

Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2009 - 2014

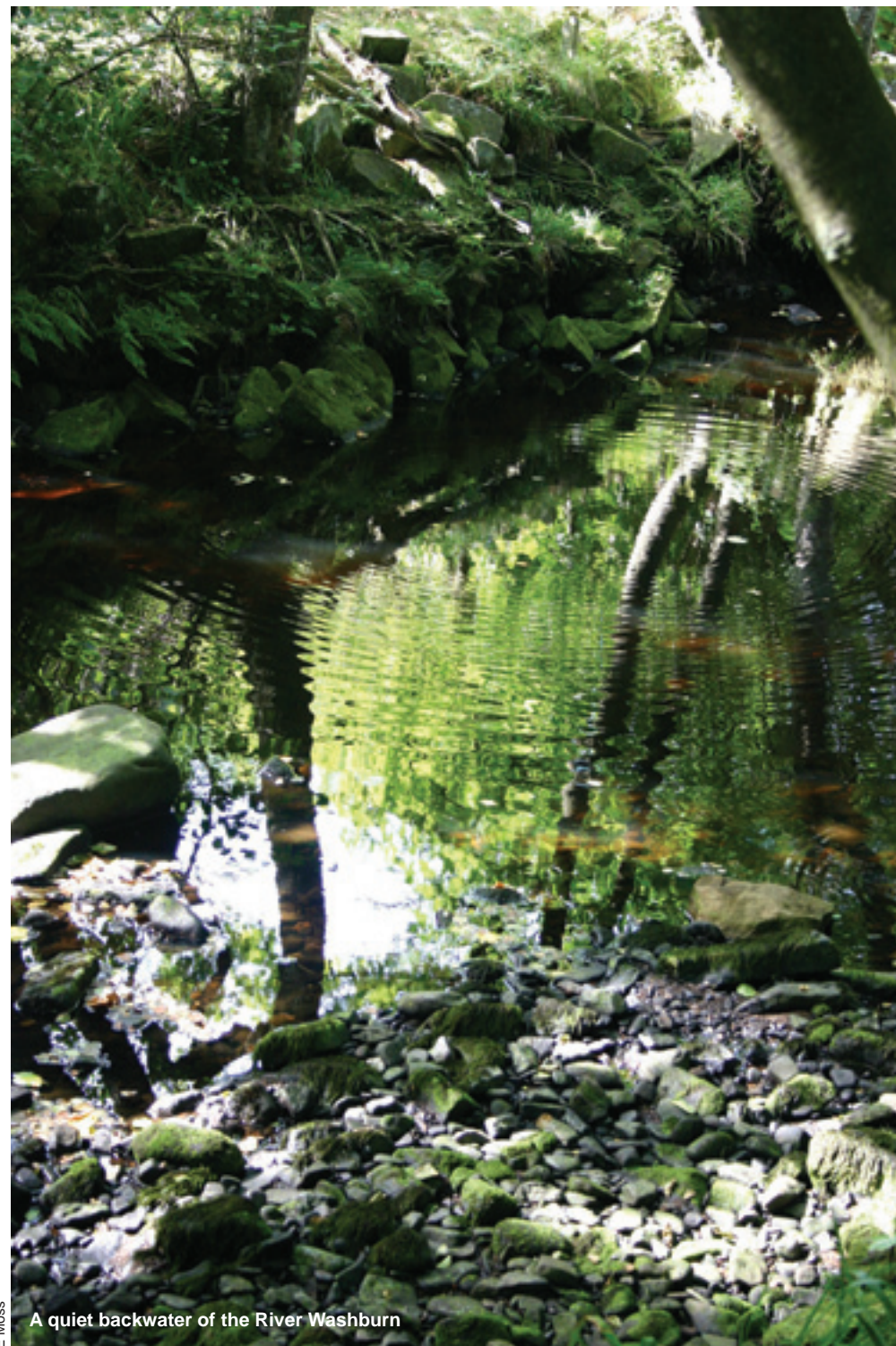
Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Stephen Huxley

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Part 1

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SETTING THE SCENE

A tranquil scene: Gouthwaite reservoir, a man-made water body now enjoying SSSI status for its waterfowl value.

Management Plan: Introduction

This is the second statutory five year Management Plan for the AONB and follows on from the 2004 - 2009 Plan and the 1999 - 2004 AONB Management Strategy. This new Plan, for the period 2009 - 2014, comprises three parts:

- Part 1 sets the Nidderdale AONB in context geographically, environmentally and politically,
- Part 2 contains the Strategy that identifies some common themes, sets out a vision for the AONB in 2020 and includes policies that explain what the AONB stands for,
- Part 3 includes an Action Plan which defines a set of measurable actions capable of being implemented over the five-year life of the Plan.

A separate report, called 'Evidence base to the Nidderdale AONB Management Plan', accompanies the Management Plan.

Management Plan: Purpose

The preparation of AONB Management Plans is a statutory requirement. Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 imposes a duty on local authorities to 'prepare and publish a plan which formulates their policy for the management of the area of outstanding natural beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it'.

This Management Plan is a spatial strategy that addresses the need to manage change in the interests of maintaining natural beauty across a wide range of issues; the scope of the Plan is not constrained by the roles and responsibilities of individual organisations and presents an integrated vision for the future of the AONB. Its purpose is to provide a framework for action by everyone with an interest in the AONB including landowners and managers, rural communities, local authorities, third sector organisations and Government agencies.

Management Plan: Process

The preparation of the Plan has been guided by a Management Plan Review Working Party convened by the Joint Advisory Committee. Policy and Action Plan development was carried

out in conjunction with the AONB's local authority and Government agency partners. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of policies and actions in the Management Plan was carried out in accordance with the European Union's (EU) Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report was also produced to comply with the provisions of the EU's Habitats Directive.

The consultation draft of the Management Plan (and the accompanying SEA and AA Screening Report) was launched at the AONB's 2008 Annual Conference. Consultation involved a wide spectrum of individuals and organisations including Friends of Nidderdale AONB and a focus group created by the local authority.

A revised draft of the Plan was endorsed by the AONB's Joint Advisory Committee, before formal approval by the local authorities and by Natural England in April 2009.



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Pateley Bridge is the main urban settlement in Nidderdale AONB.

AONB Designation

There are 41 AONBs in England and Wales. Their boundaries were originally drawn in the 1940s when local authorities were given powers to administer AONBs by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act in 1949.

The primary purpose of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. The 1949 Act includes the following definition: *'References in this Act to the preservation, or conservation of the natural beauty of an area shall be construed as including references to the preservation or, as the case may be, the conservation of its flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features'*.

The policy statement on AONBs produced by the Countryside Agency in 2001 acknowledges the importance of people in creating and maintaining landscapes: *'The natural beauty of AONBs is partly due to nature, and is partly the product of many centuries of human modification of 'natural' features. Landscape encompasses everything - 'natural' and human - that makes an area distinctive: geology, climate, soil, plants, animals, communities, archaeology, buildings, the people who live in it, past and present, and the perceptions of those who visit it.'*

The policy statement sets out the aims of AONB designation: *'In pursuing the primary purpose 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*



Looking East from Kex Gill Moor with Fewston Reservoir in the valley bottom.

J. Houlbecki (HBC)

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."

The landscapes and scenic qualities of AONBs share the highest level of protection with National Parks; the Countryside and Rights of Way Act of 2000 imposes a duty of care on all organisations whose activities have an impact on AONBs to maintain natural beauty. Section 85 of the Act states that: *'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'*.

Other clauses in the Act enable the creation of Conservation Boards for AONBs, and impose an obligation on local authorities (or AONB Conservation Boards) to prepare and review management plans for AONBs. The Act has had the effect of significantly raising the profile and status of AONBs.

The Nidderdale AONB & the Yorkshire Dales National Park

The AONB's western boundary adjoins the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Both protected areas share key landscape characteristics; they

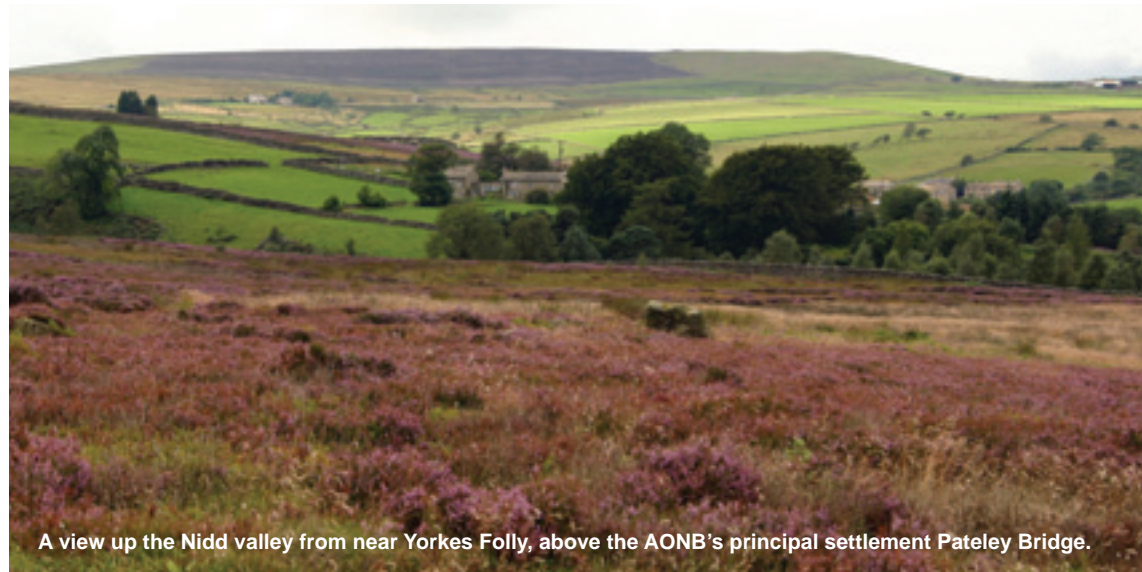
face similar issues that present similar challenges and both organisations are working together on a broad front including the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (awarded to the National Park and the AONB in 2008); community development through the Yorkshire Dales Leader partnership; and on specific biodiversity and on access projects. A close alliance with the National Park Authority, and those living and working in the National Park, is helping to strengthen the conservation effort in the AONB.

