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Foreword



*from the Chairman of the North Pennines AONB Partnership,
Cllr. Bob Pendlebury O.B.E. D.L.*

Welcome to the consultation draft of the North Pennines AONB Management Plan, 2004-2009. This is the first statutory management plan for the AONB and its production is a requirement of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Its primary aim is to provide a framework for action for the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty and special qualities of the North Pennines AONB.

Everyone has a role to play in this work – farmers, foresters, estate managers, business people, public, statutory and voluntary sector bodies, local residents and visitors alike. There will be something in these pages that relates to how you can help conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the North Pennines AONB, to help

people grow in enjoyment and understanding of the area and to support those economic and social activities which in themselves contribute to keeping it special.

As an AONB, the North Pennines is a national asset, something which we have a duty to conserve and enhance for present and future generations, both locally and nationwide. Additionally, the designation of the area as Britain's first 'European Geopark' and the large areas under international wildlife designations, show the global significance of our wildlife and wild places.

The threats to our natural beauty perhaps come more from the piecemeal erosion of rural character than from major development. This needs to be addressed through robust policies and clear action for the conservation of our landscape and the things which collectively make it so special. At the same time we must encourage appropriate development which helps to sustain local communities. This is a difficult balance to strike and a major challenge for all of us.

The landscape of the North Pennines is, along with its people, the area's greatest asset and is likely to be the major factor in its long-term prosperity. Most of the work proposed in this plan is, in line with the purpose of AONB designation, aimed at the conservation and enhancement of that landscape, its wildlife and its cultural heritage. The work proposed will also support local employment in fields such as landscape contracting, conservation, tourism, building, transport, catering, printing and design. It will encourage land-based training for local people and the retention of the skills which have helped to make our landscape so special. It will bring forward measures which aim to complement the work of others whose focus is more overtly on economic and social activity.

I hope you will be able to support the measures proposed in this draft document and that you will offer your views on the policies and actions suggested, using the guidance on page 13.

The AONB designation was once seen by many as a barrier to progress. Today, and over the five – year life of this management plan, I hope it can be seen for what is: a tremendous opportunity to focus effort and investment on our wonderful landscape and to help to support the well being of local communities.





"Wynch Bridge, Teesdale" - Charlie Hedley © Countryside Agency



"Smelt Mill Flue and distant chimney"



Charlie Hedley © Countryside Agency

Setting the Scene

Management Plan

Part 1

This part of the plan establishes what is meant by 'natural beauty' in the context of AONBs and presents the background to AONBs and their statutory management plans. As well as identifying the purpose, audience and structure of the plan, this section outlines how the plan was produced and the other plans and strategies to which it relates. The nature and purpose of the 'Policy Guidelines' in the plan is also explained, along with information on how to comment on this consultation draft.

What is meant by 'Natural Beauty'?

1. In the context of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), 'natural beauty' means so much more than just 'scenic quality'. It is acknowledged to refer to a meeting of scenic, ecological, physiographical, geological and cultural interests, which help to define the special characteristics of a particular place.
2. Countryside Agency Guidance on AONBs, (publication CA24) confirms that, "Natural Beauty is more than just the look of the landscape, but includes landform, geology, plants and animals, landscape features and the rich history of human settlement over the centuries." Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 also makes reference to biodiversity as an important component of natural beauty.
- 3 In this plan, some key cultural associations with the landscape are also referred to as contributing to natural beauty. This is on the premise that they help to articulate what makes the North Pennines special and help to develop people's understanding of the area.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

4. The UK's AONBs and National Parks are within a worldwide category of protected areas known as 'Protected Landscapes', which has been devised by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Areas of special countryside throughout the world have been given protection of various kinds so that their qualities can be enjoyed by present and future generations. Parallel landscapes in other countries include the French Parc Naturelle and the National Parks of countries such as Spain and Portugal.
5. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are unique and irreplaceable national assets and along with National Parks represent our finest countryside. There are 37 AONBs in England, covering 15% of the land area, and a further 4 in Wales. They range in size from the Isles of Scilly (16 km²) to the Cotswolds (2038 km²). AONBs have their roots in the same legislation that brought about the National Parks – the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, which has recently been updated by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
6. The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. In pursuing the primary purpose account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.
7. 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.
8. In June 2000 Nick Raynesford MP confirmed in a response to a Parliamentary Question that the Government accept that the landscape qualities of National Parks and AONBs are equivalent,

and therefore the level of protection given to both types of area by the land use planning system should also be equivalent. Planning Policy Guidance Note 7 (The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development) will eventually be amended accordingly.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000

9. The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 consolidated and strengthened earlier legislation on AONBs and for the first time placed a statutory duty on local authorities to act jointly to produce Management Plans for AONBs within their boundaries. Management Plans must be produced by March 2004 and reviewed every five years.
10. Local Authorities must also have 'due regard' for the purpose of AONB designation in the carrying out of their functions. This latter duty is also extended to public bodies and statutory undertakers. Local Authorities remain responsible for planning and development control in AONBs and need to include appropriate policies in their Structure, Local and Mineral Plans. One of the statutory roles of this Management Plan is to guide the production and implementation of future policies which the AONB Partnership might wish to see applied in the AONB.
11. The Act also provides for the creation of 'Conservation Boards' as governance models for AONBs. This model is currently being pursued in several of the larger AONBs, but a thorough review of the governance structure of the North Pennines AONB Partnership in 2002 / 03 concluded that this was perhaps an option for the longer term but not one which should be taken forward at the present time.
12. AONB Partnerships can also, for the first time, secure from central Government the same percentage of core funding as that enjoyed by the National Park Authorities (75%). However, the Act stopped short of enabling them to levy local authorities for their contributions.

National Land Use Planning and Development Policy

13. National policy relating to development in AONBs is set out in Planning Policy Guidance note (PPG) 7 which states that:
"Policies and decisions affecting AONBs should favour conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. In all cases the environmental effects of new proposals will be a major consideration, though it will be appropriate to have regard to economic and social well-being of the area. Major proposals should be demonstrated to be in the public interest before being allowed to proceed. Consideration of applications should therefore normally include an assessment of:
 - The need for the development, in terms of national considerations, and the impact of permitting it or refusing it on the local economy.
 - The cost of and scope for developing elsewhere outside the area or meeting the need for it in some other way.
 - Any detrimental effect on the environment and the landscape, and the extent to which that should be moderated"

14. Regional Planning Guidance (North East and North West) and Local Development Plans (three County Structure Plans and six District Local Plans) provide the context for workings of the planning process in the AONB. The profile of the AONB and its conservation varies considerably across these documents and one of the challenges for the AONB Management Plan is to foster consistency and high standards of policy in relation to the AONB, as these plans are reviewed.
15. Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on several themes also informs planning policy and development control in the AONB. Relevant SPG has been produced on matters such as building design, the conservation of biodiversity in developments and the adoption of energy efficient building practices. Some local authorities have also adopted the North Pennines AONB Partnership's Building Design Guidance as SPG.
16. **The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill 2003**, which is likely to be enacted at the same time this plan is adopted (April 2004), will create the opportunity for joint Local Development Documents across administrative boundaries. If enacted this new legislation will also allow for new planning policy statements which will replace Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPG), and replace some tiers of local planning policy document (notably Structure Plans) with Regional Spatial Strategies. The AONB Management Plan should provide guidance to all such new land use planning documents which cover the AONB.
17. **The National Association for AONBs** works to raise the profile of the designation and secure a bright future for AONBs. This work includes lobbying government for improvements in legislation surrounding AONBs and the countryside, influencing plans and strategies, raising public awareness of AONBs and promoting the training and other needs of those employed to work for the conservation of our finest countryside.

The North Pennines AONB

18. The Designation Order for the North Pennines AONB was made in 1978. After considerable debate, which resulted in a Public Inquiry, the Confirmation Order for the AONB was made on 7th June 1988, for an area smaller than that originally proposed. However, at almost 2000 square kilometres, it is still the second largest of the 41 AONBs (and larger than all but two of the National Parks) and is one of the most remote and unspoilt places in England. It lies between the National Parks of the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales and Northumberland with the urban centres of County Durham away to the east. The AONB crosses the boundaries of two English Regions, being in both the North East and the North West. It lies within the boundaries of nine local authorities: the three counties of Cumbria, Durham and Northumberland and the six districts of Carlisle, Eden, Derwentside, Teesdale, Tynedale and Wear Valley.
19. Each AONB has a body responsible for co-ordinating efforts to conserve and enhance it. In the North Pennines, this is the **North Pennines AONB Partnership**. It is made up of almost 30 statutory agencies, local authorities and voluntary / community organisations which care for the North Pennines. A list of member organisations and an extract from the Terms of Reference forms appendix ?

The work of the AONB Partnership is carried out through the **AONB Staff Unit**, employed through its accountable body, Durham County Council. The purpose of the core staff team is to promote partnership working to conserve and enhance the AONB and to produce, monitor and support the implementation of the AONB Management Plan. It also acts as a champion for the area in matters relating to the conservation of natural beauty. The core functions of AONB Staff Units are defined by the Countryside Agency. The performance of all of these functions forms the basis for the Agency's grant aid to the AONB Partnership. The AONB Staff Unit is based in Stanhope, in County Durham.

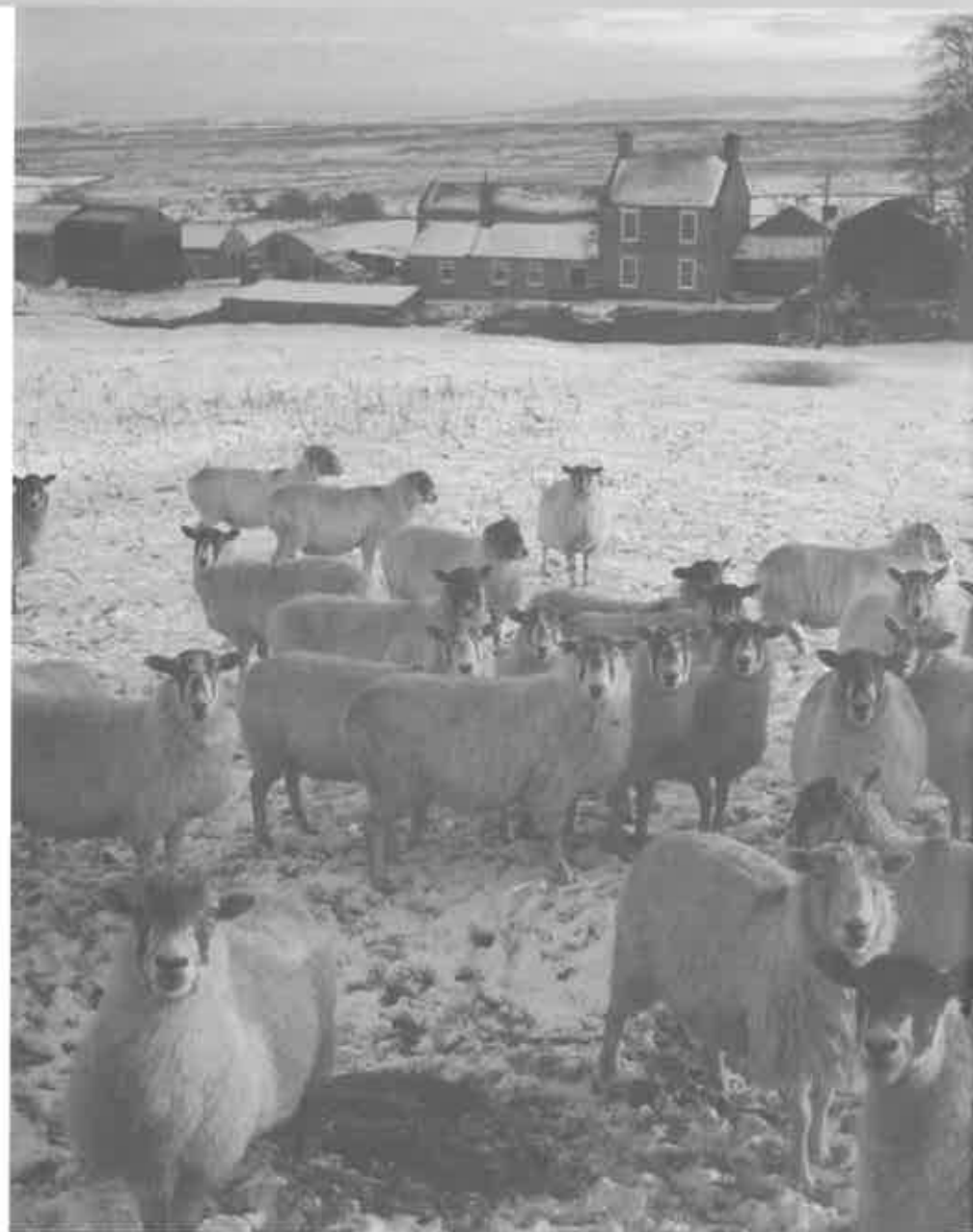
What is an AONB Management Plan?

20. Most of the 41 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have at some time had a non – statutory plan to guide their management. Such a plan was produced for the North Pennines AONB in 1995. The statutory duties placed upon local authorities by the CRoW Act 2000 include a requirement to produce, for the first time, statutory management plans for AONBs within their administrative boundaries. This duty should be discharged jointly where AONBs cover more than one local authority area. In the North Pennines, the North Pennines AONB Partnership is discharging this duty on behalf of the nine local authorities of the area (see paragraph 18).
21. The CRoW Act 2000 states that, in relation to Local Authorities, AONB Management Plans are intended to "...formulate their policy for the management of their Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it". Formal Countryside Agency guidance on the production of AONB Management Plans (CA23) requires that they go beyond this legal minimum and "set out the policies of other partners for managing the AONB." The way in which policy guidance is presented in this plan is detailed on page 13.
22. AONB Management Plans should:
 - highlight the special qualities and the enduring significance of the AONB, the importance of its landscape features and identify those that are vulnerable to change
 - present an integrated vision for the future of the AONB as a whole, in the light of national, regional and local priorities
 - set out agreed policies incorporating specific objectives which will help secure that vision
 - identify what needs to be done, by whom and when, in order to achieve these objectives
 - identify the means by which objectives and actions will be reviewed.
23. An AONB Management Plan is intended to bring forward measures which will generate action for the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. It should promote high and consistent management and policy standards across the area, regardless of administrative boundaries.
24. It should also stimulate action aimed at helping people to discover, enjoy and understand the local landscape and its natural and cultural features. Added to this, it should identify actions which will support those economic and social activities which in themselves contribute to the conservation of natural beauty.

25. The Plan is not intended to be a panacea for all the perceived problems which local communities might face, nor is it intended to duplicate or replace other statutory plans which affect the area. It is, however, the only document with a focus on the whole of the AONB and the only one which is primarily focused on the purpose of the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

Who is the Plan for?

26. The primary audience for this plan is the nine local authorities of the North Pennines, for reasons outlined on the previous page.
27. The second audience is the Government agencies, statutory undertakers, utilities and public bodies, which must, in accordance with Section 85 of the CROW Act 2000, have “due regard” to the purposes of AONB designation in the carrying out of their functions. The policy guidance and the objectives of this plan should guide them in the fulfilment of their duty under the Act.
28. The final audience is the wide range of local organisations and individuals with a concern for the future well-being of the North Pennines, be they land managers, local businesses, local residents, visitors or funding bodies. It is hoped that this plan will provide them with the inspiration and guidance to bring forward innovative ideas for the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and lead to greater awareness and understanding of the designation.
29. Crucially, it is not the plan for the AONB Partnership or the work programme for its Staff Unit. It is the plan for the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and all those with an interest in the area can be involved in its implementation.



“Winter Sunset, Lunedale” Barry Stacey © Countryside Agency.

How was the Plan Produced?

30. This Management Plan has been produced by the North Pennines AONB Partnership Staff Unit on behalf of the nine local authorities of the North Pennines. The Staff Unit was supported in this work by a Review Steering Group drawn from Partnership member organisations. However, this does not tell the whole story, as the content of this plan has been informed by a process of finding out what local people from all walks of life felt was important about the future of the North Pennines AONB.
31. A questionnaire produced in 2002 was distributed widely throughout the area. Over 400 responses were received, giving people's views about which issues were of most importance to them. The findings of the survey will be available as a separate report.
32. Three public meetings were held, along with a series of workshops with user groups and special interest groups. These included valuable meetings with representatives of the Estates, those concerned with the historic environment, those concerned primarily with nature conservation and groups focused on access to the countryside. The AONB Partnership operates a series of Working Groups, which support the development of projects and initiatives in the AONB – these too played a prominent role in the development of the policies and actions in this plan.
33. Contributions to the content have also been received from a wide range of other individuals and organisation within the AONB Partnership.
34. This consultation draft of the plan will be subject to a 'sustainability appraisal,' which will assess how the objectives contribute to sustainable development. This process will also be applied to any comments on the draft, as part of the task of producing the final version.
35. **The issues identified during this process have informed this consultation draft of the AONB Management Plan.**

North Pennines AONB Management Plan Review





Your Say on the Future of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The North Pennines has been designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) since 1988 and covers almost 2,600 sq km (1,024 sq miles), extending across the counties of Durham, Cumbria and Northumberland. The area is home to some of the best examples of moorland and tundra in the world, its wealth of historic buildings and features, and its rare and special wildlife.

In 2000, the County, AONB and Rights of Way (CROW) Act was passed. Part of the Act's purpose is to ensure a bright future for AONBs and the people that live and work in them or enjoy visiting them. An important part of the work to ensure the future, with one of a view, Management Plan for the North Pennines AONB, which is a key requirement under the CROW Act. The legal duty is to produce this plan in place of the current local authorities of the area, the North Pennines Partnership, the local authority for the AONB for a period of over 30 years and this is producing this plan on their behalf.

The new Management Plan will identify the policies and actions that are needed for the area in the future. In this way the interests, expertise and views of a representative of people and organisations can be used to ensure and enhance the special environment and character of the North Pennines.

We need to know what you think is important as this will help us make the Management Plan reflect your views and expectations. This is all happening at a time when AONBs are receiving more recognition than ever before. The AONB Partnership are committed to the goal of 'Outstanding' and we need to make sure that they are awarded to with the same sensitivity and passion.

These questionnaires will only take a few minutes of your time to complete, and will help enormously with the important work.

Cllr Bob Pendlebury
Chairman,
North Pennines Partnership

This Plan's relationship to other Plans and Strategies

36. The conservation of the North Pennines AONB is increasingly influenced by other statutory and non-statutory plans and strategies, relating to matters such as biodiversity, economic development, transport planning, rights of way improvement and tourism development.
37. In the preparation of this plan, the AONB Partnership has taken account of the relevant local, regional and national strategies which impact on the conservation of natural beauty in the North Pennines. Where these plans are particularly influential on the conservation of the AONB they are referred to in the text. These plans are listed in the following table.

Theme	Strategy (Source)
Landscape and Biodiversity	North Pennines Landscape Assessment (Countryside Commission 1990)
	Cumbria County Council Landscape Strategy (Cumbria CC)
	County Biodiversity Action Plans (County Wildlife Trusts)
	North Pennines Natural Area Profile (English Nature)
	England Forestry Strategy (Forestry Commission)
Historic Environment	A Force for the Future (DCMS / DTLR)
	Power of Place (English Heritage)
Economic Development / Rural Regeneration	Rural Action Plan for the North East (Sponsored by ONE NorthEast)
	Regional Economic Strategies for the North East and North West (RDAs)
	West Durham Rural Recovery Plan
	Weardale Task Force Report
	The Rural White Paper – Our Countryside; the Future – A Fair Deal for Rural England.
	The Countryside Agency's strategy, 'Quality of Life for Tomorrow's Countryside' (March 2003)
	Sustainable Food and Farming Delivery Plan (DEFRA)
	Community Plans (Local Authorities / Strategic Partnerships)
	Regional and Local Authority Tourism and Cultural Strategies
Land Use / Development Planning	County Structure Plans (Durham, Cumbria, Northumberland), District Local Plans (Carlisle, Derwentside, Eden, Teesdale, Tynedale, Wear Valley)
	Regional Planning Guidance (Regional Assemblies)
	Regional Spatial Strategies (Regional Assemblies)

How the Plan is structured

38. This first part of the plan provides the background to the AONB designation and how it relates to the North Pennines in particular. It explains the statutory background to AONBs and AONB Management Plans and goes on to explain how this plan was produced and for whom. The approach to 'policies' is also made clear and this is important when reading the rest of the document.
39. The second part of the plan, 'The Natural Beauty of the North Pennines' defines the landscape types of the AONB and the principal components of natural beauty. These are the special and distinctive qualities of the North Pennines which separate it from anywhere else. Issues affecting their conservation are also highlighted.
40. The first section of Part 3, 'Conserving and Enhancing Natural Beauty', considers the 'impacts' of the activities which are most likely to affect natural beauty – land use planning and land management. The next part of this section addresses the ways in which supporting sustainable communities can conserve and enhance natural beauty. Finally this part of the plan considers the importance of influencing the local, regional and national policy-making agenda to support the purpose of AONB designation.
41. Part 4 addresses the ways in which tourism and public access can be encouraged, whilst conserving and enhancing the area's special qualities. It also addresses the ways in which information and interpretation of the environment might best be provided.
42. Part 5 deals with the different kinds of monitoring that will need to take place to make sure that the plan is having an impact and that the quality of the environment is improving.
43. The final version of the plan will feature a fold out section of the back cover which will detail all the objectives from the Action Plan (see below), allowing you to see them at the relevant points in the text.
44. Part 6 is a detailed five year action plan, presenting 37 objectives and a series of actions which will be brought forward during the life of this plan.

AONB Policy Guidelines in this Plan

45. The AONB Management Plan does not override the existing policies of local authorities. Instead it provides 'AONB Policy Guidelines' to inform the drafting of future policy in matters affecting the AONB. They are presented to promote consistency of approach across administrative boundaries and stimulate the highest standards of planning and management in the North Pennines. In terms of policies relating to land use and development policy, they are intended to influence policies in documents such as Regional Planning Guidance, Structure Plans, Local Plans or their successors.
46. It is also possible for local authorities to adopt as Supplementary Planning Guidance the AONB Policy Guidelines pertinent to the land use planning process.

47. Outside the land use planning process, the AONB Policy Guidelines are intended to influence the approach of local authorities to matters such as tourism promotion, highways management, nature conservation and working with communities on matters connected to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

Influencing the work of other organisations

48. There are a great many other organisations and individuals operating in the AONB, the work of which can have a significant impact on natural beauty. These include statutory agencies, public utilities, tourist boards, land managers, community organisations and many others. A range of strategies and actions plans etc. are produced by these organisations, which can have considerable implications for the area.
49. The AONB Policy Guidelines are intended to establish an agreed policy framework for other organisations operating in the AONB, which would guide their work and inform the strategies and plans they produce.
50. An '**Action Plan**' forms the latter part of this management plan and complements the AONB Policy Guidelines. It details proposed roles and responsibilities of different organisations in action to conserve and enhance the AONB from 2004 – 2009.
51. The adoption of this plan by the nine Local Authorities of the AONB and by the North Pennines AONB Partnership, as well as its endorsement by all those bodies with AONB duties under Section 85 the CRoW Act, will symbolise a joint commitment to an agreed vision for the area. Implementing the policy guidelines, objectives and actions it recommends will bring about real and beneficial change.

Commenting on this draft

52. You can use the online or printed comment form circulated with this draft of the plan to make comments, which may be incorporated into the final version. You can also e-mail comments directly to the AONB Partnership (north.pennines@durham.gov.uk). **Please restrict your comments to factual inaccuracies in the main text, to the 'readability' of the plan (type size etc) and to the content of the Policy Guidelines, Objectives and Actions.**
53. **Please submit your comments by Monday 1st December.**





"South Tyne Valley" - Charlie Hedley © Countryside Agency

The 'Natural Beauty' of the North Pennines

Management Plan **Part 2**

This section of the plan provides a general introduction to the North Pennines AONB. It outlines 10 principal landscape types of the AONB, so that their distinctive character might be better understood. Finally it presents in more detail the main components of natural beauty which make the North Pennines unique and highlights some of the issues facing their conservation and enhancement.

An Introduction to the North Pennines AONB

“This country, though politically distributed among three counties, is one and the same in all its characteristic features. From it flow the Tyne, the Wear and the Tees and many branches which fall into these rivers. Along the banks of these and several other smaller streams which fall into them are dales or valleys, cultivated near the banks and for a short distance up the sides of the hills, but soon cultivation and enclosure cease, and beyond them the dark fells, covered with peat and moss and heath; and between one vale and another is a wide extent of high moorland, extending sometimes for a dozen miles. In these upland tracts are no inhabited homes but thousands of blackfaced sheep are scattered over them; and there breed the grouse which attract the sportsmen at the proper season of the year to this country.” (*Royal Commission into Children’s Employment in the Mines*. W.R. Mitchell. 1842)

54. This description of the North Pennines in 1842 might equally have been written today. The close similarities of the landscape of over 160 years ago and that of today in large measure reflects the continuation of land management practices. The enclosed valley bottom meadowland and the open moors maintained for sheep and for sport are the product of an unbroken management tradition. Ensuring the continuation of such established management methods is essential to retaining the character and diversity of the North Pennines landscape.
55. It is, however, misleading to consider the North Pennines landscape as timeless and unchanging. From prehistoric times (when the clearance of the natural North Pennines forest began) to today, when pressures ranging from changes in agricultural policy to reservoir building have affected the landscape, change has been continuous. The writer of the above description was employed in investigating conditions in the lead mines, which during that period had transformed many parts of the North Pennines into a semi-industrial landscape. Although often damaging to natural assets, such change has been important in establishing the variety of the North Pennines landscape and supporting active local communities and the local economy.
56. The way in which the landscape is perceived has changed greatly over the years. Early travellers in the 18th century recoiled from the wild and threatening appearance of the open moorland. The romantic view of the countryside in the 19th century, captured in Turner’s paintings and sketches of Teesdale, contrasts with the hardship of those living and working in local lead mines. Enjoyment and understanding of the ‘natural’ and historic qualities of the landscape is now an important influence on traditional management of the land. The quality of the landscape is increasingly regarded as a resource capable of creating benefits from spending by visitors. Although it cannot be foreseen how the North Pennines will be valued in the future, it is important to ensure a continuation of practices of good management which link today’s



“Upper Teesdale with Crankley Scar” – Charlie Hedley © Countryside.

landscape with that of the past. This is not to ‘preserve it in aspic’, but to ensure that its essential character is conserved.

57. The North Pennines has a population of about 12,000 people, less than half its population in 1861 when 27,000 people lived in the orefield. The majority of the AONB population lives within the North Pennine dales, where settlements include small towns such as Alston and Allendale, together with relatively compact villages, isolated hamlets and a wide scatter of individual farmhouses. The AONB boundary excludes the main settlements within and adjoining the lower dales such as Stanhope, Wolsingham, Haltwhistle, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Barnard Castle and Hexham, which cater for much of the social and economic needs of the uplands.
58. The North Pennines was created when the massive Alston Block was uplifted. This resulted major faults, the Eden Scarp to the west and the Tyne Gap to the north. Into this upland a

network of river valleys has been incised, forming a variety of dales landscapes from the steep wooded gorges of the lower Allen rivers to the much more open landscape of upper Teesdale.

