas', these areas are defined,

"...where the interaction of people and nature over time, has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the maintenance and evolution of such an area."

"The areas should possess a landscape and/or coastal and island seascape of high scenic quality, with diverse associated habitats, flora and fauna with manifestations of unique or traditional land-use patterns and social organisations as evidenced in human settlements and local customs, livelihoods and beliefs. The area should provide opportunities for public enjoyment through recreation and tourism within its normal lifestyle and economic activities."

"The area may be owned by a public authority, but is more likely to comprise a mosaic of private and public ownerships operating a variety of management regimes. These regimes should be subject to a degree of planning or other control and supported, where appropriate, by public funding and other incentives, to ensure that the quality of the landscape/seascape and the relevant local customs and beliefs are maintained in the long term."

The IUCN in 2003 released the Durban Accord which gives a global perspective of the role of protected landscapes in the 21st Century.

2.4.3 The existence of this worldwide network provides the opportunity to share with others the experience of looking after these special areas. Within Europe, the EUROPARC Federation provides one such means of contact. It has more than 350 members involved in the policy and practice of managing protected areas across 36 countries. In 2003 Europarc issued the Snowdonia Declaration which addresses how protected landscapes should champion

sustainable management and rural regeneration. The Atlantic Isles section of Europarc has a membership of over 60 organisations in the UK, Ireland and Iceland. Its activities include the provision of training courses, organisation of exchange programmes, conferences and seminars.

2.4.4 Within England and Wales the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) was established in 1998 as an independent organisation to act on behalf of all AONBs. Its role is to raise the profile of AONBs to ensure that their conservation and enhancement is kept on the agenda of all those involved in AONBs at a national level. The Association played a very important role in bringing the needs of AONBs to the attention of the government during the passage of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It was instrumental in securing the AONB clauses that now form part of the Act which include the making of AONB Management Plans into statutory documents for Local Authorities. It also provides a training programme for AONB staff, a newsletter and bi-annual magazine and runs an annual conference. The National Parks in the UK are represented by a similar organisation - the Association of National Park Authorities. It runs a similar kind of programme for National Park staff and members. The two organisations are increasingly working together to share good practice in the planning and management of Britain's finest countryside.

2.5 Herefordshire Partnership Guiding Principles Appraisal

2.5.1 A pre-consultation draft of this Management Plan was measured against the Herefordshire Partnership Guiding Principles Appraisal. The Herefordshire Partnership Guiding Principles are :-

- Recognise and make the most of what we've got
- Build an equal and inclusive society
- Promote sustainability
- Realise the potential of people and communities
- Encourage participation & partnership working
- Seek continual improvement

2.5.2 The Appraisal identified the contribution of the Management Plan to specific elements of the Herefordshire Partnership Guiding Principles. The pre-consultation draft Management Plan score was 8 excellent contributions, 17 good contributions, 8 fair, 7 weak and 2 poor

contributions. This process helped modify aspects of the management plan. It will be repeated during implementation of the action plan.

2.5.3 The Management Plan will also need to dovetail and be evaluated beside the Gloucestershire Local Strategic Partnership and the Monmouthshire Community Strategy.

3. STATE OF THE AONB

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section provides a description of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and an assessment of its significance and special qualities. The assessment is presented in the form of a State of the AONB Report which sets out the current state of the special qualities and the activities and pressures affecting the AONB. A more descriptive outline of the AONB is provided in 'The Wye Valley Landscape – An Assessment of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' Countryside Commission CCP 487 (1996).

3.2 Overview of the AONB

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

3.2.2 The Wye Valley AONB contains a **splendid variety of geological outcrops** and important examples of **active and past geomorphologic processes**. Formed over millions of years, the underlying rocks have been worked on by ice and then the river to produce the landscape of the Wye Valley we recognise today. The differing geology has given rise to a **range of distinctive settlement and farming patterns**. The oldest rocks are the Silurian limestones and sandstones that make up the grey soils of the Woolhope Dome in the north of the AONB.

The Old Red Sandstone creates the fertile red and brown soils of the Herefordshire lowlands along with the rich river alluvium of the floodplain. These softer rocks allowed the river to meander more widely. From Lydbrook the river cuts in and out of the harder Carboniferous Limestone strata of the Forest of Dean plateau to form dramatic gorges. The area has a full sequence of the Carboniferous Limestone Series and excellent exposures and formations including limestone pavement, caves, natural stream channels and tufa dams.

3.2.3 The Wye Valley is particularly important for its **rich wildlife habitats**. This is reflected in the remarkable juxtaposition of three separate candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC), submitted under the European Union's Habitats Directive. The river is a cSAC as well as being the first major river to be designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) along its entire length. Nearly a thousand hectares of valley side woodland are also designated a cSAC. Nine roosting sites for Greater and lesser Horseshoe bats make a third cSAC. Underlying this are 45 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) including 3 National Nature Reserves (NNRs) (see Map 2). The limestone woodlands are renowned as a refuge of rare species and form part of one of the **largest remaining areas of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland in the country**. As a predominantly wooded and riverine environment, the Wye Valley has a greater combination of ancient and natural features than virtually all the other AONBs and National Parks in the UK. The pastures, hay meadows, hedges and copses within the farmed landscape also provide rich habitats for wildlife.

3.2.4 The AONB contains an abundance of sites of historic and cultural significance. Many activities **fundamental to the cultural identity of Britain** have an origin in the Wye Valley. This is reflected in the fact that there are 85 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) in the Wye Valley AONB (see Map 3). The river is both the backbone and the border of the historic environment that underlays the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB. The whole of the lower Wye Valley, from Goodrich to Chepstow, has been included in the **Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest** in Wales. Features range from caves with Palaeolithic occupation, ancient forests, Roman and Celtic settlements, defensive structures such as hill forts, Offa's Dyke and Mediaeval castles, secluded early churches and monasteries. Tributaries cascade down side valleys to join the Wye, giving focus to settlements and power to **pioneering industries**

including wireworks, papermaking, tanning, tin-plate and quarrying. The river was the main transport route up and down the valley, superseded by the railway and eventually the roads. The scenic qualities of the Wye Valley are important in the history of art. Landscaped parks, gardens and viewpoints inspired some of the great British poets and writers. The Reverend William Gilpin was inspired in 1770 to write his treatise on the notion and depiction of landscape and gave birth to the **'picturesque' movement**. As a result of his work the valley became very popular with visitors, as it remains today.

3.2.5 Visitor numbers in the lower Wye Valley, at **2.5 million visitor days per annum**, are higher than several National Parks, such as Exmoor (1.4m) or the Northumberland (1.5m). Overnight stays, while common, are outweighed by day trips with many people travelling for less than 2 hours to visit the Wye Valley. Amongst these visitors are some of the **25,000 residents** living and/or working in the market towns, villages and hamlets of the Wye Valley AONB.

3.2.6 The **high quality environment** of the lower Wye Valley makes a significant contribution to the area's economic development. Recent research by the Welsh Economy Research Unit on "Valuing our Environment" (2003) indicates that the majority of both money invested in environmental management and that spent by visitors to high quality environments is retained within the local economy. The natural beauty of the area is recognised as **contributing to economic activities** such as tourism and inward investment, as well as the overall **quality of life**, making the Wye Valley a more attractive place in which to live and work. However, the general locality is renowned for limited job opportunities. Many residents work outside the AONB, often commuting to Birmingham, Bristol or Cardiff. The reality for some is an area of low incomes, limited housing, inadequate services and poor transport.

3.2.7 **Agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction and tourism** are the main industries that operate in the landscape of the lower Wye Valley. Combined together they have to a large extent **crafted the landscape** we see today. Agriculture and forestry are the most apparent land uses with farmland covering 58% of the AONB and woodland 27%. However the viability of many enterprises in agriculture, forestry and tourism are currently verging on the marginal. These industries are characterised by low pay and seasonal employment. This may have severe implication for the natural beauty and social well-

being of the area if prospects do not improve. Limestone extraction continues at two commercial quarries, with a third abutting the AONB boundary. None of these quarries are operating at full capacity at the moment. Tourism, from the early days of The Wye Tour, has focused on the river corridor and the market towns. It is still predominantly based around **enjoyment of the spectacular scenery** and the contrasting heritage of the Wye Valley. With increasing diversification tourism is spreading throughout the AONB.

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

3.3 Changes since designation

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

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

- The A40 dual carriageway had been constructed by 1971 but subsequent development along the roadside has continued to detract from the natural beauty of the area.
- Most major industry had ceased in the valley by 1971, but development of redundant sites has not always been sympathetic to the heritage or natural beauty of the valley.
- The railway line, closed by 1971, has overgrown significantly providing a tree line where before was a managed transport corridor.
- Agricultural intensification has significantly changed the AONB in some places; field boundaries and orchards have been removed in more intensively farmed areas and much floodplain grassland has been ploughed for arable use.
- The number of farmers and people employed in farming has declined steeply.
- Two quarries have closed in the AONB, but major extensions have been granted for the two remaining large quarries.
- There has been a dramatic decline in salmon stocks in the river.
- The planting of conifers in ancient woodland sites has largely stopped and some areas of heathland have had the conifers removed.
- Visitor numbers to the area appear to have declined from highs in the late 1970s and early 1980s.
- Increasing recreational activity and individual car use continues to exert pressure on honey pot sites such as Tintern and Symonds Yat.
- Canoeing on the river has increased.
- Housing and development pressure has increased, to the detriment of the stock of affordable housing.
- Many villages and rural areas have lost their shops, pubs and petrol stations, although new community initiatives have re-opened some village shops.

3.4 Responsibility for the AONB

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

3.4.2 Central Government responsibility for AONBs remains substantial. This comes through the provision of legislation and the policy context

whereby the purposes of the designation can be met. From Whitehall and the Welsh Assembly Government there is also direct involvement, guidance and funding through departmental and agency functions delivered, for example by the Countryside Agency, Countryside Council for Wales, English Nature and the Forestry Commission.

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

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

3.4.5 A Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) has overseen the Wye Valley AONB since 1972. Unlike a National Park Authority the JAC is not a planning authority. The role of the JAC is one of advising and guiding the statutory authorities regarding particular issues within the AONB. The constitution and membership of the JAC reflects the trans-national and trans-regional nature of the AONB (see Appendix II). Through 2002 to 2004 the JAC reviewed its membership and governance structures. While the complex nature of the AONB is an administrative challenge, in practice the JAC has for many years been a strong partnership based on the tremendous goodwill towards the Wye Valley. This committee meets formally three times per annum along with a winter seminar and late summer study tour.

