

Solway Coast AONB Management Plan Final Draft February 2004

FOREWORD

I am delighted and honoured to commend to you this far sighted vision and the far reaching strategies which have been developed to realise it, in cooperation with an emerging partnership involving all of you, individuals, volunteers, statutory bodies, towns, villages, landowners, schools and many special interest groups. We have all one thing in common - a love for our Solway Coast and Plain which has been handed down to us from those who went before, which we now hold in trust and which we intend to hand on to future generations, not only intact but enhanced, with the magic preserved and prosperity secured.

It is a fine vision, and it will take more than words to get there but we now have the road map and I must pay tribute to all our friends and partners, to officers and to all of you who attended meetings and returned questionnaires, and specifically to the Staff Unit for all their energy and dedication which has gone into the preparation of this first ever statutory Management Plan for our Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), exactly forty years to the month since it received its designation. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 has placed a statutory duty on us, which ensures that the plan and its implementation will be closely supported and monitored.

Much has been said and written about our landscape, which never fails to inspire with its ever-changing moods and light, the big skies and low plain so influenced by the seasons and the tides. I have carried with me since childhood, the sights, the sounds, and the smells, the dialect –the very feel of this haunting secret world – wherever I have gone and its hold and pull have only increased. How can you ever forget the spring of the marsh turf and the smell of the pinks; that millerthumb nest in the Old Junction; the fun and games in the dunes and on the banks; the eerie silence of the Holme and Black Dub; snow-capped Criffel; the 'Calley' Railway, hounds and hares all over the place; the bike rides to Bowness and Port; mushrooms from the Grune to Rockcliffe; swimming all the way down from the West Beach to Allonby and in the Waver and the Wampool; brummelling, spud-bashing, rose-hip picking even skating on the Tarns. But never far away, and often within sight – that Solway Coast and its tides, casting that

spell on all of us. And what of all the villages, hamlets and lonely houses, all with their characters and individuals deeply rooted in the land to which they all belong? It is alive and well, despite all the knocks. It will take more than the ravages of foot and mouth, the closure of railways and factories or the proliferation of drugs to see it off. Our land on the contrary will be here long after us and it is our duty to preserve and enhance it as best we can and ensure our children and theirs enjoy it, understand it and cherish it as much as we did and do.

The excellence of the Staff Unit and its leadership, the dedication and enthusiasm of the 80 strong Solway Coast Community Volunteer Group which has just been honoured with the 2003 Cumberland News Countryside Community Environment Award, and the collective wisdom of a multi talented Joint Advisory Committee should ensure that this comprehensive framework for action provides each one of us with the means, the direction and the inspiration to play a realistic part in making this vision a reality. We have a shared responsibility for the future of this very special place.

Bill Jefferson OBE

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(A shared responsibility for a very special place)

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Section I.

Introduction and Vision

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This, the second Management Plan dedicated to the future of Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), seeks to provide the foundation stone for the future prosperity of its nationally important landscape. Within the landscape lies the heart of a unique character. It is steeped in a rich and long history, it contains a wealth of wildlife and habitats which are of international and national importance, it embraces a broad canvas of architectural and settlement styles and, when all of these elements are brought together into its rich patchwork, it supports and fulfils the life of its wild, domesticated and human populations.

1.1.2 The Solway Coast is in itself an evocative title; it conjures up pictures of wind, storm, tranquillity and calm. The landscape character of the Solway Coast is also about this dynamic, climatically driven element that changes minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour. A low coastal plain is always dominated by 'big skies' that create a stunning and ever changing backdrop to the landscape. The tidal influence within the estuary provides a further dynamic that occurs twice daily and transforms the sand and mudflats and saltmarsh landscape that in turn drives the spectacular movements of bird-life around the estuary. Under the influence of weather and tide the coastal landscape is being eroded and created, adding to its unique and constantly changing character.

1.1.3 Further inland, the farming community has created a patchwork of fields and hedge boundaries, drainage ditches and settlements. Within this patchwork are the remnant areas of lowland peat bogs that have withstood land improvement and peat harvesting and are now under sympathetic management and are once again growing and thriving because they can retain their precious rainwater.

1.1.4 The Solway Coast AONB is undoubtedly a special place and its special qualities must be encapsulated into a document that describes its present needs and conveys, through a vision, what the area will be like in 2030. Simply, the aspirations of this generation delivered to the next.

1.1.5 This Management Plan attempts to unravel the special characteristics that when combined make the Solway Coast so evocative and unique. It deals with a wide range of subjects from wildlife conservation to socio-economics with an overriding focus that anchors everything to landscape quality and its conservation.

1.1.6 Before dealing with the various subjects it is worth considering where we are and where we came from as the managing Partnership of Solway Coast AONB. Much detail is given in Section One of the plan about the history of management and the structure of the managing partnership but what the reader must understand is that the Partnership is extremely young (see section 2.3), is finding its feet, and that a wealth of baseline data needs to be assembled within the first two years of this plan to provide strong arguments about the protection, restoration and enhancement of the AONB.

1.1.7 The publication of this, the first statutory Management Plan for the Solway Coast AONB comes in the same year as the 40th Anniversary of its designation as an AONB. For 32 of these years the area had no formal management except a planning interest in its protection from the three local authorities who have the statutory remit for its protection. The AONB came under part time management 8 years ago (1996) under the auspices of Solway Rural Initiative (SRI). Only 2 years ago (2002), under guidance from the Countryside Agency (CA) was a comprehensive staff unit formed (4 full time dedicated staff) and this staff unit was placed under the 'umbrella' of a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) formed six months later (2002).

1.1.8 The development of the draft of this Management Plan, and its subsequent stakeholder and public consultation, could not draw on the luxury of statistics dedicated to the area that lies within the AONB boundary, although data sets do exist for the three local authority areas. However, the plan identifies strengths and weaknesses and addresses the shortfalls in our knowledge to create a set of needs and developments that will provide the foundation of our project led outputs over the next five years. The first two years of plan implementation will create a wealth of data about the present condition of the AONB; this

pioneering work will culminate in actions through projects to deal with the varied and diverse subject matter.

1.2 OUR VISION FOR 2030

1.2.1 The dynamic nature of management planning must also take into account changes in local circumstances, changes in local, regional, national and international agenda and policies. This means that once published, a Management Plan cannot remain anchored to its publication date. Subsequently plans must be adapted and reviewed to justify their position as the lead document for a specific set of objectives concerning the future of a geographical area.

1.2.2 Solway Coast AONB Partnership will work toward an achievable vision for the Solway Coast AONB by 2030. This gives today's managers of the area a full generation to provide a sustainable future for the landscape its wildlife, local communities and visitors.

The vision below sets out how the AONB will look and feel if it were 2030. It is aspirational and should be seen as our ultimate goal.

- **Landscape**

The landscape is of extremely high quality with all land in good condition. Farming has diversified in such a way that more sustainable and traditional practices have returned. All field boundaries have cobble walls or mixed species hedgerows with mixed age standard trees that are managed in a traditional way. Pastureland is not over-grazed, and silage is taken during early and late summer. Saltmarshes, sand dunes and raised mires are enjoyed by people and due to current sympathetic management and a variety of restoration projects, are recovering historical levels of biodiversity. They support a greater biodiversity than ever before due to effective land management techniques and restoration schemes. Coastal edge erosion due to global warming has been defended in a sympathetic way that both protects infrastructure and looks natural. A Trust owns and manages much of the common land within the western sector of the AONB. A countryside management service

inclusive of rangers, education officers and volunteers, maintain and give advice with regards to landscapes and infrastructure.

- **Natural Heritage**

The Solway Firth encompasses a large range of habitats in turn supporting a wide range of resident and migratory species of wildlife. Land management regimes on natural areas are sympathetic to the needs of both agriculture and wildlife. Localised flood defence and land drainage schemes have been re-developed to retain water within raised mires. With the support of Agri- Environment funding, areas of marginal pasture have been allowed to re-wet to create breeding habitat for waders. A strong partnership has grown between land managers and conservation bodies. In the past 25 years 8 new breeding bird species have returned to the Solway. 12 New Local Nature Reserves have been created within the AONB over the past 25 years. The AONB boundary has been extended to include areas of landscape improved to an exceptionally high quality over the past 25 years.

- **Cultural Heritage**

The story of the Solway Coast is well known and respected through the provision of access to sites with quality interpretation and visitor services. Landscape evolution through mans endeavour is the connecting theme that has created a context for visitors to stay and explore the area. All conservation areas have been protected and restored through AONB driven grant schemes and design guides. Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail has had its 500,000th walker and has just celebrated its position as a world leader in sustainable tourism. The local Haaf Net fishery enjoys its status as a Heritage fishery and adds much to the local colour of the area. The town of Silloth has been included within the AONB on the merits of its Victorian heritage and high quality built environment.

- **Communities**

Villages look and feel part of the AONB through high quality signage and appropriate infrastructure. Developments over the past 25 years have been sympathetic to the local vernacular style. Rural businesses have developed without compromising the integrity of settlements. Redundant buildings have been brought back into use. A range of new buildings have been built in an eco-friendly way that is not discordant within the landscape. There are thriving rural business partnerships delivering economic growth through traditional crafts, IT based products and consultancies. Services are delivered to settlements through an integrated 'mobile services and market unit' run by local people. The diversification of farm incomes has created employment within rural areas and traditional farming practices have founded and drive a local rural skills base. Local people are being employed locally and are beginning to have an adequate supply of local housing through new initiatives. Village pubs are thriving through the development of Solway produce menus, as are village schools through the provision of opportunities for young families. The local wild shellfish gathering operation enjoys the cooperative approach to gathering and marketing Solway produce along with its employment and economic benefits.

- **Tourism and Recreation**

Solway Coast has regained its position as a traditional seaside destination, with most visitor activity centred on Allonby and Silloth. Windsurfing, sea angling and kite flying all have national centres within the AONB. Passive recreation has grown due to the marketing and implementation of 'Quiet Lanes' where cyclists, walkers and horse riders enjoy the tranquillity of the area. Tourism related businesses have grown to include stables, cycle stores and repairers and outdoor clothing outlets. Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail has had no impact on the landscape but has provided an opportunity for new visitors to see the AONB and all its treasures. New visitor attractions have grown including local produce markets and the annual country fair rivals the larger national shows in terms of visitor numbers. Visitors come all year round to see the seasonal bird spectacle on the Solway but especially in winter. Bird watching tours are provided by local businesses. Tourism and

recreation is marketed through the Solway Coast brand image forming part of a Cumbrian family of destinations. The Solway Green Awards Scheme continues to flourish with its 500th recipient of the locally coveted Oystercatcher Award. A recent survey has shown that the traditional outdoor sector of the tourism market prefers the experience of AONBs to any other area.

- **Transport and Access**

The Rights of Way network is maintained to a high standard, and 'Quiet Lanes' are classified throughout the area. Highway signage is traditional, villages have their own traffic schemes, and street lighting is traditional and low key or non existent, fitting in with the landscape. The Local Transport Partnership manages the bespoke public transport provision through the voice of local people, benefiting both locals and visitors. Services are brought into settlements through a local service vehicle that forms the nucleus for small-scale street and village green markets. Provision has been made to park cars away from the frontages of houses within certain settlements, thus securing aesthetic gains. Annual surveys maintain the sustainability of the transport network, where problems are identified and damaged infrastructure is replaced.

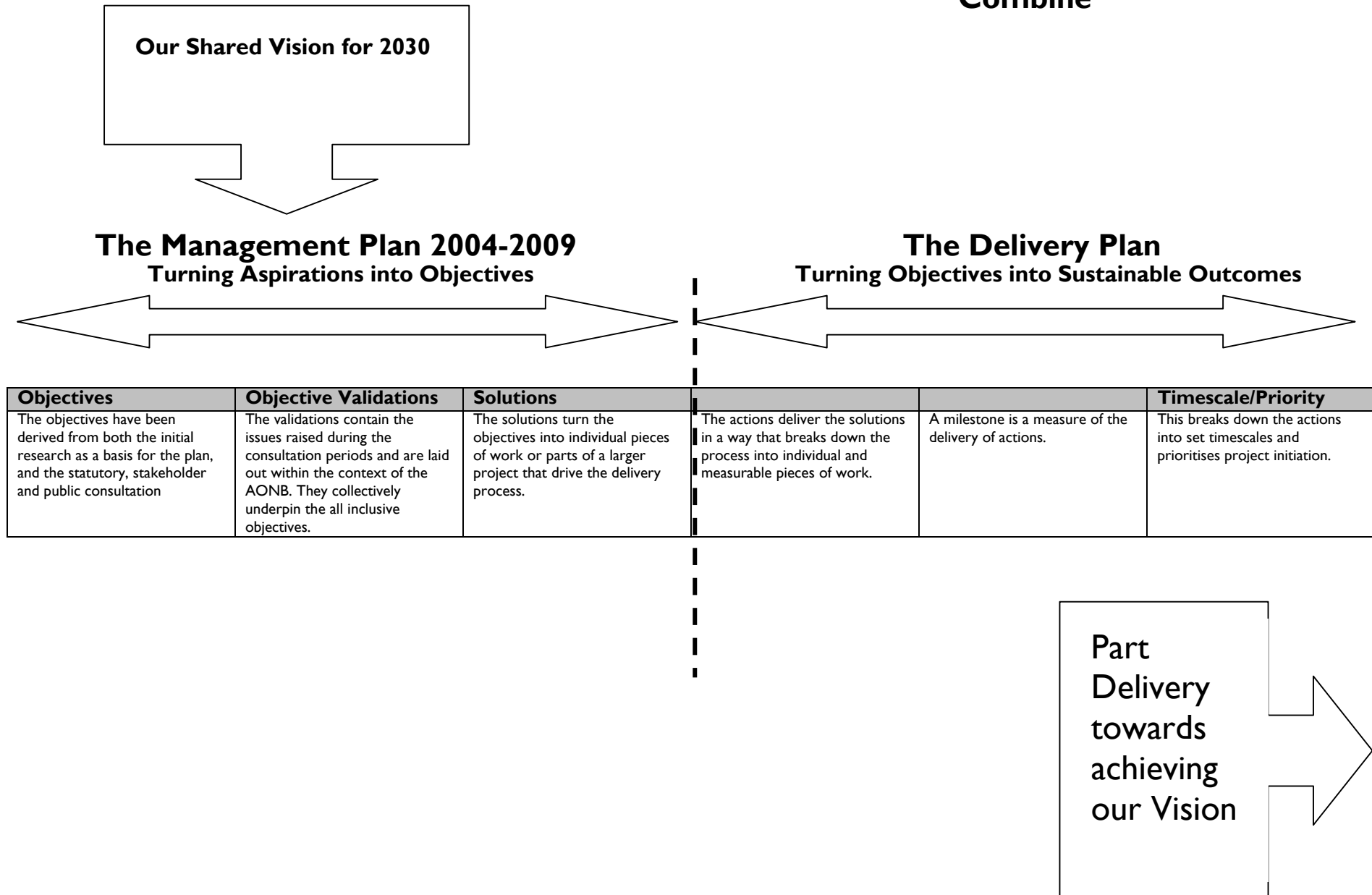
- **Education and Information**

The special qualities of the Solway Coast are well understood, especially by land managers, local people and visitors. Communities celebrate their part within the AONB through carnivals, interpretation through art and other community based activities. Local schools and colleges use the area as a resource and fully understand the status of the area along side the National Park. The Solway Coast Discovery Centre continues in its role as a gateway to the AONB and much information can be obtained from it. Colleges and schools enjoy the resource available to them through both the Discovery Centre and its associated field visits driven by teacher and student packs. Through education and interpretation the AONB is well known, it is respected, but above all it is understood.

I.2.3

This vision was derived from the information presented in the next few sections. It turns the aspirations into management objectives. The objectives then drive the delivery plan. See diagram I

How the Management and Delivery Plans Combine



Section 2.

A Landscape of National Importance

2.1 WHAT IS AN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY?

2.1.1 The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 provided for the designation of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Following this initial legislation 50 years ago, AONBs have received piecemeal management and a range of management solutions driven by local authorities. In 2000 the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) created legislation for the better protection of AONBs. This new Act consolidates and strengthens the 1949 Act concerning AONBs, reaffirming the purposes of designation, and confirming the powers of local authorities to take appropriate action to conserve or enhance the natural beauty of AONBs. The following are the objectives of the relevant sections of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 with regard to AONBs:

Section 82	reaffirms the primary purpose of AONBs
Section 84	confirms the powers of local authorities to take appropriate action to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of AONBs
Section 85	places a duty on all public bodies and statutory undertakers to 'have regard' to the 'purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty'
Section 89	creates a statutory responsibility for local authorities and conservation boards to produce and regularly review AONB management plans

2.1.2 The primary purpose of AONB designation is conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. Government confirmed in July 2000 that since the landscape qualities of National Parks and AONBs are equivalent, the protection being given to both types of area by the land use planning system should also be equivalent. The purpose of AONB designation is as follows:

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

2.2 THE SOLWAY COAST AONB

2.2.1 The Solway Coast became an AONB in 1964 and it has survived relatively unchanged in landscape character ever since. The AONB covers an area of 115 sq km and follows 59km of the Cumbrian coast between Maryport and Rockcliffe. The AONB is located on the Solway Firth estuary on the border between England and Scotland (see figures 1 & 2). The designated area is split into two separate sectors by the exclusion of the town of Silloth. Both sectors are primarily agricultural in character and are remote from large towns and conurbations. The area's international importance for bird life, its value for plant and animal habitats and natural features together with its wealth of important archaeological and historical features, underpin its international, national, regional and local importance.

2.3 THE STATUTORY MANAGEMENT PLAN

2.3.1 Within the CRoW Act (2000) Government has placed a duty on Local Authorities to produce a statutory Management Plan for all 37 English AONBs by March 2004.

2.3.2 The Management Plan for the Solway Coast AONB is a key strategic document that will assist in coordinating all those involved in the management, use and enjoyment of the area. The Countryside Agency have set out guidelines for the 'new' Management Plans in their publication Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (A Guide) published in 2001 (CA23). It describes the following broad elements to produce a successful plan, i.e. one that:

- Highlights the special qualities and the enduring significance of the AONB, and the importance of its different features;
- Presents an integrated vision for the future of the AONB as a whole, in the light of national, regional and local priorities;
- Sets out the agreed policies incorporating specific objectives which will help secure that vision;
- Identifies what needs to be done, by whom, and when in order to achieve these outcomes;
- Identifies the means by which objectives and actions will be reviewed.