The Nidderdale AONB & other protected landscapes

AONBs and National Parks in the UK are part of a global network of protected landscapes defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources [IUCN]. Called 'Category V landscapes', their distinctive ecological and cultural characteristics are the result of the interaction between people and nature.

All 'Category V' landscapes including AONBs and National Parks in the UK provide opportunities for public enjoyment through recreation and tourism. There is usually a mixture of private and public landownership, and management activities are typically subject to some degree of planning control and supported by publicly funded financial incentives such as agri-environment schemes.

Many European 'Category V' landscapes, including the Nidderdale AONB are members



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of the Federation of Natural and Nature Parks of Europe (Europarc). The Atlantic Isles section has a membership of over 60 organisations in the UK, Ireland and Iceland. It exists to co-ordinate training and exchange of best practice in the management of protected landscapes across Europe.

Local Government & the AONB

Local authorities are responsible for the management of the Nidderdale AONB. It is wholly within the area administered by North Yorkshire County Council and the majority of the AONB falls within Harrogate District. A small area of land to the north of the AONB is within Richmondshire

and Hambleton Districts. The Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber is responsible for regional delivery of national government policies and programmes affecting the AONB.

Nidderdale AONB policy and its programmes of conservation work are overseen by a Joint Advisory Committee. The Committee is striving to be the guardian of this nationally important landscape; it provides a link between regional outposts of government agencies, the local authorities and the local community to ensure that environmental and other policies followed by other organisations complement the objectives of AONB designation. The Joint Advisory Committee also oversees the work of an AONB team. The team is funded mainly by Natural England with support from local authorities particularly North Yorkshire County and Harrogate Borough Councils.

The Joint Advisory Committee & the AONB Team

Development of AONB policy and implementation of the annual programme of conservation work is overseen by the AONB's Joint Advisory Committee. Members are drawn from a wide variety of organisations whose work has an impact on the AONB. The AONB Team is responsible for the Management Plan and Action Plan delivery in conjunction with the AONB's partners.

The AONB's special qualities

The AONB's landscape is diverse and contrasting. The scenery to the west is dominated by heather moors that contain some of the most famous grouse shoots in the country. The AONB's moorlands also provide endless opportunities for enjoying the countryside.

To the east, as the landscape broadens and flattens, is a softer more pastoral landscape with historic parks and gardens, like Fountains Abbey, and great country houses such as Swinton Castle.

The AONB's geographical characteristics have been strongly influenced by past generations: the remains of nineteenth century mines and quarries, and the dams and reservoirs constructed by the water industry, are still prominent in the landscape. Earlier phases of activity define the form of settlements, transport routes and

field patterns - the historic environment is a key feature of natural beauty. The following account summarises special qualities under three headings: landscape, natural environment and cultural heritage:

Landscape

A report called 'The Nidderdale Landscape' published in 1991, prior to confirmation of AONB designation in 1994, identified a unique combination of landscape features that are perceived as valuable by people and which together constitute the AONB's special qualities.

Gritstone geology underlies most of the AONB's moorland plateau and outcrops in places to form crags that overlook the river valleys and striking weathered tors in places like Brimham. Gritstone is also widely used as a building material and in drystone walls throughout the AONB and this creates an overall appearance of unity and harmony in the landscape. The moorland plateau is characterised by an exhilarating feeling of openness, elevation and exposure; most of this landscape is accessible to walkers.

Farming is the dominant feature of the grassland plateau that occurs to the east of the heather moorland where farmsteads, often associated with small broadleaved woodlands, are distributed across a landscape that is dominated by the strong and regular grid pattern formed by drystone walls.

The transition between the upland plateau and the gently rolling landscapes that merge with the Vale of York, and the change of scene between the moorland plateau and the enclosed valleys, creates a landscape that is full of dramatic contrasts. The dale and valley landscapes are

enclosed and pastoral with meadows, woodlands, stone villages and parklands. They are enlivened by water - in rivers and streams and in the the AONB's 11 reservoirs with their elaborately constructed dams, spillways, reservoir lodges and aqueducts that date from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Natural environment

Most of the AONB's moorlands are internationally important for their flora and fauna; they are designated as Special Areas of Conservation and form part of the North Pennines Special Protection Area. Diverse and often species-rich mosaics of dwarf shrub vegetation interspersed with native broadleaved woodland in gills on the edges of the moors dominate the scenery, turning the moors purple in August. They support strategically important populations of birds including merlin, golden plover and redshank along with regionally important concentrations of other species such as curlew and lapwing that breed in the meadows and pastures grazed by cattle and sheep and whose calls in spring fill the landscape. Reptiles including adder, slow worm and common lizard occur here too.

There are still pockets of flower-rich meadows on the grassland plateau alongside areas that have been improved to produce silage. Species-rich examples also occur in areas formerly given over to lead mining where characteristic plants like spring sandwort and mountain pansy thrive.

Ancient broadleaved woodlands dominated by oak and carpeted with bluebells in spring clothe the sides of the valleys while alder forms extensive areas of wet woodland alongside rivers and streams. Otters and water voles are regularly recorded here and river lampreys are widespread.

Cultural heritage

The Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site is the most renowned representative of an extensive network of designed landscapes including Hackfall, a string of parklands overlooking the Wharfe in the south of the AONB and many non-designated gardens, orchards and parks that have been identified and recorded in recent years.

The AONB's 14 Conservation Area villages contain many Listed Buildings, many associated with the area's industrial past that was dominated by mining, quarrying and textiles. The development of the water industry in the nineteenth century has left a legacy of huge and imposing gritstone reservoir dams in an upland setting where numerous field barns and farmsteads combine to form a characteristic scene.

Features of the moorland landscape associated with grouse shooting, such as shooting lodges and butts, trackways and stone gateposts are also important components of cultural heritage.

Forces for change

The special qualities of the AONB are the product of management by successive generations; this has always been a dynamic process and the landscape is continuing to evolve. Change can have a positive impact on special qualities but only if their significance and interrelationships are properly understood. The AONB's sense of place and the inspirational qualities of the landscape are very fragile and can be easily damaged or destroyed altogether. Part 2 of this document identifies some of the specific issues that threaten

to undermine the AONB's special qualities. Major threats include the following:

- Pressure for new residential development, conversion of older buildings, highway improvements and tourism development are already changing the face of the AONB in places. Many of these changes are relatively small-scale but their cumulative effect is significant. The AONB is defined by the values people attach to being in a landscape that is tranquil and a counterpart to the busier places outside the boundary of the designated area; a place where moorlands, birds, woodlands and wide open horizons are the dominant feature and where elements of the historic environment enrich the present-day landscape.
- Large-scale development within the designated area has been restricted by planning control but development like the Knabs Ridge Wind Farm just outside the boundary to the west of Harrogate intrude into the AONB and make it more difficult for people to 'get away from it all'.
- Knabs Ridge Wind Farm is so far the most prominent consequence of climate change but there are other smaller-scale consequences including work to raise the height of reservoir dams and construction of new flood defences on the river Laver. These are symptoms of climate change impacts that will become widespread in years to come. The consequences for AONB special qualities are uncertain but work to mitigate adverse change, including creation of new ecological networks, is vital.
- Farming is the life-blood of the AONB: together with management of moorland estates for shooting, farming can rightly



Walkers in the Washburn Valley.

E Moss

claim to have created one of England's finest landscapes. Day to day decisions made by farming families and others connected with the management of farmland and moorland landscapes are fundamental in shaping the AONB. Such decisions are complex and influenced by a wide variety of considerations from commodity prices to input costs and rural policy. The future will be dominated by decisions made by people and organisations a long way from Nidderdale but their effects will be felt locally and this will have a lasting impact on the landscape.

- Changing patterns of employment, with increasing levels of commuting, limited job opportunities and a decline in the economic importance of agriculture to the rural economy have changed the face of the AONB. Rural services are declining in many areas and housing has become less and less affordable, contributing to a downward spiral in which local businesses and services suffer from shortages of both labour and customers as people travel more and over longer distances to adjoining service centres.

Other policies & strategies

These forces for change are widely understood and are reflected in policies that are contained in national and international conventions and legislation as well as in regional, sub-regional and local strategies. Policies in the AONB Management Plan are consistent with these

strategies: the Management Plan is designed to add value to them by creating a local delivery framework.