59. Much of the North Pennines is truly remote, wild countryside and it is precisely this sense of wildness and remoteness which imbues much of the area with its character. There are few places in England where you can walk all day without crossing a road, but it is still possible here, such as in the south west of the AONB on the wild moorland plateau and summits between Hartside and Stainmore Common. In spring and summer, high heather moors, blanket bogs and upland heaths are alive with the evocative calls of wading birds, black grouse dance on their leks and merlin and peregrine falcon race through the air.
60. The rise and fall of the lead mining industry has shaped much of today's landscape, not only in the physical remains that can be seen, but also in the pattern of local settlements. Weardale, Teesdale, and the South Tyne, Nent and Allen Valleys in particular, are some of the best places to see the remains of the industry and to see the 'miner – farmer landscapes' which grew out of it. This landscape became enclosed by the miner farmers from the 16th century, but beneath the surface of today's pattern of fields, villages and moorland there is a history of settlement and landscape change from mediaeval to prehistoric times. Norse, Roman, Iron Age, Bronze Age and possibly Neolithic settlers began shaping this land, perhaps as far back as 7,000 years ago.
61. In the lower and middle dales, drystone walls impose strong pattern on the landscape, where buildings on the valley sides are picked out by clumps of trees. Buildings and settlements are an integral part of the landscape, with most being built of local stone, reflecting the underlying geology, complimenting the stone field walls and reflecting the surrounding countryside. Wading birds feed in the in-bye grassland, rushy pastures and hay meadows. These hay meadows are of international importance and are awash with wildflowers. Rare alpine plants, relics of the last Ice Age, still survive in upper Teesdale.
62. The world famous rivers, Tyne, Tees and Wear have their birthplace high up in the fells. They tumble, rock strewn, along the dales, clothed in woodland in their middle and lower reaches. Where the rivers cross the erosion-resistant dolerite of the Whin Sill, dramatic waterfalls are formed, such as those at High Force, Low Force and Cauldron Snout, in upper Teesdale. In these rivers can be found the elusive otter, the water vole (Britain's fastest declining mammal) and Atlantic salmon.
63. The world renowned geology of the area has given rise to dramatic landform features, most famously High Force and the sweeping U-shaped valley of High Cup Nick, on the Pennine Way above Dufton. The geological importance of the area was in part recognised in the establishment of the AONB as the first 'European Geopark' in Britain.
64. Though not extensive, the native woods of the North Pennines are themselves important examples of woodland types. They are distinctive features of the landscape, following the course of rivers or clinging to narrow gills. The North Pennine woodlands are also one of the last places in England where you can find red squirrels.



"High Force, Upper Teesdale" © Diane Weston – Raby Estate.

65. The North Pennines has a remarkably high concentration of nationally and internationally important conservation sites and areas. 36.5% of the AONB is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are also 3 National Nature Reserves, 5 candidate Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) under the EU Habitats Directive, with five more under consideration, and a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU Birds Directive. Moor House – Upper Teesdale National Nature Reserve, Britain's largest terrestrial NNR, supports more than 20 species of Europe-wide conservation importance and in this context it is the most important reserve in the country. This reserve alone is larger than several of England's smaller AONBs. There are also many sites of more local importance, County Wildlife Sites, which contribute much to the area's natural beauty. Nearly 80% of the AONB comprises some form of semi-natural vegetation and plantation woodland. Only 20% has been significantly agriculturally improved and only 0.6% can be considered built up.

66. The landscape of the North Pennines contains many habitats of exceptional conservation value, including blanket bog, heathlands, hay meadows, oak woodlands, juniper scrub, flushes and springs, and unimproved and heavy-metal rich grasslands. In addition, there is an array of flowering plants on the calcareous grasslands of Teesdale which is unique in the UK. Internationally important numbers of birds, including 22,000 pairs of breeding waders by 2003 RSPB estimates, breed and feed on the open moors and adjacent grasslands.
67. The North Pennines is a nationally important area for many species of wildlife, including:
- 14 bird species protected at all times under Schedule 1, Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981
 - 12% of Great Britain's merlin
 - 10% of Great Britain's golden plovers
 - 80% of England's black grouse
 - 19 Red Data Book birds
 - 23 Red Data Book plants
 - 17 Red Data Book Invertebrates
 - 6 bird species listed on Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive.
68. The North Pennines also supports 40% of the UK mountain hay meadows, 35.7% of England's upland heathland, (1.1% of UK) and 20% of England's blanket bog (3% of UK). Other major habitats include upland unenclosed calcareous grassland, upland unenclosed acid grassland and the calaminarian grasslands associated with the effects of lead mining.
69. This is perfect country for walking, cycling, wildlife-watching and following in the footsteps of artists and writers who have been inspired by this wild land. There are many footpaths and bridleways to explore, including the Pennine Way National Trail, the C2C National Cycle Route, the Pennine Cycle Route, the Pennine Byway and the Pennine Bridleway. Derwent and other reservoirs offer opportunities for sailing, fishing, canoeing and even water ski-ing. The North Pennines is also the only AONB with its own ski slopes, though the trend towards warmer winters means they are little used now. Each of the North Pennine dales has a distinctive character and attractive villages to explore, such as Alston, Middleton in Teesdale, and Allendale. Quiet country roads crossing the high moors between the dales offer dramatic views of this outstanding landscape.
70. This is dynamic, productive, working countryside. Farming and forestry play an important role in the lives of local communities and in managing the landscape. The management of our moors for shooting and our rivers for fishing also benefits both wildlife and the livelihood of local people. Many farmers are diversifying into new activities and many more are taking advantage of schemes which support environmentally friendly practices. Tourism is an increasingly important aspect of the local economy, and the area offers a warm welcome for those who would come to see its wildlife and wild places, to uncover its history and visit its many attractions.



"Golden Plover" © RSPB

71. There is considerable pressure on the North Pennines landscape. This comes in many forms, including more obvious features like wind energy development, communications masts, new housing development, increasing traffic, changes in agriculture, mineral developments and military use of the area. Here is also the gradual erosion of rural character that accompanies unsympathetic management of roads, out-of-keeping conversion of traditional buildings and the gradual loss of historic features. Communities are under increasing pressure from rising house prices, loss of key services and limited employment opportunities. Tourism has the potential to be an important and positive force in the local economy, but needs to be managed sensitively to ensure that complements the special qualities of the area.
72. Though there are strong pressures on the landscape and its people, accentuated by the sometimes harsh weather and remoteness of the area, North Pennine communities remain proud, independent and versatile. Community spirit and local culture are strong, combining to provide an attractive, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere in which to live and work.

Landscape Types & Their Characteristics

Though a single entity, with unifying characteristics, there are several different types of landscape in the AONB. A journey along one of the dales might begin in a landscape of more lowland character, passing on to the mid-dales scenery of tumbling rivers, walls, meadows, scattered farms and isolated woodlands. This in turn gives way to the more open landscapes of the dale heads, with the wild moors beyond. The dramatic scarp landscapes of the west of the AONB provide further contrast in this special countryside.

A comprehensive assessment was made of the landscape of the AONB in 1990 by Landuse Consultants for the then Countryside Commission (CCP 318).

This has been modified for later work in the AONB, e.g. by Cumbria County Council (as part of the process of producing landscape guidance for the whole county) and for this management plan.

This plan recognises ten landscape types in the AONB, which are shown on the map opposite and discussed in a little more detail on the following pages.

**LANDSCAPE TYPES MAP
TO BE PLACED HERE
IN FINAL VERSION**

The Lower Dales

These landscapes are the first taste that many people get of the North Pennines as they approach on the roads from the east and north. In places such as lower Teesdale and the lower reaches of the South Tyne and Allen Valleys, the landscape is enclosed and intimate. There are scattered deciduous woodlands on the valley sides, along with hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Woodlands follow the rivers for much of their length. The walls which occur here impose a strong pattern on the landscape.



"Derwent Valley" © Cathie Tinn.

The Middle Dales

Also referred to as 'upper dales,' these landscapes are complex and diverse. Strong pattern is imposed by drystone walls, which reach high up the valley sides to the edge of the open moorland beyond. Field trees often follow the walls and the isolated houses are picked out by small clumps of trees. There are scattered farmsteads and isolated oak and oak-ash woodlands, particularly in daleside gills. The valley bottoms are characterised by flower-rich meadows and rushy pastures, with tumbling tree-lined rivers.

Farmsteads and small settlements, mainly in the valley bottom above the floodplain, are built of stone in the local vernacular style. Building style and design contribute greatly to local character, notably in Teesdale through the white farms and barns of the extensive Raby Estate. The scattered remains of mining activity, such as hushes and old mine buildings, are a reminder of the human influence on the landscape and the underlying geology which helped to shape it. Most of the few roads follow the valley at differing heights, with a few stretching up to join one dale to another. These roads are some of the highest in England and have spectacular views.

The geology of the dales has given rise to some dramatic landform features, particularly where rivers cross the whin sill outcrops and form impressive waterfalls.

The skyline is formed by the moorland edge, fringed with purple heather in the late summer and autumn.



"Weardale" – Charlie Hedley © Countryside Agency

The Dale Heads

The dale heads form bowl-rim skylines of the high moorland fringe. There is a feeling of remoteness, bleakness and wildness which is shared with the moors beyond. Steeply incised beck cut into the landscape and unenclosed land reaches far down the fellside. Smaller becks come together to form the headwaters of the rivers. Rush-dominated pastures are strewn across the landscape and are reverting to moorland vegetation. Coniferous forestry plantations are obtrusive features in the landscape, but are being felled over time. There are derelict walls and buildings, including features such as abandoned mine shops and lead miners' cottages. In places such as upper Weardale, the Upper Nent Valley and Hudeshope, the landscape is best understood through an appreciation of the mining industry and its impact on the area. Here the 'miner-farmers' established small-holdings and enclosed areas of land at altitudes and aspects where cultivation seem impossible in this harsh climate. The pattern of small enclosures in places such as Cowshill is in stark contrast to the wide open land beyond. Dale head settlements like Allenheads, Cowshill and Nenthead are among the highest villages in England, their size and prosperity ebbing and flowing with the fortunes of lead mining.



"Hartside" © North Pennines AONB Partnership.

Moorland Ridges

Moorland ridge landscapes divide the eastern and northern dales. These gently rolling summits range from 700 metres down to 450 metres in the east. They are dominated by dry heath vegetation, the changing colours of which provide irregular pattern in the landscape. This is in contrast to the more regular pattern created by heather burning. There are few man made features and there are long views across a sequence of ridges, sometimes with the dales partly visible below. They have less of a feeling remoteness and wildness than the moorland summits and plateau, though at their heart they can seem dramatic and bleak.



Looking down towards Frasterley. Views of the dales below reduce the wildness of the Moorland Ridges – Charlie Hedley © Countryside Agency.

Moorland Summits

These are wild and remote landscapes of a seemingly endless blanket bog, with heather and cotton grass creating a mosaic of colour and seasonal contrast. The landform is one of sweeping and interlocking ridges and Millstone Grit caps that form the highest fells, with stepped profiles and flat tops. Hidden valleys of small becks, burns or sikes cut through the ridge flanks. The highest ground, around Cross Fell (893m) and other nearby summits, forms a secondary skyline above the main scarp when viewed from the south and west.

There is a strong sense of openness and apparent naturalness and a general lack of modern man-made features or perceived human influence. However, isolated redundant buildings associated with the lead industry dot the landscape, notably smelt mill chimneys, which can sometimes be seen for several miles. Those modern features that do occur, such as the Air Traffic Control station on Great Dun Fell, are intrusive elements in this wild place. Exposed outcrops of rock add to the contrasts in colour and texture and to the wild, rugged qualities of the landscape. The climate is severe (the average summer temperature at Cow Green being the same as that of Reykjavik, Iceland). However, on clear days the views are long, wild and dramatic.

AWAITING NEW PHOTOGRAPHY

Moorland Plateau

This a relatively flat area of moorland, at a lower level than the summits (400 – 500 metres), with a covering of continuous peat bog and a feeling of wildness, naturalness and remoteness. There is an almost total lack of landmarks apart from the rocky raised summit of Shackleborough. Wainwright described this area as “the greatest wilderness in the country... a no man’s land....that has no paths or land marks...an upland desert”.



“Moorland Plateau landscape receding beyond Wemmergill”

The Southern Scarp

The scarp is a prominent feature of the skyline when approaching from the south and west. It can be seen for several miles across the Vale of Eden, to which it provides an impressive backdrop. Its horizontal outcrops of limestone and volcanic rock display attractive forms and colours in the changing light of passing day. South of Hartside, the high, craggy, seemingly continuous scarp runs as far as Brough. It includes impressive cliffs and scars with distinctive conical shaped outliers at Dufton and Knock. On the slope, craggy features are mostly separated by open grazed grassland or divided occasionally into small fields. At the southern extreme are remnants of ancient woodland with gully and gill features occurring frequently. Views westwards over the Eden Valley are spectacular. The high moorland summits beyond form a secondary skyline from the south and west.

AWAITING NEW PHOTOGRAPHY

The Northern Scarp

North of Hartside, the deeply incised scarp is less craggy and is lower and more gentle in character. It is incised by the valleys of Croglin Water and the River Gelt in the north and has rounded hills at Cumrew and Talkin. A band of steeply sloping fells behind forms a secondary skyline.

AWAITING NEW PHOTOGRAPHY

The Vale Of Eden

Little of the Vale of Eden lies within the AONB, but a band of attractive fell foot villages, with their distinctive red sandstone construction, and the foothills in which they nestle, are within the boundary. The view from these settlements into the North Pennines rises up sweeping grass covered fells and unusual conical hills to a skyline often dominated by the steep scarp, with rocky outcrops in the south and a more gentle skyline in the north.

AWAITING NEW PHOTOGRAPHY

Upland Fringes

To the north and east are gently rolling landscapes of low ridges and hills, dissected by woodland which is often ancient in origin. Grazing predominates, though there is a little arable cultivation to the extreme east along the A68. To the south around Stainmore, the limestone fringe is not truly part of the scarp landscape, being less steep and imposing. There is a series of flat terraces and broken topography, with richly wooded stream courses. Both upland fringe areas have scattered farmsteads, those in the north and east being more prominent in the landscape



"New Curterway Heads © Cathie T

Hay Meadows and Species Rich Verges

The North Pennine dales support over 40% of the UK's mountain hay meadows and this grassland community is now one of the rarest in the country. Many examples of traditionally managed meadows form part of the 'in bye' land of the North Pennine hill farms, where they are cut for hay between early July and August, once the food-value of the crop has peaked and the flowers have set seed. These meadows support plants such as wood cranesbill, great burnet, pignut, bugle, globeflower, marsh hawk's-beard, Lady's mantles and yellow rattle. They are also of great importance for breeding birds such as yellow wagtail, redshank and lapwing, and for feeding birds such as twite. There are extensive areas of good quality hay meadow in upper Teesdale, Weardale, Baldersdale and in the Allen Valleys.

Nationally, hay meadows have suffered a significant decline in the past 50 years, but they remain a vital element of the physical and cultural landscape of the North Pennines. Even here, hay meadows have been reduced in extent by agricultural intensification and they are currently at risk from the use of fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides, ploughing and reseeding, conversion to silage, heavy grazing pressure, drainage and neglect. Traditional management practices should be encouraged to promote hay meadow conservation, including halting of ploughing and reseeding, an end to mechanical operations during the bird breeding season, reducing the application of artificial fertiliser and slurry, and returning to hay production in place of silage. Due to the small and fragmented nature of these remaining meadows, the restoration and enhancement of degraded hay meadows is a priority.

Many plant communities similar to those in hay meadows occur outside of agricultural land, most notably on roadside verges. Many roadside verges have suffered from mismanagement, neglect and damage over the years. However, a growing awareness of their richness and importance is leading to greater effort from, and cooperation between, conservation bodies, highway authorities and utilities. County Council countryside and ecology staff and the Durham Biodiversity Partnership have all undertaken valuable work on the conservation of species rich verges in recent years, including providing support to highway authorities on appropriate verge management. The AONB Partnership's Roads Management Guidance features AONB-focused advice for highway authorities on management of important verges.



"Hay Meadow" – Charlie Hedley © Countryside Agency.

Moorlands – their wildness and wildlife

From the high summits of Cross Fell and the bleak expanses of blanket bog on the plateau above Lunedale, to the high ridges between the eastern and northern dales, the moorland landscapes of the North Pennines are some of England's wildest places. They are home to some of our rarest and most charismatic wildlife and have an unspoilt sense of naturalness and remoteness found in few other places on our crowded islands.

This sense of wildness is more imagined than real, as even the most remote summits have been affected by grazing animals under the control of humankind for centuries. Most of our moorland landscapes are also the product of management for grouse shooting and this continues to be a key motive force in their conservation. There are few man made structures on the moors and most of those that occur, such as the redundant mine shops and smelt mill chimneys, contribute to their wild character. This, and the often dramatic weather, can make them feel like a place apart from the world below. It is still possible to walk all day on our moors without seeing another human being, just wild miles of spectacular countryside.

The moorland habitats include 36% of England's upland heathland. Dry heath, which covers 14% of the AONB (almost 30,000 ha), is dominated by heather (ling) and bell heather and occurs on the steeper hill slopes and as mosaics with acid grasslands. Wet heath, characterised by cross-leaved heath and/or purple moor grass, occurs in waterlogged valleys and in association with blanket bog. Although this habitat is generally poor in plant species it supports a variety of dwarf shrubs and is rich in invertebrates.

21% of the AONB (almost 45,000 ha) is covered by wild expanses of blanket bog, occurring over the mantle of peat that covers extensive areas of plateau and gentle slopes. This represents 20% of England's blanket bog and 3% of the UK total. A typical tract of blanket bog in the North Pennines contains heather, cross-leaved heath, hare's-tail cottongrass, bilberry, broad-leaved cottongrass, cloudberry, deergrass, crowberry and bog asphodel, as well as many species of peat-building sphagnum moss.

Unenclosed moorlands of the North Pennines are also important for a variety of specialised bird species including red grouse and black grouse (which feed on the young tips of heather), hen harrier, merlin, short-eared owl, curlew, golden plover, dunlin and twite.

The highest ground in England, outside the Lake District, can be found in the North Pennines and on the highest and most exposed land is a montane heath with prostrate, weather-beaten shrubs, mosses and lichens, more typical of the parts of the Scottish Highlands. Seepages at these higher elevations support a montane 'brown flush' vegetation community found nowhere else in England. This includes common yellow sedge, yellow mountain saxifrage, Alpine meadow-rue, three-flowered rush, yellow marsh saxifrage and Teesdale sandwort.

Other major habitats of our uplands include both acid and calcareous grasslands. Upland calcareous grasslands are relatively rare; of particular importance in the North Pennines are those that exist



"Moorland" – Charlie Hedley © Countryside A

over the outcrops of sugar limestone, which occurs at just two places in the UK. Many nationally and locally rare plants occur on the sugar limestone grasslands of Moor House – Upper Teesdale NNR, including Teesdale violet, spring gentian, hair sedge and false sedge. Grazing plays a part in maintaining this unique plant community, by maintaining a short and diverse sward. Teesdale sandwort and the round mouthed whorl snail are found here and nowhere else in Britain. Both species are representative of a suite of arctic – alpine species which, quite remarkably, have persisted here since the last glaciation. This is the result of a combination of ground conditions, a relatively severe climate and low intensity agricultural management.

There are four main types of acid grassland in the North Pennines, distinguished by their dominant grasses (mat grass, sheep's fescue and common bent, wavy hair grass, and heath rush). Large areas remain because they are difficult to improve for agriculture. It is possible to restore some of the less modified acid grasslands to heathland, though where dwarf shrubs have been lost they can still be important for breeding birds, especially waders.

The wildness and wildlife of our moorlands is under pressure from several sources. These important habitats and their wildlife are affected to varying degrees by grazing pressure (too much or too little), bracken encroachment, accidental fire damage and arson, sometimes inappropriate burning management, drainage and recreational pressure on sensitive sites. In the past they have suffered from planting with conifers.

The sense of wildness and remoteness is easily shattered by low flying military aircraft and the noise from MoD Ranges. Pressure for windfarms, smaller scale wind energy development and telecom masts is growing and will need to be handled sensitively. The result of the demand for increased domestic and commercial water supply in previous decades can clearly be seen in the creation of the major reservoirs of Derwent in the 1960s and Cow Green in the 1970s, alongside the other reservoirs of Teesdale and Weardale. Whilst not affecting the tranquillity of the moorlands, they have eroded its sense of wildness.

Increased use of motorbikes and 4x4 vehicles for both land management and recreation is also beginning to affect the wild qualities of the area, through the creation of obtrusive new tracks across moorland, and the potential for increased noise and degradation of tracks and routeways.

Most of the moorland of the AONB will become accessible on foot, under rights of access which will come into force early in the life of this plan. This too poses a potential threat, as yet unquantifiable, to sensitive plant and bird species. Equally increased access may lead to greater enjoyment and understanding of the area and to greater support for conservation. New access will certainly need to be managed carefully, to ensure that new rights can be enjoyed alongside the exercise of new responsibilities.



"Spring Gentian" © North Pennines AONB Partnership.

Trees and Woodlands

Human activity over several thousand years has created the landscape we enjoy today, benefiting a whole range of species and habitats but greatly reducing our woodland cover. Remarkably, the North Pennines has half as many trees per square kilometre as the City of Westminster, but this hasn't always been the case and it does not imply that local woodlands are insignificant. Upland woodland was once a much more common feature of the North Pennines landscape and episodic changes of land use by the miner-farmer communities permitted regeneration of trees and shrubs. However, persistent grazing by livestock has fragmented and diminished our woods.

Many of our woodlands are ancient in origin, often occurring in steep gills, which have been too difficult to clear for agriculture or graze with sheep. Others are found along river valleys, particularly the Allen and the South Tyne. Three principal woodland types (excluding conifer plantations) are found in the North Pennines: upland mixed ash woods, upland oak woods and wet woodland. Juniper scrub is also an internationally important feature of the middle dales, notably in Teesdale and also in Allendale. The woodland communities of the North Pennines are important in their own right for their contribution to the landscape and for the biodiversity which they support.

Upland mixed ash woods occur on base rich soils and are dominated by ash and wych elm, with birch, sessile oak, rowan and bird cherry. The ground flora is herb rich and is notable for bright displays of flowers such as bluebell, primrose, wood cranesbill and wild garlic. Wood avens, dog violet



"Upland Oakwoods, Gelsdale" © RSPB.



Charlie Hedley © Countryside A

and wood sorrel are also regular features of the ground flora, which is often rich in ferns due to its higher humidity. Good examples of such woodlands can be found in parts of Teesdale, Weardale and the Derwent Valley. The Helbeck and Swindale Woods cSAC near Brough are considered to be one of the best examples of this woodland type in the UK.

Upland oak woods are found on free-draining more acidic soils. As well as sessile oak, downy and silver birch are also present as canopy species, with an understorey of rowan, hazel and holly. Ground flora varies with soil type and degree of grazing, but typically includes species such as wavy hair grass, wood sorrel, wood anemone, bluebell and bilberry. Birdlife in these woods is typical of many such woodlands in the northern and western UK, supporting migrant wood warbler, pied flycatcher, redstart and tree pipit, as well as range of common resident species. These woods also support a diverse community of lichens and bryophytes. This woodland type now typically occurs as fragments, surviving in steep-sided gills, with few blocks in excess of 5ha in size. It is believed that approximately 780ha of

upland oak woodland remains in the AONB (source – Natural Area Profile) with over half of this being in the Allen and South Tyne Valleys. Derwent Gorge NNR and the Gelt Valley also have significant and species rich oak woodland.

Wet woodlands are found on poorly drained soils, particularly in river valleys across the AONB and are dominated by alder, birch and willows. They are an important winter food source for black grouse. Extensive floodplain and hillside wet woodland is now extremely rare and the alder-ash woodlands of the North Pennines are considered to be of national importance.

Juniper is one of Britain's few native evergreen shrubs and juniper scrub is an increasingly scarce and fragmented habitat. Juniper stands occur at very scattered localities within the North Pennine dales, although the Moor House-Upper Teesdale NNR contains one of Britain's largest stands, with at least 15,000 bushes, covering around 100ha. What remains is often even-aged, dominated by older bushes, with virtually no regeneration occurring.

Despite their importance, our woodlands are at risk from several common problems, notably overgrazing, lack of management and the spread of non-native species. Wet woodlands are additionally at risk from lowering of the water table through drainage and abstraction, poor water quality, some flood prevention measures and the virulent disease affecting alder, *Phytophthora*. Managing juniper is a notoriously difficult task and it will require considerable conservation effort to maintain the nationally important juniper scrub of the North Pennines. There is much scope for creating new native woodlands across the AONB, which can conserve and enhance landscape character and increase biodiversity.



"Alder woodland, Waldrige Fell" – Peter Wakely © English Nature.



"Some North Pennines woodlands still support red squirrels, but their future is uncertain".

Upland Birds

Anyone visiting the North Pennines in spring and early summer will be taken aback by the sheer numbers of birds breeding in the moorland, blanket bog, marginal grassland and hay meadow habitats of the AONB. This is the most important upland area in England for breeding raptors, black grouse and waders.

The hay meadows of the North Pennines provide a valuable feeding ground for species such as linnet (and twite in upper Teesdale), whilst good numbers of grey partridge and lapwing also breed here. Perhaps the most characteristic breeding bird of these meadows is the yellow wagtail, now showing alarming signs of decline. As they breed within the hay crop, their nests are vulnerable to destruction from hay and silage cutting. In pastures, ground nesting birds may be vulnerable to trampling by stock, especially where stocking densities are high.

Upland marginal grassland, a speciality of the North Pennines AONB, embraces allotment, rough grazing and rushy pastures. Collectively, these support important populations of breeding waders and black grouse and during the spring and early summer they are alive with the song and display of breeding birds. The enclosed pastures are characterised by a distinctive suite of breeding wading birds: lapwing, curlew, oystercatcher and redshank. At higher elevations, dunlin can be found on the exposed, wet tops, with golden plover on the heather.



"Lapwing" © RSPB.



"Black Grouse" © Lindsay W.

The AONB holds almost 80% of England's remaining population of black grouse (approx. 750 male once widespread species and our most impressive and enigmatic game bird. Black grouse are dependent on a mosaic of habitat types found at the moorland edge. Display sites (leks) are traditionally used each year and are generally characterised by relatively short vegetation in the rush pastures and 'white moor' marginal grasslands below the fell wall. Wet flushes and wetland vegetation are essential for successful breeding, as for at least their first two weeks of life the chicks feed exclusively on invertebrates. In other places intensive grassland management gives way to intensive heather management for red grouse, but in the North Pennines land managers have retained our white moor areas, to the great benefit of birdlife. The suite of upland waders can be found at internationally significant densities on the moorland fringes and extensively managed grasslands of middle dales landscapes. In some of these areas survey work has revealed breeding densities of over 90 pairs of waders per square kilometre, some of the highest in Britain. Curlew, redshank and snipe favour wetter grasslands for breeding, whilst oystercatchers frequent the river and streamside fields.

Beyond the fell wall, game management has led to large populations of red grouse. One of the highest densities of breeding merlin in Britain also occurs here and short-eared owls can regularly be seen quartering the spring and summer moorlands and rougher grasslands. The steeper crags of the western and southern North Pennines also support approximately 2% of the British peregrine population. The extensive moorland has the potential to support a large number of breeding hen harriers and persecution may be one of the reasons for the lack of breeding success of this species.

The red grouse, an upland specialist, remains on the high moors throughout the year, feeding on the young tips of heather and other moorland plants such as bilberry. Average July densities for the North Pennine grouse moors are estimated to be over 80 birds/km², some of the highest in the UK.

High on the fells, golden plover are attracted to exposed limestone, short turf and recently burnt heather. This species breeds in internationally important numbers in the North Pennines, with the population estimated to be about 2,250 pairs. Adult birds often leave nesting areas to feed when not incubating and favoured feeding sites can be a considerable distance from the nest. These may include areas of marginal grassland, allotment, improved pasture and meadow. By contrast, the dunlin breeds in relatively small numbers on the high plateaux of the North Pennines, typically on moors dominated by extensive areas of blanket bog.

The AONB also has a characteristic group of songbirds, which include ring ouzel, meadow pipit and large numbers of skylark that, despite the well documented decline in many areas of the country, is still abundant here. Wheatears nest amid the stones of old walls and sheep stalls and whinchat typically breed in bracken beds and areas of long 'scrubby' vegetation. The twite is an important but easily overlooked species of the North Pennines. This small, delicately streaked brown passerine breeds in areas of long heather or bracken at the moorland edge but is dependent for feeding on herb-rich pastures and meadows at lower altitudes.

