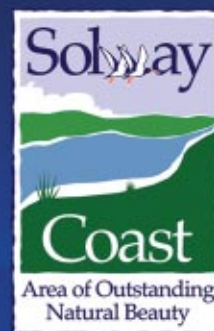


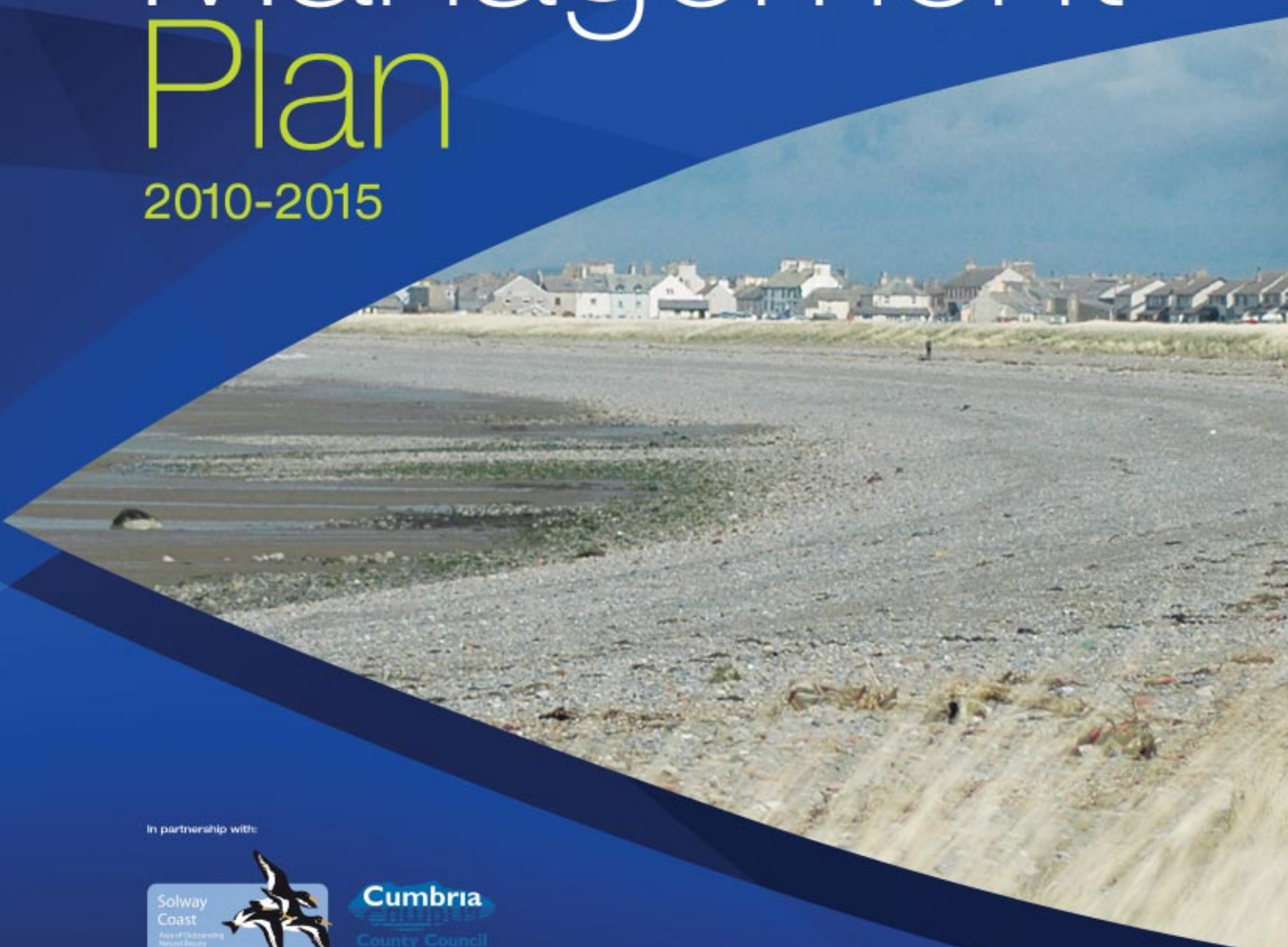
A Shared Responsibility
for a Very Special Place



The Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Management Plan

2010-2015



In partnership with:



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William (Bill) Jefferson
OBE, Chairman

Foreword

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

It is a fine vision, and it will take more than words to get there but we now have the road map and I must pay tribute to all our friends and partners, to officers and volunteers and to all of you who attended meetings and returned questionnaires, and specifically to the Staff Unit for all their energy and dedication which has gone into the preparation of this statutory Management Plan for our Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The collective wisdom of a multi talented Joint Advisory Committee should ensure that this comprehensive framework for action provides each one of us with the means, the direction and the inspiration to play a realistic part in making this vision a reality. We have a shared responsibility for the future of this very special place.

Bill Jefferson OBE

Geographical Context

Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of 49 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is the only AONB that is fully within Cumbria, it lies in a narrow linear strip along the Solway Firth coastline between Carlisle in the east and Maryport in the west and it covers an area of 115 sq km.

Review Context

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) strengthened previous legislation (1949) making further provision for the protection and enhancement of AONBs. It requires Local

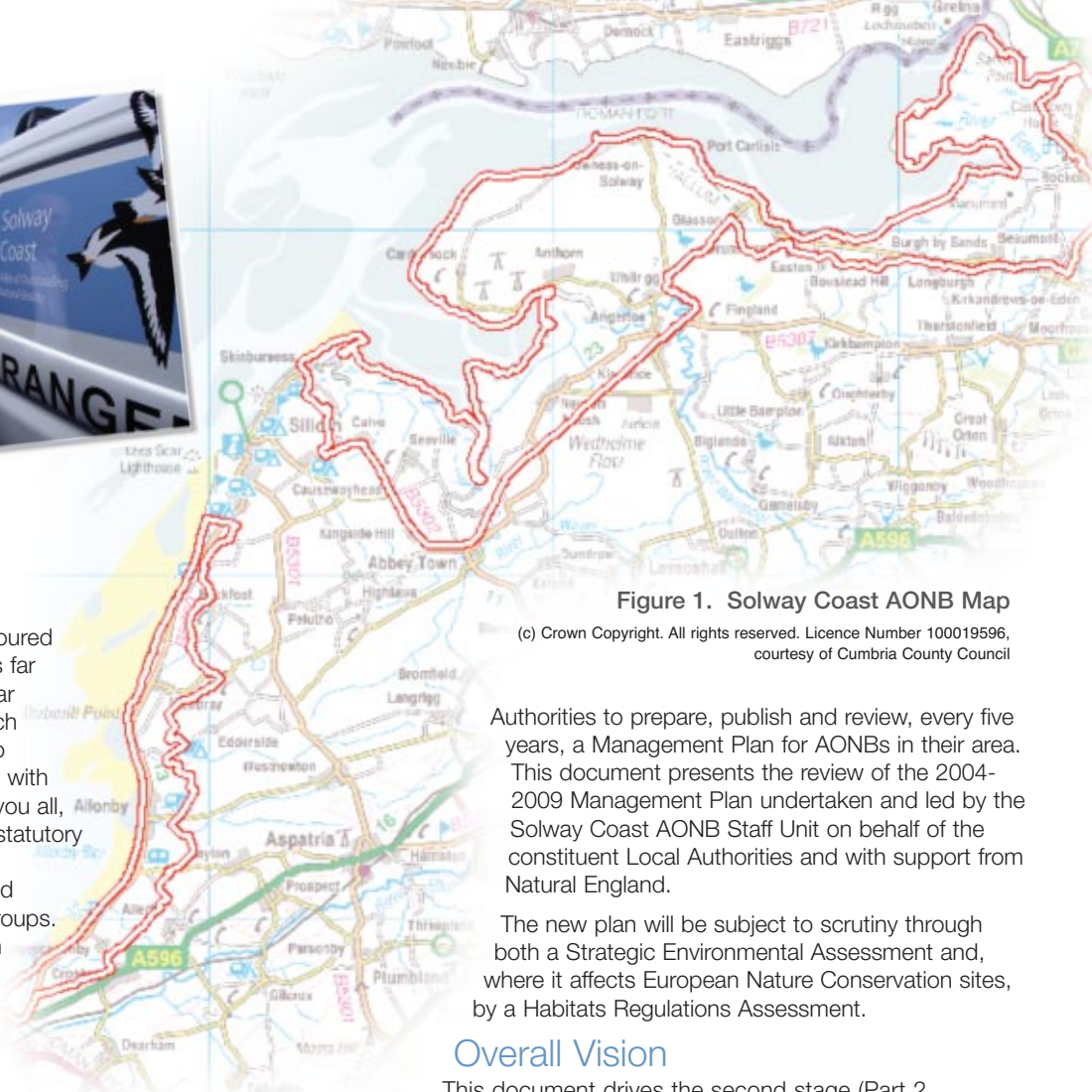


Figure 1. Solway Coast AONB Map

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Authorities to prepare, publish and review, every five years, a Management Plan for AONBs in their area. This document presents the review of the 2004-2009 Management Plan undertaken and led by the Solway Coast AONB Staff Unit on behalf of the constituent Local Authorities and with support from Natural England.

The new plan will be subject to scrutiny through both a Strategic Environmental Assessment and, where it affects European Nature Conservation sites, by a Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Overall Vision

This document drives the second stage (Part 2, 2009 -2014) in the delivery of a 30 year vision for the future restoration and prosperity of the Solway Coast AONB. That vision was signed up to by the AONB Partnership in 2004. The vision is confirmed by the AONB Partnership in this document taking our joint commitment to 2014.

The Solway Coast AONB through active conservation and enhancement, is an exemplar of well planned and implemented sustainable development. The wild and remote parts of the coastline are protected and enhanced to include open marshes, wetlands and dune areas. Traditional boundaries form a complex mosaic throughout the farming hinterland, reinforcing historic field patterns and supporting a sustainable farming economy. The area's wildlife is abundant and habitats have been developed to reflect changes in climate and the wild nature of the area. Marine protected areas across the Solway Firth support a balanced estuarine ecosystem. The natural beauty and abundant wildlife found throughout the area have established the Solway as the best eco destination in the north of Cumbria.

People living in and visiting the Solway understand, enjoy and help protect the area through a network of information and trails. People move around through a matrix of quiet lanes and routes by foot and on bikes. Traditional farmsteads and villages are complemented by new eco buildings. Together they support a range of sustainable businesses that draw on and complement the special resources available in the area. Local services and high quality IT infrastructure support a vibrant community. Small scale renewables that complement the area's special qualities are found throughout the area and the peatlands and mudflats provide a natural active carbon sink.

Part One

1.0 The Solway Coast AONB

1.1 An Introduction and Statement of Significance

1.1.1 The Solway Coast AONB contains a unique mosaic of coastal and pastoral landscapes set among a wide and low lying coastal plain and lying under the ever-changing drama of the dominant sky. The landscape is further enriched by the twice daily influence of the tide that in turn reveals the rich birdlife which use the estuary all year round.



1.1.2 The area is steeped in heritage from archaeological evidence of the Stone Age, through to Roman remains associated with Hadrian's Wall to the airfields of WWII. Today the area is home to 13,000 residents who both live and work within the landscape and help maintain its unique cultural identity.

1.1.3 The AONB lies on the southern edge of the Solway Firth, a large intertidal estuary, which also forms the border between England and Scotland. Designated in 1964, the area is relatively unchanged in character and covers 115 sq km following 59 km of coastline from the River Esk near Gretna and Carlisle to Maryport in west Cumbria.

1.1.4 The town of Silloth, with its surrounding industrial areas and golf course, sits at the heart of the AONB but is not designated and splits the AONB into two parts.

1.1.5 The AONB is the statutory responsibility of Allerdale Borough Council, Cumbria County Council and Carlisle City Council.

1.1.6 The Solway Coast contains many locally, nationally and internationally important features, some centring on landscape and others on wildlife and heritage. Many features are protected by designations and collectively they indicate the high value of the area and underpin the need to protect and enhance it for future generations. A list of landscape types and their significant features is produced in Section 1.3.3

1.1.7 The AONB contains areas of lowland raised mire which represent a significant proportion of the UK national resource.

1.1.8 Grazed saltmarshes are present in an unbroken



ribbon throughout the inner estuary area and, as such, are nationally important. They provide feeding and roosting areas for ducks, geese and swans that over-winter on the estuary in internationally important numbers. Part of the AONB's nationally rare natterjack toad population uses the saltmarshes.

1.1.9 An almost unbroken tract of sand dunes, much of it designated a SSSI, forms the coastal fringe of the western section of the AONB.

1.1.10 Agriculture is the dominant type of landuse. Pasture for dairy, beef and lamb production, both as grazing and grass silage, is the primary crop. Arable agriculture is confined to cereals with some rape and vegetables. Characteristic small fields with kested hedges sometimes associated with drainage ditches create a mosaic pattern in the landscape.

1.1.11 Settlement character is extremely varied from linear villages with space between dwellings, as at Burgh by Sands, to closely assembled and attached cottages and farms like those in Bowness on Solway. Some villages reflect their establishment or growth periods where their architecture can be attributed to styles; fine examples are the Georgian façade at Port Carlisle and Victorian buildings in Allonby. These contrast starkly with Anthorn village and its Ministry of Defence utilitarian style architecture. Building fabrics are both local and imported and create a non-uniform character within most settlements.

1.1.12 The area has a nationally significant archaeological and historical resource, arguably the most significant of which is the internationally designated Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. Other find-spots, features, buildings and clusters of sites are representative of Mesolithic and Neolithic settlement, the Bronze and Iron Ages, the Roman occupation and the Anglo-Scandinavian period followed by the Norman Conquest and its associated Monastic period, the Late Medieval, the Industrial Revolution and finally WWII and its airfields.



1.2 The AONB in its Local and Regional Setting
















Figure 2. Landscape Types

Source: Solway Coast Landscape Assessment

-  AONB Boundary
- Coastal Margin**
 -  Open sea & river channels
 -  Foreshore
 -  Salt Marsh
 -  Sand Dunes
 -  Cliff Features
- Agricultural Land**
 -  Improved Pasture & Arable Land
 -  Rough Grazing
- Mossland**
 -  Raised Peat Bog



Figure 3. North West Regional Context Map

-  Government Office Boundaries
-  County Boundaries
- National Trails**
 -  Hadrian's Wall Path
 -  Pennine Bridleway
 -  Pennine Way
 -  Heritage Coast: St. Bees
- AONB:**
 -  Arnside & Silverdale
 -  North Penines
 -  Solway Coast
 -  Forest of Bowland
- National Parks:**
 -  Lake District
 -  Peak District
 -  Yorkshire Dales
- Community Forests:**
 -  Red Rose Forest
 -  The Mersey Forest

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1.2.1 The North West of England Region consists of Cheshire, Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Cumbria and covers an area of 14,170 sq km. The region contains three National Parks - parts of the Yorkshire Dales and the Peak District and the whole of the Lake District make up this resource. Four AONBs are also represented comprising Forest of Bowland, Arnside and Silverdale and Solway Coast and a small part of North Pennines AONB which runs into Cumbria. Solway Coast AONB is completely in Cumbria and is around 15km from the northern boundary of the Lake District National Park. In total, protected landscapes cover 4,177 sq km or 29% of the region. Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site is contiguous with Solway Coast AONB as it straddles its east to west coast linear corridor. Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail stretches 15km into the eastern end of the AONB from Beaumont to Bowness on Solway where it begins/ends (see Figure 3).

1.2.2 The Solway Coast covers 115 sq km of the Cumbrian landscape and over 5% of the northwest regional coastline. It lies within the boundaries of three Local Authorities namely Allerdale Borough Council (88% of area), Cumbria County Council (100% of area) and Carlisle City Council (12% of area).

1.2.3 To the north lies Scotland, the international boundary existing as a set of map coordinates rather than a physical feature in the landscape.

1.3 Landscape Character

1.3.1 The character of the Solway Coast AONB is the product of physical, ecological and human influences. The landscape has a strong unity of character which is greatly influenced by the proximity of the sea, and yet has considerable variation within it which creates local diversity and distinctiveness. The landscape as a whole is characterised by coastal and estuarine features such as beaches, sand dunes, saltmarshes and low cliffs; contrasting agricultural land and moorland; the diversity of the flora and fauna; and the typical settlements and buildings.

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)

1.3.2 In 1995 the Countryside Commission published 'The Solway Coast Landscape' (CCP 478) on behalf of Solway Coast AONB. Although the document is almost 15 years old, much of its content is still relevant and still adequately fulfils its primary role as a descriptive assessment. The key characteristics and landscape types with their spatial relationships are described below.

1.3.3 In general, the most important landscape features of the area are as follows:

- Large flat expanses of coastal terrain
- The sky is a dominant feature
- Dynamic and large intertidal estuary
- Vast unbroken vistas across the estuary to Scotland
- Extensive areas of traditionally grazed saltmarsh
- Large but fragmented areas of lowland raised mire
- Long narrow linear tract of coastal sand dune and dune heath
- Large areas of exposed sand and mud with gravel

- storm ridges and sandy beaches
- Culture of dairy, beef and sheep farming on medium grade improved grassland
- Small hedge bound fields with sunken lanes and narrow roads
- Very scarce woodland cover
- Rich archaeological and historical heritage
- High levels of biodiversity associated with a wide range of intertidal, coastal and inland habitats
- Internationally important area for birdlife

Main Characteristics

1.3.4 Coastal Margin Landscapes – Location and Key Characteristics

Open sea and river channels



Location: Occurs throughout the coastal area, the eastern section has more channels and has finer deposits due to the low energy tidal regime characteristic of the inner estuary. The western section has open sea and is more characteristic of a traditional seaside landscape with high wave and tidal energy providing movement of larger sediments such as gravels.

- Low tide – extensive areas of exposed rippled sand flats and river channels, some overlain by rocky scour beds and reefs
- High tide - expanses of sea with a high sediment load (coloured brown)

Foreshore



- Exposed areas of pebble and gravel storm ridges, mud and sand flats, bedrock outcrops and boulder beds or scaurs

Saltmarshes



- Large areas of grazed grassland in defined vegetation zones due to the salt tolerance of the plant assemblages
- Domestic cattle and sheep graze the saltmarshes and provide ideal conditions for wintering wildfowl to graze
- The rare natterjack toad occurs on Anthorn Marsh and adjacent farmland
- Tidal creeks flood and drain the marsh and form a dendritic pattern; some are man made and linear and provide safe refuge for grazing stock
- Bridges made from stone and wood cross the larger creeks to provide access for grazing
- At the seaward edge the marshes erode by the characteristic chopping of turfs by wave action, or they accrete by sediment build up and subsequent plant colonisation
- At the landward edge of almost all of the marshes remnant medieval salt working lagoons can be found

Sand dunes



- Mobile dunes form at the interface of the vegetated shingle ridges by deposition of wind-blown sand
- Dune slacks contain some ephemeral freshwater ponds and pools
- Dune heath or heather dominated areas occur behind the mobile dunes where acid soil conditions prevail due to the underlying boulder clays
- Dune grasslands grow on the alkaline shelly sands and soils and contain a rich variety of herb species and orchids
- The rare natterjack toad is resident throughout the dune system

Cliff features



- Erosion by the sea creates a series of low soft sediment cliff features against the seaward edge of saltmarshes and sand dunes

1.3.5 Agricultural Landscapes – Location and Key Characteristics

Location: Occurs throughout the AONB behind the saltmarshes and sand dunes and surrounding the raised mires or mosses

Landuse



- Dominated by medium to low grade pasture used for winter fodder (silage) and summer grazing
- Some arable exists, notably for cereals such as barley, latterly, maize and rape has been introduced to the mix
- There is a strong influence from the underlying soils some of which are sandy and calcareous and others which are acid derived from boulder clays and associated acidic sands. Alluvial soils surround river estuaries and peaty soils occur where land has been won from mires
- Whilst not a significant feature in the landscape evidence exists for small fruit orchards associated with farmsteads

Field patterns

- Characteristic small to moderate sized fields bounded by hedges and sometimes associated open ditches



Field boundaries and Ditches



- Hedgerows are not species rich and are dominated by gorse, blackthorn and hawthorn
- Hedgerows are underpinned by characteristic mounds or kests some of which are protected from erosion by the use of local cobbles and boulders
- Some in-hedge standard trees exist
- Most hedges and trees have a characteristic ‘wind-throw’ due to the prevailing winds
- A mixture of hedgerow management techniques exist ranging from mechanical flail cutting to traditional North Cumberland Style hedge-laying
- The western sector has cobble walls, built from beach material, in general, and as they decay they are not being repaired
- Hedgerows and cobble walls are being lost to post and wire alternatives especially in the western sector of the AONB
- Ditch profiles vary with some maintained mechanically and some by hand; ditches both drain the land and provide tidal flood relief

Trees



- Woodland is restricted to river corridors and fringing birch around the raised mires
- Single trees can be found scattered around the AONB as ‘in-hedgerow’ standards. Most are large with little or no regeneration. Most occur in the eastern sector.
- A single beech avenue exists at Hartlaw
- Small woodland coverts exist on Castletown estate (near Rockcliffe) for shooting purposes

Gatestoops



- Traditional sandstone gate posts or ‘stoops’ occur throughout the AONB at field-gate thresholds and have a variety of surface finishes and pediment styles

1.3.6 Moss Landscapes – Location and Key Characteristics

Location: The Mosses or raised mires centre on the Cardurnock peninsula. Bowness Common and Glasson Moss cover an area of 1080ha in the western sector and Salta Moss covers around 46ha. Two other large areas of raised mire lie just outside of the AONB at Wedholme Flow and Drumburgh Moss.



Raised mire

- Large areas of rain-fed peatland with a shallow raised dome of peat up to 6.5m thick
- Characteristic vegetation cover reflects the low nutrient conditions on the bog surface
- Texture and colour contrasts with surrounding pasture fields
- Usually screened from view by fringing birch woodland
- Important for invertebrate fauna and acidic low nutrient flora
- Salta Moss is heath-like over most of its area due to desiccation caused by a lowering water table

1.3.7 Built Landscapes – Location and Key Characteristics

Location: The settlements within the AONB are strongly associated with the coastline and rivers. Where settlements do not conform to this pattern they are usually associated with major roads, disused canals and railways, farmsteads or Hadrian’s Wall.

Settlements



- Most of the larger settlements have a strong linear form either influenced by the coastline or an adjacent highway
- The settlements in the eastern section have clear seaward frontages with some development behind
- The establishment of villages is extremely varied from those with 12th Century origins to those developed through new ports and latterly by WWII airfields

Buildings



- There is a complex mixture of vernacular styles from fortified stone buildings to 'cruck' based structures
- Fortified farm houses or 'Bastles' are common in the Borders area and the AONB has one at Drumburgh
- Fortified churches can be seen at Burgh by Sands and Newton Arlosh
- Longhouses, clay dabbins and cruck roofed dwellings are scattered around the landscape
- The only large country estate at Castletown has an associated 'Hall' type dwelling
- Building materials are extremely diverse from shoreline cobbles to dressed stone, brick and clay. Many buildings, especially multi-phase farm settlements have a range of fabrics
- Roofs are usually covered in slate or sandstone pantile. Some reed thatch still survives
- Architectural influences are typical of the northwest coastal area where single storey longhouses hug the topography and the settlements tend to be two storeys with the upper floor as part of the roof apex and probably added at a later date
- The village of Port Carlisle has Georgian terraces, and is the product of investment into the port associated with the Carlisle canal; it is a peculiar and quirky feature in the area
- Allonby has some notable Victorian buildings and was developed during that period as a Spa-style resort
- Recent building styles have taken away much of the character of the villages with modern bungalows providing infill and boundary expansion

Roads, Footpaths and Waths



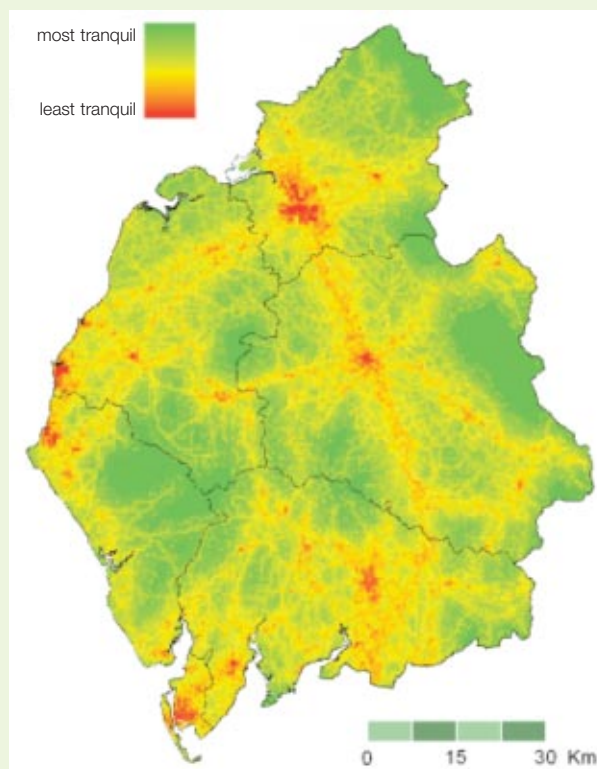
- Drove roads or sunken lanes with high hedge kests are common
- Extant, derelict and in-filled ponds occur along highways; most are within settlement boundaries

- Estuary crossing points known locally as 'Waths' are unmarked and shift with the movement of estuary sediments
- Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail, Hadrian's Cycle Route and the Cumbria Coastal Way all share the highways and byways of the AONB
- A large Public Rights of Way network criss-crosses the landscape many parts of which follow sunken lanes and field boundaries
- Open access areas include sand dunes, salt-marshes and raised mires

1.3.8 Tranquillity

- The AONB generally is mapped as a 'most tranquil' area with the level of tranquillity decreasing slightly in the southern area of the AONB along the coast from Silloth to Maryport. The impact of the roads on tranquillity is clearly seen. Increasing visitor numbers, increasing car use, improved access and changing recreational activities may lead to a decrease in tranquillity within the AONB.