A detailed assessment of relevant legislation and policy is contained in the Strategic Environmental Assessment of policy impacts but the policy context of the AONB Management Plan is dominated by the following:

International

European legislation adopted by the UK Parliament on the protection of biodiversity includes Habitats and Birds Directives that confer internationally important conservation status on the AONB's moorlands. Along with the international Convention on Biodiversity, the Water Framework Directive and the European Landscape Convention, they constitute an international dimension for AONB Management Plan policy.

National

Recent national legislation that directly affects the AONB includes the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Extensive planning policy guidance, including Planning Policy Statements 7, 9 and 15 which accompanies legislation in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the publication in 2005 of *Securing the Future*, the Government's strategy for sustainable development exert a significant influence on AONB policy. Key strategies published by AONB partner organisations include the Environment Agency's 'Creating a Better Place', English Heritage's 'Making the Past Part of Our Future',

the Forestry Commission's 'England Forestry Strategy' and Natural England's Strategic Direction 2008 - 2013.

Regional

The Regional Spatial Strategy sets the framework for local planning policy and Yorkshire Forward's Regional Economic Strategy provides a policy template for economic development across the region. The Rural Framework developed by the Government Office is seeking to coordinate delivery on the Government's 2004 Rural Strategy in the region while regional strategies produced by English Heritage and the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency's Catchment Flood Plans contain regional responses to national policy.

Sub-regional & Local

Policies in Community Plans developed by District Councils and their partners in the AONB are reflected at a sub-regional scale in the Sustainable Community Strategy produced by North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership. The AONB's Joint Advisory Committee continues to play an active part in the development of sustainable community strategies that underpin the Local Area Agreement between Central Government and the local authorities. Local Development Frameworks translate national and regional planning policy into a local context; they are a dominant component of local policy alongside Biodiversity Action Plans and the National Trust's World Heritage Site Management Plan.

Part 2

J. Houbbeck (HBO)

STRATEGY

High walking with Gouthwaite in the background.



Themes

Five themes are embedded in the Management Plan; they are woven into the policies that form the core of the document and act as a reference point for the commitments made in the Action Plan that accompanies the document.

The importance of landscape

Landscape is defined by the European Landscape Convention, which came into force in the UK on 1 March 2007, as 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. The AONB's landscape consists of physical, biological and cultural elements that combine in a way that can be described by reference to quantifiable evidence, but it also possesses a value to society that has been built up by more than a generation who campaigned for legislation to protect Britain's finest landscapes for the future.

Management Plan policies are designed to protect landscape features such as oak woodland and ancient monuments but they are also intended to protect the integrity of the landscape as a whole. This is how the landscape of the AONB is experienced by people who value tranquillity and its unique sense of place - a feeling of being close to nature and remote from the pressures of daily life. The application of individual policies in the Management Plan is intended to keep this overarching theme at the forefront.

Climate change

The climate is changing and this will have both physical and socio-economic impacts on the AONB. Action to reduce the harmful effects

of climate change by restoring degraded peat, planting new woodland and working with communities to reduce their Carbon footprint are examples of Management Plan policy initiatives that signify a commitment to work in partnership with others on climate change mitigation.

The Plan also recognises the importance of measures that will enable wildlife and people to cope with the effects of climate change by enhancing the resilience of semi natural habitats and by supporting land management measures that can reduce downstream flooding and increase the longevity and effectiveness of flood defences.

Ecosystem services

Ecosystem services are benefits that a healthy natural environment provides for people including clean air, water and food together with things that improve the quality of life such as inspirational

landscapes and opportunities for recreation. The first comprehensive investigation into the state of the global environment called the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment was carried out by the United Nations in 2000; it found that 2/3rds of ecosystem services were in decline globally or being managed unsustainably.

The AONB exports a range of ecosystem services including drinking water and healthy food alongside other vital functions such as management of Carbon deposits in peat and the management of moorlands and riverine habitats to mitigate downstream flood risk as well as providing opportunities for active recreation and development of healthy lifestyles. AONB's ecosystem services are making a significant contribution to sustainability and to the quality of life for the wider community and to the Leeds City Region in particular.



Knabs Ridge wind farm just outside the AONB - with a coal-fired power station in the far distance.

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Sustainable development

In 2005 the Government stated that 'The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and to enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations'. This definition acknowledges that new development is necessary to meet existing needs more effectively and to ensure that the components of well-being are distributed more equitably, but that if environmental thresholds are exceeded it will impoverish existing and future generations.

Innovative new development has the potential to meet existing and future needs by actively improving environmental quality and people's well-being. Policies in the Management Plan signal a positive approach to such proposals but others are designed to limit harm caused by

developments that consume scarce resources, including landscape qualities such as tranquillity, to the detriment of the environment.

Farming & land management

It has always been difficult to make a profitable living from farming in the uplands and the fluctuating fortunes of the agricultural industry across the country coupled with changing public policy priorities make decision-making by individual farmers especially difficult. However, farming and the management of land for shooting is fundamentally important to the task of maintaining the AONB's landscape. Farming, game shooting and angling are also vital components of the AONB's economy.

Policies in the Management Plan commit the AONB to doing whatever it can to retain a

viable farming industry and to support farmers and moorland land managers in developing sustainable land management practices.

The Management Plan

Part 2 of the Management Plan is divided up into five separate sections. They are not arranged in priority order:

- **Landscape**
- **Natural environment**
- **Heritage & the historic environment**
- **Understanding & enjoyment**
- **Living & working in the AONB**

The policies have been developed in response to an assessment of the evidence that is contained in the report called 'Evidence base for the Nidderdale AONB Management Plan' that accompanies this document. The intention is to produce policies that are shaped by the evidence but that are also forward looking.

The Plan contains a vision for each of the five section headings that describe how the state of the AONB might be at the beginning of the next decade in 2020 if the application of policy and implementation of the Action Plan (Part 3 of the Management Plan) has been successful.

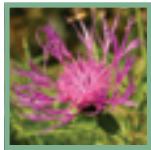
The Management Plan is intended to provide a framework for action by everyone with an interest in the AONB including land owners and managers, rural communities, local authorities and Government agencies - the policies in the following five sections must be widely adopted for the Plan to be successful.

Vision:



Landscape

The AONB's unique sense of place will have been protected and concerted efforts to enhance damaged and degraded landscapes will be underway. There will still be areas of tranquillity and the quality of the AONB's landscape will be recognised and respected as an inspirational place in which to live, work and visit.



Natural environment

All nationally and internationally designated sites will be in favourable condition and being managed sustainably by farmers and landowners. Local biodiversity partnerships will be actively conserving priority habitats and species and the importance of the AONB's moorlands in programmes to combat climate change will be valued and widely understood across the region.



Heritage & the historic environment

The importance of the historic landscape is understood by everyone and designated assets are being protected and actively cared for. Local people and visitors are actively investigating, enjoying and celebrating heritage, and the value of the AONB's heritage assets is producing economic and social benefits.



Understanding & enjoyment

There will be opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to enjoy the AONB and to enhance their health and well-being. The importance of conserving the AONB will be recognised by visitors and people living in adjacent urban areas will be aware of the AONB's recreational potential.



Living & working in the AONB

The AONB brand is being exploited by sustainable enterprises capitalising on environmental qualities maintained by a successful farming industry supported by thriving communities. There will be a concentration of innovative schemes using the AONB to deliver community strategy objectives.

Landscape

2020 Vision



The AONB's unique sense of place will have been protected and concerted efforts to enhance damaged and degraded areas will be underway. There will still be areas of tranquillity and the quality of the AONB's landscape will be recognised and respected as an inspirational place in which to live, work and visit.

The AONB's landscape is diverse and varied: there are striking contrasts between the upland plateau compared to the river valley and pastoral landscapes that form a zone of transition eastwards towards the Vale of York and in the south towards Wharfedale. This is reflected in the four Character Area boundaries that occur in the AONB (Yorkshire Dales, Pennine Dales Fringe, Southern Magnesian Limestone and Southern Pennines) and in finer-grained assessments of the AONB's landscape by Land Use Consultants and the local authorities that sub-divide and refine the Character Areas.

Understanding how these varied features that underlie the distinctiveness of the AONB's landscapes are experienced and valued by people is important for effective conservation, which involves managing the evolution of the landscape to avoid causing harm to natural beauty in the face of inevitable change. The Countryside

Quality Counts analysis of landscape change for the Yorkshire Dales and Pennine Dales Fringe Character Areas that jointly comprise more than 95% of the AONB points to a variety of factors that are driving the process of landscape change in the AONB:

- Local distinctiveness and the diversity of AONB landscapes is being undermined by neglect, new development and land management.
- Climate change, the fortunes of agriculture and shifting rural policy priorities could upset the balance of the upland economy to the detriment of internationally important upland heath habitats managed for driven grouse shooting in the west and north of the AONB.
- There is little or no transition between intensively managed grassland plateau landscape to the east and south of the areas of upland heath vegetation to the detriment of moorland habitat quality and species diversity.
- The switch from hay to silage threatens the remaining areas of semi-natural grassland.
- More active management of ancient semi-natural woodland and new planting or regeneration to link relatively isolated areas of woodland is needed to improve ecological connectivity and to reinforce character in areas where ancient woodland is a distinguishing feature of the landscape.
- Long-established commercial conifer plantations detract from landscape character.

- Management of drystone walls and hedges is uneven with evidence of neglect leading to a progressive erosion of field boundaries and increasing use of post and wire fences as a substitute.
- Tranquillity and the historic character of some settlements in the AONB is being eroded by continued pressure for residential development, increasing volumes of traffic and large-scale development outside the boundaries of the AONB.