2.3.3 The three local authorities, Allerdale Borough Council (ABC), Carlisle City Council (CaCC), and Cumbria County Council (CCC), the Countryside Agency and Solway Rural Initiative (SRI), a voluntary sector organisation, have agreed, through a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) signed in 2002, that the Management Plan should be produced and delivered by the AONB staff unit with guidance from a technical officer steering group under the umbrella of the Solway Coast AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC). (See diagram 1)

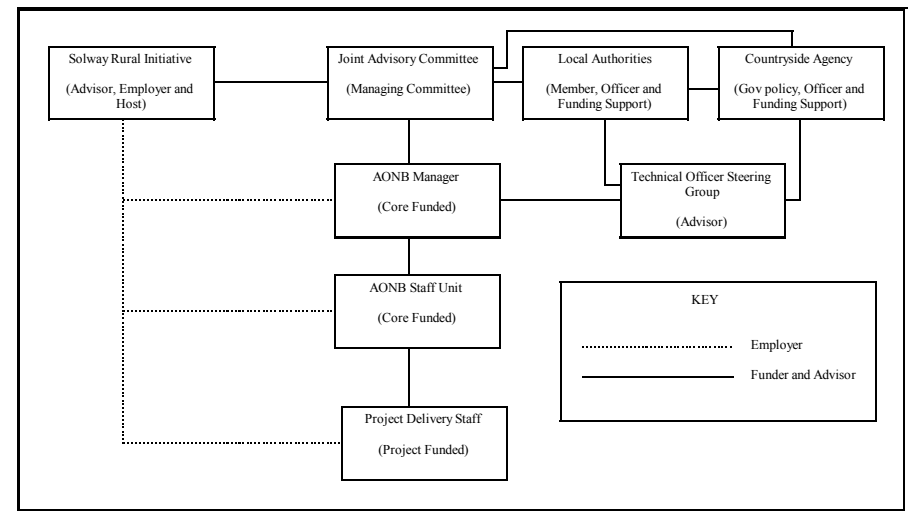


Diagram 2: AONB Partnership Structure

The JAC is made up of all those with an interest in the area. They include Local Authorities, Parish Councils, Community Groups, Statutory Agencies and other public and voluntary sector organisations. The JAC was set up and constituted in 2002 and comprises 28 seats:

Statutory Bodies (4)

Countryside Agency
 Defra
 English Nature
 Environment Agency

Local Government Elected Members (7)

Cumbria County Council (2)
 Allerdale Borough Council (4)

Carlisle City Council (1)
Parish Council Representation (4) Lead Groups
 West One Oughterside & Allerby
 West Two Allonby
 East One Bowness on Solway
 East Two Burgh by Sands
Town Council Representation (2)
 Silloth
 Maryport
Community (4)
 Port Carlisle Community Group
 Lakes Area of Ramblers
 Voluntary Action Cumbria
 Bowness on Solway Community Group
Local Land Ownership and Management Issues (4)
 Country Landowners Association
 Friends of the Lake District
 Senhouse Roman Museum
 RSPB
Director of Solway Rural Initiative (1)
Nominated (Non Voting) (2)
 Cumbria Tourist Board
 Silloth Tourism Action Group

Steering Group

2.3.4 Further to the JAC, the AONB is supported by a technical officer steering group made up of officers from the three Local Authorities and officers from Countryside Agency, Defra, English Nature, Environment Agency and Solway Firth Partnership. This group supports the work of the permanent staff unit.

Staff Unit

2.3.5 The Staff Unit comprises of the AONB Manager, Projects Officer, Development Officer and Administrator.

Core Funding

2.3.6 The partnership is core funded through the Countryside Agency, Allerdale Borough Council, Cumbria County Council and Carlisle City Council. Solway Rural Initiative Limited are the employers and accommodation providers. Solway Coast AONB Partnership, whilst core funded by members of its partnership supports projects through various funding streams available to them. This funding is normally achieved through competitive bidding processes. It is this, 'The Solway Coast AONB Partnership' that will steer, implement and review this Management Plan from its inception to its ultimate completion.

2.4 THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

2.4.1 For the Solway Coast AONB Partnership to produce a comprehensive and effective Management Plan, we needed to consult as widely and comprehensively as possible. The Consultation process began in Autumn 2002 with a series of stakeholder meetings. Five topic groups were identified that encapsulated the many themes that can be linked to landscape these being:

1. Cultural and Natural Heritage
2. Landscape
3. Tourism, Recreation and Access
4. Communities
5. Education and Interpretation

Stakeholder Consultation

2.4.2 Three rounds of meetings were held with each group (15 meetings), with comments and discussion recorded from each session and used in the compilation of the first draft of the Management Plan. Policies and objectives were also identified as a result of the stakeholder meetings and were circulated within the first draft sent out for comment in April 2003. The first draft also included a template for the Delivery Plan.

Partnership Consultation

2.4.3 The Solway Coast AONB Joint Advisory Committee Annual Conference in June 2003 provided another opportunity to consult widely on the draft, with an audience of over 100 delegates who took part in an afternoon of workshops based around the proposed policies and objectives of the plan. Again, feedback was recorded to enable its inclusion in the next draft as appropriate. (See appendix 1 for list of organisations consulted)

Public Consultation

2.4.4 July 2003 saw the launch of the public consultation stage. 5000 copies of 'The Solway Coaster', a new free newspaper for the Solway Coast AONB, were distributed and was dedicated purely to the draft Management Plan. The 'Coaster' contained a questionnaire with consultees being asked to record their views on the significance of the policies and objectives that arose from the first rounds of consultation. Towards the end of the ten week consultation period, meetings were held in Silloth and Bowness on Solway to provide further opportunity for comments. The general consensus indicated that the draft plan contained no omissions. The questionnaires received, provided a clear prioritisation mandate as each was scored as to its relative importance within the whole plan.

Public Consultation Results

2.4.5 From the Policies and Objectives drafted and published in the 'Solway Coaster' the responses received produced a list of perceived priority, in priority order, they are:

1. To preserve and enhance natural beauty.
2. To implement a Quiet Lanes Initiative.
3. To conserve, enhance and in some cases restore natural landscapes.
4. To conserve and enhance archaeological sites.
5. To seek agreements with landowners to secure public access to sites of heritage value and interest.
6. Work with strategic partners in the social and economic development of the AONB.
7. To work with salt marsh guardians and owners to create sympathetic management regimes and habitat creation.
8. To provide themed walks, cycle routes and tours.
9. To provide educational material to visitors, locals and schools.

10. To provide advice and expertise on landscape management.
11. To create new LNRS.
12. To produce a higher standard of village infrastructure, signage and information.
13. To create new LNRS along the sand dune coast.
14. To share in the delivery of the Cumbrian BAP.
15. In partnership with NAP support and deliver projects.
16. To develop a memorandum of understanding with the local haaf netting fishery.
17. To create a context for the interpretation of sites with regard to their period and links to other sites.
18. To create, upgrade and provide a high standard of visitor infrastructure at sites of interest.
19. To create a sustainable tourism brand for the AONB.
20. To secure the 'Peatlands for People' project.
21. To develop an AONB wide interpretive plan.
22. To create a special planning guidance booklet to help developers, planners and others with development plans.
23. To provide themed information across the AONB.
24. To develop the idea of a mobile services unit.
25. To initiate the definitive marketing of the town of Silloth.
26. To establish with partners an annual showcase event for the Solway Coast.
27. To encourage villages to produce a village design statement.

The responses received were very helpful in giving a general indication of the issues that were of greatest concern to those living, working and visiting within the AONB. Results from the consultation can be found in appendix 2.

2.5 THE GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORK WITH REGARD TO SOLWAY COAST AONB

Government, Public Bodies and Agencies

2.5.1 The role of Government with regard to AONBs is wide reaching with much of their responsibility being delivered through the Countryside Agency. Regional Government (Government Office for the North West), has recently collaborated with regional partners including North West Regional Assembly, North West Development Agency, Defra, Countryside Agency and the protected landscapes in the North West Region including Solway Coast AONB. This partnership has signed an accord to work together more closely through a Joint Statement of Intent. A number of national policy documents have clearly identified AONBs as playing a role in the implementation of various actions at

local level. The 'Rural White Paper', the 'Strategy for Rural Tourism in England' clearly identify AONBs as delivery partners. The CROW Act (2000) requires that all public bodies have regard to AONB objectives when discharging their duties. Statutory undertakers and Agencies, other than the local authorities, include: Environment Agency, English Nature, English Heritage, Utility Companies and others. The Countryside Agency plays the most significant role on behalf of Government through elucidation of AONB legislation and policy, AONB specific research, published guidance for AONB Partnerships, officer support to steering groups and JACs and the distribution of Government funding to AONB Partnerships.

Local Authorities

2.5.2 This, the first statutory Management Plan for Solway Coast AONB can only be effective through the incorporation of policies within other regional and local strategic plans and nationally through the Government's Planning Policy Guidance (PPG's) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS's). The Plans of our partners and collaborators (the policy framework) must be placed within and be enhanced by the AONBs own plans and objectives. The statutory remit for the protection and enhancement of AONBs lies with the District and Local Authorities whose boundaries lay within the geographical area designated as AONB. This Management Plan has been compiled on their behalf and as such incorporates their policies. The relationships between strategic partners, with a stake in the future of the AONB, are defined and articulated through their own relevant policy citations in Appendix 3.

2.6 PROGRESS SINCE 1994

2.6.1 In 1994 Solway Rural Initiative produced a 'Statement of Intent' for the future well being of Solway Coast AONB and committed the partnership of Cumbria County Council, Allerdale Borough Council, Carlisle City Council, Solway Rural Initiative and the Countryside Commission to the following objectives:

- I. The appointment of the first AONB Officer.

2. To work towards the publication of the first Management Plan for the area.

2.6.2 The AONB Officer was appointed and employed by Solway Rural Initiative in spring 1996 and publication of the Management Plan, following wide consultation, was delivered in autumn 1998. The 'Unit' was managed by the funding partnership. In 1999 the partnership decided to work toward the establishment of a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) to oversee the work of the staff and steering group.

2.6.3 From 1998, following the establishment of the National Association of AONBs (NAAONBs), the Countryside Agency and the NAAONBs provided joint advice to Government regarding future funding and governance for AONBs. This advice was considered by Government and resulted in a new package for the better protection and management for all AONBs. However, in order to qualify for the enhanced package, all AONBs went through a Governance Review in 2002.

2.6.4 The Review produced the following outcomes:

- Four core staff positions were created, they include:

AONB Manager
AONB Projects Officer
AONB Development Officer
AONB Administrator
- Establishment of a 28 member Joint Advisory Committee
- Core funding committed by the Partnership for six years (initially) to be reviewed after three years

2.6.5 During the Governance Review period the new staff offices and JAC meeting rooms were developed as part of the Solway Coast Discovery Centre (AONB Gateway Site) at Silloth. Silloth lies outside of the AONB boundary but is at the centre of the AONB (see Figure 2).

2.7 REVIEW OF THE FIRST MANAGEMENT PLAN

2.7.1 Following the publication of the first five-year plan for the AONB in 1998, six thematic projects for its delivery were developed:

1. Our Resourceful Land.
2. Wetland Heritage Project.
3. Solway Coast Community Volunteer Group.
4. Solway Settlements Project.
5. South Solway Dunes LNR.
6. Solway Coast Sustainable Experience.

The project statements, their delivery schedules and what has been achieved are summarised in Appendix 4.

2.7.2 The 1998 plan contained 35 objectives or policies and all were encapsulated within the six thematic projects. Some of the objectives have been fully achieved and others partially. Our review has revealed that around 90% delivery has been achieved. The residual outputs will be incorporated within this plan.

Section 3.

A Unique Landscape

3.0 A UNIQUE LANDSCAPE

3.1.1 This section of the plan concentrates on a range of facts and figures that describes both the environment of the AONB and its social and economic status in statistical terms. The information is not exhaustive and represents information that has been gathered with respect to the boundaries of the AONB. More work needs to be done, on many fronts, to refine and add to this data in order to measure the effectiveness of the present plan. As pointed out within the introduction, the first goal of this plan is to create a document concerning 'the State of the AONB' from this we can target our projects more effectively when dealing with the socio-environment.

The Region

3.1.2 The North West Region consisting of Cheshire, Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Cumbria, covers around 14170 sq Km, of that area 4177sq Km or 29% of the region is protected landscape either designated as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (see Figure 1). The region has over 1,000 km of coastline.

The AONB

3.1.3 The Solway Coast AONB lies within the boundaries of Carlisle City Council which covers 12% of the designated land area and Allerdale Borough Council covers the remaining 88%. In total the AONB covers 115 sq Km or 11,500 hectares, within this area agricultural land covers 7,420 hectares or 65% of the total, this includes salt marshes. Raised Mires cover 1,077 hectares or 10%, the remaining 25% covers areas such as settlements, sand dunes, rivers and highways. The AONB extends along 59 km of coastline, just over 5% of the North West region's coastline.

Socio-Economic Profile

3.1.4 Socio-economic indicators for the AONB comprise the following:

- A total population of 8,736 which is the fifth smallest of the English AONBs
- There are 13 Parishes:
Allonby, Beaumont, Bowness, Burgh, Crosscanonby, Hayton and Mealo, Holme St Cuthbert, Holme East Waver, Holme Low, Holme Abbey, Kirkbride, Oughterside and Allerby and Rockcliffe.
- 20% of the population is aged under 16
- 8% of the population is aged 16-24
- 26% of the population is aged 25-44
- 23% of the population is aged 45-59
- 23% of the population is aged 60 and over
- The Mean household Income for the AONB is £25,133 and the Median Income is £19,785. This is the lowest of the North West AONBs but ranks the Solway Coast as 25th out of the 37 English AONBs
- The economic activity of working age people within the AONB (16-64) is:

Part Time Employees	12.49%
Full Time Employees	34.75%
Self Employed	17.86%
Unemployed	2.41%
Full Time Student	1.57%
Retired	15.75%
Student	2.51%
Looking after home/family	5.57%
Permanently sick/disabled	4.94%
Other	2.15%
- 63% of households are within 4km of an ATM machine
- 61% of households are within 4km of a Bank or Building Society
- 63% of households are within 4km of a Doctor
- 41% of households are within 8km of a job centre

- 49% of households are within 4km of a library
- 55% of households are within 4km of a petrol station
- 75% of households are within 2km of a Post Office despite there only being 4 within the AONB boundary
- 77% of households are within 2km of a Primary School
- 59% of households are within 4km of a Secondary School
- 53% of households are within 4km of a Supermarket

Agriculture

3.1.5 Agriculture accounts for 65% of land-use within the AONB and as such is the primary rural economic driver for the area along with tourism. However, tourism cannot be measured in isolation because of the contribution made to the protected landscape through sustainable farming practices. The farming community is still unsettled following the foot and mouth epidemic in 2001 and as such should be seen as being in a period of instability.

- There were 129 farm holdings within the AONB in 2002. There was 133 in 1990, so a decrease of 3%
- These holdings cover 7,420 hectares which accounts for 65% of the total area of the AONB
- Farm holdings less than 5 hectares: 33% in 2002 and 9% in 1990
- Farm holdings 5 to 20 hectares: 12% in 2002 and 19% in 1990
- Farm holdings 20 to 50 hectares: 21% in 2002 and 28% in 1990
- Farm holdings 50 to 100 hectares: 22% in 2002 and 35% in 1990
- Farm holdings greater than 100 hectares: 12% in 2002 and 9% in 1990
- 29% of holdings rear lowland cattle and sheep
- 30% of holdings farm dairy

- 28% of holdings farm beef
- 11% of holdings grow turnip
- 5% of holdings grow potatoes
- 53% of holdings are temporary grass
- 75% of holdings are permanent grass
- 19% of holdings are rough grazing
- 7% of holdings are setaside
- 7% of holdings grow wheat
- 20% of holdings grow winter barley
- 28% of holdings grow spring barley
- Of 6379 people of working age within the AONB, 1276 or 20% find employment within agricultural holdings

Nature Conservation Facts and Figures

3.1.6 The AONB contains a wide array of nature conservation designations reflecting its international, national and regional importance for wildlife and habitats.

- There are 6 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs):
Upper Solway Flats and Marshes – 16165 hectares*
Silloth Sand Dunes and Mawbray Banks 188 hectares
Bowness Common – 806 hectares
Glasson Moss – 226 hectares
Salta Moss – 45 hectares
River Eden Tributaries – 2485 hectares*

* Total area of SSSI including that within AONB

- The Upper Solway Flats and Marshes and South Solway Mosses are Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC)
- The Upper Solway Flats and Mosses are a Special Area of Conservation (SPA) and a RAMSAR site, a designation given to wetland sites and of international importance for birds.

- There are 16 County Wildlife Sites:
Red Rocks, Rockcliffe (Sandstone Cliffs)
Sea Brows (Grassland Slope)
Bank End (Wet Meadow)
Maryport to Allonby Coast (Dunes)
Allonby (Ponds and Scrub)
Cowgate (Marshy Grassland)
Brownrigg Pond (Freshwater Pond)
Skinburness Great Gutter (Tidal Creek)
Saltcoats Pond (Pond)
Newton Arlosh (Disused Railway)
Kirkbride Aerodrome (Wetland)
Kirkbride Railway Line (Grassland)
Low Flood Fields (Heath and Carr)
Drumburgh Track (Grassland and Scrub)
Bowness on Solway Nature Reserve (Gravel Pits)
Bowness on Solway Churchyard (Lichen Habitat)
- There are 3 Tree Preservation Orders:
Marsh House, Burgh by Sands
Dykesfield
Castletown House, Rockcliffe
- There are 4 Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGS):
Beckfoot – Submerged Forest
Rockcliffe – Sandstone Outcrop
Swarthy Hill – Drumlin and raised beach profile
Dubmill Point, Allonby – Raised beach profile
- There are 3 Nature Reserves:
Campfield Marsh – RSPB
Bowness on Solway – Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Rockcliffe Marsh – Cumbria Wildlife Trust
- BAP Priority Species within the AONB are the Natterjack Toad and Grey Partridge.
- English Nature High Priority Species within the AONB are the Oystercatcher, Curlew, Little Tern, Ringed Plover and Skylark.

- The Isle of Man Cabbage is a Nationally Scarce Plant Species.

Key Built and Historic Environment Facts and Figures

3.1.7 There are other sites and buildings of importance that are not quantified here but will be subject to a full survey under the 'State of the AONB' Project.

- There are 8 churches founded in the pre medieval period.
- There are 7 settlements with conservation area status.
- There are 49 Scheduled Monuments including:
16 x Settlements
12 x Towers
9 x Milefortlets
4 x Roman Defences
3 x Roman Forts
1 x Moated Site
1 x Medieval Abbey
1 x Roman Camp
1 x Viking Cross
1 x Saltpans
- There are 7 Conservation Areas within the AONB:
Allonby
Boustead Hill
Bowness on Solway
Burgh by Sands
Dykesfield
Mawbray
Port Carlisle

Tourism Facts and Figures

3.1.8 No tourism surveys have been carried out within the AONB boundary and as such only physical tourism related infrastructure can be measured.

- There are 11 caravan sites within the AONB
- There are no Tourist Information Centres within the AONB.
- There are 159 km of bridleways and public footpaths in the 13 Parishes.
- The Gateway site for the AONB – The Solway Coast Discovery Centre – is located in Silloth-on-Solway.

Summary

3.1.9 The facts and figures provided here have been used and integrated within various sections of the plan but especially within the 'Objective Validations' that follow each of our objective statements within the next section. The data set is incomplete and is addressed under 'State of the AONB' Project.

Section 4.

A Special Landscape

Our Visions

The landscape is of extremely high quality with all land in good condition. Farming has diversified in such a way that more sustainable and traditional practices have returned. All field boundaries have cobble walls or mixed species hedgerows with mixed age standard trees that are managed in a traditional way. Pastureland is not over-grazed and silage is taken during early and late summer. Saltmarshes, sand dunes and raised mires are enjoyed by people and due to current sympathetic management and a variety of restoration projects, are recovering historical levels of biodiversity. They support a greater biodiversity than ever before due to effective land management techniques and restoration schemes. Coastal edge erosion due to global warming has been defended in a sympathetic way that both protects infrastructure and looks natural. A Trust owns and manages much of the common land within the western sector of the AONB. A countryside management service inclusive of rangers, education officers and volunteers, maintain and give advice with regards to landscapes and infrastructure.