Our rivers are home to birds such as dipper and grey wagtail, whilst our dales woodlands support species such as pied flycatcher and redstart. Though these species are not as significant in population terms as our waders, raptors and black grouse, they all add to the distinctive character of our birdlife.

This abundant birdlife makes the North Pennines unique among upland landscapes in England today. Grazing pressure, mechanical operations during the nesting season, neglect of rushy pastures, disturbance, accidental moorland fires (and arson), persecution and even increased traffic, all threaten the populations of the characteristic birds of the AONB. The future for the characteristic birds of the North Pennines lies in how well we can address these issues and retain the mosaic of upland habitats on which they depend.



"Merlin" © RSPB.

A World Class Earth Heritage

Nowhere is an understanding of the physical landscape – the landforms, rocks, geological and mineralogical features – more vital to land management and interpretation than in the North Pennines. The AONB abounds with geological sites and features of importance. The AONB is of global importance for its geology and includes a classic example of a base metal orefield.

Partly in recognition of this, though also in recognition of local efforts to conserve and interpret earth science, the North Pennines AONB is the first area in Britain to be awarded the UNESCO-backed status of 'European Geopark'.

During its long history of mineral extraction and associated exploration, the North Pennines has been at the forefront of developing ideas and concepts in the understanding of geological processes and formation of ore deposits. Many fundamental concepts in geological science can trace their early origins to this area. The area's geological importance rests not just on those features which can be seen today, but from the North Pennines' crucial place in the evolution of the sciences of geology and mineralogy. Examples of this importance include:

- the succession of Carboniferous rocks and the understanding of how they have been laid down has been highly influential in interpreting similar rocks elsewhere in Britain and beyond,
- the Whin Sill – the 'type' sill of geological science. Where rivers cross Whin Sill exposures, such as at High Force and Low Force, dramatic waterfall are formed, which contribute much to the area's distinctiveness,
- the numerous ore deposits, which have contributed so much to the understanding and discovery of similar deposits worldwide,
- the prediction and discovery of the concealed Weardale Granite, its key role in the generation of the ore deposits and the model it has provided for understanding ore-forming processes worldwide,
- the area has the remarkable distinction of containing the type locations for four mineral species,
- 23 sites are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) for their geological, mineralogical or geomorphological interest. Over 20 sites in the Cumbrian North Pennines are currently designated as Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) and a small number of sites in County Durham are designated as Durham County Geological Sites.

Geological features are at risk from uncontrolled collecting of mineral specimens, which may damage the conservation importance of the area. However, the main factor affecting geological conservation is a lack of appreciation of its importance to the AONB and of its international significance. This plan, and the Geodiversity Action Plan due for completion by March 2004, can take great strides to address this neglect of our world class earth heritage and bring forward measures to conserve and celebrate it.



"The Great Whin Sill at High Cup Nick above Dufton on the Pennine Way" © C

**GEOLOGICAL MAP TO BE
PLACED HERE IN FINAL VERSION**

Rivers and Wetland

The world famous rivers Tyne, Wear and Tees all have their birthplace high in the North Pennine hills. Most of our rivers are relatively unpolluted and support otter, water vole, brown trout and Atlantic salmon. They are home to dipper, common sandpiper and grey wagtail, with goosander where woodland provides opportunities for nesting. As the level of the land falls away, leaving wider valleys and more gentle hills, kingfishers bring a flash of electric blue to the riverbank. Our rivers also have a diverse range of features, such as riffles, shingle banks and pools, which each support a range of plants and animals. These channel features are complemented by bank features, such as earth or rock cliffs, stands of reeds, woodland or herb-rich grasslands. Together, this range of wildlife and habitats and their generally wild and unspoilt nature, makes our rivers one of the greatest natural assets of the North Pennines.

Our rivers have shown a remarkable recovery in fish populations, with the South Tyne and the Tees having greatly improved stocks of salmon and sea trout and the Derwent having a regionally important brown trout fishery. The main River Tyne is now the best salmon river in England. The continuing impact of pollution from historic mining activity on the water quality of the East and West Allen catchments (and that of the Nent) means that there are low invertebrate and fish densities in these rivers. However, they have developed a riparian flora which is tolerant of heavy metal pollutants and this is in large part the reason for the proposed designation of the Tyne and Allen River Gravels SAC. Some of the tributaries of the river Eden arise in the North Pennine fells, forming part of an



"The River South Tyne".



"River Wear" - Charlie Hedley © Countryside

internationally important river system designated as a candidate SAC for a number of species, including salmon and white-clawed cray fish.

Away from the rivers, other wetland areas, notably springs and flushes add much to the biodiversity of the AONB, with the basic flushes of Moor House-Upper Teesdale NNR being of international conservation importance.

The North Pennines provides water for many surrounding towns and cities, from its reservoirs, which have also become home to a range of bird and animal life, including otters and an important breeding population of wigeon. Our reservoirs have become popular places for fishing and sailing and their banks are popular with walkers and cyclists.

Several North Pennine rivers have attractive and sometimes dramatic waterfalls, notably High Force, Low Force, Cauldron Snout and Thortergill Force. As well as being of considerable geological interest, they make an important contribution to a sense of place and are popular places to visit.

Despite the generally optimistic outlook for our rivers and streams, they are currently at risk from pollution, including nutrient enrichment, toxic discharges and farm waste. They are also affected by: inappropriate channel and bankside management, including intensive grazing up to the river edge, unsympathetic engineering works and culverting. The spread of non-native species such as Himalayan balsam and mink can adversely affect local plants and animals. Catchment land use including drainage schemes at headwaters (gripping), alteration of flows, water abstraction, agricultural intensification and developments within the flood plain, all place the natural value of our rivers and streams under future pressure.



"Cow Green Reservoir" — Charlie Hedley © Countryside Agency.



"Low Force, on the River Tees" — Charlie Hedley © Countryside Agency.

Walls and Boundary Features

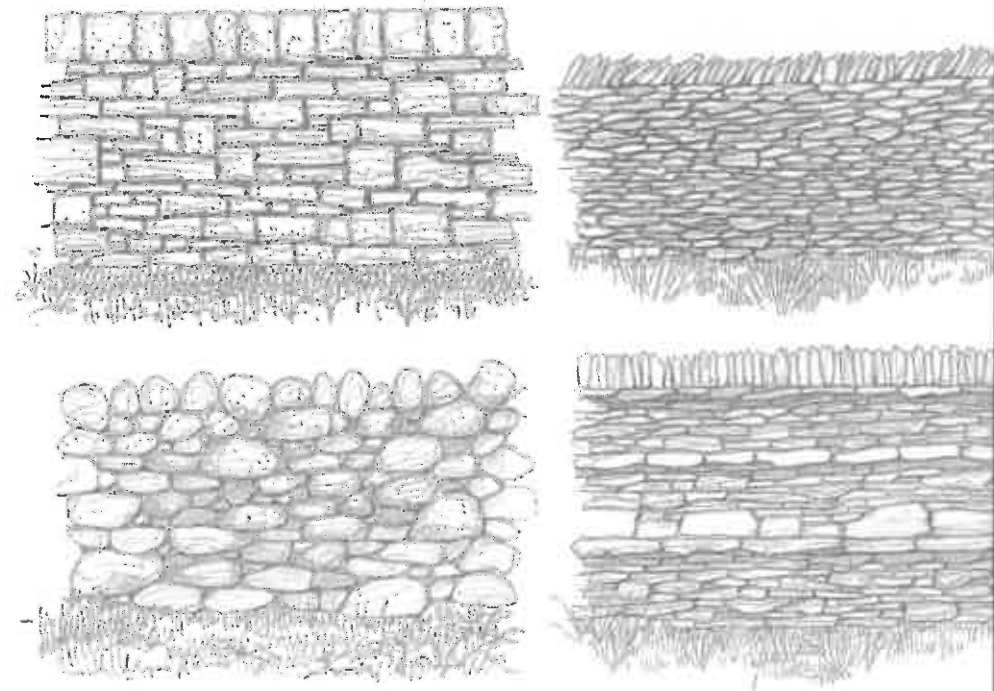
A classic North Pennine sight in spring and early summer is a wading bird standing atop a drystone wall. Drystone walls are the dominant boundary feature of the AONB, with mile upon mile of them accentuating the landform and imposing a distinctive pattern on the landscape.

It is thought that the pattern of fields in the dales began to emerge as early the C12th or C13th, but it was from the C16th onwards that small, irregular enclosures began to impose more pattern on the landscape. The pattern of larger and sometimes more regular enclosures from the C18th and C19th is now the prominent wall feature of the dales. Enclosure Act fields are supplemented by smaller fields of the miner-farmer landscapes, more common in places such as upper Weardale, the upper Allen Valleys and parts of Teesdale.

Wall construction varies in design across the area (see illustration), with materials including sandstone, old red sandstone and limestone.

As well as being characteristic features of the landscape, walls provide a habitat for a wide range of flowering plants, ferns, mosses and lichens adapted to rock habitats. Numerous invertebrates, reptiles, birds and mammals use dry stonewalls for feeding, breeding or shelter, whilst they also provide opportunities for some species to disperse through the landscape.

It is estimated that approximately half of our drystone walls are derelict. In some places, notably the dale heads, the tumbledown nature of the walls is part of the character of the area and it would not be desirable to return every wall to how it was on the day it was finished, except for where they are needed for stock retention. Where their extent and condition has declined, this is partly due to a reduction in the number of people practising traditional walling skills, removal for field and road expansion and neglect.



Historic Environment and Built Heritage

People began colonising the North Pennines about 8,000 years ago, entering a landscape which was wooded, apart from the highest fells. Thus began a process of exploitation and manipulation of the land, the progress of which has ebbed and flowed across the landscape ever since. There is no doubt much to still be discovered, but remains of the earliest settlers can be found as flint tools and worked debris eroding out of the hillsides, as burial mounds and hut circles and in the form of the earth boundaries of disused field systems scattered throughout the uplands.

The clearance of the woodland increased during the later prehistoric period as agricultural processes intensified. Coupled with dramatic change and population growth, the upland colonisation eventually resulted in the erosion and acidification of the soils and the formation of the peat blanket. We can only speculate about the extent of this colonisation as traces are patchy and most have been swept away by later settlement and land use.

From the beginning of the first millennium, farming was probably concentrated in the areas where we find it today. However, woodland management, in all its forms, will have played a far more important role in the economic life of the community than it does today. By the early medieval period, powerful political and religious individuals and groups were establishing their authority and control over the land and population. An example of this is Blanchland Abbey, founded by the Premonstratensian Order in 1165, which controlled a vast estate until the dissolution in the 16th century. Similarly the village names of Westgate and Eastgate in Weardale represent the entrances to the Bishop of Durham's hunting park. There are many boundary patterns, earthwork features and place or field names that have remained with us even though their significance or purpose has long been forgotten. The physical signs of all of this activity, beyond the buildings of the elite, may be hard to pick out with certainty, but traces of this long history of colonisation can be found in the boundaries, trackways, quarries, mines and farmsteads that make up the spectacular North Pennines landscape.

Deforestation, non-statutory enclosure, squatter encroachment and the dissolution of the monasteries considerably altered the landscape from the mid 16th Century. The Industrial Revolution and the Enclosure Acts formalised and in some cases intensified processes that were underway well before 1600. Lead mining came to dominate the economic life of the area from the 17th century until its decline at the end of the 19th century and it had a lasting impact on the landscape. There are few places in the North Pennines where you are not within sight of evidence for this industry. Mines, smelt mills, railways, spoil heaps and hushes are the most obvious legacy, but it affected the wider landscape as well, including patterns of settlement. The many historic chapels of the area are also in part a legacy of the population expansion associated with lead mining. With this increase in population many settlements and smallholdings were established by miners, who, as part-time farmers, extended agriculture to its very limits at the top of the dales.

The distinctive pattern of minor roads, lanes, footpaths and rights of way concentrated in the middle dale and dale head landscapes are associated with this historic pattern of miner – farmer small holdings. These routes are now important for the recreational opportunities they offer. The pack horse trails, for instance, are the subject of a project by the AONB Partnership to develop them as an



"Miner-farmers, upper Weardale, early C19th".

integrated and promoted network of recreational riding routes. The pattern of smallholdings in these locations is part of an upland agricultural landscape with few agricultural buildings (due to the small units of land and the housing of feed, stock and people under one roof). The miner-farmer landscape is partly defined by its contrast with surrounding areas – few estates and model farms as in the rest of Northumberland, few field barns as in Swaledale and very few yeoman farms as in other parts of Cumbria. The nature and scale of lead mining also left no 'planned' pit villages, as in the Durham Coalfield or few company houses for the workforce (though there are exceptions such as at Middleton in Teesdale and Allenheads).

Conservation effort is being focused on the lead mining heritage of the area, primarily through the work of English Heritage, local authorities, the North Pennines Heritage Trust and the AONB Partnership, amongst others. Surveys have been undertaken across the AONB on chapels, defensible structures, limekilns and lead mining site remains. Criteria have been established for prioritising these for conservation over the life of this plan.

Historic Buildings and Settlement Pattern

The settlement pattern in the North Pennines is basically an agricultural one, overlaid by, but not always submerged by, the industrial activities and mineral workers settlements developed mainly over the last 250 years. The pattern of rural building existing today varies through the AONB from the scattered farmsteads of the Strathmore and Raby estates in Teesdale to the more dense lead mining and subsistence smallholdings of the Nent and Allen Valleys and Weardale. It is important to remember that this is only the present culmination of many centuries of settlement evolution, during which settlements grew, shrank and shifted their location.

The North Pennines has listed buildings ranging from Anglo-Saxon times to the Victorian era. The greatest number belong to the 18th and early 19th Centuries, which is a reflection of the high standard of architecture and the high survival rate of buildings of those times, partly because of their relatively recent construction. This is also a note-worthy period for the variety of buildings which are listed. These include great country houses like Horsley Hall, town houses like those in Alston and Middleton in Teesdale and village cottages like those at Wearhead, Melmerby or Allenheads. Earlier buildings are not so common, simply because time has taken its toll. In most instances it is only the more substantial and higher status ones which have survived, such as manor houses (eg Stanhope Hall), bastles (e.g. Monk, West Allendale) and churches (e.g. Blanchland). Some building types are found only in certain parts of the AONB, e.g. bastles were prominent in Allendale but are absent from Teesdale.

The main expansion of the population in the area occurred with the Industrial Revolution. The localised and traditional character of the buildings was retained, in part through the continued exploitation of local materials. It is only in relatively recent times that technology and transport has really enabled the provision of cheaper or quicker options for most traditional aspects of building, as well as a range of entirely new possibilities. The adoption of these new techniques and materials has, however, led to a move away from traditional scale, colour and texture in building. This change in building materials has in part resulted in the closure of local quarries, making traditional material harder to find and resulting in a 'recycling' of existing material, further impoverishing the building stock.

For centuries before this, development took place gradually and organically to replace or convert buildings as they became obsolete. This slow process provides the foundations of our townscape and rural landscape. The conservation principles of earlier times remain valid today. It should be possible to adapt technological expertise to maintain and improve our environment by the effective use of existing sound buildings and to provide the variation and subtlety of design, essential to a successful built environment. The AONB Partnership's Building Design Guide addresses the avoidance of inappropriate conversion of traditional buildings. The scale, design and layout of buildings is a crucial factor in developing and sustaining the character of existing settlements.

It would be undesirable to prevent change in the landscape, but it should be managed. It is a living artefact, and the withdrawal of appropriate management, or allowing haphazard development that will alter long-established patterns of land use and land cover, can sometimes be as damaging to the sustainability of landscape character as large scale new development. Doing nothing is not an option



"Stublick Chimney above Alle

and the effects of neglect and the weather can quickly take their toll on our historic buildings and features. Change is part of the historic process of our landscape's development. When properly planned, change will always be more acceptable than 'fossilisation', but it should be seen to be evolutionary, developing and enhancing the fundamental character of the existing landscape.

Historic Landscape Characterisation

To help us understand and protect the landscape context of our historic buildings and archaeological sites, there is a need to characterise the historic dimension of the countryside. An approach has been developed that complements the work already done by the Countryside Agency (Countryside Character Areas) and English Nature (Natural Area Profiles). Known as 'Historic Landscape Characterisation', it is now being applied to the counties of the North Pennines.

A Cultural Landscape

A landscape such as the North Pennines does not take on a national significance because of its physical characteristics alone, but also because of the special cultural associations it has with people or works of art and literature. Celebrating those cultural associations closely connected to the landscape and which contribute to a sense of place helps to reinforce the identity of the AONB as somewhere special and distinctive.

WH Auden is perhaps the central figure of English C20th poetry and the North Pennines are to him what the Lake District was for Wordsworth. The lead mining landscapes of the area provided Auden with a never-failing source of reference and inspiration. Many of his poems of the '20s and '30s and two influential plays are set here. The landscapes around Rookhope in upper Weardale and on Alston Moor had a particular impact on Auden and this is reflected in some of his best loved poems of the period, including 'The North', 'Alston Moor', 'The Old Lead Mine' and 'The Engine House'. After the outbreak of war, Auden even declared to the American media his patriotic allegiance to the 'North Pennine moors', rather than to England as such. When we look to what Auden saw as his "great good place" we can see both the geographical area he defined and his particular places of fascination and affection:

*I see the nature of my kind
As a locality I love,
Those limestone moors that stretch from Brough
To Hexham and the Roman Wall,
There is my symbol of us all...*

*Always my boy of wish returns
To those peat-stained deserted burns
That feed the Wear and Tyne and Tees,
And turning states to strata, sees
How basalt long oppressed broke out
In wild revolt at Cauldron Snout
And from the relics of old mines
Derives his algebraic signs...*

*The derelict lead-smelting mill,
Flued to its chimney up the hill,
That smokes no answer any more
But points, a landmark on Bolt's Law
The finger of all questions. There
In Rookhope I was first aware
Of Self and Not-self, Death and Dread...*

*There I dropped pebbles, listened, heard
The reservoir of darkness stirred...*

New Year Letter, 1940



"Auden's beloved Rookhope Landscape, Weardale".

Charles Dickens travelled extensively in Teesdale in the 1840s, researching and writing *Nicholas Nickleby*. He stayed at the Morrill Arms in Greta Bridge and spent some time in nearby Barnard Castle. He based the infamous 'Dotheboys Hall' on a real institution at Bowes. When Nicholas arrived in the area of his school, he "gazed upon the wild country round, covered with snow," no doubt referring to the wilds of Bowes Moor.

Arguably Britain's finest landscape painter, JMW Turner was also inspired by the North Pennines, producing outstanding work in Teesdale in the late 1790s and between 1816 and 1836. He painted several scenes around Bowes and Greta Bridge, before travelling through Deepdale to Cotherstone and on to Middleton in Teesdale. Here he stayed and painted the town bridge and the river. He followed the route of the modern-day Pennine Way, visiting the upper dale to produce wonderful images of High and Low Force, Wynch Bridge (sketched from the Holwick side) and Cauldron Snout, before moving on through High Cup Nick to Dufton.

Several organisations, including the North Pennines Heritage Trust, Teesdale District Council and the North Pennines AONB Partnership have been active in the promotion of the links between the North Pennines which inspired Auden, Turner and Dickens and that which we see today. Their work and that of other artists and writers is being used to introduce the North Pennines to a new audience.



"Turner's High Force".



"South west of Alston" – Charlie Hedley © Countryside Agency

Conserving and Enhancing Natural Beauty

Management Plan Part 3

This section addresses the things which can be done to conserve and enhance the features identified in Part 2. It begins by setting out a bold Vision for the North Pennines in 2014, ten years on from the production of this plan. Rather than having chapters on 'subjects' such as nature conservation, archaeology etc. this plan recognises that these things are 'cross-cutting themes' in the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. This part of the plan considers the impacts on the landscape of land use planning, land management, road and traffic management and elements of the life and work of communities. It identifies Policy Guidelines and objectives for these areas of activity, which are intended to promote the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

A Vision for the North Pennines AONB in 2014

Through the process of establishing this framework for action for the conservation and enhancement of the North Pennines AONB, the North Pennines AONB Partnership has proposed this Vision for the area for ten years from now.

- The character of the landscape will be strengthened and its special and distinctive features conserved more effectively.
- The area's biodiversity will be enhanced, with particular expansion of numbers and distribution of BAP and local character species.
- The distinctiveness and character of local settlements will be well understood and strengthened and their special features conserved more effectively.
- The area's rich historic environment will be better understood and conserved.
- Farming and other land-based industries will be profitable and will support the conservation of landscape, wildlife and historic features.
- The sale of locally distinctive, quality products, from sustainable land management, will play an increasingly important role in the local economy and will project a positive image of the area.
- Opportunities for diversification that complements the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be grasped by those local farmers and land managers who can do so.
- Communities will be active in the conservation of their local environment and take a lead in developing local solutions to the challenges they face.
- Communities and visitors will have easy and regular access to public transport
- Sensitively designed and located affordable housing will help to sustain the diversity of village life.
- Local services and facilities will be available, well used and valued by local communities
- There will be wide public understanding and appreciation of the role of land managers in sustaining the economy, landscape and wildlife.
- An integrated, accessible, well-maintained network of paths, trails, recreational routes and open country throughout the AONB, will offer greater opportunities for walkers, cyclists and riders of all abilities to confidently make their own exploration of the area.
- Nature and culture-based tourism will make an increasingly important contribution to the local economy, without compromising the area's special qualities.
- The special and distinctive qualities of the area will be well understood and widely appreciated by residents and visitors.



- There will be increased and more diverse opportunities for local people to develop new skills and knowledge linked to the natural and cultural environment of the area.
- The area's potential as an excellent place to deliver a range of educational opportunities will be more widely acknowledged and realised.

Land Use Planning

1. One of the principal ways in which the natural beauty and character of the North Pennines can be conserved is through the application of thorough and robust development planning policies. This does not mean placing restrictions on all development, on innovative design or on new ideas. Ideally it means having an 'enabling' planning system, which actively promotes essential development that complements the character of the landscape and sustains local jobs and services.
2. Major development in the North Pennines AONB is subject to national planning regulations, but locally there is a great deal of flexibility in how planning policy is produced and applied. Where this is done well, it can promote the conservation of the AONB's special character, stimulate economic activity and increase the sustainability of communities.
3. The North Pennines landscape has evolved over centuries and will keep evolving. However, there are some features, those which create its essential character and make it different from elsewhere, which there is a duty to conserve for future generations. The principal threat to the character outlined in the previous part of this plan comes less from major development than it does from the piecemeal erosion of distinctiveness that accompanies small scale change. Inappropriate building location, design or restoration, telecom masts, overhead wires, military structures, mineral workings and the intrusive effects of roads and roadside clutter, have all had a detrimental effect on the AONB to varying degrees. This plan brings forward policy guidelines which seek to support planning authorities in countering the threat of piecemeal erosion of local character, as well as an approach to major development which complements national planning guidance.
4. Though the area's local authorities are mainly planning for a stable, or in some cases reduced, population over the coming 10 to 15 years, there will still be demand for new housing. The nature and scale of such housing development can have a considerable impact on the landscape and on the character of settlements. Any new housing development which takes place must be appropriate to its setting and avoid the use of standardised designs, which could be anywhere in the country and which detract from local distinctiveness. The use of local materials, wherever possible, would help to support local jobs and conserve local character. The AONB Partnership's Building Design and Agricultural Building Design documents can provide planning authorities with considerable support in this field. Some authorities have adopted this as Supplementary Planning Guidance and others might usefully do likewise. The AONB Partnership should also consider the need to revise this guidance in due course, taking into account things such as the production of new Parish Plans and Village Design Statements.
5. Parish Plans and Village Design Statements can shape the future of local development through the influence they might have on development plans. The land use elements of such plans/statements may be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Parish Plans and Village Design Statements should be encouraged as way of further identifying and promoting local distinctiveness.



"Telecom mast – Teesdale" – Charlie Hedley © Countryside Agency.

6. The location of new development is an important factor in promoting sustainability in the AONB and not just for its impact on the landscape. New development which is divorced from existing services simply creates more dependence on private transport. These services relate to transport as well as things such as schools, shops and post offices. Carlisle District Local Plan (1997) has a policy on this which might usefully be replicated elsewhere:
 - "In assessing new development proposals, account will be taken of the availability of public transport, cycleways and pedestrian access to the site to minimise private car usage". (Policy TI Choice of Means of Transport).
7. Business and industrial development is important in the AONB if employment opportunities are to remain in the area. Some of the large employers located just outside the AONB boundary have closed, affecting the area's communities considerably. Most notable amongst these closures perhaps are those of the Eastgate Cement Works and the Wolsingham Steel Works, both in

Weardale, where almost 500 jobs were lost in 2002. The future of the Eastgate site in particular is likely to be the subject of much debate in the early life of this plan. Whatever is established there will need to take account of its impact on the AONB landscape, either visually or through the transport demands it makes on the locality. Equally it has the potential to create a relatively large number of welcome new jobs in industries from manufacturing to appropriate forms of renewable energy to tourism. Landscape conservation and new employment should not be mutually exclusive and this could be an exemplar development for the North Pennines as a whole. Industrial / business development, here and elsewhere, which is sympathetic to the AONB landscape and does not bring with it unacceptable levels of noise and traffic should be welcomed if it supports local jobs and services. It should be particularly welcomed where it is related to sustainable land management or for other businesses supporting the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the AONB.

8. One of the principal features of the AONB, which is so rare elsewhere in England, is its sense of wildness and remoteness. However, this quality is particularly vulnerable to intrusive development such as telecom masts and wind turbines. Government has set challenging targets for the generation of renewable energy and there is considerable pressure on local authorities to find suitable sites. The National Association for AONBs has produced a position statement on wind energy in AONBs which reflects a balanced approach between the need to reduce greenhouse gases and the need to protect for future generations the nation's finest countryside. This position reflects fully the Government's policies as set out in PPG7 and PPG22. It states that there should be a presumption against commercial wind energy developments in AONBs, or in locations outside the AONB which affect peoples' enjoyment of the area. In most circumstances such schemes will constitute 'major development', and be incompatible with the objectives of designation. This position statement is likely to be expanded by early 2004 to cover all forms of renewable energy and should provide guidance for all planning authorities with AONBs within their boundaries.
9. There are several small (6-10 metre) individual wind turbines in the AONB, serving single properties or small groups. Further development of such turbines should be considered on a case by case basis and should be the subject of a thorough appraisal of their potential impact on the landscape.
10. Other potentially less intrusive forms of renewable energy, such as geothermal, hydro electric and biomass, should be actively welcomed in the AONB as positive steps towards future sustainability, providing the associated infrastructure is in keeping with the character of the landscape.
11. There are almost 20 telecom masts in the AONB and there is considerable potential for more in the future. Mobile phone reception is poor in some parts of the AONB and there is mounting expectation that people should have good reception anywhere they go. However, this should not be a reason to further degrade a nationally important landscape. This plan provides policy guidelines which seek to restrict new telecom masts. Telecom companies, and the emergency services, should be encouraged to share infrastructure in an attempt to minimize new mast construction.

12. Overhead power lines and other wires can have an equally obtrusive impact on the landscape. Wherever possible providers should be encouraged to place these underground, with careful consideration given to the impact on nature conservation or archaeological concerns. The presence of existing overhead wires in a given location should not be seen as a precedent for further additions to the visual intrusion and loss of rural character that such features cause. Invariably the work installing such features will be carried out by public utilities and they should be mindful of their duties in relation to AONBs under Section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000.
13. One of the main purposes of the Management Plan is to promote consistency of approach to AONB management across administrative boundaries, (where appropriate) and the AONB Partnership seeks to do this mainly through influencing development plans. This work needs to be carried forward into the new Local Development Frameworks, to ensure that planning continues to support the conservation of natural beauty alongside essential development.
14. The Policy Guidelines which follow are non-statutory. They are presented to guide local authorities as to how current policy in development plans might be adapted and future policies drafted, to promote the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the North Pennines. They seek to promote consistency of approach across administrative boundaries and to stimulate the highest standards of planning and management.

