North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Management Plan 2014-19

NORTH PENNINES
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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Management Plan
2014-19

Strategy and Action Plan

Ministerial Foreword

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are some of our finest landscapes. They are cherished by residents and visitors alike and allow millions of people from all walks of life to understand and connect with nature. I am pleased to see that this management plan demonstrates how AONB Partnerships can continue to protect these precious environments despite the significant challenges they face. With a changing climate, the increasing demands of a growing population and in difficult economic times, I believe AONBs represent just the sort of community driven, collaborative approach needed to ensure our natural environment is maintained for generations to come.

AONB Partnerships have been the architects of a landscape-scale approach to land management. This approach is a key feature of the Government's Natural Environment White Paper and emphasises the need to manage ecosystems in an integrated fashion, linking goals on wildlife, water, soil and landscape, and working at a scale that respects natural systems.

This management plan also makes the important connection between people and nature. I am pleased to hear that local communities will be at the heart of its delivery. From volunteers on nature conservation projects, to businesses working to promote sustainable tourism, it's great to hear of the enthusiasm and commitment of the local people who hold their AONBs so dear. AONBs are, and will continue to be, landscapes of change. Management Plans such as this are vital in ensuring these changes are for the better. I would like to thank all those who were involved in bringing this plan together and I wish you every success in bringing it to fruition.

Lord De Mauley, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

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1. The plan and the designation

1.1 AONBs and their Management Plans

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are designated by the Government for the purpose of ensuring that the special qualities of the finest landscapes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are conserved and enhanced. The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, as confirmed by Section 82 of the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000* (CRoW Act).

AONBs are unique and irreplaceable national assets. There are 34 AONBs in England, covering 15% of the land area, and a further four in Wales and eight (on a different legislative basis) in Northern Ireland. They range in size from the Isles of Scilly (16km^2) to the Cotswolds (2038 km^2).

The Government has confirmed that the landscape qualities of National Parks and AONBs are equivalent, so the protection given by the land use planning system to natural beauty in both types of area should also be equivalent. The AONB designation is also of international importance, recognised as a Category V Protected Landscape by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Sections 88 and 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) state that local authorities (acting jointly where relevant) and Conservation Boards must prepare and publish a Management Plan for their AONB, which must then be reviewed at intervals of no more than five years. The Act says that such plans should 'formulate the policy' of local authorities in relation to their AONB(s).

Additional responsibilities are placed on local authorities and the planning system:

- AONBs are defined within the EIA Regulations for specific consideration as a "sensitive area".
- AONB Management Plans have been recognised to form a 'material consideration' in the planning decision making process.
- Land within AONBs is recognised differently under the Town and Country Planning Act as Article 1(5) land (which for example restricts certain permitted development rights).

The CRoW Act Section 85 Duty of Regard requires all public bodies, down to parish council level, to consider the AONBs nationally protected status in any land use related decisions. This includes planning applications and the formulation of Local and Neighbourhood Plans. However, AONB Management Plans are not formally recognised in the planning system and are not part of the Development Plan. Where they have been used as part of an evidence base or locally 'adopted' (e.g. as SPD) this is at the discretion of the local planning authority (LPA). Thus while an LPA has a duty to have regard to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty (as defined by, and the appropriate management of the area, being set out in the statutory Management Plans), this is achieved through collaboration with AONB Partnerships and by reference to AONB Management Plans as a material consideration - there are a number of cases where AONB Management Plans have been accepted on appeal to form a material consideration when considering planning applications. This is also achieved through

having Local Plan policies in place which give great weight to the purpose of AONB designation

The first statutory Management Plan for the North Pennines AONB was produced by the AONB Partnership on behalf of its constituent local authorities in 2004 and was reviewed and re-written in 2009. As well as formulating the policy of local authorities in relation to their AONBs, AONB Management Plans are intended to:

- highlight the special qualities and the enduring significance of the AONB and the importance of its landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage, identifying those features that are vulnerable to change
- present an integrated vision for the future of the AONB as a whole, in the light of national, regional and local priorities, regardless of administrative boundaries
- set out agreed objectives which will help secure that vision
- identify what needs to be done, by whom and when, in order to achieve these objectives
- stimulate action aimed at helping people to discover, enjoy and understand the local landscape and its natural and cultural features
- identify actions which will support those economic and social activities which in themselves contribute to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

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

This document forms the second part of a two-part Management Plan, all of which will be presented online as a single 'microsite' (a website dedicated to the Management Plan):

- 'What's special about the North Pennines?' – which highlights the area's special qualities and some of the issues facing them - this document will undergo only minor changes from the last management plan and only an additional chapter on Dark Night Skies is part of the current consultation. You can see 'What's Special' at: http://www.northpennines.org.uk/Pages/PublicationItem.aspx?DocRef=88
- This document (Strategy), which shows the strategic context of the Plan, and the objectives identified over the life of the document to 2019 and a rolling three year action plan, which will be updated annually, showing what will be done to meet the objectives. This will have an interactive element, enabling other organisations to update their actions in support of the plan.

In addition to this plan (including the 'What's Special' document outlining the area's special qualities), the North Pennines National Character Area Profile, the production of which was led by Natural England, is a good source of baseline data. http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5682293?category=587130

1.2 Who is the plan for?

One audience for this plan is the local authorities of the North Pennines, as it is upon them that the duty is placed to produce the plan and to conserve and enhance the AONB. The AONB Partnership discharges this function on their collective behalf.

Another important audience is the Government agencies, statutory undertakers, utilities and public bodies, which must, in accordance with Section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000, have "due regard" to the purposes of AONB designation in the carrying out of their functions. The objectives and actions in this plan should guide them in the fulfillment of their duty under the Act.

A third and equally important audience is the wide range of local organisations and individuals with a concern for the future well-being of the North Pennines, be they land owners, land managers, local businesses, local residents or visitors. It is hoped that this plan will provide them with the inspiration and guidance to bring forward innovative ideas for the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and lead to greater awareness and understanding of the designation. Crucially, it is not the plan for the AONB Partnership or the work programme for its Staff Team; it is the plan for the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and all those with an interest in the area can be involved in its implementation.

1.3 How was the plan produced?

A consultation draft Management Plan was produced by the North Pennines AONB Partnership on behalf of the five local authorities of the North Pennines, on which the statutory duty is placed. The AONB Team was supported in this work by members of the Partnership's formal working groups, Partnership Members and people from a wide range of conservation, land management, tourism and other organisations. It was also informed by the content of the previous statutory plan, which was itself the subject of wide consultation. A Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report and an assessment under the Habitats Regulations further informed the final version, as did comments received on the draft. The responses to the draft were approved by the AONB Partnership, discussed separately with Local Authorities and made available through the Partnership's website.

1.4 Natural beauty

'Natural beauty' is something of a misnomer in some ways; today's North Pennines landscape is partly the result of thousands of years of human activity. It has been shaped by early settlers who cleared the forests, by the first (and generations of subsequent) farmers, the long history of mining for lead and other minerals, by moorland managers and by more modern developments.

Nowhere is truly wild, yet nowhere is totally artificial either - natural processes go on even in the most managed environments. So it is not 'natural' in the sense of being untouched and pristine, but it does have a distinctive character and is a deeply rural environment with few large human-made features, and a sense of relative wildness, remoteness and tranquillity which has no equal in England.

'Natural beauty' in the context of AONBs is about much more than scenic quality, but includes landform, geology, plants and animals, landscape features and the rich history of human settlement over the centuries.

1.5 Legislative requirements

The primary legislation in relation to AONB designation is from the **CRoW Act (2000)** and originally from the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. The amount of policy relating to AONBs has reduced greatly since the removal of Structure Plans and abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategies. Policy for AONBs is now solely contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Local Plans and emerging Neighbourhood Plans.

The **National Planning Policy Framework**, confirms the requirement in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF provides specific planning guidance for plan makers and decision takers in relation to AONBs and confirms (para 115) that: *"Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty."*

AONBs and their management plans are material considerations in the planning system. The 'great weight test' is significant and one of the most stringent legal tests that can be applied under planning law.