The Solway Firth encompasses a large range of habitats in turn supporting a wide range of resident and migratory species of wildlife. Land management regimes on natural areas are sympathetic to the needs of both agriculture and wildlife. Localised flood defence and land drainage schemes have been re-developed to retain water within raised mires. With the support of Agri- Environment funding, areas of marginal pasture have been allowed to re-wet to create breeding habitat for waders. A strong partnership has grown between land managers and conservation bodies. In the past 25 years 8 new breeding bird species have returned to the Solway. 12 New Local Nature Reserves have been created within the AONB over the past 25 years. The AONB boundary has been extended to

include areas of landscape improved to an exceptionally high quality over the past 25 years.

The story of the Solway Coast is well known and respected through the provision of access to sites with quality interpretation and visitor services. Landscape evolution through mans endeavour is the connecting theme that has created a context for visitors to stay and explore the area. All conservation areas have been protected and restored through AONB driven grant schemes and design guides. Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail has had its 500,000th walker and has just celebrated its position as a world leader in sustainable tourism. The local Haaf Net fishery enjoys its status as a Heritage fishery and adds much to the local colour of the area. The town of Silloth has been included within the AONB on the merits of its Victorian heritage and high quality built environment.

4.0 LANDSCAPE HERITAGE

4.1.1 Landscape and habitat are inextricably linked, and within this section an attempt has been made to deal with those elements that are landscape topics and those which are based on habitats. Both natural and man made landscape elements are dealt with in turn creating a set of objectives for future management and a set of solutions to deliver those objectives. The process is both validated with regard to the broad objectives and the solutions are set against the priorities identified during the consultation process.

4.1.2 The Solway Coast AONB lies wholly within the 'Solway Basin' Landscape Character area (Countryside Character, Volume 2, 1998). It consists of a broad coastal plain fringed by the low, rugged and relatively remote coastline of the Solway Firth, with open panoramic views to the Dumfries and Galloway coast and inland to the High Fells of the Lake District.

4.1.3 The Solway Coast AONB contains a rich wealth of special landscapes created by the interaction of human activities and natural processes. (The geographical distribution of the landscape types are shown in Figure 3) To the west sand and pebble beaches are backed by sand dunes. These in turn make a transition to the more stable dune heathland. This dune system is valuable throughout its length for nature conservation and two extensive sections of the dunes between Mawbray Banks and Silloth have been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The sand dunes are an important breeding site for the rare natterjack toad. Cumbrian shores provide a refuge for a third of the UK population.

4.1.4 Within the eastern end of the AONB saltmarshes are backed by agricultural land reclaimed from both saltmarsh and lowland raised mires. Extensive salt marshes lie between Skinburness and Rockcliffe, the seaward edge being characterised by dendritic creeks and low soft river cliffs. The bright green of the salt marsh dotted with the pinks and whites of native marsh plants, contrasts widely with the grey and sandy colours of the estuary.

Looking north, the foreshore of the Solway Firth is dominated by large expanses of intertidal mudflats broken by a shifting network of minor channels with the salt marsh behind. These are habitats which are designated as SSSI and cSAC. The mudflats and salt marsh are both important for supporting huge numbers of waders and over wintering wildfowl giving them the designation of RAMSAR and SPA. The presence of wildfowl adds greatly to the zone's natural character, and the expansive area of the saltmarshes create a feeling of remoteness and wilderness.

4.1.5 Behind the immediate coastal fringe, the low-lying plain is relatively flat and open to the prevailing south westerly winds that throw or skew the local hedges and hedge trees. The agricultural land of the AONB is typified by small fields and many of these small enclosures date back to medieval times, thus linking the Solway landscape character to human endeavour. Dairy cattle graze in improved pasture fields, that are bounded by drainage ditches, small streams, low wind-swept hedges and stone faced Cumberland banks or 'kests'. Raised Mires, a type of peat bog, known locally as 'mosses' contrast in colour and texture with the pastures. The mires are of national and international importance as a rare habitat, and cover a large tract of land at the heart of the AONB. The raised mires of Glasston Moss and Bowness Common and the remnant raised mire at Salta Moss are all fragmented parts of a collection of similar sites across the Solway Plain. Collectively they form the most extensive area of intact lowland raised mire in Britain.

4.1.6 Further inland, towards the inner or landward boundary of the AONB, the land becomes more undulating and is managed mainly as pasture. The field pattern is rectilinear and the fields become larger and bound by fences, or hedges with some hedge trees. Broadleaved woodland is restricted mainly to shelterbelts. Agricultural land occupies the largest area of the AONB, containing a number of distinctive villages acting as a backdrop to the more dramatic views of the coastline. It has managed to retain much of its traditional character although pressures to intensify agricultural production are taking place. Taken in turn these landscapes create a patchwork of habitats and wildlife refugia across the AONB, which are either in competent management or are the subject of survey or emerging management plans. Most of the land outside of private

ownership has common grazing rights or 'stints' (grazing rights based on headage or number of animals rather than acreage or land area) to 'turberry' (rights to extract peat for burning fuel).

4.1.7 The lack of large-scale industrialisation and absence of main roads and rail communication have left the AONB relatively unspoilt, giving it a timeless and secluded quality with a special character of wild remoteness and scenic beauty. Whatever makes the AONB special, management is needed to help maintain, restore and enhance those unique qualities of local, national, and international recognition that this landscape has received, and certainly deserves. The intricate mosaic of these varying landscape characteristics presents a complex and interesting backdrop. Loss of this variety, or a change in the scale of things would significantly alter this unique character. The 'natural heritage' of the AONB, its flora, fauna, geological and geophysical features, are key factors in forming a sense of place in the Solway Coast. Raised Mires, Salt Marshes, Sand Dunes and Agricultural land are all important components of the landscape, and are also the habitats of some of the species characteristic of the Solway Coast, such as the natterjack toad, sand leek, heather, oystercatcher and little tern, to name but a few.

4.1.8 Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), should underpin an estuary wide initiative to tackle sea level change, coastal processes and will link to the recommendations of both shoreline management plans for England and Scotland. Under the auspices of the Solway Firth Partnership, the Solway Coast AONB will provide input to any future decision making processes.

Landscape Heritage

Key landscape characteristics

Estuarine intertidal mudflats and salt marshes, with wintering and migrating waders and wildfowl
Fragmented areas of relatively intact raised peat bogs, or lowland raised mires, of high nature conservation value
Flat to gently undulating lowland plain, intensively managed predominantly for pasture
Medium to large fields enclosed by windswept hedgerows and stone faced hedge banks
Dense network of highly managed rivers, streams and ditches
Limited woodland cover
Rich historic, cultural and archaeological heritage
Victorian coastal resorts, small market towns and villages. Considerable variety of building styles and materials
Primary transport routes on rectilinear pattern of roads and lanes.
Raised beaches, dunes, pebble beaches and sandy shores

Our vision for landscape can be partly achieved using the actions within the natural and cultural heritage sections (Sections 4.1 and 4.2) of the plan. In order to measure how effective our work has been in achieving the vision we must first set about collecting a wide range of information about the landscape character of the AONB. Everything from the built environment through to the number of hedgerow trees needs to be known in order to measure effectively whether our work has improved the landscape as a whole. Once this baseline has been established we can then move towards our vision in a quantitative way.

Objective LC1 . Recognise and protect those parts of the landscape that contribute to the overall identity and character of the Solway Coast AONB, including all the landscape areas, intertidal mud flats, traditional buildings and farmsteads.

LC 1 Objective Validation

Changing agricultural practices in both grassland management and animal husbandry have an impact on plant communities, on the habitats of nesting birds and on the visual character of the Solway farmland.

Hedgerow neglect and removal, drainage of wetlands and ponds, lack of appropriate planting of new native woodland and management of existing farm woodland.

Natural regeneration of woodland on raised mires, alters the physical and ecological characteristics of such areas (This is largely due to anthropogenic lowering of the water table, although a natural bog would have sparse birch cover).

Highly managed river systems and the problems of eutrophication threaten the mosses and wetland habitats.

Caravan sites and development between Silloth and Maryport and the increase in the popularity of the Solway Coast to the day visitor has increased recreation pressure on the foreshore. Damage to the dune system from the misuse of four wheeled drive vehicles and unrestrained parking is evident.

Coastal erosion, deposition and the rise in sea level is recognised as a long term cause of change. Recent erosion of the soft raised beach between Mawbray and Maryport and of the sand dunes has resulted in the commissioning of research on sediment transport and the preparation of a strategy for coastal flood management.

Development pressures include small but significant proposals for residential development in a number of the villages, and in isolated locations in the open countryside, in which local vernacular styles have not been adopted. This includes pressure for further ribbon development. Conversion of agricultural buildings to non agricultural uses, e.g. residential, alters the character of farmsteads and villages.

Derelict former airfields at Anthorn, Kirkbride and Silloth have either been developed or are under consideration for development and the communications station and wind farm developments have an impact on the character of the area.

Solutions

- Promote increased awareness of local landscape character to maintain local distinctiveness in development plans, landscape management plans and enhancement schemes.
- Promote, maintain and restore the rural, farmed character of the countryside, resisting developments which would detract from this character
- Promote awareness of the setting of the AONB, and views to and from it, when considering development and landuse change proposals on sites adjacent to the AONB.
- Enhance the landscape by repairing damage and mitigating the effects of existing intrusive developments.
- Identify and implement methods to monitor landscape.
- Promote greater public awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the Solway Coast landscape.

- Develop an enhanced awareness and understanding of the Solway Coast landscape by achieving AONB wide coverage of local landscape character assessments using a consistent methodology and guidance to help manage change.
- To consider extending the boundary of the AONB to encompass Silloth, Wedholme Flow, Drumburgh Moss NNR and County landscapes adjacent to the AONB.
- To undertake a common land survey, involving landowners, PCs, EN, NT , etc, to assess its biological and landscape potential.
- To consider the extent of the MOD landholdings and a scheme to remove redundant structures and roads.

Natural Heritage

Natural Heritage:

The coastal margin or foreshore is composed of rocky scour areas with gravel spits surrounded by mud and sand-flats that are intersected by river and creek channels. Sandy beaches are linear and are usually backed by shingle and pebble ridges. Exposed bedrock 'new red sandstone' outcrops are very localised and only occur in two areas.

Grazed saltmarshes dominate the inner part of the estuary with some areas defended from inundation by the sea creating coastal grassland. Active sand dunes, truncated by coastal highway consist of mobile dunes, dune heathland and dune grasslands.

Low cliff features occur along the coastal edge where boulder clay drumlins, salt marshes and sand dunes have been eroded by wind and tide.

Once extensive raised mires are screened by birch woodland. Some of the mires are active and retain their boggy character whilst others are drier and have a heath like appearance. All of the mires have been modified through agricultural land claim.

Agricultural land consists of rough and improved pasture enclosed by a broad range of field sizes and patterns. A mixture of hedgerows, stone walls and modern fences provide field boundaries, some are paired with steep sided drainage ditches. Hedgerow trees and small deciduous woodlands occur in small pockets. The land topography varies from flat to mildly undulating throughout the area.

Our vision for natural heritage can be achieved through clearly targeted Agri-Environment schemes both within and adjacent to the AONB. Landowners will be encouraged to re-wet land that will provide for wildlife and create new habitat. Land drainage and flood defence will be encouraged to work together to provide mutual benefits. Local communities and voluntary groups will be encouraged to adopt land as Local Nature Reserves as the culmination of individual restoration projects. Greater access and education with regard to natural heritage will be developed.

Objective NHI: To secure sympathetic management and Local Nature Reserve status for the South Solway Dunes coast line.

NHI Objective Validation

The western sector of the Solway Coast AONB has a thin ribbon of coastal sand dune intersected by golf courses, pasture and hard (man made) coastal defences. A particularly important objective for nature conservation is the enhancement of this narrow coastal strip. Around 85% of the dunes are registered grazing commons. However, no grazing has been undertaken since 1997 because of the hazards of high-speed traffic along the B5300 coast road with regard to unfenced stock. English Nature provides advice on the wildlife management of the three SSSI's existing in the dunes and foreshore between Dubmill Point and Silloth.

The dunes are subject to a range of destructive activities such as ad hoc car parking, scrambling with quads and bikes, walking, mussel fishing activities and other erosive pressures.

Car parking track-ways and vehicles generally in the dunes are a major concern. None of the car parks along this stretch of coastline are official, apart from the one at Mawbray constructed in 2003, and do not fall within the remit of any statutory undertaker. Highways Department, Allerdale Borough Council and Cumbria County Council have no legal remit to maintain these car parks. Thus, there is a problem of dealing with at least five unofficial car parks along this stretch of coast. Unrestricted recreational access to the beach and dunes by locals, visitors, and travelling people cause disturbance to wildlife, and potential for dune fires. There is piecemeal enforcement of the law for the travelling people, and related problems of environmental health, litter, fires, and damage to the SSSI's.

Grazing is a particularly important method of management of the dune system. At present there is a widespread problem of under grazing which encourages coarse grasses and scrub invasion. Common graziers who wish to resume grazing on the dunes are constrained by the volumes and speed of traffic on the unfenced B5300 coast road. The erection of fencing to contain the animals would also impose a constraint. This would need careful planning and management, due to the time required resolving this issue. Also, with the implementation of the CRoV Act, part of the SSSI has been identified for possible designation as open access land. Any fencing of management works within this area need to cater for the new designation.

Most of the dune areas are relatively stable and are naturally colonised by gorse. This has mixed implications for management as its spread will decrease the extent of valuable dune vegetation communities and large stands of gorse will become a fire risk. Conversely gorse bushes provide protective nesting habitat, which is rare on the coast. The main issue, therefore, is to find a balance between maintaining it as a valuable habitat and preventing its encroachment onto other dune habitats of importance, such as dune heath and dune grassland. A base line measurement of gorse has begun at Mawbray Banks, and future management for its removal and cyclical cutting within the Banks will be proposed in the present Delivery Plan. The main constraint for managing the 44 hectares of SSSI is staff resources, as the AONB Unit does not have extra staff resources and would lead to a pressure on staff time. The problem could be resolved with the introduction of a 'Ranger' or Countryside Management Officer.

Associated with the dunes are linear strips of marginal rough grasslands and wetland areas adjacent to the eastern edge of the coast road, and these provide roosting sites for wading birds at high tide and a valuable habitat and buffer to the adjoining pasture land. The areas are also important habitats for natterjack toads.

Mussel fishing is a local economic activity, which is undertaken by several groups. They have enjoyed historic access across the dunes at certain locations. These groups have no formal rights of access but their activities to and from the mussel beds need managing as it is damaging to fragile dune habitats.

The extraction of sand and gravel from the beach has previously taken place for agricultural usage. There is less replenishment of beach material now (with increasing erosion and shifting beach material) and further extraction, even on a small scale is not considered good practice. Fly tipping is also a problem in unofficial car parks, tracks and dunes.

Drystone walls, mainly in disrepair, are attractive features of the coast and extend from farmsteads at Mawbray and Allonby. Some have been replaced by barbed wire fences which catch litter and present an unattractive view of the coast. Elsewhere, field boundaries to the B5300 comprise of gorse and windblown hawthorn hedges often gapped and strung through by barbed wire.

Solutions

- To create a 'Landscape Trust' consisting of land owners, graziers/commoners, Allerdale Borough Council, the AONB Partnership, Local Community and relevant Parish Councils to lead as a single body.
- Restore and maintain dune habitats along the AONB coastline.
- Promote the provision of coordinated, consistent and high quality conservation and give funding advice to farmers, landowners and managers.
- Set up a grazing scheme within the AONB managed land in consultation with the Landscape Trust
- Maintain and enhance populations of rare and uncommon species present.
- Develop appropriate site management to safeguard the dune habitat.
- Promote the uptake of land-based skills such as dry stone walling and hedge-laying to farmers, landowners and land managers, through open days and funded courses.
- Restore unnatural erosion within dune areas where appropriate, using sand trapping and other techniques.
- Allow safe public access and public appreciation and interpretation.
- Further sand dune conservation by using sites for educational and scientific study.

Objective NH2. To work with salt marsh guardians, owners and users to create coordinated and complimentary management regimes and habitat restoration throughout the saltmarsh system

NH2 Objective Validation

The marshes in the Solway Coast AONB lie in an unbroken coastal ribbon from Rockcliffe marsh in the east to Skinburness marsh to the west. All of the marshes are grazed and have been for around 1000 years. This grazing regime has created a vegetation type and habitat structure enjoyed by wintering wildfowl, breeding waders and ground nesting passerine birds. Further improvements for nature conservation have been made through the implementation of numerous Agri-Environment schemes. The grazing is managed by private landowners and marsh committees with the notable exception of the RSPB on Campfield Marsh. As well as being grazed the marshes are shot over by the South Solway Wildfowling Association who have a very comprehensive conservation regime. The marshes are subject to other recreational activities such as birdwatching, walking, and even mushroom picking.

On the more extensive marshes such as Rockcliffe, Burgh, Newton Arlosh and Skinburness there are three distinct vegetation zones corresponding to high, middle and low marsh. This tiering effect is due to sea level change at about 10-8,000 years ago. The outcome is that different parts of the marsh are sea washed for longer periods than others due to the variation in the height of tides. To the seaward edge of the marsh the plants are more salt tolerant than those at the back of the marsh. This has created three separate habitats and landscape types.

The marshes can be dangerous places for the inexperienced due to tides and soft mud and as such little has been done to provide access. However, access is needed by the graziers, wildfowling and walkers (CRoW Act 2000) and much could be done to provide good infrastructure. Also, better information would allow the public to access the marshes when the dangers of high tides are minimal. The AONB are working in partnership with the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail to provide tide tables.

Associated habitats include brackish pools and ditches in the upper marsh areas. These are frequently an ideal breeding habitat for natterjack toads and great crested newts in the spring and summer and feeding ponds for widgeon in the autumn and winter. Monitoring of these sites by the Herpetological Conservation Trust is carried out annually and a Conservation Officer was appointed for Cumbria for 2002-2004. Further liaison and monitoring with HCT, the marsh committee and the AONB is required.

Disturbance of wildlife on the marshes can be a problem, and dogs can be an issue to ground nesting birds on the upper marshes between May and June, and to feeding wildfowl and roosting waders in winter. They can also be a major problem to farmers by 'worrying' sheep and cattle.

The shooting of wildfowl is carefully controlled through the South Solway Wildfowler's Association, who regulate and monitor their activities and minimise the occurrence of illegal wildfowling. Wildfowling management will be kept under review to ensure that the national and international wildfowl interests in the Solway are maintained, and enhanced where possible.

Management for nature conservation is currently being undertaken by a number of bodies including English Nature, Environment Agency, RSPB, CWT, AONB and the marsh committee. There is no site ranger or warden system for the salt marshes other than that provided by the RSPB at Campfield Marsh and seasonally at Rockcliffe. The AONB Unit will work with and input to site management statements produced by English Nature.

Solutions

- Promote the provision of coordinated, and consistent high quality conservation and funding advice to farmers, land-owners and managers.
- Improve appropriate signage for access to the marsh, and interpretation and infrastructure for the marshes.
- Support the existing wildlife management networks and establish new ones where appropriate, to promote information exchange and cooperative working.
- Consider a survey of degradation of the saltmarshes including tipping, signage overload, seats, car parks and carry out an enhancement project.

- To investigate access problems in the salt marshes and possible conflict of interest with nature conservation and wildfowling when 'open access' is adopted, and progress solutions where necessary.

Objective NH3. To work with the 'Peatlands for People Project' and encourage the implementation of existing designated wildlife area management plans and local management agreements.

