

**Sustainability Appraisal Report
(incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment)
of the
Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Draft Management Plan 2014 - 2019**

July 2013

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1. CONTEXT

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS AONB

The Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was designated in 1958. It covers 802 km² in Shropshire and the Borough of Telford and Wrekin, extending from the Wrekin to the Clun Forest and from the Stiperstones to the Clee Hills. The area is one of 46 AONBs in the UK. The AONB Partnership is made up of 36 members, and hosted by Shropshire County Council.

Lying between the Welsh uplands and the English Midland Plain, the Shropshire Hills is a landscape of diversity, with no single feature or hill dominating. A very varied geology is reflected in the different landforms, habitats and wildlife. The hills themselves, rolling pastoral farmland and woods, rivers and river valleys are the main elements of the landscape. Heritage and antiquity is ingrained in the landscape – in settlement and field pattern, hillforts, traditional buildings, and industrial heritage from charcoal burning to lead mining and stone quarrying. The AONB designation is unusual in its breadth, and also recognises such intangibles as tranquillity and remoteness, along with human values such as local community and culture, and opportunities for quiet enjoyment.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE APPRAISAL PROCESS

The methodology used for this Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is based on Natural England's guidance for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of AONB Management Plans. It has also been informed by the sustainability appraisal for the previous AONB Management Plan, SEAs undertaken by other AONBs, and government guidance on SEA. The SA has been developed in parallel with the revision of the AONB Management Plan, but due to operational pressures the publication of this report is delayed behind the publication of the draft Management Plan for public consultation. Natural England's guidance is that because AONB Management Plans aim to benefit the environment, the SEA/SA process should be strategic and focus on the policies within the Management Plan.

The natural beauty of the Shropshire Hills is particularly affected by economic and social influences in the area. We have therefore opted once again to go beyond the legal minimum for Strategic Environmental Assessment, and decided to do a fuller Sustainability Appraisal. In line with Natural England's guidance however, this process does not need to be as rigorous as that undertaken by planning authorities for Local Development Framework documents.

A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report was produced in December 2012, and comments on this were received from Natural England and English Heritage. As a result of this some additional plans, policies and programmes have been considered and amendments made to draft environmental objectives E8 and E9 proposed in the Scoping Report.

The heart of the Sustainability Appraisal process is the matrix assessment of each draft Management Plan policy and AONB Partnership Position against the SEA and SA objectives. Since there is very little change in the draft policies from the last Management Plan, the key issues arising are seen to be very similar to those described in the previous Sustainability Appraisal. The matrix assessment from the last Sustainability Appraisal has been refreshed for the policies contained in the public consultation draft of the Management Plan. This was

carried out by the AONB Manager, who has acted as editor of the Management Plan. An update of the key findings forms the basis of the non-technical summary.

In the matrix assessment (Appendix 1), the interaction between the Management Plan policies and SEA/SA objectives is scored using the following scale:

Policy strongly supports SEA/SA objective	++
Policy supports SEA/SA objective	+
Policy is neutral in relation to objective	N
Policy potentially works against SEA/SA objective	-
Policy strongly works against SEA/SA objective	--

1.3 SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The draft AONB Management Plan for 2014-19 has four strategic themes:

Conserving and enhancing our outstanding landscape and nature

Wildlife, heritage, tranquillity, appropriate development

Helping our local communities thrive in a more sustainable way

Farming and land management, prosperity and wellbeing, low carbon

Promoting personal enjoyment, understanding and participation

For local people and visitors, sense of place and belonging, doing and taking part

Maintaining and enriching the natural services on which we all depend

Ecosystem services (air, water, food, climate, etc) and wider benefits to society

and six Delivery Priorities:

Joining up the conservation effort

Valuing the AONB in planning and decisions

Encouraging a sustainable land management economy

Supporting enjoyment and a visitor economy in harmony with the AONB

Raising awareness and participation, especially among young people

Local working with communities

1.4 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS AND STRATEGIES, INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION OBJECTIVES

The full list of other plans and strategies identified as relevant, and their implications for the AONB Management Plan is published at in an Appendix to the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (updated following consultation).

2. SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE

A description of the state of environment and current trends, the character of the AONB and relevant environmental problems are all contained within the draft AONB Management Plan itself, available at <http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/looking-after/management-plan/>.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (essential)

Compatibility of Management Plan objectives and SEA environmental objectives, specifically by assessment of individual policies, scope for mitigation, review of alternative policies / actions

The following objectives have been selected against which to appraise key aspects of the AONB Management Plan. The environmental objectives, which form the essential legal SEA requirement of this process, are those set down in Natural England's guidance, with amendments to E8 and E9 following advice on best practice from English Heritage. *Note that these are not objectives of the Management Plan, but generalised environmental objectives against which the impacts of the Management Plan can be assessed.*

Environmental objectives (essential)

- E1 To protect and where practical enhance biodiversity (habitats)
- E2 To protect and enhance fauna and flora (individual species)
- E3 To ensure no adverse effect arises on population (i.e. demographic balance)
- E4 To safeguard human health
- E5 To protect and enhance soil quality
- E6 To protect water
- E7 To protect air and climate
- E8 To conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings
- E9 To protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of landscapes/townscapes, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- E10 To protect material assets including natural resources
- E11 To avoid significant adverse effects between the above interrelationships

The matrix appraisal of draft AONB Management Plan policies against these objectives is given in Appendix 1. Key issues arising are discussed below.

The main significant negative effects identified between policies in the draft AONB Management Plan and SEA environmental objectives relate to the **relationship between landscape protection and renewable energy**. The key area of conflict is Management Plan policies against significant wind energy development in the AONB, which limit ability to reduce CO2 emissions in the area (objective E7 'To protect air and climate'). The important influence of climate change on the future of the AONB require that this issue be considered carefully. It should be noted that this is not just an issue for the AONB Management Plan, and the consideration of alternatives below therefore recognises the broader context of spatial planning and policy initiatives at a larger scale.

Alternatives to reduce conflict between AONB Management Plan landscape protection policies and development of renewable energy, especially wind energy:

1. Give priority to CO2 targets, allowing significant wind energy development in AONB.

This approach enables greater gains with CO2 emission reductions, but at the expense of nationally protected landscape. There are a small number of large wind developments within AONBs, but since the last Management Plan there has been a swelling of public and political opinion against onshore wind energy.

2. Concentrate wind energy development outside protected landscapes.

This option relates more to the national/regional policy, above the level of an AONB Management Plan but is nevertheless relevant. It represents the general position of current national policy (i.e. NPPF presumption against major development in AONBs), although some decisions go more with option 1 above. A difficult issue arises in relation to Management Plan policies on wind energy development outside but near to the AONB boundary. If the approach to wind development near AONBs is too restrictive, it could perversely undermine the potential of this option to reduce pressure within AONBs themselves (i.e. every windfarm outside an AONB is one less within one). Given that landscape and visual impact reduces relatively quickly with distance, the policy approach proposed in the Management Plan of only opposing large scale wind development within 5km of the boundary probably represents the right balance. Using the Welsh definition of large (25MW+), this is roughly developments of 8+ large turbines.

3. Vigorously pursue energy conservation measures to reduce demand and the levels of renewable (including wind) energy required.

The AONB Management Plan strongly supports this approach, through its support for to Low Carbon activity and policy in support of energy conservation and low carbon community initiatives. Energy conservation is the most effective way of lowering carbon emissions with least impact on the landscape, and therefore legitimately becomes a concern of the AONB Management Plan. It is not an alternative to renewable energy, but good practice in renewable energy always puts energy conservation first as it reduces the scale of generation necessary, often making renewable options more economic or manageable.

4. Promote and encourage renewable energy measures which are compatible with the AONB and its landscape.

The Management Plan also supports this approach especially through small scale and woodfuel energy. The actual potential of these approaches in relation to the scale of 80% CO2 cuts by 2050 needs however to be borne in mind. It is only in combination with options 3 and 2 above that this approach becomes at all viable.

5. Optimise carbon management and sequestration opportunities.

The opportunities for carbon sequestration in the area have not been quantified, but are known to be small in relation to CO2 emissions from energy. Measures to manage methane emissions from farming, carbon storage in soils, and increasing tree and woodland cover will however have some positive effect.

An effective combination of options 2, 3, 4 and 5 does however provide a realistic and justifiable basis for opposition by the Management Plan to large scale wind energy development as in option 1. No significant change is proposed from the policies in the previous Management Plan.

Other issues arising from the Appraisal in relation to environmental issues are as follows:

- **All renewable energy** technologies need to be carefully applied to avoid damage to biodiversity, heritage, landscape and resources.
Good information and guidance will be key to achieving this.
- In the longer term, **climate change** will intensify conflicts between basic human needs (e.g. food, energy) and maintaining nature and landscape.
Demonstration is necessary to show that food and energy production is compatible in the area with maintaining landscape and nature.