3.4.6 The JAC is supported by a Technical Officers Working Party, which comprises representatives of the four local authorities involved plus a range of relevant Government agencies (see Appendix III). The core costs of managing the Wye Valley AONB are jointly funded by the local authorities in whose area it lies, with grant aid from the Countryside Agency and the Countryside Council for Wales. There is a small team of dedicated staff employed by the local authorities on behalf of the JAC consisting of an AONB Officer, an AONB Co-ordination Assistant, an AONB Community Links Officer, an AONB Development Officer and an AONB Information Officer. The AONB staff work from the AONB Office in Monmouth, which is near the geographic centre of the Wye Valley AONB. The budget for the AONB unit is approximately £250,000 per annum, with additional funds depending on varying levels of partnership funding for specific projects and initiatives.

3.5 The Landscape Character of the AONB

3.5.1 The main elements and features that contribute to the landscape character of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) have recently been independently assessed in the three counties of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire. Since 2000, Herefordshire Council and Forest of Dean District Council have each undertaken Landscape Character Assessments, while Monmouthshire County Council has completed the similar LANDMAP initiative, developed under the leadership of the Countryside Council for Wales. The former and the latter are now Supplementary Planning Guidance in the respective councils' Unitary Development Plans. The various character areas and landscape types identified by the three assessments can generally be seen to correspond to the original Wye Valley Landscape Assessment (1996) and the seven AONB Landscape Zones (see Map 4) that were identified in the 1992 Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, and modified in the 1999 AONB Nature Conservation Strategy. These seven AONB Landscape Zones are unique descriptive areas set within the overall framework of the three Landscape Character Assessments.

3.5.2 The key features and distinctive attributes of the seven Wye Valley AONB Landscape Zones are outlined in Table 1. These are drawn from the above documents, combined with the responses from the Wye Valley Views questionnaire (see Appendix I), the Jigsaw project, and the consultation draft comments. Table 2 provides the breakdown of land uses in each of the Landscape Zones.

TABLE 1. FEATURES AND DISTINCTIVE ATTRIBUTES OF EACH OF THE SEVEN AONB LANDSCAPE ZONES

Landscape zone / Features		Distinctive Attributes
WOOLHOPE DOME		
T1.1	Farmland	Semi-natural grasslands
T1.2		Hedgerow network with mature trees
T1.3	Parkland	Mature parkland
T1.4		Wood pasture and veteran trees
T1.5	Grey soils, rock and stone	Outcrops of Silurian strata
T1.6		Weathered sandstone farmsteads and barns
T1.7	Common land	Grazed &/or managed
T1.8	Small woods	Often closely related to surrounding grassland or farmland
T1.9		Rich flora & fauna
T1.10	Major woods	Mostly ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) of varied structure or planted ancient woodland sites (PAWS), with rich flora & fauna
T1.11		Some commercial conifer plantations
T1.12		Dominant on skyline
T1.13	Public access	Forestry Commission land & commons
T1.14	Dispersed settlements	Distinctive churches
T1.15		Timber framed buildings, often thatched
T1.16	Lanes	Narrow lanes, with hedges & hedge banks
T1.17	Orchards	Traditional, high canopy orchards with locally distinctive apple & pear varieties
T1.18		Often small field size, linked with semi-natural grassland
T1.19	Streams	Not prominent but with important riparian habitats
HEREFORDSHIRE LOWLANDS		
T1.20	Estate farmland	Arable or mixed with hedgerows and mature trees linking scattered woodland
T1.21		Traditional orchards
T1.22		Streams in narrow corridor of woodland or grassland
T1.23	Red soil, rock & stone	Extensive area of Devonian Old Red Sandstone
T1.24		Stone houses and barns
T1.25	Woodland	Steep valley side Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) or planted ancient woodland sites (PAWS),
T1.26	Lanes	Narrow lanes, often lined with high hedges & banks with mature trees
T1.27		Species rich verges
T1.28	Distinct churches	Spires
T1.29	Railway heritage	Cuttings

Landscape zone / Features		Distinctive Attributes
WYE FLOODPLAIN		
T1.30	Floodplain grassland	Permanent, semi-natural pasture
T1.31		Marshy land
T1.32	River banks	Riparian trees, traditionally pollarded
T1.33		Bank-side vegetation
T1.34	River & meanders	Frequent flooding
T1.35		Natural processes, with islands, riffles, pools & shallows, mud cliffs, overhanging trees etc.
T1.36		Wide range of wildlife, including otter, fish
T1.37		High water quality
T1.38	Trees	Remnants of floodplain woodland
T1.39	Red cliffs	Impressive Devonian Old Red Sandstone cliffs
T1.40	Railway heritage	Embankments & bridge abutments

Wye Gorge		
T1.41	Ancient Woodlands	Near continuous high forest canopy of ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW), high mix of ash, beech, oak & large-leaved lime, ancient pollards & coppice or planted ancient woodland sites (PAWS)
T1.42	Riverside settlements	Ancient churches, remains of river commerce; wharfs and quaysides.
T1.43	Semi-natural grassland	Flower-rich meadows & limestone grassland
T1.44	Small field pattern	Closely associated with stone barns and cottages
T1.45	Dry stone walls	Often lining old track-ways and green lanes
T1.46	Narrow floodplain	Brackish meadows below Tintern
T1.47		Alder & ash remnants of floodplain forest
T1.48	Natural river	Natural processes, with islands, mud & stone cliffs, overhanging trees,
T1.49		Wide range of wildlife, including fish
T1.50		Brackish marsh below Tintern
T1.51	Picturesque Movement associations & views	Views, viewpoints & literary associations
T1.52	Limestone cliffs	Rare wildlife on cliffs, including peregrines, rare whitebeam trees.
T1.53		Limestone pavement and grasslands
T1.54		Hill forts and caves often near to cliffs
T1.55	Rock outcrops	Outcrops of Quarts Conglomerate and Carboniferous Limestone with superimposed drainage
T1.56	Offa's Dyke	Unique 8th century AD bank and ditch boundary linked to the origins of England and Wales. Lined with mature trees including yew and beech.
T1.57	Industrial heritage	Water powered mills, leats, forges and early furnaces
T1.58	Railway heritage	Old Station Tintern
T1.59		Tunnels
T1.60		Railway bridges over river

Landscape zone / Features		Distinctive Attributes
FOREST OF DEAN (HIGHMEADOW)		
T1.61	Major woods	Nearly continuous high forest canopy, mostly Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) of varied structure, with rich flora & fauna or planted ancient woodland sites (PAWS),
T1.62		Some commercial conifer plantations
T1.63	Villages & dispersed settlements	Prominence of Staunton and The Kymin
T1.64	Large boulders and rock outcrops	Outcrops of Quartz Conglomerate ('Puddingstone'), Carboniferous Limestone and other important strata
T1.65	Heathland	Staunton Common cleared & grazing restored
T1.66	Public access	Forestry Commission land & commons
T1.67	Extensive views	Across Dean & Wye Valley

ST BRIAVELS PLATEAU		
T1.68	Ancient Woodlands	Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) linked closely with remnants in hedges or planted ancient woodland sites (PAWS),
T1.69	Villages & dispersed settlements	Distinct churches
T1.70	Streams & tributaries	Wooded streams
T1.71		Limestone, tufa and geomorphological sites
T1.72	Semi-natural grassland	Flower-rich meadows & limestone grassland
T1.73	Small field pattern	Particular concentration on Hewelsfield and St Briavels Common in association with Offa's Dyke.
T1.74		Closely associated with stone barns and cottages
T1.75	Remnant orchards	Traditional apple & pear varieties
T1.76		Often linked with semi-natural grassland
T1.77	Heathland	Tiddenham Chase recently cleared & grazing restored
T1.78	Drystone walls	Wide & unevenly built of mixed stone
T1.79		Walls built around mature trees
T1.80		Often lining narrow lanes and old track-ways and green lanes
T1.81	Industrial heritage	Early mineral extraction.
T1.82		Tramways and railways
T1.83	Extensive views	Across Dean & Severn

Landscape zone / Features		Distinctive Attributes
TRELLECH PLATEAU		
T1.84	Ancient Woodlands	Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) linked closely with remnants in hedges or planted ancient woodland sites (PAWS),
T1.85	Planted ancient woodland	Maturing conifer woodland
T1.86	Public access	Forestry Commission land & commons
T1.87	Villages & dispersed settlements	Prominence of Trellech
T1.88	Heathland	Whitelye Common being restored, other areas being studied
T1.89	Streams & tributaries	Wooded streams
T1.90		Springs & well heads
T1.91	Bogs	Cleddon Bog
T1.92	Semi-natural grassland	Flower-rich meadows & limestone grassland
T1.93	Small field pattern	Particular concentrations close to Wye Gorge
T1.94		Closely associated with stone barns and cottages
T1.95	Drystone walls	Mixed stone, including puddingstone
T1.96		Often lining old track-ways and green lanes
T1.97	Remnant orchards	Traditional apple & pear varieties
T1.98		Often linked with semi-natural grassland
T1.99	Parkland & estate farmland	Designed landscape with mature trees
T1.100	Heritage	Industrial heritage and early furnaces
T1.101		Historic environment of Trellech with Harolds Stones, Virtuous Well, mediaval town & Tump
T1.102	Extensive views	West to Brecon Beacons
T1.103		East over Wye Valley & Dean
T1.104		South across Severn



Photo: AONB Unit

TABLE 2 LAND USE IN THE WYE VALLEY

LANDSCAPE ZONE	WOODLAND	RIVER	MIRE AND HEATH	FARMLAND	SMALL FIELDS	ORCHARDS	SUB-URBAN	URBAN	TOTAL	PROPORTION OF AONB IN EACH LANDSCAPE ZONE
WOOLHOPE DOME	9	-	-	28	-	2	-	1	40	12.7%
HEREFORDSHIRE LOWLANDS	9	-	-	46	-	4	6	1	66	21.0%
WYE FLOODPLAIN	-	1	-	22	-	-	1	1	25	7.9%
DEAN (Highmeadow)	9	-	-	5	-	-	1	-	15	4.8%
ST.BRIAVELS PLATEAU	3	-	-	14	5	2	-	-	24	7.6%
WYE GORGE	23	3	1	15	4	-	6	-	52	16.5%
TRELLECH PLATEAU	32	-	1	52	5	-	3	-	93	29.5%
TOTAL	85	4	2	182	14	8	17	3	315	
PROPORTION OF AONB IN EACH LAND USE	27.0%	1.3%	0.6%	57.8%	4.4%	2.5%	5.4%	1.0%		100%

The areas for each landscape zone have been estimated by determining the land use at each of the 315 intersections of the 1 km square national grid which fall within the AONB. The information was obtained from the OS Outdoor Leisure Map 14, Wye Valley and Forest of Dean, supplemented by 1:25,000 sheets for the rest of the AONB.