In specific relation to major development the NPPF states that planning permission should be refused for major developments in

AONBs except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest, and sets a series of tests that have to be assessed. What constitutes 'major development' has not been defined and will be assessed on its merits, according to local circumstances. All 'major' development will still need to pass the tests of:

- Being in the national public interest – AONB is not a 'local' designation, it is a 'national' one
- Whether or not the need for the development could reasonably be met elsewhere
- Any environmental impacts and the extent to which they could be mitigated.

The NPPF confirms that local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for their areas within Local Plans and accordingly deliver the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. The NPPF also confirms that allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value (counting the AONB as the highest value) that local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting landscape areas will be judged (development affecting AONBs includes impact on their setting) and that planning should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Local and Neighbourhood Plans should set out policy for AONBs locally and define the special qualities of the area; any additional Development Plan Documents (DPD) should specifically cross reference the AONB Management Plan. Further to this the existence of an AONB designation should be considered at the very outset in plan preparation and should influence the plan in terms of the strategic location of development, access issues, green infrastructure, Community Infrastructure Levy, use of natural resources, and in terms of landscape and environmental protection. Simply including a single policy reference to AONBs does not demonstrate that LPAs have met their legal duty under Section 85 of the CRoW Act to have full regard to the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.

AONB-specific policies in **Local Development Documents, including Core Strategies and Neighbourhood Development Plans**, provide more detailed policies in relation to the North Pennines. Two documents produced by the AONB Partnership in association with local planning authorities – **North Pennines Planning Guidelines** and **the North Pennines Building Design Guide** – provide a much finer grain of detail to help guide development in, or having an impact upon, the AONB; these are adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents in Eden and Carlisle, and as material considerations in the planning system in Durham and Northumberland.

2. The place and the partnerships

2.1 The North Pennines AONB

The designation of the North Pennines AONB was confirmed in 1988 and at 1,983km^2, it is the second largest of the 38 AONBs in England and Wales. One of the most remote and unspoilt places in England, it lies between the National Parks of the Yorkshire Dales and Northumberland, with the former West Durham Coalfield to the east and the Eden Valley to the west. The AONB straddles the North East and the North West of England and lies mostly within the boundaries of five local authorities: the three counties of Cumbria, Durham and Northumberland and the districts of Carlisle and Eden, but also has 2.6km^2 in North Yorkshire around Tan Hill.

For more detail on the AONB and its special qualities, visit: http://www.northpennines.org.uk/Pages/PublicationItem.aspx?DocRef=88

2.2 AONB Partnership and Staff Team

Each AONB has an organisation responsible for conserving and enhancing it directly, and co-ordinating the work of many partners. Locally this is the North Pennines AONB Partnership. It is made up of 23 statutory agencies, local authorities and voluntary/community organisations which care for the North Pennines, a list of member organisations can be found on the Partnership's website. The Partnership also has community representatives elected on a two year term. The work of the AONB Partnership is carried out through the AONB Staff Team, employed through its accountable body, Durham County Council. The purpose of the Staff Team is to promote partnership working to conserve and enhance the AONB and to produce, monitor and take action to implement, the AONB Management Plan. It also acts as a champion for the area in matters relating to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. The AONB Staff Team is based in Stanhope, in County Durham.

To find out more about what the team does, visit: http://www.northpennines.org.uk/Pages/Aboutus.aspx

The Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership (LNP)

Arising out of the Natural Environment White Paper (June 2011) the Northern Upland chain encompasses the protected landscapes of:

- Northumberland National Park (including, west of the Park, the key ecological assets of the extensive National Nature Reserves of Kielderhead and Whitelee Moor as well as

Kielder Forest and Water; also the area between the National Park and the North Pennines AONB),

- North Pennines AONB (and including all of the National Character Area just beyond the AONB Boundary),
- Yorkshire Dales National Park
- Nidderdale AONB.