Related Plans and Strategies: *Regional Spatial Strategy, Development Plans, Community Strategies, Parish Plans.*

AONB Policy Guidelines

- LP1 Allow major development only where it is in the overwhelming national public interest and could not take place elsewhere, in line with national planning guidance on AONBs.
- LP2 Ensure that any significant development proposals are the subject of Environmental Impact Assessments.
- LP3 Encourage new housing development only in those settlements with an agreed level of existing services, so as to increase the sustainability of these communities and the services offered. All development permitted should contribute to local distinctiveness and landscape character.
- LP4 Encourage the production of Parish Plans and Village Design Statements and their adoption, where appropriate, as Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- LP5 Encourage new business development to be sited only where the buildings, other infrastructure and associated traffic generated do not detract from the quality of the landscape, impact on biodiversity or adversely affect local communities.
- LP6 Promote the use of local materials in building works and produce guidance notes where required.
- LP7 Allow the conversion, restoration and extension of properties only with features which do not detract from the quality of the built or natural environment. The priority for conversion of properties should be for economic, rather than residential, use.
- LP8 In the conversion of isolated structures into new uses, including dwellings, ensure that curtilage features such as gardens or access tracks do not detract from rural character and local distinctiveness and that the character of the building itself remains intact.
- LP9 Resist the development of commercial wind energy production in or visible from the AONB. Consider favourably other proposals for renewable energy providing their form, materials and infrastructure does not detract from landscape quality / character, biodiversity or the historic environment or adversely affect the local community. Any application for individual turbines for small scale supply (e.g. a house or group of houses), within or visible from the AONB, should be subject to a detailed assessment of its impact on landscape quality.
- LP10 Permission for telecom masts should only be granted where the applicant can show that the proposal is in the national interest as part of a national network, that there is no suitable alternative site or that there is a genuine technical reason why masts cannot be shared with other operators.
- LP11 The undergrounding of new or replacement cables, wires and pipelines should be strongly encouraged, with care being taken to conserve biodiversity and the historic environment in all works.

See also:

AONB Policy Guidelines LM4, SC5, KS1, AH1
Action Plan Objectives 1, 4, 24, 27



"Commercial wind energy production in the AONB would be subject to national planning regulations"

Supporting Sustainable Land Management

The fundamental challenge for the future in the North Pennines is to address how the economy of the AONB can be diversified and strengthened in order to support the resident population and to facilitate continued and enhanced environmental management. The provision of support to sustainable land management can make a significant contribution to meeting this challenge.

Farming in the North Pennines

1. A harsh climate and short growing season seriously limits what can be produced in the North Pennines and the deep rural nature of the area can make farming here a hard and sometimes isolating experience. In consultations on the development of this plan, local farmers and landowners have also identified low prices for the producer, the imbalance in the relationship with large retailers and distance from markets as barriers to making a living from the land. Allied to this, there is a perception of a lack of Government and EU understanding of farming and that planning regulations and conservation designations place too great a restriction on the activities of commercial land managers.
2. In the public consultation which helped inform this draft management plan, the matter which was placed highest on people's list of priorities was that 'farming and forestry should contribute to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty'. This recognises the role that land management has already played in creating this landscape. However, it also emphasises a public desire for an agricultural and land management system which is based on environmental 'best practice' and produces more of the kind of countryside they want to see.
3. In the June 2002 DEFRA census, there were 1,723 farm units in electoral wards in or adjacent to the AONB, employing just under 4,000 people. The level of employment in farming within the AONB is comparatively high and makes agriculture still a vital component of local life. However, the number of people employed in farming in the North Pennines fell by almost 60% between 1990 and 2002 and there is no sign that this downward trend is abating.
4. There have also been changes in farm size and the number of farm units over the period. There were almost 400 more farm units in the AONB in 2002 than in 1990. There is a widely-held perception that there is a trend towards larger farm holdings, but this does not reflect the full picture of the changes occurring. Comparing 1990 data and that of 2002, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of farms of less than 5 hectares (currently 38% of holdings), with a smaller increase in the number of farms of over 100 hectares (currently 14% of holdings).



"In the harshest of weather, the sheep still need feeding – Lunedale" – Barry Stacey © Countryside A

- This is at the 'expense' of middle sized farms, which have seen the greatest reduction in the number of holdings.
5. This can have a number of implications for conservation. It does not necessarily follow that larger holdings will have a negative impact on landscape and wildlife, as is often espoused. Larger holdings may in some cases be more profitable, allowing investment in both business and environment. Small farms may be so marginal as to allow little scope for conservation minded management. A trend towards larger holdings can be a positive and a negative influence, dependent on the approach and finances of the owner.
 6. DEFRA census data shows that in 2002 farms in the AONB run 620,000 sheep and 81,000 cattle with a small area of arable operations on the eastern fringe. There was a 23% decline in sheep numbers over the period 1990 – 2002, though this is not as marked as may have been expected following the 2001 Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak. It would appear that many farms

have quickly restocked to pre-FMD levels and their practices continue as before. Others see 'the writing on the wall' for higher densities of livestock in the uplands and are already moving towards measures more compatible with the conservation of a more diverse and species-rich landscape. There is evidence that, in the aftermath of the foot and mouth outbreak and perhaps in anticipation of agricultural reforms to come, more farmers are seeking to enter agri-environment schemes and reduce stocking rates (e.g. applications for Countryside Stewardship in the AONB in 2003 were significantly up on previous years).

7. Many farms have fell rights for grazing as part of a common grazing system. This has had implications for conservation, as the headage payment system has driven numbers of animals to particularly high levels on common land. It also has implications for entry to agri-environment schemes, as securing agreements on commons is more difficult than on single-occupancy land.
8. Two agri-environment schemes currently operate in the North Pennines – the Environmentally Sensitive Area Scheme (ESA) and Countryside Stewardship. As an example of their coverage, approximately 60% of all enclosed grassland in the AONB is one of the two schemes (Source RSPB). The Pennines Dales ESA is a non-competitive scheme, allowing all those landowners in the scheme area who wish to participate to do so. Funding is available in two tiers, for which increasingly far-reaching conservation measures accompany increasing payments. Though there will always be questions about the rate of grant available, the ESA scheme has evolved to have an ever stronger focus on the key species and habitats of the area and has done much to conserve wildlife and landscape value in the AONB.
9. The Countryside Stewardship Scheme is competitive, with an annual round of applications for a finite sum of funding. Like the ESA, there are always likely to be concerns that the levels of funding are insufficient, but Stewardship has also done much to conserve wildlife and habitats. Application rates and the nature of the work proposed suggest that the response from farmers to agri-environment measures is constantly becoming more positive.
10. During the life of this plan, these schemes are likely to be replaced by two new ones:
 - The Entry Level Agri-Environment Scheme (which was piloted on the fringes of the AONB near Barnard Castle) would allow farmers to choose from a range of management options suitable to their farm. It would be open to all farmers regardless of location and forms will be easy to complete. It would reward continuation of current good environmental management.
 - The Higher Tier Agri-Environment Scheme will develop out of the existing ESA and Countryside Stewardship Scheme. The ESA geographical boundaries would no longer apply. It would fund new conservation measures beyond the scope of the Entry Level Scheme. It will offer greater flexibility to the landowner but will be more targeted at designated areas and key species.
11. On SSSIs, English Nature's Wildlife Enhancement Scheme (WES) has been available for almost 20 years. This scheme provides agreements between the landowner and English Nature, aimed at promoting conservation-minded management. In places such as upper Teesdale, WES can be as important as agri-environment measures in securing conservation benefit.



"Hay meadow cutting, Upper Teesdale".

Supporting Sustainable Farming

Land Management

1. It is not the role of this plan to bring forward measures to address all the perceived ailments of modern farming, forestry and other commercial land management in the AONB. Rather the plan proposes a series of land management measures which would bring about an enhancement of landscape quality and biodiversity and should receive widespread support from Government, funding bodies, local authorities and land managers.
2. Farmers, foresters, commercial moorland managers, managers of fishing rights, conservation bodies and community groups need to work together more effectively if environmental, economic and social sustainability is to be achieved in the long term.

3. Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy during the life of this plan is likely to bring about an end to production subsidy and replace it with payments for increased environmental stewardship of the land. This would ideally provide farmers with the income to enable, for instance, a reduction in stocking rates and to rear more traditional breeds, such as Galloway cattle, with a lower energy demand more suited to the poor quality grazing available. This reduction in grazing pressure will in turn have enormous benefits for nature conservation, particularly for the conservation of some of the area's characteristic birds and plants.
4. The 'Sheep Wildlife Enhancement Scheme,' and any successor schemes during the life of this plan, should also help to reduce stocking rates in the uplands and benefit wildlife and landscape.
5. If farmers are to take increasing steps to conserve wildlife, landscape character and quality and the historic environment, they need to have the right level of funding and have access to consistent and high quality advice and support. Effort should be focused on matching landowners with the right support systems (financial and advisory) for their particular circumstances. There are a great many other things that farmers can do to conserve the characteristic features of natural beauty in the AONB:

Farmers should be supported in:

- The re-creation of wet grassland by raising water levels or creating shallow pools. If all pasture on the farm has been drained, selecting an uneven field and blocking field drains can create a mixture of wet ground for feeding by wading birds and drier ground for nesting. Even small wet field corners can provide important feeding areas for chicks. Any existing boggy areas should be retained.
- Cutting hay meadows at most appropriate times and not carrying out mechanical operations during the bird breeding season. Hay meadows provide nest sites for breeding birds if they are cut after mid-July and not rolled or chain harrowed between mid March and mid July. Cutting at this time also benefits plant communities
- Managing rushes – Patchy rush cover can help breeding waders by providing tall cover in which to nest and conceal chicks from predators and open areas for feeding. However, if rushes become invasive (>30% of the field area) they can be controlled by late summer cutting and/or grazing by cattle.
- Reducing input of artificial fertilizer – This benefits wildflowers and reduces the impact of leaching out to watercourses
- Avoiding discharges of waste materials to land and watercourses
- Avoiding grazing up to the edge of rivers and streams – this protects banksides and supports the conservation of water vole in particular.
- The further conservation of walls and boundary features – this conserves a distinctive feature of the landscape of the dales.
- The conservation of historic buildings and archaeological features on farmland – this contributes greatly to the conservation of natural beauty and cultural heritage. The lack of financial return for the farmer necessitates considerable grant aid for this work.
- Entering into agri-environment schemes, and particularly the Higher Tier Agri Environment Scheme (should it be introduced).



"Quality local produce, available at the gate, Middle End, Teesdale" – Charlie Hedley © Countryside Ag

Support for Quality Local Products

6. The future is likely to be one in which there will be more of an emphasis on quality of produce over quantity. There is likely to be increasing demand for produce which can be connected to highest standards in environmental management and animal welfare or to the special qualities of a particular place. Farmers in the North Pennines may increasingly have to co-operate to create a critical mass of demand for their produce and to market it effectively as being what it can be – the highest quality food and other goods from the highest quality landscape.
7. There is already a base from which to build, with Farmers' Markets across the AONB and several groups of farmers coming together to market their produce, particularly meat. There is also a range of locally distinctive products such as Cotherstone Cheese, Alston Sausage and locally brewed beer. In 2003, a Parliamentary reception serving food from the AONBs left all those who attended wanting to know where they could get more Cotherstone Cheese – there is demand

for our products and we may all need to work together more effectively to meet it. The plethora of local food initiatives means that only some of them will survive.

Farmers should be supported to:

- Investigate where a North Pennines local food and products brand might be appropriate and add value to that which exists, or where local products can be marketed as part of wider regional schemes
- Provide retailers and caterers with the information that enables them to source local ingredients and materials
- Provide the public with information on where quality, land based local products can be found.

Supporting Land Based Diversification

8. Diversification is not always possible for every farmer. A single farmer, living away from tourist attractions, with only seasonal labour, no spare buildings and little money to invest in the business, is unlikely to diversify. Added to this, there may be restrictions of tenancy and of course not all farmers want to diversify into things that are not seen as 'farming'. However, for those that can and wish to diversify their operations or take further conservation measures, there are many funding and support opportunities through the England Rural Development Programme and other funding streams.

Farmers should be supported in:

- Diversification proposals which are land-based and which in themselves help to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. To support diversification, it is likely that new buildings will have to be erected or existing properties renovated. Such development must be compatible with its setting and not detract from local distinctiveness.
9. Providing the above point is adhered to, planning authorities should give particular encouragement to new development which is aimed at keeping people farming or managing the landscape, perhaps over other commercial ventures which are not rooted in the special qualities of the area.

Supporting Land-based Skills Training

10. Whilst there are many people in the North Pennines with a wealth of skills in rural land management, there is a generally thought to be decline in the skills base in areas such as drystone walling and traditional building work. This acts against the conservation of key features of the landscape and results in a further reduction in local people making their living from the land. This in turn impacts on the nature of communities, the cost of local housing and the



"Traditional skills such as drystone walling need to be retained".

distances people travel for work. In consultation over the production of this plan, there was considerable support for measures which might boost these traditional skills, support small scale employment opportunities and help to conserve the fabric of the landscape.

Farmers should be supported to:

- Ensure a continuation of the skills which will lead to the conservation of historic buildings and features, drystone walls and key local habitats and species.

Moorland Management

1. The heather moorland of the North Pennines has been carefully managed in order to provide the maximum number of red grouse for shooting in late summer and autumn. Britain has 90% of the global population of red grouse and the North Pennines and North Yorkshire has the best grouse shooting in the world. Because of the international importance of the red grouse – and the demand for shooting a truly wild bird that cannot be artificially reared – substantial income from shooting has paid for the management that has been carried out for decades by the land and shooting owners.
2. Within the North Pennines there are 39 separate units of heather moorland, at least 90% of which are used for shooting purposes. These moorland areas together total an area of 190,500 acres (77,094 hectares) which is equivalent to 38% of the AONB. As such the moorland comprises about 24% of the total area of heather moorland in England and Wales. The income brought into the area by shooting revenue is very considerable, totalling approximately £1.3million per year (based on mid 1990's figures with the addition of inflation and rise in brace cost). Much of this income is ploughed back into the AONB, as moorland management operations provide all year round employment for some and seasonal or casual work for others. Examples of this include heather burning in late winter and early spring and beating on shooting days after August 12th. In addition, many accommodation and catering businesses in parts of the AONB owe their continued survival to the shoot.
3. The shooting income that pays for the moorland management has provided the optimum conditions for red grouse and has also benefited upland breeding waders. Species such as curlew, lapwing, oystercatcher, and golden plover have thrived, principally due to the control of ground predators practiced on local grouse moors. A report by the RSPB has also recognised the value of kept grouse moors in conserving wading birds.
4. There is a good track record of estates and conservation organisations working together on the conservation of moorland wildlife and habitats, not least through the North Pennines Black Grouse Recovery Project, led by the Game Conservancy Trust.
5. Debate continues between conservationists and moorland managers about the sustainability of moorland burning. English Nature has identified burning as the second most important factor nationally in contributing to lack of favourable condition on SSSIs and this is tremendously important in the North Pennines. Despite the benefits to management for red grouse, intensive burning can be implicated in reducing raptor numbers and affecting other aspects of biodiversity, simplifying the complexity of moorland ecosystems and undermining their special functions (which often operate well beyond their boundary e.g. in flood prevention in downstream catchments). An approach which meets the needs of economy, biodiversity and landscape must prevail in the long-term.



"Heather burning"

Supporting Moorland Management for Shooting and Conservation

- The conservation benefits of moorland management are clear and have already been highlighted in this plan. Thanks to the way the estates are operated, the North Pennines has to some degree escaped the problem of intensive heather management above the fell wall and intensive grassland management below it. However, there is the potential for further enhancement of natural beauty on our moorlands which need not compromise the economic value of their management.

Moorland managers should be supported in:

- The retention of a mosaic of moorland habitats in preference to a blanket heather cover
- Sensitive timing and location of heather burning (e.g. avoiding burning blanket bog or burning wet areas which are a source of invertebrate food for species such as black grouse)
- The eradication of remaining pockets of raptor persecution (which 99% of moorland managers wish to see come to an end)
- The continued management of ground predators to benefit characteristic bird species

Farmers should be supported to:

- Manage moorlands through environmentally sensitive grazing systems.
- The conservation of historic features on moorland

- The conservation of historic features is likely to require considerable grant aid, given the lack of a commercial return for the owner, but many examples of prehistoric settlement and inhabitation are found on our moors and may need relatively low-cost protection from damage or active conservation management.
- There is a genuine lack of public understanding about what estate managers do. Much more could be done to help the public appreciate the links between grouse moor management and the conservation of landscapes and wildlife. As well as this, a key issue for public awareness lies in the dangers to people, property and environment of accidental fires (and arson).

Moorland managers should be supported to:

- Participate in collaborative projects with conservation bodies which should aim to raise awareness of commercial moorland management and the role it plays in conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

- A model of partnership working on our moors (and surrounding land) is the North Pennines Black Grouse Recovery Project. This project works to conserve the mosaic of habitats, on a farm unit and wider landscape scale, which black grouse require, integrating the needs of this special bird with those of commercial land management.



"Grouse Shooting" © The Moorland Association.

- The AONB Partnership is working with the Game Conservancy Trust to create a new moorland advisory post for the AONB. This post would support advice, fundraising and practical assistance to moorland managers seeking to take further steps to conserve landscapes and biodiversity whilst managing a thriving shoot. It may be possible through this project to work with owners to showcase good practice to other moorland owners and managers.

Forestry & Woodland Management

1. As well as being important landscape and biodiversity features, woodlands can also generate employment, provide opportunities for sporting and recreational activities and improve the quality of life in and around villages and towns. Few other land uses can boast such a diverse range of benefits.
2. The nature of our native woodlands means that they present few opportunities for commercial gain in the short term. Though coniferous woodlands are prominent in the landscape, there has actually been almost no commercial conifer planting on new sites since 1980, though restocking of felled woodlands has continued with reduced levels of conifer and increasing areas of broadleaves. Most woodland planting in recent years has been carried out by landowners who are keen to improve the potential of their land to support black grouse, or to diversify the landscape. There is little or no economic return on such planting and without grant aid from the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme and JIGSAW Challenge programme, it would have been impossible.
3. Large blocks (in landscape terms) of predominantly coniferous forests still exist within the AONB. The original purpose of the larger 'commercial blocks', to provide nothing other than a strategic reserve of timber for times of war, is firmly buried in the past. Today, the Forestry Commission through grants, licences and approval of long-term forest plans encourages the management of these areas for a much wider range of public benefits. Landscape, conservation, recreation and public access now sit alongside timber production as primary objectives although the emphasis given to each will vary between sites and landowners.
4. There are 5,128 hectares of woodland in the AONB. 3,483 ha (68%) is coniferous, with 1,645ha (32%) broadleaved. 930ha, or 57% of the broadleaved woodland is ancient and semi-natural. (Source: Forestry Commission).

Supporting Woodland Management and Creation

5. Expanding the woodlands of the North Pennines needs to be carried out sensitively if other special features of the area are not to be lost. There is potential conflict with the conservation of other habitats and the species they support, with the historic environment and with the conservation of the essentially open character of much of the landscape.
6. A landscape scale approach to the planning and planting of new woodlands is essential if they are to enhance the overall character of the landscape across the AONB. In order to maintain the character of the landscape, much new planting is likely to take place on sites similar to those where woodland has survived to date and become a characteristic feature of the AONB in its own right. These woodlands are likely to be complemented by the creation of areas of larger wood pasture, a lost feature of the AONB landscape.



"Woodland planting is likely to take place in gills such as this one at Middle End" – Charlie Hedley © Countryside Agency

Landowners and managers should be supported to:

- Create new woodlands which are sympathetic to the conservation of landscape character, biodiversity and historic features. Gill woodland is most suitably planted with species such as rowan, hawthorn and willow, rather than high canopy species. There are also proposals to create new, large and more open structured wood pastures, notably in Geltsdale. Our new woodlands are likely to be created with a blend of natural regeneration and new planting, fencing will usually be required to support this in all but the areas least accessible to stock.

7. There is little benefit to the landowner in planting woodland of the kind which will do most to support landscape character and biodiversity conservation. Some existing grant schemes, notably Woodland Grant Scheme and Jigsaw Challenge, are not designed for the creation of the kind of small, less densely planted, often isolated woodlands which best suit the landscape and some, though not all, of its key woodland species (particularly black grouse).

Landowners should be supported through:

- New and higher returning incentives from woodland grant funding sources.
 - Flexibility in the approach to replanting of felled conifer blocks. This should allow restocking across a land holding, not just on the same site, and enable smaller woods to be created which may be compatible with landscape and wildlife objectives.
8. The AONB Partnership has been successful in securing funding from the Countryside Agency and Forestry Commission for a new Woodland Advisor post, whose role will include the landscape scale identification of the most suitable sites for new woodland, to conserve landscape character and increase biodiversity.
9. It will be essential to ensure that archaeological features, notably hushes, are conserved in the planting of any new woodland. The exchange of information between archaeologists, landowners and conservation bodies is essential to this process.
10. The AONB Partnership will also be seeking to work with landowners and the Forestry Commission to implement an HLF funded project during the life of this plan. This will match Forestry Commission and landowner funding and ensure the planting of 125 hectares of new small woodlands across the AONB. The 'Cumbria Forest Futures' initiative and Northwoods project will also be active in the AONB. Careful co-ordination needs to take place to ensure that there is no duplication of effort and that a clear and consistent approach is presented to landowners and to funders.
11. Woodland planting can be used to support farm incomes and make managing a landholding easier and more efficient. Woodland managers should be encouraged to enter into schemes which achieve this, such as that outlined below:

Woodland Planting to Support Farm Management and Conserve the Landscape

The area along the river Belah, near South Stainmore in Cumbria is beautiful, but also very undulating. This gives sheep and/or cattle the opportunity to wander into the landscape's 'nooks and crannies' from which it is sometimes difficult to retrieve them. The landowner, has used the JIGSAW programme very effectively to rationalise his farming system, by putting forward all the sloping land along the river for tree planting, and by retaining the flat easily accessible land for farming.

Eleven hectares of this undulating land is to be planted with a range of native tree species. By doing this, seven existing woodlands both on his land and his neighbours' will be linked to form one large native woodland totalling 25 hectares, along the Belah. Nearly one hectare of the most accessible area will be planted with a high proportion of hazel, so that every seven years or so a coppice crop can be taken.

The JIGSAW grant reimbursed 100% of the project costs, which includes all the trees, their planting and the protection materials (tubes and stakes), as well as all the fencing needed to protect the whole woodland from grazing. Through the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme he will receive a further grant for 15 years to compensate him for taking this land out of production. The farmer is now looking forward to seeing the woodland and its wildlife thrive.

12. The coniferous woodlands have great potential to offer multi-purpose benefits e.g. for recreation and timber / wood products, particularly as they mature. Woodland planting can also bring longer-term benefits to landholdings through providing food and cover for game birds, but it can also provide some small scale timber return in time. A study commissioned by Northumberland County Council in 2001 suggested that existing and potential markets existed for 'wild foods', particularly fungi and wild herbs, and also for preserves and fruit wines. However, no individual woodland could generate sufficient quantities to serve any market demand and partnership between owners would be required. The market for craft materials was also found to be extremely limited.

Woodland owners and conservation bodies, notably the Forestry Commission, should work together to:

- Take opportunities to 'redesign' plantations, utilising species variety, diverse age class and spatial structure, and create managed open space for conservation and landscape improvements.
- Further investigate markets for woodland products in the AONB, though this is likely to be a very marginal activity for some time to come.

River & Wetland Management

1. Fishing remains the motive force of much of the habitat improvement on our rivers and it is perhaps an underestimated contributor to the local economy. The owners of rivers and fishing rights are, along with the Environment Agency, the main managers of rivers and riparian land in the AONB. There are also a number of river conservation trusts operating in the area, e.g. Eden Rivers Trust, River Wear Environmental Trust and Northern Rivers, some of which have done considerable work for in-stream and riparian conservation. Management work in the past has been largely aimed at improving fish stocks, sometimes in tandem with other works to support conservation of bankside habitats and species.
2. Flood defence work is carried out by the Environment Agency and efforts are made to ensure that natural measures are used wherever possible.
3. The reservoirs of the North Pennines are managed to promote biodiversity and public access. Northumbrian Water has a good track record of conservation management at sites such as Derwent reservoir, where a partnership with the Wildlife Trusts of Durham and Northumberland and Northumberland County Council is improving habitats and helping people to enjoy the local wildlife.

Supporting Managers of Rivers and Riparian Land

4. Partly as a result of the work of those referred to above, the North Pennines now has some of the best fishing country in the North.

Managers of fishing interests in the AONB should be supported to:

- Promote fishing in the AONB in order to bring income to the area and generate increased measures for conservation.
5. Alongside the Environment Agency, rivers trusts and other conservation bodies, including community-based groups (e.g. the Fawside Foundation and BTCV on the East Allen), should be encouraged and supported to continue to work for improvements in the conservation value of watercourses and riparian land.
 6. The AONB Partnership is seeking to improve the conservation value of the Tees, the Derwent and South Tyne as part of a 'Landscape Partnership Scheme' bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Northern Rivers Foundation, supported by the AONB Partnership and other conservation bodies, aims to operate a River Conservation Project in the North Pennines during the life of this plan. This will involve the identification of a range of conservation opportunities in our river catchments and raising the funding to support land owners to improve fish stocks, conserve other wildlife and provide controlled public access.
 7. Northumbrian Water has undertaken excellent conservation work at local reservoirs. The company is also involved in work through the AONB Partnership to secure Heritage Lottery Funding for conservation projects at Derwent, Blackton and Burnhope Reservoirs.



Those organisations involved in river, riparian and reservoir conservation should be supported to:

- Take a landscape-scale approach to the planning and delivery of major river conservation projects
 - Target agri-environment schemes at the conservation of rivers and riparian land.
 - Foster improved management of in-stream and riparian habitats to benefit fish stocks, but also to manage for key species such as water vole, otter and white-clawed crayfish. The presence of goosander on local rivers should not be viewed as a threat to fish stocks, but as a bird which contributes to the character of the area.
 - Further develop programmes of conservation and public access work at reservoirs
 - Undertake flood defence works in ways which promote the conservation of natural river systems wherever possible. Hard engineering solutions to flooding problems should be avoided.
8. Farmland and roads continue to generate pollution of our watercourses to some degree.

Farmers should be supported to:

- Control farm waste discharged to land
- Reduce artificial inputs to the land

Highways managers should be supported to:

- Install pollution interceptors and other measures where roads are adjacent to watercourses.