Boxes show how many 1 km square intersections fall within that landscape zone - land use combination. Each intersection represents 104.179 ha. The area occupied by each land use in each landscape zone can be obtained by multiplying the number in the appropriate box by 104.179 hectares (i.e. 32816 ha divided by 315 sample points)

3.6 The State of the AONB Report

3.6.1 Reporting on the state of the AONB provides a baseline for determining and understanding the special qualities and the pressures on the AONB. The State of the AONB Report establishes a foundation for measuring change – beneficial or adverse – in the state or condition of the AONB. Therefore it forms the starting point for associated monitoring procedures. Monitoring and evaluation of the Management Plan and the State of the AONB are dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 11.

3.6.2 The State of the AONB Report is laid out as follows:

3.6.3 State of the resource – The following section 3.7 and 3.8 with Tables 3.1 to 3.11 and 3.12 to 3.22 respectively outline the Socio-economic and agricultural statistics for the AONB. Table 4 identifies the special qualities of the AONB and their nature, quality, extent and condition – identifying the special features that are crucial to the long-term well being of the AONB. Table 5 and 6 list the important bird and vascular plant species in the AONB.

3.6.4 Changes or threats- these are identified in Table 4 and represent the social, environmental and economic facets of the AONB and its communities that are significant sources of pressure for change on the special qualities of the AONB.

3.6.5 Management options – these are also in Table 4 and identify the management initiatives and the progress required to mitigate against the impacts of the changes or threats

3.6.6 Measurement of change – these are also in Table 4 and establish the basis for monitoring, and identify (in brackets) which bodies might be responsible or able to undertake the data collection.

3.6.7 Activities / Pressures These are highlighted under Table 7. These need to be understood in terms of their interaction, whether positive or negative, on the special qualities of the AONB. Many of the ‘changes or threats’ identified in Table 4 arise directly from these activities and pressures.

3.7 Socio-economic statistics for the AONB

3.7.1 The fundamental challenge with the use of any statistics for the AONB is the correlation of the data with the AONB boundary. The boundaries of AONBs do not generally follow any standard geographical data collection unit (such as Wards, Parishes or Local Authority Areas). Therefore there is virtually no data collected that relates directly the AONB. Varying methodologies can be employed to approximate the datasets to the AONB. However these can lead to some variance and potential inaccuracies if the data was gathered from a much larger area. Similarly data from one source analysed and disaggregated for the AONB by one methodology cannot necessarily be compared with data from another source, analysed through another methodology. Therefore to gain consistently accurate statistical information for the AONB is currently impossible. The information in this section was prepared by the Centre for Rural Research (CRR), University College Worcester for the Countryside Agency, or supplied direct from the Countryside Agency (CA). What can be gained from this is some specific information and trend data.

3.7.2 The population of the Wye Valley AONB, based on 1991 census data is 24,370, with 9,429 households. The following data comes from different sources and has been derived using different methodologies. However the figures give some indication of the socio-economic make up of the Wye Valley AONB.

Table 3.1 AGE COHORTS & POPULATION

	<16	16-59	>59	Total
Wye Valley AONB	4,538	13,969	5,863	24,370
AONB %	18.6	57.3	24.1	
UK %	20.1	58.7	21.2	

Source: 1991 Census, Casweb

Collated: 2003, CRR

Table 3.2 INCOME

Mean Income	Median Income	Total Households	% Households Below 60% Median
£26,881	£20,832	£23,949	25.13%

Source: 2001 Census

Collated: 2003, CA

Note the methodology includes all data for wards in or adjoining the AONB and therefore includes areas and parts of Chepstow, Coleford and Monmouth that are outside the AONB boundary

Table 3.3 NUMBER OF CARS

Total of cars or vans in the area	Numbers of cars or vans privately used by % of households				
	None	One	Two	Three	Four or more
30910	13.46%	40.49%	34.55%	8.42%	3.09%

Source: 2001 Census

Collated: 2003, CA

Note the methodology includes all data for wards in or adjoining the AONB and therefore includes areas and parts of Chepstow, Coleford and Monmouth that are outside the AONB boundary

Table 3.4 NUMBER OF KEY SERVICES

Service	Gloucestershire	Herefordshire		Monmouthshire	Total
		Excluding Ross	Ross-on-Wye		
Post Offices	6	9	2	4	21
General stores	3	5	5	6	19
Pubs	7	30	14	17	68
Halls	12	23	4	13	52
Youth groups	5	9	8	N/a	22+
Doctors Surgeries	5	5	2	2	14
Primary Schools	2	8	3	2	15
Secondary Schools	1	0	1	1	3
Petrol Stations	2	6	4	2	4
Cash machines	1	1	5	1	8

Source: Rural Services in 2000, Parish & Community Council Headline Summaries.

Collated: 2003, Wye Valley AONB Unit

Table 3.5 PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS* (DELIVERY POINTS) WITHIN SET DISTANCE OF KEY SERVICES

	<2KMS	>2KMS
POST OFFICES	85.58%	14.42%
PRIMARY SCHOOLS	85.47%	14.53%
	<4KMS	>4KMS
CASH MACHINES	76.87%	23.13%
BANKS & BUILDING SOCIETIES	57.74%	42.26%
DOCTORS	74.68%	25.32%
LIBRARIES	57.61%	42.39%
PETROL STATIONS	80.97%	19.03%
SECONDARY SCHOOLS	67.13%	32.87%
SUPERMARKETS	60.18%	39.82%
	<5KMS	>5KMS
PUBLIC INTERNET ACCESS POINT	72.72%	27.28%
	<8KMS	>8KMS
JOBCENTRES	81.94%	18.06%

Collated: 2003, CA

*Note the methodology includes all data for wards in and adjoining the AONB and therefore includes areas outside the AONB and parts of Chepstow, Coleford, Monmouth and Ross.

Table 3.6 NUMBERS EMPLOYED IN KEY INDUSTRY SECTORS

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	TOTALS		AONB BY TYPE			
	GB	AONB *	MALE	FEMALE	FULL TIME TOTAL	PART TIME TOTAL
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	6,175,199	3314	1483	1830	1600	1712
Public administration, education & health	6,187,790	1742	329	1415	787	955
Manufacturing	3,603,304	1112	829	283	995	115
Banking, finance and insurance, etc	4,995,975	909	460	450	654	259
Transport and communications	1,558,190	482	358	122	389	93
Other services	1,330,219	407	182	224	211	197
Construction	1,148,508	374	322	50	332	39
Agriculture and fishing	248,026	109	59	47	95	11
Energy and water	209,187	49	44	3	47	1

Source: ABI, Employee Analysis (NOMIS), 2001 Collated: 2003, CRR

Note: *There may be some discrepancies in AONB data due to rounding figures

Table 3.7 BUSINESS SIZE

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	NUMBERS OF EMPLOYEES						
	1-4	5-10	11-24	25-49	50-99	100-199	200+
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	297	69	28	11	3	2	0
Banking, finance and insurance, etc	295	26	9	2	3	0	0
Construction	114	9	4	0	1	0	0
Other services	106	7	2	1	0	0	0
Manufacturing	80	14	9	6	2	3	0
Transport and communications	62	7	2	1	1	1	0
Public administration, education & health	26	26	24	10	4	0	0
Agriculture and fishing	8	3	0	1	1	0	1
Energy and water	6	3	1	0	0	0	1

*Source: ABI (NOMIS), 2001**Collated: 2003, CRR***Table 3.8 AONB VAT REGISTERED ENTERPRISES, BY EMPLOYMENT SIZEBAND**

EMPLOYMENT SIZEBAND	no.	%
1-49 Employees	1378	99
50-249 Employees	7	1
250 or More Employees	0	0
TOTAL	1385	

*Source: ONS, March 2000**Collated: 2003, CRR***Table 3.9 AONB VAT REGISTERED ENTERPRISES, BY INDUSTRY GROUP**

AREA	no.	%
Construction And Other	969	69
Agriculture	318	23
Production	118	8
TOTAL VAT REGISTERED ENTERPRISES	1411	

*Source: ONS, March 2000**Collated: 2003, CRR***Table 3.10 UNEMPLOYMENT, BY GENDER**

AREA	Male	Female
UK	75	25
Wye Valley AONB	73	27

*Source: Figures derived from NOMIS, 2003**Collated: 2003, CRR*

Table 3.11 PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT	AONB total	AONB %	UK %
No Previous / Unknown Occupations	34	14	15
Managers / Administrators	16	6	4
Professional Occupations	16	6	3
Associate Professional / Technical	16	6	5
Clerical / Secretarial Occupations	30	12	13
Craft / Related Occupations	24	10	12
Personal / Protective Service Occupations	11	4	7
Sales Occupations	14	5	7
Plant / Machine Operatives	18	7	9
Other Occupations incl. agriculture, forestry & fishing	75	30	26
TOTAL	254		

Source: NOMIS, 2000

Collated: 2003, CRR

3.8 Agricultural statistics for AONB

3.8.1 The information in this section was prepared by the Centre for Rural Research (CRR), University College Worcester for the Countryside Agency, or supplied direct from the Countryside Agency (CA) from data provided by DEFRA. The DEFRA data covers the period 1990 to 2001. Information for the years 2000 and 2001, however, differ slightly to that of 1990, as for the latter two years DEFRA included 'minor' in addition to 'main' holdings in their agricultural census. As well as this, during the Foot and

Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak, many smaller holdings that had just a few livestock had to register for the first time. Therefore, there are a larger number of holdings for the years 2000 and 2001, particularly the smaller holdings. This must be taken into account when making comparisons across the 11 year period for which data is provided.

3.8.2 In some instances, DEFRA suppress the actual figures for certain categories. This is to prevent disclosure of any individuals, so the actual figure are withheld where there have been only 1 or 2 holdings in a particular category.

Table 3.12 TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN FARM EMPLOYMENT IN ENGLAND AND WYE VALLEY AONB

TOTAL LABOUR	YEAR			
	1990	1995	2000	2001
England	435,781	400,887	374,291	386,732
Wye Valley AONB	909	914	817	810

Source: Defra

Collated: 2003, CRR

Note that these figures are at variance with the NOMIS data above for Numbers Employed in Key Industry Sectors in 3.6 above

Table 3.13 SIZE OF AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS

<5 hectares	5 <20 hectares	20 < 50 hectares	50 <100 hectares	>=100 hectares
600	230	170	130	106

Source: Defra, June Agricultural Census 2002

Collated: 2003, CA

Note the methodology includes all data for wards in or adjoining the AONB and therefore includes areas that are outside the AONB boundary.