Figure 4. Tranquillity Map of Cumbria



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1.3.9 Significant features

- Hadrian's Wall, contemporary defences of the Cumbrian coast, remains and earthworks (Mileforts and Vallum)
- Elizabethan Sea Dyke at Skinburness
- Salt extraction sites on saltmarshes and behind open beaches
- Carlisle canal
- Railway buildings, bridges and cuttings
- Ministry of Defence wireless array (15 masts) near Anthorn

1.3.10 Historic Landscape Characterisation

Historic Landscape Characterisation has taken place for Cumbria at a county wide scale. A range of historic landscape types have been defined and historic landscape character areas have been developed. The AONB forms part of the Solway Plain character area. This extends from the coast from near Carlisle to Crosscanonby and inland towards the A596. It also forms part of the Ellen and Marron Valley Character area south of Crosscanonby. More information can be found in the Guide to Cumbria Historic Landscape Characterisation Database for Cumbria’s Planning Authorities.

1.4 Purpose and Context

What is an AONB?

1.4.1 Our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are some of the finest landscape assets in the British Isles. This status is underpinned by a legislative framework for their protection and enhancement into the future.

1.4.2 The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 provided for the designation of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Following this initial legislation 60 years ago, AONBs have received piecemeal management and a range of management solutions driven by Local Authorities. In 2000 the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) created legislation for the better protection of AONBs. This new Act consolidates and strengthens the 1949 Act concerning AONBs, reaffirming the purpose of designation and confirming the powers of Local Authorities to take appropriate action to conserve or enhance the natural beauty of AONBs. The following are the objectives of the relevant sections of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 with regard to AONBs:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Section 82 | reaffirms the purpose of AONBs |
| Section 84 | confirms the powers of local authorities to take appropriate action to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of AONBs |
| Section 85 | places a duty on all public bodies and statutory undertakers to ‘have regard’ to the ‘purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty’ |
| Section 89 | creates a statutory responsibility for Local Authorities to prepare and publish and periodically review a plan which formulates their policy for the management of the area and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it |

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

The statement of purpose of AONB designation is:

‘To Conserve and Enhance Natural Beauty’

1.4.4 The natural outcome for the statement of purpose is to pursue its aims through a plan, a management plan. Therefore the primary driver for this document is the statement of purpose.

1.4.5 Having due regard for the purpose of AONB designation is a provision of the CRoW Act (2000), Section 85 places a duty of regard on all bodies undertaking work within AONBs. Therefore this Management Plan is a useful tool for public bodies to support AONB purposes.

Who is responsible for AONBs?

1.4.6 Local Authorities have the primary responsibility for the conservation and enhancement of AONBs. The duty under section 89 of the CRoW Act, to produce a plan giving policies for the management of the area, also falls on the Local Authorities for the area covered by the designation. Natural England with the three constituent local authorities, Allerdale Borough Council (ABC), Carlisle City Council (CaCC), and Cumbria County Council (CCC) provide both the foundation and the core funding to maintain the AONB Partnership through the provision of a Staff Unit and a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC). The Staff Unit has produced this Management Plan revision on behalf of the three local Authorities.

How is the AONB managed?

1.4.7 The JAC is made up of representatives of organisations with a particular interest in the area. They include Local Authorities, Parish Councils, Community Groups, Statutory Agencies and other public and voluntary sector organisations. The JAC was set up and constituted in 2002 and comprises 24 seats:

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Statutory Bodies | (2) |
| Natural England | |
| Environment Agency | |
| Local Government Elected Members | (6) |
| Cumbria County Council | (2) |
| Allerdale Borough Council | (3) |
| Carlisle City Council | (1) |
| Parish Council Representation | (4) |
| Groups | |
| West One | Oughterside & Allerby |
| West Two | Allonby |
| East One | Bowness on Solway |
| East Two | Burgh by Sands |
| Town Council Representation | (2) |
| Silloth | |
| Maryport | |
| Community | (4) |
| Port Carlisle Community Group | |
| Lakes Area of Ramblers | |
| Voluntary Action Cumbria | |
| Bowness on Solway Community Group | |
| Local Land Ownership & Management Issues | (4) |
| Country Landowners and Business Association | |
| Friends of the Lake District | |
| Senhouse Roman Museum | |
| Royal Society for the Protection of Birds | |
| Nominated (Non Voting) | (2) |
| Cumbria Tourism | |
| Solway Coast Volunteer Group | |

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

1.4.9 The Staff Unit comprises the AONB Manager (FT), Assistant AONB Manager (PT), Education Officer (PT), Community Volunteer Coordinator (PT) and Administrator (PT).

1.4.10 The Partnership is core funded through Natural England, Allerdale Borough Council, Cumbria County Council and Carlisle City Council. The AONB Partnership (JAC) is not a legally constituted body so cannot act in its own right on employment or financial matters. As a result, Allerdale Borough Council has a role as the 'Accountable Body' for the AONB Partnership. They provide financial management, employment facilities and accommodation on behalf of the AONB Partnership.

Who is this Plan for?

1.4.11 It is the Solway Coast AONB Partnership that will own, steer, and facilitate the implementation and review of this Management Plan. The wider partnership is inclusive of all stakeholders within the AONB and, as such, all have a say in its delivery. The plan will also inform, influence and integrate all partner/stakeholder activities in the AONB area with the ultimate goal of fulfilling the 'Vision'. It is the staff unit and the Joint Advisory Committee that will monitor progress and make the decisions about reaching the ultimate vision for the AONB.

Where does this Plan fit into the wider policy framework?

1.4.12 The context or relationship of this Plan to other strategies and plans is extremely important. The supporting documentation that underpins the Local Development Framework (LDF) provides the primary focus for the AONB Plan. This Plan will work as an informing document which will influence other plans but, and more importantly, it has taken full account of the many policies, objectives and aspirations of the wider framework.

1.4.13 International, national, regional and local plans have all influenced the Plan in some way and this makes it both relevant and alive and as aspirational as others.

1.4.14 The table (right) outlines the relevant local, regional and national strategies and plans which influence this Plan. A more comprehensive review can be found in The Environmental Report 2009.

1.5 Governance, Monitoring and Reporting

Governance

1.5.1 As described in section 1.4.7 the Solway Coast AONB JAC came into being in 2002 and its structure and membership has proven successful over the past 6 years. A number of small changes have been made to both the membership of the JAC and its constitution (working arrangements) over the years to enhance its role as a governance structure and maintain it as 'fit for purpose'.

Theme: Landscape & Natural Heritage

Strategy: The Solway Coast Landscape (Countryside Commission 1995) · Cumbria County Council Landscape Strategy (Cumbria CC) · UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP Partnerships) · Natural England Strategic Direction 2006-2009, Natural England, (2006)

Theme: Cultural and Built Heritage

Strategy: A Force for the Future (DCMS/DTLR), PPG15, PPG16, Circular 07/2009 · Protection of WHS Architectural Framework for NW England · White Paper Heritage Protection for the 21st Century, DCMS, (2007)

Theme: Landscape, Economy & Community, The Coast, Tourism, Transport, Access & Recreation

Strategy: North West Regional Rural Delivery Framework, (2006) · North West Regional Economic Strategy, (NWDA 2006) · 4 North West Regional Spatial Strategy (NWRA 2008) · The Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food – Facing the Future, Defra, (2002) · A Sea Change: A Marine Bill White Paper, (Defra 2007) · Rural Strategy, Defra (2004) · Cleaner coasts, healthier seas - working for a better marine environment · Our Strategy for 2005-2011, Environment Agency, (2005) · The North West Plan for Sport and Physical Activity 2004-2008, Sport England, (2004) · The Strategy for Tourism in England's Northwest 2003-2010 · Northwest Development Agency Revised 2007 · North West Wetlands Network, Final Report, Jacobs Baktie · (Environment Agency, English Nature), NWDA, 2006 · Allerdale Local Plan, Allerdale Borough Council (1999) CCP · Sustainable Cumbria – A Strategy for Growth and Progress for Cumbria, CSP (2004) · Cumbria Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Cumbria County Council, (2007) · Carlisle District Local Plan 2001-2016 (2008) · Cumbria Landscape Strategy, Cumbria County Council, 1998 · The Local Transport Plan for Cumbria 2006/07-2010/11, Cumbria County Council 2006 · NW Regional Spatial Strategy, September 2008 · Allerdale LDF, Core Strategy, Issues and Options, September 2006 · Allerdale Local Development Scheme (2008-2011) · Local Development Scheme for Carlisle (2008-2011)

Theme: Climate and Renewables, Environmental Management

Strategy: Spatial Implications of Climate Change, North West Regional Assembly, (2003) · Rising to the Challenge – A Climate Change Action Plan for England's Northwest 2007-09 (NWDA) · North West Sustainable Energy Strategy, NWRA, 2006 · Cleaner coasts, healthier seas - working for a better marine environment. · Our Strategy for 2005-2011, Environment Agency, (2005) · Cumbria Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document · Adopted Version, Cumbria County Council (2007) · The Eden and Esk Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy, Environment Agency, 2006 · The Derwent, West Cumbria and Duddon Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy, Environment Agency, April 2007 · Cumbria Climate Change Strategy, Draft for Consultation, Cumbria Strategic Partnership, 2007

1.5.2 The life of this Plan is five years and in that time change is inevitable whether on a small or large scale and the forces for change can be many and varied, from European and national legislation to changes in local partner priorities. Whatever the driver, the AONB Partnership must be flexible but must always concentrate on the successful delivery of the plan and, equally as important, to maintain the Partnership.

How will progress be measured?

1.5.3 The AONB Partnership has two priorities with regard to plan delivery progress and how it is measured. Actions driven by the plan must be monitored in the context of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) outputs and the subsequent success of the actions must be measured against the condition of the AONB.

To fulfil this need, we will:

- Assess progress and achievements made against the Action Plan Targets for the year
- Confirm Action Plan activities and targets for the year ahead whilst incorporating unfinished actions from the previous year
- Identify new areas of action based upon partner activities or new forces for change
- Keep the Action Plan under review over the coming five years

To monitor condition we will identify a range of indicators which can be used to establish a baseline and measure change. The nature of the AONB designation does not throw-up obvious indicators so proxies will be found covering the following subject matter:

- Countryside and landcover indicators
- Cultural and vernacular indicators
- Ecology and environmental indicators (purpose of designation)
- Socio-economic and quality of life indicators

The Annual Review document published by the AONB Partnership will describe measure and report on all priorities.

The AONB Partnership

1.5.4 Core funding is provided by Natural England and the three Local Authorities at a ratio of 75% to 25%. It covers the cost of running the AONB Staff Unit and delivery of the core functions stipulated by Natural England. The funding and governance arrangements are outlined in the current Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), updated in 2007. This will be replaced during 2010 by a new agreement outlining the new working arrangements between Natural England and the Local Authorities.

1.5.5 Natural England also provides a template of Partnership indicators to monitor the health of the AONB Partnership, which are reported on at the end of each year. These are attached at Appendix 7. These will also be updated in 2010.

1.5.6 An Annual report will be produced each year demonstrating the work of the Partnership in delivering the core functions and the Management Plan actions.

Project funding

1.5.7 Funding will be sought from a range of sources to fund delivery of actions identified in this Management Plan.



Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)

1.5.8 Natural England provides funding for a Sustainable Development Fund for the AONB. The SDF is a grant scheme managed by the AONB Unit. It supports innovative and sustainable projects that combine social, environmental and economic benefits to the AONB. The fund provides grants to organisations, businesses, community groups and individuals who wish to explore and develop projects that enhance, conserve and develop the environment, economy and way of life in the AONB.

1.5.9 Grants are available to Parish and community organisations, Parish Councils, charities, voluntary groups, Local Authorities, Government agencies and private businesses or individuals (with evidence of community support).

The Management Plan

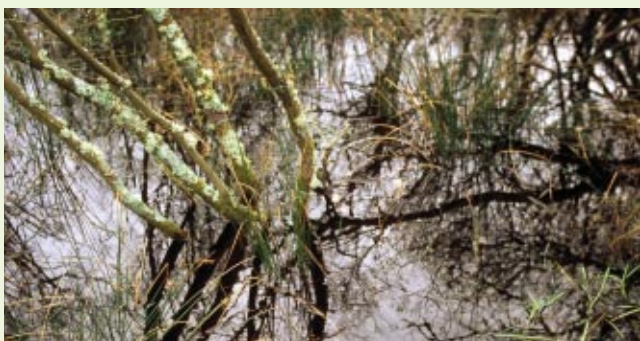
1.5.10 The measurement of success or otherwise regarding delivery of Management Plan objectives entails performance indicators once again. However, the measurement this time can be simple or complex. On the one hand delivery of a simple project such as the design and publication of a leaflet by the AONB Unit is in the hands of the Partnership. In this context both delivery and performance can be directly attributed to the AONB Partnership. Alternatively, a project supported by the AONB Unit such as a partnership approach to a common theme may be compromised in both delivery and performance by a member organisation. This situation cannot be directly attributable to the AONB Partnership.

1.5.11 To avoid any misunderstandings and to provide a SMART scoring system, the AONB Unit must identify the external threats to each of the actions and factor them in as part of the monitoring and reporting process. This approach is embedded in the Action Plan matrix in section three of this plan.

State of the AONB

1.5.12 In 2008, as part of the 2004-09 Management Plan Review, the AONB Partnership commissioned a State of the AONB Report. For the first time the AONB Unit has a 'baseline' data set from which it can measure change and monitor condition within a range of subject matter pertaining to the AONB. From the condition of SSSI, to the cost of housing, to visitor spend, to landuse, there is now information on which to inform progress in the conservation and enhancement of the AONB.

1.5.13 Almost all of the subject matter is contained within this Plan, however only part of it is directly influenced by the AONB Partnership.



Issues and Forces for Change

Issues and forces for change are covered in the next section where they drive our theme objectives and policies. The following considers issues and forces for change that may affect/influence the internal processes and functions of the AONB Partnership.

- Global economic recession will impinge on UK government funding priorities in the medium term (1-5 years)
- Local Authority funding may be affected by national government funding re-alignment
- Changes in local government service provision, 'joint working' and 'shared services' will affect the AONB Partnership
- Opportunities to extend the funding partnership, to ensure that rises in core costs can be met without compromising project and SDF delivery are possible, perhaps through 'shared services'
- The need to access additional project funding to allow delivery of actions in the Plan will mean that the AONB Unit will need to build on its current track record of successfully attracting additional funding
- The Management Plan delivery monitoring criteria and the reporting protocol will be subject to change and adjustments throughout the coming five years
- Setting up a Marine Agency will have implications for the AONB Partnership through accommodation of the new body

1.6 Management Plan Themes, Visions, Objectives and Actions

Themes

1.6.1 Nine overarching themes provide focus and understanding of the many issues and forces for change that are either influencing the AONB now or are likely to influence it over the next five years.

1.6.2 Change can be both negative and positive but will inevitably affect the future of the area. The next section of the Management Plan seeks to encapsulate related subject matter into themes that provide a process through which we identify our work over the coming five years. As a starting point the themes identified are as follows:

1. Landscape
2. Natural Heritage
3. Cultural and Built Heritage
4. The Coast
5. Environmental Management
6. Climate and Renewables
7. Tourism, Transport, Access and Recreation
8. Education and Awareness
9. Economy and Community

1.6.3 Each of the themes will be presented in the following way:

1. Vision statement
2. Scope of theme and evidence
3. Issues and forces for change
4. Objectives – what we want to achieve
5. Policies – the ways in which we plan to meet the objectives
6. Actions – the mechanisms to deliver the objectives
7. Progress – The ways we will report and measure progress in delivery of the objectives

Visions

1.6.4 Each of the themes begins with a vision statement that acts as a target or the ultimate goal we wish to achieve in 30 years' time. It is aspirational but is achievable through the successful delivery of this and subsequent

Management Plans.

Scope of theme and evidence

1.6.5 The scope of each theme is based on the number of subjects it combines or it takes account of the complexity or simplicity of single subjects under one theme heading.

1.6.6 The evidence base is derived from the 'State of the AONB' data which looks at a wide range of subject matter and encapsulates it into a series of categories.

1.6.7 The consultation process on this Plan provides another source of evidence as does the everyday process of AONB management and working closely with partner organisations, stakeholders and communities and understanding their needs and aspirations.

Issues and Forces for Change

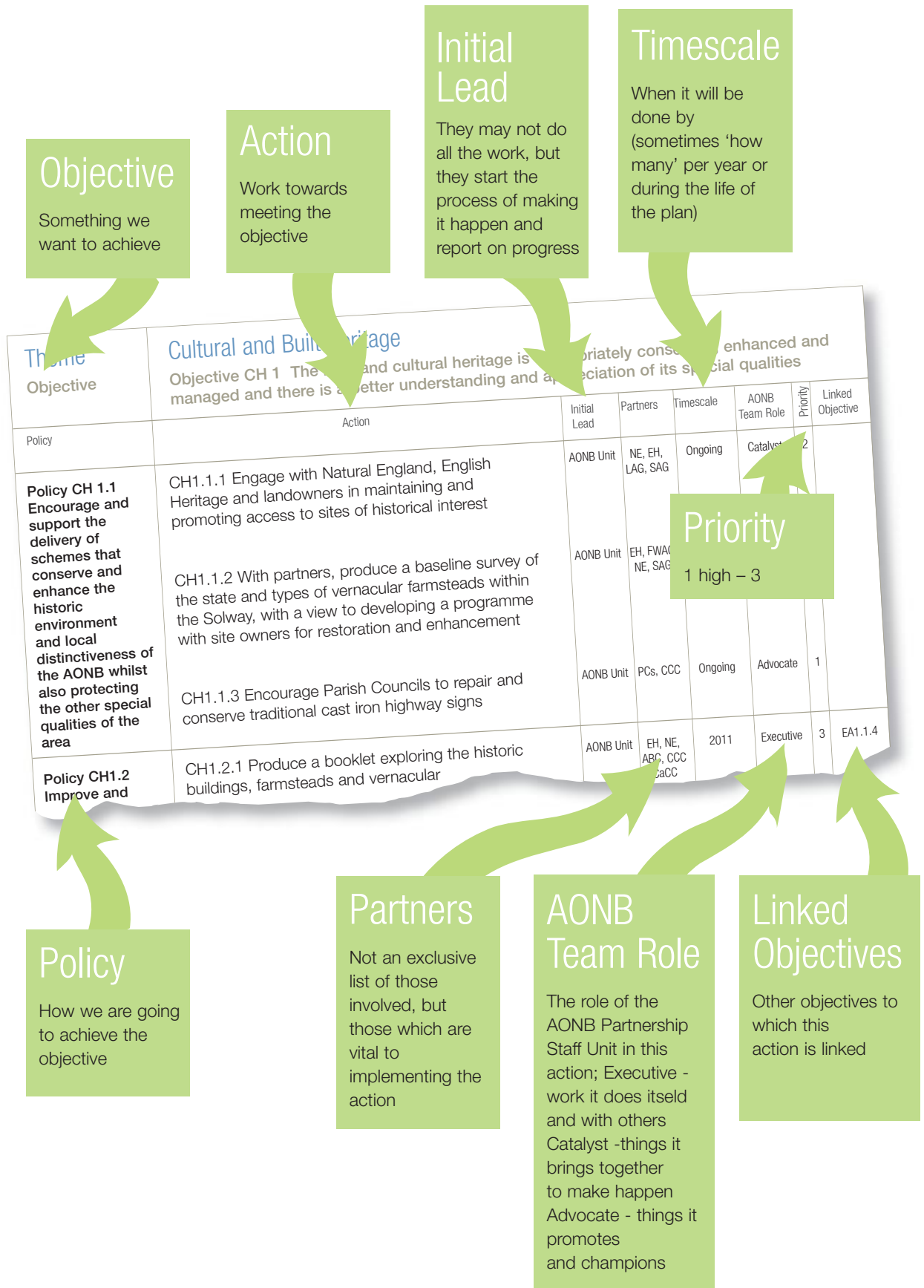
1.6.8 These are both derived locally or are influenced by national, European and world policies and legislation.

From Objective to Progress

1.6.9 This is the process or the direction of flow we will take to deliver the needs of the AONB and report our progress and ultimately meet the statement of purpose 'to conserve and enhance natural beauty'.

Using the Action Plan

How to interpret the Action tables







Part Two

2.1 Landscape

Landscape Vision 2034

The natural beauty of the Solway Coast AONB is conserved, appropriately managed and enhanced. Farming has diversified in such a way that more sustainable and traditional practices have returned. Field boundaries have cobble walls, stone-faced banks topped by hedges or mixed species hedgerows with mixed age standard trees that are managed in a traditional way. Woodlands have been extended where appropriate and are well managed, and succession of hedgerow trees as a feature has been ensured. Saltmarshes, sand dunes and raised mires are enjoyed by people and due to current sympathetic management and a variety of restoration projects, are recovering historical levels of biodiversity. The AONB boundary has been extended to include more areas of high landscape value.

Scope of theme and evidence

2.1.0 This theme addresses the heart of the reason for designation as an AONB and, as such, the landscape

description is fundamental to understanding its importance, what makes it special, and the factors which affect it. Landscape is described as an area as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. The whole of this Management Plan assesses these actions and interactions. This theme is a general overview of landscape and all its component elements.

2.1.1 As described in detail in section 1, the Solway Coast landscape is diverse but fragile; it is also a living landscape and in some places it is still wild and natural. Many issues and forces impinge upon the landscape all of which have the potential to modify it either for good or otherwise.

Issues and Forces for Change

2.1.2 A range of issues are affecting the area. These have been identified from a number of sources including public meetings, volunteers, Parish Council requests, our State of the AONB Report 2008; they are described in Appendix 1 and below.

| Issues and Forces for Change | Evidence |
|---|---|
| <p>Marine litter is a continuous area of concern both locally and nationally.</p> | <p>Marine litter and especially marine plastics is a growing problem on UK shorelines and the AONB is no exception. Through working with local authorities, community groups, schools and individuals, and organisations such as the Tidy Britain Group, Adopt a Beach, the Marine Litter Campaign and the Marine Conservation Society it is clear that marine litter is an increasing issue that needs addressing.</p> |
| <p>The coastal car parks are derelict, of poor quality and susceptible to coastal erosion. There is a need to improve the car parks to better integrate them into the landscape and provide better quality facilities for visitors to the area without introducing urban design characteristics.</p> | <p>Coastal car parks within the AONB were not built as car parks. Instead they are artefacts of areas where people park their cars to enjoy the coastline. The outcome has created heavily eroded, unsafe and extremely difficult areas to maintain. Where car park closures have occurred they have been replaced with well built alternatives that are virtually maintenance free.</p> |

| Issues and Forces for Change | Evidence |
|---|---|
| | Of the twenty one unofficial car parks along the coast line only six are maintainable without causing further environmental damage. |
| The coastal landscape is being damaged by unauthorised access points that are eroding fragile surfaces. | Motorised vehicles such as cars, scramble bikes, quad bikes, tractors, 4x4s and ex military vehicles have all been recorded on the dune system leading to major erosion of the soft sediments (sands). |
| There are changes to dune grassland habitat arising from the removal of conservation grazing stock (horses and sheep) on the unfenced dune grassland due to an increasing number of mortalities and injuries from road traffic impacts on the B5300 coastal route. This has resulted in a decline of our nationally important dune and heath systems. | SSSI monitoring shows the condition of large areas of the sand dunes is poor. Habitat change has been evident since the removal of the grazing stock. However this decline could be reversed if a safe grazing solution can be found. A recent experiment to fence part of the dunes for conservation livestock grazing has produced an immediate improvement in plant species diversity and sward quality. Further areas are being assessed as to their suitability for fencing. |
| The encroachment of gorse and ragwort into coastal grasslands is preventing native species from thriving. | Many areas where stock is absent provide ideal habitat for invasive weeds and shrubs. A planned programme of hand pulling ragwort over the past 10 years has done little to reduce its impact. Invasive plants need to be managed according to DEFRA guidance where there is no threat to livestock from potentially poisonous species. In some places gorse is being managed on a rotational basis which is proving effective. |
| Large groups of travellers settle along certain parts of the dune coastline (cars, vans, caravans, horses and dogs) for extensive periods of time. This has a harmful visual and physical impact and degrades the feeling of wildness. It also discourages other members of the public from enjoying the resource. | In summer and autumn three areas of the AONB are vulnerable to the activities of travellers and their livestock. Crosscanonby verges, Mawbray Banks and Wolsty Banks are the worst affected. The problem is getting worse. Allerdale Borough Council has recognised this issue and is currently looking to designate a site for travellers. |
| Changes in farming practices have led to an increase in wind-blown plastics. This degrades the overall quality of the area and is a particular issue in open landscapes along the coast. | Farm and field boundaries are being draped in wind blown black and green plastic bale/silage wrap. |
| Fly-tipping is a growing concern where access into the dunes is out of sight and in hollows. The situation is an eyesore but it has further potential to pollute SSSI's. | Allerdale Borough Council is removing more waste that has been tipped illegally in parts of the AONB. |
| Some of the raised mires and other natural areas have hard rectilinear edges due to drainage ditches and field enclosures. These could be softened by allowing natural shrub and tree succession in appropriate locations. | Mapping and observation has revealed the non-natural landscape in these areas. |
| Overhead power and telecommunications wires and poles can be intrusive in some parts of the flat and open landscape. | 7290m of power lines have been identified as requiring under-grounding within the AONB. 1547m has been completed so far. |
| Government is committed to renewable energy provision and there is likely to be a continued interest in wind energy developments close to the boundary of the AONB due to its open and windy characteristics. An increase in biomass crops could change the landscape character of parts of the area. | Planning applications for 3 wind energy schemes within 3.5km of the AONB were submitted to Allerdale Borough Council in 2007. 1 of these has been granted consent. A further offshore windfarm has been announced for the Solway Firth. |

| Issues and Forces for Change | Evidence |
|--|---|
| <p>Trees (both woodland and hedgerow) are mature or over mature and the lack of appropriate planting of new native woodland and the management of existing woodland are areas of concern. Hedge kests are losing their traditional metting of stone. Open grassland commons are being 'gardened' in a patchwork manner.</p> | <p>Changes in farming techniques have resulted in the loss of landscape features such as hedgerow and in-field tree standards and the loss of living field boundaries to post and wire fencing. Grass cutting on grassland commons by adjacent property owners is changing the character of the common land and is producing a manicured look. Hedge cutting practices are changing and creating non traditional shaped hedges in the landscape. Other important features include dressed stone culverts, gate stoops, stone-faced kests (hedgebanks topped with hedges), and dry stone walls. Only small areas of woodland occur within the AONB but by their scarcity have become important landscape features, providing vertical interest in an otherwise predominantly flat landscape.</p> |
| <p>There is a loss of traditional sandstone gatestoops in-field thresholds as farm implements and machinery get larger. The continued loss of traditional farmstead buildings and the siting and construction of new farm buildings is gradually eroding the special qualities of the area.</p> | <p>A survey carried out by the AONB Unit in 2000 (internal database) revealed that the loss of sandstone gatestoops was in the region of 60% with very few thresholds having matching pairs. A survey carried out by the farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (in press 2009) has revealed loss of some traditional buildings, an increase in modern silage clamps and above ground slurry tanks, both of which are associated with the modern practice of silage cropping for winter fodder.</p> |
| <p>Agricultural practices are likely to diversify due to increasing pressures on the saltmarshes and wetlands from rising sea levels linked to climate change. Also changes are likely to the sea ward edges of the area from coastal realignment and flood defence options that will be necessary to mitigate sea level changes.</p> | <p>The newly emerging Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) will act to steer future management options. The needs of the current SMP and the special Allonby Bay report have been fulfilled to protect the B5300 coastal highway and vulnerable archaeological sites. Landscape guidance from the AONB Unit helped to mitigate visual impacts with landscape friendly designs being implemented.</p> |
| <p>Commercial interest in aquaculture of oysters and mussels may affect seascape if not sensitively sited.</p> | <p>Locally there is an increasing interest in this industry. Well managed it could add to the local identity. However poorly sited development may damage sensitive habitats, be visually intrusive and disturb sensitive species.</p> |
| <p>The European Landscape Convention commits the UK to looking after its special landscape character. The existing landscape character assessment for the area is out of date and does not follow current landscape character methodology. The overall condition of the area needs to be re-assessed as this information is currently lacking.</p> | <p>The only information available is linked to the Countryside Quality Counts project and this indicates that the wider landscape within which the AONB sits has a neglected or diverging condition. This is not considered to be the case of the AONB, but the evidence needs to be gathered to address this issue. The AONB boundary appears arbitrary in places and the characteristics of the setting of the area are not clearly defined in landscape terms.</p> |

Objectives

L1 Objective

The landscape characteristics that create the distinctive identity of the Solway Coast AONB are appropriately protected, managed, conserved and enhanced.

