

# Guidance for the review of AONB management plans

## The Countryside Agency

The Countryside Agency is the statutory body working to make the quality of life better for people in the countryside and the quality of the countryside better for everyone. It is a non-departmental body sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

The Agency is changing as the result of Defra's Rural Strategy 2004 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill, which gained Royal assent in March 2006. The new Act sets out the creation of:

- **Natural England – a single new body that will integrate the Landscape, Access and Recreation division of the Countryside Agency with English Nature and most of Defra's Rural Development Service (RDS). Natural England will work for people, places and nature, with responsibility for enhancing biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas; promoting access, recreation and public well-being, and contributing to the way natural resources are managed – so that they can be enjoyed now and by future generations.**
- **Commission for Rural Communities – a single body that will act as a rural advocate, expert adviser and independent watchdog, with a particular focus on disadvantage. Currently operating as a division of the Countryside Agency, the Commission will become an independent body.**

These changes will come into effect in October 2006, at which point the Countryside Agency will cease to exist.

We may be changing, but our skills, knowledge and enthusiasm will continue to benefit people in rural England. To find out more about our work, and for information about the countryside, visit our website:

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**Landscape  
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# Guidance for the review of AONB management plans

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# 1. What is this guidance about?

- 1.1** Sections 89 and 90 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CRoW Act) created a statutory responsibility for local authorities and conservation boards to produce AONB management plans and thereafter to review adopted and published plans at intervals of not more than five years. The legislation applies both in England and Wales.

## What the legislation says

### **Section 89 (10) describes how a management plan review should take place.**

Where a conservation board or relevant local authority review any plan under this section, they shall:

- a) determine on that review whether it would be expedient to amend the plan and what (if any) amendments would be appropriate,
- b) make any amendments that they consider appropriate, and
- c) publish a report on the review specifying any amendments made.

### **Section 89 (11) explains the meaning of ‘relevant local authority’**

- a) in the case of an area of outstanding natural beauty which is wholly comprised in one principle area, the local authority for that area, and
- b) in any other case the local authorities for all the principal areas wholly or partly comprised in the area of outstanding natural beauty, acting jointly.

### **Section 90 describes the process for undertaking the review.**

- (1) A conservation board or relevant local authority which is proposing to publish, adopt or review any plan under section 89 shall:
  - (a) give notice of the proposal:
    - (i) if the area of outstanding natural beauty is in England, to the Agency and English Nature,
    - (ii) if the area of outstanding natural beauty is in Wales, to the Council, and
    - (iii) in the case of a conservation board, to every local authority whose area is wholly or partly comprised in the area of outstanding natural beauty,
  - (b) send a copy of the plan, together (where appropriate) with any proposed amendments of the plan, to every body to which notice of the proposal is required to be given by paragraph (a), and
  - (c) take into consideration any observations made by any such body.
- (2) A conservation board or relevant local authority shall send to the Secretary of State or the National Assembly for Wales a copy of every plan, notice or report which they are required to publish under Section 89.

- 1.2** In November 2001, the Countryside Agency published *Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans – A Guide (CA 23)*. The aims of the guide were to help the relevant local authorities, AONB staff units, AONB partners and others with the task of producing the first round of CRow Act AONB management plans to ensure that they were appropriate to the needs of the AONB, had the commitment of all AONB partners and stakeholders, were implemented, and their policy objectives achieved. Parallel guidance was produced by the Countryside Council for Wales for the Welsh AONBs.
- 1.3** Management plans have now been produced and adopted for all AONBs in England. This is a significant achievement. The plans all meet the requirements of the CRow Act but they are very different. This is in part a reflection of the great variability of AONBs in terms of their size and complexity but is also as a result of different approaches to management plan production.
- 1.4** The purpose of this new guide is to advise the relevant local authorities, AONB partnerships and conservation boards on AONB management plan reviews with the aim of:
- meeting the requirements of the legislation;
  - recognising the opportunity provided by the statutory five-year review for AONB partnerships and conservation boards to promote the purposes and priorities of the AONB among partners and key stakeholders;
  - ensuring that issues are addressed that are new for AONBs or have changed since the first round of AONB management plans;
  - encouraging positive, ambitious and engaging reviews which build on best practice from producing and implementing the first round of statutory plans; and
  - achieving practical, realistic and cost-effective reviews.
- 1.5** The guidance should be read alongside CA23. CA23 still acts as a useful reference document on the process of developing an AONB management plan. It should also be read alongside separate guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment of AONB Management Plans, which is currently being produced for the Countryside Agency and will be available by the end of August 2006.

### Purpose of AONB designation

- 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, 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.

## 2. Lessons from producing the first round of plans

- 2.1** To inform the guidance, information has been drawn from a variety of sources including: the requirements of the legislation, a record of the AONB management plans review workshops run by the Countryside Agency in September and October 2004, responses to a questionnaire circulated to all AONB officers, discussions with key organisations and individuals, an appraisal of the first round plans, and three workshops with AONB officers to discuss the new guidance in draft.
- 2.2** The main messages for the review of AONB management plans are summarised below.

### **Purpose of AONB management plans**

#### **Focussing on the primary purposes of designation**

- 2.3** S89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires relevant local authorities and conservation boards to prepare and publish a plan which formulates their policy for the management of the area and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it. Plans are essentially about delivering the statutory purpose of AONBs, ie, conserving and enhancing their natural beauty. The review should focus on this requirement.

#### **Addressing the subsidiary purposes**

- 2.4** While material relating to the rural economy and communities in the AONB should be included in reviewed plans, it should be included in the context of delivering the purpose of AONBs and not for its own sake. The need is to make the links between conserving and enhancing the AONB environment and prosperous local businesses and thriving local communities.

#### **Who are they for?**

- 2.5** AONB management plans are for the AONB partnership as a whole, and for other stakeholders and the community, not just for the AONB unit, local authority or conservation board. Accordingly, reviewed plans should be outwardly focused, addressing wider issues and embracing many potential implementing agencies. In this way, plans will be more relevant to the AONB and should be more capable of effective implementation.
- 2.6** Reviewed AONB management plans need to be set in context, making links as necessary with other strategies and plans affecting the area. As Plans for nationally designated protected landscapes they should be seen as overarching plans taking precedent.
- 2.7** Plans have an important role to play in securing commitment from public bodies to the purpose of AONBs, including action to comply with S85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 – the ‘duty of regard’.

## The need to keep the task within bounds

- 2.8** The review of the plan may be costly in time and other resources and may also have opportunity costs. The task needs to be carried forward in a cost-effective manner, but accepting that consultation will be crucial for wide acceptance of the reviewed plan's policies and actions.
- 2.9** Condition monitoring will also be costly in time and resources. There is a need for a standard short set of indicators relating to the purpose of AONBs.
- 2.10** There needs to be a recognition that AONBs vary considerably in size and complexity and that plans need to be tailored accordingly. However, there should be a consistency of approach across the AONB family as far as possible.
- 2.11** The role of the Countryside Agency, English Nature and their successor body *Natural England* (NE) in the review process needs to be explained, with effort focussed on engagement at a strategic level and in the provision of relevant data.

## The desire for more consistency

- 2.12** There needs to be more consistency between plans, with a common structure and a consistent terminology. This would help to provide a sense of cohesion between plans for AONBs with common partners and to highlight that each AONB is part of a family of nationally significant protected landscapes.

## Strengths of the first round plans

- 2.13** The process of producing the plans had the effect of galvanising the partnership and securing commitments to action. The review needs to be done in a way which secures a similar outcome.

## Weaknesses in the first round plans

- 2.14** It was acknowledged that there were weaknesses in a number of the first round plans, notably in the following areas:

**describing special qualities.** Describing what makes landscape 'outstanding' is different from describing its landscape features. Some plans muddled the two;

**visions.** These were often bland and not place-specific and failed to recognise the potential for significant change that is nevertheless consistent with the area's special qualities;

**evidence.** Not all plans made full use of the core of evidence that was available to them or identified the key drivers for change in their areas.

These weaknesses should be addressed in reviewed plans, alongside a more consistent approach to terminology.



## A local authority view

### Richard Butler – Devon County Council

“The current round of plans were a very unknown quantity when produced and this was reflected in their quality and range of content. I feel that many tried to address far too many issues rather than concentrating on what could be achieved within the time and resources available. This has influenced the esteem in which the plans and Partnerships are held by some local authorities. It is better to promise less and deliver than more and fail. This is a very important message as it could affect the level of investment local authorities are prepared to put into the Partnerships if they see poor outcomes at the end of the day.

The plans have been much more successful when concentrating on the environmental aspects of their remits than when they have tried to address wider social and economic structural issues.

The plans have often been seen as addressing the soft issues of the day and not helping to resolve the fundamental environmental issues which impact on their areas.”

*Richard Butler – personal communication*

## Format of plans

**2.15** Observations on the first round of plans concluded that an ideal plan should be:

- aspirational and inspiring;
- easy to read and understand, with material presented in a logical order and with supporting material consigned to appendices at the end;
- comprehensive with delivery mechanisms focussing on what realistically can be achieved;
- clear about where the plan is adding value to existing relevant plans and strategies, and clear about where it fits in with them;
- flexible enough to be able to respond to new issues and opportunities as they arise.

## 3. The review process

### 3.1 The review process

#### Why review?

**3.1.1** As well as being a statutory requirement, a five-year review of the AONB management plan is necessary to make sure that it remains relevant to key partners in the light of changing circumstances, new knowledge and feedback from its implementation. The task of a review is to identify amendments that are necessary to ensure it remains a working document that reliably, and realistically, informs the AONB management process itself and other processes such as the preparation of local development frameworks. For this reason, the review should be thorough and comprehensive.