Table 3.14 LEVELS OF EMPLOYMENT ON AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS

Labour Force Type	Total	Per 1000 of Working Age Population
Farmers - Full-time	414	23
Farmers - Part-time	677	38
Managers - Full-time	17	1
Managers - Part-time	0	0
Employee Male - Full-time	123	7
Employee Male - Part-time	62	3
Employee Female - Full-time	13	1
Employee Female - Part-time	36	2
Casual Staff - All	105	6
Number of people - Working Age	17,910	

Source: Defra, June Agricultural Census 2002 Collated: 2003, CA

Note the methodology includes all data for wards in or adjoining the AONB and therefore includes areas that are outside the AONB boundary

Table 3.15 NUMBER OF FARMS BY TYPE

Cereals & General Cropping	Horticulture	Dairy	Pigs & Poultry	Cattle and Sheep (inc lowland)	Mixed	Other
145	115	53	38	294	105	451

Source: Defra, June Agricultural Census 2002 Collated: 2003, CA

Note the methodology includes all data for wards in or adjoining the AONB and therefore includes areas that are outside the AONB boundary

Table 3.16 FARM TYPE BY NUMBER OF HOLDINGS

FARM TYPE	YEAR	
	1990	2001
Cereals	8	14
General Cropping	38	30
Horticulture	17	25
Pigs & Poultry	7	16
Dairy	31	17
Cattle & Sheep (lowland)	98	96
Mixed	44	37
Other	50	149

Source: Defra

Collated: 2003, CRR

Table 3.17 LAND USE BY HOLDING AND TOTAL AREA

LAND USE	Number of Holdings		Total area(ha)	
	1990	2001	1990	2001
Crops & Fallow	145	132	6598.0	5889.7
Temporary Grass	112	76	1695.7	1298.9
Permanent Grass	251	281	5261.3	4835.3
Rough Grazing	52	46	412.9	131.3
Woodland	83	102	317.3	453.7
Setaside	0	55	0.0	716.2
All Other Land	150	121	289.4	295.9
Total			14,574.6	13,621

Source: Defra

Collated: 2003, CRR

Table 3.18 TYPE OF CROPS BY HOLDING AND TOTAL AREA

CROPS	Number of Holdings		Total area(ha)	
	1990	2001	1990	2001
Wheat	82	57	2,026.1	1,944.4
Winter Barley	70	25	1,012.9	360.7
Spring Barley	48	39	564.5	618.9
Oats	28	20	244.5	306.3
Other Cereals	4	7	35.0	114.6
Potatoes	59	30	808.9	739.3
Sugarbeet	32	24	620.5	393.4
Peas Harvested Dry	18	17	328.8	405.6
Turnips etc.	28	16	82.9	35.8
Other Crop stock	19	19	48.5	69.3
Maize	8	17	59.4	182.9
Total Veg in Open	14	7	101.8	66.9
Total Fruit	28	38	249.9	268.0

*Source: Defra**Collated: 2003, CRR***Table 3.19 LIVESTOCK TOTALS BY HOLDING AND TOTAL AREA**

LIVESTOCK	Number of Holdings		Total animals	
	1990	2001	1990	2001
Cattle	163	102	9,847	7,998
Pigs	14	10	2,415	2,588
Sheep	146	115	55,898	29,881
Goats	12	9	91	25

*Source: Defra**Collated: 2003, CRR***Table 3.20 TYPE OF CATTLE KEPT BY HOLDING AND TOTAL AREA**

CATTLE	Number of Holdings		Total animals	
	1990	2001	1990	2001
Dairy	43	20	2,214	1,366
Beef	67	53	955	1,195
Breedherd Replacements	66	57	1,091	1,115
Other Cattle over 1 Year	122	85	2,789	2,304
Cattle under 1 Year	113	75	2,798	2,018

*Source: Defra**Collated: 2003, CRR***Table 3.21 TYPE OF SHEEP KEPT BY HOLDING AND TOTAL AREA**

SHEEP	Number of Holdings		Total animals	
	1990	2001	1990	2001
Breeding Ewes	141	107	25,456	14,590
Lambs under 1 Year	138	98	27,887	14,158
Other Sheep	128	89	2,555	1,125

*Source: Defra**Collated: 2003, CRR*

Table 3.22 AGRI-ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS 1998 - 2002

	Holdings	Area (Hectares)	Value (£)
Countryside Stewardship			
Herefordshire			
Land under agreement 2m and 6m arable margins	22	465.25 20,025 metres	1,056,033
Gloucestershire			
Land under agreement	14	210.12	200,420
Tir Gofal			
Monmouthshire			
	10	232.29	N/a
Total		907.66	1,256,000+

*Source: Defra**Collated: 2003 by AONB unit*

Photo: AONB Unit

TABLE 4. SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE WYE VALLEY AONB

Special Qualities	Recognition	Extent [Ref. T1]	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Strategic Objective WV-	Indication of change (data source)
Biodiversity							
1. Woodlands	Much Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and Planted Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) including 35 SSSIs.	27% woodland cover in AONB. 6083 ha of Ancient woodland >2ha covers 18.65% of AONB. SSSIs cover 1679 ha. 5% of AONB. [T1.4, T1.8, T1.10, T1.11, T1.25, T1.38, T1.41, T1.61, T1.62, T1.68, T1.84, T1.85]	Varied; much ASNW under managed, many PAWS losing ancient features [in English part of AONB 67% of SSSIs meet EN PSA targets, sites ranging from 0-100%, EN]	Changes in land management, including neglect of much private small woodland and road & bank side trees Ongoing degradation of ancient woodland sites by the continuing existence of conifers and other non-native species fragmentation of ancient woodland sites by land use changes Climate change	Support for viable processing & markets for wood products Liaison with landowners Favour resilient native species	F11, W2, W4, W5, W6, E1 B4, W1, W2, W4 E2 W1, W2, W3, W4 B7, W1, W2, W3, W7	% woodlands in active management by type, eg conifer or deciduous timber, coppice, etc. (FC) and Area & % of woodland in Forestry Commission or agri-environment grant scheme. Extent of woodland by type; eg conifer, deciduous, ASNW as area & % of AONB (FC) Numbers of blocks of ancient woodland sites in AONB (FC) Healthy native woodlands (EN, CCW, FE, FC, WoT)
	Wye Valley Woodlands cSAC	913.62ha 3% of AONB [T1.41, T1.61, T1.68]	Unfavourable to fair; [woodland cSAC / SSSI condition; CCW, in English part of AONB 73% of SSSIs meet EN PSA targets, sites ranging from 0-100%; EN	much ASNW reversion from conifer to native broadleaves	Support for viable processing & markets for wood products minimal intervention woodland	F11, W2, W4, W5, W6, E1 B4, W1, W2,	cSAC in favourable condition and overall woodland cSAC/SSSI condition (EN & CCW)

Special Qualities	Recognition	Extent [Ref. T1]	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Strategic Objective WV-	Indication of change (data source)
				Degradation through neglect	Research of causes and impacts with remedial action & advice	W4, E2	
				Degradation by specific alien &/or expanding species (eg. cherry laurel, deer, grey squirrel)	Research of impacts and remedial action	L4, B4, B5, W1, W2	
2 . The river & tributaries	Main river cSAC and SSSI	45 miles (72km) of main river (1.3% of AONB) and a similar length of tributaries and streams [T1.19, T1.22, T1.34-37, T1.48, T1.49, T1.70, T1.71, T1.89, T1.90]	Of 11 cSAC features 5 are in unfavourable condition, 36% of SSSI meets EN PSA target [condition of salmon & white clawed crayfish unfavourable, sediment levels & diffuse pollution of concern] (EN, CCW), Water quality is good, although river & many streams suffering from some pollution.	Degradation of Natural processes, including constraints on flooding Invasive alien species Land use impacts may degrade or destroy features e.g. siltation, engineering for recreational interests etc. Diffuse Pollution, including the leaching of chemicals from agricultural land	Maintenance and/or restoration of natural processes Reinstatement of natural extent of floodplain. Co-ordination with flooding initiatives outside of AONB Eradicate or control Development Control & Planning Enforcement Liaison with user groups Interpretation & education Co-ordinate best practice of farming initiatives	L1, L2, L3, B1, B2, B3, G1, G2 P4, P8 L2, B4 L1, L5, D1, D3 L2, L7, B6, F1, C1, P6 L7, B6, G3, A1 L2, L5, F1, F2, F3	Extent & quality of features (AONB, EA, EN, CCW) Extent of natural floodplain (EA) Number of projects external to AONB & factors or outcomes Incidents & severity of flooding (EA) Extent of habitats & species (EA, EN, CCW & WiT) Ratio of incidents: applications: transgressions (LAs) Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives (EA, AONB & LAs) Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; reduction in targeted type of disturbance (AONB, EA, EN, CCW) Uptake of higher tier agri-environment scheme (RDS) Diffuse phosphate modelling (AMP3 & AMP4)

Special Qualities	Recognition	Extent [Ref. T1]	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Strategic Objective WV-	Indication of change (data source)
				<p>Point source Pollution, including increased development overflowing old drainage and sewerage systems</p> <p>Changes to water table – through climate change, altered seasonal rainfall and increased abstraction.</p> <p>Spread of disease, such as <i>Phytophthora</i> infection of riparian alders</p>	<p>Development Control, Licensed discharges to river & Planning Enforcement</p> <p>Liaison over incidents & sources</p> <p>More sustainable use of water</p> <p>Disease control</p> <p>Interpretation & education</p>	<p>L1, L5, F3, D1, P4</p> <p>L4, P4, P9</p> <p>L2, L5, L7, B2, B6, F1, F2, F3, D2, U1, C1, E2, P4, P5, P8</p> <p>W7</p> <p>B6, W8</p>	<p>Ratio of incidents: applications: transgressions (EA, LAs)</p> <p>Levels of pollution and trends (EA, EN, CCW & LAs)</p> <p>Water table levels, No.Low flow events, Total aggregate capacity of annual Abstraction Licences. (EA)</p> <p>No. & area of outbreaks (EA)</p> <p>Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; reduction in spread of disease (AONB, EA, EN, CCW)</p>
3. Small field pattern of un/semi-improved grassland, often bounded by drystone walls or old hedges	Very few SSSIs, Target area for Countryside Stewardship in Gloucestershire	4.4% of AONB inc 250 ha Hewelsfield & St Briavels Common [T1.1 T1.18, T1.43, T1.44, T1.72, T1.73, T1.92, T1.93]	Prone to neglect [Hewelsfield & St Briavels Common Parish Grassland survey]	<p>Continuing degradation through neglect and/or Change in ownership &/or land management</p>	<p>Support for viable land use (e.g. extensive livestock grazing, harvesting hay &/or grass seed) and sustained maintenance (e.g. hedge laying & drystone walling skills)</p> <p>Support the promotion of local food, branding and marketing of Wye Valley produce as a means to help encourage/maintain sensitive land use in the AONB.</p>	<p>L2, L4, B4, F1, F2, F6, F11, C1</p> <p>F8, F11, C1, E1, E4, P5</p>	<p>Condition surveys of grassland concentrations & Wildlife Sites (AONB, CCW, EN, LA, WiT & community groups)</p> <p>% grasslands in active favourable management (AONB, DEFRA / RDS, EN, CCW)</p> <p>% local food in local shops (AONB)</p>