Objective Validation

The Solway Coast is rich in Lowland Raised Mires. For thousands of years, the remains of mosses and other plants have slowly been accumulating into domes of thick peat. Habitat loss has reduced the original lowland mires from its original 95,000ha of mires in the UK to just 6000ha. Of the remaining 11,415 ha of mires in England, about 58% is found within the Northwest Region by area and over 80% by number. The mires have been subject to man made drainage, reclamation for marginal pasture and peat extraction for hundreds of years. The outcome is that very few acres are in favourable condition and most have taken on a heath – like condition. 32% of the Solway's raised mires have been lost to these practices between 1948 and 1978.

Over the past 20 years much work and investment has been carried out to conserve the mires and in doing so large areas have been designated as National Nature Reserves with other areas in less favourable condition as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. 'Wetting Up' old degraded areas is proving successful with work still ongoing by English Nature, RSPB, CWT and private landowners.

A new project 'Peatlands for People' aims to restore the South Solway and Duddon raised mires as healthy and sustainable features of our landscape and to re-create the habitats associated with raised mires like open water, fen/carr and reed beds.

At the present time the raised mires are only enjoyed by very few people and are very secluded putting the mires out of sight and mind. Raised mires in good condition are colonised by fringing birch and alder woodland that acts as a screen. The 'Peatlands for People' project is looking to redress this and create interesting walks and interpretation, providing a resource to people through their wildlife and history.

Solutions

- To help provide management solutions for Salta Moss in line with its designation as SSSI
- To provide appropriate AONB based interpretation.
- To create and promote access and education opportunities within the raised mires.

Objective NH4. To promote the restoration and management of traditional farm settlements, farmland, land management techniques, field boundaries, ponds, orchards, and woodlands.

Objective Validation

Agriculture on the Solway Plain has made numerous changes over the years to become more efficient and remain economically viable. These changes have often been to the detriment of landscape conservation.

The underlying geology of the Solway Coast is primarily glacial drift deposits that are rich in clays. These clay deposits are badly drained and this has created a trend towards artificial land drainage to make new pasture whether it is marginal or of a higher grade.

Large areas of important habitat have historically been lost through the drainage of peat mires and the claiming for pasture of areas of salt marsh, such as in the vicinity of Calvo, Newton Arlosh, between Whitrigg and Dykesfield and at Rockcliffe. Recent losses have occurred with changes to more intensive systems of farming notably through the switch from hay to silage making and through the use of herbicides and fertilisers to improve yields of grass and arable crops. This has had the dramatic effect of reducing wildflower and grass species diversity originally present in old hay meadows with a corresponding loss of wildlife (butterflies, birds, mammals, etc.).

The small fields in the AONB are not ideally suited for modern farming methods and machinery, and there is the concern for the removal of hedgerows and the traditional sandstone gate 'stoops' to allow use of modern equipment.

The management of hedgerows and hedgerow trees is of vital concern for nature conservation interests and BAP targets. Around 70% of hedgerows are not species rich and dominated by Hawthorn. The use of flail cutters on hedgerows during early autumn is of great concern as it reduces a hedgerow's potential as a feeding area for wintering birds. Flail cutters are also indiscriminate and take out valuable tree saplings which would enhance the wildlife potential as well as the aesthetic value of the hedgerow. Although many farmers and landowners regularly maintain hedgerows by cutting and/or laying there are many examples of gapped and badly managed hedges. Uncut hedges are generally seen as 'bad housekeeping' but in fact provide a vital habitat for declining species. Hedges cut on a rolling 3 year programme will allow ample bird/insect and small mammal habitat, 'whilst being kept in check'. Likewise dry stone walls provide an over wintering habitat for invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles and small mammals.

Solutions

- To carry out a hedgerow survey with regards to the new Hedgerow Regulations.
- To promote the uptake of current and future incentives, embodied in specific Agri-Environment schemes, which encourage farmers and landowners to conserve and enhance the landscape. i.e. arable buffer strips, winter stubble retention.
- Identify, support and improve existing highway verge management for nature conservation.
- To promote the skills of traditional Cumberland hedgelaying through introduction of competitions and land-based courses.

Objective NH 5. To engage farmers, landowners and Parish Councils in a scheme to create water retention within the AONB to provide habitat for wildlife, recreational provision and to combine flood defence and land drainage practices to help create new wetland areas.

NH 5. Objective Validation

The AONB is crossed and bordered by a large number of streams and the major water courses of the rivers Waver, Wampool, Eden and Esk. Wetland habitat has progressively been drained to improve pasture although substantial areas of farmland are crossed by open drainage ditches of potentially great wildlife and habitat importance. For example certain brackish pond and ditch environments are known to contain breeding colonies of natterjack toads.

Elsewhere, wetland meadows have been lost and water courses generally have been degraded for wildlife value through intensive management, nutrient enrichment from fertiliser run off and loss of bankside vegetation. The ditches are managed to reduce flood risk and, therefore, usually impoverished as a wildlife habitat.

The Environment Agency are now actively promoting conservation measures and an otter study was undertaken along the Rivers Waver and Wampool.

The restoration or reinstatement of village ponds brings wildlife into the community for all to enjoy. The AONB Unit has restored five village ponds since 1996 and wish to carry on this important work with village communities.

Much wetland habitat has been lost due to land drainage to improve pasture. This process has had a major effect on wet meadows throughout the AONB. The habitat is extremely scarce with few open water areas and even fewer reed beds. Reeds are now confined to mire edges and drainage ditches. These habitats provide for a wealth of bird and insect species creating a spectacle for the visitor. Land management at the RSPB Nature Reserve at Campfield provides the only large scale initiative to reverse this major loss of wetland habitat.

The control of silage effluent and slurry contamination is also of concern and requires vigilant monitoring. Farmers should be encouraged to comply with Defra codes of Good Agricultural Practice.

Solutions

- Influence the work of the Environment Agency with regard to flood defence works throughout the AONB.
- Promote good practice with regard to water management to land owners and farmers through advice on Agri- Environment schemes.
- Seek to create large wetland areas through drainage management and landscaping within semi improved agricultural areas.
- To provide help and advice to Parish Councils with regard to village pond reinstatement and improvements.

Objective NH 6. To engage landowners and farmers in a scheme to provide 20% more tree cover within the AONB by 2030 through planting shelter belts, growing 'in hedge' standards and planting stands of native broadleaf woodland

NH 6. Objective Validation

Only small areas of woodland now occur in the AONB together with individual trees in the hedgerows. Trees also form interesting wind sculpted avenues such as those between Calvo and Abbeytown, at Anthorn and near Campfield Farm on the Cardurnock Peninsula and occur as groups in association with churches and farmsteads. The few remaining trees and woodlands have become important landscape features due to their scarcity in the AONB. Most of the trees are mature or over mature with little if any planting.

Woodlands only occur as small plantations of mixed coniferous deciduous woodland at Priesthill north of Beaumont and around Castletown House at Rockcliffe and trees generally are poorly managed. The only remaining woodland in the AONB is that of birch and willow scrub fringing the raised mire areas. No commercial woodland occurs within the AONB. Trees in hedgerows include, beech, ash, sycamore, blackthorn, hawthorn and oak.

The greatest concern with trees in the AONB is their lack of management and age structure. No, or few, younger trees have been planted and as mature trees continue to decline in numbers through age and neglect, the landscape becomes more open. It is important to achieve the correct balance of both individual trees and small copses. Overplanting could radically alter the area's character, whilst inaction would result in a less attractive and interesting landscape. Grant schemes, through Cumbria Woodlands, are available for tree and hedge planting and their future management, either as part of a whole farm scheme, or as community or individual projects.

The AONB between Maryport and Silloth is characteristically almost devoid of trees due to exposure, although mature pines growing on the coastal edge at Silloth are a distinct and attractive feature. Trees elsewhere in this section would appear inappropriate both in terms of the area's character and exposure. The remaining section of the AONB in addition to the harsh climate between Skinburness and Rockcliffe is more variable in character and in its ability to 'absorb' tree planting. The low lying flat mosslands are characteristically lacking in hedgerow trees and correctly reinforce the feeling of a relatively new landscape. The sheltered drumlin area to the north of Burgh by Sands, however, currently supports fine hedgerow tree specimens and these areas should be considered as priority areas to target both replacement and additional hedgerows trees. Tree groups emphasising farmsteads and churches should also be carefully considered for thinning and replanting to ensure continued tree cover in appropriate locations.

Solutions

- To promote the management of hedgerows to achieve BAP targets and landscape value.
- To promote the improved management for conservation, and recreation, where appropriate, of farmlands, hedgerows, ponds, orchards, woodlands.
- To promote the uptake of current and future incentives, embodied in specific Agri-Environment schemes, which encourage farmers and landowners to conserve and enhance the landscape.

4.2 Cultural Heritage

4.2.1 Cultural Heritage can be revealed through both landscape features and written history. It is important that this Management Plan encapsulates man's influence on the landscape and reveals how human endeavour has left its signature on the Solway Coast. Whilst it is not necessary to understand both the physical and human influences on the landscape in order to enjoy it, a greater understanding of what created it will enrich its appreciation. In order to make decisions on what to enhance, conserve or restore, we must first understand its distinctive characteristics and how it evolved.

4.2.2 The historic environment is multi-faceted and embraces man's activities from, in the case of Solway Coast, the first colonisers following the last ice age at around 10,000 years ago up until the present day. Evidence of man's influence includes archaeological monuments and find-spots, palaeo- environmental deposits such as peat, relict sites surviving as earthworks or ruins as well as historic buildings and landscapes still in contemporary use, such as farms and field boundaries, industrial and military structures, commons and the World Heritage Site of Hadrian's Wall. Today's Solway Coast landscape is to a great extent determined by historical patterns of land use and way of life. The historic environment also has important cultural associations with social history, folklore, arts and literature.

Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site

4.2.3 Hadrian's Wall Military Zone has been designated as a World Heritage Site. This runs in association with the wall between Beaumont and Bowness on Solway then follows the Cardurnock coastline crossing Moricambe Bay to Grune Point and Skinburness/Causeway Head. The designated area then follows a zone overlapping the Sand Dune Coast and the adjacent agricultural land to Maryport and includes the Roman forts at Beckfoot and Maryport together with associated Roman towers and fortlets.

Cultural Landscape Heritage

Prehistory

The Solway Coast landscape is relatively young at around 10,000 years old only existing since the last ice age. Following this, the first colonisers were the hunter-gatherers of the Mesolithic (middle stone age) period. These people were nomadic and evidence for their existence is very scarce within the Solway area. Next came the Neolithic period (new stone age) and with them came the first forms of farming. They also brought the first permanent settlements. Bronze Age activity, mainly in the form of burials and metal hoards is evident in several parts of the AONB. During the Iron Age farming became more complex and trading patterns were established. During this period a tribe of ancient Britons called Carvetii were responsible for much of the archaeological evidence we find today.

Roman

The Romans arrived in the area in 71-72 AD and then advanced into southern Scotland. It is their influence and military management that provided the largest impact on the Solway landscape over the next 400 years. The Roman subjugation of the Carvetii, created local trade to develop and new settlements to be established to supply the Roman military presence. Under the Emperor Hadrian, about 122 AD, instructions were given to build a stone military defence wall from Corbridge to Bowness on Solway. Free standing towers and mile-fortlets extended along the coast from Bowness on Solway to Maryport with major garrison forts at Beckfoot and Maryport. Although the wall is no longer visible west of Carlisle, its stone is very much in evidence in local buildings, such as Drumburgh Castle. Today the western end of Hadrian's Wall forms the most important monument within the area and it's associated corridor or military zone. The wall has been designated a 'World Heritage Site' and as such is very well protected from abuse and development.

The Dark Ages

After the Romans left Britain at the beginning of the 5th century until the latter part of the 12th century, the Solway suffered a series of invasions and colonisations shifting from Britons, Anglians, Scandinavians, Scots and Normans. During the 5th-7th century the area belonged to the British kingdom of Rheged, but by the mid 7th century it was under the control of the Northumbrians, a people of mixed Anglian and British origins. However, there is little evidence of their presence apart from place names such as Burgh (fort).

Viking

The Dark Ages were followed by the occupation in the 9th and 10th centuries of Irish-Scandinavians (Vikings), perhaps with the acceptance of the local inhabitants. This again created changes in settlement pattern and farming practices.

Medieval

Under William and Henry I, medieval baronies were formed with the AONB lying in the barony of Allerdale from the Wampool south- eastward and the barony of Burgh-by-Sands to the North. The Monastic period was established shortly after the Norman Conquest and Holme Cultram Abbey (Abbeytown) was founded in 1150 by the Cistercian monks. The monks had extensive holdings on both sides of the Solway, but within the AONB they created the greatest level of change/ human influence on the landscape.

Post- Medieval

The era of peace came to an abrupt end in 1296 when the Scots invaded. In the 14th century the characteristic contribution to the landscape were the fortified towers of Newton Arlosh and Burgh-by-Sands churches. Today there is the modern monument to Edward I, the 'Hammer of the Scots' who died on Burgh marsh in 1307 on one of many expeditions to Scotland across the Solway waths. Between this date and 1603, when the union of the Scottish and English crowns took place, border reiving took place with continual raiding and fighting over the border and the 'Debatable Lands'

Industrial Period

In 1823 a new harbour was attempted at Port Carlisle, which was to link with a canal to Carlisle and then to Newcastle. However, the port was not successful and the canal was filled in to become the bed of a railway. The railways were the legacy of the 19th century, but are now all dismantled.

20th Century

In the 1940s came the construction of airfields at Silloth, Kirkbride and Anthorn, the old hangars are still used for local industries, and the Ministry of Defence still uses the communication masts at Anthorn which dominate the surrounding landscape. Modern farming techniques over the last 40 years have had smaller scale influences on the landscape character of the area.

Objective CHI. To protect, maintain and where appropriate promote a greater awareness of the AONB's Cultural Heritage.

CHI Objective Validation

Much of the archaeological heritage of the Solway Coast is either unexcavated or has been subject to reuse of materials. To bring the history of the area to life one must look further than the individual monuments and seek to describe what lies below and above the surface of the landscape.

The most important monument within the area is the western end of Hadrian's Wall and its associated corridor or military zone (Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site). The policies and actions outlined within its current Management Plan (2002-2007) are fully endorsed and underpinned by the Solway Coast AONB Partnership.

Other sites of interest are not so clearly defined as Hadrian's Wall but are no less important as historical monuments. The influence of the Cistercian Monks at Holme Cultram (Abbeytown) and the remains of the Abbey can act as a focus and much can be revealed through the identification of village names, settlements and other sites as being associated with Holme Cultram.

Roman Period

Hadrian's Wall Corridor, Mile Fortlets, Roads

Viking Period

Haaf Netting (living archaeology), Hog Back Gravestones

Medieval Period

Holme Cultram Abbey, Place names and buildings, Salt Making, Field Systems, Drainage Systems, Road Network

Industrial Period

Canal System (now derelict), Railway System (now derelict)

This suite of interest allows for a broad-brush set of interpretation and the spatial context of the remains creates a wide geographical area of interest.

The monuments themselves must be conserved and maintained to provide a set of high quality sites, in terms of their fabric, the visitor infrastructure and their interpretation.

This high standard should also be identifiable as being part of the interpretation of the Solway Coast AONB and will link individual sites with others across the area. The archaeological/historical period should be themed and coded with regard to the interpretation, thus giving the visitor both orientation and a theme to follow.

The AONB partnership will support the future well being of the local Haaf Net fishery with regard to its heritage value.

Solutions

- To create a context for the interpretation of the sites with regard to their period and links to other sites.
- To create, upgrade and provide a high standard of visitor infrastructure at sites of interest.

- To link interpretation to the story underpinning the Solway Coast Discovery Centre exhibition and its associated literature.
- To produce, with local communities, a higher standard of village infrastructure such as signage and information to help distinguish villages within the AONB from those without.
- To seek agreements with landowners to secure public access to sites of heritage value and interest.
- To develop a memorandum of understanding (support) with the local Haaf Net fishery and seek its official status as a 'Heritage Fishery'.
- To create a special planning guidance booklet with partners, to help developers, planners and others with the development of villages within the AONB.

Section 5.

A Living Landscape

Villages look and feel part of the AONB through high quality signage and appropriate infrastructure. Developments over the past 25 years have been sympathetic to the local vernacular style. Rural businesses have developed without compromising the integrity of settlements. Redundant buildings have been brought back into use. A range of new buildings have been built in an eco-friendly way that is not discordant within the landscape. There are thriving rural business partnerships delivering economic growth through traditional crafts, IT based products and consultancies. Services are delivered to settlements through an integrated 'mobile services and market unit' run by local people. The diversification of farm incomes has created employment within rural areas and traditional farming practices have founded and drive a local rural skills base. Local people are being employed locally and are beginning to have an adequate supply of local housing through new initiatives. Village pubs are thriving through the development of Solway produce menus, as are village schools through the provision of opportunities for young families. The local wild shellfish gathering operation enjoys the cooperative approach to gathering and marketing Solway produce along with its employment and economic benefits.

Solway Coast has regained its position as a traditional seaside destination, with most visitor activity centred on Allonby and Silloth. Windsurfing, sea angling and kite flying all have national centres within the AONB. Passive recreation has grown due to the marketing and implementation of 'Quiet Lanes' where cyclists, walkers and horse riders enjoy the tranquillity of the area. Tourism related businesses have grown to include stables, cycle stores and repairers and outdoor clothing outlets. Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail has had no impact on the landscape but has provided an opportunity for new visitors to see the AONB and all its treasures. New visitor attractions have grown including local produce markets and the annual country fair rivals the larger national shows in terms of visitor numbers. Visitors come all year round to see the seasonal bird spectacle on the Solway but especially in winter. Bird watching tours are provided by local businesses. Tourism and recreation is marketed through the Solway Coast brand image forming part of a Cumbrian family of destinations. The Solway Green Awards Scheme continues to flourish with its 500th recipient of the locally coveted

Oystercatcher Award. A recent survey has shown that the traditional outdoor sector of the tourism market prefers the experience of AONBs to any other area.

The Rights of Way network is maintained to a high standard, and 'Quiet Lanes' are classified throughout the area. Highway signage is traditional, villages have their own traffic schemes, and street lighting is traditional and low key or non existent, fitting in with the landscape. The Local Transport Partnership manages the bespoke public transport provision through the voice of local people, benefiting both locals and visitors. Services are brought into settlements through a local service vehicle that forms the nucleus for small-scale street and village green markets. Provision has been made to park cars away from the frontages of houses within certain settlements, thus securing aesthetic gains. Annual surveys maintain the sustainability of the transport network, where problems are identified and damaged infrastructure is replaced.

The special qualities of the Solway Coast are well understood, especially by land managers, local people and visitors. Communities celebrate their part within the AONB through carnivals, interpretation through art and other community based activities. Local schools and colleges use the area as a resource and fully understand the status of the area along side the National Park. The Solway Coast Discovery Centre continues in its role as a gateway to the AONB and much information can be obtained from it. Colleges and schools enjoy the resource available to them through both the Discovery Centre and its associated field visits driven by teacher and student packs. Through education and interpretation the AONB is well known, it is respected, but above all it is understood.

5.0 COMMUNITIES

Background

5.1.1 Higher priority is now given to the needs of local communities in Cumbria and protected areas. The Solway Coast AONB is a living and working landscape, therefore, we must balance the requirement for a sustainable, prosperous local community with the conservation and enhancement of the AONB.

5.1.2 This Management Plan is not a strategy for tackling social and economic needs, but it will enhance the work of others and share in the delivery of those needs where relevant to the purpose of the designation.