Public, Statutory and Voluntary Sector land Management

1. A range of organisations have ownership or direct management influence on large areas of the North Pennines, including Northumbria Water which owns 12 reservoirs; the MoD which manages 6,500 acres of ranges at Warcop, around Murton Fell and east towards Stainmore; and English Nature which manages three National Nature Reserves (Upper Teesdale, Moor House, and Derwent Gorge & Muggleswick Woods) and has agreements with landowners and tenants on the 63 SSSIs. Together these total 537 square kilometres, which amounts to 27% of the AONB. English Nature is the statutory body for nature conservation in England and has a crucial role in the conservation of the natural beauty of the North Pennines, where so much land is designated for its wildlife importance.
2. English Heritage provides considerable grant aid, advice, research and monitoring to further the conservation of the historic environment of the AONB.
3. The Rural Development Service (RDS) administers and provides advice on agri-environment schemes. Working with others it is influencing the management of over 20,000ha of land in the ESA alone.
4. The large moorland reserve of Geltsdale in the north-west of the AONB is managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Other conservation bodies own areas of land within the AONB, notably the County Wildlife Trusts of Cumbria, Durham and Northumberland, the Woodland Trust, which owns Dufton Ghyll Wood in Cumbria, and the National Trust which owns Allen Banks and some of the extensive Allendale woodlands. The County and District Councils are also owners and managers of significant areas of the North Pennines with land for highways, waste disposal and leisure. Their countryside, landscape or ecology sections are active in the conservation of the AONB, providing direct management, support to landuse planners, advice and funding. East Cumbria Countryside Project has a long track record of working in partnership with many organisations to conserve landscapes and wildlife in the area and to help people enjoy and understand the countryside.
5. The North Pennines AONB Partnership, through its Staff Unit, aims to co-ordinate effort for the conservation enhancement of the AONB through producing and supporting the implementation of the AONB Management Plan.
6. The work of these organisations is complemented by an array of Trusts, charitable bodies and community groups. Examples include the work of the Fawside Foundation in the Allen Valleys, the long track record of historic building conservation by the North Pennines Heritage Trust and the local survey work of the North East Vernacular Architecture Group. BTCV has a strong presence in the area and the role of the Groundwork Trust is growing steadily. There are numerous other trusts and voluntary groups whose role encompasses, at least in part, the conservation of the special features of the AONB.

AWAITING NEW PHOTOGRAPHY

Supporting Conservation Management

Working together for wildlife and landscapes

7. One of the challenges for these organisations (particularly local government and statutory agencies) is to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure that they present a coherent message about who they are and what they do.
8. Some of these organisations, notably charity and voluntary sector (so called 'third sector') bodies, have a constant struggle to find the funding they need for staff. This is even true of government agencies, which must compete for funding against all the other demands on exchequer funding. The need for partnership is essential if common goals are to be met through the pooling of limited resources. Increased levels of support are likely to be necessary if the land under the direct management of conservation bodies is to thrive.

9. Where conservation organisations and other land managers have collaborated, excellent work has resulted. This is most apparent in projects such as Working With Waders (led by RSPB), Natural Links (led by English Nature) and the Black Grouse Recovery Project (led by the Game Conservancy Trust).

Conservation organisations and local authorities should be supported to:

- Enable existing major species and habitat projects to continue, e.g. Black Grouse Recovery Project and 'Working with Waders,'
- Establish new flagship projects for hay meadows, rivers, moorland, geology and woodlands,
- Collaborate with farmers, moorland managers and woodland managers to conserve and enhance natural beauty,
- Target agri-environment scheme measures and other funding to the features of natural beauty identified in this plan.

10. Much of the conservation effort in the AONB is by 'third sector' organisations such as the Wildlife Trusts, BTCV and those bodies concerned with the historic environment.

Third sector bodies should be supported to:

- Contribute to AONB objectives through collaboration in partnership projects and initiatives focused on the characteristic features of natural beauty.

11. Some areas of work for the conservation of natural beauty, notably the conservation of geological features and the historic environment, are most likely to be led by conservation bodies rather than commercial land managers. In the case of geology, it is essential that a world-class earth heritage has an appropriate management strategy. The AONB Partnership, through close collaboration with the British Geological Survey and English Nature, is producing a North Pennines AONB Geodiversity Action Plan (GAP) in 2003, the first plan of its kind for a UK protected landscape. The document presents a strategy for the identification, conservation and interpretation of sites of geological importance within the North Pennines AONB. Policy guidelines are outlined to safeguard key geological and landscape features and a framework presented for ensuring full consultation between different conservation interest groups and land owners and managers.

Land managers should be supported to:

- Implement the North Pennines Geodiversity Action Plan

12. The historic environment is easily damaged by other activities, from building work to nature conservation management. More information needs to be gathered on the precise nature of the historic environment and measures put in place to conserve its special features. It would not be



"Schemes such as the Black Grouse Recovery Project should be supported to continue". © Game Conservancy Trust

appropriate (as possible) to 'restore' all the buildings and features in the AONB, as their variable condition is part of the area's character. However, features which are important examples of their type, and those which may have an economic or social function, should be sensitively conserved. Funding for this is available, but the human resources to secure it are often severely limited.

13. Support for the conservation of historic features should be based on an AONB wide assessment of conservation need and importance. Such an assessment (and subsequent funding bids and work) should focus on the characteristic built forms of the area, such as chapels, defensible structures, limekilns, characteristic agricultural buildings and those associated with the lead mining industry. The 'miner farmer landscapes' of the AONB should be conserved, retaining the pattern of small enclosures and isolated buildings typical of the landscape around, for example, Cowhill in upper Weardale.

Conservation organisations and land managers should be supported to:

- Carry out further survey of the historic environment, recording the importance, condition and conservation need of features identified,
- Establish clear and consistent criteria for where conservation effort and resources should be prioritised,
- Ensure co-ordination of effort over funding bids and project development,
- Implement the AONB Partnership's 'Lead Mining Sites Strategy,'
- Take action to increase the skills required to conserve historic buildings and features,
- Provide consistent and high quality advice and support to private landowners who may wish to conserve historic features,
- Ensure the continued targeting of agri-environment scheme measures towards the historic environment.

Promoting 'Naturalness' in Conservation

14. Naturalness (a relative freedom from man's influence) is rising up the conservationists' agenda both in the UK and Europe. Though active management has resulted in the countryside we see today, in some places its intensity has been such that wildlife has survived in spite of it rather than because of it. In some cases, removing management (and paying the farmer for lost production) is likely to be an effective way of achieving conservation objectives.

Encouraging this approach would give the following benefits:

- (i) restore scrub, woodland and rocky ecosystems more cheaply, less contentiously and much more sensitively in the landscape.
- (ii) establish a much greater degree of natural dynamism in the countryside, where natural ecological processes will promote the development of habitats of increasing complexity over decades and centuries. Resources such as woodland and heathland need not be so zealously preserved if parts of the landscape were allowed to develop these habitats; at the moment they are usually only lost.
- (iii) ultimately lead to a richer landscape for wildlife and to some, a visually more appealing landscape with more texture and seasonal colour;
- (iv) act as valuable refugia for species needing a range of habitats, such as black grouse.
- (iv) better promote the conservation of common resources and help us learn about the capacity of the countryside to recover unaided from unsustainable exploitation.

Conservation bodies and land managers should be supported to:

- Explore the potential for projects to promote naturalness in locations across the AONB.

Providing Clearer Advice and Support

15. There is a wide range of grant aid available to farmers and land managers, but in some respects this breadth of support creates a problem – there is plethora of sources and an equally wide range of advisors. It would be beneficial to create a 'first stop shop' (or a series of them across the AONB), to provide land managers with a first point of contact and a 'signposting service' to environmental and business support. A project of this nature considered Weardale should be given every encouragement. The AONB Partnership is proposing to produce a directory of land management advice, practical assistance and grant aid in the AONB. This should help landowners and communities make applications to the appropriate sources of funding.

Conservation bodies should be supported to:

- Work together to present a clearer picture to landowners and communities as to 'who does what' in terms of remit and responsibilities, the provision of funding, advice and support.

Skills and Training

16. A decline in traditional land and building management skills has been identified elsewhere in this plan as a barrier to the conservation of natural beauty in some fields, including drystone walling and traditional building repair. Development of these skills may also lead to small-scale employment opportunities being retained in the area.

Conservation organisations should be supported to:

- Work with practitioners and training providers to identify gaps in land management / historic environment conservation skills,
- Link those people willing to learn these skills with those who can provide the training,
- Make better use of existing projects which link those seeking training with those who can provide it, e.g. The Haltwhistle Skills and Training Project.

Records and Data

17. There is a great need to improve knowledge and understanding of our landscapes, wildlife and habitats. A greater recognition is needed (amongst funding bodies in particular) that survey and monitoring work is as much a part of conservation as physical grassland and moorland management.

Conservation organisations and local authorities should be supported to:

- Further co-ordinate survey effort and establish an AONB wide programme of survey and monitoring. At the very least this would ensure there was no duplication of effort or competition for funding.
- Establish environmental records centres in the North East and North West which support conservation of natural beauty in the AONB. Data should be able to be readily shared between records centres and local conservation bodies where appropriate.
- Ensure improved sharing of information between different conservation disciplines, notably ecologists, archaeologists and woodland managers. This should aim to ensure that potentially conflicting conservation interests can be addressed effectively.

Managing the Impacts of Public Access

18. Local authorities and conservation bodies will need to work closely with land managers and public bodies to ensure that rights of open access will not damage the conservation value of the North Pennines or impede land management. They will also need to provide the information which will enable people to enjoy the new rights to greatest effect. They will need to be adequately funded in order to do this. The Local Access Forums covering the AONB are likely to be well-placed to support the development of links between land managers and those charged with administering the access regulations.

Local Authorities, conservation bodies and land managers should be supported to:

- Secure the necessary finance from central government to enable open access to be properly administered and managed on the ground.
- Improve information on the responsible use of access land, to minimise impact on sensitive plants and birds, to avoid risk of moorland fires and to protect the livelihood of commercial land managers.
- Establish guidance and a voluntary code of practice for those organising large public access events (e.g. major challenge walks).

Related Plans and Strategies: *Regional Spatial Strategy, Development Plans, Regional Economic Strategies, Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food, National and Local Biodiversity Action Plans, North Pennines AONB Geodiversity Action Plan, Community Strategies.*

AONB POLICY GUIDELINES – Land Management

- LM1 Farmers and moorland managers should be supported as the main stewards of natural beauty. Measures for the conservation of the landscape, wildlife, geology and historic features should be supported through advice, direct assistance and flexible grant schemes.
- LM2 The North Pennines should be a 'target area' for additional effort under any new agri-environment schemes, in particular the new higher tier options (in common with the system currently employed under Countryside Stewardship). Agri-environment schemes should be targeted at the key features of natural beauty in the AONB.
- LM3 Support should be given for the development and marketing of local products linked to the special qualities of the North Pennines.
- LM4 Land based farm diversification proposals should be encouraged where they contribute to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.
- LM5 An increase in skills relating to land management within the AONB, should be encouraged through the development of skills audits and the funding and delivery of training.
- LM6 The sensitive expansion of woodland management should be widely supported and a landscape scale approach to woodland expansion adopted.
- LM7 River and watercourse management should focus on the conservation of fish stocks, BAP and local character species. Natural solutions should be found for problems of flood defence.
- LM8 Support should be provided for the continuation of existing major species and habitat projects in the AONB and for the development of new projects linked to the key features of natural beauty (e.g. hay meadows, rivers, moorland, geology, historic environment).
- LM9 Increasing the range and quality of data on the natural and historic environment should be strongly supported. Ease of public access to data and the capacity to share information with a wide range of organisations, should be promoted where this does not compromise conservation objectives.
- LM10 Projects to improve public understanding of the role of land managers of all kinds in conserving the countryside should be widely supported.
- LM11 Measures to increase funding for conservation and enhancement of the AONB should be supported by local, national and regional organisations.
- LM12 Balanced measures to manage the potential impact of open access on nature conservation and land management should be brought forward and supported.

See also:

Policy Guidelines SCI – 2, TT1-2, CA4, SW1-3
Action Plan Objectives 2-21, 27,

Supporting Sustainable Communities

1. It is not the role of this plan to promote measures which support all aspects of community life. However, it is clear that environmental sustainability needs to go hand in hand with economic and social sustainability if the North Pennines landscape is to be conserved. It will also be essential for local people to have a thorough appreciation of the area's special and unique qualities and to play a strong role in conserving them.

Supporting Community Action for the Environment

2. Across the North Pennines, local societies, conservation groups, Development Trusts and others are taking steps to support the conservation of natural beauty. Those projects which marry the conservation of the environment with benefit for the economy and genuine community participation should be given every support. Where they complement the purpose of AONB designation, innovative ideas should be embraced and supported, including those which sound at first to be strange and unusual – change only comes about through a break from the 'usual' practices.
3. In recent years, there have been a wide range of funding streams for local communities to use to develop their own projects, including the North Pennines LEADER II programme and its successor North Pennines LEADER +, the National Lottery, local authority funding and funding provided by statutory agencies such as the Countryside Agency and Forestry Commission. Add to these funding from individual conservation bodies (including the AONB Partnership), Charitable Trusts, Aggregates Tax and a range of others, and there is clearly money available to be focused on the North Pennines AONB.
4. The routes to funding may become more simplified with the development of Local Strategic Partnerships and Community Plans, but there will still be a wide range of funders with a wide range of application criteria. Whilst this is a potentially good thing for local communities, it should be the goal of all funding organisations operating in the North Pennines to simplify their application processes and make navigating the 'funding maze' as easy as possible. It is unlikely that there will ever be a 'one-stop-shop' for all funding information across the AONB, but a series of local 'first stop shops', providing guidance on suitable funding streams and sources of assistance, would be useful, be it theme or geographically based. A proposal of this nature for Weardale should be supported and replicated elsewhere if successful.
5. Local Authorities, statutory agencies and others must work effectively with local communities to help support ideas and initiatives which will bring about future sustainability. As far as possible they should



"Community Meeting, Allenheads Heritage Centre".

- be mindful of the need to support project development as well as implementation. Local groups often incur considerable expense and use up a considerable amount of time and energy in bringing a project to the stage where it can be considered for funding. Within the scope of this plan, the support which might be provided includes the provision of advice, grant aid, training and practical assistance on matters relating to land management and conservation of the historic environment, sustainable transport and helping people understand and enjoy the countryside more easily.
6. There is also great benefit in supporting those organisations, from whatever sector, which can help communities make connections with different opportunities in things such as training and fund raising. A good example of this is the Haltwhistle Training and Skills Project, run by the Haltwhistle Partnership, which helps match local people and their training needs with potential trainers and courses. Ideally the support offered should take a community development approach, building the capacity of local communities to help themselves into the future and thereby become more sustainable.

7. As community projects grow, some of them may need full time staff support. Where possible, this should be drawn from the local community, providing that any recruitment process is fair and transparent. Durham Rural Community Council, in its 2003 Rural Services Report, has identified that whilst this creates employment in the community, the impact of new employment legislation can leave many community groups feeling 'out of their depth' when it comes to managing the staff they have employed. Funding bodies do not operate controls or research to assess how those employed might be managed, asking only if the organization has the capacity to do so. As a solution it would be helpful if funders would encourage management committees of local groups to undergo formal training as a condition of grant aid, to ensure that they were properly equipped to undertake management of staff. Alternatively they might consider appointing a separate independent organisation to fulfill this role.
8. One way in which local communities can most effectively influence the future of where they live is through the production of a Parish Plan. Parish Plans aim to ensure that account can be taken of community views on the place they live in a strategic, rather than a reactive, way. They enable local people to take the initiative in shaping the future of their community and have the benefit of being informed by a great deal of local knowledge. They are also a potentially excellent way of generating cohesion within communities, bringing people together to identify a common vision of the economic, social and environmental issues which affect their quality of life. Encouragement and support should be given to those communities wishing to produce a Parish Plan or to undertake similar community planning or appraisal exercises. A successful example of the latter was Alston's version of the Countryside Agency's 'Market Towns Healthcheck' which generated a great deal of local interest and collaborative effort. The result is an action plan which has broad community support and is acknowledged as such by local authorities, agencies and funding bodies. Communities should be encouraged through these plans to develop projects which support the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.
9. It is not the role of this plan to proscribe every action which will be taken forward to meet the vision for the future and this is never more true than in respect to community efforts to conserve and enhance the AONB. Flexibility must be applied in the planning and provision of resources which allows good ideas to come up from local level and be supported to fruition.
10. Equally, applicants need to match their project to the right funding stream and recognise that they are unlikely to get long-term project funding for things that have been supported for several years. Difficult though it may be, longer term financial sustainability should be a goal in all projects. Equally, some things will always be a 'service,' with little commercial life and may always need external support to some degree; funding bodies need to acknowledge this more fully.

Related Strategies and Plans: *Community Plans, Local Development Plans, Sustainable Food and Farming Strategy Delivery Plan, Biodiversity Action Plans*

AONB POLICY GUIDELINES – Supporting Community Action

- SC1 Funding bodies should seek to support communities in project development as well as implementation, through the provision of advice, practical assistance, training and funding where possible.
- SC2 Direct support should be given to community groups implementing projects to conserve the AONB's landscape, wildlife and historic environment or to celebrate its cultural features
- SC3 Routes to funding for local communities should be simplified wherever possible and clear information published on local sources of financial support.
- SC4 Support should be given to those organisations which help communities make connections between community need and sources of direct assistance.
- SC5 Funding bodies should give careful consideration to how staff employed by community organisations will be managed and provide support where required.

See also:

Policy Guidelines LP4, LMI, 3-5, 8, 12, 13.

Action Plan Objectives 3, 21, 24, 34

The Prudent Use of Natural Resources

1. Other parts of this plan address how some of our prime natural resources of wind, water and minerals are used in the AONB and the impact this might have on the landscape. Within the scope of this plan, we might also seek to influence the prudent use of natural resources through promoting sustainable design and location of buildings, the greening of business practice and 'green travel'. Nationally designated landscapes can be the cradle of good practice across the widest spectrum of environmental fields.
2. In considering the following issues, it is important to remember that landscape and wildlife are natural resources and ones which are perhaps in the long term likely to be the motive force of the local economy. We need to avoid over-exploitation of both and to manage them sensibly and sustainably if they are to support our communities into the future. This requires action such as:
 - the careful disposal of farm and other waste,
 - monitoring and regulating activities which affect air, soil and water quality, and the impact of light pollution,
 - the protection of rare and characteristic wildlife and habitats
 - balancing enjoyment of new rights of access and the conservation of fragile habitats and vulnerable species.

Sustainable Building – Design and Location

3. New buildings in the AONB, as well as being in keeping with their surroundings, should also be as environmentally sustainable as possible. Designing energy efficient features into affordable housing, for instance, will make it cheaper to run alongside being cheaper to rent or buy and will also benefit the environment. Durham County Council's document, 'Building in Sustainability' (2002) is widely recognised as providing model guidance which could be applied across the AONB. The prudent use of natural resources can also be promoted by locating development where it will minimise the need for private car use to the greatest extent (this is dealt with in more detail elsewhere in the plan).

Green Travel Planning

4. How people get to and from work and how they visit local attractions and the wider countryside can also have an effect on the environmental sustainability of the AONB. In a deeply rural area like the North Pennines some degree of private car use is essential for almost everyone, but encouragement should be given to businesses in the AONB to produce green travel plans for their staff or their visitors. As a minimum, all literature promoting local attractions, events and activities should provide details of how to get there by public transport, where possible. The Countryside Agency has produced guidance on Green Travel Plans which is available on its website www.countryside.gov.uk



"Any new mineral extraction workings would be subject to National Planning Regulations on AONB's"
 – Charlie Hedley © Countryside Agency.

The Greening of Business

5. One of the principle ways in which business can support the local environment is to buy locally produced goods and services. The use of good quality local products also acts as a badge of quality for the whole area, helping to reinforce the idea that the North Pennines is a special place, as well as supporting the local economy. Tourism businesses can also use the Tourist Board / Countryside Agency 'Green Audit Kit', which helps them to assess and improve their own environmental performance. It may be appropriate to tie future grant aid and other support to the use of the green audit kit and similar measures.

Minerals and Waste Planning

6. The landscape of the North Pennines has been to a large degree shaped by the extraction of its rich mineral resources. Mineral extraction and quarrying are controlled by County Councils through the minerals planning process. Any new quarrying or mineral extraction activity on a commercial scale would be likely to constitute major development and be subject to national planning regulations on AONBs.
7. Future planning for mineral extraction within the AONB should balance the economic benefit which this may bring with the potential impact on landscape, biodiversity and local communities. It should also consider the potential impact of any infrastructure and traffic issues which may arise. Every encouragement should be given to after-use which complements the surrounding landscape. This should not preclude industrial development where this is of a nature and scale compatible with its setting in an AONB.
8. There are currently no active waste disposal sites in the AONB and it is anticipated that permission will not be given for new ones, other than where there will no adverse impact on landscape or biodiversity, either directly or through the effects of increased traffic and noise etc.
9. Business ideas, particularly for community businesses, which aim to manage or recycle waste in the AONB, should be supported where the associated infrastructure has no adverse impact on natural beauty.

Related Plans and Strategies: *Regional Planning Guidance; Local Development Plans; Minerals and Waste Local Plans; County and District LA 21 Strategies, Cumbrian Sustainability Strategy, 'Building in Sustainability' (Durham CC)*

AONB POLICY GUIDELINES – The Prudent Use of Natural Resources

- NR1 Local Authorities, property owners and developers should seek to incorporate the principles of sustainable building design and construction in all new buildings in the AONB.
- NR2 Opportunities should be sought to support the greening of business in the AONB, through measures such as green travel plans, promoting the green audit kit, green purchasing policies and collating information on sourcing quality local products for business use.
- NR3 Proposals for mineral development in the AONB should be subject to rigorous examination, with a balanced approach taken to the impact on the landscape, biodiversity and the local economy.
- NR4 Proposals for waste disposal development in AONB should not be permitted other than where there would be no adverse impact on the landscape and no inconvenience to communities through associated traffic and noise.

See also:

**AONB Policy Guidelines LPI-2
Action Plan Objectives 1, 22, 23**

Access to Key Services and Facilities

1. People's access to services and facilities may not instantly appear to have a direct link to the conservation of natural beauty. However, it is an essential feature of building the sustainable communities which can contribute so much to the well-being of the AONB. Directly related to the remit of this plan, retaining and enhancing local services can:
 - Reduce car journeys and traffic
 - Provide services for visitors too, further supporting the local economy.
2. However, good access to key services also has clear benefits in that it can:
 - Strengthen the role of villages and market towns as service centres which can act as gateways to the AONB
 - Retain local employment opportunities
 - Help to counter rural social exclusion
 - Improve the quality of life of local people
3. In short, it helps maintain diverse vibrant communities of people who can then contribute positively to local conservation.
4. It is possible to plan positively for the retention of key services and to establish policies within local authorities and agencies to support this. Regional Planning Guidance for the North East has a Development Policy on Rural Settlements which includes specific guidance on establishing local development plan policies relating to the retention of key services. It advises that such local policies should: "Seek to protect and improve the provision of critical rural service infrastructure (including schools, post offices, banks, shops, pubs, village halls and petrol stations)." Such policies might include:
 - encouragement for resisting changes of use to residential purposes,
 - support for dual use of local facilities (e.g. the pub/ post office or village hall / library),
 - the retention of shop fronts for a given time in order to promote potential return of shopping provision or inviting community or social use of certain premises.
5. It will be important to maintain information on the levels of services within communities to enable policies to be refined and targeted more effectively. The Rural Community Councils' annual 'Key Services Reports' are likely to continue to be the best mechanism for this.
6. There are clearly several ways in which development policy can support key services. Studies in North Cornwall, West Oxfordshire and Wiltshire have shown that simply providing more housing in a settlement will not alone sustain local services. (Source: Key Services in North East England, John Moores University for the Countryside Agency). Many key services in rural communities will need a variety of income streams in order to have a long- term future and such income streams can be hard to generate in some of our more isolated communities. The Post Office and café in Allenheads have had a number of changes of tenant in only a few years, despite



"Carrigill Post Office" – Charlie Hedley © Countryside Agency.

the best efforts of the Allenheads Trust to ensure continuity. Local community use and the C2C cycle route are perhaps insufficient as the main income streams for a viable business.

7. Of course, there are ways of encouraging the retention of key services in which everyone can become more involved. Simply encouraging the use of local services and facilities, by local people as well as visitors, will help to some small degree, as will the active promotion of those services and facilities which offer a locally distinctive product.

Related Plans and Strategies: *Regional Planning Guidance, Local Development Plans; Community Strategies; Regional Economic Strategies, Stanhope, Middleton and Haltwhistle Market Towns Action Plans, Northumberland Cultural Strategy.*

AONB POLICY GUIDELINES – Access to Key Services and Facilities

- KS1 Local Authorities should establish development plan policies on the retention of key local facilities and services, of the kind suggested in the AONB Management Plan .
- KS2 The community and environmental benefits of 'buying local' should be widely promoted.

See also:

AONB Policy Guidelines LP3, 5
See Action Plan Objective 3

The Provision of Housing to Meet Local Need

1. It is widely acknowledged that there is benefit in encouraging communities to be diverse in their age structure, retaining young people and enabling the elderly to enjoy good living standards for which they may have worked all their lives. It is not within the purpose of AONB designation to provide for affordable housing in rural areas, but it is an important factor in maintaining the sustainability and integrity of communities and thereby making it easier for local people to contribute positively to the life of the countryside. The dormitory or retirement communities which may otherwise be the result are perhaps less likely to be involved in land management, sustainable tourism and other activities linked to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.
2. Whilst it might still be possible to sell a small house in London and buy a very large one in the North Pennines, house prices in the North East and Cumbria are rising faster than anywhere else in the country. This is increasingly pricing many people, young and old, out of the housing market. Local employment opportunities have also declined in some parts of the North Pennines in recent years, most obviously in Weardale, and this all affects people's ability to keep pace with house prices. It is also thought that second home or holiday cottage ownership, along with 'Right to Buy' schemes for Council housing, is also inflating local house prices. The need for affordable housing in the AONB was in the 'top five' issues felt to be most important by those responding to the questionnaire which has helped to inform this draft of the management plan. Conversely, in some places such as Haltwhistle and surrounding parishes (some of which are in the AONB), consultation has suggested that local housing is in sufficient supply and is affordable (Source: Haltwhistle Market Towns Initiative consultation process).
3. In the same way that it is possible to plan for key service retention, it is possible to develop policies which create, and maintain, stocks of affordable housing. Such development should be subject to a thorough assessment of need, be designed to a high standard and be of a nature and scale appropriate to its setting – this need not cost more. It should be located so as to reduce car journeys and promote the sustainability of existing key services.
4. Mechanisms to retain affordable housing into the future might include the promotion of part-ownership or shared tenure schemes.
5. Part of the AONB (Teesdale, Wear Valley and Derwentside) benefits from the services of a Rural Housing Enabler. Their role is to help to identify areas of rural housing need and to explore the locations where it would be most socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. The employment of Rural Housing Enablers across the AONB should be considered as a way of addressing the problems of providing good quality, environmentally sustainable housing, which meets local need now and into the future.

Related Plans and Strategies: PPG3 (Housing), Regional Planning Guidance, Local Development Plans, Community Plans, Local Housing Strategies.



"Social housing" © Cull

AONB POLICY GUIDELINES – Affordable Housing

- AH1 Subject to an assessment of need, ensure the availability of increased levels of affordable housing in the AONB, of a nature, scale and location which does not detract from its natural beauty. Measures should be adopted which retain affordable housing in perpetuity.
- AH2 The work of the Rural Housing Enablers should be supported and efforts made to establish AONB wide coverage of their services.

See also:

AONB Policy Guidelines LP3, 6
Action Plan Objective 24

Managing Roads & Traffic, Providing Transport

1. Roads and the traffic that uses them are an ever more prominent feature of our countryside. The North Pennines has thus far largely escaped some of the more adverse impacts that insensitive road building has brought to other parts of the country. Rather it is the day to day management of our roads and our roadside environment that poses a potential threat to the conservation of the rural character of the area. Inappropriate lighting, excessive signage, obtrusive surface treatments and kerbing, unsympathetic drainage and 'urban' design in roadside features such as bus shelters, can all take their toll on the character of the AONB.