4. "SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES" APPRAISAL (optional)

The additional discretionary sustainability objectives have been defined as part of the scoping process, and are based partly on Natural England's guidance and partly on local priorities.

Additional sustainability objectives (mostly focused on economic and social goals)

- S1 To sustain a thriving economy
- S2 To reduce poverty and deprivation
- S3 To optimise employment opportunities for all
- S4 To maintain and improve quality of life, health and wellbeing for all
- S5 To sustain vibrant, cohesive, safe and sustainable communities
- S6 To promote social inclusion and improve accessibility of services and facilities
- S7 To raise standards of education and training and promote employment skills
- S8 To encourage the use of locally sourced goods and materials
- S9 To encourage the continuation and appropriate diversification of farming
- S10 To protect the environment, people and properties from flood risk
- S11 To reduce the demand for travel and promote modes of travel other than private motor vehicles

Note that these are not objectives of the Management Plan, but generalised economic and social objectives against which the impacts of the Management Plan can be assessed.

The consideration of the Management Plan's policies against social and economic objectives is very worthwhile, as these factors have profound influence on the landscape of the Shropshire Hills. The review of AONB Management Plan policies against these sustainability objectives is also contained in the matrix in Appendix 1. This process shows that the approaches of the Management Plan are generally strong for sustainability, and there are many more positive interactions between issues than negative ones. Indeed the Plan provides an important means to navigate some of the key issues for the area.

In these columns, a good many of the potentially negative interactions have been scored as +/-, indicating that there may be a positive or negative impact. This is explained in the consideration below of key issues arising, which fall into four main groups:

- a) **The effect on the economy of protecting the environment**
- b) **Possible social consequences of seeking to minimise travel**
- c) **Effects on affordability of housing**
- d) **The cost implications of higher standards sought**

a) THE EFFECT ON THE ECONOMY OF PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

AONB designation does prevent some forms of development, potentially limiting economic progress. However the high quality of the AONB's environment is also an economic asset which can be sensitively used for long term sustainable economic benefit, and may be damaged by inappropriate development.

Alternatives to reduce any potential conflict might be as follows:

1. Relax Management Plan policies to allow more development.

This may achieve greater economic benefit (in the short term at least), but is at the expense of the environment and landscape qualities of the AONB. In reality it is planning policies more than those in the Management Plan which protect the AONB, and this option would put the Management Plan out of alignment with national and local policies.

2. Be positive about forms of economic development which are compatible with the AONB.

This option is in keeping with the secondary purpose of AONBs '*to promote sustainable forms of economic and social development, which in themselves conserve and enhance the environment*'. It is strongly supported by the Management Plan, e.g. in policies on topics including farming, tourism and appropriate renewable energy. This approach recognises that the AONB Management Plan and the activity of partners needs not just to be about what shouldn't happen, but be positive and proactive about what should happen. There are many examples of this in the AONB Partnership's work, though relating any economic benefits back to the primary AONB purpose will remain important.

3. Demonstrate and publicise the positive economic effects of the environment.

This option links to option 2 above, and aims to gain support for the approach by providing evidence.

4. Provide guidance and support to help reduce negative impacts of development.

This option is also compatible with options 2 and 3 above.

b) POSSIBLE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF SEEKING TO MINIMISE TRAVEL

The AONB Management Plan proposes approaches which seek to limit the impact on the AONB of increased road traffic. In a largely very rural area, people are very dependent on transport by private car, and there is the risk that such policies may have negative social consequences.

In reality, the influence of the Management Plan on this issue is relatively small, and is likely to be through the promotion of alternatives such as improved public transport and linking recreation opportunities to public transport. These are likely to have benefits to those most in need. The promotion of local products and sustainable tourism is also likely to support jobs while minimising transport. There is evidence that strengthening community in rural areas can help to reduce dependence on mobility to meet people's needs of homes, jobs and services.

c) EFFECTS ON AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING

High standards of protection of the AONB may exacerbate problems of **affordability of housing**, especially by making the area more attractive to wealthier incomers.

The measures to reduce this conflict lie largely beyond the scope of the Management Plan, and lie in the Council's policies for affordable housing and contributions. The Management Plan makes clear that affordable housing should be allowed in the AONB where other forms of development would not be, but that high standards of design need to be maintained.

d) THE COST IMPLICATIONS OF HIGHER STANDARDS SOUGHT

The **higher standards, e.g. of design**, sought in the AONB may add to costs. An emphasis on quality in tourism provision risks excluding those on lower incomes.