5.1.3 Within the geographical area of North Allerdale a strategic market towns partnership has been created called the North Allerdale Partnership (NAP). The Solway Coast AONB Partnership has identified this organisation as being crucial to the delivery of socio economic objectives within the AONB. The NAP and the AONB Partnership will jointly deliver projects and funding with regard to the AONB. The social and economic needs of the Solway Coast AONB include:

Services, (Shops, Pubs, Post Offices)

Transport
Health Care
Training Opportunities
Employment
Rural Broadband
Micro Business Support
Village Waste Recycling
Village effluent treatment

Communities

There are 12 villages within the AONB that each have over 125 inhabitants. These larger villages are neighboured by about 25 smaller villages and hamlets. Some of the villages have a unique vernacular style dependant on the date of their foundation, whilst others share architectural styles. Some communities are not settlement based but lie within the rural hinterland and include individual farms, caravan sites and homesteads. These satellite dwellings have an important role to play in the overall community of the AONB and each owner will have an affinity with either a related village settlement or town. Solway Coast AONB is a large linear tract of land running along the coastal fringe and is linked via a typical coastal highway. However, a number of other settlements are located within the inland area of the AONB. This situation creates problems in terms of both communication and service provision within the AONB.

Businesses

Businesses within the Market Towns provide essential services to the rural hinterland. In the case of Silloth there is also a service to local tourism, however, this is on a seasonal basis. Both the visitor and local people are serviced through this commercial centre. Whilst most of the businesses within Silloth and Allonby are tourism oriented they will undoubtedly be enhanced by new tourism initiatives and the extension of the tourism season. Commercial business such as manufacturing, have been decimated recently through factory closures on the old airfield site.

Farming

The farming community is probably the most important economic driver within Solway Coast AONB, as it supports jobs, creates income and influences the landscape we all enjoy. It is without doubt the most influential rural activity within the AONB. Farmers must be encouraged and helped to create and provide the best possible plans for their individual holdings. This is probably our greatest challenge in that both increased farm incomes and environmental gains should go hand in hand.

Village Infrastructure

The built environment within Solway Coast settlements varies considerably from those built around industry and others built around farming. Village establishment dates vary from Roman times around 2000 years ago to some villages being created as recently as the early 19th Century, for example, Port Carlisle. This situation has created a range of village styles with varying attributes. Some villages have a traditional village green and in the case of Allonby it stretches for about 40 acres. In Bowness on Solway, however, no such feature exists. Any development of the village environment should be subject to local needs and aspirations, which should form part of the Parish Plans process. Solway Coast AONB will act on the Parish Plans process but will also encourage individual villages to produce a village design statement; this will provide local planning authorities with the views of the community when considering new planning proposals. This will hopefully secure the long-term integrity and character of the individual villages.

Fishing Industry

On this, the English side of the Solway Firth, the commercial harvesting of mussels is governed by Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee (CSFC), and any fisherman wishing to gather mussels by hand must apply to them for a permit. Currently this application is non discriminatory, therefore, any fisherman that applies to CSFC for a permit must be granted one. However, this means that CSFC have the ability to record catch figures from such fishermen. Mussel stocks are monitored by CSFC thereby giving them a management tool that enables them to direct fishermen to areas only containing mature stocks. This means that the wild fishery is harvested in a sustainable way. A new mussel fishery regulating order will undoubtedly control the fishery much more effectively and will stop the environmentally damaging processes that are currently happening. Once in place the regulating order should provide a firm foundation for the development of a local based mussel fishing economy. Solway Coast AONB will encourage both the environmental good practice in the management of the fishery and will also work with stakeholders to secure a sustainable local industry.

Facilities and Services

Over the past five to ten years, services within villages have been eroded considerably, from village post offices to public houses. This situation has a significant impact on village communities and as such provides the main topic for regeneration through community needs analysis. Other services include provision for children through play areas and for all age groups through the establishment of village green spaces. Public transport, and social services such as health care, have also been depleted over the past decade.

The services available to residents are extremely varied in terms of their provision. In fact services are still being lost and it is essential that this trend be reversed. Solway Coast AONB will work alongside Parish Councils especially in the production of Parish Plans through the Vital Villages Initiative and will embrace the needs of local people and help find solutions and mutual benefits. Services such as schools, libraries, health care, training, accommodation and tourism information must be enhanced. Most town services such as council, police, childcare, library etc can be provided through mobile links. It is the integration of all services on to a single vehicle where overheads could be kept to a minimum, therefore making services sustainable, and would encourage a wide range of users to use a single facility perhaps on a weekly basis. It is without doubt an essential service for those finding it difficult to get to service centres to have services provided within their own settlement.

Objective CI. To work with partners to promote the sustainable social and economic development of the AONB.

CI Objective Validation

Parish Councils and their associated communities are currently being encouraged to produce a Parish Plan. These plans will set the agenda for communities within the AONB and will cover most of their socio-economic and recreational needs inclusive of a Village Design Statement.

Solway Coast AONB will support NAP and Solway Rural Initiative in the Solway Treasury, a keep money local initiative, and will market it through service providers. Solway Treasury asks visitors and residents to purchase goods from local shops and markets. This creates a sustainable local economy and can contribute to local landscape benefits e.g. brash waste from woodland coppicing used to create sand trapping hurdles along the coastline. Recently this scheme has been promoted in greater North Allerdale but the tourist base for this area is centred on the Solway Coast and the level of understanding and participation in this scheme can be developed within the AONB for the combined benefit of both local business and the local environment.

Traditionally Solway villages stage an annual carnival event usually managed, funded and organised by the local communities. Solway Coast AONB Unit will endeavour to provide a greater awareness of the AONB through these village festivals.

Solutions

- To provide encouragement to the Market Towns Initiative through working closely with the North Allerdale Partnership and appropriate partners, with regard to the AONB.
- To create a Solway Coast transport strategy sympathetic to the needs of both local people and visitors. (See also Transport & Access, Section 5.3)
- Retain and enhance the provision of, and access to, facilities and services as part of programmes to promote the conservation and enjoyment of the environment of the Solway Coast.
- To support the sustainable implementation of a new regulating order with regard to the Solway Coast Mussel Fishery and to encourage sustainable growth of the local shell fish industry.
- To incorporate and enhance published and emerging Parish Plans where they are compatible with the AONB designation
- To produce with local communities, a higher standard of village infrastructure such as signage and information. (See also Education and Information Section 5.4)

5.2 Tourism and Recreation

Background

5.2.1 As part of the area's designation as an AONB, there is no statutory requirement for the provision of tourism and recreation. However, it is increasingly recognised that rural tourism is seen as part of the answer to supporting the rural economy and communities. Tourism and Recreation is dealt with in this plan as it does/could have an impact on landscape.

Rural tourism is, without doubt second only to farming with regard to its ability to provide jobs, create local income and to generally drive the rural economy. As such tourism indeed plays a substantial part within the overall economy of the Solway Coast AONB and is a major employer and generator of income. Hotels, guesthouses, caravan parks and farmhouses provide for the visitor but all have the capacity to accommodate more. Without doubt the greatest pull for the visitor is the 'seaside' and its traditional visitor base. Thirty years ago the town of Silloth-on-Solway, which lies at the heart of the AONB, was a thriving seaside resort much on the lines as for example the coastal towns of North Wales. However, the demise of the rail link and the rise in popularity of cheap foreign holidays has had a severe impact. Day trippers such as car tourists, walkers and other users make up the transient visiting population and they too make a contribution to the tourism economy of the AONB. This traditional tourism base exists despite the obvious low-grade infrastructure that exists to support them such as coastal car parks, access and interpretation.

There are many recreational activities carried out within the AONB including: walking, riding, cycling, angling, bird watching and wind surfing. However, none of the above activities, with the exception of walking, has a high quality infrastructure to support it. The AONB, whilst being used for recreation, is largely not under threat from recreational 'pressure'. There is a large recreational capacity that is under exploited and could therefore be enhanced or extended. Promotion of the area through tourism marketing that focuses on passive recreation should be developed using sustainable criteria. Measurement of use, erosion, disturbance and abuse must be monitored and quantified so that future 'informed' management decisions can be taken with regard to sustainability.

We believe that most visitors to the area are unaware that the Solway Coast is a protected landscape with a wealth of natural and cultural assets. Our new agenda seeks to address this lack of awareness through the creation of new initiatives.

Balancing Conservation and Recreation

5.2.2 The pressure of recreation is of major concern, both with the threat posed to the existing environment and also the prospective damage that may be caused in the future. The Solway Coast has been used for informal recreation since the 1850's, and in the past this was limited to day trips by railway, mainly to Drumburgh and to holidays at Silloth and Allonby. Chalet and caravan sites began to appear along the Sand Dune coast between Maryport and Silloth during the 1950's and 1960's as increased leisure time and enhanced mobility resulted in an increase in visitors to the area particularly by car.

Sand Dune Coast

Although it is acknowledged that tourism forms an important part of the local economy, it is also apparent that some current recreational uses, particularly within the dunes are not sustainable. For many years locals and tourists have been enjoying what the Solway Coast AONB has to offer, without damaging the environment. In most cases impact is minimal where recreation involves quiet enjoyment. However, it is almost inevitable that there will be some degree of conflict arising between enjoyment of the countryside and its conservation. The dune coast is the most intensively used recreational area in the AONB. Both the dunes and foreshore are popular with tourists and locals and this has progressively caused adverse effects on the dune habitat, wildlife and aesthetic value. Although the dunes and foreshore are generally used for informal recreation on foot, there is over frequent usage for unauthorised vehicle access. Consequently the South Solway Dunes Restoration Project that began in 2003 aims to achieve a sustainable balance of use between nature conservation, recreational use and landscape quality. The Dunes Coast has proved to be one of the most popular areas with visitors and the problems their vehicles create give a seasonal pressure on the sensitive dune vegetation which, once removed, leaves the surface sand exposed to both tidal and wind erosion. Dune vegetation is not vigorous enough to be able to re-establish itself from one year to the next. This Management Plan seeks to implement a policy of recreational control aimed at reducing the impact of extensive visitor numbers and their cars.

Salt Marsh Coast

The Salt Marsh Coast is extremely valuable for its wildlife and sensitive habitats and as such noisy recreational pursuits are highly incompatible with it. Much of the Salt Marsh is common land, yet it does not have unrestricted public access as a means of minimising such disturbances to the area. By routing cycle and walking routes away from the more sensitive areas, more passive tourism can be encouraged, and interpretation provided as to the reasoning behind such a move. As with a lot of issues within the AONB, information is key to the education of both local people and visitors as to the fragility and value of our habitats.

Hadrian's Wall Path, National Trail

The opening of the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail in May 2003 has given the AONB Management team the added responsibility and duty to monitor the impact that increased visitor numbers may have on wildlife, farm businesses and the possible threat to the tranquil lifestyles of the villages lying on the trail route.

Raised Mire

In terms of vegetation and wildlife, the raised mires are sensitive habitats. Tourism and public access has to be finely balanced and at levels that will not compromise the future of the mires. Access to the mires is varied, some have no access routes whilst others such as the RSPB's land at Bowness Common is available throughout the year through the existing Rights of Way network.

Agricultural Land

Within the AONB, the agricultural zone is currently little affected by tourism and recreational usage, and as such potential does exist for careful visitor management that would ultimately benefit both the visitors to the area and also the farmers. Bed and Breakfast accommodation is not in abundance within the AONB, and combined with the attractiveness of the area to tourists who come for scenery, wildlife and history, this would provide an opportunity for farm based accommodation and recreational activities. Existing footpaths through farmland currently only receives local use and by combining these old tracks and minor lanes there is an opportunity to develop horse riding and cycling which would encourage small scale farm activity holidays.

Objective T&RI. To facilitate appropriate levels and types of recreation and sustainable tourism which are compatible with AONB Landscapes.

T&R I Objective Validation

Providing and Managing Opportunities for Recreation

The Solway Coast AONB is well used by a large number and wide range of user groups. Many of these people are local and/or regular users who are familiar with the area and as such have no great need for visitor information. The AONB suffers from a lack of co-ordination in the planning and provision of recreational facilities. An example of this is that walkers, cyclists and other such users expect promoted routes to have high standards of maintenance, promotion, signage and facilities along the routes. Residents and town councillors in North Allerdale want a purpose built cycle path between Silloth, Allonby and Maryport to boost tourism. The cycle path would hug the coastline between the three towns and would be the first purpose built cycle path on the Solway Coast. A cycle route already exists between Silloth and Maryport as part of the 260 mile Cumbria Cycle Route, but cycling enthusiasts say the route is too dangerous. Solway Rural Initiative commissioned a study in 2000, to look at the development of cycle routes and the promotion of cycle tourism and its role in playing a significant part in the conservation and economic regeneration plans for the Solway Coast AONB. The findings of this report will drive our solutions.

Visitor Facilities and Services

The provision of facilities and countryside services within Solway Coast AONB is relatively sparse, except for the newly opened gateway site to the AONB, the Solway Coast Discovery Centre. Until the Centre opened in August 2002 there was no major visitor facility to interpret the Solway Coast AONB and provide information about where to visit within it. There are no Tourist Information Centres wholly within the AONB although there is Maryport, Silloth and Carlisle on the boundaries. There is considerable opportunity to enhance the provision of information to visitors through these information centres and in addition through shops, post offices and other outlets within local villages.

Countryside Furniture

Any area geared up for tourists and recreational activity runs the risk of being subject to unwanted countryside furniture – signs, litter bins, car parks, seats, fences, gates. This infrastructure must be implemented in a way that is not discordant with the landscape.

A Showcase Event

The Solway Coast has a number of small scale annual events such as village fetes and carnivals. However, the whole area does not have a showcase event where the people who live, work and enjoy the area can fully participate. By initiating some form of Country Fair encompassing agriculture, countryside recreation and commerce under the branding of Solway Coast AONB, it would benefit both the AONB in terms of awareness and recognition, and also the local economy in terms of income generated over its duration. The event could be staged over 3-4 days and be centred around Silloth on Solway that is traditionally a market town and has the capacity to absorb a large visitor influx.

Solutions

- To identify the types of visitors to the AONB and in doing so develop and maintain a strategic understanding of recreation and access activity and management needs and priorities.
- To measure the impact of tourism on fragile environments by monitoring erosion, disturbance & abuse.
- To monitor and measure the impact of Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail.
- To minimise any damaging impacts of recreation activities and facilities or tourism development within the wider countryside.

- To promote and support environmentally sustainable management of sites used for recreation including historic landscapes.
- To help maximise the benefits of sustainable recreation activity to local communities and the rural economy.
- To promote responsible behaviour by all visitors to the countryside.
- To develop strategic recreational opportunities to strengthen links between town and country.
- To promote awareness of the AONB through the initiation of a showcase event for the Solway Coast.

Objective T&R 2. To create a sustainable tourism brand for the AONB and to promote the AONB through sustainable tourism marketing strategies.

T&R 2 Objective Validation

Branding & Image

The Solway Coast landscape with its many attributes is still not recognised as a tourism and recreation destination except by those with traditional seaside aspirations. Solway Coast AONB has much to offer the specialist visitor but the very nature of what we have needs to be packaged and given polish. A brand image of a green, wild, attractive and above all a rewarding destination is paramount to its success. The Solway Coast is well known as a distinct landscape but little effort has been made over the years to develop and present a definitive brand and image of the area. One of the objectives of this plan is to overcome this long-standing problem in conjunction with other strategic partners who share the same aspirations. The image of the Solway Coast AONB is undersold, and as such is not accepted as a destination in its own right as is the Lake District National Park. Consequently there is extremely limited marketing of the Solway Coast area on a regional and national scale.

Green Audit Scheme for Tourism Businesses

Within the AONB a number of caravan parks and chalet parks have been developed over the past 50 years. These businesses make a contribution to the AONB through visitor spend within the villages and towns and also provide employment on the parks themselves. Some of the parks have been designed in an environmentally sensitive way whilst others have a significant impact along the coastal fringe. Solway Coast AONB will endeavour to both enhance the number of visitors using these parks whilst providing an incentive to lessen their visual impact on the landscape. This has been achieved in part through 'Solway Greens Award Scheme' whereby individual parks are given incentives to create shelterbelts of trees and are asked to provide traditional thresholds/gateways to their sites. This scheme will be enhanced and further developed to provide marketing for the sites through the Solway Coast Green Audit.

Sustainable Recreation

The AONB is perfect for the enjoyment of sustainable recreational pursuits such as riding, walking, cycling, birdwatching, etc. A range of guided tours for the user would provide the visitor with a range of information and would also provide the impetus for longer stays within the area.

Solutions

- To create a sustainable tourism brand for the AONB and have it adopted by Cumbria Tourist Board
- Promote the AONB through sustainable tourism marketing strategies.
- To identify opportunities for farm based recreation and accommodation (sustainable farm diversification).
- To continue promotion of the Solway Greens Awards Scheme (Environmental Audit) to tourism related businesses within the AONB.
- To create and support infrastructure development to support passive recreational activities such as walking and cycling.
- To provide themed walks and cycle routes that encompass the natural and cultural heritage of the AONB.
- To enhance provision of information to visitors through the Solway Coast Discovery Centre and through local outlets.

5.3 TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

Background

5.3.1 The rapid growth in road traffic over the last few years and the continued growth expected in the future bring with it the inevitable increase in road development works, congestion, noise and disturbance to rural areas. The overall approach is to encourage more people to leave their cars at home and to cycle or walk to school, work, shop and for leisure by placing increased priority on them through infrastructure development, promotion and publicity. The Solway Coast AONB has a network of highways and byways with the highest grade being 'B'. This is confined to the B5300 coast road running from Silloth to Maryport. The remaining highways are C grade or less. They could all be classified as 'country lanes' and as such they have a distinctive character. The lanes also have a historical and cultural significance as drove roads, links to settlements, military roads and estate perimeters. The verges, hedge kests and the hedges themselves have a traditional Solway character. Ditches are also a feature of some of those lanes especially in the

low lying areas where deep ditches are used to drain land and to create flood relief channels due to the tidal influence on low lying land. Some lanes are very winding with many blind bends whilst others are straight and were probably established during Roman military occupation. This network goes through all of the places of interest within the AONB and as such it is seen as a resource for recreational activities.

Local Transport Plan

5.3.2 Of specific local relevance to this Management Plan is the Local Transport Plan (LTP) prepared by the Highways Authority. Cumbria County Councils LTP contains objectives and policies that are relevant to Solway Coast AONB, they can be found in Appendix 5.

Bus Services

Cumbria County Council operates only about 10% of registered rural local bus services with a small percentage operated by other neighbouring authorities. The rural local bus network consists of mainly commercial services linking the main towns in Cumbria. Other rural routes operate only a few trips a day or only part week. The relatively low frequency of these services makes it very difficult for both locals and visitors to coordinate with other modes of transport for greater access to the AONB and beyond. This encourages the use of the car and brings with it landscape impacts.

Cycling, Walking & Riding

Increased cycling and walking should be seen as a key element in solving the problems caused by increased car use – high levels of congestion, air pollution and noise. It is also a way of developing a sustainable approach to tourism and recreational activities. By encouraging cyclists into the area, economic benefits will be brought to local communities along the cycle routes through visitor spend in tourist attractions, local shops, restaurants pubs and accommodation. Potential cyclists are deterred by the threat of theft or vandalism by. This can be reduced by the provision of sensitively designed cycle parking facilities across the AONB at appropriate sites.