#### The legal requirement

**3.1.2** The requirement under Section 89 (9) and (10) of the CRoW Act is that:

- the relevant local authority (or authorities acting jointly) or conservation board should carry out a **review** of their management plan;
- based on the outcome of this review, they should determine whether it is **expedient to amend the plan**;
- they should make any such amendments that they consider appropriate; and
- they should **publish a report** on the review, specifying the amendments they have made.

**3.1.3** **In practice, the relevant local authorities (acting through AONB partnerships) and conservation boards may find that the amendments arising from the review are so significant that they will find it more expedient to publish something more ambitious and extensive than just the ‘report on the review specifying any amendments’ required under S89(10)(c). Such an approach would be consistent with the requirements of the Act, as it would exceed the basic requirement. However, it is up to individual partnerships and boards to decide on the approach they take.**

**3.1.4** For the purposes of this guidance, we will refer to the published output required by the Act as ‘the review’.

**3.1.5** Section 90(1) requires relevant local authorities and boards to:

- **give notice of an intention to review, to the bodies listed in S90(1)(a);**
- **send a copy of the plan and any proposed amendments to the same bodies; and**
- **take into consideration any observations made by them.**

**3.1.6** It is on this basis that the Countryside Agency, on behalf of the Natural England Partnership, has prepared this guidance on what the process of review should entail to ensure it achieves the broader purposes of AONBs.

**3.1.7** Section 90(2) requires relevant local authorities and boards to send a copy to the Secretary of State of whatever they publish under s89.

## 3.2 Undertaking the review

### What will the statutory consultees look for in a review?

**3.2.1** The process for undertaking the review should involve a comprehensive assessment of the relevance and achievements of the management plan and the drafting of new material that will help steer the management of the AONB over the following five year period. In making observations under S90(1)(c), *Natural England*, as a statutory consultee, will look for evidence of such a process. It will also look for evidence that observations made on the first round management plans have been taken into account.

### Template for a comprehensive review

**3.2.2** The template below offers an approach that might be adopted, and sample questions to help elicit where amendments may be needed. The template can be made relevant for all parts of individual AONB plans (eg, vision, forces for change, objectives, policies) and will indicate clearly in the review the decisions that have been made for each element of the plan.

**Table 1: Sample template for AONB management plan review process**

Existing Plan	Review observations:				Comment or Proposed Amendment
	Still important?	Less /more/same importance	Include in 2009 – 2014?	Delete/Revise/No change	
Sample text: Theme Vision (for guidance on terminology see section 8) A rich diversity of wildlife, habitats and geology is flourishing and better understood	Y	M	Y	R	Revise theme vision to make it more AONB specific
Background issues					
Forces for change					
Objectives					
Policies (for guidance on terminology see section 8)					
Policy N1 Increase the area coverage and improve the condition of existing natural and semi-natural grasslands	Y	S	Y	N	No change
Policy H1 Inform the conservation of the historic environment through an historic landscape character assessment	Y	M	Y	R	New policy as follow-on Use the objectives of the historic landscape character assessment to inform management actions for key historic features

- 3.2.3** This Review Template may be used as the basis of the review, which should also describe briefly the process that was used for the review. Key stages and actions for this process are recommended in **Table 2: Programme for Management Plan Review.**

### Leading the review process

- 3.2.4** Responsibility for the review process lies with the relevant local authority, or authorities acting jointly, or with the conservation board. For AONBs that are not conservation boards, this responsibility is likely to be discharged through an AONB partnership arrangement which is usually constituted as a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) with members drawn from amenity and land use interests as well as the relevant local authorities.
- 3.2.5** In reality it is most likely that the AONB ‘unit’ will drive the process on behalf of the partnership. The process should involve the stages set out in Table 2 and should be integrated wholly with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Producing an SEA is now a statutory obligation for an AONB management plan (or a revised AONB management plan, though not for a Report + amendments to a plan). The table shows the various stages of both processes – review and SEA – and the requirements of each stage.
- 3.2.6** Partnerships and boards will need to ensure that the review programme can be completed comfortably within the five years prescribed by the legislation. A realistic review timetable should be agreed by the partnership at the beginning of the process to allow for all the stages detailed in Table 2.
- 3.2.7** The extent of consultation should be commensurate with the proposed scale of changes to the plan. A complex schedule of, for example, participatory workshops is recommended only if fundamental changes are needed that substantially alter the content of the plan or if the inherent participative nature of the original plan would be seriously compromised without it. Many of the partners, together with the communities of the AONB, may have been consulted extensively over the plan and other related plans and initiatives, resulting in consultation ‘fatigue’. The process recommended in the table should avoid ‘unnecessary’ consultation, but ensure that consultation has been adequate to maintain the integrity of the plan. Where substantial changes are required the partnership may wish to gather together specialist groups of stakeholders, including professionals, interest groups and the community, to tackle specific topics.

## 3.3 Integrating the review with other plans and strategies

### Planning context of the review

- 3.3.1** One outcome of the review process will be an assessment of how well the AONB’s objectives have been integrated into the local planning system. Achieving this may mean subjecting all or part of the plan to a Sustainability Appraisal, as well as an appropriate level of consultation which would allow the plan, or aspects of the plan, to be adopted as part of the Local Development Framework. This important issue is considered further in Section 7 of the guidance.

## 3.4 Re-drafting and re-issuing the management plan

### Determining what is expedient

**3.4.1** If the amendments to the plan are extensive the partnership or conservation board may determine that, instead of producing a list of amendments and a report of the review to accompany the original plan (which is the basic legal requirement), it will be more expedient to re-draft and re-issue the management plan. There are likely to be two key drivers for this:

**Number and significance of amendments.** Given the pace of change in countryside policy and emerging new issues, together with feedback from the plan's implementation, it is anticipated that quite substantial changes may well be indicated within the review period. While these changes could simply be embodied in a Review report, this may render the process of reading both the original plan and the report so complex that a revised plan is the better option for clarity and convenience;

**Opportunity to raise awareness.** A revised plan that is re-launched with appropriate publicity would also be more likely to elicit partner and stakeholder support, 'ownership' and action than a Review report that accompanies the old plan. It is for the partnership or board to make this decision, however.

### Legal requirements of a revised and re-issued plan

**3.4.2** If the decision of the partnership or board is to revise the management plan it should be accompanied (or prefaced) by a report that describes the review process, and the two documents, together with a copy of the notice of intention to review the plan, should be sent to the Secretary of State on completion of the review.

### Revised, not new!

**3.4.3** A revised plan is likely to be based fundamentally on the original. It needs not to be considered as a completely new plan: that would be a waste of valuable resources and would show a lack of respect for the original plan's preparation process, which involved input from an extensive network of stakeholders through a comprehensive participative exercise. Preparing a revised plan should aim primarily at building on what was written before to make sure it is still relevant and finding the most appropriate and efficient means of filling the gaps in a way that retains the consensual nature of the process. The partnership or board needs therefore to find the right balance between efficiently updating the content of the plan and upholding the integrity of the original preparation process.

### Publishing the plan

**3.4.4** Before publishing the revised plan, relevant local authorities and conservation boards should formally approve and sign off the revised plan. All local authority partners should be encouraged to provide a statement of commitment (see para 4.2.12).

## 3.5 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

**3.5.1** Separate guidance is currently being produced on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for AONB Management Plans on behalf of the Countryside Agency. This should be available by the end of August 2006.

**3.5.2** Appendix 1 provides interim advice on the SEA process and the related process of Sustainability Appraisal.

**Table 2: Programme for management plan review**

Stage Review	SEA	Participants	Task	Actions	Timetable
1 Announce intention to undertake the review - Issuing the Notice (S90 (1))	Announce requirement for SEA	CRoW bodies Key stakeholders	Announce review and explain the process and timetable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write to key stakeholders, including a statement about the process, its timetable and who will be responsible for initiating and leading the review</li> <li>• Consider producing the equivalent of a Statement of Community Involvement</li> <li>• Notify NE of intention to review the plan</li> <li>• Conservation boards to notify every relevant local authority of the intention to review the plan</li> </ul>	<b>Column to be completed by partnership or conservation board at the start of the process</b>
2	Set the contexts and objectives for the SEA	Partnership	<p>Scope the requirements for SEA and SA</p> <p>Draw up evidence base to be used (Stage A of SEA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set out the framework for SEA/SA</li> <li>• Identify the evidence base to help in developing SEA/SA objectives</li> <li>• Identify SEA objectives and indicators</li> <li>• Identify sustainability indicators</li> <li>• Ensure the SEA/SA covers all the likely significant environmental effects of the plan</li> </ul>	

Stage Review	SEA	Participants	Task	Actions	Timetable
3 Plan Review (S89 (9-10))		Partnership and Key stakeholders	<p>Assess Strategy and Action Plan for amendments</p> <p>Analyse any annual reviews of action plans or progress reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider formal observations from the statutory consultees on the previous management plan: have outstanding issues identified then been resolved?</li> <li>• Review the plan. The template at Table 1 may be used to determine required amendments</li> <li>• Review the overall structure of the plan – is it sufficiently clear, readable and navigable?</li> </ul> <p>Identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing relevance</li> <li>• Gaps</li> <li>• Impacts of current plan – what’s worked, not worked and why not worked?</li> <li>• Relevance of actions to the plan</li> </ul> <p>Has it made a difference – if not, why not? Identify, recognise and celebrate achievements</p> <p>Refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New imperatives</li> <li>• New initiatives</li> <li>• Monitoring system</li> <li>• Changes in trends</li> </ul> <p>Conduct a participative process appropriate to the scale of amendments to generate new objectives, policies and actions. Consult: informal consultation with NE</p>	<b>Column to be completed by partnership or conservation board at the start of the process</b>