Landscape policies

- L1** Maintain the distinctiveness of the AONB's landscape by respecting variations in landscape character and by enhancing the quality of damaged or degraded landscape features:
- Conserve openness and tranquillity of the AONB's moorland plateau landscape;
 - Improve management of field boundaries;
 - Ensure that management of the traditional farmed landscape of the Pennine Dales Fringe is consistent with local styles and traditions;
 - Commission research on the processes, direction and drivers of landscape change to improve understanding and the ability to adapt to the continuing evolution of the AONB's landscape.

L2 Ensure that farmers and landowners continue to be eligible to receive agri-environment payments by acting as an advocate for the AONB in negotiations with DEFRA and Natural England about Environmental Stewardship targeting and programme delivery.

L3 Improve conservation of landscape features by providing AONB farmers and landowners with support and advice on applications for Environmental Stewardship, England Woodland Grant Scheme and other measures designed to support conservation of landscape.

L4 Promote the value and importance of moorland peat to the conservation of landscape, biodiversity and archaeology. Protect existing deposits and facilitate restoration to increase the capacity of peat to store and sequester Carbon in the AONB.

L5 Support measures to restore the natural hydrology of moorland water catchments in the AONB to enhance biodiversity, maintain water quality, reduce diffuse pollution and help mitigate downstream flood risk by promoting improved management of moorland and farmland.

L6 Facilitate development of new native woodland on sites that have the potential to reinforce landscape character, that enhance biodiversity, improve ecological connectivity and which contribute to sustainable development by encouraging new planting and natural regeneration where possible.

L7 Promote re-structuring of geometric conifer plantations, especially on land in upper valley landscapes, by encouraging establishment of native tree and scrub species on plantation edges and by supporting proposals to fell and re-stock with native broadleaves.

L8 Resist applications for planning permission in the AONB that involve major development that is incompatible with the AONB's landscape including:

- Large-scale industrial, residential and commercial development;
 - Development of new transport networks, quarries, waste disposal sites, telecommunications and large-scale renewable energy installations;
 - Overhead power supply;
 - Pipelines;
 - Water resource or water treatment facilities.
-

L9 Ensure the highest standards of design, materials and environmental performance in new development and resist applications for planning permission in the AONB that involve:

- Development that is incompatible with landscape character, local tradition and design;
 - New buildings, conversions and curtilage development that reduces biodiversity or damages archaeology and the character of historic buildings or features;
-



- Proposals that compromise the openness and tranquillity of the AONB's moorland plateau and upper valley landscapes in the Yorkshire Dales Character Area.
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L10 Encourage small-scale sustainable development to create social housing, new enterprise based on environmental qualities including farm diversification and green tourism ventures, small-scale renewable energy schemes and other small-scale development that makes a positive contribution to reinforcement of landscape character and to the repair of damaged or degraded landscape features.

Natural Environment

2020 Vision



All nationally and internationally designated sites will be in favourable condition and being managed sustainably by farmers and landowners. Local biodiversity partnerships will be actively conserving priority habitats and species and the importance of the AONB's moorlands in programmes to combat climate change will be valued and widely understood across the region.

Upland heath and blanket bog habitats that cover over 25000 hectares of protected moorland and associated habitats including woodland are of international importance. They are designated as a Special Area of Conservation (EU Habitats Directive) and a Special Protection Area (EU Birds Directive). These sites support significant populations of peregrine falcon, merlin and golden plover and provide suitable habitat for other birds like hen harrier listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive.

There are 9 nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that cover a variety of habitats (three are notified for their geological importance) and 81 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) designated by the local authorities. The AONB also contains a network of UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats

and associated species together with extensive river and wetland habitats. The hydrology of the AONB's upland river catchments is having a measurable impact on flood risk further down the system in adjoining urban areas to the south and east of the designated area.

Analysis of SSSI condition data together with information on management of SINCs and on non-designated sites that contain examples of UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat that are cited in the Harrogate Local Biodiversity Action Plan highlights the following key issues:

- 57% of land designated as SSSI is classified by Natural England as being in 'unfavourable' condition.
- Active grips on AONB moorland are disrupting patterns of natural moorland drainage and damaging upland hydrology leading to lowering of water tables and an increase in water colouration. They are causing erosion of peat leading to silt-

ation of watercourses and they are also contributing to localised flood events.

- Management of land designated as SINC is inconsistent and conservation objectives have not been identified in most cases.
- Water supply infrastructure, the spread of non-native flora and fauna and disease affecting native riverine tree species has resulted in a decline in habitat quality.
- Biodiversity Action Plan habitats outside designated sites are fragmented and ecological connectivity is inadequate to facilitate adaptation to climate change.
- Data on AONB-based populations of wildlife species identified as priorities for conservation action in local Biodiversity Action Plans is lacking; populations of several rare species are declining or at critically low levels.



A typical scene at Brimham Rocks, an extensive gritstone outcrop managed by the National Trust.

E Moss

- Geodiversity issues have a low profile and site-based conservation priorities outside SSSIs have not been identified.
- Ecological survey data is patchy, often out of date and difficult to obtain.

Natural Environment policies

NE1 Ensure that improvements to the conservation status of upland heath and blanket bog habitats being carried out by owners and managers on land designated as a Special Area of Conservation in the AONB are sustained by:

- Promoting adoption of DEFRA's Heather and Grass Burning Code and preparation of burning plans;
- Continuing management of grazing to increase species diversity;
- Restoring hydrological systems to facilitate moorland re-wetting;
- Further enhancing the conservation value of ancient semi-natural woodland on moor edges and in gills;
- Controlling the spread of bracken and rush;
- Improving the diversity of semi-natural grassland habitats on the moor edges.

NE2 Support work to maintain wild bird populations associated with the North Pennines Special Protection Area in the AONB at levels that are appropriate to the carrying capacity of habitats in the designated area.

NE3 Ensure that Natural England's target for SSSI condition in the AONB is met by 2010 and support continuing conservation management by owners and managers.

NE4 Enhance management of existing ancient semi-natural woodland and encourage creation of new native woodland planting on suitable land to improve ecological connectivity between isolated stands.

NE5 Increase the value of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) in the AONB by improving the quality and availability of SINC survey data and by supporting owners and managers to enhance standards of SINC habitat management where necessary.

NE6 Improve the conservation value of National, Regional and Local Biodiversity Action Plan habitats in the AONB outside designated sites to improve ecological connectivity and adaptation to climate change.

NE7 Facilitate improvements to riverine and wetland habitats by maintaining minimum flow in river systems with reservoirs, working with owners and managers to reduce the intensity of agricultural management along river catchments and by targeted action against invasive non-native flora and fauna.

NE8 Promote identification and conservation of geological sites and features.

NE9 Carry out research and survey work to monitor habitat quality and changes in populations and distribution of wildlife species on designated sites and in the wider countryside.



Spring in Oak Woodland at Dallowgill.

E Moss

Heritage & the Historic Environment

2020 Vision



The importance of the historic landscape is understood by everyone and designated assets are being protected and actively cared for. Local people and visitors are actively investigating, enjoying and celebrating heritage, and the value of the AONB's heritage assets is producing economic and social benefits.

Designated features of the AONB's historic environment include the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site as well as 571 Listed Buildings, 124 Scheduled Monuments, 3 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens and 14 Conservation Areas. The AONB occupies 45% of the land area of Harrogate District, but contains over 70% of the District's Scheduled Monuments.

Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal is managed to an exemplary standard by its owner, the National Trust, but some other designated assets are less well maintained and are included on 'at risk' registers maintained by English Heritage and some local authorities. Most of the AONB's historic environment assets are undesignated and lack any form of statutory protection, including characteristic landscape features such as dry



Fountains Abbey.

E Moss

stone walls delineating medieval field boundaries. Landscape-scale conservation of historic environment features has been introduced by the National Trust at Fountains and a limited number of agri environment scheme agreements between Natural England and members of the farming community also reflect this valuable approach.

There is a very strong and long-established tradition of historical research by members of local communities in the AONB that continues to make a significant contribution to the North Yorkshire Historic Environment Record as well as highlighting and celebrating heritage. It will be vital to ensure that this work continues.

Research carried out by the AONB during preparation of the Nidderdale AONB Heritage

Strategy 2009-2014 identified a number of key issues:

- Key components of the AONB's historic landscape are inadequately researched, recorded and protected. This applies particularly to historic water industry landscapes, industrial landscapes, including mining, and the AONB's uplands including grouse moors.
- Coverage of archaeological data held in NYCC's Historic Environment Record is uneven for the AONB, with significant gaps in the uplands and to the east.
- Conversion of traditional farm buildings is widespread resulting in the loss of vernacular features that are under-recorded.

- Significant historic buildings, structures and monuments are included on the English Heritage and Harrogate Borough Council 'at risk' registers.
- The full potential of the AONB's heritage as an economic resource is not currently being realised, with particular potential for enhancing heritage tourism.
- The timing and actual impacts of the introduction of the government's proposed Heritage Protection Bill are currently unknown.