Solway Coast AONB has a range of leaflet guided circular walks the text of which conveys the special character of the protected landscape. This is further enhanced by information within the Solway Coast Discovery Centre (gateway site). Furthermore, information is held on Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail both of which emphasise and extol the need for visitors to be aware that they are within a protected area. At the present time the status of Rights of Way network within the AONB is good quality having benefited from the recent Parish Paths Partnership (P3) initiative.

Encouraging cycling and walking

Physical activity is one of the key determinants of good health, and cycling can help protect against heart disease, strokes, diabetes and certain types of cancer. Even a small amount of cycling can lead to significant health benefits, including better cardio-vascular fitness, improved balance and co-ordination, reduced stress and greater psychological well-being. Cyclists and pedestrians also absorb lower levels of pollutants from traffic fumes than other road users. As for the dangers of road traffic, doctors and government health experts have concluded that the benefits of cycling outweigh the risk of injury.

Quiet Lanes

Quiet Lanes is a broad term used to describe a concept where appropriate traffic calming and design measures have been taken to enable better shared road use by cyclists, horse riders, walkers and other non motorised users. The term 'Quiet Lane' refers to a network of several roads. Quiet Lanes must not disrupt the economic life of the countryside or prevent motorised vehicles such as delivery vans, farm machinery, or emergency vehicles from going about their business. However, through-traffic will be dissuaded from using these networks as short cuts or ways to avoid heavier traffic. Traffic calming measures are likely to involve changes to verge maintenance, soft landscaping and introduction of local waymarking if appropriate to the area. Care will always be taken to enhance the local character and distinctiveness of the area and, as traffic speed and volume creates a danger and disturbance to the landscape ,the Quiet Lanes initiative addresses this.

To create a Quiet Lanes network a strategic approach must be taken to keep through traffic on major roads. Lower speed limits to calm traffic through villages could be put in place as part of this wider approach. Any attempts to manage speed will require careful planning with the local police force.

The AONB is criss-crossed with quite narrow but open roads; most are designated as C quality or less. The roads themselves tell an interesting historical story and as such their use by walkers, riders and cyclists should be encouraged. The Quiet Lanes initiative is a perfect tool to effectively manage motorised traffic with its associated awareness signage that tells drivers that more vulnerable users may be using the road. This initiative will be essential to both the success of the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail and any future walking and cycling routes within the AONB.

Further information on Quiet Lanes can be found in Appendix5.

Objective T&A I. To conserve and enhance the AONB by ensuring safer access for residents and visitors to, from and within the area.

T&A I Objective Validation

Public Transport

Public transport is very basic in the area at the present time and falls short of a comprehensive service. Sustainable tourism may provide and enhance public transport service as witnessed through the successful 'Hadrians Wall Bus' service. This model could be followed to incorporate the 'Solway Coaster' bus service. The AONB will work with the LTP to improve the public transport network within the area.

Quiet Lanes

Quiet Lanes could be linked to new public transport infrastructure such as local buses on new routes, which may be able to carry bicycles for the visitor. If we can encourage visitor use of public transport throughout the AONB during summer, the revenue generated may be able to sustain services for the local community throughout the year, thus providing essential public transport linking the AONB with the market towns and the City of Carlisle in a sustainable way and it reduces pollution, damage and disturbance to the landscape.

Car Sharing

Solway Coast AONB would also benefit from travel to work car-sharing schemes and will fully support the new initiative running throughout North Allerdale, again reducing pollution, disturbance and damage to the landscape.

Rights of Way Network

All rights of way within the AONB will be audited every five years with a view to upgrading and replacement of worn out infrastructure, this work will be undertaken in partnership with the Highways Authority, Parish Councils and landowners.

Open Access

Open access is confined to areas of either registered common land or open country. Registered common land is confined to the coastal strip and includes sand dune areas that have been squeezed by the B5300 coast road between Maryport Golf Course and Beckfoot. The saltmarshes of Skinburness and Border, with a narrow strip at Angerton, are included as are a small area of West Common and saltmarsh adjacent to Bowness on Solway. One small area of land between Drumburgh Moss and Glasson is also included. Open Country is confined to the raised mires of Bowness Common, Glasson Moss and the edge of Drumburgh Moss National Nature Reserve. The Open Access initiative will be implemented whilst taking into consideration habitat damage and wildlife disturbance. Information will be extremely important to the success and environmental sustainability of the process.

Solutions

- To promote environmentally sustainable forms of travel, particularly alternatives to the car.
- To enhance the quality of the environment by reducing the impact of vehicle traffic on roads within villages in the AONB.
- To protect the AONB landscape from the damaging impacts of highway improvement schemes and developments in transportation.

- To help create a Solway Coast Transport Strategy sympathetic to the needs of both locals and visitors.
- To implement a Quiet Lanes Initiative within the AONB to encourage a greater level of safety for walkers, equestrians and cyclists.
- To support the Highways Authority in the upgrading and maintenance of the Public Rights of Way network within the AONB.
- To ensure the smooth implementation of Open Access throughout the AONB, including recognising the sensitivities of some species to human disturbance.

5.4 EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Background

5.4.1 Anyone, out and about within the AONB should, if possible, be made aware that they are within a special protected landscape and be given the reasons why it is so special. Information is at the heart of education and this must provide a clear and consistent message of quality and protection.

We wish the visitors and residents to learn that...

The AONB is a unique place

Its uniqueness has been recognised by local, national and international designations

It is home to some of the UK's rarest plants, birds and animals

The habitats of the AONB are fragile and should be understood, respected and nurtured

Many of the AONBs fragile habitats are under threat and in decline as a result of industrial, agricultural and residential development

Part of the AONBs appeal is its remoteness and air of seclusion

The multitude layers of mans influence has forged the landscape we see today

Visitor management is an important part of caring for the AONB

We wish the visitors and residents to...

Access the AONBs key sites easily and safely

Take account of interpretation and information on the site

Use the sites resources in the way they were designed to be used

Leave sanctuary areas and sensitive sites alone

Go on to visit related sites

Come back to the AONB

We wish the visitors and residents to...

Feel privileged to be part of the Solway Coast and its people

Feel concerned for the health of its habitats

Enjoy discovering the AONB

Feel confidence in the management of the AONB

Get a sense of being in a special, unique, managed area

Objective E&I 1. To provide information across the AONB to provide passive and active messages to both visitors and the local community

E&I 1 Objective Validation

We can deliver education at two distinct levels; they are passive, where the recipient digests information that is educational by unconsciously reading messages, and active, where the recipient seeks to educate themselves through a positive approach to the information available. Both types of information uptake can be delivered using the same media both through information panels, leaflets, events and through visiting information sites such as the Solway Coast Discovery Centre.

The Solway Coast Discovery Centre in Silloth-on-Solway was born following the publication of the last Management Plan for the AONB in 1998. Within the document it was recognised that the area, which was little known, needed a flagship/gateway site to reveal many of the hidden secrets that the landscape of the Solway Coast had to offer both visitors and locals.

The Centre and its exhibition provides a fascinating tour of one of our most beautiful Cumbrian landscapes with reference to its heritage both natural and cultural, its people both living and gone, but most of all it celebrates the hand of man and especially farming in the evolution of one of the most beautiful places in England. The exhibition then links the visitor to the leaflets and guidebooks that we have produced. The exhibition appeals to both young and old and is designed both as entertaining and educational. The Discovery Centre will also be used as an education resource covering national curriculum subjects and will be part of an emerging schools pack.

Any profits made from the Discovery Centre are put back into the sustainable management of the Solway Coast AONB. In this case the visitor pays, but does so in a very constructive way, unlike schemes that charge for coastal car parking, for example, where the visitor does not receive any messages about the fragility of the area they are visiting.

Solutions

- To provide educational material to visitors, locals, schools and colleges through the Solway Coast Discovery Centre and other interpretation and literature provided by the AONB and it's partners.

Objective E&I 2. To provide themed and comprehensive information across the AONB using a range of media.

E&I 2 Objective Validation

Solway Coast AONB has a range of leaflet guided circular walks, the text of which conveys the special character of the protected landscape. This is further enhanced by information within the Solway Coast Discovery Centre. Furthermore, information is held on Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail, both of which emphasise and extol the need for visitors to be aware that they are within a protected area.

The Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail has been developed throughout its length using 'Limits of Acceptable Change' whereby each piece of infrastructure put in place, be it paths or information, is assessed as to the impact it is creating on the landscape and local environment. New and enhanced access will be undertaken within the AONB with reference to this approach and as a result should be unobtrusive and should blend into the local environment. There are many other partners within Solway Coast AONB that have a remit to both interpret and inform. The development of an AONB wide interpretive plan would ensure that this information is not duplicated and is produced to an appropriate consistency and standard both in terms of content and production.

The fact that the Solway Coast is designated as a nationally important landscape is probably not enough to secure a vibrant and sustainable local economy, more must be revealed to make the area more interesting.

The area has a vast wealth of landscape/habitat types and the incredible diversity of species enjoying this wealth must be at the heart of our themes.

Further to this, we have a wealth of heritage sites, linkages and stories to further enhance the visitor experience. We have 115 sq Km to work with and the establishment of themed routes and distractions will embrace the visitor for longer periods of time thus creating longer stays and greater enjoyment.

At the heart of any interpretation for Solway Coast AONB is the Solway Coast Discovery Centre. The Centre will signpost visitors and locals toward a series of 'stories' or sub brands. Other potential Gateways include Tullie House Museum in Carlisle and the Senhouse Museum in Maryport. This network would be further enhanced by the Tourist Information Centre Network.

Sub branding will be important within this context to create a series of trails explaining and making interesting a series of walks and cycle rides. Historical routes will cover Victorian, monastic, agricultural, Roman and other themes. Natural routes will cover habitats, geology, wildlife, freshwater and other related themes. These proposed packages will encourage visitors to stay within the area for longer periods of time (up to a week) with their own specialisation being unravelled day by day.

Delivery Plan Solutions

- To develop an AONB wide interpretative plan that encompasses the aspirations of partners who also have a remit to interpret and inform within the AONB.
- To produce and install on-site interpretation
- To produce leaflets and guidebooks
- To use the AONB Website to deliver our message and present our product

Section 6.

A Protected Landscape

6.0 A PROTECTED LANDSCAPE

6.1.1 Threats to landscape quality and its functional integrity are all too obvious in today’s world of new technologies, developments in agriculture and aquaculture, sea level rise predictions due to global warming and general solutions to infrastructure development. This Management Plan cannot ignore the possible threats to the Solway Coast AONB from a plethora of potential external development pressures. These pressures can come in the form of new physical structures, pollution and abstraction or loss. To help safeguard what we hold dear today, an AONB Policy guidance framework that is compatible with the two local plans encompassing the area and the Cumbria County Council and Lake District National Park, Joint Structure Plan is set out below. Section 85 of the CRoW Act (2000) places a duty on all public bodies and statutory undertakers with regard to potential landscape impacts.

Section 85	places a duty on all public bodies and statutory undertakers to ‘have regard’ to the ‘purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty’
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The following set of policy guidelines are not comprehensive but cover a range of potential issues and real issues over the past 5 years. They are AONB wide and not specific to any given area. The present managers feel the need to protect from future negative developments through this process. It was agreed that these policy guidelines should be part of the statutory management plan for the AONB rather than a separate policy document. The validations that underpin the policy guidelines should be considered within the context of a special landscape and the restoration, conservation and future protection of those special qualities outlined in section 3 of this plan.

POLICY GUIDELINE	VALIDATION
DI: Cross-border Partnership Agreements To work through the auspices of the Solway Firth Partnership with a view to establishing a cross border agreement or other suitable mechanism with regard to common interest development proposals.	A significant weakness exists in that a large part of the landscape beauty of Solway Coast AONB is encapsulated within the views and shared drainage basin across the firth to Scotland. Scottish developments have no requirement to consult in England and as such a range of impacts could occur that are beyond our influence. Recently (2003) a decision by the Scottish Executive to allow the development of two 30-turbine wind farms on a single site on Crown Land within the Scottish territory of the Solway Firth (Robin Rigg) without recourse to the views of the English Planning Authorities, has already set a precedent. In the light of this decision and the process through which it was reached, we believe that cross-border planning agreements must be developed to protect both countries from adverse impacts whether they be physical, chemical, erosional or otherwise. With regard to Scottish landscape designations; two National Scenic Area's (NSA's) would also be affected by developments in England.

D2: Renewable Energy Promote awareness and full consideration of the landscape setting of the AONB, and views to and from it, when considering renewable energy developments adjacent (visual envelop) to the AONB.	Of the many forms of renewable energy Wind Energy arguably poses the greatest threat to the landscape integrity of the Solway Coast AONB. The physical presence of wind clusters (2-6 turbines) and wind farms (>6 turbines), can have an adverse impact on the landscape or seascape. Whilst Solway Coast AONB Partnership supports the development of, and use of renewable energy resources it would argue that any infrastructure should be sited within an appropriate setting. Policy R42 in the Joint Structure Plan clearly states: “Within the Lake District National Park and AONBs, wind farms will not be permitted.....” 4.3.2 However, areas of search for onshore wind farm development have been identified within the Joint Structure Plan. A tract of land to the landward side of the AONB has been identified as an area of search and as such the integrity of the landscape setting of the AONB may be adversely affected by it.
D3: Wireless Telecommunications Promote awareness and full consideration of the landscape setting of the AONB, and views to and from it, when considering telecommunications developments within and adjacent (visual envelop) to the AONB. D4: Overhead Telecommunication Wires Overhead telecommunication wires within settlements should be subject to grounding where this is possible, whilst taking full regard of the natural and historic environment on which this initiative may impinge.	Telecommunications masts are the legacy of modern electronics based communications. The masts are essential for transmission and reception and work as part of a national network. To provide maximum coverage of any given network, masts must be positioned to maximise their coverage or efficiency. Solway Coast AONB lies within a low lying coastal plain, and at present it is served by masts outside of the designated area that are sited on higher ground overlooking the coast. However, future developments in telecommunications technology may change this situation. A new technology, ‘Broadband Internet’, is being developed within and adjacent to the AONB. This technology requires both satellite receiver dishes and distribution masts. The distribution masts work on the ‘line of sight’ principle and based on local topography can range from 10 – 50m high. This new technology will be dealt with in the same way as general telecommunications.

POLICY GUIDELINE	VALIDATION
<u>Electricity</u> D5: Overhead Wire Electricity Supplies Overhead power lines within settlements should be subject to grounding where this is possible, whilst taking full regard of the natural and historic environment on which this initiative may impinge. D6: Replacement Lines New, replacement or upgraded overhead power and telecommunication lines will only be acceptable where the chosen route will have no adverse impact on the landscape of the AONB. The grounding of lines will be expected where overhead lines would have an unacceptable impact on the natural or historic environment.	The Solway Coast AONB is criss-crossed by a network of overhead power supply lines, and telecommunications lines. The lines are low voltage and are operated by the regional electricity distribution companies, and not the high voltage system run by the National Grid Company. These 'local' lines serve settlements, isolated farmsteads and other infrastructure such as wastewater treatment works within the AONB. The wires and their associated poles detract from the landscape character of the area and as such are seen as undesirable within a protected landscape. An option is to ground them (put them underground), however, the cost of grounding is prohibitive with regard to the existing system. The long distance cross-country supplies would come under these criteria. However, the grounding of wires within settlements along with telecommunication lines could be achievable at low cost. In open countryside many lines exist and their maintenance or upgrading may provide an opportunity to ground them. New power line developments should be grounded as a matter of course. Whether these power/telecommunication lines cross open country, run parallel to roads, field boundaries or ditches or are within settlements, the overall policy guideline is to ground them at the earliest possible opportunity.

POLICY GUIDELINES	VALIDATION
D7: Coastal Erosion and Defence To work with statutory undertakers to provide the best possible solutions for coastal protection. Their design and standard should have low or negative landscape impact, provide a base for future natural colonisation and should not impede access to the foreshore.	Solway Coast AONB has a 'soft' coastline stretching throughout its entire length with the exception of the sandstone outcrop at Red Crag, Rockcliffe that stretches for about 0.5 kilometres. Soft refers to the unconsolidated nature of the sediments making up the coastal edge. The sediments range from inter-tidal silts and sands within the eastern sector of the AONB to sand and shingle beaches within the western sector. The whole area is subject to both active erosion by wind and water and active accretion by the same means. Any soft coastal environment is dynamic by nature and as such must be monitored and managed according to the overriding environmental conditions that prevail. Solway Coast AONB has been subject to the National Shoreline Management Planning process and as such has a prescription for the future monitoring and management of the coastline. The Shoreline Management Plan (St Bees Head to Sark Foot) has a range of five options for coastal protection: 1. do nothing 2. do minimum 3. hold the line 4. advance the line 5. managed retreat Within the AONB all of these options are recommended for different areas. In general, along the western sector hold the line and advance the line has been recommended. The main driver for this pro-active protection is the flood and erosion threat to the B5300 coast road. The road has squeezed the natural sand dune defence of the coastline and as such it is more vulnerable. The options that have been implemented over the past four years are gabion baskets buried below the existing eroding low cliff line to minimise visual impacts and to provide areas for natural re-colonisation by dune plants and sand trapping. Both methods have proven effective and are providing a bed for natural revegetation. Within the eastern sector flood defence is managed by the Environment Agency. Recently work has been carried out at Skinburness marsh and Burgh marsh whereby the flood banks have been strengthened and new infrastructure provided. Neither option is environmentally sensitive and its primary purpose is to protect small areas of re-claimed saltmarsh converted into rough pasture. Any future work in these areas should be open to a rigorous assessment of the merits of managed retreat.

Section 7.