Special Qualities	Recognition	Extent [Ref. T1]	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Strategic Objective WV-	Indication of change (data source)
4. Boundary habitat diversity, e.g. between grassland & woodland, farmland & heathland, tidal river & ASNW, hedges &/or drystone walls, lanes, banks, verges and fields & woods	Varied,	Throughout AONB [T1.1-4, T1.7, T1.8, T1.16-22, T1.25-27, T1.30-41, T1.43-50, T1.52-57, T1.61, T1.65, T1.68, T1.70-82, T1.84-85, T1.88-99]	Varied	Damage and degradation through change in ownership &/or land management, including removal, inappropriate activity, road widening	Support for sustained management and maintenance (e.g. information & advice for landowners & managers, grants for appropriate management and hedge laying & drystone walling skills.) Development Control & Planning Enforcement Research to progress conservation and enhancement of features and characteristics	L1, L2, L7, B6, H3, F1, F6, W1, D1, T3, T4, T5 L1, L5, D1, D3 L4, B5, H2, P9	% boundary habitats under management and % in favourable condition (AONB, CCW, DEFRA / RDS, EN, FC, WiT) No. applications approving change to features (LPA) % loss or gain of key features (AONB, LAs, CPRE, CPRW)
Geological							
5. Devonian - Lower Old Red Sandstone	Good	Underlies about 60% of AONB [T1.23, T1.24, T1.39]	Good Outcrops, eg Wilton Road, Ross	Vernacular building material, although rarely used in modern architecture due to softness of rock	Conserve access to specific quarries where appropriate Geoconservation, including interpretation & access	L1, G1, G2, G3 L2, L7, G1, G2, G3	Number of accessible quarries (CCW, EN, MPA, EHT) Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; (AONB, CCW, EHT, EN)
6. Carboniferous Limestone	Good	Underlies about 25% of AONB south of Ross [T1.45, T1.52-55, T1.64, T1.74, T1.78, T1.94, T1.95]	Good Outcrops, especially cliffs and quarries	Quarrying; two working quarries in, and one bordering, AONB Loss of working small quarries	Development Control, liaison & Planning Enforcement Geoconservation, including interpretation & access	L1, M1, M2, M3, M4 L2, L7, G1, G2, G3	Ratio of permitted quarry workings: area of working quarries; ratio of number of restoration plans being implemented: new quarry applications (MPAs) Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; (AONB, CCW, EHT, EN, Hansons & Tarmac) Area of accessible natural exposures (AONB, CCW, EHT, EN)

Special Qualities	Recognition	Extent [Ref. T1]	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Strategic Objective WV-	Indication of change (data source)
7. Acid Quartz Conglomerate	Good	Prominent seams between Tintern and Ross [T1.55, T1.64, T1.78, T1.95]	Good Outcrops, eg Coppett Hill & Doward	Traditionally used locally in drystone walls, limited modern use	Conserve prominent exposures Geoconservation, including interpretation & access	L1, L2, G1, G2, L2, L7, G1, G2, G3	Number of exposures visible (CCW, EHT, EN) Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; (AONB, CCW, EHT, EN)
8. Silurian Limestone	N/a	Woolhope Dome [T1.5-6]	Exposures in small old quarries	Little used as a traditional building material	Geoconservation, including interpretation & access	L2, L7, G1, G2, G3	Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; (AONB, CCW, EHT, EN)
9. Riverine geomorphology	Good	Along length of river [T1.32-37, T1.46-50]	Good	Natural processes, including flooding and movement of meanders Invasive alien species Land use impacts may degrade or destroy features e.g. siltation, engineering for recreational interests or flood defence	Maintenance and/or restoration of natural processes Reinstatement of natural extent of floodplain. Eradicate or control Development Control & Planning Enforcement Liaison with user groups Interpretation & education	L1, L2, L3, B1, B2, B3, G1, G2 P4, P8 L2, B4 L1, L5, D1, D3 L2, L7, B6, C1, P6 L7, B6, G3, A1	Extent & quality of features (AONB, CCW, EA, EN, RIGS, WiT) Extent of floodwater (EA) Extent of habitats & species (CCW, EA, EN, WiT) Ratio of incidents: applications: transgressions (LAs) Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives (EA, AONB & LAs) Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; reduction in targeted type of disturbance (AONB, CCW, EA, EHT, EN, WiT)

Special Qualities	Recognition	Extent [Ref. T1]	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Strategic Objective WV-	Indication of change (data source)
Visual and Sensory Landscape							
10. 7 landscape zones (see Table 1 & 2) with key elements of valley & plateaux; farmland & woodland; the river; varied settlement pattern & building design; orchards, hedges, walls & lanes; commons; parks;	Out-standing (see county Landscape Character Assessments and LandMap)	Whole AONB [T1.1-104]	Poor to good [see county Landscape Character Assessments and LandMap]	Sustainable land management &/or ownership that conserves or enhances key landscape characteristics and features Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy landscape features; (including neglect, addition of inappropriate features, on going loss & decline of elements that define landscape character resulting in increased uniformity and loss of distinctiveness)	Support for sustained and viable land management and maintenance of key features (e.g. information & advice for landowners & managers, grants for appropriate management and skills development) Development Control, PRoW and Planning enforcement Liaison with user groups Interpretation & education	L1 - 7, H3, F1 - 7, F11 W1 - 6, U1 - 3, T3, C1 - 3, E1 - 5, S1, S3, R1, P4, P8 L1, L5, D1, D3 L2, L7, B6, C1, E1, P6 L7, B6, G3, A1	% landscape types and features under management and % in favourable condition (AONB, CCW, DEFRA / RDS, EN, FC, LAs) Sensitivity Analysis of Land Cover Parcels in Herefordshire Landscape Character Assessment (HC, AONB) Ratio of incidents: applications: transgressions (LAs) Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives (AONB & LAs) Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; reduction in targeted type of disturbance (AONB, CA, CCW, EA, EN)
11. Picturesque, extensive & dramatic views.	72 viewpoints identified including 4 SAMs at Piercefield.	Throughout AONB but majority overlooking the Wye [T1.3, T1.28, T1.39, T1.51-52, T1.54-58, T1.60, T1.63-64, T1.67, T1.69, T1.83, T1.102-104]	Varied; some spectacular, some overgrown, some inaccessible, health & safety poor at some [Assessment of Historic & Picturesque Viewpoints in AONB, 2001].	Changes in ownership &/or land management may degrade or block both physical access to viewpoints and the view window Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy the landscape viewed from a viewpoint	Liaison with owners and site user & interest groups Interpretation & education	L1, L2, L8, H3 L7, L8, H3, H5, G3, A1	Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives (AONB, Cadw, EH, LAs) Viewpoints & views windows restored (AONB) Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; reduction in targeted type of disturbance (AONB, Cadw, EH, LAs)

Special Qualities	Recognition	Extent [Ref. T1]	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Strategic Objective WV-	Indication of change (data source)
					Liaison with owners	L1, L2, L8, H3, F1, F2, F4, F5, D4	Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives (AONB, Cadw, EH, LAs)
12. Overall sense of tranquillity, sense of remoteness and naturalness / wildness	High	Majority of AONB [T1.1-104]	Poor to good, with localised disturbance from heavy traffic and military aircraft	Changes in land management including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● new or expanding development and intensification of use (i.e. inappropriate tourism and recreation or increasing road or air traffic) ● change driven by new standards and legislation e.g. street lighting, highway construction may lead to loss of tranquillity and sense of remoteness 	Liaison with owners and site user groups Development Control & Planning Enforcement Interpretation & education	L1, L7, F1, F8, C2, C3, S1, R1, R2 L1, L2, D1, D3 L7, L8, C2, E5, A1	Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives (AONB, LAs) Ratio of incidents: applications: transgressions (AONB, CPRE, CPRW, LAs) Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; reduction in targeted type of disturbance (AONB, LAs)
Cultural							
Archaeology							
13. From Paleolithic to present	85 SAMs and 2657 items on SMR in AONB	Scattered through -out AONB [T1.1-104]	Varied	Neglect or continuing unsympathetic management may degrade or destroy archaeological features eg. damage to archaeological horizons through deep ploughing, irresponsible treasure hunting or continued neglect which may lead to tree and shrub root damage	Scheduled monument consents, Development Control, PRoW and Planning enforcement Liaison with owners and site user groups Interpretation & education	L1, H1, H3 L1, L7, H3, F1, C2, S1, R1, R2 L7, H5, C2, E5, A1	Ratio of incidents: applications: transgressions (Cadw, EH, LAs) Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives (AONB, Cadw, EH, LAs) Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; reduction in targeted type of disturbance (AONB, Cadw, EH, LAs)

Special Qualities	Recognition	Extent [Ref. T1]	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Strategic Objective WV-	Indication of change (data source)
14. Offa's Dyke	Massive early medieval boundary of unique cultural and historical importance	Eastern crest of Lower Wye Valley from Redbrook to Dannel Hill [T1.56]	Varied, but very well preserved in some places	Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy archaeological features visitor access, Offa's Dyke Path National Trail erosion	Development Control, PRoW and Planning enforcement Liaison with owners and site user groups Interpretation & education	L1, H1, H3 L1, L7, H3, F1, C2, S1, R1, R2 L7, H5, C2, E5, A1 L4, H2, P9	Ratio of incidents: applications: transgressions (Cadw, EH, LAs, ODI) Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives (AONB, Cadw, EH, LAs, ODI) Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; reduction in targeted type of disturbance (AONB, Cadw, EH, LAs, ODI) Offa's Dyke Initiative photographic monitoring (ODI)
15. Railway heritage	Line closed 1958	Disused line through length of AONB [T1.29, T1.40, T1.58-60, T1.82]	Redundant track bed with decaying infrastructure	Further neglect of structures	Restoration of route to enhance existing network of rights of way	L2, H1, H5, T1, T2, T3, T4	Increase of use of restored route by user groups eg. walkers, cyclists, horses, less able. (AONB, LAs)
16. Historic landscapes	Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Cadw Register of Historic Landscapes with particular associations of	Cadw Register of Lower Wye Valley; Goodrich to Chepstow, but whole	Fair to good	Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy archaeological features	Development Control & Planning Enforcement Liaison with owners and site user groups	L1, L5, D1, D3 L2, L7, H3, F1, F2, W1, C2, P6	Ratio of incidents: applications: transgressions (Cadw, EH, LAs) Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives (AONB, Cadw, EH, LAs)