Stage Review	SEA	Participants	Task	Actions	Timetable
4 Expediency consultation (S89 10 (a))		Core Partnership	Based on the review process above, determine whether it will be expedient to amend the plan and how this will be done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collate all amendments (if any)</li> <li>• Assess significance of any amendments against the original management plan</li> <li>• Assess how best to present these amendments</li> </ul>	<b>Column to be completed by partnership or conservation board at the start of the process</b>
5	Invite comment on scoping stage of SEA	All stakeholders and interested parties	Invite comment		
6 Prepare draft Review <sup>1</sup> with draft revised Delivery Plan (Action Plan)	Prepare SEA Environmental Plan	Partnership CRoW Agencies Key stakeholders	<p>Review: Collate proposed amendments</p> <p>SEA: Develop and refine alternatives to objectives, policies and actions (Stage B of SEA)</p> <p>Prepare SEA Environmental Plan or SA Report (Stage C of the SEA)</p>	<p>Based on the outcome of the expediency consultation, prepare either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A draft report with proposed plan amendments and draft revised Delivery Plan, or</li> <li>• A draft Revised Management Plan (Strategy and Delivery Plan) with proposed amendments, together with draft Review Report</li> </ul> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have all issues been identified?</li> <li>• What else?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present SEA Environmental Report in a form suitable for public consultation</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this guidance, we will refer to the published 'report on the review specifying any amendments' required by the Act as 'the review'.



Stage Review	SEA	Participants	Task	Actions	Timetable
7 Consultation (s89 (10) (a))	SEA Consultation	Partnership Key stakeholders Wider consultation for selected key topics where necessary	Consult on: proposed draft Review Report and revised Delivery Plan, or Revised Management Plan and Review Report  SEA Environmental Plan / SA Report (Stage D of the SEA)	Activities: • Hold workshops on specific topics – re-convene original working groups – limit to small number of key topics where changes are clearly needed • Commission research • Formal consultation with NE • Develop and refine any strategic alternatives if necessary for SEA/SA	<b>Column to be completed by partnership or conservation board at the start of the process</b>
8 Publish Review Report and updated Delivery Plan, or Revised Management Plan and Review Report	SEA statement	Partnership	Present final amendments Review and updated Delivery Plan (Action Plan) with revisions as response to consultation Send to Secretary of State with Notice from 1 above  Show how the revised management plan has responded to the findings of the SEA/SA	Outputs: Review Report and revised Delivery Plan, or Revised Management Plan and Review Report. An SEA/SA statement that summarises the key findings of the Environmental Report and explains how its findings have been considered in the Revised Management Plan. Activities: • Presentation – attractive, plain English, inspirational, etc • Prepare separate summary for wide audience • Publication, adoption • Approval/sign off by local authorities	
9 Promote the plan		Partnership			
10 Implementation/delivery  Monitoring	Monitor the Management Plan against the SEA objectives	Partnership Key stakeholders	Delivery  Track the environmental effects of the plan through monitoring against SEA/SA objectives (Stage E of the SEA)	Actions: • Annual review of progress • Revised and rolled forward Delivery Plan (Action Plan) • Track the environmental effects of the plan	

# 4. Revised management plan structure, content and presentation: guidance notes and good practice

## 4.1 Overall structure

**4.1.1** If, during the review process, the partnership or conservation board considers it expedient to revise the original management plan due to the number and extent of amendments, there may be a need to incorporate new information and to present it in a different form. This section of the guidance provides advice on an ideal structure, content and presentation of an AONB management plan.

**It is offered as guidance only and can be followed wholly, or in part; it is not a requirement for partnerships or conservation boards to follow this structure.** The guidance has been constructed from an assessment of what worked best from the first round of plans and is provided as a response to the desire by many partnerships for more clarity in presentation and for more consistency between AONB plans. It is still important, though, that management plans are prepared for each AONB individually and are therefore tailored for their specific needs.

**4.1.2** Evidence from the first set of management plans suggests that a plan which is split into separate **Strategy** and **Delivery Plan** documents works best in providing the visions, objectives and policies for the duration of the plan period and a more easily update-able delivery plan that can be continuously revised and rolled forward during plan implementation. The Strategy document might also include 'priority actions' to identify the key implementation areas, though this may only be necessary for the larger AONBs where the administration is more complex. If it is considered that the Strategy and Delivery Plan need to be held together, a loose leaf format may be a better option to consider, allowing the user to update the actions quickly and easily.

**4.1.3** A recommended structure for the **management plan** is shown on page 19. Each aspect of the management plan is then discussed in more detail in Sections 4.2 and 4.3.

# Recommended AONB Management Plan Structure

## 1 Strategy

### Foreword

Commendatory statement and commentary on the context for the reviewed plan

### Introduction and Map

What this plan is all about

The status of plan

A statement of the national importance of protected landscapes, and the significance of the family of AONBs in England and Wales

### Statement of Significance

What is special and significant about the AONB

### Vision Statement

The ideal state of the AONB in 20 years time

### Themes

Introduction – explanation

Themes presented under headings. Under each heading consider:

- Vision

- Description

- Forces for change

- Objectives

- Policies

- Measuring progress

### A Spatial Dimension

Explanation of how the plan might be translated spatially in the AONB

### Relationships with other strategies and plans

How the plan relates to other plans, including development plans

### Introduction to the Delivery Plan

Explains the actions and how they are presented in the separate Delivery Plan

### Processes

How the original plan was prepared and how the review took place – brief information

### Appendices

Background documents

Other more detailed information which is useful, but not essential, to the plan

### Statements of Commitment

A statement from each key partner

## 2 Delivery Plan

Table of actions grouped under themes and objectives

## 4.2 The Strategy

### Foreword

**4.2.1** The Foreword is an opportunity for the chairman of the partnership or board to make a commendatory statement about the AONB, the value of the partnership and the role of the management plan in coordinating a partnership approach to its protection. The Foreword might also include a short commentary on the changing context for the plan, achievements since publication of the first plan and emerging issues.

### Introduction and Map

**4.2.2** What the plan is all about. This section briefly introduces the reviewed plan, its role and status, and the processes for its original production and for the review. It is an opportunity also here to stress the national importance of AONBs within the family of protected landscapes in England and Wales.

### Statement of Significance

**4.2.3** What is special and significant about this AONB? This section should bring out the essence of the AONB as an evocative description of the area rather than as a statistical account. It should identify the key attributes that should form the focus for its protection and management for the life of the plan, including such intangibles as views, tranquillity, remoteness, quality of light and sense of place. The aim is to express the features that justify its designation as a landscape of national, regional and local importance. More detailed descriptions can be included in the themed sections below. The statement should be based very largely on the Landscape Character Assessment for the AONB with other information gathered from the consultation process for the preparation of the original plan.

## Isle of Wight

### Statement of Significance

**The special qualities of the Isle of Wight AONB are many, contrasting, varied and inspiring. They contribute greatly to the quality of life and well being of local communities and visitors.**

From majestic sea cliffs and sweeping beaches to the quiet solitude of ancient woodland; the ever changing patchwork of worked fields to the timeless and enduring presence of the downs; the intricate inlets of tranquil creeks to the long distance views from coastal heaths and downland; the planned and manicured gardens of former Royal Estate and Victorian villas to the irregular undulating hedged fields of pasture; the dark starlit skies to the bustle and colour of festivals and events; the winding paths, shutes and hollow ways in the countryside to Chines and steps down cliffs to the beach; place names and dialect to poetry, literature and art; isolated houses, hamlets and rural villages to harbour towns, castles and tumuli; plants and animals to fossilised trees and dinosaur footprints.

## Vision Statement

**4.2.4** The ideal state of the AONB in 20 years time – an aspirational, and inspirational, statement. All the first round plans included an overall vision for the AONB though for many this vision was poorly developed and could have been applied to any area of countryside. The vision should be specific for the special qualities of the AONB and provide a clear focus for all objectives and policies contained in the plan. It should recognise that there will be change in the landscape of the AONB during the 20 years, some of which will be desirable. It is likely the vision will extend to more than just a brief statement, to enable it to embrace the key elements of the AONB's character.

## Arnside and Silverdale

### Overall Vision

The Arnside and Silverdale AONB is a distinctive and living landscape in which an intimate mosaic of low limestone hills, woodland, wetland, pastures and coastal scenery characterises much of the area. Important landscape and wildlife features, a diversified rural economy and vibrant local communities co-exist in harmony. Forces for change in the AONB, including demand for development, agricultural change, the threat posed by rising sea levels and other pressures are sensitively managed in ways that integrate the sustainable needs of local communities with the conservation and enhancement of this nationally important landscape.

**4.2.5** The Statement of Significance and the Vision Statement should be seen as the fundamental blocks on which the revised plan is built.

### Themes

**4.2.6** This section provides the details for the strategy of the plan. The headings are illustrative but cover most of the topics the plan will need to cover.