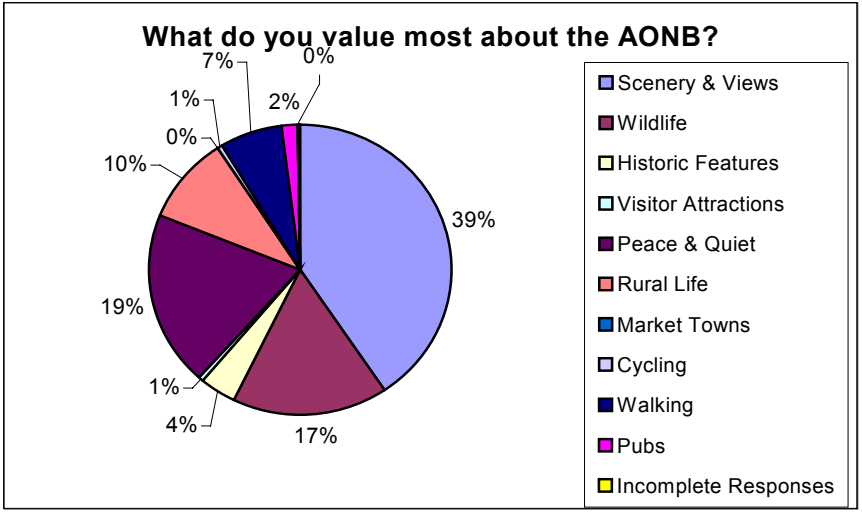
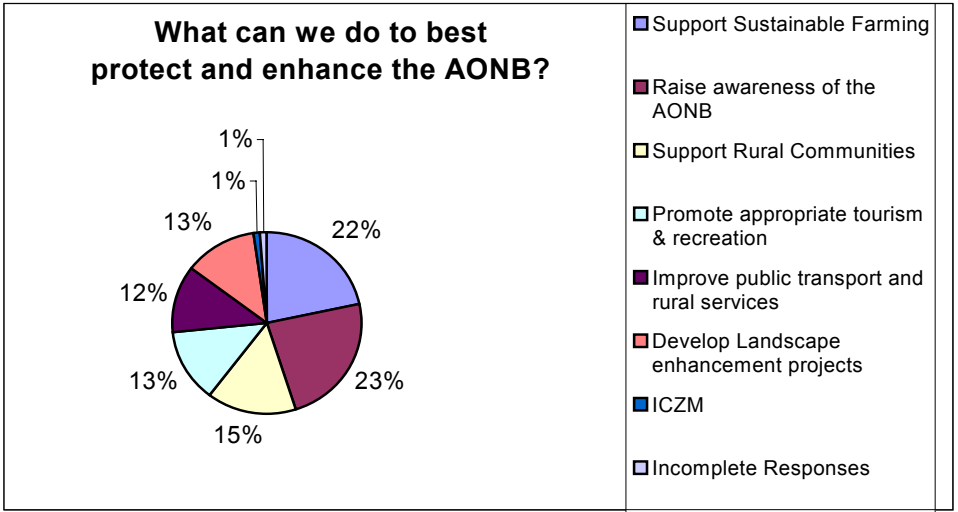
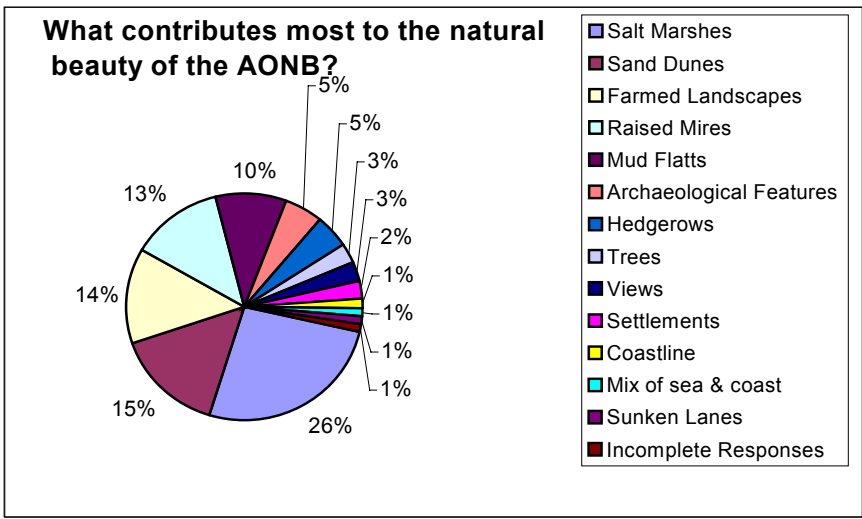
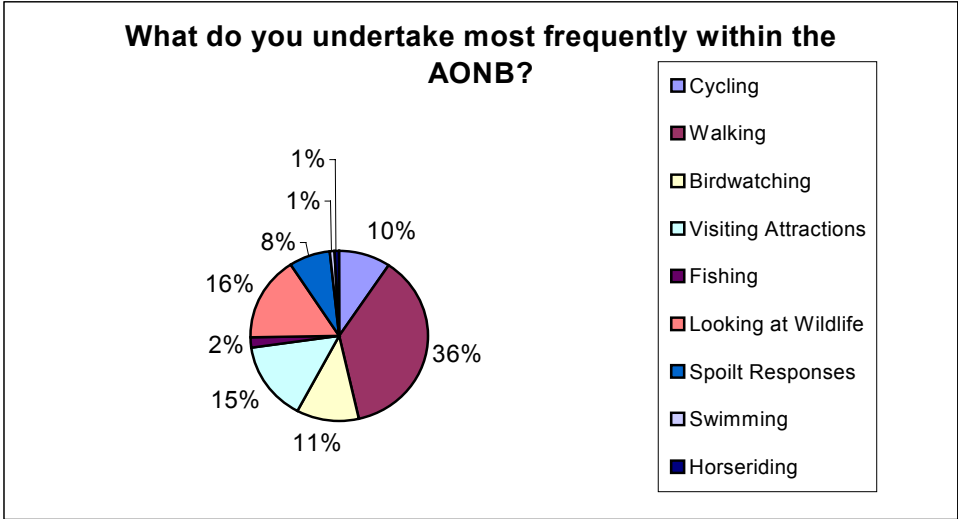
Appendices

Appendix I

List of Invited Consultees

Andrew Tegg	Allerdale Borough Council	Michael Young	English Nature
Richard Evans	Allerdale Borough Council	Stephen Preston	English Nature
Terry Rourke	Allerdale Borough Council	Dave Keddy	Environment Agency
Vikki Turner	Allerdale Borough Council	Ian Wrigley	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
Ben Brinicombe	Allerdale Borough Council	Ian Brodie	Friends of the Lake District
Joe Mumberson	Allerdale Borough Council	Jack Ellerby	Friends of the Lake District
David Thomas	Allerdale Borough Council	David McGlade	Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail
Jeffery Gardner	Allerdale Borough Council	Paul Austen	Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site
Maureen Rourke	Allerdale Borough Council	Jane Brantom	Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership
Jim Musgrave	Allerdale Borough Council	Robert Richardson	Holme St Cuthbert Parish Council
Tony Markley	Allerdale Borough Council	Wilson Wise	Holme St Cuthbert Parish Council
Bill Douglas	Allonby Parish Council	Bill Jefferson OBE	Allerdale Borough Council
Bill James	Bank Mill, Beckfoot	Jenny Gallagher	JAC – Bowness Parish Council
Jim Eldridge	Bowness Community Group	Bill Johnstone	JAC – Silloth Town Council
James Graham	Bowness on Solway Parish Council	Rachel Newman	Lancaster Archaeology Unit
Anne Pattinson	Burgh Marsh Committee	Jacqui Raw	Learning Skills Council
Duncan Dobson	Burgh by Sands Parish Council	Janet Connolly	Mawbray Community Group
Tony Jackson	CAPITA	William Bell	Newton Arlosh Marsh Committee
Richard Irving	Cardurnock Marsh	Debbie Keir	North Allerdale Partnership
Don Taylor	Carlisle City Council	Phil Reddy	North West Development Agency
Peter Messenger	Carlisle City Council	Dennis Hetherington	Oughterside and Allerby Parish Council
Chris Hardman	Carlisle City Council	Rachel Newman	Oxford Archaeology Unit
Mark Hudson	Carlisle City Council	Sue Gallagher	Port Carlisle Community Group
John Bell	Carlisle City Council	Sue Lightfoot	Port Carlisle Community Group
John Collier	Carlisle City Council	Alan Nash	Ramblers Association
Paul Walker	Carlisle City Council	Norman Holton	RSPB
Susan Harrison	County Landowners Association	David Blackledge	RSPB
Ruth Parker	Countryside Agency	Pat Allison	Rural Development Programme
David Hortin	Countryside Agency	Chris Miles	Scottish Natural Heritage
Rosemary Budd	Countryside Agency	Hugh Thompson	Senhouse Roman Museum
Roland Trafford Roberts	Countryside Agency	Peter Cusack	Silloth Business Association
David Sibbitt	Cumbria Association of Headteachers	Jonathan Dennison	Silloth Primary School
David Ingham	Cumbria County Council	Fausto Previtali	Silloth Tourism Action Group
Duncan Fairbairn	Cumbria County Council	Florence Hammond	Silloth Tourism Action Group
Bob Edgar	Cumbria County Council	Norman Hammond	Silloth Tourism Action Group
Mike Smith	Cumbria County Council	Bill Allison	Silloth Town Council
Pat Ackred	Cumbria County Council	Marjorie Littleton	Skinburness Marsh Committee
Richard Newman	Cumbria County Council	Richard Jennings	Solway Firth Partnership
John Hetherington	Cumbria County Council	Brian Batey	Solway Haaf Netters Association
Alan Waters	Cumbria Education	Bill Knowles	Solway Rural Initiative
David Dobson	Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee	Ella Fraser	Solway Rural Initiative Director
Graham Kennedy	Cumbria Tourist Board	Margaret Snaith	Solway Rural Initiative Director
David Harpley	Cumbria Wildlife Trust	Brian Hodgson	South Solway Wildfowlers Association
Simon Humphries	DEFRA	Steven Hewitt	Tullie House Museum
Bob Timmins	DEFRA	Susan Dalloe	Tullie House Museum
Henry Conn	DEFRA	Roger Roberts	Voluntary Action Cumbria
Alistair Maltby	Eden Rivers Trust	Kerry McPhee	Western Lake District Tourism Partnership

Appendix 2



Appendix 3.

Policy Citations regarding Solway Coast AONB

The 1949 Countryside Act placed a non-statutory duty on local authorities to be responsible for the management and maintenance of AONB's within their boundaries. Furthermore, recent legislation through the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) requires further protection through the provision of a statutory management plan by 2004 and that all public bodies have regard to AONB objectives when discharging their duties.

The relationships between strategic partners, with a stake in the future of the AONB, are defined below through their own policy citations.

National Framework

National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) with regard to AONBs is encapsulated within PPG7, The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development (2000). Section 4.7 is as follows:

“Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's) are designated by the same means and under the same legislation as National Parks. The primary objective of designation is conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. Local authorities should reflect this objective in their structure and local plans and development control. AONB's differ from National Parks in that the promotion of recreation is not an objective of their designation, though these areas should be used to meet the demand for recreation so far as that is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses. There are no special statutory arrangements for the administration of AONB's although the Government endorses the practice of setting up Joint Advisory Committees to bring together local authorities and amenity groups, farming and other interests to encourage a coordinated approach to their management. This will be especially important where AONB's cover the area of several authorities who will wish to ensure that their policies are broadly compatible”.

The Local Framework - Local Authority Plans

Cumbria County Council

Cumbria County Council (CCC) is currently reviewing its Joint Structure Plan (1991-2006), a plan that includes the following policy with regard to all landscapes of national importance within the County of Cumbria:

Policy 11 – Landscapes of National Importance

“Development and other land use changes detrimental to the present characteristics and qualities of the landscape of the National Parks, AONB's and the Heritage Coast will not normally be permitted. Particular regard will be paid to the protection and enhancement of undeveloped open countryside and coast, the lakes and other sensitive locations, and in addition.....”

In addition to the present Joint Structure Plan is the emerging new Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan 2001-2016, Deposit Plan, May 2003.

Part 6, 'Caring for the Environment', section 6.3: states:

“Areas and features designated as being of national or international importance must be afforded the strongest level of protection, in accordance with Policies ER2 and ER5 of Regional Planning Guidance....”

Section 6.4: states:

“Government guidance has confirmed that AONBs are equivalent to National Parks in terms of their landscape value and should be given equivalent protection....”

From Policy E33 'Landscape Character' it is noted that:

“Development and land use change should be compatible with the distinctive characteristics and features of Cumbria's landscapes as defined by the 'Landscape Map' in Figure 8 and the 'Cumbria Historic Landscape Characterisation Programme'. Proposals will be assessed in relation to:

- 1. Locally distinctive natural or built features*
- 2. Visual intrusion or impact*
- 3. Scale in relation to the landscape and features*
- 4. The character of the built environment*
- 5. Public access and community value of the landscape*
- 6. Historic patterns and attributes*
- 7. Biodiversity features, ecological networks and semi-natural habitats, and*
- 8. Openness, remoteness and tranquillity*

In addition, development and land use change detrimental to the distinctive character of landscapes designated as of County Importance will not be permitted, except where required to meet local infrastructure needs, which cannot be located elsewhere and which is sited to minimise environmental impacts and meets high standards of design.”

Policy E31: ‘Areas and features of national and international conservation importance’ states;

“Development and other land use changes in areas or features of national or international conservation importance, or within their settings, and that are detrimental to their characteristics will not be permitted”.

Exceptions will only be made where:

1. *There is an overriding need for the development required to meet local infrastructure needs which cannot be located elsewhere and which is sited to minimise environmental impacts and meets high standards of design, and*
2. *In the case of nature conservation, where an over-riding public interest can be demonstrated to outweigh the international conservation interest or, in the case of European Priority habitats or species, where there are human health or safety considerations or benefits of primary importance to the environment.”*

With regards to proposals for wind energy development, Part 8, ‘Utilising Resources’ Policy R40; states;

“Proposals for wind energy development will be permitted where it is demonstrated that they satisfy all the following requirements:

1. *There is no significant adverse affect on the landscape character of the area either individually or cumulatively through its relationship with other wind energy development,*
2. *There is no detrimental impact on the designated areas identified in Policy E31 or within their settings that are detrimental to their character and/or species of national or international conservation importance,*
3. *There is no significant adverse affect on local amenity, highways, aircraft operations or telecommunications,*
4. *The proposal takes all practical measures to reduce the adverse impact on recognised landscape, environmental, nature conservation and historical interests,*
5. *measures are included to secure the satisfactory removal of structures and remediation of land following cessation of operation of the installation.”*

Allerdale Borough Council

Allerdale Borough Council (ABC) produced its Local Plan in 1999 and it is currently under partial review, however, environmental policies are unaffected by the review. ABC have two policies regarding the protection of the AONB, they are:

Policy EN20

“When considering proposals for development within or adjoining the Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Council will require the protection of its natural beauty. This will be given priority over all other planning considerations.”

This Policy is followed by seven sub-sections that add substance and context to it.

Policy EN21

“Development proposals within the Solway Coast AONB which are required as a result of an approved management plan will be approved where they accord with the relevant sub-sections of Policy EN20”.

Carlisle City Council

The land area covered by Carlisle City Council (CarCC) is around 15% of the land area designated as Solway Coast AONB. The Council produced their Local Plan in 1997 and has a single policy regarding the two AONB’s impinging on their area as follows:

POLICY E3 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

“Within and adjacent to the North Pennines and Solway Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission will not be given for development that would be unacceptably detrimental to the present character and quality of the landscape. Development proposals should seek to conserve or enhance the present character and quality of the landscape through appropriate siting, design, materials and landscaping. Large scale development will only be permitted where there is proven national need and lack of an alternative site”.

Throughout this plan policies other than those related to Town and Country Planning will be dealt with as they impinge on the thematic content of the various sections described hereafter.

Appendix 4
1998 Management Plan Review

A review of the existing Management Plan has led to the production of the current Action Plan, which includes the SMART delivery of 9 projects.

The 1998 Solway Coast Management Plan divided the AONB into four Management Zones

- Agricultural Land
- Raised Mires
- The Salt Marsh
- The Sand Dune Coast

Each of these Management Zones was discussed under Key Topic headings as below:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------|
| • Landscape | L |
| • Nature Conservation | NC |
| • Trees and Woodlands | TW |
| • Agriculture | A |
| • Settlement | S |
| • Cultural Heritage | CH |
| • Recreation, Tourism and Access | RT&A |
| • Information and Interpretation | I&I |
| • Coastal Protection | CP |
| • Cleansing Management | CM |
| • Safety and Emergency Planning | S&EP |

Our Resourceful Land (Wildlife and Visitors can mutually Share and Enjoy the Landscape) AIM: To Manage and Enhance Understanding of Threatened Habitats in the AONB					Performance Review	
Objectives	Time Scale	People involved in Work	Funding Bodies	Partners	To Achieve	Achieved
1. To identify rare and threatened habitats in the AONB	1 year	AONB Officers, EN, CBP	HLF, CA, CWMET, LAs, CCF, FLD	SRI, LAs, EN, CWT, CBP, Local communities, landowners, DEFRA, , FWAG, RSPB, CWT.	Production of document outlining all the threatened habitats, including maps and description of habitat type by 2004.	Project proformas completed, and initial work completed for AONB-wide bid. Discussed with CA and CBP. Partner organisations have been identified in 2000.
2. To raise Awareness of our Most Treasured Habitats, their needs, threats and uniqueness	2 years	AONB, EN, CBP, Volunteers, Schools, Media, SRI, ETF			Production of 5 leaflets, outlining the threatened habitats and the locations by 2005.	Partially Achieved
3. To promote local pride and involvement.	Ongoing	As above			Presentations in schools, local groups and PCs, media coverage and contact with landowners-2003-2004. (and ongoing) Practical work involving volunteers and local groups, 2003-2010.	Partially Achieved
4. To promote and enable the sensitive management and enhancement of these habitats.	2 years	As above			Production of management agreements and permissions for access agreed, with continuing publicity, 2003-2004. Ongoing.	Partially Achieved
5. To acquire, where feasible, the most outstanding or threatened examples of these habitats.	5 years	AONB, EN, Landowners, Local Groups, LAs, Media.			Acquisition of at least three sites by 2006.	Partially Achieved
6. To encourage access wherever possible	2 years and ongoing	As above and volunteers			Improvements to accessibility to at least three sites, with Access for All considerations, 2004. Ongoing	Partially Achieved
7. To secure the future management of enhanced sites	5 years	AONB, LAs, EN, RSPB, CBP, CWT DEFRA	DEFRA, EN	As above and DEFRA	Production of five-year management plans to support applications for grant aid from	

					Countryside Stewardship Scheme and EN's Wildlife Enhancement Scheme, 2006. Ongoing	
Supporting Objectives to Achieve.	L.1, L.2, NC.2, NC.3, NC.4, NC.5, T&W.1, A.1, A.2, A.3, RT&A.1, RT&A.4, RT&A.5, RT&A.6, RT&A.7, I&I.3, I&I.4, CP.1					

"Wetland HeritageProject" AIM: To interpret and protect Heritage Sites within the AONB, creating wildlife and visitor resources, and Access for All Trails.					Performance Review	
Objectives	Time Scale	People involved in work	Funding Bodies	Partners	To Achieve	Achieved
1. To identify and assess landforms and sites for access and development potential.	5 years	AONB, Volunteers, Local people, contractors.	HLF, CA, CWMET, EH, ABC, CCC,	EH, EN, CA, PCs, Local interest Groups, CCC CBP, FLD, NWDA, ERDP.	Surveys completed by 2002, negotiations with land owners completed.2008. Funding to be in place 2008.	Project proformas completed, initial work completed for AONB-wide HLF bid. Discussed with CA 2000.
2.To produce an AONB Heritage Interpretive Plan	2 years	AONB Officers, ABC, HWNT		HWWHS team, HWNT	Production of a Heritage Plan, including integration of sites and interpretation content and styles 2004 and ongoing.	Completed
3.To produce interpretation for up to 10 sites and maintenance regime	2 years	AONB Officers, volunteers, contractors, local people			To place on 10 sites an interpretive panel or leaflets, and to manage sites on an annual basis	
4. As above	1 year	As above			As above 2004-2005.	
5. To create a wetland nature Reserve and Access for All Trail		AONB staff, volunteers, contractors			Management ongoing 2002-2010	Crosscanonby Carr Site opened in 1999, educational visits 2000- 2003.
6.To install x metres of gabions along the length of the Saltpans	1 year	AONB, ABC, contractors, ETF, Volunteers			Total length of Saltpans with gabions installed.2003	Gabions placed on site 2000.
7. To install new surfaced path between Saltpans car park and the Carr.	2 years	AONB, Volunteers, contractors.			Trail of x metres competed between the Carr and Saltpans car park, with car park upgrading 2010.	
8. To purchase 9 hectares of pasture for conversion to reed bed, and have HLF in place.	2 years	AONB, JAC, ABC			HLF bid in place, and purchase of the proposed site.2010	
9. To install timber dams to raise water levels of the site.	1 year	AONB, SRI, ETF, contractor.			Dams to be in place by 2010	
10. To plant <i>Phragmites</i> reed bed	1 year	AONB, SCCVG, contractors			Reed bed planted 2010	
11. To create an Access for All circular Trails around the reedbed reserve.	2 years	As above			Access for all Trail completed by 2010	
12.To establish connecting trails to the Saltpans car park, and a bird hide.	1 year	As above	2 Trails produced and one bird hide on the site by 2005		2Trails to be produced and one bird hide by 2010	
Supporting objectives to Achieve	L.1, NC.1, NC.2, NC.4, NC.5, T&W.1, A.1, CH.1, CH.3, CH.4, RT&A.1, RT&A.2, RT&A.5, RT&A.7, RT&A.8, I&I.1, I&I.2, CP.1					