The basis for the geography

The LNP is defined by an ecological, economic and cultural logic. The principal features of the LNP area are:

- a common suite of upland species and habitats
- a common portfolio of ecosystem goods and services
- broad similarities in landscape character
- a similar set of upland agricultural and land management issues,
- local economies and communities with much in common in terms of their economic situations and their access to facilities and services.

What will be done together

Through the NUC LNP partners will:

- Conserve and enhance the natural heritage of the northern uplands, increasing resilience and ensuring these landscapes can meet the challenges of the future
- Support the economic and social well-being of our upland communities in ways which contribute to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty
- Promote public understanding and enjoyment of the nature and culture of these areas, encouraging people to take action for their conservation
- Value, sustain and promote the benefits that the NUC provides for society, including clean air and water, food, carbon storage and other services vital to the nation's health and well-being.

The LNP Board will do this by:

- Creating a strong new identity as a visible champion for the Northern Upland Chain, with a clear remit, vision and programme which we will communicate to others.
- Focusing on improved outcomes – doing more, doing things better, doing more together.
- Developing collaborative projects and programmes at a large 'super-landscape-scale' aimed at: conserving, enhancing, expanding and connecting habitats and communities of wildlife; improving ecosystem services; supporting land managers;

encouraging enjoyment and understanding of the countryside, providing opportunities for education and training.

- Developing collaborative submissions for further resources, and sharing existing resources where appropriate to deliver common objectives
- Providing a stronger, clearer and better co-ordinated voice for nature and sustainability in the northern uplands
- Improving the gathering, sharing and wider dissemination of data and evidence to improve our collective understanding of ecosystem services, biodiversity, economy, health and well-being of the area in order to support better decision-making.
- Working with businesses and the area's Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to encourage a greater understanding of the economic and social value of a high quality, well-connected, functioning natural environment, and working to support sustainable growth in the uplands.

Many of the projects and activities proposed in the AONB Management Plan will be pursued on an LNP-wide basis, sharing resources, learning from each other and benefitting from this collaborative approach.

3. Some highlights from implementing the last Management Plan

The last AONB Management Plan covered the period 2009-2014 and though it's not yet complete there have been some significant achievements by all of those with a role in delivering the plan's actions:

The **Planning Guidelines and Building Design documents** were completed and after through consultation adopted by the AONBs authorities in a variety of ways, including as full Supplementary Planning Documents in Eden and Carlisle Districts. The first **Neighbourhood Develop Plan** for a small part of the AONB (Upper Eden) was completed (England's first too) and an emerging plan for Allendale has much in it related to conserving and enhancing the AONB.

The AONB Partnership's **Peatland Programme** (formerly known as Peatscapes) oversaw major programmes of grip blocking and bare peat restoration. New cross-border partnerships have emerged to expand this work

The North Pennines has 40% of the UK total of species rich hay meadows. The AONB Partnership's **Hay Time** project made a huge contribution to the conservation and enhancement of this special habitat, spreading green hay on an area almost double the original resource.

WildWatch, the Partnership's community wildlife recording and education project has created thousands of new wildlife records, created three local wildlife groups and held over 70 events to train wildlife recorders

With many partners, an **HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme** was completed for parts of Teesdale, Alston Moor and the Blanchland area, restoring buildings, planting woods, conserving rivers and creating opportunities to explore and enjoy the countryside. A second scheme, for the Allen Valleys, has passed stage 1 with £2m put aside for making it happen.

The AONB Partnership's community archaeology project, **Altogether Archaeology** had a highly successful pilot year and has gone on to become a three year project with over 400 volunteers signed-up to uncover their heritage

Many different people and groups took part in **oral history** projects on hay meadows, commons, quarrying and fluorspar mining

Many different organisations organised hundreds of **events and activities,** supporting the local economy and contributing much to people's enjoyment of the North Pennines. Alongside many new walking, cycling and riding initiatives, more people had more fun for longer in the AONB. The greening of tourism businesses expanded and there was closer working across tourism boundaries

Attractions such as Killhope, the North of England Lead Mining Museum, continued to thrive and make new investments in their

future. The AONB Partnership took on the running of Bowlees Visitor Centre in 2013 and it is already becoming a major economic, environmental and social asset

Thousands of **schoolchildren explored the North Pennines**, making films, carrying out climate change research, planting trees and more

The establishment by the AONB Partnership of the **Friends of the North Pennines** as a charity which sits alongside the AONB Partnership and has a constitution aimed at supporting the implementation of the AONB Management Plan

The **Geopark** status for the AONB was retained and UNESCO is in the process of formalising a 'UNESCO Global Geoparks Initiative'.