Policies

Policy L1.1 Work with partners to improve the baseline data available to inform condition monitoring and management priorities.

Policy L1.2 Encourage and support the development, targeting and delivery of schemes and projects that maintain and improve the landscape character and local distinctiveness of the AONB.

Policy L1.3 Encourage local planning authorities to take better account of AONB purpose, and maintain and enhance the AONB's special landscape character.

Policy L1.4 Encourage local councils to improve their mechanisms to help protect and enhance the AONB's special character.

| Theme | Landscape | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------|--------------------------|-------------|----------------|----------|-------------------------|
| Objective | Objective L1 The landscape characteristics that create the distinctive identity of the Solway Coast AONB are appropriately protected, managed, conserved and enhanced | | | | | | |
| Policy | Action | Initial Lead | Partners | Timescale | AONB Team Role | Priority | Linked Objective |
| Policy L1.1 Work with partners to improve the baseline data available to inform condition monitoring and management priorities | L1.1.1 Develop and produce an updated district-level Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment for the AONB and its setting, including identification of forces for change, sensitivity, capacity for change and production of management guidelines | AONB Unit | NE, LAs | Summer 2010 | Executive | 1 | C1.15 |
| | L1.1.2 Develop and undertake an AONB-wide survey project to identify extent and condition of key landscape features for future use as indicators of condition, including hedges, hedgebanks, walls, gate stoops and other priority features identified as neglected in CQC theme detail sections | AONB Unit | NE, EH CWT | Summer 2010 | Executive | 1 | NH1.6.1 |
| | L1.1.3 To provide information and statistics in order to make informed decisions about coastal car park provision and subsequent actions and to provide the relevant authorities with the philosophy underpinning 'rural road character' | AONB Unit | CCC Highways FLD | Ongoing | Executive | 1 | |
| | L1.1.4 To provide landscape advice to various bodies, primarily United Utilities using the best practice from FLD with regard to overhead 'wirescape' and to provide vision through advice to landowners and farmers regarding landscape | AONB Unit FLD | FLD NE | Ongoing | Executive | 2 | |
| | L1.1.5 To consider, in the light of emerging evidence, how the AONB landscape will be affected by climate change | EA | AONB Unit NE | Ongoing | Catalyst | 2 | |
| | L1.1.6 To present a case, to the constituent local authorities and Natural England, regarding the AONB boundary and its relevance following 45 years of designation | AONB Unit | LAs, NE 2010 | Summer | Executive | 2 | |
| Policy L1.2 Encourage and support the development, targeting and delivery of schemes and projects that maintain and improve the landscape | L1.2.1 Support and advise landowners to access funding from Environmental Stewardship and Woodland Grant schemes, ensuring agreements identify and target priority landscape features | NE | AONB Unit | Ongoing | Advocate | 1 | EM1.2.1 |
| | L1.2.2 Develop a project to restore key features identified as in need of restoration through the Solway Wetlands Project | AONB Unit | NE, CWT EA, EH NFU, RSPB | Autumn 2010 | Catalyst | 2 | EM1.2.2, NH1.4c.2 |
| | L1.2.3 Continue the annual hedgelaying competition, to champion best practice and encourage better hedge management in the AONB, and to also encourage restoration of walling and kests | AONB Unit CN | NE, FLD | Annual | Executive | 1 | NH1.6.2 NH1.4.3 EM1.2.3 |

| Theme | | Landscape | | | | | |
|---|--|---|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------|----------|--|
| Objective | | Objective L1 The landscape characteristics that create the distinctive identity of the Solway Coast AONB are appropriately protected, managed, conserved and enhanced | | | | | |
| Policy | Action | Initial Lead | Partners | Timescale | AONB Team Role | Priority | Linked Objective |
| character and local distinctiveness of the AONB | L1.2.4 To agree sustainable beach access areas with local shell fishermen that are non damaging and safe with regard to the highway interface CSFC (or equivalent) | AONB Unit CWT | NE, RSPB | When fisheries re-open | Advocate | 2 | |
| | L1.2.5 To promote the sympathetic (visually unobtrusive) use of stock fencing and freshwater provision within coastal dune grassland commons to provide a safe haven for livestock whilst encouraging human access on foot into the fenced areas | AONB Unit Graziers | NE, ABC | Spring 2010 | Executive | 1 | |
| | L1.2.6 To provide a workforce, using primarily the Solway Coast Community Volunteers and local schools, to 'hand-pull' ragwort on the dune system and to use appropriate techniques to move fringing gorse where necessary | AONB Unit | Volunteers Schools NE | Annual | Executive | 1 | NH1.5.1 C1.1a.3 L1.4b.1 NH1.1.4 |
| | L1.2.7 To raise awareness and find solutions to landscape damaging processes carried out by landowners, farmers and local residents | NE | AONB Unit ,LAs | Ongoing | Advocate | 1 | |
| | L1.2.8 To create a 'State of the Built Heritage' document identifying those farm buildings under threat and to provide statistics regarding the numbers of gatestoops lost since 1950 | AONB Unit | FWAG LA's, EH Grampus | Spring 2010 | Executive | 1 | |
| Policy L1.3 Encourage local planning authorities to take better account of AONB purpose, and maintain and enhance the AONB's special landscape character | L1.3.1 Comment on planning applications which will have a significant impact on the landscape character of the AONB and Local Development Policy and Proposals which affect the landscape character of the AONB and its setting | AONB Unit | LAs, FLD NAAONBs | As and when required | Executive | 1 | |
| | L1.3.2 Work in partnership to produce an up to date Landscape Character Assessment for the AONB and its setting | AONB Unit | NE, LAs 2010 | Summer | Executive | 1 | L 1.1.1 |
| | L1.3.3 Provide input to strategic planning process (RSS, LDF, etc.), to influence all relevant strategies, plans and policies to ensure they adequately reflect the 'duty of regard' to the AONB | AONB Unit | LAs when required | As and | Executive | 1 | |
| Policy L1.4 Encourage local councils to improve their mechanisms to help protect and enhance the AONB's special character | L1.4.1 To work with Allerdale Borough Council legal department to strengthen their bylaws to provide a more positive legal framework with regards to illicit campers, caravanners and travellers | AONB Unit | ABC, NE | 2010-11 | Advocate | 2 | |
| | L1.4.2 To work with Allerdale Borough Council's street scene contractor to establish a strategy for the removal of farm plastics from fencing and coastal and marine litter | AONB Unit | ABC | 2010 | Advocate | 2 | |
| | L1.4.3 To encourage the estuary partnership (Solway Firth Partnership) to raise awareness of marine litter and its visual impact and to help persuade the constituent local authorities to take action | SFP LAs | AONB Unit | Ongoing | Advocate | 2 | C1.1a.1 C1.2.3 |



2.2 Natural Heritage

Natural Heritage Vision 2034

The Solway Firth encompasses a large range of habitats in turn supporting a wide range of resident and migratory species of wildlife. Land management regimes on natural areas are sympathetic to the needs of both agriculture and wildlife. Localised flood defence and land drainage schemes have been re-developed to retain water within raised mires. Areas of marginal pasture have been allowed to re-wet to create breeding habitat for waders. A strong partnership has grown between land managers and conservation bodies. Eight breeding bird species have returned to the Solway. Twelve new Local Nature Reserves have been created and the AONB encompasses more areas of high nature conservation value.

2.2.1 The Natural Heritage section covers habitats, species and ecological factors that determine the spatial distribution and welfare requirements of the plants and animals within the AONB. The 'layer-cake' of conservation designations to protect its habitats and species is testament to the international importance of the Solway Coast for wildlife.

Scope of theme and evidence

2.2.2 The Solway Firth is one of the most important estuaries in the UK with regard to biodiversity. The AONB is made up of, and associated with, vast areas of sand and mudflats surrounded by an unbroken tract of saltmarsh. Three major rivers flow through and into the area. Together these provide extensive habitats for feeding, roosting and wintering for birds and migratory highways for fish. The lowland raised mires sit within and around the intertidal areas providing further unique habitat for wildlife. The outer estuary with its associated gravel scours and pebble beaches are flanked by a linear sand dune system. This theme seeks to address the issues associated with managing the biodiversity and geodiversity interest found throughout the AONB.

2.2.3 Many organisations are working for the benefit of wildlife and the protection and creation of quality habitats within the AONB. This situation is supported by the AONB Partnership which seeks to provide a landscape-scale overview of where resources and expertise would be best



deployed to help secure quality habitat, sanctuary and richer biodiversity. Both the Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and HLS targeted species and habitats (Solway Basin Character Area) provide the main focus. However, national and international priorities such as the Solway Firth Marine Site (SPA and SAC) seek to protect both static (year round) and migratory (seasonal) species and the habitats they rely upon (Appendix 1). Those species and habitats that have not been listed as priorities will be given the same level of conservation and restoration support through AONB project delivery.

Issues and Forces for Change

2.2.4 The list below is derived from a number of sources from public meetings, volunteers, Parish Council requests, our State of the AONB Report 2008 and the findings of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Document for this Plan. Further detail can be found in Appendix 1.

| Issues and Forces for Change | Evidence |
|--|--|
| <p>General loss of important habitats across the AONB including raised mire, dune grassland, seasonal wet meadow, reedbed, open freshwater, hedgerows and small woodlands due to modern farming methods, land reclamation for agriculture and active coastal erosion.</p> | <p>Targeting of Higher Level Stewardship Schemes (HLS) has prioritised areas of concern in the Solway Basin character area and has comprehensively picked up the issues and forces for change. Further enhancements to the scheme have identified species that are threatened and provide measures for their protection. These include at least 8 Cumbria BAP species: Songthrush, Barn Owl, Brown long-eared Bat, Natterer's Bat, Pipistrelle Bat, Marsh Fritillary, Natterjack Toad and Great-crested Newt (also known as Warty Newt).</p> |
| <p>Loss of active raised mire habitats and morphology due to on and off-site drainage regimes is damaging an internationally important habitat and its functionality leading to loss of biodiversity and the subsequent encroachment of heath and woodland vegetation.</p> | <p>Monitoring of mires has shown that many are declining in biodiversity value due to drying out. Restoration agreements with landowners on land adjacent to the raised mires is compromising some restoration projects that rely on water retention off the mire. However, there is evidence that some progress is being made where land can be purchased by conservation bodies to establish water retention.</p> |
| <p>Wildlife in sensitive areas such as roosting, feeding and breeding areas on shingle beaches and saltmarsh areas are open to disturbance.</p> | <p>Disturbance takes many forms but is usually from recreational use such as walking and through dog walking. This can effect distribution and breeding success, particularly of birds. Some species that are a feature of the AONB rely on habitats that experience high levels of human use such as beaches.</p> |
| <p>Loss of habitats such as village ponds, field ponds and orchards.</p> | <p>Mainly due to changes in need, water supply, landuse and the shift from horses to tractors.</p> |
| <p>Loss of riverine habitats due to cross sectional re-profiling (canalisation) of water courses.</p> | <p>Flood alleviation works have reduced the habitats available to wildlife through bank re-profiling.</p> |
| <p>Bank poaching through stock encroachment on large (old) saltmarsh creeks creating large areas of bank erosion and loss of saltmarsh habitat.</p> | <p>Foot fall by cattle is creating large areas of erosion and collapse along creek edges destroying habitats for sea lavender and sea aster. Artificial steep sided creek profiles due to drainage management also concentrate stock at favoured crossing points.</p> |
| <p>Drainage of saltmarsh 'tidal-flashes' creating habitat loss for dabbling ducks and waders.</p> | <p>By reducing areas of open water through simple drainage 'trenching', many traditional areas of ephemeral open water have been reduced to provide more areas for grass production to feed sheep and cattle. This also affects saltmarsh function by reducing the amount of sediment trapped on high tides.</p> |
| <p>There has been an unfavourable and declining condition of coastal dune grasslands as a direct consequence of grazing stock being removed.</p> | <p>SSSI monitoring shows the condition of large areas of the sand dunes is poor. Habitat change has been evident since the removal of the grazing stock. However this decline could be reversed if a safe grazing solution can be found. A recent experiment to fence part of the dunes for conservation livestock grazing has produced an immediate improvement in plant species diversity and sward quality. Further areas are being assessed as to their suitability for fencing.</p> |
| <p>Invasive plant species - encroachment of gorse and ragwort into coastal grasslands can become dominant and prevent grassland diversity.</p> | <p>Many areas where stock is absent provide ideal habitat for invasive weeds and shrubs. A planned programme of hand pulling ragwort over the past 10 years has done little to reduce its impact. Invasive plants need to be managed according to DEFRA guidance where there is no threat to livestock from potentially poisonous species. In some places gorse is being managed on a rotational basis which is proving effective.</p> |

| Issues and Forces for Change | Evidence |
|--|--|
| Changes in farm practice, and in particular intensification, has led to declines in farmland wildlife across the AONB, primarily breeding birds. These species are a key characteristic of the AONB. | Farmland bird indicators have shown a dramatic decline in a wide range of farmland species. This is reflected in the AONB where corn bunting, yellow wagtail and corncrake may now be absent. |
| Loss of hedgerow and in-field tree standards and the loss of living field boundaries to post and wire fencing. Encroaching gardening (grass cutting) on grassland commons by adjacent property owners is producing a manicured look as does the now annual Autumn ritual of hedgerow cutting using flails. | Changes in farming techniques have resulted in the loss of landscape features such as hedgerow and in-field tree standards and the loss of living field boundaries to post and wire fencing. Grass cutting on grassland commons by adjacent property owners is changing the character of the common land and is producing a manicured look. Hedge cutting practices are changing and creating non traditional shaped hedges in the landscape. Other important features include dressed stone culverts, gate stoops, stone-faced kests (hedgebanks topped with hedges), and dry stone walls. Only small areas of woodland occur within the AONB but by their scarcity have become important landscape features, providing vertical interest in an otherwise predominantly flat landscape. |

Objectives

NH1 Objective

The biodiversity and geodiversity of the AONB will be appropriately protected, conserved, enhanced and managed.

Policies

Policy NH1.1 Encourage better management, conservation, restoration and enhancement of important habitats and key species through relevant projects and programmes.

Policy NH1.2 Encourage better management, restoration and enhancement of river system habitats and water quality.

Policy NH1.3 Reduce disturbance to wildlife in sensitive areas ensuring that access has minimum impact.

Policy NH1.4 Prevent the loss of important habitat and species.

Policy NH1.4a Improve the management of statutory and non statutory wildlife sites.

Policy NH 1.4b Support the enhancement, expansion and connectivity of small or locally important habitats.

Policy NH 1.4c Support creation and enhancement of new or restored habitat such as raised mires and river channels.

Policy NH1.5 Reduce invasive and non native plant species that threaten the special character of the area.

Policy NH1.6 Encourage better management of hedgerow, in-field trees and living boundaries to increase biodiversity and enhance the special character of the area.

| Theme | Natural Heritage | | | | | | |
|--|---|----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|------------------|
| Objective | Objective NH1 The biodiversity and geodiversity of the AONB will be appropriately protected, conserved, enhanced and managed | | | | | | |
| Policy | Action | Initial Lead | Partners | Timescale | AONB Team Role | Priority | Linked Objective |
| Policy NH1.1: Encourage better management, conservation, restoration and enhancement of important habitats and key species through relevant projects and programmes | NH1.1.1 Provide the lead in 'Solway Wetlands Project', a five year nature conservation, heritage and socio-economic scheme with partners, to reach targets for BAP objectives focussed around the raised mire habitats | AONB Unit | NE, EA, CWT, RSPB, NFU and others | Ongoing | Executive Advocate | 1 | EM1.2.3 |
| | NH 1.1.2 Increase the grazing regime on Wolsty Banks to better manage the SSSI towards favourable condition by working with landowners, Highways and NE to extend the grazing areas and mowing areas on SSSI's and monitor natterjack toad numbers with Herpetological Conservation Trust | AONB Unit | ABC, NE ABC, PC's LC, HCT | Ongoing | Executive | 1 | |
| | NH1.1.3 Create a Landscape Trust to manage SSSIs in the AONB, through use of targeted funding opportunities, (HLS) | AONB Unit CaCC | ABC | 2011 | Executive | 2 | |

| Theme | | Natural Heritage | | | | | |
|---|--|--|------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|---------------------|
| Objective | | Objective NH1 The biodiversity and geodiversity of the AONB will be appropriately protected, conserved, enhanced and managed | | | | | |
| Policy | Action | Initial Lead | Partners | Timescale | AONB Team Role | Priority | Linked Objective |
| | NH1.1.4 Provide a workforce, using primarily the Solway Coast Community Volunteers and local schools to hand pull ragwort on the dune system and use appropriate techniques to move fringing gorse where necessary | AONB Unit Schools, | Volunteers in summer | Annual | Executive | 2 | C1.1a.3 L1.2.6 |
| | NH1.1.5 Work with Marsh Committees and Environment Agency to continue to improve the grazing regimes and saltmarsh management for wildfowl species, and habitat restoration | AONB Unit CWT, EA | EA, MC's | 2012 | Advocate | 2 | |
| | NH1.1.6 Provide information to landowners through Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, on improved habitat restoration and biodiversity on agricultural land | AONB Unit | FWAG NE | 2010 and Annually | Executive | | |
| Policy NH1.2 Encourage better management, restoration & enhancement of river system habitats and water quality | NH1.2.1 Provide information to landowners and promote HLS regarding field drainage and bank management, through FWAG using appropriate leaflets | FWAG | AONB Unit, NE CWT, EA | 2011 | Advocate | 2 | |
| | NH1.2.2 Engage with the Environment Agency as to canalisation of appropriate intertidal riverine habitats and with regard to flooding protection | EA | AONB Unit, NE | 2011 | Advocate | 2 | NH1.4c.4 EM1.1.2 |
| Policy NH1.3 Reduce disturbance to wildlife in sensitive areas ensuring that access has minimum impact | NH1.3.1 Provide notices and information in all publications from the AONB for walkers with dogs in sensitive areas, dunes, marshes, peatlands | AONB Unit | NE, LAG | 2010 | Catalyst | 2 | |
| | NH1.3.2 Provide notices for mussel fishers accessing the beach via the dunes during bird nesting season | AONB Unit | RSPB CSFC | 2010 | Catalyst | 1 | |
| | NH1.3.3 Provide a 'Ranger Service/ Volunteer Coordinator' for the AONB, to patrol the dunes throughout the year and inform locals, visitors of disturbance | AONB Unit | ABC, NE | Ongoing | Executive | 1 | |
| Policy NH1.4 Prevent the loss of important habitat and species | NH1.4.1 To work with the Herpetological Conservation Trust in maintaining Natterjack numbers and habitats on the coast | HCT | AONB Unit, AONB Volunteers CWT, NE | Ongoing | Catalyst | 1 | |
| | NH1.4.2 To work with partners in monitoring important roosting and nesting sites for over wintering wildfowl | WWT, RSPB | AONB Unit, NE, | Ongoing Annual CWT | Catalyst | 1 | |
| | NH1.4.3 Continue the annual hedgelaying competition, to champion best practice and encourage better hedge management in the AONB, and to also encourage restoration of walling and kests | AONB Unit | FLD, NE FWAG, CN FLD | Annual | Executive | 1 | L1.2.3 |
| | NH1.4.4 Provide the lead in 'Solway Wetlands Project', a five year nature conservation, heritage and socio-economic scheme with partners, to reach targets for BAP objectives | AONB Unit | NE, EA, CWT, RSPB NFU and others | Ongoing | Executive Advocate | 1 | EM1.2.3 |

| Policy | Action | Initial Lead | Partners | Timescale | AONB Team Role | Priority | Linked Objective |
|--|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|-------------------------------|
| Policy NH1.4a Improve the management of statutory & non statutory wildlife sites | NH1.4a.1 Provide the lead in 'Solway Wetlands Project', a five year nature conservation, heritage and socio-economic scheme with partners, to reach targets for BAP objectives | AONB Unit | NE, EA, CWT, RSPB, NFU and others | Ongoing | Executive Advocate | 1 | EM1.2.3 NH1.1.6 NH1.2.1 |
| Policy NH1.4b Support the enhancement, expansion and connectivity of small or locally important habitats | NH1.4b.1 To provide a workforce, using primarily the Solway Coast Community Volunteers and local schools, to 'hand-pull' ragwort on the dune system and to use appropriate techniques to move fringing gorse where necessary | AONB Unit | AONB Volunteers, schools, communities | Annual | Executive | 1 | L1.2.6 |
| | NH1.4b.2 To provide a Solway Coast Volunteer Group to maintain small reserves within the AONB in conjunction with CWT and RSPB Volunteers | AONB Unit | AONB Volunteers, RSPB, CWT, HWDC | Ongoing | Advocate | 1 | NH1.4b.2 |
| | NH1.4b.3 Provide the lead in 'Solway Wetlands Project', a five year nature conservation, heritage and socio-economic scheme with partners, to reach targets for BAP objectives | AONB Unit | NE, EA, CWT, RSPB, NFU and others | Ongoing | Executive Advocate | 1 | EM1.2.3 |
| Policy NH1.4c Support creation and enhancement of new or restored habitat such as raised mires and river channels | NH1.4c.1 Provide the lead in 'Solway Wetlands Project', a five year nature conservation, heritage and socio-economic scheme with partners, to reach targets for BAP objectives | AONB Unit | NE, EA, CWT, RSPB, NFU and others | Ongoing | Executive Advocate | 1 | EM1.2.3 |
| | NH1.4c.2 Develop a project to restore key features identified as in need of restoration through the Peatlands for People and Solway Wetlands Project | AONB Unit | NE, EA, CWT, RSPB, NFU and others | Ongoing | Executive Advocate | 1 | EM1.2.3 |
| | NH1.4c.3 Provide information to landowners and promote HLS as to field runoff and bank management, through FWAG and appropriate leaflets | FWAG | AONB Unit, NE, CWT, EA | 2011 | Advocate | | NH1.2.1 |
| | NH1.4c.4 Engage with the Environment Agency as to canalisation of appropriate intertidal riverine habitats and with regard to flooding protection | EA | AONB Unit, NE | 2011 | Advocate | 2 | NH1.2.2 |
| Policy NH1.5 Reduce invasive & non native plant species that threaten the special character of the area | NH1.5.1 To provide a work force using primarily the Solway Coast Community Volunteers and local schools, to 'hand-pull' ragwort on the dune system and to use appropriate techniques to move fringing gorse where necessary | AONB Unit | AONB Volunteers, schools, communities | Annual | Executive | 1 | L1.2.6 NH1.1.6 |
| Policy NH1.6 Encourage the better management of hedgerow, in-field trees and living boundaries to increase biodiversity and enhance the special character of the area | NH1.6.1 Develop and undertake an AONB-wide survey project to identify extent and condition of key landscape features for future use as indicators of condition, including hedges, hedgerows, walls, gate stumps and other priority features identified as neglected in CQC theme detail sections | AONB Unit | NE, ABC, CCC, CaCC | 2010 | Executive | 1 | L1.1.2 |
| | NH1.6.2 Continue the annual hedgelaying competition, to champion best practice and encourage better hedge management in the AONB, and to also encourage restoration of walling and kests | AONB Unit FLD | FLD, NE, FWAG, CN | Annual | Executive | 1 | L1.2.3 |
| | NH1.6.3 Provide information to landowners and promote HLS, through FWAG and appropriate leaflets | FWAG | AONB Unit, NE, CWT, EA | 2011 | Advocate | 2 | NH1.2.1 |



2.3 Cultural and Built Heritage

Cultural and Built Heritage Vision 2034

The story of the Solway Coast is well known and respected through the provision of access to sites with quality interpretation and visitor services. Landscape evolution through human endeavour is the connecting theme that has created a context for visitors to stay and explore the area. All important buildings, traditional farmsteads and conservation areas are being protected and restored. Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail has had its 500,000th walker and has just celebrated its position as a world leader in sustainable tourism. The local Haaf Net fishery enjoys its status as a Heritage fishery and adds much to the local colour of the area.