Solway Coast Community Volunteer Group (SCCVG) AIM: To Create and Launch the Solway Coast Community Volunteer Group					Performance Review	
Objectives	Time Scale	People involved in Work	Funding Bodies	Partners	To Achieve	Achieved
1. To obtain necessary funding to create the post of Community Services Coordinator.	Initially a 3 year project	AONB Officers and funders/partners	CA, CCC, CaCC, FLD, ABC.	CA, SRI, CCC, CaCC, ABC, STC, PCs, FLD, CWMET, RSPB, EN, CFS, CWT, HCT, LDNP	Completed.	Coordinator appointed July 2002.
2.To contact and create a network of local, dedicated volunteers and launch the project.	3 years	AONB Officers, SRI, Local Groups, Schools, Media, Cumbria Fire Service			Official launch of the scheme in August 2002, with 40 new volunteers each year	81 volunteers on data base in July 2003.
3. To create a diary of events and training for volunteers	1 year rolling programme	AONB Officers, SCCVG Coordinator, Local Groups, RSPB, Schools, volunteers, RA, CWT, HCT, LDNP Volunteers			Production of Newsletter, one / month and training events for volunteers ongoing	50 events and workdays and a monthly newsletter produced from July 2002-Aug 2003
4. To encourage volunteers to participate in AONB projects	3 years	AONB Projects and Development Officers, and Community Volunteer Coordinator,			Ongoing	Newsletters and promotional events through 2002-2003. Meetings with schools, local interest groups, talks, and involvement with the Discovery Centre activities 2003.
5. To obtain necessary transport for Coordinator/ volunteers	3 years during project	AONB,			Van and trailer obtained 2002-2003	Volunteer transport obtained 2002.
6. To provide ID, safety equipment, and tools for volunteers	3 years	AONB			Necessary equipment obtained and in place 2002-2003. Ongoing.	
7. To provide 4 Training events /year	3years	AONB, EN, LDNPA, Red Cross		EN, LDNPA, Red Cross	Ongoing	1 st Aid training provided, Safety, machine and tool use and habitat management training given 2002-2003
8. To hold an award evening each year	3 years	AONB, Volunteers			An annual award evening in December for volunteers	An annual award evening held Dec 2002
Supporting Objectives to Achieve: L.1, L.2, NC.1, NC.2, NC.4, NC.5, T&W.1, A.1, A.3, CH.1, CH.4, RT&A.1, RT&A.2, RT&A.3, RT&A.5, RT&A.7, I&I.2, I&I.4, CP.1, CM.1						

Solway Settlements Project AIM: To enable Solway Coast Villages to represent their AONB uniqueness and encourage improvements.					Performance Review	
Objectives	Time Scale	People involved in work	Funding Bodies	Partners	To Achieve	Achieved
1. To complete the village appraisal/ design statements for the three villages	2 years	Local inhabitants, PCs, community groups, AONB,	CA, ABC, CaCC, CWMET	ABC, CaCC, CA, VAC, PCs, Local groups and local people.	2002, to have carried out three meetings with each of the three villages to create finished 'wish list'. 2003, to have produced three village statements.	2000, three pilot villages preparing Appraisals/Studies, after many local meetings and training. 2003 Burgh village Plan completed.
2. To liaise with three village schools to design a village signage	1 year	Village schoolchildren and staff, AONB, ABC.			2005, to have winning designs produced from each school	
3. To produce and install 3 sets of village signs.	1 year	AONB, ETF, Locals, Volunteers, contractors			2006, to have erected completed village signage.	Allonby Completed
4. To produce interpretation signage for Port Carlisle, and Bowness	2 years	AONB, ETF, Locals, Volunteers, contractors, HWNT		HWNT, LHI	To have information and designs produced. 2004, to have finished panels erected in the village 2005.	
5. To produce plans and work for improved village greens and play areas	2 years	As above, ABC, CaCC.			2002, to have produced all plans for improvement., to carry out remedial work in all villages. Ongoing	5 completed
6. To create village walk routes and leaflets.	2 years	As above, HWNT.		HWNT, LHI	To establish the route of a village walk in three villages, with interpretation. 2006 to create village walks with leaflet produced,	2 completed
7. To sign and protect architectural and archaeological works.	2 years	As above, EH, contractors,		EH	To produce all relevant documentation for sites of interest. 2006 to carry out all work for the preservation of marked sites.	On Going
Supporting Objectives to achieve: S.1, S.2, RT&A.2, RT&A.8, I&I.1, I&I.2, I&I.3, I&I.4						

South Solway Dunes LNR AIM: To designate the South Solway Dunes as a Local Nature Reserve					Performance Review	
Objectives	Time scale	People involved in work	Funding Bodies	Partners	To Achieve	Achieved
1. To deliver 150 metres of sand-trapping hurdles on the dunes and embryo dunes	2003- March 2004	Contractors and volunteers	ALSF, FLD	EN, PCs, Landowners, Local community Groups, ABC, CCC, CA, CWMET, CaCC	Completed.	150 metres erected at Wolsty Banks.
2. Publish a SSD management plan		AONB Officers, EN, Contractor	As above	As Above	Completed.	Original Management plan, and Action plan produced Sept.2000. Delivery plan produced 2003.
3. To reduce the number of car parks on the coastline and upgrade the remaining ones		AONB, ABC, EN,	As above	As Above	Mawbray Yard to have new car park 2003 Newtown Rd End car park to be upgraded and installed 2006.	Traffic survey done 2000, Castles Corner car park closed Feb.2002. Old tracks near Mawbray Yard closed 2003.
4. To produce 3 interpretation panels and a leaflet of a circular walk in the dunes		Local community, SRI, AONB Officers, EN, Contractors	As above	As above	3 panels to be placed on the dunes by 2004. Circular path leaflet produced by 2004	3 interpretation panels produced.
5. To remove 3 hectares of gorse and scrub on the dunes.		Volunteers, contractors, AONB Officers	.	.	Obtained permission from EN, to, clear gorse in specified areas and to clear in2003. Completed.	Completed
6. To create trial short sward areas in the dunes		Volunteers, local landowners, EN, AONB Officers, contractors			Clearing and cutting Aug 2003. Completed.	EN, AONB and contractors made contact with local landowners.
7. To restore natterjack pools.		AONB Officers, Contractors, HCT, volunteers.		HCT, EN	One pool to restored 2002, two to be created Dec2003.	One pool to be restored March 2002. Two to be created.
8. To involve the local community in the above objectives		P.C's, volunteers, AONB, ABC, landowners, local residents, schools.			Ongoing SSD group meetings and public consultation, school and volunteers work.	Consultation with local community in 2000, Man. Plan produced. Also in June 2003, with South Solway Dunes Restoration Project

Objectives	Time scale	People involved in work	Funding Bodies	Partners	To Achieve	Achieved
9. To increase the awareness of the SSD as part of the AONB		AONB, contractors, volunteers, schools.			Designation of LNR by 2005 with interpretation in place.	Threshold signs placed in 2001, and current SRI/AONB leaflets. Community work with schools, and public liaison.
10. To reseed heath areas of Mawbray Banks and dune grassland.		AONB, contractor, Schools, volunteers			Seed planting events in Sept 2003. Ongoing	Seed collecting July-Aug 2003
11. To eradicate invasive weeds on Mawbray and Wolsty Banks		AONB, volunteers, schools, contractor			Ongoing.	Spraying, cutting, and removing done July 2003
Supporting Objectives) to achieve.	L.1, NC.2, A.2, CH.4, RT&A.1, RT&A.2, RT&A.3, I&I.1, I&I.2, S&EP.1					

The Solway Coast Sustainable Experience AIM: To develop Sustainable Transport and Access for Visitors and Locals in the Solway Coast AONB					Performance Review	
Objectives	Time scale	People involved in work	Funding Bodies	Partners	To Achieve	Achieved
1. To monitor the need for cycle carriage by local trains, and to promote the awareness of the facility.	2 years	Train companies locally, AONB, Volunteers, Cumbria Cycle groups.	HLF, CA, CCC, RDP, ABC, CWMT, Leader II, ERDF.	CA, CCC, ECCP, CaCC, Volunteers, CBP, FRCA, FWAG, Landowners, Locals	Link up facility in AONB by 2006	Ongoing in 2003 with HWNPT
2. To liaise with CCC to integrate bus services	2 years	CCC, Bus companies, AONB			Link up by 2006	
3. To introduce the 'Solway Coaster' Sunday bus service	1 year trial	As above			Liaison with HWNT to begin summer 2004	One year trial 2000 completed.
4. To replace existing concrete poles with painted wooden poles	2 years	AONB, Volunteers, Contractors			Work completed by 2010	
5. To provide AONB information on bus poles					Work completed by 2010	
6. To install bus shelters	2 years	Contractors			Work completed by 2010	
7. Design and produce 10 cycle leaflets in the AONB	2 years	AONB, Volunteers, CCC, Cycle clubs			Produce leaflets or a booklet by 2005	10 routes identified.
8. Produce site panels at appropriate stop off points	2 years	AONB, Contractors			Work completed by 2010	
9. Link with cycle hire shops and Solway Coast Discovery Centre	2 years	AONB, CCC, Cycle Hire firms			To be ongoing	Initial discussion in MP stakeholder meetings 2003
10. Produce book of circular walks in the AONB hinterland	DONE	SRI, AONB			N/A	Smugglers Route launched 2000
11. Production of 5 leaflets of walks, linking HWPNT to AONB area	DONE	SRI, AONB				Solway Coast Rambles launched July 2003
12. Construction of necessary upgrading of pathways	2 years	AONB, ABC, Contractors			Identify areas for upgrading 2003/2004 and finish worst areas by 2010	
Supporting Objectives to Achieve	L.1, NC.2, RT&A.1, RT&A.2, RT&A5, RT&A.7, RT&A.8, I&I.1, I&I.2, I&I.3, I&I.4					

Key Topics (Objectives)

LI	The perceived degradation of aesthetic character along the sand dune Coast.
L2	The need to maintain the landscape of the Salt Marsh Coast.
NC1	Disturbance to wildlife during breeding season and at roosting times by people and their dogs throughout the AONB coastal area.
NC2	The need to reverse previous loss and damage to habitat along the Sand Dune Coast.
NC3	The previous loss and damage of active raised mires due to drainage, burning and peat cutting.
NC4	Bringing together manager and user policies for the benefit of nature conservation interests.
NC5	Fragmentation, reduction and loss of wildlife habitats over an extensive area.
T&W1	Lack of new planting, general loss of tree cover and lack of woodland management.
A1	The need to prevent or reverse the loss or degradation of traditional field boundaries and their visual amenity.
A2	Loss or degradation of wildlife habitat.
A3	Securing agreements with local farmers/landowners for agricultural practices which will ensure the conservation and enhancement of the raised mires.
S1	The need to prevent future development which would be unsympathetic to the AONB.
S2	The need to support sympathetic and appropriate standards for development and seek settlement enhancement.
S3	The siting and construction of farm buildings, associates structures and storage elements which are not compatible with the AONBs landscape designation.
CH1	The need to improve the lack of management of existing sites of archaeological and historical interest.
CH2	To work towards protecting the traditional Haaf Net fishery of the Solway Firth.
CH3	The conservation of potential and existing features of historic value.
CH4	Actual and potential damage caused to sites and features of archaeological and historic value.
RTA1	Relatively uncontrolled recreational use of, and access to the Sand Dune Coast and foreshore causing erosion, disturbance to wildlife and reducing the scenic beauty of the area.
RT&A2	The need to improve existing tourist facilities and impose information and interpretation.
RT&A3	To mitigate disturbance caused to wildlife by both active and passive recreation from sea and land.
RT&A4	The need to improve views of bog vegetation.
RT&A5	The levels to which recreation, tourism and access are compatible with raised mire sites.
RT&A6	The level of public use of fragile habitats, using 'limits of acceptable change' approach.
RT&A7	The need for recreation, tourism and encouraged access in agricultural areas.
RT&A8	The lack of encouragement to use the public right of way network.
I&I1	The need to improve the current understanding of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
I&I2	Lack of information and interpretation for sites of archaeological and historical interest.
I&I3	The need to improve information and interpretation along the salt Marsh Coast.
I&I4	The interpretation of historical features on the salt marsh and the interpretation of the estuary and marsh habitat along with its associated wildlife.
CPI	The need for a coordinated approach to coastal management which will take into account coastal protection, conservation and amenity.
CM1	The regular occurrence of unsightly and potentially hazardous waste, debris and litter in the dunes, on the foreshore and throughout the zone generally.
SE&P1	The need to improve safety for the general public.
SE&P2	The need to control fire.
SE&P3	The need to improve the current lack of comprehensive and coordinated maintenance and management.

Appendix 5.

Local Transport Plan and Quiet Roads

Local Transport Plan

Of specific local relevance to this Management Plan is the Local Transport Plan (LTP) prepared by the Highways Authority. Cumbria County Councils LTP contains the following objectives and policies that are relevant to Solway Coast AONB, they are:

T6 To safeguard and improve provision for walkers, cyclists, people with mobility problems, equestrians and public transport users.

T8 To minimise the impact of the highway network on the natural and built environment.

HN7 Road Design – The Council will undertake all roadworks taking fully into account the character of the area through which the road passes; and retain the character.... Particular attention will be given to roads in National Parks, AONBs and Conservation Areas.

HN17 Ecological Protection – In the preparation of works in the highway, protected species of wild animals and plants will be safeguarded.

T18 & T22 To create and maintain a comprehensive and safe cycling/walking network.

T19 & T23 To increase the facilities available to cyclists/walkers

T20 & T24 To reduce the perceived dangers to cyclists/walkers

Quiet Roads

Quiet Roads – The County Council will introduce low mandatory and advisory speed limits to protect and encourage pedestrians, equestrians, cyclists and mobility impaired people on country lanes.

This Management Plan should be a complementary document and aims to be consistent in terms of its aims

The Transport Act 2000 now gives legal status to the term Quiet Lane and states that:

268.1 A local traffic authority may designate any road for which they are the traffic authority as a quiet lane.

268.2 The appropriate national authority (the Secretary of State) may make regulations authorising local traffic authorities who have designated roads as quiet lanes to make use orders and speed orders of such descriptions as are prescribed by the regulations in relation to any roads designated by them as quiet lanes.

Taken together these measures should change expectations and behaviour in favour of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders rather than motorised traffic. In summary, a Quiet Lanes initiative would benefit the Solway Coast AONB by:

- Making it a place where travel is easy for cyclists, walkers, and horse riders.
- Making it a place where cars are encouraged to travel at lower speeds.
- Developing a partnership between local authorities, interest groups and local communities to establish a local consensus about local travel.
- Encouraging respect for the local environment – managing and conserving the local landscape and character.
- Developing links with other types of route if necessary to create local 'networks' for communities to use.

Appendix 6

Agri-environment schemes

Various Government Schemes that promote environmentally friendly farming, including Countryside Stewardship and Environmentally Sensitive Area schemes.

Clay Dabbin

Cottages or barns, with walls constructed in the original clay daub mixed with straw and pebbles called clay dabbin.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

An Act of Parliament that creates new rights to walk on 'open country'; moor, mountain, heath, down and common land. It also covers public rights of way, nature conservation, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks.

Countryside Stewardship Scheme

This is a scheme run by DEFRA, which makes payments to farmers and land managers to improve the natural beauty and diversity of the countryside. It operates throughout England and is part of the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP).

County Wildlife Site (CWS)

Sites recognised by Cumbria Wildlife Trust, which are non-statutory areas of wildlife value and are protected in local plans.

Drumlins

Streamlined elliptical hills of glacial till formed parallel to the direction of the ice movement.

Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)

Area of outstanding environmental importance in which the government wants to promote environmentally-friendly farming with the aid of grants and compensation for lost income.

European Water Framework Directive

An important European legislation on water quality, requiring all inland and coastal waters to reach at least 'good status' by 2005.

Geomorphological feature

Landform shaped by the physical and chemical interactions between the Earth's surface and the natural processes acting on it.

Historic Landscape Characterisation Project

A Cumbria County Council and Lake District National Park Authority project, funded by English Heritage as part of a national programme. It analyses the whole of Cumbria to determine the historic character of the present landscape.

Local Nature Reserves (LNR)

Area designated by the local authority, often owned by them and managed by other bodies, such as Wildlife Trusts.

National Nature reserve (NNR)

An area designated by English Nature for the national or international importance of their wildlife or natural features.

Natura 2000

Network of protected areas across the European Union (Special Protected Areas and Special Areas of Conservation). They protect important habitats and wildlife.

Open Country

Mountains, moor, heath, down and registered common land that will have a new public right of access on foot as a result of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Quiet Lanes Project

An initiative of the Countryside Agency working with local traffic authorities and partners, to use a network of minor roads treated appropriately to enable shared use by cyclists, walkers, horse riders and motorised users.

Ramsar Site

These are areas of internationally important wetland designated under the Ramsar Convention in 1971, which are important for migratory wildfowl and waders.

Regionally important Geological/Geomorphological Site (RIGS)

Geological or geomorphological site protected because of its educational, research, historical or aesthetic importance.

Right of Way

A road, footpath, bridleway or by-way open to all traffic that people have a legal right to use.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

A conservation site designated by English Nature, to protect nationally important animals, plants, geological or physiographical features.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Protected area designated by the European Union under the Habitats Directive. These areas conserve the 253 habitat types, 200 animal and 434 plant species listed in the Habitats Directive.

Special Protection Area (SPA)

A protected area designated by the European Union under the Birds Directive. These areas protect the 182 bird species and sub-species listed in the Birds Directive.

Stoop

Traditionally, a red sandstone gate- post.

Sunken Lanes

Lanes and tracks in the Solway Area that have been constructed up to a metre below surrounding field levels. The excavated material has been used to increase the

heights of the hedges to each side of the road, the hedges being planted on the cobble 'banks' or 'kests'.

World Heritage Site Inscription

Addition to the world Heritage Site list, which protects globally important places of cultural and natural heritage.

Appendix 7

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CroW	Countryside and Rights of Way
JAC	Joint Advisory Committee
DEFRA	Department of Environment Farming and Rural Affairs
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
CCC	Cumbria County Council
ABC	Allerdale Borough Council
CarCC	Carlisle City Council
AAONB	Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
LNR	Local Nature Reserves
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
PC	Parish Councils
EN	English Nature
NT	National Trust
MOD	Ministry of Defence
DoE	Department of Environment
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
SAP	Special Action Plan
HAP	Habitat Action Plan
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
SPA	Special Protection Area
EMS	European Marine Site
SFP	Solway Firth Partnership
RIGS	Regionally Important Geological Site
TPO	Tree Protection Order
CWS	Cumbria Wildlife Site
CWT	Cumbria Wildlife Trust
FC	Favourable Condition
HCT	Herpetological Conservation Trust
SMP	Shoreline Management Plan
CHAMP	Coastal Habitat Action Plan
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
VAC	Voluntary Action Cumbria

NAP	North Allerdale Partnership
CSFC	Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee
LTP	Local Transport Plan
NSA	National Scenic Area
SCCVG	Solway Coast Community Volunteer Group

Appendix 8

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