AONB Roads Management Guidance

2. With the active participation of Highway Authority officers, the AONB Partnership has produced a guidance document for all those organisations which have an impact on the roadside environment. This document provides guidance on the most appropriate means of ensuring that the unique character of the North Pennines is not adversely affected by roads, whilst recognising the safety (and other) standards with which Highway Authorities must comply.
3. It enables distinctions between rural and urban areas to be better made, allowing the specific needs of the North Pennines AONB to be taken into account. The guidance is intended to apply to all road and roadside improvements and management practices. It could also be beneficial in the preparation of Environmental Impact Assessments which would be needed for any major schemes. Its wide adoption and use is recommended as a way to conserve rural character across the AONB.
4. Some existing local government policies seek to take account of the needs of conserving rural character during road improvements in the AONB. Good examples are:

Cumbria Local Transport Plan 2001/2002 – 2005/2006. (Policy HN7)

"The Council will undertake all road works taking fully into account the character of the area through which the road passes and retain the character of unimproved roads subject to the need to address significant road safety hazards. Particular attention will be given to roads in National Parks, AONBs and Conservation areas".

Carlisle District Local Plan to 2006(1997). (Policy T5 Highway Schemes in Sensitive Areas)

"Within AONBs and other important landscape areas, highway schemes should respect the character of the locality."

5. These policies reflect the approach which the Roads Management Guidance document seeks to foster and would act as model policies for other authorities to consider.



"Maintaining the rural character of roads and the roadside environment is an important step in conserving the area's natural beauty"
– Charlie Hedley © Countryside Agency.

The Speed and Volume of Traffic

6. Increasing amounts of traffic on our roads affects us all. It causes an increased danger to drivers, pedestrians and other users of the road and it can lead to mitigation measures which can have a damaging effect on rural character. Efforts need to be made to ensure that considerations of safety and utility are seen alongside those of the conservation of the character of the AONB.
7. According to a study by CPRE in 1999, 91% of people think that the speed limit should be reduced, but 91% are not slowing down on our rural roads. Given that, in general, traffic has been shown to travel faster on rural roads than it does on urban roads and that speed of travel is the greatest factor influencing the severity of injury in a traffic accident, then the speed of vehicles on local roads needs addressing urgently. The importance of responsible driving needs to be promoted as much as the use of (often intrusive) physical traffic calming and management measures. The policy of 'matching the traffic to the roads, not the roads to the traffic' should be followed – we cannot keep modifying our roads indefinitely to serve the demands of the car.

8. Through freight traffic, which may have no connection with businesses in the area, may also be contributing to increasing numbers of vehicles on our roads, increasing pollution and making it harder for local people to go about their business. Measures to counter this should include not signing, within and around the AONB, destinations more than 20 miles distant. This may encourage traffic to use roads around the AONB to get across country rather than use through routes such as the A689 east – west across the AONB or the B6276 from Middleton to Brough.
9. Road traffic levels are not monitored in the Durham and Northumberland parts of the AONB, but in Cumbria information from 2001 shows that 13,600 vehicles a day use the A66 on the fringes of the AONB and that 20% of these (2720) are HGVs. 1,860 vehicles a day (112 HGVs) use the winding A686 from Langwathby to Alston over Hartside. These figures are an increase on previous years and this trend is unlikely to be reversed.
10. As well as increasing traffic volume, the consultations carried out in the production of this plan identified speeding traffic as a major cause of local concern. Some locations, such as the A686 between Penrith and Haydon Bridge and the A66 Scotch Corner to Penrith have a history of accidents often, though not always, attributed to inappropriate driver behaviour. In consultation during the production of this plan, residents of Melmerby, for instance, have said that speeding (and noisy) traffic on the A686, particularly at Bank Holidays and weekends, has a damaging effect on the safety, tranquillity and attractiveness of the village. Measures need to be taken to manage traffic speed and volume, without compromising rural character and affecting the tranquillity of the area. Safe and convenient access needs to be provided for local people and visitors to the area, so that they may benefit from what it has to offer as a place to live, work and explore.

Public Transport

11. The role of this plan with regard to public transport is to bring forward and promote measures which increase people's opportunities to find alternatives to the private car and to champion measures to conserve and enhance rural character in the roadside environment.
12. Geographically remote, the North Pennines is crossed by few roads. Since the closure of the Alston to Haltwhistle line in 1976 there are no links to the main railway network. Public transport in the North Pennines is 'variable' with a relatively good service in Weardale, but less so elsewhere.
13. Communities which are not on the main road networks round the edge of the AONB have poor access to public transport. For instance, to travel from Alston to Middleton in Teesdale (by car a distance of 25 miles, on one road, taking 40 minutes) currently involves travelling via Newcastle, Durham, and Barnard Castle, taking approximately five hours and covering well over 100 miles. As a result of the remoteness of much of the area and the public transport services it has, access to private transport is a necessity within most of the AONB and levels of car ownership are correspondingly high. Improved public transport provision and the development of demand responsive and other schemes can help to address some of the problems associated with the increasing use of private cars. The West Allendale 'Phone & Go' service is a good local example of this. However, it is acknowledged that living in a relatively remote area such as the North Pennines will always bring with it a need to travel by car for many people's work and social lives.
14. The larger settlements beyond the northern edge of the AONB are well served by the Carlisle to Newcastle rail line. More could be done to promote sustainable visits to the AONB, providing bus and cycle links from places such as Hexham, Haydon Bridge and Haltwhistle. These might also serve Hadrian's Wall and the Northumberland National Park as well as the North Pennines.
15. There have been proposals for several years to re-open the railway line from Bishop Auckland to Stanhope and perhaps on to Eastgate. These proposals have 'hit the buffers' in the past, but there is genuine expectation that this could be achieved during the life of this plan. It would bring passengers directly into the AONB for the first time for almost 30 years. The potential to link this line with bus, cycle and walking routes is tremendous and there is great potential for economic and community benefit to accrue from it. The sustainability of proposals for the Eastgate Cement Works site relies to a large extent on the return of the railway.



"Hartside" © North Pennines AONB Partnership

16. At present the Rural Transport Partnerships (RTP) are the main influence in improving the quality of transport in rural areas. This is a Countryside Agency funded initiative, which brings together the private, public and voluntary sectors to develop and support local transport projects. Such projects provide additional transport facilities in rural areas and improve access to jobs, services and social activities, whilst enhancing visitor access to the countryside. RTP schemes operate across the AONB. Further support should be given to help integrate community and voluntary transport schemes developed through the RTP, with the mainstream passenger transport network. The creation of interchanges with other modes of transport, notably on principal walking and cycling routes such as the Pennine Way and C2C, should also be encouraged.
17. There are several examples of good practice in the North Pennines which can be followed in the future. These include: the 'Black Grouse Bike Bus', which currently brings people and their bikes into the area on public transport in the summer months, instead of having them attach the bike to the back of the car; the 'Fellrunner Village Bus Limited', a community led transport scheme in the East Fellside, has been taking people from the remote parts of the Eden Valley and Alston Moor to Carlisle and Penrith since the late 1970s.

Related Plans and Strategies: *Guidance on the Management of Roads in the North Pennines AONB; County based Local Transport Plans; Local Development Plans; Community Strategies; Regional Economic Strategies, Local and Regional Tourism Strategies, Stanhope, Middleton and Haltwhistle Market Towns Action Plans, Countryside Agency Guidance notes on Rural Road Management.*

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AONB POLICY GUIDELINES – Traffic and Transport

- TT1 The AONB Partnership's 'Guidance on the Management and Maintenance of Roads in the North Pennines AONB' should be widely adopted and implemented.
- TT2 Highway Authorities should undertake all road schemes, including those for traffic calming and management, in a manner which respects the conservation of natural beauty and rural character and in consultation with local communities.
- TT3 Appropriate and effective measures should be brought forward to control speeding traffic in acknowledged 'problem locations' such as on the A686.
- TT4 Consideration should be given to signing freight traffic around the AONB or to not signing locations more than 20 miles distant within and around the AONB.
- TT5 Measures should be brought forward to improve cross dale and cross border public transport.
- TT6 Community transport schemes should be encouraged and valued for the contribution they make to environmental and social sustainability.
- TT7 Support should be given for projects which link community transport schemes with mainstream transport provision and those which link with other forms of transport such as walking and cycling.
- TT8 Support should be provided for the return of passenger rail services on the Weardale Railway.
- TT9 Projects which link the AONB to surrounding railway stations should be actively supported.

See also:

AONB Policy Guidelines SC1-2, IA1, 3, CA5

Action Plan Objectives 25,26, 32

Influencing the Local, Regional and National Agenda

1. **Placing the AONB higher on the agenda of local, regional and national organisations is one of the primary roles of the AONB Partnership. If the AONB designation is to have long-term benefit, all those organisations and institutions which affect it must be aware of its qualities, its needs and the role they can play in its conservation and enhancement.**
2. At local level, the task of influencing development plans and other strategic documents is an ongoing one. This work must be extended further to ensure that county based Strategic Partnerships and district based Local Strategic Partnerships carry out their roles with awareness of the importance of the AONB and with the policy guidelines, objectives and actions of this Plan in mind. There is also a vital and ongoing role to promote consistency of local authority approach in key areas of work, such as rights of way management and the application of planning policy, across local authority boundaries.
3. At regional level, the Regional Development Agencies are growing in awareness of the role that AONBs and AONB Partnerships can play in promoting economic and social well being which is linked to the purpose of designation. The Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Alun Michael MP, said in 2002 that protected landscapes should be 'test-beds' of innovative initiatives for rural revival. For this to happen, the needs of the North Pennines and the purpose of AONB designation need to be at the heart of RDA policy-making and delivery. It is the role of the RDAs themselves, the Countryside Agency and the AONB Partnership to ensure that this is happens. An accord is being developed between the RDAs and protected landscape management bodies to promote future co-operation.
4. Similarly the regional Rural Affairs Forums (North East and North West) need to take increasing account of the AONB and its potential as a test-bed for rural revival. The AONB Partnership needs to make continuing effort to engage with these fora to raise the profile of the AONB in policy-making and action. It also needs to make the most of the potential of regional tourism fora, rural business support networks and other mechanisms to bring benefit to the AONB.
5. The Regional Assemblies have an important policy making role which affects the AONB, most obviously in the production of the Regional Spatial Strategies. The AONB Partnership should aim to influence the policies of the Regional Assemblies to promote measures which support the purpose of AONB designation.

6. At national level, the work of the National Association for AONBs should be supported by the AONB Partnership and by its local member organisations as it strives to further the AONB designation. The AONB Partnership should continue to play a strong role in the work of the Association and support campaigns and initiatives which raise the profile of AONBs in Government and amongst the public.
7. There are several national initiatives which have brought great benefits to National Parks, but have not yet been available to AONBs. Examples of this include the 'Sustainable Development Fund' and the 'New Native Woodland in National Parks' scheme. AONB Partnerships and the National Association for AONBs need to work with others to bring the benefits of these and other initiatives to AONBs too.
8. Section 85 of the CROW Act places a duty on public bodies to have due regard to the purpose of AONB designation in the discharging of their functions. Some public bodies awareness of this legislation has proved to be limited. There would be benefit in establishing an accord between the AONB Partnership and the relevant public bodies (including the utilities) to ensure full awareness of the legislation and to encourage collaborative working to ensure future compliance.

AONB Policy Guidelines – Influencing the Regional and National Agenda

- IA1 Local authorities, strategic partnerships and LSPs covering the AONB should consider its conservation and enhancement in all policy making and action.
- IA2 RDAs should promote the AONB as a testbed for rural revival and support new initiatives which complement the purpose of AONB designation.
- IA3 All bodies with Section 85 duties under the CROW Act 2000 should be encouraged and supported to fulfil their obligations.

See also:

**AONB Policy Guidelines LPI-11, LM2, CA1, NR3, NR4, AH1, TT1-2
Action Plan Objective 27**



"Upper Teesdale"



Enjoying and Understanding The North Pennines

Management Plan

Part 4

This part of the Management Plan addresses issues relating to how local people and visitors use the AONB, how their experience of it might be more rewarding and how they can grow in appreciation of its life and work. It also addresses how tourism can contribute positively to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

Exploring the North Pennines

1. Though not a purpose of AONB designation, it is widely acknowledged that one of the best ways to ensure the long term conservation of any area of countryside is to provide opportunities for people to:
 - Be aware of where it is and what is special about it.
 - Be able to enjoy the things it has to offer.
 - Be able grow in understanding of its wildlife, landscape, culture and communities.
2. This plan seeks to promote measures which make this possible, without compromising the quality of the environment.

Public Rights of Way and Access Land

3. The North Pennines AONB is well served with footpaths, bridleways and green lanes, giving local people and visitors plenty of opportunities for exploration. Two National Trails cross the area, the Pennine Way and Pennine Bridleway. The Coast to Coast Walk and Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail are both within a few miles and the C2C cycle route and Pennine Cycle Way (North) cut right through the heart of the AONB. There are regional routes such as the South Tyne Trail, Weardale Way, Teesdale Way and Cumbria Way and any number of locally promoted routes for walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and off-road vehicles. This resource is managed by the 3 county highway authorities within the AONB, with the help of district and parish councils, community projects and individual landowners.
4. In addition to the network of rights of way there are a number of places where access is provided by permission of landowners. Again there is provision for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders in various locations. As one example, many of the reservoirs within the North Pennines are accessible to the public for quiet recreation by permission of Northumbrian Water.
5. The three counties which share the North Pennines AONB each have slightly different mechanisms for management of rights of way. In Cumbria there is a split between the 'client' (the County Council) and the 'contractor' (a private company appointed to deliver on the ground services under contract to the County Council). Northumberland County Council manages the network through its own Countryside Service, while Durham County Council operates a rights of way team as part of its Environment and Technical Services directorate. These differences do not necessarily have an impact on the way work is done on the ground, though the resources available may differ. There has been increasing contact and liaison between officers across administrative boundaries, principally through the North Pennines AONB Partnership's 'Access and Recreation Working Group' and through the development of Local Access Forums.
6. The network of Public Rights of Way is a legacy of the past, when the rural population had a more intimate relationship with the land. Walking from home to work, to church, to market to school necessitated the use of paths and tracks throughout the countryside. Cattle, sheep and other livestock were driven from farmstead to markets along drovers' lanes and pack-horses carried all manner of goods, along well-made causeways. These routes, established by regular use over many generations, eventually became the basis for a network of paths, bridleways and green lanes enshrined in law under the 1967 Highways Act. In addition there are rights of access associated with commons and occupation of land which are equally secure in law.
7. Public Rights of Way fulfil a number of functions today, but recreational access to the countryside is the most significant. Many paths have been promoted for the quality of the recreational experience they offer and are now used by large numbers of people. The area's National Trails are managed and marketed by the Countryside Agency and attract walkers from Britain and abroad. Increasingly this use of long-distance walks is for short breaks, rather than completing



the whole route in one go. Regional routes such as the Teesdale Way and the Weardale Way bring in small numbers of visitors from within the UK and are also used by local people as part of their enjoyment of the wider rights of way network. Other local routes are used primarily by residents and day visitors, mostly coming from the North East and Cumbria. The network of paths is currently being promoted as a resource for healthy lifestyles, with encouragement for people to take more exercise in the form of a country walk.

8. The new rights of open access provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act will have come into force in the North Pennines by the Autumn of 2004, early in the life of this Management Plan. Due to the nature of the area, with its vast expanses of open moorland, the North Pennines will be the most 'accessible' of the 41 AONBs. People will have new opportunities to explore this wonderful countryside and many walkers will be able to go to places they have never been before and to discover more about their surroundings.
9. The CRoW Act (2000) places new duties and rights on local authorities in relation to the management of rights of way and access land. Highway Authorities are required to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RWIP) by 2007. They have also now met the requirement to set up Local Access Forums (LAF) to give user groups, landowners and others a formal process through which to advise highway authorities on both the management of 'Access Land' and the production of RWIPs.
10. Two LAFs cover the AONB: a joint North Pennines (Durham and Northumberland) LAF and the Cumbria LAF, which includes the AONB with the rest of the land outside the two National Parks.
11. Large areas of Defence Estates property within the AONB are mapped as Access Land under provisions in the CRoW Act 2000, though some, such as the tank firing range at Warcop, will have permanent restrictions placed on them due to the nature of their military use. Despite such restrictions, large areas of countryside will be open to the public for the first time for many years.

Supporting Improvements in Sustainable Countryside Access

Setting the Highest Standards

12. Consistent, high standards of management of the Rights of Way network should be seamlessly applied across the North Pennines. Neither resident nor visitor should be able to discern the administrative boundaries simply on the basis of the type of signposting used on paths or the level of maintenance they receive. Legal anomalies in the network, especially at borders, need to be addressed as a priority and should feature prominently in Rights of Way Improvement Plans affecting the AONB.
13. Particular effort might usefully be focused on the management of the network of promoted routes across the AONB. People picking up a leaflet guided walk in a local TIC need to be able set out on the route with confidence that it will be accessible and easy to follow.



"Guided walk, Roof of England Walks 2003" © Middleton Plus.

New Rights, New Responsibilities

14. With the new rights of open access, come new responsibilities for the walker and new challenges for the land manager. The land over which people will have the right to walk may look wild, but it is managed for sport or for stock grazing and is a large part of the economic prosperity of the area. Equally it is land of international importance for nature conservation, particularly for its communities of birds and plants. Steps will need to be taken to ensure that the public is able to enjoy these new rights without compromising the needs of wildlife and a significant part of the local economy. People will need readily accessible information about which land is open for access and about how to explore the newly available land enjoyably, safely and sensitively.
15. Alongside the regulatory system for temporary and permanent closure of some land for conservation, health and safety and management purposes, voluntary codes of practice may be

one option to influence the use of sensitive areas of land. Some of the terrain mapped as 'access land' is very difficult to traverse (e.g. heather moorland and blanket bog) and the majority of people may welcome being guided (e.g. by low-key signage or cutting of vegetation) along routes which allow them to reach new parts of the countryside with minimal pressure on conservation and commercial land management. There may also be a need to consider the provision of access points to open country and also informal visitor parking at some locations, which should be established in accordance with the AONB Partnership's companion document to the management plan, "Guidance on the Management and Maintenance of Roads in the North Pennines AONB".

16. It may only be after the new rights of open access have been in place for some time that the true picture of its impact on the user and the landowner will be known. The Government will be called upon to make extra resources available for the effective management of open access and Local Authorities and the Countryside Agency will need to be adequately funded to enable them to administer the system, make information on access land restrictions widely available and manage the new access on the ground.
17. Access provided by permission of the landowner is often overlooked in the consideration of countryside recreation opportunities. The continued provision of such managed access should be encouraged and supported.

Managing Off-Road Vehicle Use

18. There is a broadly held perception that increasing use of off road vehicles will bring more problems of noise pollution, habitat damage and loss of amenity to other users of the countryside. The true extent of this situation is not known in the North Pennines and further research is required. The rights of legitimate users are to be protected, but it is recommended that there should be no active promotion of recreational off-road use in the AONB. Highway authorities, conservation bodies and user groups should seek to work together to overcome any difficulties which may arise. Regulatory powers such as Traffic Regulation Orders should also be used where appropriate, on a case-by-case basis.
19. The impact of new access tracks across moorland, often to provide access for shoots, can be detrimental to landscape conservation. Care needs to be taken on the siting and materials for such tracks, which in many cases do not 'weather' quickly.

Social Inclusion

20. Social inclusion should be sought in all activities relating to AONB management. In this context this includes the need for access opportunities close to where people live, routes and events linked to public transport, activities suitable for all ages, good access to information and excellent provision for people with disabilities (the 'access for all path' in Blanchland presents a good model for future path projects).



"Access-for-All path, Blanchland" © C

21. When integrated with the Rights of Way network, public transport offers great potential for helping people explore the AONB. Further linkages are required to exploit this opportunity more fully. Increased (or at least not decreasing) passenger numbers will help to persuade operators and subsidy providers that services are worthy of support. Extra usage by visitors contribute to maintaining services.

Community Participation

22. Community participation in the management of the rights of way network, fostered through Parish Paths Partnership scheme and local path groups, should be supported. Communities should also be encouraged to develop events, activities and attractions based on sustainable access to the countryside. This will reinforce the link between the conservation of a high quality accessible environment and local economic prosperity. The 'Roof of England Walks', Haltwhistle

Walking Festival and similar events should continue to be supported. They should be encouraged to develop in ways which support the local economy and are sympathetic to land management and nature conservation. It may be valuable to produce an accord or guidance note for those organising such events, to help them minimise their impact on, for example, breeding birds or sensitive flora.

A Lesson for the Future?

23. The Foot and Mouth Outbreak of 2001 showed how important it was for the local rural economy that people could get out into the countryside and walk. Though people could still visit formal attractions, when they could not get out and explore the area on foot, on horseback and by bike, many rural communities and businesses suffered. This is the clearest evidence possible of the importance of the Public Rights of Way network. It needs to be well funded, properly promoted and well managed – the economy of the area depends on it.

Related strategies and plans: *County Rights of Way Strategies, Local Transport Plans, Rights of Way Improvement Plans (from 2005).*

AONB POLICY GUIDELINES – Countryside Access

- CA1 The Public Rights of Way network in the AONB should be maintained to the highest standards and effort made to co-ordinate and integrate signage / waymarking.
- CA2 Effort should be focused on resolving anomalies in the Public Rights of Way network
- CA3 Measures should be supported which make 'Access Land' readily available to the public (subject to the application of legal restrictions), which keep the public informed of any restrictions as they occur and which promote responsible use of such land.
- CA4 Motorised off-roading should not be promoted in the AONB and reasonable measures taken where needed to minimise its potential negative impact on the countryside and people's enjoyment of it. Efforts should be made to engage with users to minimise such impacts as might occur and seek commonly agreed solutions where possible.
- CA5 Community participation in managing and promoting access opportunities should be fostered and supported.

See also:

AONB Policy Guidelines LM12, SC2, TT5, TT7, TT9, TC6, TC8

Action Plan Objectives 28-32

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Tourism & The Conservation & Enhancement of Natural Beauty

1. Tourism is a growing industry in the North Pennines and is the focus of ever-greater attention from local, national and regional organisations. Whilst there are no detailed statistics for the AONB, 27,000 jobs in the North East are estimated to be directly dependent on natural and cultural assets (Source – *Regional Economic Strategy*).
2. The chief assets of the area are undoubtedly its outstanding natural and cultural heritage. Those involved in tourism, from all sectors, need to ask how the area can 'raise its game' in order to compete with surrounding destinations. There is an important role for tourism in an increasingly environment-based economy. Marketing of the area is improving and becoming increasingly co-ordinated, but the brand has to live up to the marketing. People will expect high quality experiences, accommodation which meets their needs, the best quality local food, good transport and a warm welcome.
3. This plan brings forward policy guidelines, objectives and actions which promote the kinds of tourism most appropriate to protected landscapes such as the North Pennines AONB. These will ideally be based on the special qualities of the area and contribute to the conservation of natural beauty.

Planning for Tourism Development

4. The North Pennines has been described as the 'antidote to the Lake District'. More visitors can be accommodated with ease and can bring real benefit to the local economy. However, they also bring pressures on the landscape which need to be addressed. These pressures come in the form of increased traffic, traffic noise, signage and pressure for car parks etc. pressure on and potential damage to sensitive habitats and an increase in off-road vehicle use. Careful planning must ensure that these pressures do not detract from area's special qualities.
5. Until 2003, guidance on planning for tourism development was catered for in Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 21. At the time of producing this plan (mid 2003), PPG 21 is proposed to be replaced by 'Good Practice Guidance', which should provide the opportunity to have included in it AONB-specific recommendations and examples of good practice which relate directly to tourism in protected landscapes.
6. In the North Pennines, good practice in planning for tourism development should take account of AONB Management Plan policy guidelines and objectives and should conform to national, regional and local planning guidance on AONBs. Tourism development can bring great benefits to



"Niche markets such as cycling and horseriding are under-exploited – Cycling on the South Tyne Trail"

the economy of the area, but its promotion is best focused on those activities which bolster local distinctiveness. Those involved should consider how their operations, plans and activities can build on and promote the special qualities of the area. This principle that tourism development should build on the character of the local countryside forms part of guidance in PPG7 (para 3.12). Tourism would ideally focus therefore on activities such as walking, cycling, horseriding, wildlife-watching and discovering the area's rich history and culture.

7. It is generally accepted that many visitors are looking for an experience which marks out the place they are visiting from other destinations. Like any other development in the AONB, tourism development should be encouraged where it conforms to national planning guidance on AONBs, uses local building materials, design which complements the local environment and showcases local products, crafts and traditions.
8. The sensitive re-use of appropriate redundant buildings might be encouraged for tourism purposes, improving 'derelict sites' and sometimes providing an economic use which may sustain important buildings in the landscape.
9. It is often suggested that the area needs more effective signage to guide visitors to local attractions. However, this should not mean more signs – a proliferation of signage detracts from rural character and in the long term would be part of a sub urbanisation of the area's deep rural environment. The AONB Partnership's guidance document on the management of roads in the AONB offers further advice on the quantity, nature and location of signs in the countryside, including highway and tourist signs.
10. Regional Planning Guidance for the North East advises that emphasis must be placed on the development of sustainable tourism. It states "*Development Plans and other strategies should promote tourism and seek to achieve an acceptable and sustainable balance between the development of tourist facilities and attractions, and the potential for conservation of the Region's natural and historic environment*". This broad brush advice may be acceptable on a regional basis, but there might be the useful caveat that, in protected landscapes like the North Pennines AONB, the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty should be the principal consideration in decisions on, and planning for, tourism development.
11. The growing popularity of the North Pennines means there is likely to be increased pressure for more conventional recreation related developments. These may include visitor centres, major attractions, accommodation (catered and self-catering), cafes, restaurants and car parks. This infrastructure may be necessary to support an increase in tourism, but it should be of a nature and scale appropriate to its setting and reflect the policy guidelines in this plan. There is often discussion locally about the need for a 'flagship' tourism attraction, akin in size and profile to the Eden Project in Cornwall. As major development, this would be subject to national planning regulations on AONBs. Projects of this nature outside, but impacting on the AONB, (perhaps visually or through increased traffic, etc.) would also need to be carefully assessed for the extent to which they were compatible with the AONB designation. A study commissioned by Cumbria Tourist Board in 2003 found that, "Iconic attractions like Eden and the Guggenheim in Bilbao are rare examples of genius



"Riding nr. Cowshill" © Philip Nixon.

and inspiration. For every one that succeeds, many fail" (*Tourism Market and Development Forecasts Study*). It is worth noting that current niche markets based on the special qualities of the area (walking, cycling, riding, wildlife-watching and tourism focused on the historic environment) are greatly under exploited and that effort might more profitably be directed towards this.

12. The DETR document "Planning for Sustainable Development:- *Towards Better Practice*" (1998) highlights ways in which planning for leisure and tourism can contribute to sustainable development, including:
 - Helping to maintain the quality of the environment in which the activity takes place (through the incorporation of specific measures such as 'Visitor Payback' schemes),
 - Encouraging the provision of facilities in the most accessible locations,
 - Using local labour, products and services,
 - Improving local accessibility to the countryside,

13. The broad adoption of these principles would contribute much to the successful integration of tourism and conservation in the AONB.
14. It is not just the nature of development and the level of promotion which is an issue for the future of tourism in the North Pennines. Tourism businesses, along with others, should be encouraged to adopt green travel plans for staff and take positive measures to promote visits to their premises on sustainable forms of transport. They should also be encouraged to use local products wherever possible and to adopt energy efficient building and working practices.