This may be somewhat overcome by good guidance and early consideration. Some design aspects do not affect cost, and where higher costs are incurred, there are likely to be some benefits to the local economy (e.g. through using local materials). Provision for low cost accommodation which meets good environmental standards e.g. campsites, hostels, should be supported.

5. MONITORING

The draft AONB Management Plan sets out a series of 'headline indicators' for monitoring the condition of the AONB's special qualities. Based on the analysis above, the following indicators should also be monitored to assess the impact of the Management Plan on other environmental factors and on economic and social objectives:

- Carbon emissions (CO₂ per capita figures are available for a District scale, from which an approximation for the AONB may be inferred).
- Indices of economic prosperity, including GVA, employment levels, etc.
- Indices of deprivation (the Index of Multiple Deprivation is available at super-output area level).

6. TECHNICAL REVIEW

No particular gaps in information or technical deficiencies have been identified in carrying out this appraisal.

Appendix 1 Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-19 Sustainability Appraisal matrix

Ref	POLICIES	Strategic Environmental Assessment objectives										Additional sustainability objectives										Notes (especially on negative impacts identified)		
		E1 To protect and where practical enhance biodiversity (habitats)	E2 To protect and enhance fauna and flora (individual species)	E3 To ensure no adverse effect arises on population (i.e. demographic balance)	E4 To safeguard human health	E5 To protect and enhance soil quality	E6 To protect water	E7 To protect air and climate	E8 To conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings	E9 To protect, enhance and manage the historic appearance of landscapes, towns, villages and their settings	E10 To protect and strengthen the character and sense of place	E11 To protect material assets including natural resources	S1 To avoid significant adverse effects between the above interrelationships	S2 To sustain a thriving economy	S3 To reduce poverty and deprivation	S4 To optimise employment opportunities	S5 To maintain and improve opportunities for all and wellbeing for all	S6 To sustain vibrant, cohesive, safe and accessible communities	S7 To promote social inclusion, safe and accessible services and facilities	S8 To raise standards of education and improve and promote employment and training	S9 To encourage the use of locally sourced goods and materials		S10 To protect the environment and appropriate properties from flood risk	S11 To reduce the demand for travel and promote modes of travel other than private motor vehicles
AONB Management Plan Policy for the AONB boundary																								
1	In the foreseeable future, the benefits of formally amending the AONB boundary would not be justified against the considerable costs and resources this would entail. The AONB Partnership and local authorities will work, and encourage partners and others also to work, in ways which will strengthen the integrity and identity of the Shropshire Hills AONB as an area of exceptional landscape value. The Partnership will focus its work strongly on the designated AONB area, but will work in a flexible and pragmatic way in relation to the AONB boundary, to secure the maximum benefit for the Shropshire Hills.	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	+	N	N	+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		
AONB Management Plan Policy for 'Joining up the conservation effort'																								
2a	Existing areas of high quality habitat must be retained, and networks developed of higher quality habitat through targeted improvements on privately owned land.	++	++	N	+	++	++	++	++	++	+	+	+/-	N	N	+	+	N	N	N	+	++	N	Some forms of development and land-use may be inappropriate, but key assets of the area will be enhanced
2b	Pro-active adaptation to climate change, focusing on wildlife and natural processes, is essential to retaining the natural beauty of the AONB and must be given a high priority.	++	++	N	+	++	++	++	++	++	+	+	+/-	+/-	N	+	+	N	N	N	+	++	N	Climate change will intensify pressure on land and potential conflict between food production, energy production and conservation/amenity
2c	Organisations which regulate designated sites and features, environmental quality and amenity should make full use of available measures to ensure the highest standards appropriate to a nationally protected landscape are achieved in the AONB. A supportive and awareness-raising approach should be used with landowners where possible, but mechanisms for legal enforcement should also be used where necessary in more serious cases. Known 'blackspots' and problems should be addressed and tackled, but consideration given to the secondary purposes of AONBs to have regard for the needs of rural industries and local communities, and to promote sustainable development.	++	++	N	+	++	++	+	++	+	+	N	N	N	N	+	N	N	N	+	+	N	N	
2d	The Shropshire Hills should remain a priority area for agri-environment funding, and farmers should be actively encouraged to utilise the options that best contribute to the AONB Management Plan's aims. Environmental Stewardship priorities should support a shift back towards more mixed systems of farming especially in the uplands (e.g. by allowing a proportion of arable cropping and hay meadows).	++	++	N	N	+	++	++	++	++	+	N	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+	N		
2e	Broadleaved woodland comprising native species should be expanded, and especially restored on Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and Plantation on Wood Pasture (PWP). Where felling is taking place, opportunities should be sought to improve design and landscape sensitivity of plantations. Reversion to open habitat should be targeted to locations where landscape benefits and potential for high value habitat (e.g. heathland) are greatest. Any new or replacement planting should follow the highest standards of design guidelines in relation to landscape and amenity, nature and heritage conservation and resource protection.	++	++	N	+	+	++	++	+	++	+	+	+	N	+	+	+	+	N	+	++	++	N	