Heritage & the Historic Environment policies

-
- HE1** Facilitate sustainable management of the AONB's historic landscape by improving SSSI condition in a manner sensitive to the historic environment, and promoting uptake of historic environment options by owners and managers in applications for agri-environment grants.
-
- HE2** Ensure that new development does not have an adverse impact on the historic environment and heritage assets of the AONB, especially in the AONB's Conservation Areas.
-



E Moss

-
- HE3** Conserve Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Historic Parks and Gardens that appear on the 'Heritage at Risk' registers.
-
- HE4** Support preparation of Heritage Management Plans by owners of heritage assets and ensure that management of these assets is adapted to predicted climate change impacts.
-
- HE5** Provide training opportunities for the acquisition of heritage skills.
-
- HE6** Improve knowledge and understanding about the AONB's historic environment and heritage by supporting the network of local history groups and heritage volunteers; by sponsoring professional research and by disseminating the results of the Historic Landscape Characterisation of the AONB.
-
- HE7** Update NYCC's Historic Environment Record for the AONB by targeting research to address key gaps, and encouraging all researchers in the AONB to lodge their data with the HER.
-
- HE9** Ensure sustainable conservation of archives and collections and facilitate public access to these resources where possible.
-
- HE10** Enable people to enjoy heritage through education, by removing barriers to access and by encouraging participation in events to celebrate the AONB's heritage.
-

Understanding & Enjoyment

2020 Vision



There will be opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to enjoy the AONB and to enhance their health and well-being. The importance of conserving the AONB will be recognised by visitors and people living in adjacent urban areas will be aware of the AONB's recreational potential.

AONB designation was introduced by the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act; the Act was a response to a campaign by several generations to ensure that Britain's finest landscapes were adequately protected and that people had opportunities to enjoy them. Although the objective of AONB designation is conservation of natural beauty, provision should be made for recreation and enjoyment where this does not conflict with conservation: the AONB's access infrastructure - provision of information about what the AONB has to offer, public rights of way, access land and transport networks - enables this to happen. Enjoyment is important in its own right but also because there is growing evidence that access to 'greenspace' makes a significant contribution to health and well-being; recreational opportunities afforded by the AONB are within easy reach of some of adjoining urban communities in West Yorkshire where indices of well-being are below the national average.

Recreational opportunities are widespread across the region and not everyone will choose to visit the AONB but it is important that people of all abilities and from different backgrounds are not prevented from enjoying the AONB because of unsuitable infrastructure, lack of information or inadequate transport.

Analysis of the data has revealed that the key issues are:

Infrastructure

- The status of vehicular rights over of 98kms of Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads is undetermined.
- 48% of the rights of way network was classified as 'easy to use' in 2003.
- Public transport networks in the AONB do not provide a viable alternative to private cars for local people and visitors. This disadvantages local people without cars

and those in adjacent urban areas without cars who are unable to visit the AONB.

Information

- There are no dedicated AONB visitor facilities.

Recreation

- There is a shortage of AONB-specific survey data on visitor profiles.
- People from minority ethnic communities, disabled people, young people and those on low incomes are disproportionately under-represented in the available data on visitor profiles.
- An estimated 5% of potential recreational users in North Yorkshire are deterred because access infrastructure in the sub-region including the AONB is not suited to people with special needs.



AONB

Understanding & Enjoyment policies

UE1 Improve the quality and accessibility of the rights of way network in the AONB.

UE2 Reduce the environmental impact of recreational vehicles using unclassified roads and the rights of way network and increase the value of the highway network to non-motorised users by improving safety standards on designated routes.

UE3 Ensure that walkers are able to use and enjoy open access land.

UE4 Encourage people to exploit the AONB's recreation infrastructure on foot, on bicycles and on horseback to promote health and well-being as part of an active lifestyle.

Transport

UE5 Improve opportunities for cycling in the AONB.

UE6 Ensure that local people and visitors have access to reliable, year-round bus services within the AONB, to services linking urban populations on the edge of the area and to seasonal services targeted at attractions.

Enjoyment

UE7 Ensure that more people are aware of AONB purposes and boundaries, and enhance people's understanding of the designation and the importance of conservation by communicating information about AONB special qualities.

UE8 Provide information and organise activities and events that help people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the AONB.

UE9 Raise awareness of the AONB across socio-economically and ethnically diverse communities in urban areas of West Yorkshire.



Open Country

Living & Working in the AONB

2020 Vision



The AONB brand is being exploited by sustainable enterprises capitalising on environmental qualities that are being maintained by a successful farming industry supported by thriving communities. There will be a concentration of innovative schemes using the AONB to deliver community strategy objectives.

The overriding purpose of AONB designation is conservation of natural beauty, a quality that has been carefully constructed by successive generations. The AONB's environmental assets are owned and managed by farmers, landowners and the rural communities; these assets have an economic value that is geared to the fortunes of the wider economy. The community's capacity to manage key environmental features is partly the result of a commitment to the environment that goes beyond the economic value of these assets but it is related to the fortunes of the economy nonetheless. The capacity to manage these assets is also determined by the availability of essential rural services including housing, schools and healthcare.

The links between people and the environment have sometimes been straightforward and direct, such as those involved in agriculture, mining and the water industry, or indirect like those in the past who chose to establish their country estates in the AONB because of the quality of the landscape. These direct and indirect links between the socio-economic needs and characteristics of communities with the surrounding landscape still exist even though they are configured differently today. Policies in the Management Plan alongside commitments in the Action Plan that concern Living & Working in the AONB recognise the importance of this relationship.

The relationship is complex and extends across the boundary of the designated area: the socio-economic characteristics of the AONB are strongly influenced by surrounding towns and cities, especially the large conurbations in West Yorkshire close to the AONB's southern boundary. These provide employment opportunities for rural communities and a market for AONB-produced goods and services, and consume

ecosystem services supplied by the AONB. This interdependence is confirmed by inclusion of the AONB in the Leeds City Region and key issues identified in the 'Nidderdale AONB Facts & Figures' report reflect this:

- The sparsely distributed population across most of the AONB creates local inequalities in access to services; the impact on economically disadvantaged sections of the community is much greater.
- Socio economic deprivation is widespread in the large urban communities on the southern edge of the AONB.
- The availability of housing in the AONB is skewed in favour of relatively wealthy sections of the community.
- The AONB's employment structure is dominated by out-commuting that has had an adverse impact on sustainability and the growing prosperity of Leeds may exacerbate this trend.



Nidderdale Show 'Best in Show' parade.

E Moss (HBC)

- High levels of self-employment and business success could lead to pressure for expansion and further development.
- The relatively small part played by agriculture and land-based industries in the economic life of the AONB could lead to its status and importance being overlooked by policy makers.
- Tourism business is an important component of the economy and has potential to grow further by capitalising on the AONB's environmental quality.
- Existing patterns of tourism are not sustainable.
- Creative industries make a significant contribution to the AONB's tourism 'offer'.

Living & Working in the AONB policies

Community

- LW1** Support Local Development Framework policy and objectives on provision of affordable housing in the AONB.
-
- LW2** Support retention of existing services and innovative projects to improve rural service delivery.
-
- LW3** Consolidate scheduled rural public transport services and support expansion of community transport initiatives.
-

LW4 Assist with delivery of local and sub-regional Community Strategy objectives.

LW5 Facilitate community action to conserve the AONB's landscape and to enhance the environmental sustainability of rural settlements.

Employment

LW6 Encourage promotion of AONB environmental qualities in food and non-food product marketing to stimulate development of an environmental economy in the AONB.

LW7 Support creation of new enterprises that complement and enhance landscape and that capitalise on the AONB's environmental assets.

LW7 Create training opportunities based on the AONB's landscape.

Agriculture

LW8 Support implementation of Local Development Framework policy and objectives on farm diversification and development of sustainable rural enterprise.

LW9 Ensure that the farming industry has access to high quality business advice and intelligence about future market opportunities to enable the sector to grow and prosper.

LW10 Encourage the development of cooperative ventures in the farming industry.



Blessing the lambs ceremony at Middlesmoor.

LW11 Support industry-led initiatives to reduce energy costs and enhance the environmental sustainability of farm businesses.

Tourism

LW12 Support the Europarc Sustainable Tourism Charter implementation plan.

LW13 Support the Dales and Harrogate Tourism Partnership.

LW14 Provide visitors to the AONB with information about activities, events, attractions and services provided by local tourism businesses.

Part 3



J Holubecki (HBC)

ACTION PLAN

Scar House Dam - collects water for Bradford, some 37km to the south.

Introduction

The Action Plan is a set of detailed commitments that describe how Management Plan Policies will be put into practice. It is intended to be a blueprint for all sections of the community, supported by organisations like local authorities and government agencies, that will help achieve the vision for the future set out in the Management Plan.

Where appropriate, a timetable is included in the actions and the Plan identifies the organisations with lead responsibility for delivery. The Joint Advisory Committee and the AONB Team have sole responsibility for some of the commitments but are part of a delivery partnership alongside other organisations in others. For some of the actions, the AONB's role is simply to monitor progress and offer support where necessary although these different roles are not mutually exclusive.