**Introduction** – an explanation about the structure of the section

**Principles** – underlying principles which need to be addressed under all themes, such as sustainable development and climate change

**Themes** – these are likely to include some or all of the following components:

### Elements of the Resource

- Natural – landscape, biodiversity, geology
- Cultural – archaeology, historic landscape, built environment, local traditions
- Environmental – air quality, soil quality, water quality
- Recreation – rights of way, access land
- Visual and sensory – views, tranquillity, sense of place

### Activities

- Visitors – recreation and tourism
- Land management – agriculture and forestry
- Economic activity and development – housing, energy, employment, etc (in so far as this is relevant to the primary purpose of designation)
- Community and social – local services, transport (in so far as this is relevant to the primary purpose of designation)

Whichever way the themes are structured it is important to provide sufficient links and cross-references between resource elements and activities to ensure a logical flow of information and to aid navigation between the various sections. There should also be a strong integration of the themes to make it obvious that they are inter-dependent and that objectives and policies can very often affect issues across a number of different themes.

### **Present for each theme...**

#### **A Vision for the theme**

‘Characteristic wildlife features are conserved and enhanced’

‘Opportunities for access to the AONB are available to all’

#### **Background material**

What is important about this theme – statistical material (key facts and figures – the evidence base), the state of the resource.

Other relevant documents and initiatives

#### **Forces for change**

What are the trends – changing, deteriorating, plus a value judgement (how important is the change) that steers the nature of the objectives, policies and actions

#### **Objectives**

‘all SSSIs in the AONB are in favourable condition by 2010’

‘all PROWs are managed to an acceptable standard by 2012’

#### **Policies to achieve the vision**

‘Appropriate PROWs are made accessible to disabled people’

#### **Measuring progress**

How implementation of the policies and actions might be measured and assessed

## **Norfolk AONB**

### **Theme Vision**

The Norfolk Coast is a living, working area. It is richly diverse, with distinctive landscapes, wildlife, settlements, building styles and materials, communities, history and culture. The area is essentially unspoilt with a strong feeling of remoteness, peace and tranquillity. The landscape shows many links with history, with features and patterns created by past cultures and land use. The archaeology and cultural development of the area are evident. There are wide skylscapes, seascares and dark skies that show the richness and detail of star patterns. All parts of the area support a rich diversity of characteristic wildlife and habitats associated with natural variations and management, including species and habitats of national and international importance.

Other buildings that contribute to the character of the area are well maintained and in productive use. New buildings are located and designed to contribute to the area’s beauty and distinctiveness.

## Nidderdale

### Evidence base by theme

#### Each theme is supported by “key facts” and sources of further information, eg Recreation

- There are 820 kilometres of public footpaths and bridleways in the AONB
- 48% (393 kms) of the AONB’s Rights of Way network was classified as ‘easy to use’ in 2004 according to standards laid down by DEFRA
- 0.54% (330 hectares) of land was open to public access in 2004 (in addition to access afforded by Rights of Way)
- The Nidderdale Way follows 90 kms of Public Rights of Way in Lower and Upper Nidderdale
- The Ripon Rowel covers 80 kms of Public Rights of Way in Fountains and Mashamshire
- There are 360 kms of unclassified public roads (including unsurfaced tracks) which carry a vehicular right of way in the AONB

Sources of further information: North Yorkshire County Council Rights of Way

[www.northyorks.gov.uk/footpaths](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/footpaths)

### A spatial dimension

**4.2.7** Consideration should be given to developing objectives and policies for specific areas within the AONB, for example on the basis of discrete landscape character types. For the larger, and more complex, AONBs this may be the most effective way of generating policies and actions that can be delivered coherently during the lifetime of the plan. Policies should be derived from consultation and a firm evidence base and expressed as aspiration for public benefit, rather than intention, if they refer specifically to land which is privately owned. Such spatially targeted policies may best be presented in a document separate from the management plan as guidance on its implementation. There are, of course, other potential spatial dimensions that could be used to provide a focus for spatially targeted activity, such as district and county boundaries, socio-economic units or Joint Character Areas. The task of the partnership or conservation board is to make sense of these various potentially conflicting dimensions. Whatever is chosen it is recommended that the dimensions are represented in mapped form.

## Cotswolds AONB

### Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

Building on the AONB landscape character assessment, in the Cotswolds a more detailed assessment has been undertaken for each of the AONB’s 19 landscape character types. This has identified key features and forces for change and has enabled management strategies and guidelines to be produced for each area to help manage change in a sustainable and positive way. The guidelines will be used as a tool in the decision making process and will be promoted to a wide range of stakeholders.

## Relationship to other strategies and plans

**4.2.8** This section should identify other strategies, plans and initiatives that impact on the plan and the management of the AONB, and describe the planning frameworks into which the plan will fit. The AONB plan should be promoted as the overarching policy document for the management of the AONB.

### Introduction to the Delivery Plan

**4.2.9** This is an introduction to the separate Delivery Plan (or Delivery section within a loose leaf format) which explains the actions and how they relate to the objectives and policies of the strategy.

### Processes

**4.2.10** The Processes section should describe how the original plan was prepared and how the review took place.

### Appendices

**4.2.11** More detailed information about processes, themes, etc and other aspects of the plan which give background information for the reader but which would be cumbersome in the main body of the text should be placed in appendices. These should be kept short. Other useful documents should be signposted. Some material that is pertinent to the preparation of the revised plan may be better made available on CD-ROM or via the AONB's website.

### Statements of Commitment

**4.2.12** A statement generated by each key partner to record and emphasise their involvement in the plan and its implementation, and placed within the front or back cover. Such statements should be more than just a collection of signatures from partners, but an indication of real commitment and assured participation in the plan's implementation. For the major partners the statement of commitment might later be developed as an accord, setting out in more detail how the AONB unit or conservation board and the partner will work together.

## Lincolnshire Wolds Accord

### Shared Priorities Statement with the Forestry Commission

Through the Joint Accord, the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB and The Forestry Commission (FC) East Midlands Conservancy will work together to enhance the contribution that trees and woodlands can make within this special landscape. The CRoW Act and the FC Regional Forestry Framework (RFF) will provide the opportunity to tighten our co-operation to ensure that our finest countryside is managed in an integrated way. Most of the woodland within the Wolds is in private ownership, and working with landowners will be key to success.

Partners aims for woodland management in the AONB are:

- Securing an attractive and sustainable landscape.
- Protection of existing woodlands.
- Reversing the fragmentation of ancient and semi-natural woodlands.
- Promoting appropriate management practices.
- Gaining public support and confidence.

## 4.3 The Delivery Plan

**4.3.1** The Delivery Plan is the programme of action agreed by the AONB partnership or conservation board to deliver the policies in the Strategy. **It is a required section of all AONB management plans.**



It is recommended that:

- the Delivery Plan should be presented as a separate free standing document, to be read alongside the management plan Strategy;
- the Delivery Plan should be reviewed and rolled forward on an annual basis.

If there is considered to be significant difficulty in compiling a full five year programme of action, the plan could be presented for shorter periods than five years.

**4.3.2** Policies are the means to achieve the objectives in the management plan and should be relevant for the full life of the plan. Actions are specific actions and tasks to deliver the policies. In many cases actions and tasks are likely to be time limited.

**4.3.3** Under each management plan objective and associated policies, the Delivery Plan needs to:

- identify each action or task;
- describe the action or task in summary form;
- note the timetable for the work;
- state the target to be achieved;
- identify, if possible, the lead partner organisation;
- identify other partners; and
- set out success criteria.

A tabular format is recommended. Table 4 is a worked example.

### Ambition vs realism

**4.3.4** The Delivery Plan must reflect the ambitions of the strategy but must also be realistic about the resources and capacities required to achieve its actions. It is likely to contain a mix of easily achievable, ‘value for money’ schemes – the ‘easy wins’ – and more ambitious initiatives that can tackle some of the fundamental issues of the AONB and which will make a real difference to its protection and management. It should not shy away from these more ambitious schemes, though it is important to show an understanding of the scale and achievability of the task.

**4.3.5** As the AONB Partnership has developed, “shared agendas” should have emerged. Progress is likely to be faster and more secure where partners have a common interest in particular actions and outcomes. Opportunities for joint action should be exploited.

**4.3.6** The agreed actions for the following year should be translated into an annual costed business plan for the AONB unit or conservation board and fed into the business plans of partner organisations.