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AONB Management Plan Policy for 'Valuing the AONB in planning and decisions'																								
3a	In line with national and local authority planning policies, the AONB has the highest standards of protection for landscape and natural beauty and the purposes of designation should be given great weight in planning decisions, also taking into account the statutory AONB Management Plan.	++	++	N	+	+	+	-	++	++	+	N	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+	N	N	+	+	+	+	Some forms of development may not be appropriate, but protecting the environment provides and maintains other opportunities
3b	Consideration of the purposes of designation in all decisions affecting the AONB should reflect sustainability and the full range of special qualities defined in the Management Plan as well as landscape character and visual amenity.	++	++	N	+	+	+	-	++	++	+	N	+	N	N	+	+	N	N	+	+	+	+	Landscape protection inhibits wind farm development which can lower CO2 emissions
3c	Tranquillity should be taken fully into account in both strategic and specific decisions. Proposals having a significant impact on tranquillity in the AONB should be prevented where possible.	N	+	N	+	N	N	N	+	++	++	N	+/-	+/-	+/-	++	+	N	N	N	+	N	+	Some forms of development may not be appropriate, but protecting the environment provides and maintains other opportunities
3d	Expansion of airports or alterations to flight path corridors which increase the volume or impacts of air traffic over the AONB should not be allowed.	N	N	N	N	N	N	++	N	+	N	N	-	N	N	+	N	N	N	N				
3e	Small scale quarrying to supply local materials for restoring traditional buildings and structures is supported, subject to careful consideration of environmental factors, including the conservation value of former quarries where these may be reopened.	++	++	N	+	+	+	+	++	++	+	N	+	N	+	+	N	N	N	+	+	N	N	Some developments which could bring economic benefits will not be compatible
3f	Opportunities created by technological advance should be sought to remove or reduce the prominence of hilltop telecommunications structures.	+	+	N	+	N	N	N	++	++	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
3g	New overhead cables should be avoided where possible, with consideration given to undergrounding or off-grid options.	+/-	+/-	N	N	N	N	N	+/-	++	N	N	+	N	N	+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Undergrounding must avoid damage to archaeology, but can improve the setting of heritage features.
3h	Even with small structures not requiring planning permission, care should be taken to avoid loss of wildness. On many hills and in more secluded valleys, especially where there are few man-made objects, this will mean a preference for no structures at all. In cases where structures are essential, their location and design may need to be modified to reduce the impact on wildness.	N	+/-	N	+	N	N	N	+	++	N	N	+	N	N	+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
3i	Where affordable housing is allowed when other forms of development would not be, in order to meet social need, the standards of sensitivity to the AONB should not be compromised, and are expected to be higher than outside the AONB. Such cases need to include a rigorous assessment of identified local housing need and consideration of the capacity of the landscape to accommodate development without undermining the purposes of designation. Development should not contribute to the loss of irreplaceable habitats or established ancient trees.	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	+	+	N	N	+/-	-	N	N	N	N	N	+	N	N	N	Higher standards may add to costs, but likely to benefit tourism economy indirectly