<i>Yorwoods</i>	<i>Yorwoods (Regional forest industry organisation)</i>
<i>NYCC</i>	<i>North Yorkshire County Council</i>
<i>YDRT</i>	<i>Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust</i>
<i>LGAPP</i>	<i>Local Geodiversity Action Plan Partnership</i>
<i>NT</i>	<i>National Trust</i>
<i>HBC</i>	<i>Harrogate Borough Council</i>
<i>YDNPA</i>	<i>Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority</i>
<i>RSPB</i>	<i>Royal Society for the Protection of Birds</i>
<i>Sustrans</i>	<i>Sustrans (Cycling organisation)</i>
<i>D&BCIC</i>	<i>Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company</i>

<i>HDCT</i>	<i>Harrogate District Community Transport</i>
<i>Yorkshire Forward</i>	<i>Regional Development Agency</i>
<i>YW</i>	<i>Yorkshire Water</i>
<i>MA</i>	<i>Moorland Association</i>

Implementation of the actions will be subject to ongoing refinement throughout the life of the Management Plan, requiring negotiation with the AONB's partners together with the application of funding and other resources. This process will result in the production of a business plan that will translate the schedule of actions into an annual work programme matched to funding and organisational capacity.

Delivery Partners

Action Plan Abbreviation	Organisation
<i>District Councils</i>	<i>Harrogate Borough, Hambleton & Richmondshire District Councils</i>
<i>NE</i>	<i>Natural England</i>
<i>ATP</i>	<i>Yorkshire Dales & Harrogate Area Tourism Partnership</i>
<i>FC</i>	<i>Forestry Commission</i>
<i>EA</i>	<i>Environment Agency</i>
<i>EH</i>	<i>English Heritage</i>
<i>YDMT</i>	<i>Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust</i>
<i>LAG</i>	<i>Leader Action Group</i>
<i>LU</i>	<i>Leeds University</i>



One of the follies in Hackfall Woods - a registered Historic Park which is also a Conservation Area and a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

J. Holbeck (HBC)

Monitoring

The effectiveness of the Action Plan will be carefully monitored. Reliable and informative performance information is essential to facilitate proper management of the Action Plan by the AONB and the other lead agencies, and to provide key stakeholders and the wider community with the means to evaluate progress. Performance measurement will take place on two levels.

Strategic-level monitoring

The condition of the AONB's environment is the key test of the Action Plan's effectiveness in meeting the designation's aim of conserving natural beauty.

Data will be collected by the AONB and by organisations that have a special responsibility for the AONB under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.

Condition monitoring will take place over the 5-year period of the Management Plan by reference to a set of key indicators that will act reciprocally to drive progress and serve to align the Action Plan with the strategic goals of the Management Plan. The indicators are as follows:

- Amount of land covered by agri-environment scheme agreements (ha).
- Amount of land covered by EWGS and Felling Licence Agreements (ha).

- Number of planning applications refused on grounds of harm to AONB landscape.
- Amount of land designated SSSI in Favourable/Unfavourable/Recovering.
- Number of SINCS in active management
- Number of sites designated as Regionally Important Geological & Geomorphological Sites.
- Population of wading birds (Snipe, Curlew, Lapwing, Redshank).
- Number of heritage sites at high/medium/low risk in AONB.
- Number of monuments records enhanced to conform to HER national benchmark Level I.
- Number of annual heritage events in the AONB.
- Number of Public Rights of Way network maintenance tasks outstanding.
- Number of people attending AONB events.
- Number of affordable housing units built.
- Number of local services - Post Offices/ local shops/pubs.
- Total level of economic activity.
- Number of business start-ups .
- Farm income trends.

- Number of people employed in agriculture.
- Day and staying visitor numbers.
- Number of accredited accommodation providers.
- Number of accredited green tourism businesses.

Business plan monitoring

Quantitative targets for actions associated with Management Plan Policies will form the yardstick by which the effectiveness of the organisations with responsibility for project delivery can be judged. Targets will be set and monitored on an annual basis.

Management Plan Review

Section 89(7) of the CROW Act stipulates that AONB Management Plans must be reviewed every five years. The review of this Management Plan will begin in 2013 with the production of a report for public consideration on the outcome of condition monitoring leading to an assessment of progress towards achieving the vision set out on page 12 of this Plan.

Action Plan for Landscape

Policy ref	Policy	Action	Lead Partner/s	Plan Priority
L1	Maintain the distinctiveness of the AONB's landscape by respecting variations in landscape character and by enhancing the quality of damaged or degraded landscape features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conserve openness and tranquillity of the AONB's moorland plateau landscape; ○ Improve management of field boundaries; ○ Ensure that management of the traditional farmed landscape of the Pennine Dales Fringe is consistent with local styles and traditions; ○ Commission research on the processes, direction and drivers of landscape change to improve understanding and the ability to adapt to the continuing evolution of the AONB's landscape. 	1. Produce concise AONB landscape design summaries for landowners, land managers and property owners by 2011.	AONB	1
		2. Commission research to identify landscape detractors; develop action plans to restore damaged features by 2010.	AONB	3
		3. Develop new versions of saved Local Development Framework policies that seek to maintain and enhance diversity of landscape character in the AONB by 2014.	District Councils	1
		4. Review and update Landscape Character Assessment Guidelines for the AONB by 2013.	District Councils	2
		5. Commission research in 2010 to characterise and define areas of tranquillity at a local scale.	AONB	3
L2	Ensure that farmers and landowners continue to be eligible to receive agri-environment payments in the AONB.	1. Maintain Higher Level Environmental Stewardship target area status for AONB by providing Natural England with comprehensive data on AONB habitat, heritage asset and landscape quality in targeting the 2011 review.	AONB	1
L3	Improve conservation of landscape features by providing AONB farmers and landowners with support and advice on applications for Environmental Stewardship, England Woodland Grant Scheme and other measures designed to support conservation of landscape.	1. Agree three-year farm advice delivery contracts with North Yorkshire FWAG in 2009.	AONB	1
		2. Negotiate farm advice delivery agreement with Natural England in 2009.	AONB	1
		3. Achieve 80% of land covered by Entry Level Environmental Stewardship by 2014.	NE/AONB	1
		4. Submit a minimum of 30 Higher Level Stewardship Agreements on behalf of AONB landowners by 2014.	NE/AONB	2
		5. Achieve 80% of eligible land covered by Uplands Entry Level Stewardship by 2004.	NE/AONB	1
		6. Provide training in maintenance of drystone walls and opportunities for a minimum of 50 volunteers to carry out conservation projects by 2014.	AONB	1
		7. Provide landowners and managers with advice and grant aid to establish new woodland and sustainably manage existing woodland in line with Regional Forestry Strategy and AONB Native Woodland Opportunity Plan targets by 2014.	FC	1

Action Plan for Landscape

Policy ref	Policy	Action	Lead Partner/s	Plan Priority
L4	Promote the value and importance of moorland peat to the conservation of landscape, biodiversity and archaeology, and facilitate restoration to increase the capacity of peat to store and sequester Carbon in the AONB.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commission research to identify the extent of peat deposits and produce conservation plan to restore degraded areas by 2009. 2. Support development of a sub-regional peatland restoration project and identify AONB priority sites by 2010. 	<p>AONB/LU</p> <p>AONB/ YW/YDNPA/YWT</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p>
L5	Support measures to restore the natural hydrology of moorland water catchments in the AONB to enhance biodiversity, maintain water quality, reduce diffuse pollution and help mitigate downstream flood risk by promoting improved management of moorland, woodland and farmland.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement the Environment Agency's Ripon Multi-Objective Project implementation plan by 2011. 2. Implement land management measures on AONB stretches of the Wharfe, Nidd, Ure and Washburn in line with the Ouse Catchment Flood Management Plan. 	<p>AONB</p> <p>EA</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p>
L6	Facilitate development of new native woodland and sympathetic management of existing woodland on sites that have the potential to reinforce landscape character, that enhance biodiversity, improve ecological connectivity and which contribute to sustainable development by encouraging new planting and natural regeneration where possible to improve species and structural diversity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide grants and advice for landowners and managers to increase the extent of native woodland in line with the Regional Forestry Strategy and the AONB Native Woodland Opportunities Plan. 2. Improve access opportunities to existing woodland and facilitate establishment of 2 community woodlands in partnership with AONB Tree Wardens by 2010. 	<p>AONB/NE/FC/YDMT</p> <p>AONB</p>	<p>1</p> <p>3</p>
L7	Promote re-structuring of geometric conifer plantations, especially on land in upper valley landscapes, by encouraging establishment of native tree and scrub species on plantation edges and by supporting proposals to fell and re-stock with native broadleaves.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide advice to owners on bioenergy and other markets for woodland products and on grant aid for restructuring at least 5 commercial conifer plantations by 2014. 2. Provide grant aid to facilitate establishment of native woodland on at least 3 plantations by 2014. 	<p>Yorwoods/FC 2</p> <p>AONB/NE/FC/YDMT</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p>
L8	Resist applications for planning approval in the AONB that involve major development that is incompatible with the AONB's landscape including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Large scale industrial, residential and commercial development; ○ Development of new transport networks, quarries, waste disposal sites, telecommunications and large scale renewable energy installations; ○ Overhead power supply; ○ Pipelines; ○ Water resource or water treatment facilities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide local planning authorities with clear and consistent advice about the impact of proposed development on the AONB's landscape. 	<p>AONB</p>	<p>1</p>