Tourism Promotion

15. From 1990 to 1999, the North Pennines Tourism Partnership sought to raise the profile of the North Pennines, seeking to market the area as a visitor destination. The Tourism Partnership merged with the AONB Steering Group in 1999, forming the predecessor to the current North Pennines AONB Partnership.
16. In the past, the North Pennines was often overshadowed by other places such as the Lake District, Hadrian's Wall, Durham City or the Northumberland National Park, though this is slowly beginning to change. Cumbria and Northumbria Tourist Boards will soon be working together to boost the North Pennines 'brand' and give it the prominence it deserves alongside other visitor destinations. The AONB's nine local authorities market the area, though there is a need for greater co-ordination and a more consistent message about its special features. The work of other organisations such as the North Pennines Heritage Trust, the Haltwhistle Partnership, Teesdale Marketing, Alston Moor Business Association and Middleton Plus, also involves promoting visits to the area to enjoy its special qualities.
17. The 2002 North Pennines visitor survey showed that there was a strong correlation between the reasons for AONB designation and the primary features which visitors found attractive i.e. the beautiful scenery and unique landscape. Other popular features mentioned were the distinctive towns and villages of the area, along with good opportunities for walking and experiencing wildlife. Surveys by OneNortheast have also identified walking, cycling and enjoying the special landscapes of the area as people's chief reasons for visiting the region.
18. The area has some of the best cycling, walking and horseriding country in Britain. It is largely undiscovered and there is a need to improve the infrastructure for these activities, alongside specialist promotion, if their full potential is to be realised.
19. A high proportion of all interviewees had visited the area 5 or more times in the last twelve months. 45% of staying visitors had been to the area before and 76% were day visitors. Staying visitors spent in the region of £253 per group and day visitors £47 per group. Given that over 104,000 tourists visited one of the main TICs for the area (Stanhope) last year, this represents a significant investment in the local economy, which should be built upon.
20. The North Pennines AONB Partnership produces an annual 'Discovery Guide' to the AONB, which includes information on activities such as walking, cycling, wildlife-watching and cultural

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- tourism in the AONB, alongside an accommodation guide. This is the only tourism promotion publication focused solely on the North Pennines. This publication promotes sustainable transport and the kinds of tourism most compatible with a protected landscape.
21. The guide produced by the AONB Partnership is the beginning of more co-ordinated approach to tourism promotion in the AONB which has not been evident since the end of the Tourism Partnership. The AONB Partnership has a strong role in co-ordinating effort for the promotion of the AONB and it should be increasingly able to fulfil this function, directly through its Strategic Unit and through its Marketing and Promotions Working Group.
 22. Local 'Tourism Clusters' are beginning to develop in the AONB. These bring together small businesses which might benefit from tourism so that they might develop a more co-ordinated approach to marketing what they and the area has to offer. Clustering of tourism businesses around themes such as cycling and walking can improve the profile of that market. Clear links between accommodation, attraction and other service providers (cycle hire, transport etc.)

present a stronger product to the consumer and can help maximise the economic benefits of tourism activity. Such clusters should be supported and encouraged where their work does not detract from a North Pennines-wide approach to promoting the area, where it builds on local distinctiveness and where it does not detract from the conservation of natural beauty.

23. Any branding of the area by other bodies should seek to ensure that tourism promotion focuses on the environmental and cultural qualities of the North Pennines and that it bolsters the image of the area as a nationally important landscape.
24. A further goal of tourism promotion, recognised in all regional and local tourism strategies affecting the AONB, is the extension of the tourist season. This may necessitate the development of theme-based breaks or the promotion of other off-season activities such as winter fell walking, shooting (August to December) or even skiing (at existing facilities). At any time of year, themed breaks or events, focusing on the area's special qualities and incorporating sustainable transport, should be supported where possible.

Visitor Payback

25. Successful 'visitor payback' schemes operate across the country, often as part of wider partnerships between the operators of private tourism businesses and conservation organisations. These schemes generate income from visitors to invest directly in local conservation measures. Perhaps the best known and most successful example in the North is the Lake District Tourism and Conservation Partnership. The AONB Partnership will explore ways in which a similar project might be brought to the North Pennines, making further links between tourism and the conservation and enhancement of the AONB.

Accommodation

26. The standard of visitor accommodation in the AONB is variable. Whilst there is generally thought to be room for improvement in quality, it would be desirable to retain a variety of accommodation types to suit the differing needs of visitors. There are several schemes which can support improvement in accommodation. These include funding through the England Rural Development Programme (Rural Enterprise Scheme) and local authority tourism enhancement schemes.
27. There is a need to provide a warm welcome to visitors who come to enjoy the North Pennines on foot, by bike or on horseback and the latter two groups in particular are likely to have different needs from other visitors. The adoption of cyclist, walker and horse rider – friendly schemes is to be encouraged. This might include measures such as the provision of cycle storage and washing facilities at accommodation or attractions.
28. Whilst many organisations involved in promoting visitor accommodation can only promote those which are accredited in some way, there needs to be some flexibility which allows other accommodation to be promoted where it might meet the wide variety of visitor needs. Tourism businesses should all be encouraged to consider how they will cater for the needs of disabled visitors in light of the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act.

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"Frog Hall Cottages, Herdship Farm"

AONB POLICY GUIDELINES – Tourism and Conservation

- TC1 Tourism development should foster the needs of conservation of landscape character, biodiversity, the historic environment, cultural heritage and local communities, with the guiding principle that where environmental and other considerations are in conflict, the environmental considerations will prevail.
- TC2 Tourism development should be supported where it where is based on the special qualities of the AONB, conforms to national planning guidance on AONBs and does not detract from the area's special qualities.
- TC3 Providing it complies with policy guidelines TC1 and TC2, tourism development should be encouraged where it uses local building materials, in designs which complement the local character and where the local environment, quality local products, crafts and traditions can be showcased.
- TC4 Tourism development should be located so as to maximise opportunities for visits on sustainable forms of transport.
- TC5 Tourism development and promotion should avoid a proliferation of signage and other obtrusive features. A rationalisation of existing signage etc. should be sought.
- TC6 Tourism promotion of the area should focus on its special environmental and cultural qualities and promote sustainable forms of transport. It should be based around opportunities for walking, cycling, horseriding and exploring the area's cultural heritage and historic environment.
- TC7 Regional tourism promotion should recognise the North Pennines as a regional sub-brand with its own distinct identity and attractors.
- TC8 Support should be provided for improvements in the standard of visitor accommodation in the AONB, for the development of a variety of accommodation types and for the adoption of cyclist, walker and horse rider – friendly schemes. Improvements in accommodation standard should not be at the expense of conservation of local character and natural beauty.
- TC9 Tourism schemes which generate revenue for local conservation should be supported.

See also:

AONB Policy Guidelines LPI, LM3, LM4, SC2, NR 1-3, CA1, CA3, CA4, TT1, TT5, TT7, TT9
Action Plan Objectives 32, 33, 34



Fulfilling the Educational Potential of the AONB

It is possible to teach just about any aspect of the National Curriculum outdoors, or in a setting with easy access to inspirational landscapes, wildlife and cultural or historic features. The maxim that "a frog in the pond is worth five in formaldehyde" is a light-hearted reminder of the importance of first hand experience of the subject of study, whatever it may be.

The North Pennines presents a vast range of opportunities for teaching the formal curriculum. From the landscapes that inspired cultural giants like Auden and Turner, to the social history of lead-mining or the nature conservation interest of its moors, meadows, woods and rivers, the area has something for students of all levels. These educational opportunities can be realised at several local outdoor or environmental education centres such as Dukes House near Hexham, Harehope Quarry in Weardale or Middleton in Teesdale OEDC. Local attractions such as Killhope Museum, Nenthead Mines and Allen Banks also have education programmes to bring the curriculum to life. Despite the many regulations surrounding it, some local farms have also branched out into supporting school visits.

The exact nature of the provision of educational opportunities remains unclear and more research is needed to quantify what is on offer. Equally the potential for the different providers to collaborate on the production of education resource material or joint packages for schools remains largely untapped.

There is likely to be benefit in bringing the various providers together to map current provision in this field. Connecting them, collectively, with users of their services may enable gaps in both need and provision to be addressed in a way which best suits both parties, helping the schools and colleges to see what is on offer and assisting the providers to offer what the schools really want.

Farmers and estate managers should also be supported to develop initiatives which deliver the formal curriculum whilst helping children to see where their food comes from and how the countryside really works.



"Going underground as part of a school visit to Killhope" © Durham County Council.

AONB POLICY GUIDELINES – Education in the Countryside:

- EC1 Projects should be supported where they increase the quality of education provision outside the school environment within the North Pennines.
- EC2 Providers of outdoor and environmental education services should be encouraged to collaborate to meet the needs of their customers and to share knowledge and expertise.
- EC3 Farmers and landowners should be encouraged and supported to develop links and projects with local schools and colleges and with providers of outdoor and environmental education.

See Management Plan Objective: 35

Spreading the Word

Raising Awareness, Increasing Understanding and Improving Information.

1. One of the problems facing the North Pennines is that it is sometimes seen as 'the middle of nowhere'. It is sometimes seen as being not just geographically on the fringes of its constituent counties, but also peripheral to where the main focus might lie. It has nowhere near the profile and resources of the Lake District, the focus for much effort in Cumbria; in Northumberland it has neither the popularity or 'World Heritage Site' profile of Hadrian's Wall and the National Park or Northumberland Coast AONB; in County Durham, it is sometimes secondary to the places where the bulk of the people live and work and to Durham City itself, with its Cathedral voted Britain's Best Building in 2002. But the North Pennines is a national asset, the equal of any of those quoted here. There are many stories to tell in the North Pennines and it is important they be told in the most exciting and accessible ways, helping to reinforce the unique character of this special place.
2. There is a need for some degree of consistency in the message sent and the themes used, so that a unified impression of the special qualities of the AONB can arise and be easily understood. To this end, the North Pennines AONB Partnership is producing an **Interpretation Strategy** for the AONB, which will be completed early in the life of this plan. It is not anticipated that all interpretation will look the same. Rather it is intended to ensure that the key messages for the area as a whole come through in any interpretive provision and that high standards are achieved and maintained.
3. Ultimately the effect of environmental interpretation should be to improve awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the North Pennines. This should be to the point that people, particularly local people, fully appreciate the area's special qualities, understand the role that they and others have as its stewards and recognise or feel part of its life and work.

Key Themes

4. The key themes for interpretation identified in work on the Interpretation Strategy are:
 - **A nationally important landscape** – Whilst being conscious of and celebrating the distinctiveness of different parts of the AONB, we should ensure that the connections back to the wider AONB context are always made. It is also important to raise the profile of the designation itself, helping more people to become aware that they are living in or visiting countryside designated for its nationally importance landscape. 62% of respondents in the 2002 AONB Visitor Survey did not know that the area was an AONB, or what that meant.

- **A unique mix of internationally important species and habitats** – The North Pennines AONB has an assemblage of species, habitats and geological features found nowhere else in the world. This is a unique heritage of which we can be justly proud. It provides us with a tremendous story to tell about the area.
- **A rich historic environment** – Just as our natural environment is unique, so too is our rich blend of historical features. There is around 7000 years of settlement to tell of in the North Pennines, from modern times, to pre-history and we can journey into the past to see how it has shaped the present.
- **Diverse and vital communities (a 'Living Landscape')** – The North Pennines landscape is dynamic, productive, working countryside. Wherever possible interpretation should help people to understand how this has shaped the landscape we have today. It can also help to explain how our individual actions can make a difference to the natural environment.
- **A wealth of culture and tradition** – Local people and visitors to the area are often eager to explore the traditions which make one place different from another. The area has famous connections with some of the world's great artists and writers. The stories of the people's connections with the area help to bring it to life and can provide new ways of exploring what is special and distinctive about the North Pennines.

An Interpretation Accord

5. The AONB Partnership is producing an Interpretation Accord, which seeks to generate an accepted code of practice for the production of interpretation. This will feature in the final version of the plan. It is hoped that all those organisations and individuals producing interpretation in or about the AONB will sign up to this accord and be guided by it and by the content of the interpretation strategy.

Information for Local People and Visitors

6. There is a great variety of information available for those wanting to find out about the North Pennines. This is produced by local authorities, public bodies, conservation organisations, local community groups, tourist boards, accommodation providers and attractions. The quality of the message sent about the AONB is variable, often failing to promote the area's special qualities or national importance. Responsibility for improving this lies primarily with the AONB Partnership Staff Unit, which has, for instance, produced information for those producing tourism publications such as holiday guides. Much more needs to be done to send a positive and consistent message about the area and all those who produce public information should be encouraged to promote the North Pennines as a place with special environmental and cultural qualities and as a nationally designated and protected landscape.

7. Current work to promote the whole AONB includes the AONB Partnership's website (www.northpennines.org.uk) and North Pennines News, the magazine of the AONB Partnership, which is issued every six months and runs articles relating to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, sustainable tourism, community action and rural life and work in the area. The website will continue to develop, but greater effort is needed for its promotion and its potential as a community resource is only just beginning to be explored.
8. More needs to be made of some of the existing places where information on the AONB might be provided, such as shops, pubs, bus shelters etc. and to this end the AONB Partnership is renewing its 'Local Information Points' in 2003. These provide details of accommodation, attractions and services in settlements without a TIC and in some cases out of normal business opening hours. Other similar schemes should be developed which make it easier for local people and visitors to find out more about the area.
9. The concept of a 'Rural Bureau' for business advice in Weardale might usefully be adapted to include advice on conservation and community grant aid and project development support. This first stop shop for advice and information might be replicated elsewhere if successful.

AONB POLICY GUIDELINES – Spreading the Word

- SW 1 Interpretation in the AONB should be carried out in accordance with the North Pennines AONB Interpretation Strategy.
- SW 2 All those producing information about the AONB or impacting on the AONB should be encouraged to send a consistent message about its special qualities.
- SW 3 Projects should be supported where they increase the quality of and ease of access to information about the AONB.

See also:

AONB Policy Guidelines LM10, SC2, TC2-3, 5-7

See Action Plan Objectives 36, 37



"Interpretation Panel" – Teesdale.



"Patterns caused by heather burning, Weardale"

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

Management Plan

Part 5

How Will the Plan be Implemented?

1. Implementing the Action Plan which follows will require the co-ordinated effort and commitment of a wide range of organisations and individuals.
2. There is a lead role for the North Pennines AONB Partnership, through the AONB Staff Unit, to promote and co-ordinate action for the implementation and monitoring of the Management Plan. It will also be the role of individual members of the AONB Partnership, and others, to drive forward particular areas of work.
3. It is recognised that much of the work of conserving and enhancing the landscape will be in the hands of farmers and landowners and they need to be supported in this work. Equally, conservation bodies, local authorities and local communities also have a strong role to play in securing a bright future for the AONB.
4. The annotated table on page 7 shows how the plan should be interpreted, including the roles of 'Initial Lead' and 'Key Partners' for each action.

Funding the Action

5. During the life of this management plan, the funding schemes available for conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the North Pennines are likely to change considerably. This plan does not therefore identify funding sources against each proposal in the action plan. Every effort will be made to secure the necessary funding for the implementation of this plan, using sources ranging from EU funds, to national and local government funding, public bodies, National Lottery and support from charitable bodies and trusts. A guide to funding sources will be produced by the AONB Partnership and regularly updated.

Monitoring the Implementation of the Plan

6. The North Pennines AONB Partnership will take the lead in monitoring the implementation of the plan i.e. in confirming to what extent the proposed actions are being carried out and what effect they are having in conserving and enhancing the AONB. This kind of 'implementation monitoring' can tell us much about the impact the plan has had on the well-being of the area.
7. Each action in the Action Plan has an identified lead organisation, responsible for making it happen (though crucially not for doing all the work alone). The action plan also has an identified 'monitor' for each action, which is often, though not always, the organisation charged with leading on its implementation. Where this role does not fall to the 'Initial Lead' body, the 'monitor' is marked in bold in the action plan table against each relevant action point. This 'monitor' will be responsible for supporting the work of the AONB Partnership in reporting on the quantity and the quality of implementation of the measures proposed in the plan.

8. The AONB Partnership will produce an annual summary of achievements against management plan objectives and targets. It will also provide an overview of such achievements (its own and those of others) in its Annual Report.

'Condition Monitoring'

9. Rather than trying to monitor every single change in the AONB, it is accepted practice to identify and monitor key indicators of the health of the environment, the well-being of communities and the level to which people can enjoy and understand the area. These indicators are not in themselves measures of the effectiveness of the management plan, but they provide a general picture of the state of the AONB, which will be the result of many factors.
10. Effective condition monitoring uses 'proxy indicators' which can tell us about more than just the subject in question. An example of a proxy indicator of this kind might be the use of the presence of otter as an indicator of a healthy river system. Such proxy indicators enable us to look behind the statistics and gain a wider insight into the condition of the AONB. Approximately 12 condition indicators will be selected using the following criteria:
 - They will be easily understood by a generalist audience
 - They will be directly related to the special qualities of the North Pennines AONB and the Policy Guidelines in this plan
 - They will be based on data regularly gathered by other organisations
 - They will be proxy indicators of the wider condition of a facet of the AONB
 - They will be capable of repeated measurement over time
 - They will be broadly comparable with other similar areas elsewhere in the country, so that comparisons can be made
11. These condition indicators are best measured over a period of at least five years, preferably and can be used in conjunction with this management plan and also help to inform the one which will succeed it for the period 2009 to 2014.

Indicator	Indicative of?	Monitoring Lead
Distribution and numbers of key wader species, black grouse and raptors.	Taken together, the conservation of habitat diversity and maintenance of appropriate keeping.	RSPB (waders) /Game Conservancy Trust (black grouse).
Length of river with 'good water quality' using both biological and chemical indicators.	General health of the water environment and things such as amount of damaging run off entering watercourses.	Environment Agency.
Area of native broadleaf woodland (assuming planting in locations which does not compromise landscape, other biodiversity features or the historic environment).	Restoration of a lost feature of the landscape and an important component in conserving biodiversity including black grouse.	Forestry Commission
A hay meadow indicator.		English Nature
Area of SSSIs in favourable condition	Improvement in condition of SSSIs, improved environmental performance by site owners / tenants and managers.	English Nature
Number of buildings on the Buildings at Risk Register.	Improvements or otherwise in local ability to conserve built heritage.	English Heritage
Degree to which BVPI targets for rights of way maintenance have been met.	High quality of the PRoW Network	Highway Authorities
A reduction in roadside signage	Conservation of rural character in the roadside environment	Highway Authorities
Number of geological sites in management approved schemes?	Conservation and interpretation of earth science features	British Geological Survey
Number of organised school visits to identified locations.	Extent to which the AONB is fulfilling its potential to deliver the national curriculum.	Operators of locations identified for monitoring purposes, e.g. Killhope, Nenthead Mines
Others to be confirmed in final version of plan.		

Reviewing this Management Plan

The CRoW Act 2000 requires that this management plan be reviewed every five years. It is proposed that the review process begins in earnest in early 2008, allowing perhaps fourteen months to produce a plan which will cover the period from April 2009 to March 2014. This process should be kick-started with a report to the North Pennines AONB Partnership in late 2007, proposing the way forward for the review.

The production of this new plan should be informed by the annual implementation monitoring described in these pages and also by a 'mid term report' on the condition monitoring indicators outlined here. Local authorities, statutory agencies, local organisations and residents should again be consulted on what they feel the are key issues for the new plan to address.

The new plan for 2009 to 2014 will summarise the achievements in the preceding five years. It will show how far the measures proposed in this Management Plan were implemented and how successful they were.

It is hoped that this fills several pages with reports of rural character protected, species and habitats conserved, of people making a sustainable living from the land, of thriving communities responsive to the needs of the landscape and its wildlife and of local people and visitors growing in understanding of the North Pennines and enjoying the many things it has to offer.





A Plan for Action

Management Plan

Part 6

How to Read This Action Plan

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

Action

The work that is to take place, to contribute to meeting the objective.

Timescale

When it will be done by (sometimes 'how many' per year or during the life of the plan)

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
OBJECTIVE 4 To support those farmers who wish to diversify into new forms of activity, where this complements the purpose of AONB designation	1 Promote the uptake of diversification measures under the England Rural Development Programme, through specially targeted events and publications, aiming for a take-up rate higher than the national average.	RDS	Farmers, CA, LAs, NPAP, Tourist Boards, Business Link, FBAS	Ongoing	Executive	1	LM4
	2 Establish a network of farms showcasing best environmental and business practice in diversification.	RDS	Farmers	By 2006	Advocate	2	LM4, 10

An objective, the achievement of which will be a stepping-stone to fulfilling the vision.

Initial Lead

They may not do all the work, but they will start the process of making it happen and report on progress. For abbreviations see the list on the next page. An entry in bold means this organisation leads on monitoring the action.

Partners

Not an exclusive list of those involved, but those which are central to implementing the action. An entry in bold means this organisation leads on monitoring the action.

AONB Team Role

The role of the AONB Partnership's Staff Unit in this action:

Executive – work it does itself and with others.

Catalyst – things it brings others together to make happen.

Advocate – the things it promotes and champions as good practice in relation to AONB management

Priority

1 high – 3 lower.

Policy Link

AONB Policy Guideline to which action relates.

Abbreviations used in this Action Plan

AMBA – Alston Moor Business Association

BAP – Biodiversity Action Plan

BASC – British Association of Shooting and Conservation

BGS – British Geological Survey

BTCV – British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

BVPI – Best Value Performance Indicator

CA – Countryside Agency

CC – County Councils

CLA – Country Land and Business Association

CPRE – Campaign for the Protection of Rural England

CW – Cumbria Woodlands

DC – District / City Councils

Dev. Trusts – Development Trusts

EA – Environment Agency

EGN – European Geopark Network

EH – English Heritage

ERT – Eden Rivers Trust

FC – Forestry Commission

FWAG – Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group

GCT – Game Conservancy Trust

Highway Auths. – Highway Authorities

L+ – North Pennines LEADER + Programme

LA – Local Authorities

LAFs – Local Access Forums

MA – Moorland Association

MGA – Moorland Gamekeepers Association

NAAONB – National Association for AONBs

NFU – National Farmers' Union

NPAP – North Pennines AONB Partnership

NPHT – North Pennines Heritage Trust

NRF – Northern Rivers Foundation

NWater – Northumbrian Water

PC – Parish Councils

RDS – Rural Development Service

RIGS Groups – Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites Groups

RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

TPUK – Trade Partners UK

UNI's – Universities

WT's – Wildlife Trusts

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
OBJECTIVE 1 To support development of a nature and scale appropriate to its setting that does not compromise AONB purposes.	1 Ensure that local authority planning policy documents contain and uphold robust and consistent policies in relation to the conservation of the distinctiveness and character of the AONB, following national planning guidance and Management Plan Policy Guidelines.	NPAP	LAs, PCs, CA, CPRE	Ongoing	Advocate	1	LP 1, NR
	2 Seek the adoption of the Building Design Guide and Agricultural Building Design Guide as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) by all North Pennines local authorities.	NPAP	LAs	By 2005	Advocate	1	LP6,
	3 Review both sets of existing building design guidance and redraft where appropriate.	NPAP	LAs, EH, CA, CPRE	2006	Executive	1	LP6,
	4 Produce, and seek adoption as SPG, a local position statement on wind energy, telecom masts, overhead wires and other activities / features which might compromise the AONB landscape.	NPAP	LAs, CA, EN, PCs, Utilities, NAAONB	2005	Executive	2	LP 10,
	5 Produce, and seek adoption as SPG, guidance notes where required on the use of local materials in building works.	NPAP	LAs, EH, CA	Ongoing	Catalyst	3	LP
OBJECTIVE 2 To maintain high uptake of agri-environment schemes and encourage measures which support BAP / local character species and habitats and the conservation of landscapes and the historic environment.	1 Promote uptake of agri-environment schemes through face to face contact and publications, which is at least 20% higher than the national average. Emphasis should be on the uptake of the new higher tier scheme.	RDS	NPAP, EN, WTs, LAs, ECCP, GCT, EH, FWAG	Ongoing	Executive	1	LM
	2 Promote a system of monitoring of the agri-environment schemes which identifies the enhancements to features of the built and natural environment of the North Pennines.	RDS	EN, RSPB	2006	Advocate	3	LM2
	3 Ensure each round of agri-environment scheme targeting gives high priority to landscape character, key species and habitats in the AONB, and to the conservation of the historic environment.	RDS	NPAP, EN, WTs, LAs, ECCP, GCT, EH, FWAG	Annual	Advocate	1	LM2,
	4 Establish a series of awareness raising events to promote the importance of the historic environment of the North Pennines to land managers and to RDS staff and other agri-environment scheme advisors.	NPAP	RDS, EH, LAs, NPHT, Local Groups	1 per year from 2005	Executive	1	LM SW
	5 Ensure that sufficient staff resources are in place to provide advice and support to those wishing to enter agri-environment schemes.	RDS	EN, LAs, EN, ECCP, RDS	Ongoing	Advocate	1	LM

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
OBJECTIVE 3 To support the production and marketing of quality local products linked to the conservation of rural character and local distinctiveness.	1 Identify the nature and range of 'local products' with a connection to the conservation of rural character and local distinctiveness.	NPAP	Producers, RDS, CA, LAs, RDAs	2005	Executive	1	LM3
	2 Produce and regularly update a 'Local Products Directory' for the AONB.	NPAP	Producers	2005	Executive	1	LM3
	3 Establish an added-value promotion scheme for local products, including the creation of both environmental and quality criteria.	NPAP	Producers, RDS, CA, LAs, RDAs, Retailers	2005	Catalyst	1	LM3
	4 Establish a 'North Pennines Market' as a section in local shops, as an umbrella for selling products from different parts of the AONB to a wider audience, without subsuming more local branding (e.g. Teesdale, Weardale).	NPAP	Producers, RDS, CA, LAs, RDAs, Retailers	2005	Executive	2	LM3
	5 Establish a campaign to promote local Farmers' Markets and local craft groups as a way of supporting local producers.	NPAP	NPAP, CA, LAs	2006	Executive	2	LM3
OBJECTIVE 4 To support those farmers who wish to diversify into new forms of activity, where this complements the purpose of AONB designation.	1 Promote the uptake of diversification measures under the England Rural Development Programme, through specially targeted events and publications, aiming for a take-up rate higher than the national average.	RDS	Farmers, CA, LAs, NPAP, Tourist Boards, Business Link, FBAS	Ongoing	Executive	1	LM4
	2 Establish a network of farms showcasing best environmental and business practice in diversification.	RDS	Farmers	By 2006	Advocate	2	LM4, 10
OBJECTIVE 5 To establish, and then expand, the skills base within the North Pennines that is available to support the conservation of natural beauty and the promotion of enjoyment and understanding of the countryside.	1. Establish baseline figure for those receiving relevant training, the nature of current opportunities and the skills required to support conservation of the AONB's special features.	NPAP	Lantra Training providers, Statutory Agencies, LAs, NPHT, RDS, landowners, tenants	2005	Catalyst	1	LM5
	2. Initiate a training programme to promote training opportunities, including the use of ongoing work as examples of good practice. Devise new programmes as necessary to meet demand and areas of skills shortage.	NPAP	As above	2 per year 2005-2009	Catalyst	1	LM5

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
	3 Promote training opportunities available through the ERDP.	RDS	RDA, LAs, Training Providers, CA, Colleges, Lantra	Ongoing promotion in DEFRA publications and those of partners.	Executive	2	LMI-7
	4 Produce an annual web-based directory of local land-based, tourism and heritage conservation skills training opportunities.	NPAP	RDS, LAs, Training Providers, RDAs, CA, Colleges, Lantra	From 2005	Executive	2	LM5
OBJECTIVE 6 To conserve and enhance the resource of internationally, nationally and locally significant habitats and species found in the North Pennines.	1 Implement, monitor and review the North Pennines AONB Biodiversity Action Plan & Statement. / County BAPs	NPAP / WTs	Owners, EN, WTs, LAs, ECCP, GCT, FC, NPAP BAP Partnerships	Annual monitoring of progress	Catalyst	1	LM1-11
	2 Institute measures to ensure targets are met for SSSIs in favourable condition	EN	Owners, RDS, RSPB, GCT, WTs	2009	Advocate	1	LM1,2, 6-8,
	3 Survey the County Wildlife Sites in the AONB and prioritise their management to support 75% being in favourable condition.	WTs	Owners, EN, RDS, RSPB, GCT, ECCP	2009	Advocate	2	LM9
OBJECTIVE 7 To secure the continuation of existing / establishment of new major species and habitat conservation projects.	1 Secure funding to build on the RSPB's pilot Working With Waders Project.	RSPB	EN, CA	By 2004	Advocate	2	LM8
	2 Secure funding to continue the Black Grouse Recovery Project	GCT	EN, MA, CA, RSPB, MoD, NWater	By 2006-09	Advocate	2	LM8
	3 Support opportunities for securing extensions to existing nature reserves such as that at Geltsdale.	RSPB	EN, CA, WTs, (NPAP)	Ongoing	Advocate	3	LM8
	4 Maintain predator control where it aids the conservation of characteristic North Pennine species such as black grouse and wader species. and act to eradicate such illegal activity as still persists.	Estates	MA, MGA, RSPB, GCT, EN, RDS	Ongoing	Advocate	1	LM1