**How to Read This Action Plan**

*The plan is presented in tabular form. The following example illustrates how the headings should be interpreted*

Objective	Action	Lead Partner	Partners	Timetable	AONB Costs/£m	Priority	Policy Link
<b>OBJECTIVE 4</b> To support those farmers who wish to diversify income from farming, while still complying with the provisions of AONB designations, thereby ensuring compliance with other legal requirements	1. Promote the uptake of diversification measures, under the England Rural Development Programme through suitable regional events and publications strategy for a 3-5 year period from the next financial year	RDS	Furze, CA Ltd, RDP, Tarrant Farm Business Ltd, RAS	0-2012	£0.10M	1	1514
	2. Establish a network of farm diversification and business practice in diversification	RDS	Furze	By 2006	Advised	7	1514 10

**Objective**  
An objective that will be pursued by the AONB.

**Lead Partner**  
The partner who will be responsible for the action.

**Partners**  
Other partners who will be involved in the action.

**Timetable**  
The date of the action.

**AONB Costs/£m**  
The cost of the action to the AONB.

**Priority**  
The priority of the action.

**Policy Link**  
The policy link of the action.

Table 4: Delivery Plan

## Theme: The Historic Environment

Objective A The contribution of the historic environment to the character of the AONB is better understood

Policy A 1 To promote research on the historic environment to improve knowledge and understanding of its significance in the AONB

Action	Summary of Action	Timetable					Targets	Partners (Lead partners in bold)	Success criteria
A1.1	Produce an Historic Landscapes Characterisation for the AONB supplementing the existing landscape character assessment	<b>yr1</b> Sept Let contract	<b>yr2</b> ongoing	<b>yr3</b> Complete the project and promote the findings	<b>yr4</b>	<b>yr5</b>	A major event for partners to promote the findings	<b>EH</b> AONB Unit County Council archaeological unit NFU CLA	Historic character more fully understood with the information assembled in a form to allow revision of the existing landscape character assessment to better reflect the historic component
A1.2	Work with the local university to encourage research into the significance of archaeological sites	Dec Signing of accord with university	PhD students working on archaeological topics	ongoing	ongoing	Review effectiveness of programme	Three students a year enrolled for PhDs on aspects of archaeology in the AONB	<b>University of x</b> AONB Unit County Council archaeological unit	A better understanding of the significance of archaeological sites in the AONB and the information used to influence management decisions and the content of visitor information
A1.3	Work with local communities to identify valued historical and cultural features in the landscape	June Begin the project. Establish valued features topic group	Trial the project in six parishes and assess the results	If successful, role out the project more widely	ongoing	ongoing	Coverage of all AONB parishes by 2010	<b>AONB Unit</b> District Councils	Communities taking a greater interest in the care of historic and cultural features and agreeing action through Parish Plans

**Policy A 2 To encourage the provision of information on the historic environment to land managers and the wider public**

Action	Summary of Action	Timetable					Targets	Partners (Lead partners in bold)	Success criteria
		yr1	yr2	yr3	yr4	yr5			
A2.1	Compile a register of valued historical and cultural features not covered by SAM or listed building status (links with A.1.3)	Agree scope and nature of the register	Record information emerging from action A.1.3	ongoing	ongoing	ongoing	Register fully operational by the end of year 1	<b>AONB Unit</b> District Councils	Readily accessible information which is being used by parishes and other interests
A2.2	Develop interpretive material for the more important archaeological sites and monuments in the AONB (leaflets and information panels)	Agree a phased programme. Produce material for one site and assess public reaction	Roll out programme to common house style	ongoing	ongoing	ongoing	By 2010, all major archaeological sites and monuments to benefit from interpretation	<b>AONB Unit</b> English Heritage National Trust County Council archaeological unit	Public support for interpretive material, assessed as part of visitor surveys
A2.3	Ensure that the historic environment is picked up in targeting statements for the HLS scheme	Input to annual targeting process to influence targets	Refine targets	Further refine targets			Good working relations with <i>Natural England</i> developed and maintained on the historic dimension of the HLS scheme	<b>AONB Unit</b> <i>Natural England</i> <i>English Heritage</i>	An HLS scheme which is clearly effective in encouraging the conservation of historic landscapes and features

Actions to be listed in priority order as far as possible

## 4.4 Management plan content

- 4.4.1** AONB management plans are a mix of long term vision and shorter term action. The vision and objectives are the ‘ambitions’ of the document. If originally generated through consensus they should still largely hold true for the duration of the reviewed plan, though they should still be reviewed critically to ensure their continuing relevance and to make sure they provide the direction that the plan needs for it to be effective in its delivery. The policies and actions are more likely to change with time as the partnership or board learns more about the resource, as national and local policies change and as actions are implemented. The review should assess the relevance of all parts of the plan, but it is more likely that change will be needed in the policies and actions than in its ambitions. (See also Section 8 - Terminology)
- 4.4.2** Responses to the questionnaire that preceded this guidance, and also to the workshops held following the production of the plans in 2004, suggest that a difficulty with the implementation of the original plans is that many are too extensive and include a range of objectives and actions that are unrealistic to implement. While it is important that the Strategy is comprehensive and includes information derived from the consultation process, it is also essential that the Delivery Plan is credible and realistically achievable. The selection of actions should be influenced heavily by the capacity of the implementing agencies to deliver the actions within the timescale and by the capacity of the AONB unit or conservation board that will, inevitably, act as a ‘driver’ for many of the actions.
- 4.4.3** In the Terminology section (Section 8) there are recommendations on the terms and forms of wording for key sections of the plan. Objectives will be both quantitative and qualitative and ideally should be SMART, though it is inevitable that many will be ongoing and will not have tangible outputs. Care should also be taken to focus objectives on those issues that adhere closely to the purpose of designation – they should primarily be aimed at maintaining and enhancing the special qualities of the AONB that have contributed to its status as a landscape of national significance. Objectives on socio-economic issues should be chosen with care and should relate closely to the primary purpose of designation.
- 4.4.4** AONB partnerships and conservation boards have also requested guidance on how to address the balance between national, regional and local priorities. AONBs are clearly a national designation and are of national significance. Alongside National Parks they are the landscapes that, as a nation, we have considered to be worthy of special protection as key heritage areas. They are also areas where the prosperity, or lack of prosperity, of the people who live and work there can have a direct impact on their effective management. The Statement of Significance should identify those special qualities that justify its selection as a landscape of national, as well as local, significance. Management objectives should focus on the maintenance and enhancement of these qualities.
- 4.4.5** All the original management plans carried objectives and policies that referred to the AONB as a whole and also to specific features or

areas within the AONB. If it is to be implemented successfully, the plan may need to be translated into action on the ground in specific locations. The nature and wording of the plan's policies and actions need therefore to be chosen carefully to facilitate implementation in a spatial sense.

## 4.5 Management plan presentation

- 4.5.1** Management plans are public documents that have the combined purposes of describing the special qualities of the AONB, determining the direction of management and engaging with a network of partners and other stakeholders who, collectively, will participate in its implementation. To capture the attention and interest of this broad audience the plan must be both informative and inspirational, and carry its objectives in an easily assimilated form. Ideally it needs to be free of unnecessary jargon and written in plain English and its structure must be conducive to easy understanding. The inclusion of attractive and relevant photographs, quotes from participants and other mechanisms that help to 'bring the document alive' greatly helps its readability.
- 4.5.2** It is perhaps asking too much of one document to be wholly appropriate for all its audiences. Consideration could be given to producing a summary document containing the Statement of Significance, key objectives and policies and an outline of priority actions for wide distribution within the partnership, and also a short promotional document to capture the attention of the media and the general public. There may also be value in producing promotional documents for specific audiences, such as farmers, small businesses, or communities, with policies and actions that are relevant to their activities.
- 4.5.3** Increasingly, web-based documents are becoming a recognised means of delivering information and there is opportunity for partnerships and conservation boards to consider producing the revised plans in this way, perhaps in addition to a hard copy. Ideally, the plan should be produced for the web as an html document with installed hyperlinks, rather than as a pdf version of the hard copy, to aid navigation and to utilise the full capability of the web as a conveyor of information.

## 4.6 Performance monitoring

- 4.6.1** It will be important to monitor progress in delivering the actions and to be able to adjust the delivery programme as necessary. There will be inevitable slippage with some projects and actions, however well they are planned, and new issues may need to be addressed.
- 4.6.2** AONB units and conservation boards should establish formal mechanisms for monitoring progress in the delivery of their business plans and for reporting on progress through regular reports. These should make it easy for managers to track progress, for example through a "traffic light" approach indicating where action is on target or ahead, or is behind, or is seriously delayed or unachievable.
- 4.6.3** Partner organisations should be encouraged to provide similar reports, at least on an annual basis, to inform the roll forward of the programme.

# 5. The evidence base and monitoring

## Howardian Hills AONB Supplementary Technical Information Booklet

The Howardian Hills AONB produced a separate Technical Information Booklet which accompanies the management plan and provides supporting data and information.

### 5.1 The need for an evidence base

- 5.1.1** Wherever possible commentary, objectives and policies should be supported by evidence. This is necessary in order to substantiate arguments and give credibility to the plan and so ensure that the plan is accepted widely.
- 5.1.2** Data are needed to understand the nature of the AONB environment and the attributes which make the area special, how the environment is changing and the forces for change, and the nature and scale of activities and their impacts. Each theme in the plan should be supported by an evidence base. Priority issues identified for the AONB should always be supported and justified on the basis of good evidence. Funding organisations will also increasingly require evidence to support project applications.
- 5.1.3** The statistical base for the Countryside Quality Counts (CQC) programme can contribute to an evidence base for an AONB and is useful in itself for making comparisons between the AONB and the countryside around (see para 5.2.1.3). Partnerships and conservation boards will find, however, that more detailed information is required to assess the condition of their AONB, generate policy and monitor impacts of actions.
- 5.1.4** Appendix 2 provides a comprehensive list of data sources for AONB management plans. *Natural England* will explore the extent to which data can be provided centrally.

### 5.2 Monitoring

- 5.2.1** A system of monitoring is required to ensure that the management plan is delivering the desired outcomes and is “making a difference” on the ground. Monitoring should take two forms:
- **Condition monitoring** to establish whether the condition of the special features and attributes of the AONB is being maintained or is improving or is deteriorating;
  - **Performance monitoring** to establish how well the Partnership is performing in the delivery of the agreed actions in the Delivery Plan.
- 5.2.2** Monitoring is an essential function of AONB units and conservation boards. AONB management plan reviews need to be informed by an understanding of the effectiveness of the previous plan.
- Is the vision for the AONB being achieved? Are the policies in the plan effective? What changes should be made?