Action Plan for Landscape

Policy ref	Policy	Action	Lead Partner/s	Plan Priority
L9	<p>Ensure the highest standards of design, materials and environmental performance standards in new development and resist applications for planning approval in the AONB that involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development that is incompatible with landscape character, local tradition and design; ○ New buildings, conversions and curtilage development that reduces biodiversity or damages archaeology and historic buildings or features; ○ Proposals of that compromise the openness and tranquillity of the AONB's moorland plateau and upper valley landscapes in the Yorkshire Dales Joint Character Area. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide annual training events for local planning authority development control teams on AONB landscape management priorities and practices including farming. 2. Provide AONB resources to take part in planning surgeries on a monthly basis with local planning authority development control staff. 	<p>AONB</p> <p>AONB</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p>
L10	<p>Encourage small scale sustainable development to create social housing, new enterprise based on environmental qualities including farm diversification and green tourism ventures, small-scale renewable energy schemes and other small scale development that makes a positive contribution to reinforcement of landscape character and to the repair of damaged or degraded landscape features</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide advice and at least £50,000 grant aid from the AONB's Sustainable Development Fund and support bids to the Yorkshire Dales Leader Programme from those seeking help with creation of sustainable enterprises based on the AONB's environmental and cultural heritage. 2. Provide advice about AONB objectives to applicants for planning consent to develop sustainable enterprises based on the AONB's environmental and cultural heritage. 	<p>AONB</p> <p>AONB</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p>

Action Plan for Natural environment

Policy ref	Policy	Action	Lead Partner/s	Plan Priority
NE1	<p>Ensure that improvements to the conservation status of upland heath and blanket bog habitats being carried out by owners and managers on land designated as a Special Area of Conservation in the AONB are sustained by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promoting adoption of DEFRA's Heather and Grass Burning Code and preparation of burning plans; ○ Continuing management of grazing to increase species diversity; ○ Restoring hydrological systems to facilitate moorland re-wetting; ○ Further enhancing the conservation value of ancient semi-natural woodland on moor edges and in gills; ○ Controlling the spread of bracken and rush; ○ Improving the diversity of semi-natural grassland habitats on the moor edges. 	1. Negotiate at least 5 Higher Level Environmental Stewardship agreements with owners of upland heath and blanket bog habitats in the AONB.	NE	1
		<p>2. Produce fire risk management plans for AONB moors in conjunction with North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service.</p> <p>3. Organise annual campaign to increase public awareness of moorland fire risk.</p>	YDNPA/MA	1
NE2	<p>Support work to maintain wild bird populations and other UK BAP Priority Species associated with the North Pennines Special Protection Area / Special Area of Conservation in the AONB at levels that are appropriate to the carrying capacity of habitats in the designated area.</p>	1. Gather and collate population data in conjunction with the Dales Wader Forum and the Upland Bird Study Group by using AONB volunteers to carry out annual counts and by commissioning research where necessary.	NE/AONB/RSPB	2
		2. Target Higher Level Environmental Stewardship payments for maintenance of upland rough grazing on land supporting breeding populations of target species including waders, raptors and passerines.	NE	1
NE3	<p>Ensure that Natural England's target for SSSI condition in the AONB is met by 2010 and support continuing conservation management by owners and managers.</p>	1. Negotiate Higher Level Environmental Stewardship and England Woodland Grant Scheme agreements with all SSSI owners and managers, provide managers with advice on implementation over the period of agreement where needed and monitor progress using Common Standards Monitoring.	NE/FC	1
NE4	<p>Enhance management of existing ancient semi-natural woodland and Planted Ancient Woodland Sites to encourage better management and creation of new native woodland planting to improve ecological connectivity between isolated stands.</p>	1. Undertake a survey of ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) to assess condition by 2010.	FC	1
		2. Develop and implement an action plan by 2011 targeted at damaged or degraded sites using Woodland Improvement Grant, Higher Level Environmental Stewardship	FC/NE/AONB	1

Action Plan for Natural environment

Policy ref	Policy	Action	Lead Partner/s	Plan Priority
		<p>plus other sources of funding and practical help as appropriate.</p> <p>3. Increase area of upland ash and oak wood, wet woodland, wood pasture and parkland in accordance with targets in the Regional Forestry Strategy and objectives in the AONB Native Woodland Opportunity Plan.</p>	FC/NE/AONB/YDMT	1
NE5	Increase the value of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) in the AONB by improving the quality and availability of SINC survey data and by supporting owners and managers to enhance standards of SINC habitat management where necessary.	<p>1. Publish information about all AONB Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) on the AONB website by 2010.</p> <p>2. Produce management plans for all 72 AONB SINCs in consultation with landowners and managers by 2011.</p> <p>3. Achieve 75% of SINCs in active conservation management by 2012 to assist the local authorities with achieving 'Good Performance' standard for National Indicator 197.</p>	<p>AONB</p> <p>AONB/NYCC</p> <p>AONB/NYCC</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p>
NE6	Improve the conservation value of UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitats in the AONB outside designated sites to improve ecological connectivity and adaptation to climate change.	1. Convene an AONB Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) partnership to coordinate action on local BAP habitats and species targets by 2010.	AONB	2
NE7	Facilitate improvements to riverine and wetland habitats by maintaining minimum flow in river systems with reservoirs, working with owners and managers to reduce the intensity of agricultural management along river corridors and by targeted action against invasive non-native flora and fauna.	<p>1. Establish a Catchment Sensitive Farming project in Upper Nidderdale in 2009.</p> <p>2. Produce action plan to counter spread of non-native flora and fauna that harm biodiversity by 2010.</p>	<p>NE/EA/AONB/YW/YDRT</p> <p>EA/AONB</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p>
NE8	Promote identification and conservation of geological sites and features.	<p>1. Attend meetings of the Yorkshire Dales Local Geodiversity Action Plan Partnership</p> <p>2. Develop a network of Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites in the AONB by 2014.</p>	<p>AONB</p> <p>LGAP/AONB</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p>
NE9	Carry out research and survey work to monitor habitat quality and changes in populations and distribution of wildlife species on designated sites and in the wider countryside.	1. Produce a research and monitoring strategy by 2010.	AONB	2

Action Plan for Heritage & the historic environment

Policy ref	Policy	Action	Lead Partner/s	Plan Priority
HE1	Facilitate sustainable management of the AONB's historic landscape.	1. Facilitate Entry Level, Uplands Entry Level and Higher Level Stewardship grant applications on 90% of holdings with features included in the Historic Environment Record by 2014.	NE/AONB	1
		2. Facilitate preparation of 2 Heritage Management Plans by 2013; ensure that management of these assets is adapted to predicted climate change impacts.	AONB	3
		3. Implement the Fountains Abbey World Heritage Site Management Plan by 2013.	NT	1
HE2	Protect the AONB's historic environment and heritage assets by resisting inappropriate proposals for new development.	1. Integrate the findings of the Historic Landscape Characterisation into the Landscape Character Assessment of the AONB by 2013.	NYCC	3
		2. Provide archaeological advice for local planning authority development control teams.	NYCC	3
HE3	Improve condition of Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Historic Parks and Gardens that appear on the Heritage at Risk' register.	1. Produce action plans for 'At Risk' assets in the AONB by 2012.	HBC/EH	1
		2. Provide grant aid for owners and managers of 'At Risk' assets.	HBC	1
		3. Create a Local List of AONB Heritage Assets by 2013.	HBC	3
HE4	Provide training opportunities for the acquisition of heritage skills.	1. Establish a Heritage Skills Training Centre in the AONB by 2010 to assist local authorities with achieving 'Good Performance' status for National Indicator 90.	AONB	1
HE5	Improve knowledge and understanding about the AONB's historic environment and heritage by supporting the network of local history groups and heritage volunteers, by sponsoring professional research and by disseminating the results of the Historic Landscape Characterisation of the AONB.	1. Facilitate implementation of the AONB Heritage Strategy Project Plan by the Historic Environment Committee to help local authorities achieve 'Good Performance' status for National Indicator N16 on regular participation in volunteering by 2014.	AONB	1
		2. Attract resources to maintain the AONB Historic Environment Project Officer post by 2010.	AONB	1
HE6	Expand the content of the Historic Environment Record for the AONB and enhance public access.	1. Create an AONB heritage 'microsite' in 2009.	AONB	1
		2. Establish links between the 'microsite' and the HER by 2010.	AONB	1

Action Plan for Heritage & the historic environment

Policy ref	Policy	Action	Lead Partner/s	Plan Priority
HE7	Ensure sustainable conservation of vulnerable archives and collections by 2014 and facilitate public access to them.	1. Facilitate conservation of archives and collections.	AONB	3
HE8	Enable people to enjoy heritage through education, by removing barriers to access and by encouraging participation in events to celebrate the AONB's heritage.	1. Organise an annual programme of heritage events and activities.	AONB	2

Action Plan for Understanding & enjoyment

Policy ref	Policy	Action	Lead Partner/s	Plan Priority
Infrastructure				
UE1	Improve the quality and accessibility of the rights of way (RoW) network in the AONB.	1. Develop an 'ease of use' indicator for the AONB RoW network by 2009. 2. Carry out a RoW management programme to ensure that 90% of RoW are easy to use by 2014. 3. Implement a targeted RoW improvement programme to create a network of routes over at least 15km adapted to the needs of people with a range of expectations, interests and levels of ability. 4. Establish a RoW management base in the AONB by 2009.	NYCC NYCC AONB/NYCC AONB/NYCC	1 1 1 1
UE2	Reduce the environmental impact of recreational vehicles using unclassified roads and the RoW network and increase the usability of the highway network for non-motorised users.	1. Produce assessment of the environmental carrying capacity of all Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads (UUR) in the AONB by 2010. 2. Devise a programme of UUR maintenance/Traffic Regulation Orders by 2012. 3. Prepare and implement plan for improving safety standards for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists on designated highways by 2010 and suppress traffic growth by 2% below annual predicted national increase over Plan period.	NYCC/AONB NYCC NYCC	1 1 3
UE3	Ensure that walkers are able to use and enjoy open access land.	1. Maintain AONB Access Volunteers network to help local authorities achieve 'Good Performance' status for National Indicator N16 on regular participation in volunteering. 2. Produce report on signage of Open Access land by 2010 and carry out improvements as necessary.	NYCC NYVV/AONB	2 3