Special Qualities	Recognition	Extent [Ref. T1]	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Strategic Objective WV-	Indication of change (data source)
	Iron Age/Roman, Early Mediaeval, Industrial Picturesque, Railways.	AONB contains rich historic environment [T1.1-104]			Interpretation & education	L7, H5, A1	Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; reduction in targeted type of disturbance (AONB, Cadw, EH, LAs)
17. Ancient trees	Significant numbers of ancient pollards and mature trees in hedges, woods and parkland	Through-out AONB [T1.2-4, T1.7-11, T1.16-18, T1.20-22, T1.25-27, T1.41, T1.56, T1.61, T1.68, T1.79, T1.84, T1.99]	Poor	Neglect or Inappropriate management may damage or destroy trees	Liaison with owners Interpretation & education	L1, L2, H3, W1, W4 L7, H5, W8, A1	Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives to save trees (AONB, LAs, FC) Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; raised profile of importance of ancient trees in Wye Valley (AONB, FC, CCW, EN, LAs, WT)
18. Historic parks and gardens	10 registered parks and gardens; Sufton Court, Hill Court, The Kymin, Troy House, High Glanau, The Argoed, Wyncliffe Court, Piercefield, Itton Court, Mouton House, plus 48 of local significance in AONB	Through-out AONB [T1.3-4, T1.20, T1.51, T1.99]	Fair to good	Inappropriate land management may degrade or destroy historic features (including the degradation of identified designed landscape)	Development Control & Planning Enforcement Liaison with owners and site user groups Interpretation & education	L1, L5, D1, D3 L2, L7, H3, H4, F1, F2, W1, C2, P6 L7, H4, H5, A1	Ratio of incidents: applications: transgressions (Cadw, EH, LAs) Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives (AONB, Cadw, EH, LAs) Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; reduction in targeted type of disturbance (AONB, Cadw, EH, LAs)

Special Qualities	Recognition	Extent [Ref. T1]	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Strategic Objective WV-	Indication of change (data source)
19. Historic buildings Marcher Castles Tintern Abbey Early Churches Farmsteads Commoners cottages Estate houses	Varied	Through-out AONB [T1.6, T1.14-15, T1.24, T1.28, T1.42, T1.57, T1.63, T1.69, T1.74, T1.87, T1.94, T1.99]	Varied	Inappropriate management may degrade or destroy historic features	Development Control & Planning Enforcement	L1, L5, D1, D3	No of Listed Buildings on Property at Risk register (Cadw, EH, LAs)
				Changes in the visiting regime and increases in popularity of various sites.	Liaison with owners and user groups	L2, L7, H3, F1, F2, C2, P6	Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives (AONB, Cadw, EH, LAs)
					Interpretation & education	L7, H5, A1	Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; reduction in targeted type of disturbance (AONB, Cadw, EH, LAs)
						H1, H3, H5 S1, S3, R1	No of visitors and trends in visitor statistics (Cadw, EH, LAs)
Language							
20. Welsh language & accent; Forest of Dean & South Herefordshire dialects & accents	Usage diminishing. Welsh taught in schools in Monmouthshire	Varied through-out AONB [n/a]	N/a	Loss of local identity can further erode traditional usages	Encourage & support local events and traditions	C1,C2, C3	Number of locally distinctive events supported (AONB, LAs)
				Influences of universal education and media	Encourage promotion of local traditions in local schools	C1, C2	Uptake of information / interpretation on locally distinctive use of language (AONB, LAs)
Environmental							
21. Air quality	Good	Through-out AONB [n/a]	Good except for A40 corridor	Increase in road traffic pollution	Encourage & support positive programmes for integrated and sustainable transport, to encourage more walking and cycling, especially for short journeys as well as better public transport Encourage more sustainable & less transport dependant lifestyle	T1, T2, T3, T4, C1, C2, C3 E2, S1, R1, R3, P4	Usage of subsidised public transport (AONB & LAs) Increases in utilitarian walking and cycling (AONB & LAs) Increase of Farmers Markets as indicator of reduced food miles, Car Sharing initiatives, Recycling, and similar initiatives (LAs)

Special Qualities	Recognition	Extent [Ref. T1]	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Strategic Objective WV-	Indication of change (data source)
				Inefficient use of wood-fuel	Encourage & support most efficient use of wood-fuel	W1, W6, E2	Increase in adoption of advice from wood-fuel initiatives
22. Water quality	Main River cSAC and in EC Freshwater Fish Directive (78/659 EEC)& along with all streams are Fisheries Ecosystem class 2,	Through-out AONB [T1.19, T1.22, T1.36-37, T1.48-50, T1.70-71, T1.89-90]	Good [River and most streams meet Fisheries Ecosystem Class targets; River meets targets for EC Freshwater Fish Directive plus at abstraction points meets Surface Water for Abstraction for Public Supply Directive (75/440/EEC) targets]	Changes in land use may increase point or diffuse pollution e.g. soil run off, chemical leaching, etc. Falling water table may impact on water quality through low flow events, increased concentration of pollutants, and reduced surface area for oxygen diffusion.	Development Control & Planning Enforcement Liaison with land owners Interpretation & education More sustainable use and management of water	L1, L5, D1, D3 L2, L7, B6, F1, C1, P6 L7, B6, A1 L2, L5, L7, B2, B6, F1, F2, F3, D2, U1, C1, E2, P4, P5, P8	Ratio of incidents: applications: transgressions (EA, LAs) Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives (EA, FWAG, LAs) Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; reduction in targeted type of pollution (AONB, CCW, EA, EN, LAs) No.Low flow events and Levels of pollutants (EA, EN, CCW & LAs) Changes against Fisheries Ecosystems targets and EC targets (EA)
23. Soil quality	1,2 &3	1,2 &3 [T1.1-11, T1.17-23, T1.25, T1.30-39, T1.41, T1.43-44, T1.46-50, T1.61-62, T1.65, T1.68, T1.72-77,	Fair, although some areas of high erosion risk	Changes in land use may degrade or contaminate soils e.g. erosion and soil run off, chemical leaching, quarrying & extraction, loss of soil diversity and loss through development, etc.	Development Control & Planning Enforcement Soil erosion risk mapping and risk management Liaison with land owners	L1, L5, D1, D3 L4, L5, F3, P9 L2, L7, B6, F1, C1, P6	Ratio of incidents: applications: transgressions (DEFRA, EA, LAs) No. farms with erosion risk maps & soil management plans (CCW, DEFRA/RDS, EN, FWAG, LAs) Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives (DEFRA/RDS, EA, FWAG, LAs)

Special Qualities	Recognition	Extent [Ref. T1]	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Strategic Objective WV-	Indication of change (data source)
		T1.84-85, T1.88-94, T1.97-99]			Interpretation & education on soil conservation	L7, B6, A1, P4, P8	Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets; reduction in targeted type of degradation (AONB, CCW, EA, EN, LAs)
Recreation							
24. Rights of way network Often in sunken ways &/or bounded by drystone walls, or along river corridor including disused railway	Generally good	Through-out AONB [T1.1-104]	Majority accessible	Erosion due to excessive usage and/or river flooding in places Blockage and/or obstruction Unclear classification	Repair & consolidate route Promote alternative route(s) to relieve pressure (with or without route closure) interpretation and education liaison with user groups PRoW Enforcement & Development Control Liaison with land owners Archive research followed by designation of lanes as 'byways' to protect their character, surface and boundary features.	T3, R3 L2, T1, T3, T5, S1, R1 L7, C2, A1, L2, L7, B6, F1, W1, C1, P6 L1, L5, D1, D3 F1, W1, E5, R2 P6 L4, L5, T1, T5, P4, P9	Wear & tear of new infrastructure (LAs) Uptake of interpretation & usage of promoted route(s) (AONB, LAs) Uptake of information / interpretation leaflets (AONB, LAs) Number of positive encounters, reduction in targeted type of disturbance & compromise initiatives (LAs) Ratio of incidents: transgressions (LAs) Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives (LAs) Number of new Byways and other PRoW. (LAs)

Special Qualities	Recognition	Extent [Ref. T1]	Condition [data / reason]	Changes or threats	Management options	Strategic Objective WV-	Indication of change (data source)
25. Offa's Dyke Path	National Trail	Monmouth to Chepstow [T1.41-45, T1.51-2, T1.56, T1.63, T1.67-68, T1.72-76, T1.78-80]	Premier national walking route	as for general Rights of Way category, plus Damage to Offa's Dyke earthwork	as for general Rights of Way category, plus Realignment of sections of the route off the Offa's Dyke earthwork	H1, H3, H5	as for general Rights of Way category plus Percentage of the route off the Offa's Dyke earthwork, (ODI, LAs)
26. Wye Valley Walk	Regional Route	Through length of AONB [T1.1-76]	Good	as for general Rights of Way category, including blockage by erosion of riverbank. Some sections still on Permissive Paths	as for general Rights of Way category, plus Upgrade route to Public Right of Way	R3, P4, P8	as for general Rights of Way category plus Percentage of the route on PRoW and off permissive paths (AONB, LAs)
Access land							
27. Forestry Commission woodland	Good	Haugh Wood, Chase Wood & lower Wye Valley [T1.10, T1.25, T1.41, T1.61-2, T1.68, T1.84-5]	Good	Changes in legislation or sale removing access rights	Securing long term access rights	P4, P8	% change in access land (FE, LAs)
28. Woodland Trust, Wildlife Trusts, National Trust land and reserves	Good	Scattered throughout AONB [T1.1-9, T1.25, T1.41, T1.43, T1.72, T1.84, T1.92]	Good	Changes in organisational priorities regarding permissive public access rights	Securing long term public access rights	P8	% change in access land (WT, WiT, NT, LAs)
29. Small commons; largest are Coppet Hill, Broadmoor, Staunton Meend, Whitelye, The Hudnalls	Generally good	12 scattered through -out AONB [T1.7, T1.30, T1.41, T1.65, T1.68, T1.88]	Generally good	Obstruction to access	Enforcement & Development Control Liaison with commoners, site users and neighbouring land owners	L1, L5, D1, D3 F1, W1, C1, C2, E5, R2, P6	Ratio of incidents: transgressions (LAs) Number of positive encounters & compromise initiatives (LAs)

TABLE 5. BIRDS OF HIGH CONSERVATION SIGNIFICANCE

(Red List Species) Which Breed Within the Wye Valley AONB, Their Occurrence in the United Kingdom BAP Species List

SPECIES	COMMON NAME	CONSERVATION SIGNIFICANCE		OCCURRENCE IN WYE VALLEY AONB
		UK Population >10 000 pairs	UK BAP Priority Species List	
<i>Perdix perdix</i>	Grey Partridge	■	■	■
<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Turtle Dove	■	■	■
<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	Nightjar		■	■
<i>Dendrocopus minor</i>	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker			■
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Skylark	■	■	■
<i>Turdos philomelos</i>	Song Thrush	■	■	■
<i>Locustella naevia</i>	Grasshopper Warbler	■		■
<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Spotted Flycatcher	■	■	■
<i>Parus palustris</i>	Marsh Tit	■		■
<i>Parus montanus</i>	Willow Tit	■		■
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Starling	■		■
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow	■		■
<i>Passer montanus</i>	Tree Sparrow	■	■	■
<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Linnet	■	■	■
<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Bullfinch	■	■	■
<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Yellowhammer	■		■
<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Reed Bunting	■	■	■
<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	Corn Bunting	■	■	■

TABLE 6. VASCULAR PLANTS OF CONSERVATION SIGNIFICANCE

(Red Data Book Species and their IUCN category, Species included in the United Kingdom BAP Priority Species List, and Species Protected in Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 and Subsequent Amendments) Which Occur in the Wye Valley AONB.