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3j	All development should integrate well into the historic pattern and character of the surrounding built environment and landscape. Building style should reflect local tradition, and designs should be of a high standard in keeping with the nationally designated landscape. In line with Core Strategy policy CS6, particular regard should be paid to village and town design statements and Conservation Area Appraisals. In the AONB this includes Church Stretton Town Design Statement, and Village Design Statements for Clun and Wistanstow. Inappropriate design, layout and materials should be avoided. Innovative sustainable schemes are to be encouraged where they take account of the surrounding vernacular and the use of local materials.	N	N	-	+	N	N	N	++	++	+	N	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+	+	N	++	N	+	+	
3k	Existing traditional buildings of architectural merit should be restored in preference to being replaced by new builds, and conservation advice should be sought. Agricultural buildings of merit should be retained in use or converted to live-work units where possible retaining their historic integrity and functional character, and only as a last resort converted into residential dwellings.	N	N	N	N	N	N	++	++	+	N	+	N	N	N	N	N	N	++	N	N	N		
3l	Where possible, locally occurring building materials should be used. Roofing materials should be in keeping with those used in nearby buildings, with no bright coloured tiles or reflective surfaces should be used. The use of photovoltaic tiles matching existing and surrounding roof colours should be encouraged. External lighting on new developments should be kept to a minimum and designed using down lighting to reduce light pollution.	N	N	N	N	N	N	+	++	+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	++	N	N	N			
3m	Lowering carbon emissions from the area is an over-riding priority, and should influence all areas of decision making. Energy conservation should be given the highest priority, and should always accompany renewable energy generation. Low carbon community initiatives are supported. In addition to carbon from energy use, the ability of land management to reduce carbon emissions should be optimised. Integration of energy efficiency and renewable energy will be encouraged in all development – new or refurbishment, and of any scale.	++	++	N	++	+	+	++	+/-	+/-	++	N	+/-	+/-	+/-	++	+	+/-	+	+	+	++	++	Insensitive measures to reduce carbon could damage the landscape. Low carbon approaches are sometimes more expensive, but sometimes save money. Some types of development are inappropriate. The area is heavily dependent on car transport for accessing jobs and services.
3n	Renewable energy developments in the AONB should generally be of a small scale appropriate to local use. Larger scale energy developments will be more suitable outside the AONB, e.g. linked to market towns where transport links are better, closer to larger scale demand, etc. Small scale domestic renewable installations (e.g. solar panels) are encouraged and AONB designation should not be used as a reason against these. The design and installation of these should take account of visual amenity. Greater sensitivity may be required in Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings, but even in these circumstances, effort should be made to enable energy benefits to be achieved.	+	+	N	+	+	+	+/-	+	++	+	N	+/-	N	+/-	+	+	N	+	++	++	+	+	Protecting the landscape rules out measures such as large windfarms which could be effective in lowering carbon emissions. Some development and employment opportunities are lost.

Appendix 1 Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-19 Sustainability Appraisal matrix

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		E1 To protect and where practical enhance biodiversity (habitats)	E2 To protect and enhance population (individual species)	E3 To ensure no adverse effect arises on population (i.e. demographic balance)	E4 To safeguard human health	E5 To protect and enhance soil quality	E6 To protect water environment	E7 To protect air and climate	E8 To conserve and enhance the historic and appearance of their settings	E9 To protect and manage the character and sense of place	E10 To protect material assets including natural resources	S1 To avoid significant adverse effects between the above interrelationships	S2 To sustain a thriving economy	S3 To reduce poverty and deprivation	S4 To optimise employment opportunities for all and wellbeing for all	S5 To sustain vibrant, cohesive, safe and accessible communities	S6 To promote social inclusion and improve standards of services and facilities	S7 To encourage employment and training and materials	S8 To encourage the use of locally sourced goods	S9 To protect the environment and appropriate modes of travel from flood risk	S10 To reduce the demand for travel and promote private motor vehicles			
3o	Biomass energy based on existing resources in the area, such as woodfuel and agricultural by-products, is particularly compatible with the AONB and is strongly supported. Establishment of energy crops should avoid harm to biodiversity, water quality and availability, and where larger and longer-lived than normal agricultural crops, should take account of visual amenity (e.g. following forestry design guidelines regarding scale and shape of compartments including in relation to landform, structural diversity and edge treatments).	++	+	N	-	N	N	++	+	++	+	N	+	+	+	+	N	+	++	++	+	N	Biomass energy must use clean burn technologies to avoid air pollution	
3p	There should be no development of wind turbines (other than in accordance with permitted development rights) within the 'High Open Moorland' and High Volcanic Hills and Slopes' Landscape Types in the AONB.	N	+	N	N	N	N	--	+	++	N	-	+/-	N	N	+/-	N	N	N	N	N	N		
3q	Proposals for wind turbines within the AONB should take account of factors including landscape character, visual amenity, biodiversity, heritage and recreation, and the following guidelines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 100m of buildings (excluding Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas), one or two wind turbines of up to 12m to blade tip are likely to be acceptable within the AONB. • There are not likely to be any parts of the AONB where turbines of over 30m to blade tip, or groups of more than five turbines would be acceptable. • Wind turbine proposals should be linked to local energy needs and energy conservation measures. Community benefits should relate to energy in preference to amenity or other measures. 	N	+	N	N	N	N	--	+	++	N	-	+/-	N	N	+/-	N	N	N	N	N	N		
3r	Decisions on proposals for wind turbines and associated infrastructure outside the AONB should take account of the potential impacts within the AONB, especially the extent of visibility and significance of viewpoints affected, and potential cumulative effects with existing structures.	N	N	N	N	N	N	-	+	++	N	-	+/-	N	N	+/-	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
3s	Land within 5km of the AONB boundary is unsuitable for large scale windfarm development, and should be excluded from any Search Areas.	N	+	N	N	N	N	--	+	++	N	-	+/-	N	N	+/-	N	N	N	N	N	N		
3t	The AONB Partnership supports community low carbon initiatives and will take a view of renewable energy proposals based on a range of sustainability criteria as well as visual aspects.	+	+	N	N	N	N	+	+	+	N	N	N	N	N	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		
3u	Road improvement schemes within and outside the AONB should not increase noise pollution or emissions from traffic. Approaches such as speed management schemes may, for example, be more appropriate than road widening. Potential impacts within the AONB of proposed road improvement schemes beyond the boundary should be considered.	++	+	N	+	+	+	++	+	++	+	N	+/-	N	+/-	++	+/-	-	-	+	+/-	N	++	People are travelling more and more to access jobs and services, which is not sustainable
3v	Road management and improvement schemes in the AONB should minimise landscape impact and avoid urbanisation of rural roads, e.g. through sensitive and appropriate design and use of materials, and avoiding unnecessary signage clutter.	N	N	N	N	N	+	N	++	++	+	N	N	N	+	N	N	N	++	N	N	+		