#### 5.2.1 Condition monitoring

- 5.2.1.1** The South West Protected Landscapes Forum has been developing a co-ordinated approach to protected landscapes condition monitoring with a common set of indicators. It is recommended that headline condition indicators be developed for use in all AONBs, with the discretion to add more local indicators. Appendix 3 provides a starting point for this work.

Common headline indicators would provide for a consistent approach to AONB condition monitoring, meeting national needs for information and enabling comparisons to be drawn between AONBs, and between AONBs and the wider countryside. Locally derived indicators would enable partnerships and boards to monitor the condition of features which were special to their areas.

5.2.1.2 Headline condition indicators should:

- be relevant to all or most AONBs;
- focus on the special qualities of AONBs which were the reasons for designation;
- be capable of indicating change;
- be directly influenced by actions by partnership members;
- be relatively few in number;
- be supported by robust data available at the AONB level; and
- relate closely to the plan's core policies.

5.2.1.3 Separately the Countryside Agency has been developing the Countryside Quality Counts Project (CQC) to help understand how the Character Areas of England are changing and what change means in terms of maintaining and enhancing local distinctiveness (see the CQC website for more information). The same data can be used both as input to the CQC process and for AONB condition monitoring. *Natural England* will advise AONB partnerships and conservation boards on the application of this data in individual AONBs and will make relevant data readily available.

5.2.1.4 *Natural England* will assemble and manage the data for the CQC Project, generating an indicator of countryside quality which will be able to show whether change in AONB landscapes over time is consistent with existing countryside character area descriptions, and how AONBs are changing in relation to the surrounding countryside.

5.2.1.6 Responsibility for condition monitoring should lie with the AONB unit or conservation board. However, to share the load and ownership of the information, the task should be developed, as far as possible, as a "shared task" with the organisation with greatest interest in the particular indicator taking the lead. As for the Evidence Base (para 5.1.4), *Natural England* will explore the extent to which data can be provided centrally for this wider task.

5.2.1.7 A phased programme of condition monitoring should be developed, spreading the burden of data collection and analysis over a number of years. It is recommended that the information gathered should be drawn together into a State of the AONB Report which is published separately. The information in the State of the AONB Report would then be used to inform the review of the management plan and subsequent reviews.

## **5.2.2 Performance monitoring**

5.2.2.1 Recommendations on performance monitoring are set out in Section 4.6 of this guidance.

## 6. Contexts

### Protected landscapes

An area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, 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 protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area

IUCN, 1994

- 6.1** Individual AONB management plans need to be set in a wider context. All AONBs are members of a family of AONBs: they are also part of a wider family of protected landscapes in England and Wales, alongside the National Parks. The significance of protected area status should be explained. Plans also need to reflect national environmental policies and concerns and in turn can help address such concerns: AONBs should be exemplars of good practice. In particular, AONBs should be seen as leaders in sustainable land management and the place to pioneer new approaches.

### AONBs as protected landscapes

- 6.2** Our AONBs have an international dimension and significance. They are recognised by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) as Category V Protected Landscapes. The IUCN Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA) has recommended that Protected Areas be guided by management plans with a strong emphasis on partnerships.
- 6.3** AONB management plans should briefly:
- explain the significance of the area as a protected landscape;
  - place the plan in the context of other AONBs and protected landscapes in the region;
  - place the plan in the context of the family of AONBs in England and Wales.

### National environmental policies and concerns

#### Demonstrating the principles of sustainable development

- 6.4** The Government has put sustainable development at the heart of policy. In March 2005, the UK Government, Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Administration agreed on a set of shared principles that provide a basis for sustainable development policy across the UK. For a policy to be sustainable it must respect five principles at the same time:
- living within environmental limits;
  - ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
  - achieving a sustainable economy;
  - using sound science responsibly; and
  - promoting good governance.
- 6.5** The challenge for AONB units and conservation boards is to demonstrate these principles in the planning and management of their areas. This means looking for solutions to issues which deliver benefits for the environment, community and economy together. Policies for AONB plans should always be developed with sustainable development principles in mind.
- 6.6** The AONB Sustainable Development Fund is designed to encourage innovative new approaches



## AONB Sustainable Development Fund

Introduced by Defra in 2005, the fund has been allocated through the Countryside Agency to all AONB units and conservation boards for a new grant scheme to support projects that bring social, environmental and economic benefits to the AONB. The emphasis is on developing innovative approaches and community groups are particularly encouraged to apply.

### Shared UK principles of sustainable development

#### Living Within Environmental Limits

Respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity – to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.

#### Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society

Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity for all.

#### Achieving a Sustainable Economy

Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (Polluter Pays), and efficient resource use is incentivised.

#### Using Sound Science Responsibly

Ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific evidence, whilst taking into account scientific uncertainty (through Precautionary Principle) as well as public attitudes and values.

#### Promoting Good Governance

Actively promoting effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society – engaging people's creativity, energy and diversity.

## Responding to climate change

- 6.7** Climate change could have a significant impact on characteristic AONB landscapes and the historic environment over time, for example as farmers and foresters adapt to altered weather patterns and different crops are grown.
- 6.8** Addressing climate change through actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to mitigate against climate change impacts is a Government priority. AONB management plan policies should be developed accordingly. Actions might include habitat creation to improve the resilience of habitats to climate change and to allow migration of species in response to climate change, the choice of species in woodland replanting and creation; coastal realignment projects; flood attenuation by slowing the passage of water through catchments; and support for sensitively designed small scale renewable energy initiatives.
- 6.9** Policies in the plan should be assessed for their impact on climate change as part of the SEA process.

## Water Framework Directive

- 6.10** "This Directive is the most substantial piece of water legislation from the EC to date. It requires all inland and coastal water bodies to reach at least "good status" by 2015. It will do this by establishing a river basin district structure within which demanding environmental objectives will be set, including ecological targets for surface waters. The Directive therefore sets a framework which should provide substantial benefits for the long term sustainable management of water." Defra
- 6.11** The aim of the Directive is to safeguard and improve water quality. It will do this through River Basin Management Plans which will develop the links between surface and groundwater, and water quantity and water quality. The Environment Agency is the lead agency for ensuring that that the Directive is implemented.
- 6.12** AONB management plans should recognise the importance of the water environment and articulate the steps that will be taken within the AONB to meet Water Framework Directive objectives, encouraging appropriate partnerships with the Environment Agency and action in priority catchments.

## Agri-environment and Woodland Management Delivery Programmes

- 6.13** The AONB landscape has been largely shaped by farming and woodland management activities over the generations. The new Environmental Stewardship scheme, with its Entry Level (ELS) and Higher Level (HLS) options, and the English Woodland Grant Scheme are the main incentive mechanisms to secure public benefits from land management. AONB management plans should recognise the importance of these grant programmes for achieving AONB objectives and should set out how the

partnership will secure maximum advantage from them. Plans should also recognise the continuing contributions of agreements made under the previous Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA), Countryside Stewardship (CS) and woodland grant programmes.

- 6.14** Landscape character area descriptions should assist in identifying which ELS options should be encouraged, how the HLS should be targeted, and priorities for woodland management and new creation.

### **Addressing Coastal Issues**

- 6.15** Management of the coast is receiving increasing attention as a national priority, in recognition of the importance of the coast for conservation and recreation, and increasing pressures upon the coast including sea level rise.
- 6.16** Reviewed management plans for AONBs with coastlines need to include specific material about the coast covering:
- the significance of the coastline in terms of its attributes and visitor attractions and use, and the implications of the AONB designation as a statutory landscape designation;
  - the role of the AONB partnership, which is well placed to take an holistic area-based view emphasising that the coast is not discrete from inland or marine areas but is part of a continuum;
  - how the AONB management plan can deliver for the coast, bringing all interests together and engaging with local communities, for example through Coastal Forums;
  - links with land defined as Heritage Coast. Most AONBs with coastlines include stretches of Heritage Coast;
  - the significance of the S85 duty of regard for relevant marine bodies such as harbour authorities.
  - AONB partnerships will also need to take into account any relevant provisions in the Marine Bill which is expected to introduce a streamlined system for planning and managing activities and consenting to developments in coastal and marine waters, extend the scope for protecting and restoring marine species and habitats, and generally update existing piecemeal marine environmental legislation.

## 7. Relationships with other strategies and plans

### Heritage Coasts

Heritage Coasts are a non-statutory landscape definition, defined by agreement between the relevant maritime local authorities and the Countryside Agency. Most are part of a National Park or AONB.

- 7.1** AONB management plans need to relate to other strategies and plans. Such strategies and plans may be at the regional level or more local. As statutory plans for nationally designated protected landscapes, AONB management plans should act as the overarching plan for the area, with relevant policies in other plans and strategies in alignment.
- 7.2** Involvement of a wide range of organisations is vital for the successful drafting of AONB management plans and to their delivery, and to the achievement of AONB purposes more widely. A successful plan will have been informed by a wide range of other strategies and plans which affect the area at all levels from Regional Spatial Strategies (see below) to community strategies and parish plans, and in turn will influence other strategies and plans, so helping to ensure that AONB purposes are achieved through partnerships. The relationship must be two-way, providing the opportunity to pursue shared agendas and ensuring that the management plan is viewed as part of the 'strategic infrastructure'.

### North Pennines

#### Influencing the Local, Regional and National Agenda

Placing the AONB higher on the agenda of local, regional and national organisations is one of the primary roles of the AONB Partnership. If the AONB partnership is to have long-term benefit, all those organisations and institutions which affect it must be aware of its qualities, its needs and the role they can play in its conservation and enhancement.