Scope of theme and evidence

2.3.1 The Solway's cultural, political and economic history can best be told through its extant heritage of man made features underpinned by the written record. The conservation and restoration of the physical remains of this history is extremely important to the AONB as it is part of the landscape. These remains are spatially diverse and reflect the layers of human settlement, landuse and modification that together tell the story of the Solway Coast AONB.

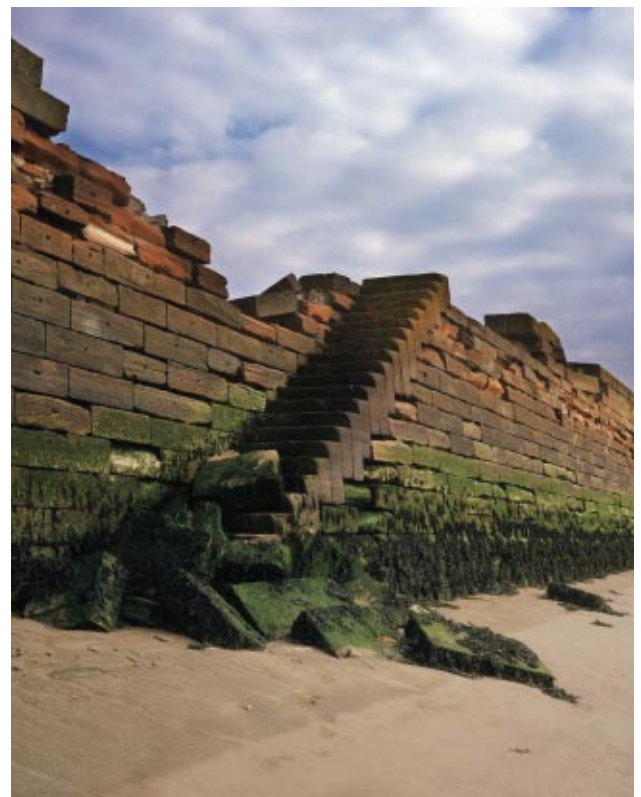
2.3.2 Buildings, settlements, settlement patterns, highways, earthworks, surface features, written records and other elements all survive today to collectively tell the story of the Solway Coast AONB. However, not all of the information provides evidence to drive the conservation and enhancement of the AONB landscape which is the primary purpose of this plan.

2.3.3 To manage the historical environment effectively we need to understand it and, in doing so, we can identify appropriate options for action, many to help conserve and enhance it. Our lack of detailed understanding with regards to the buildings and settlements and their spatial distribution will be addressed over the next five years. Vernacular styles and building fabrics will be understood, as will the historic phases of building and expansion or retraction.

2.3.4 To help protect our special and nationally recognised cultural and built heritage we need to produce guidance to inform others such as planners and developers so that they are sympathetic toward its special qualities.

2.3.5 Access, both intellectual and physical, will be developed to tell the story of the Solway Coast.

2.3.6 The best understood heritage feature within the AONB is



Hadrian's Wall which is designated a World Heritage Site. This designation, important as it is, has the potential to obscure many other important historical influences that modified the landscape we see today, and therefore needs to be seen as one part, albeit a very important one, of the complex history and development of the AONB.

2.3.7 We also have 'living archaeology' in the form of Haaf Netting, a type of salmon and sea trout fishing handed down from the Viking/Anglo-Scandinavian Period using the same basic technology as it did 1000 years ago.

Issues and Forces for Change

2.3.8 The list below is derived from a number of sources from public meetings, volunteers, Parish Council requests, our State of the AONB Report 2008 and the findings of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Document for this Plan. Further detail can be found in Appendix 1.

| Issues and Forces for Change | Evidence |
|---|---|
| <p>Loss of traditional buildings that reflect the local vernacular style through dereliction, change of use and end of use.</p> | <p>Like many areas of the UK traditional farm buildings are being converted into dwellings with poor detailing and loss of vernacular styles. Fragile buildings such as those built of clay and wood have either completely decayed or are in an advanced state of dereliction. Changes in need due to modern farming practices and abandonment of sites are also factors of concern.</p> |
| <p>There is a lack of published guidance and understanding of the vernacular building style(s) of the AONB. This issue applies equally to dwellings, farmsteads, religious buildings and other structures.</p> | <p>There is no existing design guidance and the existing landscape character assessment does not include details on building styles. A recent survey commissioned by the AONB Partnership has begun to understand the evolution of farming settlements within the area. Further work will report in detail in late 2009.</p> |
| <p>Lack of understanding of the spatial relationships of man made features such as ditches, field boundaries, field sizes, and their associated settlements.</p> | <p>Sites on the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and monuments under threat register are identified. The historic landscape character assessment has only just been completed at a county level and will help to better understand and manage the historic landscape in future.</p> |
| <p>Lack of design guidance and development control enforcement to protect the historical integrity of building styles and settlements and features, such as cast iron highway signs.</p> | <p>Inappropriate use of materials such as UPVC windows in conservation areas and on listed buildings, and both village extension and infill have affected the intrinsic beauty of many settlements. There has been a loss of cast iron highway signs over the last 20 years due to highway improvements.</p> |
| <p>The establishment of a management company for Hadrian's Wall World Heritage site will drive sustainable development objectives through projects within the AONB.</p> | <p>Over the past three years a number of projects have been delivered jointly by the AONB Partnership and Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited (HWHL).</p> |
| <p>Lack of quality access to sites of historical interest and their interpretation.</p> | <p>Both well known sites and those closed to the public have low key access and interpretation. Some of this was addressed during the last Management Plan period but further developments need to address this issue.</p> |
| <p>The newly published Hardrian's Wall World Heritage Site Management Plan contains a series of actions to be implemented within the AONB.</p> | <p>The AONB Partnership will assist and influence the WHS programme in the following areas: sustainable physical access, developing the visitors' experience and understanding of the WHS and buffer zone, sustainable development and economic regeneration, engaging with communities, marketing and education.</p> |
| <p>Haaf Net fishing on the Solway has been subject to a range of conservation measures to help restore salmon stocks throughout the Solway's catchment</p> | <p>The long term survival of the fishery depends on the sustainability of the salmon population and on the steady recruitment of fishermen from the local community and beyond.</p> |

Objectives

CH 1 Objective

The built and cultural heritage of the AONB is appropriately conserved, enhanced and managed and there is a better understanding and appreciation of its special qualities.

Policies

Policy CH 1.1 Encourage and support the delivery of schemes that conserve and enhance the historic environment and local distinctiveness of the AONB. whilst also protecting the other special

qualities of the area.

Policy CH1.2 Improve and develop appropriate and sustainable access and improve awareness and understanding of the importance of the cultural and built heritage of the AONB.

Policy CH1.3 Provide advice and encourage planning processes to appropriately conserve, enhance and manage the special cultural and historic character of the AONB.

Policy CH1.4 Promote the importance of Haaf Net fishing as an important 'Heritage Fishery' within the Solway Coast.

| Theme | Cultural and Built Heritage | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|----------------|----------|------------------|
| Objective | Objective CH 1 The built and cultural heritage is appropriately conserved, enhanced and managed and there is a better understanding and appreciation of its special qualities | | | | | | |
| Policy | Action | Initial Lead | Partners | Timescale | AONB Team Role | Priority | Linked Objective |
| Policy CH 1.1 Encourage and support the delivery of schemes that conserve and enhance the historic environment and local distinctiveness of the AONB whilst also protecting the other special qualities of the area | CH1.1.1 Engage with Natural England, English Heritage and landowners in maintaining and promoting access to sites of historical interest | AONB Unit | NE, EH, LAG, SAG | Ongoing | Catalyst | 2 | |
| | CH1.1.2 With partners, produce a baseline survey of the state and types of vernacular farmsteads within the Solway, with a view to developing a programme with site owners for restoration and enhancement | AONB Unit | EH, FWAG NE, SAG | Ongoing | Executive | 1 | |
| | CH1.1.3 Encourage Parish Councils to repair and conserve traditional cast iron highway signs | AONB Unit | PCs, CCC | Ongoing | Advocate | 1 | |
| Policy CH1.2 Improve and develop appropriate and sustainable access and improve awareness and understanding of the importance of the cultural and built heritage of the AONB | CH1.2.1 Produce a booklet exploring the historic buildings, farmsteads and vernacular architecture of the AONB (possibly adopt as SPD) | AONB Unit | EH, NE, ABC, CCC CaCC | 2011 | Executive | 3 | EA1.1.4 |
| | CH1.2.2 Produce an Historic Landscape Assessment of the Solway Coast AONB to complement the county wide HLCA | AONB Unit | EH, NE, ABC, CCC CaCC | 2010 | Executive | 1 | |
| | CH1.2.3 Link the cultural interpretation to the story underpinning the Solway Coast Discovery Centre exhibition and its associated literature (education) | AONB Unit | EH, NE, ABC, CCC CaCC | 2011 | Executive | 2 | EA1.1.1 |
| Policy CH1.3 Provide advice and encourage planning processes to appropriately conserve, enhance and manage the special cultural and historic character of the AONB | CH1.3. 1 Comment on planning applications which will have a significant impact on the historic landscape character of the AONB and Local Development Policy and Proposals which affect the landscape character of the AONB and its setting | AONB Unit ABC, CCC CaCC | EH, NE, | Ongoing | Executive | 1 | |
| Policy CH1.4 Promote the importance of Haaf Net fishing as an important 'Heritage Fishery' within the Solway Coast | CH1.4.1 Engage with the Environment Agency on net limitation orders | SFP | AONB Unit, EA, SHNA, EH | 2011 | Catalyst | 3 | |
| | CH1.4.2 With partners carry out a project to emphasize the importance of Haaf Net Fishing as a 'Heritage Fishery' in the Solway Firth | SFP | AONB Unit, EA, SHNA, EH | 2010 | Catalyst | 2 | |



2.4 The Coast

Coast Vision 2034

The coastline is our greatest asset. Wide panoramas across the sand, mudflats and saltmarshes to the sea and Scotland beyond are highly regarded. The dune systems and saltmarshes are well managed and are grazed using local stock. Coastal erosion and effects of sea level rise are managed through re-alignment schemes that respect the special character of the area and create gains for wildlife as new habitat areas, such as reed beds and open water, are being developed. People bathe and enjoy watersports away from sensitive coastal areas. Marine and coastal partners are working together to maintain the vision

Scope of theme and evidence

2.4.1 With a 59km coastline the AONB is inextricably linked to the sea and, as such, owes its high landscape value to the interface between land and sea. Unlike the open sea coast, an estuary coast has much more intimacy between the landscape and seascape and the dynamics of the ebb and flood of the tide is much more apparent. The edges are blurred creating a true continuum from solid to liquid and land to water. The AONB boundary stops at the mean low water mark limiting our full engagement with the marine environment; that role is usually taken by the Solway Firth Partnership (SFP), an Estuary Partnership on which the AONB has a seat. The UK Marine Bill is currently moulding a different approach to coastal management which may place the AONB in a more influential position.

2.4.2 The sea provides the AONB with many things from wildlife to tranquillity to recreation but it can also be damaging to habitats, public infrastructure and private property. The greatest threat is the predicted sea level rise and storminess due to global warming; this prediction is at the heart of sustainable solutions within this Plan. Sustainable fisheries management, safe coastal access, habitat protection and flood defence are the main issues addressed here.



Issues and Forces for Change

2.4.3 The list below is derived from a number of sources from public meetings, volunteers, Parish Council requests, our State of the AONB Report 2008 and the findings of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Document for this Plan. Further detail can be found in Appendix 1.

| Issues and Forces for Change | Evidence |
|--|---|
| <p>Climate change effects such as sea level rise, river flooding due to higher precipitation levels and storminess will have a range of damaging effects on the coastline (see below) and could result in a loss of landscape character, cultural heritage and habitats such as sand dune and saltmarsh.</p> | <p>Predictions for the UK suggest that over the next 50-80 years the climatic effects of global warming will bring a range of enhanced conditions. Increases in wind speeds and precipitation and the predicted sea level rise, when combined with a shallow intertidal estuary with soft-sediment shorelines (silt, mud, sand and gravel), has the potential for catastrophic effects.</p> |
| <p>Inland flooding could be significant causing damage to properties, infrastructure and large areas of land, including marine inundation of freshwater habitats.</p> | <p>The low lying Solway Coast landscape and the intertidal nature of its river estuaries put the area under threat of coastal flooding. This, when coupled to managed freshwater drainage for the needs of agriculture, places the area at higher risk when rivers are heavy with floodwater coupled with high tides.</p> |
| <p>Temporary or permanent loss of coastal transport corridors could arise from high winds, flooding and highway erosion.</p> | <p>Throughout the AONB the coastal transport network sits upon a raised beach feature. In some places within the inner estuary the highway is frequently inundated by high spring tides. Along the B5300 running along the shoreline of the outer estuary, where soft dune sediments are exposed to wave action, the highway has been subjected to erosion. Tidal surges created by high tides, high winds and extreme low pressure can damage the highway during a single tidal cycle.</p> |
| <p>Coastal squeeze could result in a loss of valued coastal habitats and landscapes.</p> | <p>The coastal highway and hard flood defences restrict the natural movement of habitats. Predicted sea level rise and increased storminess and tidal surges could further accelerate coastal squeeze in the future.</p> |
| <p>Access to the foreshore by vehicles used in the shellfish industry and casual users such as motor cyclists, 4x4 users and others are damaging the coastline and habitats through the erosion of soft sediments. Disturbance to species is also an issue.</p> | <p>Along the outer estuary and, in particular, areas of coastline naturally protected by active sand dune accretion are the areas of most concern. Heavy tyres are creating man made 'blow-holes' and natural protection is lost. Where inundation by the sea occurs through these breaches further erosion takes place.</p> |
| <p>The Solway Firth has been identified nationally as having potential to produce tidal energy that could contribute towards the UK's renewable energy targets. A tidal scheme could have far reaching effects on the character and special qualities of the AONB coastline and its marine setting.</p> | <p>A proposal for an energy barrage that could provide highway and recreation opportunities (Solway Energy Gateway Scheme) is being promoted. A feasibility study, funded by Scottish and English RDA's is underway.</p> |

| Issues and Forces for Change | Evidence |
|--|--|
| <p>The government is committed to expanding offshore wind energy and a further round of offshore windfarm licences have been announced off the west Cumbrian coast and south Scottish coast in the Solway Firth.</p> | <p>An increase in offshore wind farms could affect the wide open panoramas that contribute to the special landscape character of the area. The visual impact of such schemes is already apparent in the southwest end of the AONB due to the building of the Robin Rigg offshore windfarm.</p> |
| <p>Current and future pressures on the coast require management. This is achieved through the Shoreline Management Plan and process.</p> | <p>The Shoreline Management Plan II (SMP2) process has been initiated and is being supported by the AONB partnership. The Plan will help guide the options for coastal management as has the first SMP. Over the past ten years the recommendations of the approved SMP have been followed.</p> |
| <p>Environmental Campaigns (ENCAMS) are promoting a rural beach award standard to Local Authorities.</p> | <p>With Local Authority support this could help improve beach and water quality in the area and cut down on increasing levels of coastal litter. It will also provide upgrades in amenities such as toilets and information provision. Rural Beach status has been awarded to LAs throughout the UK. However, authorities in Cumbria have not pursued this standard to date.</p> |
| <p>Marine and coastal issues do not stop at the English border and close working on cross border initiatives is particularly important.</p> | <p>International conservation designations, the EU Water Framework Directive and other European legislation requires cross border working. Integrated Coastal Zone Management should be reinforced through the emerging Scottish Marine Bill and the UK Marine and Coastal Access Bill.</p> |
| <p>New coastal access needs to be supported whilst recognising the need to conserve the special qualities of the AONB.</p> | <p>The Marine and Coastal Access Bill will change the way we manage coastal areas and will secure continuous coastal access around England.</p> |
| <p>Lack of an evidence base to guide decisions affecting the character of the seascape.</p> | <p>Seascape assessments have evolved since the last landscape character assessment was carried out and an integrated landscape and seascape character assessment would help conserve and manage the character of the AONB, its coast and marine setting.</p> |



Objectives

Objective C1

The special qualities of the coastal area and its wider marine setting are appropriately conserved, enhanced and managed.

Policies

Policy C1.1 Encourage action to conserve and enhance the soft coastline (saltmarsh and sand dune) of the Solway Coast.

Policy C1.1a Support good management of the coastal zone that supports a variety of coastal uses that are compatible with the special qualities of the AONB.

Policy C1.2 Support and encourage action that maintains the highest standard of bathing water quality and litter management along the coastline.

Policy C1.3 Provide advice and encourage planning decisions that seek to appropriately conserve, enhance and manage the special character of the coastal part of the AONB and its marine setting.

Policy C1.4 Work with partners to improve the baseline data available to inform condition monitoring and management priorities with regard to seascape.



| Theme | The Coast | | | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|----------------|----------|------------------|
| Objective | Objective C1 The special qualities of the coastal area and its wider marine setting are appropriately conserved, enhanced and managed | | | | | | |
| Policy | Action | Initial Lead | Partners | Timescale | AONB Team Role | Priority | Linked Objective |
| Policy C1.1 Encourage action to conserve and enhance the soft coastline (saltmarsh and sand dune) of the Solway Coast | C1.1.1 Liaise with the Environment Agency in the Catchment Flood Management Plan and Shoreline Management Plan II processes | EA | AONB, SFP, NE, CCC, ABC, CaCC | Ongoing | Advocate | 2 | |
| | C1.1.2 Liaise with Cumbria County Council 'Highways' and all relevant authorities, in the protection and enhancement of the B5300 Maryport to Silloth coast road | CCC | AONB, ABC, HWH | Ongoing | Catalyst | 1 | TTAR1.3.2 |
| | C1.1.3 Engage with Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee as to accepted access points for mussel fishery vehicles in the sand dune system | CSFC | AONB, ABC, NE | Ongoing | Catalyst | 2 | |
| | C1.1.4 Provide up to date information about tide-times, liable flood risks and the importance of the coastal environment and biodiversity | AONB Unit, NE, HCT | EA, CWT, | Ongoing | Advocate | 3 | |
| | C1.1.5 Develop and produce an updated district-level Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment for the AONB and its setting, including identification of forces for change, sensitivity, capacity for change and production of management guidelines | AONB Unit | NE, LAs 2010 | Summer | Executive | 1 | L1.1.1 |
| Policy C1.1a Support good management of the coastal zone that supports a variety of coastal uses that are compatible with the special qualities of the AONB | C1.1a.1 To encourage the estuary partnership (Solway Firth Partnership) to raise awareness of marine litter and its visual impact and to help persuade the constituent local authorities to take action | SFP | AONB, MCS, ABC, CaCC, CCC | Ongoing | Catalyst | 2 | L1.4.3 |
| | C1.1a.2 To provide information and statistics in order to make informed decisions about coastal car park provision and subsequent actions and to provide the relevant authorities with the philosophy underpinning 'rural road character' | AONB | ABC, CCC, FLD | 2013 | Catalyst | 3 | L1.1.3 |

| Policy | Action | Initial Lead | Partners | Timescale | AONB Team Role | Priority | Linked Objective |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | <p>C1.1a.3 To provide a workforce, using primarily the Solway Coast Community Volunteers and local schools, to 'hand-pull' ragwort on the dune system and to use appropriate techniques to move fringing gorse where necessary</p> <p>C1.1a.4 Engage with Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee as to accepted access points for mussel fishery vehicles in the sand dune system</p> | <p>AONB volunteer group</p> <p>CSFC</p> | <p>Schools ABC</p> <p>AONB, ABC, NE</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Executive</p> <p>Catalyst</p> | <p>3</p> <p>2</p> | <p>L1.2.6</p> <p>C1.1.4</p> |
| <p>Policy C1.2</p> <p>Support and encourage action that maintains the highest standard of bathing water quality and litter management along the coastline</p> | <p>C1.2.1 Support the local authority ENCAMS rural beach award standard</p> <p>C1.2.2 To provide regular volunteer and school group beach litter picks and liaise with Allerdale Borough Council with regards to marine litter disposal</p> <p>C1.2.3 To encourage the estuary partnership (Solway Firth Partnership) to raise awareness of marine litter and its visual impact and to help persuade the constituent local authorities to take action</p> | <p>ABC</p> <p>AONB</p> <p>SFP</p> | <p>AONB, Community, EA, MCS, SFP</p> <p>ABC, Volunteer Group, schools, MCS, SFP</p> <p>AONB, MCS, ABC, CaCC, CCC</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Advocate</p> <p>Executive</p> <p>Catalyst</p> | <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> | <p></p> <p>CR1.1.2</p> <p>L1.4.3</p> |
| <p>Policy C1.3</p> <p>Provide advice and encourage planning decisions that seek to appropriately conserve, enhance and manage protect, maintain and enhance the special character of the coastal part of the AONB and its marine setting</p> | <p>C1.3.1 Work with Local Authorities, SFP, and communities on planning decisions which may affect the AONB and marine setting</p> <p>C1.3.2 Work with NE, landowners, and marsh committees to ensure correct grazing of coastal vegetation</p> | <p>ABC</p> <p>NE</p> | <p>AONB, CCC, SFP, CaCC, NE, EA</p> <p>AONB, EA, FWAG, MC,s, SSWA</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Catalyst</p> <p>Catalyst</p> | <p>1</p> <p>2</p> | |
| <p>Policy C1.4</p> <p>Work with partners to improve the baseline data available to inform condition monitoring and management priorities with regard to seascape.</p> | <p>C1.4.1 Engage with European Marine Site managers and others to provide baseline data to provide subject matter for agreed monitoring and reporting of seascape</p> | <p>AONB Unit SFP</p> | <p>NE, EH, LAs</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Catalyst</p> | <p>2</p> | |



2.5 Environmental Management

Environmental Management Vision

The traditional ground drainage culture is being reversed to provide seasonal wet meadow habitats for breeding birds. The wider effects of water retention in raised mires and their associated boundary habitats (wet woodland, reed beds and open- water) are being supported through sympathetic management regimes. The symmetrical nature of drainage channels and rivers (canalisation) has been reversed and natural habitats hold a rich diversity of species. Small woodlands are adding to the mosaic of landscapes and hedgerow trees stand as sentinels along traditional field boundaries.

Scope of theme and evidence

2.5.1 Environmental Management is defined here as activities that have a direct impact on the environmental quality of the area. They include land, water and soil management, all of which are important factors in the maintenance of a healthy environment and subsequently a healthy landscape.

2.5.2 Landuse in the Solway Coast is directly influenced by its topography and underlying geology. Most of the area used for agriculture is on the glacial till or boulder clays. These sediments are non-uniform and have pockets of pure clay, pure sand, gravels of various types and mixtures of all. This gives rise to a range of ground conditions that need to be managed in different ways. Factors such as pH values (usually neutral to mildly acidic) and drainage patterns also influence land management practices. Peaty soils and pure peat substrates occur where raised mire has been reclaimed for agriculture and these areas are usually managed as low grade pasture. Both natural (slurry) and man made fertilisers underpin grass regeneration for silage across the Solway area. Some of this fertilizer inevitably finds its way into watercourses via surface runoff and groundwater flow, adding to the nutrient enrichment, or eutrophication, of the receiving waters. Eutrophication reduces water quality and can have severe impacts on the ecology of affected rivers.



2.5.3 The recent move to maize as a crop has a landscape impact in spring through the use of plastic ground covers, and can be a factor in increased soil erosion resulting from its late harvesting in autumn.