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3w	The provision of any new public car parking should be in scale with the setting and capacity of roads used to reach the location. Larger car parks should generally be situated nearer to settlements or larger roads. Where informal roadside parking is improved to alleviate traffic problems on smaller roads, care should be taken to avoid adding to traffic levels. Design should be appropriate to a rural setting, e.g. stone surfacing, use of timber for edging and signs.	+	N	N	N	+	+	+	+	++	+	N	+/-	N	N	+	N	N	N	+	+	N	++	Some forms of development may not be appropriate, but protecting the environment provides and maintains other opportunities
3x	Strategies for transport affecting the AONB should not be solely informed by a 'predict and provide' model of increasing capacity to deal with increased traffic flow. The need for road upgrades and improvements which could have detrimental effects on the AONB may be avoided by use of other measures	++	++	N	+	+	+	++	+	++	+	N	+/-	-	+/-	+	+	+/-	-	++	+	N	++	People are travelling more and more to access jobs and services, which is not sustainable
AONB Management Plan Policy for 'Encouraging a sustainable land management economy'																								
4a	Farmers and land managers should be supported as the main stewards of natural beauty, and for their vital role in maintaining the Shropshire Hills landscape. Policies and public funding relating to farming and forestry should recognise this and help to support ways of farming which generate these public environmental benefits.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	N	+	+	++	+	N		
4b	Because the vitality of the local agricultural economy is so integrally linked with the natural beauty of the Shropshire Hills, the AONB Partnership will actively support appropriate and sustainable forms of farming and diversification enterprises where these are compatible with the AONB designation.	+	+	+	N	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	N	+	+	+	++	++	+	+		
4c	Farm enterprises need to be in harmony with the environment and not degrade this resource, which also provides an important economic asset for the future. The impact of business-related traffic to and from the property will be an important consideration, including cumulative effects.	+	+	+/-	N	+	+	+	+	+	+	N	+	+/-	+/-	+	+	N	+	++	++	+	+	Some forms of diversification may not be appropriate, but protecting the environment provides and maintains other opportunities
4d	Design of new agricultural buildings including location, structure and materials should be of a high standard appropriate to the AONB, taking into account published AONB agricultural buildings design guidance. Efforts should be made to improve existing buildings where these are of a poor standard.	+	+	N	N	+	+	+	++	++	+	N	+/-	-	N	N	N	N	N	++	++	N	N	Higher standards may add to costs, but likely to benefit tourism economy indirectly
4e	Farm advisory services on environmental issues should make better links with business approaches such as selling direct into local markets, which are also of benefit to the AONB.	+	+	N	N	+	+	+	+	+	+	N	+	N	N	+	+	N	N	+	++	+	N	