4. Looking ahead

4.1 What's new?

There have been a number of important changes since the production of the last statutory management plan in 2009. They include:

- Considerable changes in the planning system, with the production of the **NPPF and the first Neighbourhood Development Plans** coming on stream. A new set of local plans is in production across the area's local authorities.

- New Government **guidance on renewable energy** https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-practice-guidance-for-renewable-energy replaced "Planning for renewable energy: a companion guide to PPS22" confirms that the need for renewable energy does not automatically override local environmental and heritage protections and the concerns of local communities.

- The publication of the **Natural Environment White Paper *The Natural Choice – securing the value of nature***, heavily influenced by Making Space for Nature, which spawned the Local Nature Partnerships. Three of the four ambitions in the NEWP are directly relevant to the North Pennines: protecting and improving the natural environment, growing a green economy and reconnecting people and nature.

- The publication of the '**State of Nature'** report, which chronicles the dramatic decline in the UK's wildlife and which should be a wake-up call to all who have responsibility for policy affecting our natural environment.

- The production of '**Making Space for Nature'** (The Lawton Report) which highlighted the importance of enhanced ecological networks across the landscape and taking an approach to management which was summed up by the phrase, 'bigger, better, more, more joined-up'

- An increasing emphasis on a whole **ecosystem approach** to landscape management and on the safeguarding of ecosystem services (referred to in this plan as 'natural services') and Outcome 1c of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – that 17% of the land in the UK should be managed under an ecosystems approach by 2020.

- The production of the **Biodiversity 2020 targets** arising out of the CBD, which feature in this plan. For the North Pennines these are: *blanket bog; upland heath; limestone pavement; upland calcareous grassland; upland hay meadows; purple moor grass and rush pasture; Lowland dry acid grassland; lowland calcareous grassland, lowland meadows; broadleaved mixed and yew woodland (broad habitat).*

- The creation of the **Local Nature Partnerships** and the establishment of the Northern Upland Chain LNP (the Cumbria LNP also has a partial overlap with the NUCLNP)

- '**Think big: ecological recovery in Protected Landscapes'** – the AONBs and National Parks response to Lawton, which recognized that, in order to build coherent and resilient ecological networks, habitat improvement and creation becomes integral to sustainable land management systems and that it provides adequate reward for land managers

- The signing of the **European Landscape Convention** which aims to embed a holistic understanding of landscape and 'place' into plans and policies. Its 7 key principles can be seen here: http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/ELC-GUIDANCE-PART-2_tcm6-23585.pdf

- The business-led **Ecosystem Markets Task Force** was established and has reported on its emerging thinking on why nature should matter to business and the potential opportunities for business from valuing nature (Commitment 44)

- The **Uplands Evidence Review** led by Natural England, which should help to bring additional knowledge to bear on land management decisions

- All of the area's 'old-style' agri-environment schemes came to end and there is now excellent coverage of **Higher Level Stewardship** across the North Pennines. However, impending CAP reform, the end of the current RDPE and the as yet undefined nature of new Environmental Land Management Schemes brings a time of uncertainty.

- A desire for a more **outcome-focused approach to agri-environment schemes**

- An increasing emphasis on **food and energy security**

- A growing understanding that the way in which **climate change** will manifest itself is unpredictable, making it hard to plan for.

- The **global economic downturn**, the long-term pressure on public sector finances and the Government's 'growth agenda'

4.2 What has nature ever done for us?

Natural Services and the ecosystems approach

With all of the talk about strategies and plans and ecosystem services, it's important to remember that nature has an intrinsic value – that it can't all be defined in terms of what it does for us and that it has a value independent of us, yet of which we are the stewards. But the landscape of the North Pennines is not only beautiful and rich in wildlife, important though these things are.