Issues and Forces for Change

2.5.9 The list below is derived from a number of sources from public meetings, volunteers, Parish Council requests, our State of the AONB Report 2008 and the findings of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Document for this Plan.

| Issues and Forces for Change | Evidence |
|---|---|
| <p>The historic landscape is being lost through intensive farming practices and the use of modern machinery.</p> | <p>Traditional field boundaries are under threat from modern mechanised farming methods. Flail cutting is replacing the tradition of Cumberland style hedge-laying and traditional stone faced kests are disappearing because of re-use of the stone.</p> |
| <p>Both silage and straw storage is creating a visually negative element in the landscape.</p> | <p>The modern grass fodder preservation method of silage and the storage of straw is creating landscape intrusion through large 'clamp' buildings and polythene covered bales being left in fields. Originally these bales were brought into barns and other covered storage, but now that they are wrapped in polythene they can stand in fields until needed.</p> |
| <p>Small scale woodlands such as shelter belts, copses and plantations are being lost through a lack of replenishment..</p> | <p>Replacement of woodland following losses caused by felling, old age, disease and wind damage is creating a more open landscape</p> |
| <p>Potential sources of pollution exist as a consequence of modern farming techniques..</p> | <p>Water pollution from farm wastes such as livestock slurry can be highly damaging, especially in relatively intensively managed landscapes. The Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiative is being extended to cover some of the AONB, and will promote careful management of water and wastes to prevent pollution in future.</p> |
| <p>The Water Framework Directive should guarantee water quality from bathing water to drinking water into the future providing a healthier and pollution free environment within the AONB.</p> | <p>Land management on the Solway Coast has traditionally centred on land drainage to allow land reclamation for agriculture, and the 'land drainage culture' is still with us today. In recent years there has been a subtle shift in how water is managed in the Solway. Habitat restoration and conservation through water retention schemes is beginning to be supported by land managers, particularly through the use of agricultural stewardship programmes where there are incentives to diversify farm incomes.</p> |
| <p>Loss of traditional and labour intensive management methods (hedgerow management) is giving way to efficient but indiscriminate mechanised methods which affect landscape character by weakening hedgerow condition leading to their ultimate loss and replacement by post and wire fencing.</p> | <p>The effect of flail cutting is being felt by in-hedge standard trees that are being continually pruned at hedge height and not allowed to mature into a standard.</p> |
| <p>Predicted sea level rise will affect flood defence systems; the findings of the Shoreline Management Plan II process will address some of these issues.</p> | <p>Climate change is likely to bring about rising sea levels and altered river levels as rainfall patterns change over time. With the strong influence of the sea, rivers and streams on the low-lying AONB landscape, future environmental management will have to be flexible to adapt to this changing world</p> |

Objectives

Objective EM.1

Land and water management are undertaken using sustainable methods which seek to conserve and enhance the special character of the AONB.

Policies

Policy EM.1.1 Encourage better management, conservation, restoration and enhancement of river system habitats and water quality.

Policy EM.1.2 Promote and support land management, diversification and agri-environment schemes that reflect the purpose of the AONB.



| Theme | Environmental Management | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|----------------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------|------------------|
| Objective | Objective EM.1 Land and water management are undertaken using sustainable methods which seek to conserve and enhance the special character of the AONB | | | | | | |
| Policy | Action | Initial Lead | Partners | Timescale | AONB Team Role | Priority | Linked Objective |
| Policy EM.1.1 Encourage better management, conservation, restoration and enhancement of river system habitats and water quality | EM1.1.1 Provide information to landowners and promote HLS as to field runoff and bank management, through FWAG and appropriate leaflets | EA, NFU RSPB, AONB, CWT (Solway Wetland Partnership) | NE, EA, CWT, NFU RSPB AONB | Ongoing | Executive | 1 | NH1.2.1 |
| Policy EM 1.2 Promote and support land management, diversification and agri-environment schemes that reflect the purpose of the AONB | EM1.1.2 Engage with the Environment Agency and its Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiative regarding canalisation of appropriate intertidal riverine habitats and with regard to flooding protection | Solway Coast AONB Partnership | AONB, EA, NE, SMP II | Ongoing | Executive | 2 | NH1.2.2 |
| | EM1.2.1 Support and advise landowners to access funding from Environmental Stewardship and Woodland Grant schemes, ensuring agreements identify and target priority landscape features | NE | NE, AONB | Ongoing | Advocate | 1 | L1.2.1 |
| | EM1.2.2 Develop a project to restore key features identified as in need of restoration through the Solway Wetlands Project | Solway Coast AONB Partnership | NE, SWP | Ongoing | Executive | 1 | L1.2.2 |
| | EM 1.2.3 Continue the annual hedgelaying competition, to champion best practice and encourage better hedge management in the AONB, and to also encourage restoration of walling and kests | Solway Coast AONB Partnership | FLD, NFU, CN | Annual event | Catalyst | 1 | L1.2.3 |



2.6 Climate Change and Renewable Energy

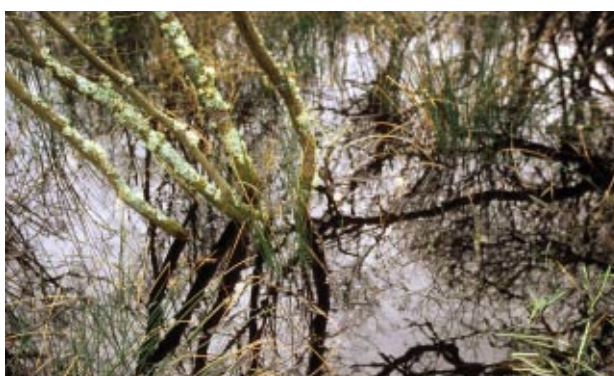
Climate Change and Renewable Energy Vision 2034

The Solway Coast is playing a major role in carbon sequestration through the growth and restoration of its raised mires. These massive peat bodies are providing both containment for historic carbon and the surface area is fixing new carbon through plant growth. The estuary itself is playing an even greater role through the fixing of carbon by molluscs and crustaceans into calcium carbonate shells and exoskeletons. The farming landscape is developing appropriate energy crops supporting local energy production. New housing and developments, such as extensions, are being built to high environmental standards and high energy efficiency. Older houses and buildings are being retro fitted with small scale renewable energy sources. The AONB is identified as a carbon neutral protected landscape.

Scope of theme and evidence

2.6.1 The UK Government is committed to taking action against climate change to help reduce harmful pollution and emissions and develop ways to manage earth's natural resources better. It is also developing strategies to see how the UK can adapt to climate change and mitigate adverse changes resulting from changing global conditions.

2.6.2 Management of the coast is receiving increasing attention as a national priority, in recognition of the importance of the coast for conservation and recreation, and increasing pressures on the coast including sea level rise. The impacts of sea level rise coupled with an increase in storm severity will alter the coastline through such mechanisms as increased erosion and flooding. The likely impact of increased weather activity may be seen through increased rates of sediment transfer, flood damage and erosion. The areas most threatened by these pressures will be the sensitive estuarine environment and the coastal sand dunes. The Management Plan will, where appropriate, defer to the Shoreline Management Plans developed by the relevant body in order to have an



effective strategy to deal with the pressure of environmental change.

2.6.3 Potential sea level rise and increased stormy weather could have an effect on the character of the Solway Coast that is both positive and negative.

2.6.4 Changes in weather could lead to changes in agriculture leading to more arable land use which will affect landscape character. This could be particularly obvious if there is an increase in arable crops, such as linseed and oilseed rape, which can have a major impact on landscape character in spring and summer when in flower.

2.6.5 A shift to more renewable and low carbon energy production could also have an effect on the character of the area. The coastal plain and cliffs of Cumbria have a high wind resource and the Solway Firth provides a significant tidal resource.

2.6.6 The Solway Coast is providing a carbon sink through its vast areas of peatland, estuarine mud and sand flats. They all have the potential to sequester large amounts of atmospheric carbon and, through a good management regime, could be able to help lock up additional carbon emissions within the AONB over the next 30 years.

Issues and Forces for Change

2.6.7 The list below is derived from a number of sources from public meetings, volunteers, Parish Council requests, our State of the AONB Report 2008 and the findings of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Document for this Plan.

| Issues and Forces for Change | Evidence |
|---|---|
| <p>There has been an increasing number of scoping view requests and planning applications for terrestrial wind-farms and wind-clusters adjacent to the AONB boundary.</p> | <p>The identified wind resource on the flat coastal plain is generating interest from developers. Following a public inquiry, Park Head Wind Cluster was approved by the inspector; it lies within 1km of the AONB boundary in an area that contributes to the setting of the AONB.</p> |
| <p>An increase in offshore wind farms could affect the wide open panoramas that contribute to the special landscape character of the area.</p> | <p>Further off-shore windfarm licences were announced in 2008 along with a renewed commitment to offshore wind in the UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009). The visual impact of such schemes is already apparent in the south west end of the AONB due to the building of the Robin Rigg offshore windfarm.</p> |
| <p>The Solway Firth has been identified nationally as having potential to produce tidal energy that could contribute towards the UK's renewable energy targets.</p> | <p>A proposal for an energy barrage via a freshwater lagoon that could also provide highway and recreation opportunities (Solway Energy Gateway Scheme) is being promoted by a local group. Such a tidal scheme could have far reaching effects on the character and special qualities of the AONB coastline and its marine setting. A feasibility study, funded by Scottish and English RDA's is underway.</p> |
| <p>In 2008 the need for new development to be environmentally sustainable and to reduce carbon emissions was reflected in national planning guidance.</p> | <p>Local planning policy will change to reflect this during the period of the Plan. Specifications for new low energy housing and on site renewable energy generation need to be compatible with the local vernacular style.</p> |
| <p>Thermal shift will change landuse and biodiversity.</p> | <p>Seasonal temperature, precipitation and sunlight will affect the climate preferences of a wide range of flora and fauna causing geographical changes in their range. Agriculture will also be affected by higher rainfall and thermal shifts creating different growing conditions for plants.</p> |
| <p>Resource efficiency can assist in reducing the AONB's carbon footprint. Opportunities to increase recycling facilities within the AONB should be developed further to help people reduce their waste footprint.</p> | <p>The current situation, whilst good and meeting national standards, could be further improved, for example with regard to farm waste in rural areas. Cooperation across administrative boundaries is already happening to increase the amount of materials re-cycled within the AONB.</p> |
| <p>Information is improving on the potential for natural systems and processes such as carbon sequestration in both peat bodies (anaerobic plant materials) and estuarine mud and silt (calcium carbonate shells and estuarine micro-faunas).</p> | <p>The AONB has a high potential for fixing carbon (sinking) by natural storage (sequestration). Large areas of sand and mud flats, saltmarshes, dunes and raised mires, when fully functioning, will fix and retain carbon for millennia. Areas of the resource are not functioning or are compromised due to modification by man. Restoration of natural habitats is the key to increase their storage potential.</p> |

Objectives

Objective CR1

The natural resources of the AONB are managed in a sustainable manner, maximising the opportunities to support climate change adaptation and mitigation and ensuring, wherever possible, that measures are compatible with the AONB purpose.

Policies

Policy CR1.1 Support and encourage schemes that will help to reduce, recycle and re-use waste in a sustainable manner whilst respecting the landscape character of the AONB.

Policy CR1.2 Engage with developers and Relevant Authorities to minimise possible impacts arising from climate change ensuring that any measures are compatible with AONB conservation objectives and works are in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

Policy CR1.3 Support environmental and renewable energy schemes, actions, programmes and policy that respect the area's special qualities.

Policy CR1.4 Support research and reporting on carbon sequestration within the AONB.

| Theme | | Climate and Renewables | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|-----------|----------------|----------|------------------|--|
| Objective | | Objective CR1 The natural resources of the AONB are managed in a sustainable manner, maximising the opportunities to support climate change adaptation and mitigation and ensuring, wherever possible, that measures are compatible with the AONB purpose | | | | | | |
| Policy | Action | Initial Lead | Partners | Timescale | AONB Team Role | Priority | Linked Objective | |
| Policy CR1.1 Support & encourage schemes that will help to reduce, recycle and re-use waste in a sustainable manner whilst respecting the landscape character of the AONB | CR1.1.1 Engage with the local authorities in designing recycling schemes and sites within the AONB | ABC, CaCC CCC | AONB | Ongoing | Advocate | 2 | | |
| | CR1.1.2 To provide regular volunteer and school group beach litter picks and liaise with Allerdale Borough Council with regards to marine litter disposal | AONB Unit | ABC, MCS, Shools, Volunteer Group | Ongoing | Catalyst | 2 | C1.2.2 | |
| Policy CR1.2 Engage with developers & Relevant Authorities to minimise possible impacts arising from climate change ensuring that any measures are compatible with AONB conservation objectives & works are in accordance with the principles of sustainable development | CR1.2.1 Undertake a base line study with the Environment Agency and other partners of the implications of climate change to the landscape of the AONB | EA,CCC | AONB, ABC, CaCC, NE, RSPB | 2013 | Catalyst | 3 | CR1.3.2 | |
| Policy CR1.3 Support environmental and renewable energy schemes, actions, programmes and policy that respect the area's special qualities | CR1.3.1 Develop and produce an updated district-level Landscape Character Assessment for the AONB and its setting, including identification of forces for change, sensitivity, capacity for change and production of management guidelines | AONB | CCC, NE, EH, EA | 2011 | Executive | 1 | L1.1.1 | |
| | CR1.3.2 To consider, in the light of emerging evidence, how the AONB landscape will be affected by climate change | EA, CCC | AONB, ABC, SFP CaCC, NE, FLD, | 2014 | Catalyst | 2 | | |
| | CR1.3.3 To support renewable energy schemes through SDF in keeping with the sustainable management of the landscape | AONB | NE, FLD | Ongoing | Executive | 2 | | |
| Policy CR1.4 4 Support research & reporting on carbon sequestration within the AONB | CR.1.4.1 To work with the Environment Agency and other organizations (Solway Wetland Project) to provide research on carbon sequestration | NE, EA RSPB, CWT, NFU | AONB, | 2014 | Catalyst | 2 | | |



2.7 Tourism, Transport, Access and Recreation

Tourism, Transport, Access and Recreation Vision 2034

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

The Rights of Way network is maintained to a high standard. Highway signage is traditional, villages have their own traffic schemes, and street lighting is traditional and low key or non existent, fitting in with the landscape. The Local Transport Partnership manages the bespoke public



transport provision through the voice of local people, benefiting both locals and visitors thus ensuring sustainable outcomes. Services are brought into settlements though a local service vehicle that forms the nucleus for small-scale street and village green markets. Provision has been made to park cars away from the

frontages of houses within certain settlements, thus securing aesthetic gains. Annual surveys maintain the sustainability of the transport network, where problems are identified and damaged infrastructure is replaced.

Scope of theme and evidence

2.7.1 The combination of tourism, transport, access and recreation reflects the double role of a coastal AONB. On the one hand, people visit the area because it is an AONB but more people visit because it is 'by the seaside'. The traditional user of the English Solway Coast began doing so with the changes in transport such as the train and motor vehicle over 100 years ago. The popularity of seaside holidays created the growth in Silloth, Allonby and other villages. It also developed transport links, car parks, public amenities, access to the shoreline and ultimately recreation from swimming to birdwatching.



2.7.2 Public enjoyment through recreation can have both positive and negative effects on the landscape and economic growth can lead to a reduction in tranquillity. Greater tranquillity can alienate those who seek group based recreational activities. So a balance must be sought to cater for a wide spectrum of needs and the potential impacts they may impose on the landscape. Whilst recreation is not a primary purpose of designation, it is recognised that demand should be met provided it does not harm conservation or natural beauty, or the needs of other uses.

Tourism

2.7.3 Tourism is second only to farming in its importance to the local economy and is a major employer in the area. The principal recreational activities are informal – walking, cycling, bird watching, fishing and swimming. Allonby also attracts windsurfers. Survey data regarding visitor make-up is not currently available but it is thought that day visitors come chiefly from Carlisle and north Cumbria and from the northern Lake District; staying visitors are dominated by traditional seaside holidays based at the

coastal chalet and caravan parks. There are nine caravan parks, eight of them situated in the south of the AONB, 2 hotels, 1 guest house and a number of pubs which cater for these staying visitors. Data available for the whole of Cumbria suggest that visitors to this area are more likely to stay for a shorter time and spend less than in other areas, such as South Lakeland. Tourism activity in Cumbria (and the AONB) and the consequent tourism revenue is subject to seasonal variations, July to September being the busiest part of the year. Revenue created by tourism activity is a key measure of a destination's performance. In 2006, Carlisle accounted for 11.2% and Allerdale 18.1% of the tourist revenue to Cumbria. In comparison, South Lakeland accounted for 43.5% and the Lake District National Park (LDNP) 56.3%.

2.7.4 Although visitor numbers recorded by both Allerdale Borough Council and Carlisle City Council (and across Cumbria) have shown a recent downward trend, the number of visitors to the AONB specifically is rising, mainly as a result of the designation of Hadrian's Wall as a World Heritage Site and the development of the Hadrian's Wall Cycleway and Trail (opened in May 2003). Further development of tourism within the AONB as a contributor to the local economy is important but managing this increase while at the same time protecting the special qualities of the AONB is a key challenge for the future.

Transport

2.7.5 The National Cycle Network Route 72 passes through the AONB (the Hadrian's Wall Cycleway) and part of the Cumbria Cycle Way between Silloth to Maryport (this is considered too dangerous by cycling enthusiasts). A purpose built cycle path has been proposed between Silloth, Allonby and Maryport to boost tourism. Within the AONB cycling is becoming more popular.

Access

2.7.6 The Solway Coast has a vast resource of access routes throughout the area. Recently the Cumbria Countryside and Access Partnership and the Local Access Forums (LAFs) have been set up to provide management and development of the network throughout Cumbria. There are 1449 km of footpaths and 20.3 km of bridleways in the area and 1 byway is open to all traffic. Open Access has been secured in five areas within the AONB: Silloth and Mawbray Bank, Burgh Marsh, Skinburness Marsh, Bowness Common and Glasson Moss. Mapping is already underway to create a coastal footpath meeting the needs of the Marine and Coastal Access Bill. Three long distance footpaths pass through the AONB: the Cumbria Coastal Way, the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail and the Allerdale Ramble which extends northwards along the shore as far as Grune Point. There are also 11.4km of Easy Access walks.

Recreation

2.7.7 There are many recreational pressures on the

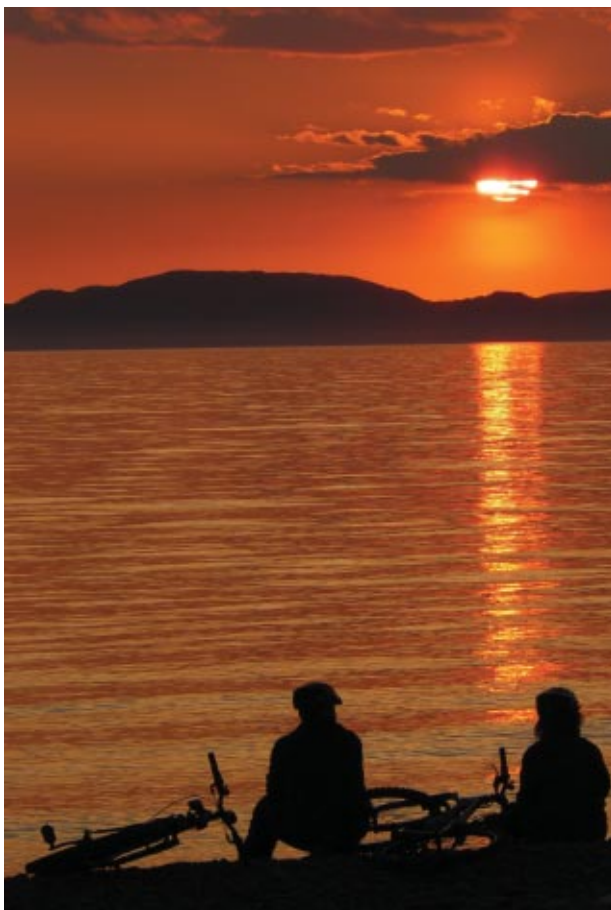
AONB and especially in the south west section or Sand Dune Coast. Much of the pressure is passive and non-damaging such as walking, bathing, picnicking, wind surfing and angling to name a few. Recreation may be damaging to the landscape, habitats and tranquillity. Motor cycle, quad bike and 4x4 users are illegally using the dunes and foreshore to test the limits of their vehicles; the consequence is wholesale damage of ecosystems and tranquillity. Jet skis are creating problems along tidal bird roosting sites.

Tranquillity

2.7.8 The tranquillity of the Solway Coast AONB is one of its key features. Its remoteness and wildness are also part of its special qualities. The Council for the Protection of Rural England Tranquillity Map is available for Cumbria. The detail is somewhat inadequate at AONB level. However, the AONB generally is mapped as a 'most tranquil' area with the level of tranquillity decreasing slightly in the southern area of the AONB along the coast from Silloth to Maryport. The impact of the roads on tranquillity is clearly seen. Increasing visitor numbers, increasing car use, improved access and changing recreational activities may lead to a decrease in tranquillity within the AONB.

Issues and Forces for Change

2.7.9 As described above, this large theme encompasses a range of subject matter, but increasingly, along with partner organisations, the AONB are planning and developing joint solutions in a holistic way.



| Issues and Forces for Change | Evidence |
|---|--|
| <p>Few of our rights of way are in good condition or are easily accessible.</p> | <p>A recent survey of all rights of way in Cumbria has highlighted the need to work with Cumbria Countryside and Access Partnership to secure sustainable solutions to RoW provision.</p> |
| <p>Access to historic sites is limited and opportunities need to be taken to increase access provision through new access agreements.</p> | <p>Recent developments at a historical site in the AONB have provided an approach to secure safe and multi-user access. Using Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) new access has been agreed with landowners. The model should be used to secure more provision of this sort.</p> |
| <p>The Marine and Coastal Access Bill will be introduced in 2009 and will include provisions to increase open access around the coast of England.</p> | <p>As some parts of the area will be more sensitive than others to increased coastal access, for example protected wildlife habitats, the Partnership will need to work closely with other partners, especially Cumbria Countryside and Access Partnership, so helping to deliver this agenda to ensure access along the coast is compatible with the special qualities of the area.</p> |
| <p>The rural character of the AONB's roads and lanes should be used to encourage greater enjoyment of the AONB by walkers, cyclists and equestrians.</p> | <p>The Management Plan seeks to encourage better and safer access for visitors and walkers, cyclists and equestrians. The area is criss-crossed by minor roads with blind bends, high hedgerows, concealed junctions and raised verges which are rural in character and could benefit from improvements to encourage greater enjoyment of the AONB. The above characteristics should provide a relatively solid basis for the introduction of the 'quiet lanes' initiative on all roads (designated C or less) which is designed to provide greater safety to all highway users such as walkers, cyclists and equestrians.</p> |
| <p>The area has untapped potential to become an eco-tourism destination due to its high quality landscape, high levels of nature conservation interest and abundant birdlife. Sensitively designed and sited infrastructure needs to be provided to support this. The Discovery Centre 'Gateway' should be developed to reinforce the area as an eco destination.</p> | <p>The Solway Coast has the potential to provide an international focus for wildlife based recreation. The range of habitats and abundant wildlife should be showcased and provided for through the marketing of a wide package of initiatives.</p> |
| <p>As visitor numbers increase and people are encouraged to use alternative transport to the car, better understanding of walking, cycling and riding routes is needed.</p> | <p>During the last Management Plan period four guides were published on walking, cycling, birdwatching and botany in the area. These have proved popular, with high sales, and have encouraged people to explore the special qualities of the area, by means other than the car, and stay in the area for longer. There is a need to provide more guides on other themes and parts of the AONB.</p> |

| Issues and Forces for Change | Evidence |
|--|--|
| <p>There is a need to encourage farm diversification projects to improve the amount of quality visitor accommodation and attractions in the area.</p> | <p>The provision of advice, funding and networks should be encouraged to provide more and better quality holiday accommodation for visitors.</p> |
| <p>Opportunities need to be supported that seek to market the natural assets of the area in a sustainable way to help extend the tourism season.</p> | <p>The area provides great recreational opportunities throughout the year, particularly for walking and bird watching, that are currently under-used or less well known.</p> |
| <p>One of the things that makes the area special is its relative remoteness, which is sometimes obvious from the intricate network of roads that lead to and through the area.</p> | <p>Signage to the area is still limited and further development of the 'England's Solway Coast' highway branding would help raise awareness to motorists and visitors travelling on the M6 corridor of the proximity of the AONB. Recent work in the North Allerdale Partnership (NAP) area has begun to deliver this initiative.</p> |
| <p>Cycling as a way of enjoying the AONB should be supported and encouraged. This can help mitigate against climate change effects and reduce motorised vehicles in the AONB.</p> | <p>The Hadrian's Wall cycle route has recently been extended to Ravenglass and runs through the AONB. However, there are some key areas that need to be enhanced to improve cyclist experience. A feasibility study is being carried out for the completion of a safe route through Allonby and Crosscanonby to help address this issue. Implementation of this initiative needs to be supported.</p> |
| <p>Conflicts can arise along the B5300 coast road between vehicles, walkers, cyclists and equestrians.</p> | <p>This road is popular with visitors to the area, and is the main route along the coast for people living and working in the area. The road can be busy and conflicts can occur. Steps have already been taken to calm traffic, develop a tourist route and create safer access along the B5300 coast road. Issues under consideration include use, parking provision, access, traffic calming, cycle improvements and signage.</p> |
| <p>Rural road character is being eroded through un-sympathetic use of materials, signs and designs and the countryside highways and byways are taking on a more urban character. This situation needs to be addressed and quality guidelines drawn up.</p> | <p>Road signage clutter and shared poles is giving a non-planned and ad-hoc look to rural byways. Using traditional cast iron finger signs as a basis for conservation, other signage should be sympathetic to their charm.</p> |
| <p>An integrated transport system needs to be developed that encompasses rail, bus and cycling to access and explore the AONB.</p> | <p>The Hadrian's Wall bus is the only integrated transport solution that exists in the AONB. Services like this need to be expanded to get people around the AONB. Links to rail, bus, cycle routes and rights of way need to be explored to provide sustainable access to the area and reduce the reliance on the private car.</p> |

Objectives

Objective TTAR1

Sustainable access, recreation, tourism and transport, which are compatible with the area's special qualities, is supported.

Policies

Policy TTAR1.1 Encourage and support improved access for a diverse range of users that maintains, protects and enhances the special qualities of the area.

Policy TTAR1.2 Encourage and support sustainable tourism activities and development within the AONB which respect, enhance and promote its special qualities.

Policy TTAR 1.3 Protect and enhance the AONBs special character through safe and sustainable access for residents and visitors to, from and within the area.