Action Plan for Understanding & enjoyment

Policy ref	Policy	Action	Lead Partner/s	Plan Priority
UE4	Encourage people to exploit the AONB's recreation infrastructure to promote health and well-being as part of an active lifestyle.	1. Assist local authorities with achieving 'Good Performance' status for National Indicators 8 and 119 by developing a programme of 'healthy lifestyle' activities for local and regional audiences by 2010 to enhance people's feeling of well-being.	AONB	1
transport				
UE5	Improve opportunities for cycling in the AONB.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement 2006 - 2011 Local Transport Plan target for improved cycle access to Pateley Bridge Service Centre. 2. Create 3 new mountain bike (MTB) routes in the AONB by 2010 and promote via Yorkshire Dales MTB website. 3. Produce report on a cross-Pennine cyclistroute and develop implementation and marketing plan by 2010. 	NYCC AONB/NYCC/YDNPA Sustrans	1 3 3
UE6	Ensure that local people and visitors have access to and adequate information about reliable, year-round bus services within the AONB, to services linking urban populations on the edge of the area and to seasonal services targeted at attractions.	1. Maintain the AONB leisure bus network at a minimum 2008 level and achieve a 15% increase in usage on 2008 figures.	D&BCIC/AONB	2
enjoyment				
UE7	Ensure that more people are aware of AONB purposes and boundaries, and enhance people's understanding of the designation and the importance of conservation by communicating information about AONB special qualities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support Friends of Nidderdale AONB and achieve an membership increase of 10% annually. 2. Maintain opportunities for volunteering in the AONB and increase numbers by 10% annually to assist local authorities with achieving 'Good Performance' status for National Indicator 6 and Local Indicator 63. 3. Maintain volunteering opportunities for people with special needs to assist local authorities with achieving 'Good Performance' status for National Indicator 6 and Local Indicator 56. 4. Install AONB boundary signs on the highway network. 5. Organise an annual events programme and increase participant numbers by 5% annually. 6. Produce at least one edition of the AONB residents' newsletter annually and distribute to all AONB households. 7. Produce and distribute at least 25 000 copies of the AONB summer newsletter for visitors annually. 	AONB AONB AONB AONB AONB AONB AONB	1 1 1 1 2 1 1

Action Plan for Understanding & enjoyment

Policy ref	Policy	Action	Lead Partner/s	Plan Priority
		8. Maintain the AONB's websites and increase numbers visiting the sites by 5% annually.	AONB	1
		9. Organise at least 1 dales-wide festival focusing on special qualities of the protected landscapes with the Yorkshire Dales Leader Action Group.	AONB	2
		10. Carry out and publish a survey of residents and visitors to establish baseline data on level of AONB awareness by 2010.	AONB	3
UE8	Provide information and organise activities and events that help people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the AONB.	1. Maintain the AONB's Young Ranger Group and increase participation rate by at least 25% by 2010.	AONB	1
		2. Create satellite Young Ranger activity programmes in at least 5 young people's organisations by 2011.	AONB	2
		3. Support providers of outdoor pursuits to create and maintain opportunities for caving, canoeing, mountain biking and other activity sports in the AONB where this does not harm the environment or compromise tranquillity.	ATP	
UE9	Raise awareness of the AONB across socio-economically and ethnically diverse communities in urban areas of West Yorkshire.	1. Maintain the Source to City project and obtain funding for a community-based project in 2010.	AONB	1

Action Plan for Living & working in the AONB

Policy ref	Policy	Action	Lead Partner/s	Plan Priority
	community			
LW1	Support Local Development Framework policy and objectives on provision of affordable housing in the AONB.	1. Facilitate increase, in accordance with targets for AONB Parishes identified in relevant Local Development Frameworks, in provision of affordable housing in line with local authority National Indicator 155.	District Councils	1
		2. Provide local planning authorities with advice on design and environmental performance.	AONB	3
LW2	Support retention of existing services and innovative projects to improve rural service delivery.	1. Implement 'Creating Stronger Rural Communities' theme in Yorkshire Dales Local Development Strategy by 2011.	LAG	3
		2. Promote business support services available to rural business in accordance with objectives in the Sub Regional Investment Plan for North Yorkshire.	YF	1

Action Plan for Living & working in the AONB

Policy ref	Policy	Action	Lead Partner/s	Plan Priority
LW3	Consolidate scheduled rural public transport services and support expansion of community transport initiatives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assist local authorities with achieving 'Good Performance' status for National Indicator 175 by achieving a 15% increase in community transport usage by 2014. 2. Implement Bus Strategy and Bus Information Strategy objectives for the Pateley Bridge and Ripon Service Centres in the 2006 - 2011 Local Transport Plan. 	<p>HDCT/AONB</p> <p>NYCC</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p>
LW4	Assist with delivery of local and sub-regional Community Strategy objectives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contribute to delivery of LAA targets identified in the Harrogate Sustainable Community Plan and the Sustainable Community Strategy for North Yorkshire. 	AONB	1
LW5	Facilitate community action to conserve the AONB's landscape and to enhance the environmental sustainability of rural settlements.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain the AONB's network of 11 Parish Caretakers and establish Dales-wide project to attract Leader grants for AONB Parishes by 2009. 2. Administer annual programme of Sustainable Development Fund grants to 2014 and advise communities on other sources of grant funding; assist with the application process where projects meet AONB objectives. 3. Develop a Dales-wide Carbon footprinting project with the Yorkshire Dales Leader Action Group in 2009 and create community wide Carbon-reduction plans. 	<p>AONB</p> <p>AONB</p> <p>LAG</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>
employment				
LW6	Encourage promotion of AONB environmental qualities in food and non-food products, crafts and tourism packages to stimulate development of an environmental economy in the AONB.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produce report on potential AONB producer contribution to regional food and drink strategy with Nidderdale Agricultural Society by 2010. 	AONB/Yorkshire Forward	3
LW7	Support creation of new enterprises that complement and enhance landscape and that capitalise on the AONB's environmental assets.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide Sustainable Development Fund grants to support new enterprise and attract RDPE funding through YF's Rural Enterprise Investment Programme in accordance with objectives in the Sub Regional Investment Plan. 2. Provide businesses with advice and practical help on applications to the Yorkshire Dales Leader programme to 2011 in accordance with objectives in the Yorkshire Dales Local Development Strategy. 	<p>AONB/Yorkshire Forward /Business Link</p> <p>AONB/YDMT/ Yorkshire Forward</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p>
LW8	Create training opportunities based on the AONB's landscape.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a Leader-based countryside management apprentice scheme by 2010 to complement and attract funding from the Land Skills component of RDPE. 	YDMT/Yorkshire Forward	1

Action Plan for Living & working in the AONB

Policy ref	Policy	Action	Lead Partner/s	Plan Priority
agriculture				
LW9	Support implementation of Local Development Framework policy and objectives on farm diversification and development of sustainable rural enterprise.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide planning advice for rural estates and farm businesses seeking help with diversification projects and business development in accordance with objectives identified in the Sub Regional Investment Plan. 2. Support AONB Friends/Nidderdale Agricultural Society's annual Support Enterprising Farm Award. 	District Councils/ Yorkshire Forward AONB	1 1
LW10	Ensure that the farming industry has access to high quality business advice and intelligence about future market opportunities to enable the sector to grow and prosper.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide business advice for farming clients in accordance with objectives identified in the Sub Regional Investment Plan. 	Yorkshire Forward/ Business Link	1
LW11	Encourage the development of cooperative ventures in the farming industry.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a Leader-based knowledge-sharing joint marketing and procurement project in the Dales in 2009. 2. Promote 'Share to Farm' in accordance with objectives identified in the Sub Regional Investment Plan. 	YDNPA/AONB/ Yorkshire Forward Yorkshire Forward	1 1
LW12	Support industry-led initiatives to reduce energy costs and enhance the environmental sustainability of farm businesses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Negotiate 5 Farm Resource Efficiency Programme grants to support AONB projects by 2014. 	Yorkshire Forward	1
tourism				
LW13	Support implementation of the Europarc Sustainable Tourism Charter implementation plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appoint Sustainable Tourism Charter project officer in 2009. 2. Develop implementation plan in partnership with Area Tourism Partnership by 2010 and identify priority actions. 3. Negotiate package of grant aid for green tourism businesses by 2010. 	YDNPA YDNPA/AONB YDNPA/AONB/ Yorkshire Forward	1 1 1
LW14	Support the Dales and Harrogate Tourism Partnership.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attend meetings of the Operations Group. 2. Produce Blubberhouses Visitor Centre feasibility report and implement findings in 2009. 	AONB AONB	3 2
LW15	Provide visitors to the AONB with information about activities, events, attractions and services provided by local tourism businesses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produce information pack for AONB accommodation providers and update annually as required. 	AONB	1