Further paragraphs explain the detail

#### Policies

Local authorities, strategic partnerships and LSPs covering the AONB should consider its conservation and enhancement in all policy making and action.

RDAs should promote the AONB as a testbed for rural revival and support new initiatives which complement the purpose of AONB designation

All bodies with Section 85 duties under the CRoW Act 2000 should be encouraged and supported to fulfil their obligations.

- 7.3** A critical element of the review process should be to assess critically the policies of the management plan against those of

other relevant strategies and plans and to consider how AONB objectives and policies can be 'tailored' to fit with them. It is important that this should in no way compromise the integrity of your plan; it is simply a means of developing a better 'fit' between the management plan and other strategic documents. It might be helpful to develop a matrix that would show the degree of 'match' between AONB management plan policies and the policies of other key strategies and plans, and to use this in conjunction with the Review Template shown in Table 1. The aim is to find 'hooks' in these other plans which might influence the way the management plan policies could be better expressed to aid their delivery by partners.

- 7.4** The importance of links with other plans has been emphasised with the introduction of Section 85 the "duty of regard."

#### **Duties on relevant authorities to have regard to the purpose of AONBs – CRoW Act, Section 85**

S85 (1) In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.

- (2) The following are relevant authorities for the purposes of this section –
- (a) any Minister of the Crown
  - (b) any public body
  - (c) any statutory undertaker
  - (d) any person holding public office.

- 7.5** Guidance issued by Defra (2005) makes it clear that "relevant authorities are expected to be able to demonstrate that they have fulfilled these duties" and "should be able to clearly show how they have considered the purposes of these areas in their decision making". Defra also suggests that "... AONB Management Plans provide a useful mechanism for those managing these areas to secure the active involvement of relevant authorities in plan implementation." If the AONB management plan is acting as the pre-eminent document setting policy for the area it should provide the framework for relevant authorities to carry out their duties under Section 85. Critical elements to aid this process include ensuring that the policies in the management plan are clear and robust and encouraging all partners to adopt appropriate policies in their own plans. The formal adoption of the management plan by partners, and the annual monitoring of achievements, are opportunities to raise awareness of the duty of regard and to celebrate how partners and other stakeholders as 'relevant authorities' are fulfilling their duties.
- 7.6** Using the South West as an example, the following is a list of other strategies and plans where two ways links with AONB management plans should be forged where possible.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) – SW Regional Assembly  
 Regional Economic Strategy (RES) – SW RDA  
 Regional Rural Delivery Framework - GOSW/Defra  
 Regional Environmental Strategy – SW Regional Assembly  
 South West Biodiversity Implementation Programme – BIP Partnership  
 Historic Environment Strategy – English Heritage  
 Regional Cultural Strategy – Culture SW  
 Renewable Energy Strategy – REGEN SW  
 Regional Sport Strategy – Sport England SW  
 South West Tourism Strategy – SW Tourism  
 Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food – SW CoRE  
 Regional Woodland and Forestry Framework – Forestry Commission SW  
 Warming to the Idea – SW Climate Change Impacts Partnership  
 Environment Agency plans (but see above re Water Framework Directive)  
 ERDP (2008 +) including LEADER programmes – RDA and *Natural England*  
 Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) – District Councils and Unitary Authorities  
 Local Transport Plans (LTPs)  
 Community Strategies  
 Parish Plans  
 This is not a definitive list.

## Development Plans

- 7.7** The Government’s Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS 7): Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004) reaffirms that AONBs, alongside National Parks, have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty, and that “the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside should therefore be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions in these areas.”
- 7.8** Appropriate development plan policies and effective development control are fundamental to achieving AONB purposes. AONB management plans should therefore articulate appropriate development principles, with the aim that these principles should be reflected in the statutory plans of the regional assemblies and local authorities which will guide development control decisions.
- 7.9** The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a new two tier system of planning. Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) produced by Regional Assemblies and approved by Government replace Regional Planning Guidance. Their purpose is to provide a regional framework, indicating broad locations for growth and development and policy guidance on a wide range of issues, including the environment. Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) will replace the system of Structure Plans, Minerals and Waste Plans, Unitary Development Plans and Local Plans and will be prepared by local planning authorities. Local Development Documents (LDDs) will articulate detailed policies

and proposals and provide the basis for development control. LDDs must be in conformity with the RSS.

- 7.10** Both tiers of plans are required to take a spatial planning approach, going beyond land use planning. The approach requires the integration of policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function. Such policies and programmes would include those contained in AONB management plans.
- 7.11** AONB Units and Conservation Boards, individually and working jointly with other AONBs, should seek to influence the development of Regional Spatial Strategies to ensure that AONB interests are fully reflected.
- 7.12** At the local level, it is recommended that AONB units and conservation boards develop a planning protocol with the local planning authorities in their area to ensure a consistent approach to planning and development control across the AONB. Such protocols should provide the framework for the AONB unit's or conservation board's input to planning policy development and the provision of advice and guidance, and set out arrangements for consultation on planning applications which would have a significant impact on the AONB. Through such protocols joint working between local planning authorities on their LDFs should be encouraged.

## Cotswolds AONB

### Planning Protocol

The Cotswolds AONB Conservation Board has agreed a planning protocol with all the local planning authorities in the AONB. This sets out the respective roles and responsibilities of the Board and the planning authorities and covers:

- Background to planning within the Cotswolds AONB
- Planning context
- Working in partnership
- Planning responsibilities
- The Basis for the Board's involvement in planning matters with sections on:
  - Planning policy
  - Tools and guidance
  - Development control

## Joint working on Local Development Documents

“Joint working on LDDs is also encouraged for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which cross administrative boundaries. In drafting LDDs local planning authorities should have regard to statutory .....Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans, and positive land management policies should be developed to sustain and enhance the area’s landscape quality.”

Draft South West Regional Spatial Strategy, January 2006

- 7.13** AONB units and conservation boards should encourage their planning authority partners to adopt the management plan or relevant sections as a document within their Local Development Frameworks to reflect the importance of the AONB under the new planning system. However, the AONB unit or conservation board would need to satisfy local planning authority requirements for public consultation as set out in the authorities’ Statements of Community Involvement. This would need to be done at the beginning of the management plan review process.

### Chilterns AONB

#### Chilterns Buildings Design Guide

Comprehensive design guidance has been produced in partnership with district councils and adopted by them as Supplementary Planning Guidance.



## **Inter-AONB cooperation**

- 7.14** At the regional level AONB teams should strengthen arrangements for joint working between AONBs to help ensure that AONB interests are properly reflected in other documents. Under the new planning system there will be a need to identify common management threads for protected landscapes that can be expressed coherently in Regional Spatial Strategies and also in cases where two or more protected landscapes fall within the area of a single LDF. There may be opportunities through this joint working to prepare a suite of policies that can be replicated or adapted easily for each AONB and which will illustrate a strong cohesion between the areas. This similarity of approach will help to express a commonality in the challenges facing protected landscape managers and may help to strengthen the case for support from regional and national funding bodies.
- 7.15** In the South West, the South West Protected Landscapes Forum provides a valuable coordination role and is well-placed to promote common approaches. Similar mechanisms need to be explored in other regions.

## 8. Terminology

- 8.1** In the first round of CRow Act AONB management plans there was no common approach to terminology, with different terms being used for similar purposes. A more consistent approach to terminology would help to present individual AONB management plans in the context of a family of AONBs with similar purposes. An approach based around ambitions for the AONB (statements about visions and objectives) and delivering the ambitions (through policies and actions) is recommended.
- 8.2** AONB management plans need to set out:
- ambitions for the AONB through a long term Vision Statement (a 20 year horizon is suggested) and theme visions, together with objectives for the life of the plan; and
  - policies and associated actions to deliver the ambitions.

### Ambitions for the AONB

**Vision (long term).** An aspirational statement setting out what the AONB should be like in (say) 20 years time – **‘This is where we want to be’**

- 8.3** All reviewed plans should contain an aspirational vision statement. This should be drawn from, and developed from, the Statement of Significance for the AONB. It is recommended that this vision statement is supported by more detailed statements on elements of the vision. These would become theme visions.

**Objectives.** Goals to be aimed for if the long term vision for the AONB is to be met –

**‘This is what we want to achieve’**

- 8.4** Each theme vision statement should be supported by a set of objectives, eg all SSSIs in the AONB are in favourable condition by 2010. Objectives should be specific and, ideally they should be ‘SMART’, ie:
- Specific
  - Measurable
  - Achievable
  - Relevant
  - Time-related

It is inevitable, however, due to the nature of landownership in AONBs, that some objectives will be ‘qualitative’ and ongoing rather than specific and with a measurable, tangible output.

- 8.5** **The Vision, Theme Visions, and Objectives should all be expressed as outcomes**, ie what will have been achieved if the vision and objectives have been met.

### Policies and Associated Actions

**Policies.** Policies are the means by which to achieve the objectives – **‘This is how we will get things done’**

- 8.6** Policies should be relevant for the life of the plan. Continuing with the biodiversity theme, an example might be “to encourage the targeting of Higher Level Stewardship to achieve biodiversity objectives.”

**Actions.** Actions are specific tasks to deliver the policies – **‘These are the things we want to do’**

**8.7** An example of an action would be to “Identify priority areas for establishing arable field margins.” In many cases actions and tasks are likely to be short term and time limited. They should be included in the Delivery Plan which will need to be updated annually.