SPECIES	COMMON NAME	ALIEN	CONSERVATION SIGNIFICANCE			OCCURENCE IN THE WYE VALLEY AONB
			IUCN Category	UK BAP Priority Species list	Listed in Shedule 8 of the WCA	
Anisantha madratensis	Compact Brome	A	V			•
Arabis glabra	Tower Mustard		V	•		Pre 1970
Asplenium trichomanes Spp. Pachyrachis	Sub-Species Of Maidenhair Spleenwort		D			•
Buxus sempervirens	Box	A	NrT			•
Centaurea cyanus	Cornflower	A	E	•		•
Chenopodium vulvaria	Stinking Goosefoot	A	V		•	Pre 1970
Cynoglossum germanicum	Green Hound's-Tongue		V		•	Pre 1970
Dianthus armeria	Deptford Pink		V	•	•	•
Dryopteris aemula			[*]			•
Epipogium aphyllum	Ghost Orchid		C		•	•
Euphorbia serrulata						•
Fumaria purpurea				•		1970-1986
Galeopsis angustifolia				•		Pre 1970
Galium tricornutum	Corn Cleavers	A	C	•		Pre 1970
Gastridium ventricosum	Nitgrass		NrT			Pre 1970
Hyacinthoides non-scripta	Bluebell				•	•
Hymenophyllum tunbridgense			[*]			Pre 1970
Juniper communis				•		Pre 1970
Leucojum aestivum	Summer Snowflake	A	NrT			•
Lonicera xylosteum	Fly Honeysuckle	A	E			Pre 1970
Lythrum hyssopifolia	Grass Poly	A	V		•	•
Mentha pulegium	Pennyroyal		V	•	•	Pre 1970
Muscari neglectum	Grape-Hyacinth	A	V			•
Orobanche purpurea				•		Pre 1970
Petroselinum segetum		[*]				•
Polemonium caeruleum	Jacob's-Ladder	A	NrT			•
Potentilla fruticosa	Shrubby Cinquefoil	A	NrT			•
Pyrus cordata Plymouth Pear			E		•	Pre 1970
Ranunculus hederaceus			[*]			•
Scandix pecten-veneris						1970-1986
Silene gallica						Pre 1970
Sorbus anglica A Whitebeam			V (endemic)			•
Sorbus eminens	A Whitebeam		V (endemic)			•
Torillia arvensis						•
Trichomanes speciosum	Killarney Fern (Gametophyte Form)		V		•	•
Valerianella rimosa	Broad-Fruited Cornsalad	A	C			Pre 1970

A - Alien (i.e. the natural range of the species is outside the AONBs, but may be within the UK). There are three threat categories (risks of extinction): critically endangered (C), endangered (E) and vulnerable (V) and a category where the risk of extinction is real but there is insufficient data to quantify the risk; data deficient (D). Species have also been categorised where they are considered to be near threatened (NrT). [] - indicates that category is not certain. Pre 1970 - indicates that the species was recorded from the AONB prior to 1970, but not found since. 1970-1986 - indicates that the species was recorded from the AONB recently, but not found since 1986.*

TABLE 7. ACTIVITIES AND PRESSURES IN THE WYE VALLEY AONB

Activities	Pressures	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Special Qualities association reference Table 4
Enjoyment Recreation				
Canoeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increasing use of river, particularly between Kerne Bridge and Monmouth •Demand for standardised launch facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Economic generation from canoe hire •Local spend of users •Gives a different perspective to appreciate special qualities of AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Kerne Bridge and Symonds Yat reaching capacity at peak times •Increased use can cause disturbance to other users and wildlife •Poorly designed launch sites and channel engineering can degrade landscape character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The river 9. Riverine geomorphology 10. 2 landscape zones (Wye floodplain, Wye Gorge) 12. tranquillity
Climbing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Concentrated on limestone cliffs in Wye Gorge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Economic generation from guiding & activity businesses •Local spend of users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Excessive use of routes can disturb wildlife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Carboniferous Limestone 10. Wye Gorge landscape zone 12. tranquillity
Cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Promoted locally and nationally as a sustainable form of transport •Vehicle speeds and size of many roads makes cycling dangerous •Demand for off road routes •Requirement for standardised infrastructure and facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Health benefits of cycling •Reduced vehicle use of cycle journeys •Economic generation from cycle shops and hire •Local spend of cyclists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increased off road cycling can cause disturbance to other users and wildlife •Car borne cyclists can exacerbate parking demand at honey pots •Poorly designed routes and infrastructure can degrade landscape character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. All landscape zones 12. tranquillity 15. Railway heritage 24. Rights of Way
Fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Salmon stocks declining •Demand for fishing lakes •Seasonal elver fishing on tidal river extensively over-fished (and relatively unregulated) over decades due to inflated market price of product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Economic generation from fishing rights •Local spend of anglers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Poorly designed fishing infrastructure, eg. croys, lakes and stands, can degrade landscape character •Over fishing of natural stock depletes biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The river & tributaries 9. Riverine geomorphology 10. 2 landscape zones (Wye floodplain, Wye Gorge) 12. tranquillity
Horse riding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Disjointed Bridleway network leading to demand for more accessible routes •Demand for ménages, stables and paddocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Local spend of horse-riders •Facilitates appreciation of special qualities of AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Poorly designed ménages, stables and paddocks can degrade landscape character •Excessive use of routes can damage path surfaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. All landscape zones 12. tranquillity 24. Rights of Way

Activities	Pressures	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Special Qualities association reference Table 4
Sight-seeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on honey-pot sites such as Ross-on-Wye, Tintern Abbey and Yat Rock • Demand for view-brew-loo facilities • High percentage of car use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local spend of sight-seers • Facilitates appreciation of special qualities of AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape implications of provision of facilities, including car parking • Some sites reaching capacity at peak times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. All landscape zones 11. views. 12. tranquillity 13. Archaeology 14. Offa's Dyke 15. Railway heritage 16. Historic landscapes 18. parks and gardens 19. Historic buildings
Walking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for way-marked, self guided trails • High percentage of car use to start walk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local spend of walkers • Allows appreciation of special qualities of area • Dissipated throughout AONB • Health benefits of walking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal car parking on verges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. All landscape zones 11. views. 12. tranquillity 13. Archaeology 14. Offa's Dyke 15. Railway heritage 16. Historic landscapes 17. Ancient trees 18. parks and gardens 19. Historic buildings 24. Rights of Way 25. Offa's Dyke Path 26. Wye Valley Walk 27. FC land 28. Trust reserves 29. commons
4x4 and off road trail bike riding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal use of public footpaths and bridleways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May facilitate some appreciation of certain special qualities of AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erosion to path surfaces • Adversely affects tranquillity in vicinity • Disturbance to other users and wildlife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Woodlands 10. All landscape zones 12. tranquillity 24. Rights of Way

Activities	Pressures	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Special Qualities association reference Table 4
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Wye Valley' a known brand and destination with estimated 2.5 million visitor days p.a. • Focus on honey-pot sites such as Ross-on-Wye, Tintern Abbey and Yat Rock • High percentage of car use • Increase in day trippers and long term decline in long stay visitor numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic generation from food and accommodation providers • Local spend of tourists & visitors • Facilitates appreciation of special qualities of AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale tourism infrastructure at honey pots can degrade landscape character • Incremental infrastructure improvements to tourism facilities can urbanise and detract from character landscape • Increased pollution from high dependence on private transport 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. All landscape zones 11. views. 12. tranquillity 13. Archaeology 14. Offa's Dyke 15. Railway heritage 16. Historic landscapes 17. Ancient trees 18. parks and gardens 19. Historic buildings 24. Rights of Way 25. Offa's Dyke Path 26. Wye Valley Walk 27. FC land 28. Trust reserves 29. commons
Land management				
Agriculture	<p>Farms need to assess/reassess their</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • income streams Move away from traditional mixed • farming for financial reasons Increasing farm sizes through • amalgamation New technologies & practices e.g. • polytunnels, irrigation & abstraction Changes in land ownership and land • management Increasing numbers of new hobby • farmers Farm buildings sold off from farmland, • leading to barn conversions and requirement for modern agricultural buildings 	<p>Economic generation of agricultural enterprises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape custodianship of farming • Provision of local food and materials Diversification allowing farmers to • continue farming 	<p>Potential landscape, social and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • biodiversity impacts of new technologies Inappropriate land management • practices may degrade or destroy landscape features (eg overstocking, continuous arable production) Loss of traditional mixed farming • practices New farm buildings as permitted • development can be out of character and scale in the landscape Poorly designed barn conversions can • degrade landscape character Abandonment or inappropriate use of • parkland and designed landscapes leading to loss of cultural heritage and character. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The river & tributaries 3. Small field pattern 4. Boundary habitat 5. Riverine geomorphology 10. All landscape zones 11. views. 12. tranquillity 13. Archaeology 15. Railway heritage 16. Historic landscapes 17. Ancient trees 18. parks and gardens 19. Historic buildings 22. Water quality 23. Soil quality 24. Rights of Way 26. Wye Valley Walk 29. commons

Activities	Pressures	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Special Qualities association reference Table 4
Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current low value of timber and lack of viable markets for wood products • Neglect of much private small woodland, also road & bank side trees • Ongoing degradation of ancient woodland sites by the continuing existence of conifers and other non-native species • Fragmentation by land use changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic generation of forestry products • Large area of woodland in 'benevolent' ownership (eg CCW, EN, FC, WT, WiT) • Reversion from conifer to native broadleaves • Public access to woodlands facilitates appreciation of special qualities of AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of management of much private woodland • Trees obscuring views from roads and picturesque viewpoints • Deer and squirrels affecting biodiversity and viability of many woods 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Woodlands 4. Boundary habitat 10. All landscape zones 11. views 12. tranquillity 13. Archaeology 14. Offa's Dyke 16. Historic landscapes 17. Ancient trees 18. parks and gardens 24. Rights of Way 25. Offa's Dyke Path 26. Wye Valley Walk 27. FC land 28. Trust reserves
Economic & Development				
Telecommunications and other utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent applications for new masts, often of standard basic lattice construction • Telecommunications companies not covered by Section 85 of CRoW Act. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased ease of communications in valley. • Advances in mast designs can be more sympathetic to surroundings and landscape character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual intrusion of increasing number of pylons and standardised masts, particularly when poorly designed and sited 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. All landscape zones 11. views
Energy, including renewables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal energy generated in AONB, but traditionally waterpower and wood-fuel • Renewable energy promoted locally and nationally as part of sustainable development • Scoping options undertaken on renewable energy generation favour small scale hydro, solar water heating and small scale / domestic wind turbines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape and biodiversity benefits of increasing use of coppice • Development and use of renewable energy can increase environmental awareness and appreciation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and non-traditional techniques (eg. new energy crops, large scale wind farms) can degrade landscape character 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Woodlands 2. The river & tributaries 10. All landscape zones 11. views 21. Air quality 22. Water quality