Our landscape provides us with food, jobs, timber and building materials from farming, forestry, grouse moor management and small-scale quarrying for local stone. Farming, forestry and grouse moor management in particular play a vital role in shaping the landscape, and these activities and the future of this special place are interlinked.

Careful management of our peatlands ensures that they remain a vast store of carbon, mitigating the impacts of climate change; keeping our peatlands wet also brings benefits in reducing spikes in downstream flooding, conserving wildlife, conserving the record of past lives and environments locked in the peat, and also brings benefits through reducing sediment load and water colour (and cutting the cost of 'cleaning' it).

Other 'natural services' we get from our landscape include the dispersal and cycling of nutrients, pollination and, with the right technology in the right place, a source of renewable energy. It is also a source of clean air and water, tranquillity and freedom from noise and light pollution. Crucially we can see in our landscape the places our communities have come from, the memory of how we got to where we are now and the assets that can point towards our future.

This stunning landscape, with its abundant plants and wildlife, provides all of us, local people and visitors, with a place where we can improve our health and our well-being by getting out and exploring the relatively unspoilt nature of the North Pennines. This in turn provides opportunities to develop tourism based around those people who want to come and explore this area precisely because it is distinctive and beautiful.

The economy of the North Pennines is characterised by a multitude of very small businesses. Studies tell us that the majority of small businesses in the area feel that the high quality environment has a direct impact on the business and that a deterioration of the landscape would have a negative effect on their work.

A beautiful landscape, rich in wildlife, history and community, provides our society with a great many services; only by supporting

the things that keep it special can these vital services be provided into the future.

What has nature ever done for us? Apart from providing food, jobs, wildlife, clean air and water, carbon storage, flood relief, pollination, nutrient cycling, a tourism industry and a 'natural health service'?

An Ecosystems Approach

This Management Plan identifies the most important natural services that our landscape provides and brings forward shared objectives and actions to ensure that they can be provided into the future.

The plan focuses on the whole North Pennines landscape, and where necessary beyond, identifying the need for some partnership projects and programmes that will spread out either into the surrounding lowlands or along the Northern Upland Chain. It does not deal with 'sites' and it is not focused on individual species in isolation – it is about taking a large-scale integrated approach to conservation and understanding the effects of management and development on whole natural systems.

An Ecosystems Approach cannot consider biodiversity and landscape conservation in isolation from the need for the North Pennines to remain a living and working landscape. However, the task ahead is also about understanding, and working within, the acceptable limits of environmental change, in order to meet community need and rise to the economic challenges facing society without compromising the natural services that will support us in the future. A 2013 study suggested that conserving nature costs 100 to 1000 times less than trying to restore it once it's lost or damaged and the services it provides are compromised – it makes economic sense, as well as environmental and social sense, to look after it.

What will matter is not just identifying our natural services, and saying that this plan promotes an ecosystems approach; it will be in ensuring that recognition of these things drives better and more integrated policy and action on the ground across Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, NGOs and others.

The table below sets out (left hand side) the special environmental qualities of the North Pennines that have been identified and agreed in the previous statutory AONB Management Plans through lengthy consultation – it also identifies the area's BD2020 priority habitats against the relevant special quality. The top row is a list of the main natural services that we can derive from these special qualities of our upland landscape. It suggests how conserving these special qualities will help to sustain our natural services into the future.

