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Your Ref:  
Our Ref:

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Dear Carolyn

### Shropshire's Health & Wellbeing Strategy

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft Strategy.

#### Our role and perspective

The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership is the advisory and delivery body for the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a national designation covering 23% of Shropshire and extending also into Telford & Wrekin. The Partnership is also the delivery body for LEADER in the Shropshire Hills (covering 45% of Shropshire) which is focused on wellbeing and social and community benefits from the landscape.

#### Our comments

We support the vision and outcomes of the Strategy and its general approach. We feel however, there is a need to make more in the Strategy of the potential of the outdoors and the natural environment to contribute to health and wellbeing. In a rural county such as Shropshire where many people are distant from leisure facilities, the countryside and greenspaces provide a fantastic and accessible resource. The value of continued funding for maintenance of these needs to be recognised from a health and wellbeing perspective. Also the value of contact with the natural world to mental health and general wellbeing is well known and evidenced.

This aspect could be strengthened especially in Outcomes 1 and 2 of the Strategy. Walking for Health is identified in current activity relevant to obesity, but there is nothing about the countryside in 'What more do we need to do?' The broad outcome 2 of emotional and mental health and wellbeing has no mention of the countryside or environment. A range of projects we are currently running or funding are relevant to these outcomes:

**Walking for Wellbeing project** – working with Walking for Health and Walkers Are Welcome Towns

**Things to Do pages on the AONB website** <http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/things-to-do/>

**Youthful Landscapes** LEADER funded project <http://www.hiveonline.org.uk/youthfullandscapes/>

**Tickwood Farm** LEADER funded project [http://carefarmingwm.org.uk/care\\_farm/tickwood-farm/](http://carefarmingwm.org.uk/care_farm/tickwood-farm/)

**Grow Cook & Share** LEADER funded project <http://www.ludlow21.org.uk/grow-cook-share/>

**Volunteering opportunities** <http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/looking-after/volunteering/>

There is enormous scope for further activity and participation in the natural environment to benefit health and wellbeing, both with particular target groups and the general population, and this should be recognised in the Strategy as an area for future action.

Yours sincerely

Phil Holden  
AONB Partnership Manager