Activities	Pressures	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Special Qualities association reference Table 4
Mineral development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mineral reserves and consents for existing Limestone extraction (2 large scale working quarries), 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to interpret mineral heritage and special qualities of AONB • Opportunities to use more local stone in buildings and development to enhance local character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale quarries can detract from landscape character 	1. Woodlands 5. Old Red Sandstone 6. Carboniferous Limestone 8. Silurian Limestone 10. particularly Wye Gorge & Forest of Dean 12. tranquillity
Housing & the built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing allocation demands leading to Market towns encroaching on AONB and much in-fill in villages • Location of housing and development in places which are dependant on car use • Unsympathetic and standardised designs of much modern housing and business premises • Lack of Village Design Statements for many settlements • Redundant farm buildings being converted to residential dwellings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places for people to live and work in or near to the spectacular landscape of the AONB, facilitating appreciation of special qualities of AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor design of buildings and curtilage can detract from landscape character, eg. urbanising rural areas with natural hillsides engineered for car parking & turning points, with excessive lighting and without adequate landscaping or screening • Poor location of housing and development encouraging car use and requiring additional standardised highway infrastructure 	3. Small field pattern 4. Boundary habitat 5. Old Red Sandstone 6. Carboniferous Limestone 8. Silurian Limestone 10. All landscape zones 11. views 12. tranquillity 13. Archaeology 19. Historic buildings 21. Air quality 22. Water quality 24. Rights of Way
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly locally in market towns or commute (Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff). Highest employment in service industries of tourism, public administration, finance and transport with small numbers in agriculture & forestry • Farm incomes declining. • Need for growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment predominantly based on servicing the enjoyment and appreciation of the special qualities of the AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demands of hard economics and employment, uncoupled from environmental and community aspects, can have detrimental impact on landscape 	10. All landscape zones 11. views 12. tranquillity 21. Air quality 22. Water quality 23. Soil quality
Transport & Traffic [inc emissions]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing traffic volumes exacerbating current situation; A40 dual carriageway is very busy at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most parts of AONB accessible by road, facilitating appreciation of special qualities for people of all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual impact of much transport infrastructure, including standardised concrete curbing, safety barriers, 	4. Boundary habitats 9. Riverine geomorphology

Activities	Pressures	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Special Qualities association reference Table 4
	<p>times of the day and, along with A49 and A4136, carries much heavy freight traffic; A466 and B roads are much less busy, outside of commuting times, though congestion can be caused by dawdling tourists. Slow agricultural vehicles can hold up traffic on minor roads.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on private car use and commuting • Demands to standardised upgrades of road network, from A40 dual carriageway to unsurfaced byways • Rural bus services patchy 	<p>levels of personal mobility</p>	<p>lighting & signage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low / poor maintenance of existing surfaces & features, inc bridges can detract from landscape character 	<p>10. All landscape zones 11. views 12. tranquillity 21. Air quality 22. Water quality 24. Rights of way</p>
Waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All exported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new landfill sites in AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There may be less local awareness of need to reduce & reuse & recycle. 	<p>21. Air quality 22. Water quality 23. Soil quality</p>
Community and Social				
Local services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viability of village and rural services and facilities • Mobility of residents increases competition between village, market town and city facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many good village shops & thriving market towns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of local services reduces community coherence • Increasing social isolation 	<p>10. All landscape zones 15. Railway heritage 16. Historic landscapes 19. Historic buildings 20. Language</p>
Local housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of second homes and holiday lets • Attractiveness of area for both commuting and retirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurs and fresh ideas brought into area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of potential local work force • Loss of indigenous knowledge and skills • Imbalance in local demographics 	<p>10. All landscape zones 19. Historic buildings 20. Language</p>
Community facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of affordable housing • Pubs & garages threatened by competition from supermarkets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good village halls & pubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of local services reduces community coherence • Increasing social isolation 	<p>10. All landscape zones 20. Language</p>

Activities	Pressures	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Special Qualities association reference Table 4
Other				
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing CO₂ emissions leading to anticipated global warming and species migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New opportunities for agriculture and tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands and other habitats, River & tidal flooding impacts likely to increase Water quantity likely to vary more Changes to agricultural crops and practices may change landscape character 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Woodlands The river & tributaries Small field pattern Boundary habitat Riverine geomorphology All landscape zones Ancient trees parks and gardens Water quality Soil quality Rights of Way Wye Valley Walk commons
Pollution				
Water pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diffuse and point source pollution from urban (domestic and business) and agricultural sources Ploughing of floodplain, steep valley slopes and other vulnerable soils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incidents can be used to raise awareness of pollution issues and best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pollution and litter can degrade wildlife habitats and landscape character Agricultural pollution may lead to contamination of soil and water Soil erosion leads to loss of topsoil and sediment loading in river. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The river & tributaries Boundary habitat All landscape zones Water quality Soil quality
Light pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding towns on edges of AONB Demand for standardised highway lighting, particularly at junctions Increasing use of 'security' lighting on exterior of buildings, and floodlighting of games pitches and riding arenas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of bad practice can be used to promote best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly designed and standardised lighting can degrade landscape character Poorly located or directed lighting can confuse motorists and degrade landscape character 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All landscape zones views tranquillity Historic landscapes
Noise pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy freight & traffic using main roads Increasing demand for noisy recreational activities eg. quad biking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of bad practice can be used to promote best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Localised loss of tranquillity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All landscape zones views tranquillity

Activities

Pressures

Positive Impacts

Negative Impacts

Special Qualities association reference Table 4

- Increasing domestic / garden noise from lawnmowers, strimmers, chippers etc.
- Military training flight path down valley

- 16. Historic landscapes
- 21. Air quality
- 22. Water quality

Visual pollution

- Demand for more obtrusive signage
- Bi-lingual signs require larger signs to accommodate extra wording
- Increasing use of plastic for some modern agricultural practices
- Poor design of large buildings, eg barns and business warehouses

- Examples of bad practice can be used to promote best practice

- Poorly designed and situated development in and around AONB can degrade landscape character
- Agricultural use of extensive areas of plastic can degrade landscape character

- 10. All landscape zones
- 11. views
- 12. tranquillity
- 16. Historic landscapes

Fly tipping

- Persistent levels of localised flytipping

- None

- Fly tipping can damage wildlife and the special qualities of the AONB

- 1. Woodlands
- 2. The river & tributaries
- 4. Boundary habitat
- 10. All landscape zones
- 22. Water quality
- 24. Rights of way



Photo: AONB Unit

4. VISION FOR THE AONB

4.1 Background

4.1.1 The purposes of the AONB designation are:-

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

4.2 Themes and aims

4.2.1 The priorities expressed through the above purposes have been debated at the AONB Conference in June 2001 and further discussed in various AONB topic groups and analysed with the results of the Wye Valley Views questionnaire and the outputs from the State of the AONB Report and Guiding Principles. From the amalgamation of these sources of information on the AONB five main themes appear for the AONB Management Plan. Each theme is summarised in the five following paragraphs.

4.2.2 Theme 1: Our unique landscape

Conserving and, where necessary, enhancing the natural beauty of *our unique landscape* is the primary theme. This addresses the components of natural beauty: the landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and the cultural heritage. The aim for each component will be as follows:-

- to conserve and enhance, where this is needed, the natural beauty of the landscape in the Wye Valley AONB, with its natural and cultural features and processes.
- to conserve, enhance and restore the characteristic biodiversity (comprising the semi-natural habitats, farmland wildlife, and the range and populations of native species).
- to conserve and enhance, where this is needed, the geodiversity, the sites that are important for the scientific and general understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the geological heritage of the AONB.
- to conserve, safeguard, and enhance, where this is needed, the historic environment of the AONB, with its wealth of cultural associations.

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

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



Photo: ©Archie Miles

4.2.3 Theme 2: Development and transport

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

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

4.2.4 Theme 3: Vital communities

Safeguarding rural industries and local socio-economic needs that maintain *vital communities* is the third theme. This needs to address the vibrancy of the local communities and the viability of local businesses that sustain the landscape features. The aim will be to engender thriving local communities that have a high quality of life with a healthy economy that supports the natural beauty of the area. Farming and forestry have already been covered above, but other aspects of the rural economy and rural regeneration also need to

be considered. The aim will be to foster viable rural enterprises that derive benefit from and enhance the natural resources and local distinctiveness of the AONB. Tourism is included under the next theme.

4.2.5 Theme 4: Enjoying the AONB

Promoting and ensuring that the general public are *enjoying the AONB* in sustainable ways is the fourth theme. This needs to address the enjoyment of the special landscape features by everybody. The aim will be that sustainable tourism, based upon the natural beauty and local distinctiveness of the AONB, continues to enrich the lives of visitors, operators and employees while contributing positively to the conservation and enhancement of the area. People should continue to enjoy active recreation in the Wye Valley that does not detract from the natural beauty of the area. Meanwhile generally people's appreciation of the AONB is increased through heightened awareness and understanding of why the area is designated, and engagement with the designation.

4.2.6 Theme 5: Achieving success together

Managing and governing the AONB effectively to ensure we are *achieving success together* is the fifth theme. This addresses the need to manage and co-ordinate the above aspects to maximise the benefits for everyone. The aim is to continue proactive and imaginative achievements in the Wye Valley AONB through successful and productive partnerships.



Photo: AONB Unit

4.2.7 In encapsulating these themes the following vision for the AONB was reached:-

4.3 **The Vision Statement for the
Wye Valley AONB**

**To conserve and enhance
the unique landscape and natural beauty of
the Wye Valley AONB,
and within this overriding principle;**

**guiding change that is sensitive to the
area's special qualities and the outstanding
resources of woodland, farmland, river and
cultural heritage,**

managing it in a sustainable way

**as an area where vibrant communities
live and work**

**and enabling present and future
generations to appreciate and conserve,
understand and enjoy the area's picturesque
and sublime qualities,**

**integrating the needs of
the local communities and visitors**

**with this internationally important
protected area.**