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
OBJECTIVE 8 To promote the conservation of ancient woodland.	1 Use the landuse planning process and agri-environment / woodland grant schemes to ensure no further loss of, and best management practice in, ancient woodland.	FC	LAs, Owners, EN, NPAP, ECCP	Ongoing	Advocate	1	LM6
	2 Convert plantations on ancient woodland sites to native species, using locally sourced seed / stock.	FC	Owners EN / CA / NPAP / ECCP	Ongoing	Advocate	1	LM6
	3 Support measures for fencing ancient woodland through grant schemes	FC	RDS, NPAP, EN	Ongoing	Executive	1	LM6
OBJECTIVE 9 To expand and link existing native woodlands and create 400 hectares of new native woodland by 2009.	1 Identify, on a landscape scale, the ideal sites for new woodland and increase the planting incentives available in these locations.	FC	NPAP, Owners, CA, EN, CWF	2005 onwards	Executive	1	LM6
	2 Secure funding for woodland management and creation through the AONB Partnership's bid to HLF's 'Landscape Partnership Scheme'	NPAP	FC, Owners	2005	Executive	1	LM6, 11
	3 If successful, seek funding to extend the AONB Woodland Advisor post beyond its initial three years.	NPAP	FC / CA	2006 - 2009	Executive	1	LM6, 11
	4 Establish / deliver a new woodland creation and management grant targeted at the AONB	FC	NPAP, RDS, GCT, FWAG, EN, Owners,	2005	Catalyst then Executive	3	LM 2, 6, 11
	5 Encourage the uptake of existing schemes such as Woodland Grant Scheme, ensuring that they are adequately resourced	FC	RDS, CW	Ongoing	Advocate	1	LM6, 11
OBJECTIVE 10 To improve the biodiversity of enclosed grasslands (including hay meadows, rushy pastures and allotments) and create a series of new 'conservation' grasslands to link isolated sites.	1 Establish new incentives for hay meadow management and creation.	RDS	EN, Owners	2006	Advocate	2	LM2, 8
	2 Institute a monitoring process for North Pennine hay meadows	EN	RDS, Owners, RSPB, WT's	2005	Advocate	1	LM9
	3 Seek the removal from agri-environment schemes of the allowance for mechanical operations during the nesting season.	RDS	Owners	Ongoing	Advocate	1	LM2
	4 Establish a project aimed at conserving, enhancing, promoting and creating hay meadows in the AONB.	NPAP	RDS, EN, RSPB, CA, GCT, Uni's, landowners, tenants	2006	Executive	3	LM8, 11

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
OBJECTIVE 11 To provide support for moorland management which conserves natural beauty	1 Establish Moorland Advisor post with GCT as part of AONB Partnership's HLF bid. This post to support and promote moorland management which enhances biodiversity and supports the local economy.	NPAP	GCT, MGA, MA, EN, WTs, LAs, ECCP, CA, RSPB, Owners	2005-8	Executive	1	LM1, 8,
	2 Establish a partnership project which promotes to the public the role played by moorland management in conserving natural beauty in the AONB	NPAP	GCT, MGA, MA, EN, WTs, LAs, ECCP, CA, RSPB, Owners	2005 – 2009	Catalyst	2	LM1, 8, SW3
	3 Establish a demonstration moor, which showcases best practice in moorland management for shooting and conservation.	GCT	BASC, MA, MGA, EN, RSPB, NPAP, Owners	2007	Catalyst	3	LM1, 8,
OBJECTIVE 12 To ensure an increase in the biodiversity of rivers and riparian land.	1 Deliver the instream and riparian conservation elements of the AONB Partnership's HLF bid.	NPAP	NRF, EA, EN, Owners	2005-8	Executive	2	LM7
	2 Establish a project to deliver integrated catchment conservation plans, training programmes and to undertake at least 5 projects per year.	NRF	NPAP, CA, EA, Owners, EN, ECCP, WTs, GCT, RSPB, ERT	2004 – 2007	Catalyst	2	LM7, 11
	3 Undertake a catchment-wide review of the impact on water quality of pollutants from the farmed landscape and act on the findings.	EA	RDS, EN	2005	Advocate	2	LM9
	4 Target riparian land with the higher-tier agri environment scheme and Wildlife Enhancement Scheme.	RDS	EN, EA	Ongoing	Advocate	1	LM2
OBJECTIVE 13 To identify, prioritise, conserve and interpret the key sites of earth heritage interest in the AONB.	1 Implement the North Pennines Geodiversity Action Plan, producing a rolling five year action plan.	BGS	NPAP, EN, RIGs Groups, DEFRA, WTs, LAs, CA, ECCP, NPHT, Owners, EGN	2004 – 2009	Executive	1	LM8
	2 Establish a Geodiversity and Geotourism Project to support GAP delivery	NPAP	BGS, EN, RIGs Groups, DEFRA, WTs, LAs, CA, ECCP, Owners, EGN	2004 – 2008	Executive	3	LM8, TC TC6

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
OBJECTIVE 14 To establish, monitor and review a major new 'minimal - intervention' trial site in the AONB.	1 Identify a suitable area and implement a large scale minimal - intervention regime.	EN	Estates, WTs, NPAP, RSPB, CA, RDS, MA, FWAG, Owners	2007	Catalyst	3	LM1, 6, 8, 10
OBJECTIVE 15 To retain and restore features such as drystone walls, isolated non-domestic structures and isolated trees, where appropriate, which contribute to the character of the local landscape.	1 Proactively target Agri-environment schemes and other grant aid at features such as walls and non-domestic structures.	RDS	EH, CA, Owners, RDAs	Ongoing	Advocate	1	LM2
	2 Following a survey of isolated non-domestic structures (field barns, mine shops, powder houses etc), apply criteria which allows for those in greatest need of conservation to be identified and grant aid to be targeted effectively.	NPAP	EH, RDS, CA, Owners, RDAs, LAs	By 2006	Catalyst	1	LM8, 9
	3 Conserve in the landscape isolated individual trees, small groups, and veteran trees. Local authorities to consider placing Tree Preservation Orders on prominent trees in the landscape.	Owners	LAs, EN, FC	Ongoing	Advocate	1	LM1
OBJECTIVE 16 To ensure increased research and survey of the historic environment and identify priorities for action	1 Complete a survey of the condition and value of listed structures and historic landscapes, including chapels, defensible structures, drystone walls and agricultural buildings.	NPAP	EH, NPHT, LA, Contractors, Local Groups	2005	Catalyst	1	LM8, 9
	2 Complete a detailed survey of the condition and importance of unlisted vernacular buildings and structures in the North Pennines	NPAP	EH, LAs, NEVAG	2006	Catalyst	1	LM8, 9
	3 Produce costed, prioritised programmes of action arising out of each survey and raise funds to implement findings	NPAP	EH, LA, EH, Owners	Ongoing	Executive	1	LM8, 9, 11
	4 Hold an annual 'Historic Environment Forum' to promote new projects, exchange of information and to showcase good practice.	NPAP	EH, NPHT, LAs, Local Groups	Annual from 2006	Executive	3	LM10, SW3
	5 Establish a survey programme for major estates to inform future management.	NPAP	Estates, EH, RDS, NPHT	1 per year from 2005	Catalyst	2	LM1, 9

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
OBJECTIVE 17 To establish and develop a programme of repair for historic structures within the North Pennines.	1 Establish and maintain a prioritised register of Buildings at Risk in the North Pennines (the register will include all buildings of historic, archaeological and architectural significance not just those with listed or scheduled status).	EH	LA, NPHT, NPAP	2004 onwards	Catalyst	2	LM9
	2 Develop a strategy for the repair and conservation of structures identified on the Buildings at Risk register including the sourcing of funding and the preparation of repair specifications.	EH,	LA, NPHT, NPAP	2004	Catalyst	1	LM8
	3 Seek funding for a project which specifically targets the conservation / restoration of the structures prioritised in the AONB Partnership's 'Lead Mining Strategy' document.	NPAP	LA, EH, NPHT, Owners	2004 onwards	Executive	1	LM8, 1
	4 Actively pursue all opportunities to remove at least 6 structures from the Buildings at Risk register each year.	NPAP	LA, EH, NPHT, Owners	30 by 2009	Catalyst	1	LM8
OBJECTIVE 18 To increase the range and quality of data available to support the conservation of the natural and historic environment.	1 Enhance the County Sites and Monuments Records and devise a method of improving access and the sharing of data.	LA	EH	2005	Advocate	1	LM9
	2 Establish a methodology for the sharing of information between different conservation disciplines, notably nature conservation and archaeology.	NPAP	EH, LA, EN, Wildlife Trusts, RDS	2005	Catalyst	1	LM9
	3 Produce a GIS based habitat and species distribution map for the AONB, capable of interrogation by local organisations.	NPAP	EN, LAs, FC, CA, RDS, EA	2006	Catalyst	3	LM9
	4 Support the developing proposals for a regional environmental records centre for the North East, which incorporates data from the Cumbrian North Pennines.	LAs	EN, WTs, NPAP	2007	Advocate	1	LM9
	5 Establish an agreed set of biodiversity indicators for the AONB.	NPAP	EN, WTs, LAs, ECCP, RDS, EA	2004	Executive	2	LM9

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
OBJECTIVE 19 To increase, through specific initiatives, public and landowner understanding of sustainable land management which maintains and enhances biodiversity.	1 Establish new farms walks and farm open events throughout the AONB, showcasing good practice	NPAP	Owners, RDS, RSPB, EN, CA, GCT, FWAG	Programme established from 04/05	Catalyst	1	LM10, CA5, TC6
	2 Promote the importance of responsible game management in conserving the full range of key species in the AONB and establish a 'good environmental practice accord' for local Estates	NPAP	Estates, CLA, MA, MGA, GCT, RDS, RSPB, EN, CA,	Ongoing / 2006	Executive	2	LMI, 10
	3 Establish a project linking schools from urban areas with estates in the AONB, raising awareness of the role estate management plays in nature conservation and supporting the local economy	NPAP	Estates, MA, MGA, GCT	2005	Executive	2	LMI, 10
OBJECTIVE 20 To ensure, through the development of specific initiatives, that open access does not adversely affect the area's biodiversity.	1 Develop a Code of Practice for open access in the AONB, with guidance on avoiding wildlife disturbance and accidental fire damage.	LAFs	NPAP, CA, LAFs, EN, LAs, MA	2005	Executive	1	CA3, LM12
	2 Consider the establishment of a Fire Advisory Panel for the AONB, similar to those operating in upland National Parks.	NPAP	CCs, LAFs, MA, MGA, , CA, EN, GCT	2004	Catalyst	1	LM12
OBJECTIVE 21 To increase the capacity of local communities to support the conservation of local character, biodiversity and the historic environment.	1 Promote the production of Parish Plans and Village Design Statements.	CA	NPAP, LAs, PCs, Dev. Trusts	Ongoing	Executive	2	SCI-2, LP4
	2 Maintain the NPAP small grant scheme beyond its current projected lifespan.	NPAP	CA, LAs, Leader+	2007 – 2009	Executive	2	SCI-2, LMI1
	3 Establish a training programme to enable local communities and groups to record and monitor the historic and natural environment of the AONB.	NPAP	EH, EN, CA, WTs, NPHT, LAs, Contractors, PCs, Local Groups,	At least one themed programme annually from 2004	Catalyst	1	LM5, 9, SCI-2
	4 Through the provision of advice, in kind support and funding, support the establishment of at least 6 community led historic environment or natural environment projects per year.	NPAP	EH, NPHT, LA, Local Groups	From 2004	Catalyst	1	LM8, SCI-2

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
OBJECTIVE 22 To promote the principles of sustainable building in the AONB.	1 Disseminate existing information on the principles of sustainable building (e.g. Durham County Council's 'Building in Sustainability') and produce new guidance where required.	LAs	Developers	Ongoing	Advocate	1	NR1
	2 Incorporate the principles of sustainable building in any review of AONB design guidance.	NPAP	LAs	As required	Executive	3	NR1
OBJECTIVE 23 Promote a 25% increase in use of the Green Audit Kit by tourism business in the AONB.	1 Undertake survey to ascertain current level of use of the Green Audit Kit by tourism businesses in the North Pennines AONB.	Tourist Boards	Businesses, NPAP, CA, LAs	2004	Advocate	2	NR2
	2 Undertake promotional activity to support uptake of the Green Audit Kit	Tourist Boards	Businesses, NPAP, CA	By 2005	Advocate	2	NR2
OBJECTIVE 24 To ensure that sensitively sited and designed affordable housing is available in the AONB to support the life of communities and by extension the conservation of the landscape, wildlife and historic features.	1 Subject to an assessment of demand, Local Plan policies should take account of the need for affordable housing, ensuring that development is of an appropriate nature and scale and complies with other national, regional and local planning guidance which protects the character of the AONB. Increases in provision should at least meet local plan targets.	LAs	Housing Associations, Developers, Rural Housing Enablers	Ongoing	Advocate	1	AH1-2 LP2-4, 6
OBJECTIVE 25 To ensure that roads and their associated features such as lighting and signage do not detract from rural character or the conservation of biodiversity.	1 Implement the AONB Partnership's Guidance Document on the 'Management and Maintenance of Roads in the AONB'.	CCs	NPAP, DCs, PCs, Utilities	Ongoing	Catalyst	1	LM2 TC5, TT1-4
OBJECTIVE 26 To support improvements in integrated public and community transport.	1 Establish new demand responsive transport projects throughout the AONB.	RTPs	CA, Local groups, NPAP, LAs, transport operators	At least 2 in each county by 2009	Advocate	1	TT5-9
	2 Integrate the public transport with the rights of way network, including providing support for special services, e.g. cycle racks on buses and trains, community transport services, demand responsive systems etc.	RTPs	NPAP, CA, LAs, transport operators	1 new project each year	Executive / Catalyst	1	TT5-9, CA5

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
OBJECTIVE 26 cont...	3 Encourage use of public transport by ensuring that public transport information is a feature of all publicly funded interpretation on the AONB.	All		Ongoing	Catalyst	1	TT5-9, CA5
	4 Support efforts for the return of the Weardale Railway.	Weardale Railway Company	LAs, ONE, CA	Full service by 2008	Advocate	1	TT8
OBJECTIVE 27 To ensure that local, regional and national strategies, plans and policies take account of the AONB designation and the role of the AONB Partnership.	1 The AONB Partnership Staff Unit to comment on all relevant documents and proposals on their impact on the purpose of AONB designation	NPAP	LAs, Community Partnerships, Strategic Partnerships, Rural Affairs for a etc.	Ongoing	Executive	1	IA1-3
	2 The AONB Partnership Staff Unit should be represented on appropriate local, regional and national bodies to further the interests of the AONB and support the purpose of designation.	NPAP	LAs, Community Partnerships, Strategic Partnerships, Rural Affairs for a etc. NAAONB	Ongoing	Executive	1	IA1-3
	3 The AONB Partnership / Staff Unit should continue to play an active role in the work of the National Association for AONBs / AONB Staff Forum at regional and national level.	NPAP	NAAONB / AONB Staff Forum	Ongoing	Executive	1	IA1-3
OBJECTIVE 28 At least 70% of the Rights of Way Network should be easy to use by all legitimate users (as defined by BVPI).	1 Local Highway Authorities to manage the network to a consistently high standard across the AONB, integrating with other aspects of access management and focussing effort on the AONB via the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RWIP).	CCs	User Groups, NPAP	Ongoing	Advocate	1	CA1-5
	2 Install appropriate signposting and waymarking on 100% of the PRoW network in the AONB.	CCs	Owners / tenants	Ongoing	Advocate	1	CA1
	3 Carry out regular sample survey of condition in line with BVPI requirement, adapted to suit AONB needs and providing information for managers.	NPAP	CCs	Annual	Executive	2	CA1
	4 Landowners should avoid unlawful obstruction of and damage to rights of way and ensure adequate maintenance of gates and stiles, with the support of Highway Authorities.	Owners /tenants	CCs	Ongoing	Advocate	1	CA1

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
OBJECTIVE 28 cont...	5 Pilot and use where appropriate environmentally sustainable techniques for path surfacing and drainage, especially on moorland paths (e.g. soil reversal), taking full account of conservation interests	CCs	Owners / tenants	Ongoing	Advocate	2	CA1
	6 Using websites and other media, establish a system to improve availability of information on status and location of routes (i.e. Definitive Map) and on their condition and suitability (especially in relation to paths with limitations e.g. bank erosion).	CCs	NPAP, ECCP, LAFs	In operation by 2006	Catalyst	3	SW3
OBJECTIVE 29 All routes for which a publicly funded leaflet exists should be well maintained, open and accessible to all legitimate users.	1 Establish a system of quality control and annual condition monitoring for all recreational routes (except National Trails) in the AONB, and promote those that meet the agreed standards.	NPAP	CCs, ECCP, User Groups, CA	In operation by 2006	Executive	1	CA1
	2 Highway Authorities to reflect, through the RIP mechanism, the importance of recreational routes to the AONB and to allocate resources for their management.	CCs	LAFs, NPAP, ECCP	Ongoing	Advocate	1	CA1
	3 Ensure regular liaison with National Trail managers and request information on their own monitoring and auditing of Trail condition, usage and maintenance, to allow other organisations to promote the National Trails with confidence.	NPAP	CCs, ECCP, CA,	Ongoing	Catalyst	2	CA1, TC6
	4 Encourage those producing privately published material on walks to consult with the highway authority before publication.	LAs	NPAP, ECCP, Guide producers	Ongoing	Catalyst	3	CA1, 5 SW1-3
OBJECTIVE 30 All 'Access Land' should be accessible from a public highway and information about restrictions should be easily available.	1 Ensure a range of provision of information for the public on opportunities for access to open country under the CROW Act (2000), including restrictions.	CA	CCs, LAFs	On enactment	Advocate	1	LM12, CA3, SW3
	2 Identify, prioritise and deliver works necessary to create access to open areas, including permissive paths, new structures (gates, stiles, bridges etc)	CCs	LAFs, CA, User Groups, Landowners	On enactment	Advocate	1	CA3

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
OBJECTIVE 31 To develop specific measures to minimise the impact of recreational off-road driving and motorcycling on the landscape and people's quiet enjoyment of the countryside.	1 A system of monitoring of routes used (legally and illegally) by off-road enthusiasts should be initiated and condition reports to be regularly assessed.	NPAP	User Groups, CCs, LAFs, local groups	By 2005	Catalyst	2	CA4
	2 The AONB should not be promoted as a venue for recreational off-road use.	All		Ongoing	Advocate	1	CA4
	3 Work with user groups to establish a voluntary code of conduct, learning from best practice elsewhere.	NPAP	User Groups, CCs	2005	Catalyst	2	CA4
	4 Traffic Regulation Orders should be used to manage damaging impacts on the special features of the AONB. These should be considered on a case by case basis, and may use weight restrictions and seasonal restrictions as well as permanent exclusion of vehicles.	CCs	User Groups	Ongoing	Advocate	1	CA4
	5 Effort should be made to encourage the police to take a more robust and proactive approach to policing the illegal use of motorised off road vehicles.	CCs	Police	Ongoing	Advocate	1	CA4
OBJECTIVE 32 To increase participation in cycling, walking, riding, wildlife-watching, 'geotourism' and cultural tourism in the AONB.	1 Emphasise sustainable tourism products including cycling, walking, wildlife-watching, geotourism and built/social history products as Unique Selling Points in all marketing activities.	Tourist Boards	NPAP, LAs, TCs	2007	Advocate	1	TC6
	2 Develop nature based tourism projects (including the extension of the AONB Partnership's Wake up to Wildlife' project and a series of themed short breaks) as partnerships between accommodation providers and local conservation organisations.	NPAP	Accom. Provs, ONE, NWDA, RDS, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, CA, EN, GCT	5 exemplar projects by 2009	Executive	1	TC1-2, 6
	3 Develop new walking products (including a North Pennines Circular Walk and linear walks linked to public transport) and enhance existing ones such as 'Roof of England Walks'.	NPAP	LAs, ECCP, User Groups, Landowners	1 per year / Annual	Executive	2	CA5, TC1-2, 6
	4 Re-establish a North Pennines Festival	NPAP	LAs, Tourist Boards, AMBA, CA, RDAs.	2005	Catalyst	3	TC6-7
	5 Support the annual North Pennines AONB Storytelling Festival	NPAWG	LAs, CA	Annual	Advocate	1	TC6
	6 Produce material and events promoting the special cultural and artistic associations of the AONB, such as those of Dickens, Auden and Turner.	NPAP	LAs, Local Groups, Tourist Boards, CA, NPHT, NPAWG	One publication or event per year from 2004	Executive	2	TC6

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
OBJECTIVE 32 cont...	7 Develop a geotourism project for the AONB, building on the European Geopark branding.	NPAP	BGS, EN, Local Geology Groups	2004	Executive	2	LM8, TC6
	8 Implement the NE England cycling tourism strategy (which includes Cumbrian North Pennines), through measures including the integration of cycle routes with public transport connections, improving infrastructure at accommodation and attractions, improving route information, producing a 'cyclists welcome' pack and providing training for those receiving cycling visitors.	Sustrans,	CA, NTB, CTB, ETC, LAs, NPAP, ECCP, User Groups, ONE, Accom. providers	5 exemplar projects by 2009	All	1	TT7, CA1, TCI-2, 4-6
	9 Implement and promote the Pennine Bridleway northern extension as a means of attracting horse-riding and cycling tourists to stay in the North Pennines for longer, and creating linking routes to connect the Pennine Bridleway with local service centres based on the AONB Partnership's proposed Pack Horse Trails project.	CA	All	Ongoing	Advocate	2	TC1-2, 4-6, 8
OBJECTIVE 33 To increase the quality and breadth of accommodation types.	1 Promote the opportunities available through the England Rural Development Programme to upgrade accommodation.	RDS	Tourist Boards, NPAP, LSPs	Ongoing	Advocate	1	LM2, 4, TCI-3, 8
	2 Promote local authority and other accommodation enhancement schemes such as Durham CC's Tourism Enhancement Scheme, Cumbria Farm Tourism Initiative	LAs	Tourist Boards, NPAP, LSPs	Ongoing	Advocate	3	LM2, 4, TCI-3, 8
	3 Promote the establishment and uptake of cyclist, walker and horse rider-friendly schemes	NPAP	Sustrans, LAs, CA, Tourist Boards, Accom. Provs.	Established schemes by 2006	Catalyst	3	TC8
OBJECTIVE 34 Increase, through the establishment of training, marketing and funding support mechanisms, the capacity of communities and businesses to generate income from tourism activities compatible with the nationally important AONB landscape.	1 Work with tourism businesses and others to support the establishment and marketing operations of up to four private sector tourism clusters, the work of which should be complementary to the purpose of AONB designation.	NRF	NPAP, TPUK, CA, Tourist Boards, LAs	2004 and ongoing	Executive	3	SCI-5, TCI-9
	2 Support community and small business tourism initiatives related to AONB purposes through grants, training and advice.	Tourist Boards	NPAP / LAs / CA / TPUK / LEADER / LSPs	Ongoing	All	2	SCI-5
	3 Support training for public and private sector tourism providers and other businesses on matters relating to the special qualities of the area, including wildlife, landscape, local history. Such training to follow the principles of the AONB Interpretation Strategy.	NPAP	Pennine Horizons, Tourist Boards, CA, Businesses, LSPs	2004 and ongoing	Executive	2	SCI-5, SW1-3, TC2, TC5

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
OBJECTIVE 35 To increase participation in, and the educational visits to the North Pennines AONB.	1 Identify the current participation in educational visits to the area.	LAs	Educational attractions inc. Field Studies Centres, Nenthead Killhope etc	2004	Advocate	1	EC1-3
	2 Identify the current provision of educational resource material relating the North Pennines.	LAs	Educational attractions inc. Field Studies Centres, Nenthead Killhope etc.	2004	Advocate	1	EC1-3
	3 Produce new material where gaps in provision are found.	As above		From 2004	Advocate	1	EC1-3
	4 Encourage collaborative working between providers by holding regular events to encourage sharing of ideas and information.	NPAP	Educational attractions inc. Field Studies Centres, Nenthead Killhope etc	2005 onwards	Catalyst	1	EC1-3
OBJECTIVE 36 To seek a 100% increase in people aware of the AONB designation for the North Pennines over the life of the plan, using the 2002 Visitor Survey as a baseline.	1 All printed material relating to the AONB should include the AONB logo and if space allows a brief description of the area and its special qualities	NPAP	All	Ongoing	Executive	2	SW1-3
	2 Ensure the continued production of North Pennines News, other publications and regular articles, promoting the special qualities of the area and the work of local organisations in conserving it.	NPAP	All	2 editions per year	Executive	2	SW1-3
	3 Provide support to local authorities and others to ensure that the AONB is accurately described and appropriately referred to in relevant publications, e.g. local authority holiday guides	NPAP	LAs, Accommodation providers	Ongoing	Executive	1	SW1-3
	4 Undertake AONB awareness re-survey either as part of other survey work or as a tailor-made project.	NPAP	All	2005	Executive	2	SW3
	5 The AONB Partnership's website should be regularly updated and its capacity as a 'virtual community network' enhanced.	NPAP	Local organisations and communities	Ongoing	Executive	1	SW3
	6 Promote the AONB at agricultural and other relevant shows.	NPAP	Show organisers	At least 3 per year	Executive	2	SW3

Objectives	Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB team role	Priority	Policy Link
OBJECTIVE 37 Environmental interpretation and information in the AONB should be easy to access, convey agreed key messages, follow consistent principles and be produced to the highest standards.	1 Undertake an audit of existing interpretation in the AONB	NPAP	All	2004	Executive	2	SW1
	2 Organisations involved in interpreting the AONB and its environment should follow the principles laid out in the North Pennines AONB Partnership's Interpretation Strategy.	NPAP	All	Ongoing	Advocate	1	SW1-2
	3 Review the Interpretation Strategy every 3 years	NPAP	All	2006 / 2009	Executive	1	SW1
	4 Standardise the AONB gateway signs and replace them as required.	NPAP	LAs, CA	2005 and ongoing	Catalyst	2	SW1
	5 A range of partners should ensure a programme of regular guided walks and events which promote understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB.	NPAP	LAs, ECCP, Local Groups, WTs, EN	At least 50 such events per year	Executive / Catalyst	1	LM10, CA5, SW1-2
	6 The AONB partnership should support all organisations producing information and interpretation about the AONB to send accurate messages about the designation, the area and it's special qualities.	NPAP	All	Ongoing	Executive	1	SW1-3
	7 Opportunities should be sought and projects developed to increase the quality of information on where to go, where to stay, what to do and how to travel around the AONB. New ways should be found to provide this information, particularly where they involve increased participation of local communities, accommodation providers etc.	NPAP	LAs, CA, Community Groups, Accommodation Providers	At least 1 new project per year	All	1	SW3

This document has been produced by the Staff Unit of the North Pennines AONB Partnership. It has been supported in this work by a Management Plan Review Group composed of staff from: Durham, Cumbria and Northumberland County Councils and Teesdale and Eden District Councils, the Countryside Agency, English Nature, English Heritage, East Cumbria Countryside Project, ONE NorthEast, Northumbria Tourist Board, RSPB, Durham Biodiversity Partnership, North Pennines LEADER +, Northumberland Rural Community Council.

Additional comments or contributions have been received from:

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