### Further examples of objectives, policies and actions, adapted from material in current management plans

#### Objectives (SMART)

By 2012, targets for the creation of BAP priority habitats have been met.

By 2010, 80% of landowners within the AONB have entered into Entry Level Stewardship.

By 2010 the rights of way network is fully accessible, well maintained and way-marked and free from obstructions.

50% of ancient and semi-natural woodland is under sympathetic management by 2015 under agreements with the Forestry Commission.

#### Policies

Ensure that implementation of Environmental Stewardship serves to conserve and enhance the special features of the AONB.

Encourage all woodland owners to manage their woodlands in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard.

Raise awareness of the importance and special qualities of the AONB.

Improve the rights of way network to the highest standards recognising the importance of the area for recreation.

Ensure that new buildings and structures are of a high standard of design and reflect local character and distinctiveness.

#### Actions (to be presented in the Delivery Plan, supported by information on timing, targets, lead and other partners, and success criteria)

Provide advice to *Natural England* on the targeting of the Higher Level Environmental Stewardship scheme to ensure that targeting statements reflect the special character of the AONB.

Develop and launch a branding scheme for products from the AONB.

Produce an information leaflet on the conservation of historic features.

Prioritise improvements to access for the disabled during 2007.

Publish a free newspaper for visitors.

Work with local authorities to produce design guidance on affordable housing.

# Appendix 1

## Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal

### Interim advice

**A1.1** The European Directive 2001/42/EC, usually referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment, or SEA, Directive, requires that all plans and programmes whose implementation would have a significant effect on the environment must undergo assessment to ensure a high level of environmental protection. The objective of the SEA Directive is ‘to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans...with a view to promoting sustainable development’.

**A1.2** The Directive defines ‘environmental assessment’ as a procedure that comprises:

- preparing an Environmental Report on the likely significant effects of the draft plan or programme;
- carrying out consultation on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying Environmental

Report;

- taking into account the Environmental Report and the results of the consultation in decision making;

and

- providing information when the plan or programme is adopted and showing how the results of the environmental assessment have been taken into account.

**A1.3** The key document that advises on the application of the SEA Directive is ‘A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’ available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The guide helps to define which plans and programmes are likely to be subject to the SEA Directive, namely those which are prepared by an authority through a legislative procedure or required through legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions. An indicative list of candidate plans and programmes includes AONB management plans.

**A1.4** The SEA Directive applies to plans and programmes whose preparation began on or after 21 July 2004. Although an Amendments Report, as required under the CRoW Act, is not necessarily subject to the SEA process it would demonstrate good practice to partners and stakeholders for the SEA to be built into the review process. Any revised plans that may be prepared as a result of the review would be subject to SEA.

**A1.5** Good practice in SEA recommends that the process for undertaking the assessment closely follows the process for the preparation of the plan itself, and should not be considered as a

separate activity. The majority of the stages recommended in the ODPM guidance will be, or will have been, undertaken anyway during the review of the AONB plans or during their original preparation. In addition, AONB management plans, like National Park management plans, are inherently environmental plans where objectives and actions should, by their very nature, have an environmentally beneficial impact. The time taken to undertake an SEA should not, therefore, add significantly to the task of reviewing the plans.

The key stages as recommended in the ODPM Guidance are:

**Stage A: setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope**

**Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects**

**Stage C: preparing the Environmental Report**

**Stage D: Consulting on the draft plan and the Environmental Report**

**Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan on the environment**

**A1.6** Sustainability Appraisal is a further development of SEA and builds on the strengths of the SEA process. It is very similar in its methodology but extends the appraisal to include social and economic criteria which are considered to be of equal concern to environmental criteria. This accords with the view that sustainable development has environmental, social and economic dimensions which should be seen as an integrated whole.

**A1.7** As with SEA, the Sustainability Appraisal is most effective if it uses objectives and targets that define sustainable development benchmarks against which a management plan's objectives and policies can be appraised.

**A1.8** Sustainability Appraisals are a requirement for all Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) and Local Development Documents (LDDs) under the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act of 2004. As yet, Sustainability Appraisal is not a requirement for AONB management plans, but as the plan is most likely to contain policies that have social and economic consequences AONB Partnerships, and in particular Conservation Boards (since they have an additional duty to further recreational interests), may wish to include social and economic objectives to operate alongside the environmental objectives of the SEA to form an integrated SEA/SA process.

**A1.9** Table 1 in the main body of the text integrates the SEA/SA stages into the review process so that the combined SEA/SA and management plan review tasks become a collective whole.

**A1.10** The detailed actions for each of the stages of the SEA and guidance on undertaking SA can be found in 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive', ODPM, 2005, and 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents', ODPM, 2005.

# Appendix 2

## Data sources for the evidence base

Table A General AONB profile – core resource information	
What type of data are needed?	Data source
<b>Key socio-economic information</b> Population Age structure Employment Incomes Household type Household structure Car ownership Ethnicity Number of people of working age Employment types	Census 2001
Extent of habitats – forest, grassland, moorland, wetlands Information on species	Natural Area Profiles, Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs)
Landscape character	Landscape Character Assessments
Type and extent of geological resources	Natural Area Profiles, Geodiversity Action Plans, Geological Conservation review, Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS)
Type and extent of woodlands and forests	Regional Woodland and Forestry Frameworks, National Woodland Inventory
Visual and sensory perceptions	Tranquillity Areas Maps (CPRE/Countryside Commission 1995)
Condition and trends of environmental resources – air, soil and water	Environment Agency, Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, Nitrate Sensitive Areas, Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies, River Basin Management Plans
Type and location of archaeological features and historic landscapes	Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Historic designed landscapes, Historic Landscape Characterisation, Battlefield sites
Type and location of built heritage features Information on settlement patterns	Conservation Area Statements, Listed Buildings Registers
Nature and location of informal recreation facilities and public access opportunities	ROW maps and records, ROW strategies, recreational route strategies, access land maps, physical and intellectual access studies
Culture, traditions	Museums, archives

Tables B and C summarise other economic and social information that may need to be sourced, particularly in regard to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development and in meeting the demand for recreation (as specified in the purpose of designation).

<b>Table B</b>	
<b>Economic profile data sources – for further information see CA Guidance ‘Toolkit’</b>	
<b>What type of data are needed?</b>	<b>Data source</b>
House prices	Land registry
Number of second homes Number of holiday homes	Census 2001, Council Tax Authority
Number of rooms per household	Census 2001
Income levels – household income	CACI Paycheck
Housing affordability	Assessment derived from Incomes (CACI Paycheck) and House prices (Land Registry)
Social deprivation	Index of Multiple Deprivation
No of people employed and industry type	Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR), Annual Business Inquiry (ABI), Census 2001
No of people in agricultural employment	Defra Annual Census
Social households as a % of all households	Census 2001
Business activity – number, type, etc	ABI
Other business activity	ABI, IDBR
Value of the agricultural economy, including forestry	Can be estimated from Defra Annual Census
Uptake of agri-environment schemes	Natural England custom data supply
Value of the rural economy	‘State of the Countryside’ reports
Value of tourism	Turnover of sector from IDBR
Business support grants	DTI Business Link, Chambers of Commerce
Themed data – minerals, horses, specific industries as indicators	Commissioned studies UK Day Visits Survey
Number of visitors	Bespoke surveys
Visitor spend	Bespoke surveys
Number of planning applications/ listed building consent applications	Planning authorities

**Table C**  
**Social profile data sources – for further information see CA Guidance ‘Toolkit’**

<b>What type of data are needed?</b>	<b>Data source</b>
Access to public services	CA Rural Services Survey CA State of the Countryside data
Public transport provision - % population served by a bus service	Transport providers/planners
Transport use	Census 2001
Change in traffic flows	Highway authority Local Transport Plans
No of post offices, local shops, schools, etc Average distance travelled to local services	CA Rural Services Survey
Number of planning applications and permissions granted Cases of unauthorised development	Local planning authorities
% of homes built on previously developed land	LUCS (Land Use Change Statistics) custom supply

Relevant data may also found in Regional Rural Development Frameworks (RRDFs)



# Appendix 3

## Provisional common headline condition indicators, for further development

Attribute	Indicator	Data source/comment
Farmed landscape	% of land managed under existing agri-environment schemes (ESA, CS)	Natural England
	% of land managed under Higher Level Stewardship (HLS)	Natural England
	% of land managed under Entry Level Stewardship (ELS)	Natural England
	changes in farmland type (permanent pasture/rough grazings/arable land etc)	Defra (June census) – for impact on landscape character
Woodland landscape	% of woodland under management for public benefit	Forestry Commission
Biodiversity	SSSI condition	Natural England
	Delivery of BAP habitat targets for AONB	Natural England
Historic and built environment	Condition of SAMs	English Heritage
	Condition of historic landscapes, parks and gardens	English Heritage, local authorities
	Listed (and other significant) buildings at risk	English Heritage, local authorities
Water quality (rivers)	Length of rivers (%) of good or fair chemical quality	Environment Agency
Tranquillity	% of AONB recorded as “tranquil”	CPRE
Dark skies	% of AONB affected by light pollution	CPRE
Enjoying the countryside	% PRoW in good condition	Highway authorities

Locally derived condition indicators might include:

- % change in locally distinctive field boundaries, eg walls and hedges (extent and condition)
- Changes in key views (from fixed point time series photography)
- Delivery of BAP species targets (selective)
- Water quality (bathing water beaches)

# Appendix 4

The development of the text for this guidance was assisted by the following participants:

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