Natural Service	*Carbon storage*	*Nutrient dispersal and cycling*	*Pollination*	*Biodiversity*	*Food*	*Clean air*	*Clean water*	*Flood risk mgt.*	*Jobs*	*Building materials*	*Renewable energy*	*Well-being*	*Recreation / tourism*
Special Quality / *BD2020 Habitat*													
Peatland *Upland dry heath, blanket bog*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*
Hay meadows and spp.-rich grasslands *Upland hay meadows, upland calcareous grassland. Lowland calcareous grassland, lowland meadows, purple moor grass and rush pasture, lowland dry acid grassland*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*			*	*
Upland Woodland *Yew Woodland, Upland oak/ash woodland*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Upland Rivers		*		*	*		*	*	*		*	*	*
Geological heritage inc. soils *Bare rock and scree, Limestone Pavement*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*
Upland Birds		*		*	*				*			*	*
Industrial heritage *Calaminarian Grassland*				*					*			*	*
Cultural heritage and the built environment				*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Remoteness, wildness and tranquillity, incl. dark skies				*		*			*		*	*	*

4.3 Vision 2025

Where would you like to be in 2025? It is hoped that our area will look something this:

The North Pennines AONB is increasingly nationally recognised as being an exemplar of what Protected Landscapes can do for conservation, local communities and local economies. There is wide recognition of the ecosystem services provided by this high quality landscape, in relation to issues such as employment, climate change mitigation, health and well-being, clean air and clean water.

The majority of our moorland grips have been blocked, at least half of our bare/eroding peat areas have been restored and our internationally important peatlands are functioning wetland ecosystems; as a result, areas of peat are actively building again, and providing services such as carbon storage, flood risk management and watercolour reduction.

There is a greater area of species rich grasslands, including our nationally important hay meadows, than there was in 2010. Many small species-rich fields, which would have been lost without a tightening of regulations governing their ploughing and re-seeding, have survived and are thriving.

A High Nature Value Farming approach, with a focus on outcomes, rewards farmers properly for managing our most treasured wildlife and landscapes.

Populations of characteristic birds of the North Pennines, including waders and black grouse, are still nationally important, stable and sustainable; there are stable breeding populations of hen harrier, red kite, merlin, short-eared owl, buzzard and peregrine.

99% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest are in favourable condition, compared to 80.4% in 2008 and that this is maintained; there is consensus amongst conservation agencies and land managers as to what this represents.

Areas of moorland remain free from tracks and roads and the wildness of parts of the area is still protected and prized. Dark skies are still valued and protected and the levels of tranquility are at least as high as when they were mapped in 2007.

We have increased our area of native woodland cover. Our woods are well managed and produce timber and wood products that provide woods with a sustainable economic future, promoting their continued management. Fungal attacks on native tree species notable ash and juniper, have been controlled.

Management of land allows opportunities for more natural processes to develop, including the natural development of a tree line and ecologically rich forest edges, and watercourses to follow natural courses. Management practices allow land to move further along a ‘spectrum of wildness’.

The tourism industry is both environmentally responsible and economically sustainable. Tourism is based on, and actively supports, the special qualities of the North Pennines AONB and Global Geopark.

- Visitors perceive the North Pennines as a high quality, green destination where they can experience, understand and contribute to the natural and cultural heritage of the AONB
- Local communities welcome visitors, are proud to communicate what's special about their area, and benefit economically from appropriate levels of tourism
- Organisations working in tourism in (and around) the AONB recognise the North Pennines as a destination and work together to promote a sustainable industry.

Our historic environment is better managed, recorded and understood and local people appreciate and value where their community has come from. Linked to our Geopark status, our mining heritage is more innovatively conserved and interpreted.

Small–scale new residential developments have appeared, supporting schools and local services; these developments are in local stone and work with the grain of their setting, adding to its character and distinctiveness. The sensitive conversion of traditional buildings for residential use is welcomed as helping to support the sustainability of nearby settlements, where their distinctive character and setting are retained and adverse impacts are avoided.

Our communities are vibrant, strong and active, with populations similar in size or slightly increased on those of 2013. There are increased job opportunities for local people in support of the delivery of the AONB management plan objectives and high levels of community involvement and volunteer activity.

Small-scale renewable energy has been embraced fully. New developments have been created using the principles of sustainable building, local people and visitors have reduced their own energy consumption, carefully sited domestic turbines have brought wind energy to remote properties, whilst solar power, biomass, micro-hydro and ground source heat technologies are sensitively applied. There is no commercial scale renewable energy generation in the AONB or impacting upon its quality of wildness, tranquillity and remoteness.