Policy TTAR 1.4 Support and promote the development of the area as an eco-tourism destination whilst maintaining its special qualities.

| Theme | | Tourism, Transport, Access and Recreation | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|-----------|----------------|----------|------------------|--|
| Objective | | Objective TTAR1 Sustainable access, recreation, tourism and transport, which are compatible with the area's special qualities, is supported | | | | | | |
| Policy | Action | Initial Lead | Partners | Timescale | AONB Team Role | Priority | Linked Objective | |
| Policy TTAR1.1 Encourage and support improved access for a diverse range of users that maintains, protects and enhances the special qualities of the area | TTAR1.1.1 In partnership with Cumbria Countryside Access Partnership Group, monitor and improve the rights of way network and recreational facilities in the AONB | CCC | CCAP, AONB, Capita | Ongoing | Advocate | 2 | | |
| | TTAR1.1.2 Engage with AONB Parishes to take up Parish Path Initiatives and provide funding through SDF to upgrade and maintain local pathways | CCC | CCAP, AONB, NE (SDF), PCs, FLD | Ongoing | Advocate | 2 | | |
| | TTAR1.1.3 Support Natural England and promote HLF schemes to landowners to increase new access agreements | NE | AONB, FWAG, CCC | Ongoing | Advocate | 2 | | |
| Policy TTAR1.2 Encourage and support sustainable tourism activities and development within the AONB which respect, enhance and promote its special qualities | TTAR1.2.1 To provide 1 guidebook per year highlighting the AONB and its special qualities and recreational possibilities | AONB Unit | CT, NE (SDF), RSPB, CCC, T&CP, EH, EA | 2010-2014 | Executive | 3 | | |
| | TTAR1.2.2 Engage with local accommodation businesses and provide incentives and information for tourists to stay in the AONB for a longer duration | AONB Unit | CT, T&CP, local businesses, PCs, TIC, HWH | Ongoing | Catalyst | 3 | | |
| Policy TTAR 1.3 Protect and enhance the AONB's special character through safe and sustainable access for residents and visitors to, from and within the area | TTAR1.3.1 To help secure 50km of Quiet Lanes within the AONB by year 5 of the plan | CCC | AONB, Capita, HWH, ABC, CaCC | 2014 | Catalyst | 3 | | |
| | TTAR1.3.2 Develop a project and bid for funding to improve a range of B5300 issues (document year 1, funding and implementation year 2) including Hadrian's Wall cycleway completion | CCC | AONB, HWH, ABC | 2010-2012 | Catalyst | 1 | | |
| | TTAR1.3.3 To provide the maximum possible area for safe coastal access within the AONB | CCC ABC, HWH | AONB, | 2010 | Catalyst | 1 | | |
| Policy TTAR 1.4 Support and promote the development of the area as an eco-tourism destination whilst maintaining its special qualities | TTAR1.4.1 To help Partnership link the AONB to their sustainable transport initiatives | AONB Unit | CCC, ABC, CT, NE | 2012 | Executive | 2 | | |
| | TTAR 1.4.2 Complete the England's Solway Coast signage from the M6 corridor. | AONB Unit | CCC, ABC, CT, NE | 2012 | Executive | | | |



2.8 Education and Awareness

Education and Awareness Vision 2034

The special qualities of the Solway Coast are well understood, especially by land managers, local people and visitors. Communities celebrate their part within the AONB through carnivals, interpretation through art and other community based activities. Local schools and colleges use the area as a resource and fully understand the status of the area along side the National Park. The Solway Coast Discovery Centre is a gateway to learning in the AONB. The natural resources of the area are understood and contribute to the natural economy sector. Through education and interpretation the AONB is well known, respected and understood, and above all, well looked after.

Scope of Theme and Evidence

2.8.1 Many people visit and live in the area and we want to engage with as many of them as possible, from schools to families, from development agencies to small businesses, to visitors and the local community. People can learn about the area in different ways, through guides, walk routes, and news articles, through our Discovery Centre exhibition or through special programmes such as our school visits (education programme). The term 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' is very descriptive and could apply to anywhere with credentials of this nature, not just to a designated landscape. The acronym AONB is an even more ambiguous term for a designated landscape. Public awareness of the designation is, as a direct consequence of the name, low. From this extremely low baseline and with no sign of a name change in the foreseeable future we must first define an AONB before we go onto the more important role of awareness and education regarding the landscape elements which makeup Solway Coast AONB. AONBs were designated on behalf of the nation for their special qualities/ characteristics, sometimes unique to that AONB. In order to place a value on that asset we must articulate it to the public and we can only do that through a carefully measured education and awareness programme. By understanding what makes the areas special, people can enjoy and look after the area better.

Education

2.8.2 Education lies at the heart of this plan; without an awareness and a consequent respect for the AONB we cannot hope to provide for its future as a national treasure, an economic driver or a great place to live or visit. The



AONB Partnership has a key role in raising awareness regarding the special qualities of the AONB.

2.8.3 Environmental education is provided by the Solway Coast AONB Education Officer through the use of updated facilities in the Solway Coast Discovery Centre and coastal based activities (outdoor classroom) ranging from art on the beach to identifying wildlife and various habitats, all of which explain the uniqueness of the AONB. The classification of marine litter also takes place to better understand how to target awareness raising on this issue. In 2008 nearly 800 children from 24 school groups from 20 schools (including 3 from within the AONB) have received elements of our education programme. The number is growing annually.

2.8.4 Information is provided to help raise awareness on the area's special qualities via a range of media, from the AONB website to the AONB publications. The Solway Discovery Centre provides an education and information gateway to the AONB. Our logo and the new 'England's Solway Coast' tourism signage have created a unique brand image to help encourage people to visit and find out more about the AONB. It is planned to develop secondary and primary signage to help visitors explore the AONB once they have arrived there.

2.8.5 The Solway Coast Young Ranger Group is led by the Volunteer Coordinator and activities are run

throughout the year to involve schoolchildren of all ages in activities related to the landscape management of the AONB. New leaflets are produced regularly from the AONB Unit which inform the public about the AONB and direct exploration within it, including walking, cycling, birdwatching, wildflower identification, village interpretation, volunteering.. The Peatlands for People Project, a partner led project, provides information about the Solway Wetlands (raised mires) to a wide audience, and includes activities

related to the raised mires for all ages and improved access and information. Information technology is being promoted through the business sector and the AONB website provides regular information updates. Other ways in which people are informed about the AONB include interpretation boards, events, walks, the media, the Sustainable Development Fund, Rights of Way markers and Open Access interpretation.

| Issues and Forces for Change | Evidence |
|---|---|
| <p>The special qualities of the AONB need to be understood and communicated to a wide audience now more than ever, exploiting the full range of mixed media available to help encourage people to conserve and enhance the AONB.</p> | <p>The AONB provides an educational and awareness raising resource through the Discovery Centre, its conference, newsletter, press releases and website. However, as people learn and find out about things through other ways, approaches are needed to respond to this, such as podcasts, and other web related media.</p> |
| <p>The AONB needs to reach a wider audience than children as part of its education programme, to involve landowners, residents and visitors alike.</p> | <p>During 2007/8 over 1100 students from primary to college age learnt specifically about the AONB by visiting the AONB. This helps support the AONB and the National Curriculum. Opportunities with schools and colleges continues to develop, especially as the National Curriculum focuses on issues such as climate change, sustainability, natural resources, history and geology. There is also a trend towards developing 'Outdoor Classrooms'. However, education and awareness raising needs to go beyond this as visitors, residents, landowners and managers can influence and enhance the special qualities of the AONB. There is a need to secure funding to develop a new post within the AONB Unit to develop this area further.</p> |
| <p>There is a need to provide better information services and a 'gateway' through the Solway Discovery Centre to help raise awareness on the area's special qualities and activities that people can do to enjoy them.</p> | <p>Gateway sites have proven success records as one stop shops and awareness centres. 2008 saw the refurbishment of The Solway Coast Discovery Centre and its information & educational resource to help with this goal, & further steps are needed to develop the Gateway.</p> |
| <p>There is a need to better understand and enjoy the peatlands and wider wetlands within the AONB, particularly their historic and modern role in climate change mitigation.</p> | <p>Ongoing partnership with the Solway Wetlands Partnership is providing a much needed 'joined-up' approach to educational issues facing many organisations working within the AONB.</p> |
| <p>Information is needed to help people better understand features and areas within the AONB that are vulnerable to damage and/or change, such as coastal changes through erosion and deposition, changes to traditional farming practices and the consequences of visitor pressure on fragile landscapes.</p> | <p>Visitor pressure in certain areas, coupled with misuse, is destroying the very qualities visitors come to the AONB to enjoy. Changes to farming has changed the agricultural landscape but recent CAP reforms hope to reverse the trend with a return to more traditional forms of agriculture.</p> |

Objectives

Objective EA 1

There is greater awareness of the AONB's special qualities, purpose for designation and the range of opportunities for environmental education within it.

Policies

Policy EA1.1 To provide a comprehensive and high quality

educational resource to support local and regional schools and colleges meet their curriculum needs.

Policy EA1.1.2 Promote the awareness and understanding of the special qualities and vulnerabilities of the AONB.

Policy EA1.1.3 Promote good practice within the AONB through mixed media to guide the user.

| Theme | | Education and Awareness | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|-----------|----------------|----------|------------------|--|
| Objective | | Objective EA1 There is greater awareness of the AONB's special qualities, purpose for designation and the range of opportunities for environmental education within it | | | | | | |
| Policy | Action | Initial Lead | Partners | Timescale | AONB Team Role | Priority | Linked Objective | |
| Policy EA1.1 To provide a comprehensive and high quality educational resource to support local and regional schools and colleges meet their curriculum needs | EA1.1.1 To continually assess, and where appropriate, update AONB education message and its delivery to all age groups | AONB Unit | CCC, Schools, Colleges | Ongoing | Executive | 1 | CH1.2.1 | |
| | EA1.1.2 To continually update our schools' and colleges' 'package' to meet the needs of the curriculum and to improve the 'Silloth/Solway Coast Experience' for students | AONB Unit | CCC, Schools, Colleges | Ongoing | Executive | 1 | | |
| | EA1.1.3 To provide an evolving showcase/gateway for the AONB covering all of its assets | AONB Unit | ABC, CT, TIC | Ongoing | Executive | 2 | | |
| | EA1.1.4 To continue with our programme of guide books and web information | AONB Unit NE (SDF) | CT, ABC, | Ongoing | Executive | 2 | | |
| Policy EA1.2 Promote the awareness and understanding of the special qualities and vulnerabilities of the AONB | EA1.2.1 Implement phase two of the signage strategy | AONB Unit Capita | CCC, ABC, | 2012 | Executive | 1 | | |
| | EA1.2.2 Develop a sense of place toolkit for use by tourism businesses, to ensure consistent promotion of special qualities | AONB Unit NE, CCC | CT, T&CP, | 2014 | Catalyst | 3 | | |
| | EA1.2.3 Produce new booklets including climate change effects | AONB Unit NE (SDF) | CCC, EA, -2014 | 2010 | Executive | 3 | | |
| | EA1.2.4 Research and implement new methods of promoting the AONB using information technology (mobiles, web, pod casts) | AONB Unit | ABC, CCC | 2014 | Catalyst | 3 | | |
| Policy EA1.3 Promote good practice within the AONB through mixed media to guide the user | EA1.3.1 Provide updated information about the special landscape and the need to care and protect it (leaflets, web, Discovery Centre) | AONB Unit | ABC, CT, RSPB, EA, TIC, NE | Ongoing | Advocate | 2 | | |



2.9 Economy and Community

Economy and Community Vision

Villages look and feel part of the AONB through sensitive design and building extensions, high quality signage and infrastructure. Developments over the past 25 years have been sympathetic to the local vernacular style. Redundant buildings have been brought back into use. New buildings have been built in an eco-friendly way and are designed and sited to reflect the wider landscape character. Rural businesses have developed without compromising the integrity of settlements. There are thriving rural business partnerships delivering sustainable economic growth through traditional crafts, IT based products and consultancies. Services are delivered to settlements through an integrated 'mobile services and market unit' run by local people. The diversification of farm incomes has created employment within rural areas and traditional farming practices have flourished and drive a local rural skills base. Local people work in the area and have access to an adequate supply of local housing. Village pubs are thriving through the development of Solway produce menus, as are village schools as young families have increased in the area. The local wild shellfish gathering operation enjoys the cooperative approach to gathering and marketing Solway produce along with its employment and economic benefits.

Scope of Theme and evidence

2.9.1 Community needs and economic prosperity lie at the heart of this section and are inextricably linked. As pointed

out in earlier sections visitors are also dependent on community services when visiting an area. Provisions such as shops, pubs, restaurants, public transport and other infrastructure, that support communities all year round, are important to visitors also.

2.9.2 Further community provision through quality schools, affordable housing and communication networks are essential building blocks to create sustainable community well being and pride. The Solway Coast AONB lies adjacent to areas of employment such as Carlisle, Maryport/Workington, Wigton, Aspatria and Silloth and many in the community commute to these centres. Other employment, within the AONB, includes tourism support through small scale accommodation provision and caravan parks. The largest employer within the AONB is agriculture and this is centred on family employment with little external provision for farm workers with the exception of farms with larger land holdings. Micro businesses that are home-based are growing within the AONB. These include internet retail businesses, writers, IT specialists, photographers, artists and film editors to name a few. The development of the local economy in a sustainable way is important to preserve the character of the Solway Coast AONB and its intrinsic landscape values and support it as a living landscape.

Issues and Forces for Change

2.9.3 The AONB designation can directly help the local community and its economy, based on the statistics provided in Appendix 1. The following suite of issues are underpinned by the initiatives that the AONB can provide to improve and, in some cases, initiate change to provide community wellbeing and economic growth.



| Issues and Forces for Change | Evidence |
|---|--|
| <p>As village communities and buildings change over time there can be a loss of local history and distinctiveness. This could erode the contribution the villages make to the area's overall special character.</p> | <p>It is important to understand and celebrate local identity or 'sense of place' at the village/settlement level. The existing landscape character assessment describes some of the local vernacular and settlement character, but is limited in its approach. It is unlikely that this will be addressed in detail through any landscape character review work. Opportunities to capture such detail and for local communities to celebrate and reveal their individual distinctiveness and histories will be developed.</p> |
| <p>Although the use of cars is not encouraged as the primary means of transport within the AONB, reality dictates that the local community and visitors rely on cars, especially the more remote communities.</p> | <p>Car use by visitors is an increasing issue and the provision of quality car parks along the B5300 coast road is a problem. Bus services and cycle ways and routes are limited. This has been recognised through an initiative to up-grade the B5300 and its associated transport infrastructure which is underway.</p> |
| <p>On-street parking provision in villages can have a detrimental impact on village character.</p> | <p>Some villages are popular visitor destinations, such as Port Carlisle and Bowness on Solway, but have limited on-street parking and no off-street parking facilities. This is further exacerbated through visitors using Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail, where walkers often leave their cars in villages for up to a week. There is a need to address parking issues in such villages. The option of developing formal car parks on the edges of villages in discrete locations could help alleviate this issue and should be explored with private land owners.</p> |
| <p>The provision of public toilets along walking and cycling routes and within villages is important for visitors.</p> | <p>Public amenities such as toilets are adequate along the south west sector of the AONB. However, where visitor growth has occurred, namely the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail corridor in the north east sector no such provision has been made following 7 years of use. Evidence suggests that this situation needs to be addressed.</p> |
| <p>The farming hinterland found throughout the area supports sheep and cattle farming and the coast supports a range of wild fish and shellfish.</p> | <p>There is a growing opportunity to develop a Solway Foods branding strategy and Market to help improve this part of the economy as farming, fishing and aquaculture are crucial to the long term management of the character of the area.</p> |
| <p>Sustainable, organic farming such as salt fed lamb should be encouraged to help manage the marsh areas better and increase awareness of the qualities of the AONB.</p> | <p>The provenance of local branding for farm produce is yielding new markets and premium prices at the farm gate. Salt fed lamb is nothing new on the Solway Coast marshes but local provenance is unclear. Stock is brought in from fell farms surrounding the Solway plain and thus cannot be deemed 'local'. An opportunity does exist however to fatten locally produced lamb and beef and market it with a Solway brand.</p> |
| <p>Small scale business can be vulnerable to market changes and need to be retained in the AONB to support a vibrant economy and community.</p> | <p>The AONB brand has been developed during the lifetime of the last Management Plan and could be used by small businesses to positively market their products. By demonstrating links to the AONB, local produce and local services could become more attractive. By working with other organisations such as Business Link and Cumbria Tourism further business branding could be developed and advice, training and equipment could be offered.</p> |

| Issues and Forces for Change | Evidence |
|--|---|
| <p>Some services and facilities seem to be in decline but there is a lack of information on the exact details.</p> | <p>Good quality services are needed to support a vibrant and diverse resident and visitor community and to help support the overall objectives of the AONB. However, no AONB wide studies have been carried out to establish what is on offer and what is lacking. There is a need to establish this to help secure funding to develop projects and programmes to help support them in the longer term.</p> |
| <p>Farm incomes are in decline and ways to diversify farm incomes to support sustainable growth in this sector are needed.</p> | <p>CAP reform has shifted emphasis to conservation and restoration and the uptake of Higher Level Stewardship grant is important to sustain the farming community. Climate change will have an effect in the longer term and thermal shifts will create further opportunities for change and development in farming practices. In addition to this, visitor numbers are increasing and incomes could benefit from providing sustainable visitor attractions and/or accommodation.</p> |
| <p>As farming diversifies and villages and communities change, there is a need to support community cohesion and showcase what makes the area and its resources special.</p> | <p>The area does not currently hold an annual event that celebrates the resources and rural businesses and visitor opportunities. Such an event could help community and business development and cover areas as diverse as rural businesses, tourism operators, farmers, country sports, and showing stock.</p> |
| <p>Silloth is not included in the boundary of the AONB but it is the primary service centre for the AONB. This status should be reinforced and developed.</p> | <p>The AONB Unit offices and its information centre, The Solway Discovery Centre, are both based in Silloth. It has a full range of shops, hotels, services and businesses to support the local community and visitors. It can help deliver a more sustainable AONB. The AONB brand could be developed further in Silloth to help create a service centre that provides traditional markets (outdoor) for local 'Solway' produce, information about the area and to orientate visitors to the area. This support the Solway Gateway idea.</p> |
| <p>Training and skills to service the growth of rural micro businesses is essential to sustain business growth and longevity in all sectors.</p> | <p>The AONB can provide an opportunity for developing skills and training around businesses that are providing services linked to its special quality. Training opportunities offered by Partners should be promoted in relevant sectors, such as tourism.</p> |
| <p>Further development of high-speed IT links to rural areas is key to the growth of the rural business sector.</p> | <p>As new technologies come on-stream, the rural community is being increasingly better served by broadband service suppliers. However, work still needs to be done regarding the infrastructure and speed of connections. This would undoubtedly make the Solway Coast area more attractive to micro and cottage style businesses.</p> |

Objectives

Objective EC1

A sustainable rural economy and community facilities and services are supported where they are compatible with the special qualities of the area.

Policies

Policy EC1.1 Support and encourage the production and marketing of Solway produce to add value to the local economy.

Policy EC1.2 Encourage and support the development of employment and local businesses which support AONB purpose and the area's special qualities.

Policy EC1.3 Support sustainable community projects which involve aspects of delivering the AONB purpose.

Policy EC1.4 Encourage improved services and facilities for the AONB and its communities that are compatible with the area's special qualities.

| Theme | | Economy and Community | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|-----------|----------------|----------|------------------|
| Objective | | Objective EC1 A sustainable rural economy and community facilities and services are supported where they are compatible with the special qualities of the area | | | | | |
| Policy | Action | Initial Lead | Partners | Timescale | AONB Team Role | Priority | Linked Objective |
| Policy EC1.1 Support and encourage the production and marketing of Solway produce to add value to the local economy | EC1.1.1 Provide funding for the annual 'Food Fair' held in Silloth to promote Solway produce through SDF | AONB Unit | NE (SDF) STAG | Ongoing | Executive | 2 | |
| | EC1.1.2 Produce a Solway Coast AONB Cookery Book by 2010 promoting local Solway produce and recipes | AONB Unit | NE (SDF) local community | 2010 | Executive | 3 | |
| | EC1.1.3 Support NE in advising farms of the benefits of local organic meat production for farmers markets | NE | FWAG, local landowners, CLA | Ongoing | Advocate | 1 | |
| Policy EC1.2 Encourage and support the development of employment and local businesses which support AONB purpose and the area's special qualities | EC1.2.1 Provide annual funding incentives for local rural businesses (SDF) to develop sustainable products and services | AONB Unit | NE (SDF), local businesses | Ongoing | Catalyst | 2 | |
| | EC1.2.2 Produce a data base providing the evidence for the needs of services within the AONB | AONB Unit | ABC, CaCC, CT, ACT, T&CP, NAP | 2012 | Catalyst | 3 | |
| Policy EC1.3 Support sustainable community projects which involve aspects of delivering the AONB purpose | EC1.3.1 Provide annual funding through SDF to support community projects which help to deliver AONB purpose | AONB Unit | NE (SDF), local community, PCs, ACT | Ongoing | Catalyst | 2 | |
| | EC1.3.2 Encourage community led projects on sense of place and local history | | | | | | |
| Policy EC1.4 encourage improved services and facilities for the AONB and its communities that are compatible with the area's special qualities | EC1.4.1 Engage with local Parish Councils, Town Councils and community groups to find out the needs of facility provision in the AONB | AONB Unit | ABC, CaCC, CCC, PCs, TCs, Community Groups | Ongoing | Catalyst | 2 | |
| | EC1.4.2 Use the Discovery Centre as a focal meeting point for information provision within the AONB | AONB Unit, Discovery Centre | TIC, Discovery Centre, STAG, CT | Ongoing | Catalyst | 2 | |



Part Three

APPENDIX 1

Facts, Figures, Observations and Awareness

Introduction

The information presented below is derived from a range of sources. Most is encapsulated here from the State of the AONB Report 2008. Other data and perceptions have been compiled from a range of data sets, direct consultation, observation and feedback from user groups and individuals. National trends have also been used where they have local relevance. The information provided here falls into four main categories, they are:

Facts = data of an empirical nature (usually derived from government sources)

Figures = information that is quantitative and measurable

Observations = issues that are perceived through direct observation (real or potential)

Awareness = issues that have been identified by consultees (real or potential)

In each theme section the relevant facts and figures are presented. These underpin, alongside observation and awareness, information described as a short narrative in the issues and forces for change tables in Part 2 of the Plan.

Landscape Theme: Facts and Figures

One of Solway Coast's most important distinguishing features is its combination of landscape types – it is a sequence of coastal margins, agricultural land and mossland and it is the scale and importance of these elements in the Solway Firth that are unrivalled in any other AONB. The wildness and remoteness of the Solway coast, when compared to other coastal landscapes and in particular other AONBs, is a very important part of its special qualities.

The Solway Coast AONB was designated in 1964 and is one of the UK's 49 AONBs.

Size: 115 sq km, 59 km of shoreline

Landscape Character:

Estuary and Marsh, including two sub types, intertidal flats and coastal marsh; Coastal Margins including dunes and beaches, coastal mosses and coastal plain; and Lowland including low farmland, rolling lowland and drained mosses.

Key Characteristics

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

Area by Landuse:

The majority of the AONB, around 65%, is farmland. Raised mires cover a further 10% and the remaining 25% covers areas such as settlements, sand dunes, saltmarshes, rivers and highways.

Types of Agricultural Landuse:

| Landuse | No. holdings | Area (Ha) | % agricultural land |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Crops/bare fallow | 52 | 1097.8 | 14.1 |
| Temp. grass | 51 | 854.3 | 11.0 |
| Permanent grass | 106 | 4881.7 | 62.8 |
| Rough grazing | 22 | 452.8 | 5.8 |
| Woodland | 20 | 222.0 | 2.8 |
| Set aside | 23 | 87.3 | 1.1 |
| All other land | 23 | 183.8 | 2.4 |
| Total farmed area | 134 | 7779.7 | 100 |

Bare fallow = 42.6ha, Crops = 1055.2ha (13.6%)

Features in the landscape such as hedgerows are an inherent part of the character of the AONB. Other important features include dressed stone culverts, sandstone gate posts, and dry stone walls. Only small areas of woodland occur within the AONB but by their scarcity have become important landscape features. Most of the trees are mature and the lack of appropriate planting of new native woodland and the management of existing woodland are areas of concern.

Man has significantly influenced the AONB landscape in many ways, through settlement, rural industry such as peat cutting, and land management, in particular, farming. The landscape comprises numerous individual features (sites, monuments and buildings) as well as broad patterns of field systems and settlements. There is a need to retain field patterns and boundaries, together with the need to maintain and enhance distinctive character including different local styles, e.g. kested hedgerows, North Cumberland Style Hedgelaying, sandstone gate stoops, and dry stone walls.

Results from 2004 AONB Hedgerow Survey

Few (29%) of the AONB hedges are species rich with more than 4 species. Thus, the majority of hedges do not meet the targets set for the Ancient and/ or Species-Rich Hedgerows Action Plan (part of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan). Less than 10% of hedges were occupied by gaps, showing favourable condition. There was little or no management of the verges or headlands. Most of the hedges in the AONB are laid on hedge banks, (kests locally) and this is the local character type of hedges for the Solway Basin. 60% of hedges were leggy/overgrown, with 32% clipped and 40% mechanically cut; 70% of hedges had no trees. 75% of hedges had an earth bank, most in the 0.5-1m range of height, 35% of hedge banks were fenced off, and 42% had no management. 72.5kms of hedgerow are found in the AONB, which has an area of 115 km square. The mean hedge length in each km square was 6.5km.

These results highlight the need for better hedgerow management.

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)

The Solway Coast AONB is classified as within the Solway Basin JCA (JCA 6) but only makes up a very small percentage (11%) of the JCA. The CQC results indicate that, between 1990 and 1998 within the JCA, there was some change inconsistent with the countryside character but, between 1999 and 2003, the character was neglected

and is diverging. The headline indicator does not reflect conditions within the AONB and a new LCA is needed. Natural England recognise that there is a problem with accepting CQC information at face value¹ and Solway Coast is identified as one AONB where further work is required to look at local interpretation of CQC data.

