



Securing biodiversity and ecosystems in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

A National Accord between THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AONBs and THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS

This accord focuses on our shared objectives and setting out collaborative ways of working to ensure we make the most of resources and opportunities for taking forward an ecosystem approach to landscape and biodiversity management.

CONTEXT

1. The new environmental framework emerging from government through the UK National Ecosystem Assessment, Natural Environment White Paper and Biodiversity Strategy in England and the Natural Environment Framework in Wales.
2. The push for greater localism and the need to strongly engage local communities in understanding and managing the goods and services flowing from their environmental assets.
3. The current IUCN Category V debate as to whether UK protected landscapes are giving sufficient priority to wildlife conservation.
4. Tight financial settlements demand smarter working and greater collaboration between environmental partners.
5. A joint statement on Ecological Recovery in Protected Landscapes was developed and signed by national partners July 2011.

www.cnp.org.uk/sites/default/files/Thinkbiginprotectedlandscapes.pdf

AONB FAMILY HEADLINE OBJECTIVES:

1. Conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, ensuring they can meet the challenges of the future
2. Support the economic and social well-being of local communities in ways which contribute to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty
3. Promote public understanding and enjoyment of the nature and culture of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and encourage people to take action for their conservation
4. Value, sustain, and promote the benefits that the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty provide for society, including clean air and water, food, carbon storage and other services vital to the nation's health and well-being.

THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS:

Mission is to create *Living Landscapes* and secure *Living Seas*.

Objectives are to:

Demonstrate how nature works

Inspire people and communities to value and take action for nature

Champion nature and our work.

Our two organisations share core objectives to restore ecological networks and promote public understanding and enjoyment of a healthy natural environment. Both sets of organisations also provide well-established and respected mechanisms for localism to operate in practice.

This national accord between the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) and The Wildlife Trusts (TWT) will help:

Our organisations adjust to the new national framework for environmental action / delivery

Set out clearly our shared objectives

Present a strong case for collaboration and how we go forward with building partnerships for doing bigger/better and more joined up

Set out how we will collectively approach the opportunities to strengthen natural environment delivery presented by the Lawton Review (Making Space for Nature) and the Natural Environment White Paper commitments including Local Nature Partnerships and Nature Improvement Areas.

WAYS OF WORKING:

- To be inclusive, collaborative and have a culture of no surprises
- Integrated strategy and delivery
- Presumption that WTs are eligible to be members of AONB partnerships¹.
- Presumption WTs are engaged in AONB Management Plan development and delivery.
- Presumption that large scale / Living Landscape initiatives are jointly discussed and progressed as part of AONB Management plan delivery.

APPROACH TO LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIPS (LNPS):

- Presumption that WTs and AONB partnerships will discuss LNP proposals at earliest possible stage – whether AONB focussed, County-wide LNPs or bigger
- Where LNP territories focus on AONBs, the existing AONB Partnerships should be the start point for establishing and supporting the LNP
- Where LNP territories extend beyond AONBs, AONB partnerships and Wildlife Trusts should work together to identify and promote the best arrangements for establishing and supporting the LNP.

APPROACH TO NATURE IMPROVEMENT AREAS (NIAS):

- Presumption that WTs and AONB partnerships will discuss NIA proposals at earliest possible stage (where NIAs include an AONB)
- Agree that we should not be constrained in our ambitions to see NIAs (or similar) extend across England, inside and outside AONBs
- Agree that our ambitions to see NIAs (or similar) extend across England are not constrained by the Defra funded NIA pilot programme
- Agree that NIAs need delivery partnerships and that where ecological territories include AONBs the best arrangements for these will involve both AONB partnerships and WTs working together and sharing resources.

SKILLS AND RESOURCE SHARING:

- Agree that both sets of organisations have complementary expertise and resources that should be exchanged via local agreement. Formalising this practice will improve effectiveness and provide a platform for interaction and relationship development
- Examples include creation of ecological networks; AONB management planning; valuation of ecosystem services; people / community engagement; habitat / species monitoring and surveying; support and promotion of sustainable production / consumption.

¹The term partnership includes Joint Advisory Committees, Joint Committees, and Conservation Boards

COMMUNICATION:

- Agree that our respective visions for people, wildlife and the natural environment in protected landscapes are communicated in a manner that reflects this accord – i.e. explicitly promoting our joint and complementary contributions – rather than promoting our individual ‘brands’
- Exploit the fact that stakeholders and beneficiaries will naturally perceive ‘Living Landscapes’ and ‘Landscapes for Life’ as one and the same
- Do all we can to ensure external perception of AONB partnerships and WTs is as collaborators rather than competitors
- Communicate the outcomes of, and review, this accord annually.

Signed:

For The National Association for AONBs: _____

Peter Stevens, Chairman

For The Wildlife Trusts: _____

René Olivieri, Chairman

Dated _____