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AONB Management Plan Policy for 'Supporting enjoyment and a visitor economy in harmony with the AONB'																							
5a	The siting, design and specification of new developments for tourism and recreation should be to high standards of environmental sensitivity and sustainability. The following guidelines are recommended · Single developments of more than around ten accommodation units are less likely to be supported in small settlements and open countryside. · Large static caravan parks are likely to be intrusive. Smaller sites with good landscaping are preferable, and facilities for touring caravans and camping generally have a low impact as there are fewer permanent structures. · Built facilities for recreation should only be allowed where their location and the activities they support are compatible with the special qualities of the AONB.	+	+	N	N	+	+	+	+	++	+	N	+/-	N	+/-	+	+	N	N	+	+	N	+
5b	An approach of smaller, low-key tourism developments designed in sympathy with local character will blend better into the area and spread economic benefits more widely than larger facilities. Tourism businesses will be supported to take a sustainable approach and encourage their visitors to do likewise.	+	+	N	N	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+/-	-	+/-	+/-	+	N	N	+	+	N	+/-
5c	Infrastructure associated with countryside access should be sensitively designed, and appropriate materials should be used, e.g. stone for surfacing of a type appropriate to the location, preference for wooden signposts and gates on rights of way, rural character in the specification and signage of cycle routes.	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	++	++	+	N	N	N	N	+	N	N	N	++	N	N	N
5d	Environmentally sound leisure and recreation activities which are in keeping with the AONB (including low resource-use, minimum damage to the landscape, and following a principle of 'quiet enjoyment') should be encouraged and promoted. Recreation activities which are inherently noisy or intrusive should be discouraged, and where possible prevented, e.g. facilities for such activities not allowed through the planning system.	+	++	N	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	N	+/-	N	+/-	++	+	N	N	+	++	N	++
5e	Recreational off-road use of motor vehicles should as far as possible be discouraged within the AONB. Voluntary measures and pro-active work with users are recommended to minimise the impact of legal off-road use of motor vehicles on the landscape and on people's quiet enjoyment of the countryside. Where the impact on the AONB is significant however, measures including traffic regulation orders restricting legal use should be used. Illegal motorised activities should as far as possible be prevented.	N	N	N	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	N	N	N	N	+	+	N	N	N	N	N	++
5f	Events in the AONB such as concerts, festivals, and challenge walks should be planned (e.g. in location, timing and scale) to minimise environmental impact, and regular events should not be allowed or encouraged to grow to a scale where problems arise. Event organisers should seek advice at the planning stages to enable this.	N	N	N	+	+	+	N	+	+	+	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	+
5g	Tourism activities which draw on the special qualities of the area without harming them should be especially encouraged. This may include development of access infrastructure (e.g. off road cycle routes, rights of way), use of public transport, historic and natural sites, interpretation to help aid understanding, enterprises based specifically on the special qualities of the AONB (e.g. wildlife watching, landscape painting, walking festivals) and cultural events.	+	++	N	+	+	+	+	+	++	+	+	+	+	++	+	+	+	++	++	N	++	

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5h	Countryside attractions and walks should be linked where possible to settlements where services and public transport facilities exist and can be promoted, helping to maximise economic benefits, especially from day visitors.	N	N	N	++	N	N	+	+	+	N	++	+	+	++	+	+	N	++	+	N	++		
5i	Promotion of the area for tourism should aim to minimise car travel. Towns and location best served by public transport should receive the main promotion as 'gateways' to the Shropshire Hills, in preference to locations where access is only possible by car.	+	+	N	+	+	+	++	+	++	+	N	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+	+	N	++	+	N	++	Some forms of development may not be appropriate, but protecting the environment provides and maintains other opportunities. Improved public transport provision would benefit the less well-off.
5j	Opportunities should be should be taken to strengthen the integrity and identity of the Shropshire Hills as an area of exceptional landscape value. Consistent use of the 'Shropshire Hills' identity should be given greater prominence in tourism and other forms of promotion, along with the special qualities of the AONB and opportunities for visitors to adopt a sustainable approach.	+	+	N	N	N	N	N	++	+	N	N	++	+	+	+	N	N	++	+	N	+		
5k	Opportunities and promotion aimed at both visitors and the local community should encourage people to experience the AONB's countryside more fully in ways which are not damaging (e.g. through walks and activities away from cars and roads, through appreciating wildlife and heritage).	N	N	+	++	N	N	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	++	+	+	+	+	N	++		
AONB Management Plan policy for the Wrekin Forest area																								
5l	The management of the wider Wrekin Forest area is crucial to the integrity of the Wrekin itself within the AONB and should be integrated within planning policy. The landscape quality of the wider Wrekin Forest area should be protected as far as possible, and the management of the Wrekin integrated with this surrounding area. The Wrekin Forest Partnership provides a vital local forum for this important area, and should be supported and its links to the AONB Partnership maintained. The Wrekin Forest Partnership needs to develop as a long-term structure linked to permanent funding for a dedicated staff resource to take and co-ordinate action on the ground.	+	+	N	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	N	N	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		