Natural Heritage Theme: Facts and Figures

Internationally designated areas: Natura 2000 Sites

Natura 2000 sites within the AONB

| Designation | Description | Total Area (ha) | Area within AONB (ha) | % of AONB |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Special Area of Conservation (SAC) | River Eden (and Tributaries) | 2463.23 | 17.5 | 0.15% |
| | South Solway Mosses | 1962.36 | 967.6 | 8.4% |
| | Solway Firth | 43636.72 | 3497.1 | 30.4% |
| Special Protection Area (SPA) | Upper Solway Flats and Marshes | 30706.26 | 3497.1 | 30.4% |
| Ramsar site | Upper Solway Flats and Marshes | 30706.26 | 3497.1 | 30.4% |

Species

Within the AONB there are at least 8 Cumbria BAP species: Songthrush, Barn Owl, Brown long-eared Bat, Natterer's Bat, Pipistrelle Bat, Marsh Fritillary, Natterjack Toad and Great-crested Newt (also known as Warty Newt) as well as a number of national BAP species; 6 EU Habitats Directive 'Annex II' Species – Common Porpoise, Common Seal, Grey Seal, Otter, Marsh Fritillary, Great-crested Newt; and 7 EU protected species - Brown long-eared Bat, Common porpoise, Natterer's Bat, Pipistrelle Bat, Otter, Natterjack Toad and Great-crested Newt.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats within the AONB include:

- Coastal Saltmarsh
- Coastal and Flood plain Grazing Marsh
- Coastal Sand Dunes (Dune Grassland and Dune Heath)
- Lowland Raised Bog (and Lowland Heathland)
- Coastal Vegetated Shingle
- Coastal Grasslands
- Maritime Cliffs and Slopes
- Reedbeds
- Fens
- Saltmarsh
- Mudflats and Intertidal sand flats

Nationally and locally designated areas: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

SSSIs within the AONB

| SSSI | Area (ha) | % AONB | % of SSSI (in AONB) in Favourable or Recovering condition |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|---|
| Bowness Common | 854.78ha | 7.43% | 87.5% |
| Silloth Dunes and Mawbray Bank | 91.23 | 0.79% | 41.4% |
| Glasson Moss | 225.26 | 1.96% | 63.8% |
| River Eden and Tributaries | 17.5ha in AONB | 0.15% | 0% |
| Salta Moss | 45.61 | 0.4% | 0% |
| Upper Solway Flats and Marshes | 3497.14ha within AONB | 30.41% | 95.9% |

¹ AONB Monitoring – an analysis of the first outputs of CQC, Steve Preston, Natural England

Local sites

Other important wildlife sites within the AONB include:

1 National Nature Reserve – South Solway Mosses (967.55ha) of which Glasson Moss and Bowness Common lie within the AONB (area = 448ha, 3.9% of total AONB area). The NNRs of Wedholme Flow, Finglandrigg Wood and Drumburgh Moss lie just outside the AONB.

16 County Wildlife Sites

2 County Wildlife Trust Reserves:

- Bowness on Solway Nature Reserve, (area =7.21ha, 0.06% of total AONB)
 - Rockcliffe Marsh, (area = 1120ha, 9.7% of total AONB)
- 1 RSPB Reserve, Campfield Marsh, (saltmarsh area = 52.40 ha and intertidal area = 23.83 ha, 0.66% of total AONB).

Geology: There are two SSSIs within the AONB – Upper Solway Flats and Marshes and the River Eden and Tributaries – which are designated partly for their geological importance. There are also four Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) in the AONB: Beckfoot- submerged forest; Rockcliffe – sandstone outcrop; Swarthy Hill – drumlin and raised beach profile; Dubmill Point and Allonby – raised beach profiles.

Issues for Natural Heritage

The key issues arising from the baseline assessment for biodiversity include:

The loss and fragmentation of BAP habitat within the AONB

The need to protect and enhance statutory and non-statutory designated sites of nature conservation value within the AONB

Impact of changing agricultural practices on species and habitats and scrub encroachment

Spread of invasive non-native species

Loss or fragmentation of species-rich hedgerows

Deterioration of water quality through diffuse pollution

Erosion of the dunes by vehicles and illicit car parking

Drying out or loss of raised mires

Re-creation of wetland areas

Undergrazing of the dunes

Conflict between access to the coast, undergrazing, impact on biodiversity, safety

Disturbance to wildlife along the coast during the breeding season and roosting times by people and their dogs

Development of ecological networks

Ensure development does not create new barriers to native species movement

Cultural & Built Heritage Theme: Facts & Figures

The cultural, archaeological and historic heritage of the AONB is one of the special qualities of the area and is integral to its character. Many of the features that make the area distinctive are cross cutting with the special landscape of the AONB such as field boundaries (drystone walls and hedgerows), and settlements (the layout of villages and hamlets and the building traditions of the area). Sandstone gatestoops are also an important heritage feature of field entrances. More data is needed to provide a base line for the state of hedgerows and trees, traditional buildings and steadings.

The most famous heritage site within the AONB is Hadrian's Wall which terminates at Bowness-on-Solway. Hadrian's Wall Military Zone was designated as a World Heritage site in 1987 and Roman monuments can be found throughout the AONB from Maryport to Beaumont.

Cumbria County Council holds the Historic Environment Records (HERs)² for Cumbria and details of those within the AONB are listed in the original document.

In summary, the AONB contains:

- 423 Sites and Monument Records (SMR)
- 102 Listed Buildings (4 x grade I, 6 x II*, 92 x II)
- 51 Scheduled Monuments
- 7 Conservation Areas (containing 65 SMR sites, 48 listed buildings, 8 Scheduled Monuments)
- 0 Registered historic parks & gardens
- 80 SMR sites lie within the 51 Scheduled Monument areas.
- The 7 Conservation Areas (Built environment) are Allonby, Boustead Hill, Bowness-on-Solway, Burgh by Sands, Dykesfield, Mawbray and Port Carlisle.
- There is one Parish Plan for Burgh-by-Sands and there are no Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans.

The villages within the AONB have their own distinctive characters derived from buildings constructed in a traditional style and from traditional materials. The form and layout of villages and hamlets in the area also contributes to the character and quality of the local landscape. The size of the villages in the AONB has remained fairly stable with some limited new building, not always in keeping with local vernacular styles.

Clay buildings, known as 'dabbins', are a distinctive type of vernacular architecture within the Solway Plain area, many of which are based on the longhouse design, with origins in the medieval period. A large number of these traditional buildings have been lost since they were first recorded, and many remain at risk, as only 20% are legally protected by listing. Data on 'dabbins' within the AONB is to be sought.

There is a need for a Historic Landscape Characterisation Project within the AONB to provide more relevant characterisation and local management guidance, and to increase the level of public awareness of the significance of the cultural heritage in the AONB.

Haaf netting dates back to Viking times around 1000 years ago. The technology (frame, net etc) has not changed since its introduction and is still used today. It is a public fishery and anyone can take out a licence although numbers are limited. The fishery uses Scandinavian words to describe both the tackle and the way it is fished. Both the fishing instrument and the language is an important part of the heritage of the Solway Coast.

The Coast Theme: Facts and Figures

The Solway coastline provides significant wildlife habitats and has a rich heritage of Haaf Net Fishing and maritime trading. The 59 kilometres of coastline provides a valuable resource for tranquil recreation, tourism, and fishing. The forthcoming Marine and Coastal Access Bill presents a major opportunity for coastal and marine conservation and access.

Flooding

Areas potentially at risk from flooding from rivers (a 1 in 100 year event) or the sea (a 1 in 200 year chance) without flood defences have been mapped by the Environment Agency. The flood risk maps indicate potential flooding of all the main rivers plus some flooding of the smaller watercourses flowing west between Maryport and Skinburness. The maps also indicate potential flooding around much of the AONB coast with inundation of the low lying marshes – Rockcliffe, Newton, Calvo and Skinburness Marshes. (cross cutting with Climate and Renewables)

²HERs were previously known as Sites and Monuments Records: the name has changed to reflect the wider scope of the data they now contain. This includes listed buildings, scheduled monuments, parks and gardens of special historic buildings, archaeological events (surveys, evaluations, building recording etc.) and conservation areas.

Overwintering Bird Population

Overwintering waterbirds (wildfowl and waders combined) for the Solway:-

- 00/01 = 150,642
- 01/02 = 124,127
- 02/03 = 153,364
- 03/04 = 145,052
- 04/05 = 140,961
- 5 year Average = 142,829

Species occurring in internationally important numbers:- Whooper Swan, Barnacle Goose, Shelduck, Pintail, Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit.

The impact of wind turbines on important bird populations in the Solway Estuary is a crosscutting issue with Biodiversity. The Pink Footed Goose, Greylag Goose and Whooper Swan are identified as important bird species that are vulnerable to the effects of onshore wind energy developments.

Upper Solway Mussel Fisheries

With regard to recruitment to the fishery, this can and does vary year on year. The actual figures can be found in the reports on the annual surveys (2004 onwards can be found on www.cumbriascfc.org.uk downloads). However, the following gives the amount of spat found from 2002 to date.

- 2002 very large settlement
- 2003 moderate to poor settlement
- 2004 poor
- 2005 poor
- 2006 very large settlement
- 2007 very poor

Any large settlement of spat is mostly lost before reaching the winter months. For example, in 2006 the very heavy late spring/early summer settlement was found to have been reduced by over 90% by mid October.

Bathing Water Quality

| Beach | Sampling Year | Water Quality |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Skinburness | X : 312621.03, Y: 556643.31 | |
| | 2007 | Good |
| | 2006 | Good |
| | 2005 | Good |
| | 2004 | Good |
| | 2003 | Excellent |
| Silloth | X : 310361.5, Y: 553484.19 | |
| | 2007 | Good |
| | 2006 | Excellent |
| | 2005 | Good |
| | 2004 | Good |
| | 2003 | Good |
| Allonby | X : 307742.12, Y: 542456.38 | |
| | 2007 | Good |
| | 2006 | Excellent |
| | 2005 | Good |
| | 2004 | Good |
| | 2003 | Good |
| Allonby South | X : 306445.66, Y: 540752.44 | |
| | 2007 | Good |
| | 2006 | Excellent |
| | 2005 | Good |
| | 2004 | Good |
| | 2003 | Good |

EA website accessed 21/4/08

Marine and Beach Litter

Results from the AONB Volunteer Group 'Beachwatch' Survey 2007:

1072 items found along 200 metres of beach (Allonby)
 The main items were: 41.4% plastics, 14% metal, 12% sanitary, 7% paper, 5% wood and 5% glass
 The main sources of litter were: beach users 49%, fishing 7%, shipping 8%, and not sourced 21%
 In 2006 survey 384 items were found
 Marine litter is an issue and apart from volunteer collections, Allerdale Borough Council remove coastal but not beach litter (apart from dead carcasses)

Environmental Management Theme: Facts & Figures

Agricultural land in the AONB comprises around 73% pasture (sheep, dairy and beef cattle); less than 10% is arable land and this is mainly barley and wheat.

Farming in the AONB is characterized by land held in individual tenancies and rights of common grazing on the dunes and marshes. Traditionally, shares or 'stints' in the common grazing have been attached to individual land holdings. Commons on the saltmarshes are made up of many stints and are run by committees. There has been no grazing on the dunes since 1997 because of the hazards of high speed traffic on the coastal road; however, fencing is now permitted and stock is returning to sections.

The farmed area within the AONB appears to be remaining at a fairly stable level but there is a trend towards diversification – providing holiday accommodation, caravan parks and tearooms.

Agri-Environmental schemes within the AONB

| Type of Scheme | Number | Area (ha) |
|--|--------|---------------|
| Environmental Stewardship, Entry Level Scheme (ELS) | 69 | 6357 |
| Environmental Stewardship, Higher Level Scheme (HLS) | 3 | 1039 |
| Countryside Stewardship Schemes, CSS | 51 | 4480 |
| Woodland Grant Schemes, WGS | 2 | Not available |
| Wildlife Enhancement Schemes | 7 | Not available |

Agricultural landuse within the AONB

| Year | Total area, hectares | % AONB | No. holdings |
|------|----------------------|--------|--------------|
| 2006 | 7779.7 | 67.65 | 134 |
| 2005 | 7483.1 | 65.07 | 132 |
| 2004 | 8147.4 | 70.84 | 139 |
| 2003 | 7524.3 | 65.42 | 123 |
| 2002 | 7420.8 | 64.52 | 129 |
| 2001 | 7392.6 | 64.28 | 130 |
| 2000 | 7704.4 | 66.99 | 131 |

Data suppressed prior to 2000 to prevent disclosure of information about individual holdings.

Of the 7779.7ha farmed within the AONB, the vast majority (73.8%) is grass (temporary and permanent) and is used for grazing (dairy and beef cattle and sheep). A further 5.8% is classed as rough grazing. 9.2 % is used for crops, mainly spring and winter barley and wheat. Woodland covers only 2.4 % of the AONB.

Peatlands

The South Solway Mosses comprises four distinct areas of peatland at Bowness Common, Glasson Moss, Wedholme Flow (outside the AONB) and Drumburgh

Moss. Extending to some 1,952 hectares this complex is the largest relatively intact area of lowland raised bog in England.

Tranquillity

The tranquillity of the Solway Coast AONB is one of its key features. Its remoteness and wildness are also part of its special qualities. A Council for the Protection of England Tranquillity Map is available for Cumbria. The detail is somewhat inadequate at AONB level. However, the AONB generally is mapped as a 'most tranquil' area with the level of tranquillity decreasing slightly in the southern area of the AONB along the coast from Silloth to Maryport. The impact of the roads on tranquillity is clearly seen. Increasing visitor numbers, increasing car use, improved access and changing recreational activities may lead to a decrease in tranquillity within the AONB.

Air

The Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 place a duty on local authorities to review and assess air quality for seven pollutants and ensure that standards and objectives laid down for each will be met. Monitoring is carried out within the AONB boundary by Allerdale Borough Council and air quality is not considered to be a problem within the AONB.

Water

The AONB is bordered and crossed by many streams and four major rivers – the Waver, Wampool, Eden and Esk. The major rivers and their tributaries drain into the Solway Firth. Many of the smaller streams, such as Crookhurst Beck, Brunsow Beck and Scad Beck, drain westwards into Silloth and Allonby Bays. The coastal waters around the AONB, particularly in the southern part are important for bathing.

The biological and chemical quality of the River Eden as it enters the AONB is classed as 'very good' with 'moderate' levels of nutrients (nitrates and phosphates). Water quality within the Esk is also generally 'good' with very low levels of nutrients. Trends in concentrations are steady. In the Waver, biological and chemical quality is classed as 'fairly good' with 'moderate' levels of nutrients and there have been recent improvements in chemical quality and levels of phosphates. The chemical and biological quality of the Wampool within the AONB is classed as 'Fair' (chemical quality improving recently from 'Poor'). Nutrients are classed as 'moderate to high' and appear to be stable at these levels.

Drying out of lowland mires is a particular problem within the AONB and several SSSI units are identified as being in adverse condition due to drainage and inappropriate ditch management.

The Water Framework Directive³ (WFD) is European Community legislation to ensure waters are managed to achieve good quality across Europe. All waters are to be assessed to see if they are likely to meet the objectives of the Directive. The water bodies within/bordering the AONB which have been assessed against the objectives of the WFD and which are identified by the Environment Agency as being 'at risk' are listed in below.

The quality of the water in the watercourses within and bounding the AONB is crucial in maintaining the water quality of the AONB's wetland and coastal habitats including key BAP habitats and SAC and SPA designations. The coastal waters are also very important for the local tourist industry.

³ The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC).

'At Risk' water bodies within the AONB

| Water Body | 'At Risk' status | WFD River Basin District |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| Wampool (upstream of the Laythes as it enters the AONB) | Diffuse source pollution | Solway Tweed |
| Great Gutter | Diffuse source pollution | Solway Tweed |
| Causewayhead (wath) Beck | Point source pollution and physical or morphological alteration ⁴ | Solway Tweed |
| Black Dub | Diffuse source pollution | North West |
| Crookhurst Beck | Diffuse source pollution | North West |
| Brunslow Beck | Diffuse source pollution | North West |
| Scad Beck | Point source pollution and Diffuse source pollution | North West |

Climate and Renewables Theme : Facts & Figures

The AONB supports the development of renewable sources of energy where these are compatible with its designation, e.g. small-scale renewable energy developments, energy efficient measures, ground source heat pumps, etc. These are expected to increase as the Government has set targets to source 10% of its energy from renewable sources by 2010.

Offshore development can have an impact on the landscape and seascape of the AONB, although it is outside the control of local planning authorities as their remit only extends to the mean low water level. At this moment, a major activity which has great impact on the AONB is the building of 60 wind turbines at Robin Rigg in the Solway Firth. The Government has a target of 15% of energy coming from renewables by 2020 showing the targets are increasing beyond 2010. There will be a third round of licences being issued by the Crown Estate in the Irish Sea and the recent licences in the Scottish Waters adjacent to Robin Rigg and in Wigtown Bay could result in an additional 60 turbines adjacent to Robin Rigg and an additional 60 further north at Wigtown Bay.

As biomass and biofuels are playing a part nationally, this could affect the character of the AONB if short rotation coppicing and forestry, or biofuel crops become popular in the area, and the agricultural land would not support this well.

The search for non-fossil fuel sources of energy may result in other sites close to the AONB being identified for harnessing wave and tidal stream power as a potential source of renewable energy; the notion of a barrage across the Solway Estuary has been put forward. There would be impacts on the AONB if this scheme came to fruition, and these would depend upon location, function and design.

⁴ Morphology (form and structure) of the aquatic environment is a key factor in determining the nature and condition of ecosystems within water bodies. Physical alterations to the water bodies will have an impact on the ecosystems within them. These include flood defences, weirs, dams, channelisation and culverts. Other activities can impact on the physical characteristics of rivers, such as cattle poaching (trampling on grassed areas which leads to the soil being eroded) or construction close to rivers. Often rivers are reprofiled to create a more uniform cross-section, which allows faster passage of flood flows. The impacts on the environment include: habitat reduction, loss of marginal vegetation, reduction in cover for aquatic and marginal species, soil erosion and siltation of important habitats and increased likelihood of flooding (Environment Agency).

⁵ Climate change Scenarios for the UK: UKCIP02 Scientific Report

By 2080 in the North West:

Annual change in max temp = 1-5oC
 Change in max summer temp = 2-6oC
 Annual change in rainfall = 0-20% decrease
 Change in summer rainfall = 10-60% decrease
 Change in winter rainfall = 0-30% increase
 Change in sea level = 9-69 cm
 Increased frequency and severity of storm events
 Climate change could have a significant impact on characteristic AONB landscapes and the historic environment over time. By the 2050s, typical spring temperatures may occur between one and three weeks earlier than at present and the onset of present winter temperatures may be delayed by one to three weeks. This is likely to lead to a lengthening of the thermal growing season for plants. The amount of heating and cooling for buildings will also change.”⁵

The predicted impacts of climate change will also lead to more frequent incidences of temperature extremes which may, over time, result in altered growing seasons and changes to what crops/produce can be successfully grown in the AONB. There may also be an impact on the lifecycle of indigenous species across all forms of biodiversity and increased stress placed upon existing native species and local habitats. Climate change will also lead to changes in rainfall, sea level and storm events, which in turn could lead to flooding, coastal erosion, changes in drainage patterns and river patterns. This would impinge on Environmental Management and actions to deliver.

The management of this change process is integral to the AONB Unit and, in conjunction with our partner organisations, we will monitor, manage and mitigate the impacts of climate change in order to preserve the special qualities where possible. Two naturally occurring carbon sinks are the raised mires and Solway Estuary.

Management of the coast is receiving increasing attention as a national priority, in recognition of the importance of the coast for conservation and recreation, and increasing pressures on the coast including sea level rise. The impacts of sea level rise coupled with an increase in storm severity will alter the coastline through such mechanisms as increased erosion and flooding. The likely impact of increased weather activity may be seen through increased rates of sediment transfer, flood damage and erosion. The areas most threatened by these pressures will be the sensitive estuarine environment and the coastal sand dunes. The Management Plan will, where appropriate, defer to the Shoreline Management Plans developed by the relevant body in order to have an effective strategy to deal with the pressure of environmental change.

The principles for managing coastal zone issues follow the following decision hierarchy:

- Do nothing
- Hold the existing line
- Advance the existing line
- Retreat

Tourism, Transport, Access & Recreation Theme: Facts and Figures

Whilst recreation is not a purpose of designation it is recognised that demand should be met provided it does not harm conservation or natural beauty, or the needs of other uses.

Public Rights of Way within the AONB (PROW)

| Type of Access | Length, km |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Public Rights of Way | |
| Footpaths | 144.9 |
| Bridleways | 20.8 |
| 1 byways open to all traffic (BOATs) | 2.4 |

PROW are managed by 2 different agents across the parishes within the AONB. 11 Parishes are managed by Cumbria County Council as the statutory highway authority. Maintenance of this network is undertaken through a 4 year rolling programme, such that the condition of all PROW in these parishes will have been surveyed and assessed between the years 2006 and 2010, and repairs and replacements of signing, stiles and gates undertaken.

PROW in the remaining parishes (Burgh by Sands and Rockcliffe) are managed by Carlisle City Council under claimed rights. Maintenance of this network is undertaken through a 6 year rolling programme, starting in 2008, with work completed in these parishes in the same year.

An independent random survey of 5% of all PROW across the county is surveyed yearly, in May and November, to give an indication of current condition of the network (BVPI 178 'ease of use'). The 2008/09 figures show that 69.8% passed with 92.5% of roadside signposts in place.

Stewardship Access

Natural England has agreements, including conservation walks and rides and educational access, under previous (Countryside Stewardship Scheme, CSS) and current (Higher Level Stewardship, HLS) Agri-Environment Stewardship Agreements. The table below gives the extent of stewardship access within the AONB.

Stewardship Access within the AONB

| Site | Type of Access | Length of access (km) | Access end date |
|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Swarthy Hill | Conservation walk/ride | 0.4 | 30/9/2012 |
| Dryholm Farm Silloth | Conservation walk/ride | 3.0 | 30/9/2010 |
| Rogersceugh Farm | Conservation walk/ride | 0.8 | 30/9/2013 |
| Bank Mill Nurseries | Educational access | Not applicable | 30/9/2013 |

Other Access

Three long distance footpaths pass through the AONB: the Cumbria Coastal Way, the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail and the Allerdale Ramble which extends northwards along the shore as far as Grune Point. There are also 11.4km of Easy Access walks.

Open Access Land

There are five areas of Open Access land within the AONB: Silloth and Mawbray Bank, Burgh Marsh, Skinburness Marsh, Bowness Common and Glasson Moss.

Cycling

The National Cycle Network Route 72 passes through the AONB (the Hadrian's Wall Cycleway) and part of the Cumbria Cycle Way between Silloth and Maryport (this is considered too dangerous by cycling enthusiasts). A purpose built cycle path has been proposed between Silloth, Allonby and Maryport to boost tourism. Within the AONB cycling is becoming more popular due to the Hadrian's Wall Cycleway and linked routes (AONB 5 Do-in-a-Day Cycle routes).

Tourism

Tourism is second only to farming in its importance to the local economy and is a major employer in the area. The principal recreational activities are informal – walking, cycling, bird watching, fishing and swimming. Allonby also attracts windsurfers. Most visitors arrive by car and so this

has an impact on highways. Developing 'Quiet Lanes', with traffic calming and educating about the wealth of footpaths and nature conservation interests, is as much a part of sustainable tourism as is promoting alternative forms of transport in and from the AONB.

Number of visitors to the Solway Coast Discovery Centre, 2005-2007

| No. of visitors | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|
| UK | 10,583 | 11,012 | 10,719 |
| Overseas | 131 | 199 | 104 |
| Total | 10,714 | 11,211 | 10,823 |

There have been no recent local tourist surveys to estimate the number of people who visit the AONB each year or to assess their reasons for visiting, and this is an issue which needs to be addressed. Visitor numbers to the Discovery Centre are monitored by the TIC and a breakdown of the numbers for 2005-2007 is given in the above table. Apart from this information on overseas and UK visitors collected by the TIC, there is no more detailed information on visitor makeup. Information on tourism is, however, available for Cumbria as a whole and Allerdale and Carlisle districts from the Cumbria STEAM Report (2006). Key statistics from this report for visitor revenue, numbers and days is given in the table below. These set the context for tourism activity within the AONB.

Tourism revenue, tourist numbers and tourism days in Cumbria in 2006:

| | Visitor Revenue, £M (change 2005/06) | Visitor Numbers, millions (change 2005/06) | Tourist Days, millions (change 2005/06) |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Allerdale | 194.7 (-1%) | 2.5 (-3%) | 5.3 (-1) |
| Carlisle | 120.01 (-5%) | 2.4 (-2%) | 3.2 (-3) |
| Cumbria | 1073.9 (-1%) | 15.2 (-1%) | 27.5 (-1) |

The figures clearly show the importance of tourism in the local area, in particular in Allerdale. Allerdale Borough Council in its Tourism Strategy⁶ identifies tourism as a vital sector in the local economy and a large employer in the borough. Tourism is seen as an increasingly important component of Allerdale's economy. The report also confirms that Allerdale attracts a predominantly day visitor market.

Education & Awareness Theme: Facts & Figures

The AONB Unit uses a range of techniques and materials to make people aware of the AONB and the reasons for its designation i.e. landscape, wildlife, habitats, culture, history. Overall there is a need to promote the special qualities of the AONB and to understand forces for change.

Environmental education is provided by the Solway Coast AONB Education Officer through the use of updated facilities in the Solway Coast Discovery Centre and coastal based activities ranging from art on the beach, identifying wildlife and various habitats and marine litter classifying, all of which explain the uniqueness of the AONB.

⁶ A Strategy for Tourism 2005-2015, Allerdale Borough Council, August 2005.

Facts and figures for 2007/8 Education days

Nearly 800 children
 24 school groups
 20 schools (including 3 from within the AONB)
 1 KS4 (14-16)
 8 KS1 (4-7)
 11 KS2 (7-11)
 Plus the 8 groups who took part in the Art project,
 3 key stage 1 and 5 key stage 2

Facts and Figures for 2008/9 Education Days

Nearly 1200 children (4 years -18 years)
 28 school groups
 KS1 9 groups
 KS2 13 groups
 KS1&2 (small rural schools) 4 groups
 KS4 6 groups
 Scouts and guides 2 groups
 Initial Teacher training students 2 groups

Solway Plain Tourism Signage 2007/8

The objective of this project is to provide professional signage to signpost visitors to the Solway Coast AONB and the western end of Hadrian's Wall Heritage Site.

Overall, more people will be aware of the Solway area and the AONB, and, with time, secondary and primary signage will be added. The new signage aims to provide awareness, public education and understanding of the area frequently by-passed by visitors passing through Cumbria via the M6 motorway.

The Solway Coast Young Ranger Group is led by the Volunteer Coordinator and activities are run throughout the year to involve schoolchildren of all ages in activities related to the landscape management of the AONB

New leaflets are produced regularly from the AONB Unit which inform the public about the AONB and direct exploration within it, including walking, cycling, bird watching, wildflower identification, village interpretation and volunteering.

The Peatlands for People Project, a partner led project, provides information about the Solway Wetlands (raised mires) to a wide audience, and includes activities related to the raised mires for all ages and improved access and information.

Information technology is being promoted through the business sector and the AONB website provides regular information updates.

Other ways in which people are informed about the AONB include interpretation boards, events, walks, the media, the Sustainable Development Fund, ROW markers and Open Access interpretation.

Theme: Economy and Community; Facts & Figures

This section looks at some known parts of the rural economy and needs of the community.

Demographics

The total population of the AONB is around 3400 and there has been an approximate increase in the population within the AONB from 2001 to 2006. Between 2001 and 2006, the population in Cumbria increased by 0.8%, a little slower than that in the northwest (1.2%) and England as a whole (2.7%)⁷. Over this period, the overall population within the AONB increased by approximately 1.7%.

The southern area of the AONB from Maryport to Silloth comprises 16% of the total area but accounts for 30% of the population. The population of the AONB increases significantly over the summer months due to tourists.

⁷ Office of National Statistics Update, Winter 2007, No. 130 Population Trends.
⁸ Cumbria County Council Information and Intelligence, Policy & Performance report, Sept 07
⁹ The IMD uses 38 indicators that are grouped into 7 domains. These are: Income deprivation (weighting 22.5%), Employment deprivation (weighting 22.5%), Health deprivation and disability (weighting 13.5%), Education, skills and training deprivation (weighting 13.5%) Barriers to housing and services (weighting 9.3%), Crime (weighting 9.3%) and Living environment (weighting 9.3%) Sub Domain – the "indoors" living environment (quality of housing) Sub Domain – the "outdoors" living environment (air quality and road traffic accidents).

Within the total population of the AONB, the table below illustrates that there are slightly fewer children and more retired people than in the populations of the northwest as a whole and in England generally:

| % | AONB | Northwest | England |
|-------------------|------|-----------|---------|
| Child ren (0 -15) | 20.0 | 20.7 | 20.2 |
| Retired (65+) | 17.0 | 16.0 | 15.9 |

Demographic changes in the population in the northwest are expected to lead to an increasingly ageing population and it is predicted in Cumbria⁸ there will be a steady decline in 0-14 year olds, a steeper decline in 15-64 year olds and a steady increase in those aged 65+. This pattern is likely to be reflected within the AONB.

Employment

There are no centres of employment within the AONB but small to medium enterprises and family owned business provide employment throughout the area. Farming and tourism are of primary importance to the local economy and both are major employers in the area. Around 65% of the AONB is farmland and there are 134 farm holdings within the AONB. There are 9 caravan sites, 1 guest house, 2 hotels and 13 pubs/inns listed in the AONB area. Data regarding other small businesses within the AONB is not available but, based on regional statistics and information on businesses in the vicinity of the AONB, it is estimated that there has been a growth in this area of around 8% between 2002 and 2005.

Unemployment in the area is low, (Allerdale, 2.1% of all people aged between 16-74 and economically active, Carlisle, 2.2% compared to 3.63% in the northwest and 3.35% in England) but a little higher than in Cumbria as a whole (1.9 %). However, the lack of diversity in employment opportunities within the AONB is contributing to the progressive loss of young people from the area. Opportunities to broaden employment, such as new internet-based businesses and other employment opportunities which are not dependent on good road access should be encouraged.

Housing

House prices range considerably across the AONB and the house price to income ratio varies between around 6:1 to 7:1. This is better than for much of the rest of the county eg. many parts of South Lakeland have a ratio of well over 8:1 but is worse than the Maryport / Workington area (ratios of less than 5:1). The high price of houses relative to income can make it difficult for local people on low incomes, particularly young adults, to afford a home of their own.

Lifestyle/Quality of Life

Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2004

| Ward | Burgh | Holme | Marsh |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Index of Multiple Deprivation (UK ranking) | 4688/7936 | 1849/7936 | 3310/7936 |
| Index of Multiple Deprivation (Cumbria ranking) | 121/168 | 39/168 | 76/168 |

The Indices of Deprivation are widely recognised as one of the most accurate statistical measures of quality of life in local communities. The Index of Multiple Deprivation combines a number of indicators⁹, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area in England. This allows each area to be ranked relative to one another according to their level of deprivation. Cumbria County

Council has calculated ward-level deprivation estimates for all wards in the county. The quality of life for those living within the AONB as measured against those of Cumbria and the rest of England (based on sample wards taken to best represent the AONB population) is illustrated above.

Employment in Farming

| Year | No. Farmers (full time from 2000) | | Total labour (farmers full and part time, managers and casual) | |
|------|-----------------------------------|------------|--|------------|
| | Holdings | No. people | Holdings | No. people |
| 2006 | 66 | 106 | 113 | 248 |
| 2005 | 68 | 113 | 109 | 258 |
| 2004 | 69 | 109 | 102 | 250 |
| 2003 | 69 | 110 | 104 | 240 |
| 2002 | 72 | 117 | 112 | 246 |
| 2001 | 77 | 120 | 117 | 260 |
| 2000 | 79 | 124 | 117 | 268 |
| 1999 | 112 | 212 | 115 | 293 |
| 1995 | 112 | 200 | 115 | 310 |
| 1990 | 116 | 215 | 117 | 315 |

Pre 2000, No of farmers was recorded. 2000 onwards, this was split into 'full time and part time' farmers.

The number of full time farmers has shown a steady decline from 124 in 2000 to 106 in 2006. The total number of people employed in farming (farmers, managers, full time, part time, casual) has fallen significantly from over 300 in the 1990s but has remained between 240 and 250 over the last 5 years.

APPENDIX 2

The External Review Process and Public Consultation

The revised Consultation Draft Plan went out for public consultation on 17th February for a six week consultation period until March 31st 2009. The draft consultation documents were accompanied by the Strategic Environmental Assessment at the later date of March 30th until 4th May 2009. Under European Directive 2001/42/EC the AONB Partnership was required to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in order to ensure the Plan provides a high level of protection for the environment and contributes to the integration of environmental considerations and promotion of sustainable development.

At the same time all consultation documents were available on the AONB website and hard copies or CDs were sent to all Parish and Town Councils, District Councils, Headteachers, Silloth TIC in the Discovery Centre, and all AONB Partnership members. Press releases and articles were also issued. A total of 92 contacts were individually informed of the review as part of the consultation. The Environmental Report for the SEA and a non-technical report of the SEA, formed part of the consultation documentation and these were also posted on the AONB website. In addition, the Management Plan and accompanying SEA documents and reports were sent to the statutory consultees of Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency. There were 18 responses to the Management Plan, a number were very lengthy and helpful. There were no consultation responses to the SEA.

Three evening meetings were held at Silloth Discovery Centre, Allonby Village Hall and Burgh-by-Sands Village Hall during March 2009. At each event, participants were provided with consultation proformas to fill in and discussions were actively promoted as to the special qualities of the AONB and people's perception of the landscape and sense of place; key issues affecting the AONB; ideas for the future, and any other issues arising. During the six week period the public were able to respond to the Draft Management Plan at the Discovery Centre in Silloth, using the consultation document displayed throughout.

A further environmental assessment through a Habitat Regulation Assessment (Appropriate Assessment, AA) is also to be carried out in consultation with Natural England, to ensure the AONB Management Plan will not impact on the significant wildlife value of the designated European Habitat sites in and adjacent to the AONB, as required under European Community Habitats Directive (Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994)

How the results of the consultation were used

The results of the consultation were combined and used to review, re-draft and reinforce the Management Plan's objectives, policies, actions and visions. This process involved:

- The results from consultation with partner organisations and other stakeholders were used to produce a new set of draft objectives, policies and actions for the AONB, including new changes and ideas.
- The results from consultation with communities allowed locally-specific issues and ideas to be identified and incorporated within the Management Plan, where appropriate.
- Overall the results from statutory consultees, stakeholders, partnerships and community were combined to form a single document. The combined results were then analysed in order to:
- Identify the key issues, ideas and aspirations by looking for patterns and trends in the results, eg, areas where the same or similar comments have been made by many consultees.
- Identify uncommon comments that may require further consideration.
- Identify any specific or detailed comments that may be used to help in project planning and delivery.
- Finally, any new issues and ideas from the consultation were, where appropriate, included in the final draft Management Plan with some new or altered text, facts and figures, objectives, policies, and actions included.

A summary of the combined results and how we addressed them can be found in Appendix 3

APPENDIX 3

A Summary of the Main Issues Arising from the Public Consultation and the SEA and How These Have Been Addressed.

This document contains a summary of changes to the Management Plan following public consultation with AONB partners; the amends listed are in response to partners' comments.

The main points arising are summarised here:

| Issues | How we addressed these |
|--|---|
| There was a general need for consistent use of wording, grammar, facts & spelling (all) | Changes have been made accordingly |
| Layout needed to be better differentiated as to main section headings, subheadings, etc. (all) | The layout has been changed accordingly |
| The best parts of the old plan should have been retained for redrafting (NE) | This has been noted and amends have been made |
| The document was seen to be rather too detailed and not accessible (NE, CCC) | Parts 1 and 2 have been cut in size to be more succinct |
| There was not enough emphasis placed on the fact that Hadrian's Wall WHS was in the AONB and of its importance to the special qualities (NE) | This was acknowledged and amended |
| Generally the Historic Landscape and Cultural and Built Heritage sections were weak with some archaeological data missed (NE, CCC, EH) | These sections were altered to be less specific and more overarching. |
| There was not enough importance placed on Agri- Environment Schemes to deliver conservation and enhancement of various themes (NE) | The plan has included these schemes in Objectives, Policies and actions |
| The 'Statement of Significance' did not seem to relate well to the designation or Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), (NE, CCC) | This has been altered to reflect the LCA and describes those features which are key to the designation of the area. |
| Landscape types should be a brief description and bulleted and should stay with the existing typology (NE, CCC) | This has been carried out |
| Part two seemed to repeat much of the information in part one (NE, CCC) | Key base line data has been removed from section two and placed in an appendix |
| There is a need for more clarity on monitoring for success (section 1.89 Draft Plan) i.e. monitoring the AONB in general and monitoring delivery of the Core AONB functions and Action Plan (NE) | This was acknowledged and amended to make target setting more SMART. |

| Issues | How we addressed these |
|--|---|
| Within the 'Issues and Forces for Change' sections it was not clear as to whether they were evidence based or anecdotal and if there was no evidence there should be actions, policies included to address this in lifetime of the Plan. (NE, CCC) | This has been addressed in an extra section and identified issues to be addressed in the Plan |
| Some Issues and Forces for change appeared to be actions or solutions rather than issues (NE) | This has been amended |
| Some objectives and policies seem not to match up with the issues, too few policies, some policies too similar and repeated in different themes, some wording of objectives and policies are mixed with most objectives phrased more as policies than objectives, repetitions of actions (NE, CCC, EH) | The wording has been changed accordingly. |
| The Special Qualities section seemed to be too subjective and not tangible (EH, CCC) | This has been amended |
| There is a need to bring out the purpose of the Plan and the Management of the AONB and that should show that it is not just the AONB Unit that is crucial to this but all Partners (EH) | This has been carried out |
| The actions for the plan would be better integrated more fully in part 2 of the Plan to show the links from issues to policies to actions (EH) | This has been carried out |
| The Environment Management section was positively identified as being the template for each section (CCC, NE) | This has been carried out following this template. |

APPENDIX 4

Acronyms used within the Plan

| | |
|--------|--|
| AONB | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
| ABC | Allerdale Borough Council |
| ACT | Action with Communities in Cumbria |
| ARC | Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust |
| BAP | Biodiversity Action Plan |
| CRoW | Countryside and Rights of Way |
| CCC | Cumbria County Council |
| CCAP | Cumbria Countryside Access Partnership |
| CHAMP | Coastal Habitat Action Plan |
| CAP | Common Agricultural Policy |
| CaCC | Carlisle City Council |
| CLA | Country Land and Business Association |
| CLC | Cumbria Landscape Character |
| CQC | Countryside Quality Counts |
| CSFC | Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee |
| CT | Cumbria Tourism |
| CWMET | Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust |
| CWT | Cumbria Wildlife Trust |
| CWS | Cumbria Wildlife Site |
| Defra | Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs |
| EH | English Heritage |
| EA | Environment Agency |
| EMS | European Marine Site |
| ERT | Eden Rivers Trust |
| FLD | Friends of the Lake District |
| FC | Favourable Condition |
| FWAG | Farming and Wildlife Advisory Service |
| GONW | Government Office North West |
| HCT | Herpetological Conservation Trust (ARC 2009) |
| HLF | Heritage Lottery Fund |
| HLS | Higher Level Stewardship |
| HWHL | Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited |
| ICZM | Integrated Coastal Zone Management |
| JAC | Joint Advisory Committee |
| LAF | Local Access Forum |
| LAG | Local Action Group |
| LBAP | Local Biodiversity Action Plan |
| LC | Local Community |
| LNR | Local Nature Reserve |
| LTP | Local Transport Plan |
| MC | Marsh Committee |
| MCS | Marine Conservation Society |
| MOD | Ministry of Defence |
| MTI | Market Towns Initiative |
| NAAONB | National Association of AONB's |
| NAP | North Allerdale Partnership |
| NE | Natural England |
| NFU | National Farmers Union |
| NNR | National Nature Reserve |
| NSA | National Scenic Area |
| NWDA | North West Development Agency |
| PC | Parish Council |
| PfP | Peatlands for People |
| PPG | Planning Policy Guidance |
| PRoW | Public Rights of Way |
| PSA | Public Service Agreement |
| RDA | Rural Development Agency |
| RDS | Rural Development Service |
| RA | The Ramblers Association |
| RIGS | Regionally Important Geological & Geomorphological Sites |
| RoW | Rights of Way |
| RoWIP | Rights of Way Improvement Plan |

| | |
|----------|--|
| RSPB | Royal Society for the Protection of Birds |
| SAC | Special Area of Conservation |
| WCAS | West Cumbria Archaeological Society |
| SCCVG | Solway Coast Community Volunteer Group |
| SDF | Sustainable Development Fund |
| SEA | Strategic Environmental Assessment |
| SFP | Solway Firth Partnership |
| SHNA | Solway Haaf Netters Association |
| SMP11 | Shoreline Management Plan 2 |
| SPA | Special Protection Area |
| SSSI | Site of Special Scientific Interest |
| SSWA | South Solway Wildfowling Association |
| STAG | Silloth Tourism and Action Group |
| Sustrans | National Charity for Sustainable Transport |
| TCs | Town Councils |
| TPO | Tree Preservation Order |
| T&CP | Tourism and Conservation Partnership |
| UU | United Utilities |
| WHS | World Heritage Site |
| WWT | Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust |

APPENDIX 5

Glossary of Terms

Affordable Housing - Housing provided for those whose income does not allow them to compete in the open market for house purchase, or for whom private sector economic rents are too high.

Agri-Environment Schemes – Various Government Schemes that promote environmentally friendly farming, including Countryside Stewardship and Environmentally Sensitive Area Schemes.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – Area designated by the Countryside Commission and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.

Biodiversity – The range of plant and animal species present in the area.

Biodiversity Action Plan – Action Plans concerned with protecting biodiversity from the international to national and local levels.

Clay Dabbin – Cottage or barn, with walls constructed in the original clay daub mixed with straw and pebbles called clay dabbin.

Conservation Area – An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which, it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 – An Act of Parliament that creates new rights to walk on 'open country'; moor, mountain, heath, down and common land. It also covers public rights of way, nature conservation, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks.

Countryside Stewardship Scheme – a grant scheme which aims to make conservation part of farming and land management practice and which offers changes in management that improve the natural beauty and diversity of the countryside. The scheme runs throughout England. Countryside Stewardship agreements run for 10 years.

County Wildlife Site (CWS) – Sites recognised by Cumbria Wildlife Trust which are non-statutory areas of wildlife value and are protected in local plans.

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

Environmental Assessment – The assembling of

information in relation to a proposed development, which by virtue of its siting, design, size or scale, would have a significant effect on the environment.

Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) – Area designated by the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) within which financial assistance is available to farmers to help maintain traditional farming practices in areas where landscape and wildlife are under threat from the intensification of agriculture.

European Water Framework Directive – Aims to protect and improve the environmental condition of all waters, including rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters to 1 nautical mile. Nearly all surface and groundwaters are to achieve ‘good’ status by 2015. This will be done by establishing a river basin district structure within which demanding environmental objectives will be set, including ecological targets for surface waters. First cycle of river basin management plans to run 2009-2015.

Geomorphological Feature – Landform shaped by the physical and chemical interactions between the earth’s surface and the natural processes acting on it.

Historic Landscape Characterisation Project – A Cumbria County Council and Lake District National Park Authority project, funded by English Heritage as part of a national programme. It analyses the whole of Cumbria (except Allerdale Borough Council), to determine the historic character of the present landscape.

Listed Buildings – Buildings of special architectural or historic interest listed by the Secretary of State for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) – Owned or controlled by local authorities, some of which are also Sites of Special Scientific Interest. They are designated after consultation with Natural England.

Local Plan – A written statement and Proposals Map formulating the District Planning Authority’s detailed policies for the development and use of land in its area.

Local Transport Plan – Plan produced by the Highway Authority setting out transport policies and proposals.

National Nature Reserves (NNRs) – Sites declared by Natural England or previously English Nature, under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 or the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They are owned or controlled by Natural England or held by approved bodies such as Wildlife Trusts.

Natura 2000 – Network of protected areas across the European Union (Special Protected Areas and Special Areas of Conservation). They protect important habitats and wildlife.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) – Published notes setting out Government Policy on a variety of matters (e.g. Housing, The Countryside, Tourism). They are the principal source of policy guidance on planning matters and must be taken into account in the preparation of plans.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) – Public footpaths, bridleways and cycleways along which the public has the right to travel.

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

Ramsar Site – Wetlands of International Importance designated by the Government following its signing in 1973 of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as wildfowl habitat (The Ramsar Convention).

Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Site (RIGS) – Geological or geomorphological site protected because of its educational, research, historical or aesthetic importance.

Settlement – A grouping of buildings where there is, or historically has been, a mixture of landuses providing homes, social facilities, commerce and employment giving evidence of a present or past community. The description can cover towns to villages or hamlets.

Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) – A non-statutory document which sets out strategic level guidance designed to assist sustainable coastal defence decision making over the next 50 years.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) – Areas designated by Natural England (English Nature) as being of special interest by reason of their flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features.

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) – Areas designated under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (The Habitats Directive) to afford protection to flora and fauna.

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) – Areas classified under the European Community Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds.

Statutory – Authorised by law.

Stoop – Traditionally, a red sandstone gate post.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – This is a process to ensure that significant environmental effects arising from policies, plans and programmes are identified, assessed, mitigated, communicated to decision makers, monitored and that opportunities for public involvement are provided.

Supplementary Planning Guidance – Guidance to developers additional to that contained in the Local Plan applying to a localized area or individual site. It highlights options, acceptable and unacceptable uses and sets out guidelines.

Sunken Lanes – Lanes and tracks in the Solway areas that have been constructed up to a metre below surrounding field levels. The excavated material has been used to increase the heights of the hedges to each side of the road, the hedges being planted on the cobble ‘banks’ or ‘kests’.

Sustainable Development – Development and associated use of resources which meet the needs of present generations without foreclosing the environmental and resource options for future generations.

Traditional Buildings – Buildings constructed in an architectural style and materials which have been characteristic of the area in which they are found.

Village – Group of dwellings and associated uses (e.g. small industries, shops, village hall, church) which together form a coherent whole.

World Heritage Site (WHS) – The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) encourages the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage across the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity – World Heritage Sites.

This Glossary provides a brief description of some of the terms used in the Management Plan and does not provide a full comprehensive list or legal definitions.

APPENDIX 6

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APPENDIX 7

Core Functions of the AONB Unit

Management Plan

- a) Developing, preparing, publishing and reviewing the AONB vision and the AONB Management Plan
- b) Promoting the AONB Management Plan to help distinguish the AONB from adjacent countryside
- c) Advising upon, facilitating and co-ordinating implementation by others of the Management Plan, including delivery by the team
- d) Accessing resources for Management Plan activities
- e) Developing an involvement by the community in the management of the AONB
- f) Providing a management role to co-ordinate AONB protection through the actions of the AONB Unit, the AONB Partnership and others at a local and strategic level
- g) Problem solving with the Unit acting as co-ordinator and facilitator

Advisory and Advocacy

- h) Advising Local Authorities and other partners on their activities within AONBs, to encourage them to attain the highest possible standards in AONBs
- i) Working with and contributing to the NAAONB activities, sharing advice and best practice nationally and regionally
- j) Providing landscape related planning advice (to local planning authorities and in conjunction with NE as appropriate, in line with and underpinned by protocols)
- k) Financial Support for NNAONB
- l) Contribution and support to regional activity between

AONBs and protected landscapes to strengthen status of the AONBs individually and collectively

Reporting and Monitoring

- m) Provision of an Annual Review including provision of top 3 annual best practice / successes (including those by S85 bodies)
- n) Monitoring and reporting on progress against AONB Management Plan targets (output monitoring) including performance indicators for the Partnership
- o) Monitoring AONB landscape condition (environmental outcome monitoring) in conjunction with information and analysis provided centrally by Natural England

APPENDIX 8

IUCN Protected Areas and International Classification

Categories of Protected Landscape

Guidelines published by IUCN and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre set out a "protected area" as *An area of land and / or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means –*

and further described six categories of Protected Landscape:

Areas managed mainly for:

- I Strict protection
 - 1a) Strict Nature Reserve
 - 1b) Wilderness area
- II Ecosystem conservation and protection – (i.e. National Park)
- III Conservation of natural features – (i.e. Natural Monument)
- IV Conservation through active management – (i.e. Habitat/species management area)
- V Landscape/seascape conservation and recreation – (i.e. Protected Landscape/Seascape)
- VI Sustainable use of natural resources – (i.e. Managed resource protected area)

All Protected Areas should aim to:

- Conserve the composition, structure, function and evolutionary potential of biodiversity;
- Contribute to regional conservation strategies (as core reserves, buffer zones, corridors, stepping stones for migratory species etc.);
- Maintain diversity of landscape or habitat and of associated species and ecosystems;
- Be of sufficient size to ensure the integrity and long-term maintenance of the specified conservation targets or be capable of being increased to achieve this end;
- Maintain the values for which it was assigned in perpetuity;

- Be operating under the guidance of a management plan, and a monitoring and evaluation programme that supports adaptive management;
- Possess a clear and equitable governance system.

Where the UK fits into the International Classification:

Both National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are assessed under the criteria developed by the IUCN as being Category V landscapes. This reinforces the accepted UK legislation position of giving equal value to both AONBs and National Parks.

It must be noted that British "National Parks" do not comply with the IUCN assessment criteria to be classified as National Parks i.e. Category II – Ecosystem conservation and protection areas. However, the IUCN recognises that names given to individual protected landscapes are matters for individual governments and nations and the guidance does not seek to be prescriptive regarding naming of reserves or landscapes.

Category V: Protected Landscape/Seascape

Primary objectives

- To maintain a balanced interaction of nature and culture through the protection of landscape and/or seascape and associated traditional management approaches, societies, cultures and spiritual values
- To contribute to broad-scale conservation by maintaining species associated with cultural landscapes and/or by providing conservation opportunities in heavily used landscapes
- To provide opportunities for enjoyment, well-being and socio-economic activity through recreation and tourism
- To provide natural products and environmental services
- To provide a framework to underpin active involvement by the community in the management of valued landscapes or seascapes and the natural and cultural heritage that they contain
- To encourage the conservation of agrobiodiversity and aquatic biodiversity
- To act as models of sustainability so that lessons can be learnt for wider application

APPENDIX 9

Acknowledgements

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- Mike Collins, English Heritage

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- Allerdale Borough Council

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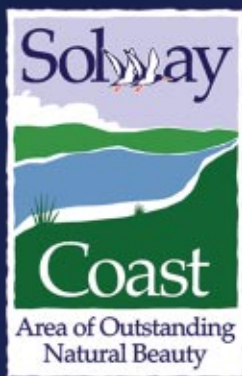
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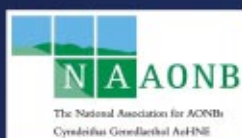
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Solway Coast AONB Partnership is a member of the National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB). The Association is an independent organisation acting on behalf of AONBs and their partners to promote, conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the 49 areas designated as AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The NAAONB is funded by Natural England, the Countryside Council for Wales and partner membership subscriptions.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this publication are correct at the time of printing



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