Local people and visitors can visit and move around the area on a public transport system which integrates services across political boundaries. Services link with railways in places such as Penrith, Hexham and Langwathby. There is a growing use of electric vehicles and bikes and the facilities to support them.

The children of farming families, and others, want to farm in the uplands and it is a rewarding way of life which helps to sustain the special character of the area. Farm diversification has continued and the successor to the LEADER programme, and targeted agri-environment schemes, along with a sound market for local

products, has grown farm incomes. Small farms thrive across the North Pennines and are a large part of the area's character.

The cultural associations with the North Pennines are widely known and celebrated, but not simply the links with Auden, Turner and Dickens, but also through the work of the artists and crafts people that create a living culture today.

Dry stone walls are in better repair than today, and the skills to maintain them are readily available

Landscapes and species are adapting naturally to climate change. There will be losses and gains, but there is long term planning to deal with the impacts of a changing environment.

Within the constraints of climate change, grouse moor management still contributes to employment and conservation and this is widely recognised. There are closer partnerships between conservation bodies and land managers. The issues surrounding moorland burning have been resolved by sound science and a burning code is agreed, respected and implemented.

The North Pennines is a much used outdoor classroom and local organisations work together more closely to use the local environment to inspire young people.

The nature, history and culture of the area are extensively and expertly interpreted, yet the landscape is not cluttered by the paraphernalia of interpretation; award winning audio, digital media and web-based interpretation reaches new audiences (though many people still want, and can get, high quality printed material); this adds to the programmes of face to face interpretation and excellent events which bring the area to life.

By the indictors of the day, the quality of life in the North Pennines is high.

5. Some common principles

There are some common principles that underpin all the different strands of this Management Plan. **The acceptance of these principles is a key part of adopting and delivering this plan** and it is anticipated that, in tandem with the objectives and actions in this Management Plan, **they will also guide policy formulation and action in relation to the AONB across a wide range of organisations**, notably local authorities and public bodies with duties in relation to the AONB under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).

The following principles run through all the strands of this Management Plan:

5.1 An Ecosystems Approach – that our landscape provides us with vital natural services that we need to sustain. We will collectively identify the most important of these services and bring forward shared objectives and actions to ensure that they can be provided into the future.

5.2 Ecological Networks on a landscape scale – that an integrated approach to conservation at the largest scale possible will provide the most benefit, supporting habitats that are bigger, better managed, more numerous and better connected. We will focus on the whole North Pennines landscape, and where necessary beyond, identifying the need for some partnership projects and programmes that will spread out either into the surrounding lowlands or along the Northern Upland Chain.

5.3 Upland biodiversity is declining – the State of Nature Report shows that of 886 upland species for which we have information, 65% have declined and 34% have declined strongly. Nationally, more species have become extinct in the uplands (15) than in any other habitat: 137 upland species, including 131 plants, are on recent national Red Lists. In the North Pennines we have x number of the NERC Section 41 priority species. It will be essential to identify the 'headline' species, have in place the mechanisms which will conserve a broad range of species, identify gaps in knowledge and develop specific projects where resources allow. *Decline in upland biodiversity must be reversed, which will be achieved through the conservation, enhancement, expansion and connection of protected habitats and communities of wildlife*

5.4 Climate change – that human-influenced climate change is real. Projects and initiatives should have as small a carbon footprint as possible. Small-scale renewable energy schemes will be encouraged and local people's effort to reduce the amount of energy and resources they use will be supported. Projects which seek land management solutions to problems of a changing climate will be encouraged, as will research which helps us better understand our changing climate.

5.5 Landscape change – that change in the landscape is inevitable, and often to be welcomed, but that change needs to be managed carefully to ensure that it is beneficial to the conservation of the area's high quality environment. The principles of the European Landscape Convention provide a good basis for approaching the evolution, conservation and enhancement of our landscape.

5.6 Economy and environment – that somewhere rich in natural beauty and with a strong sense of place and that is rich in wildlife is a tremendous economic and social asset that provides many services for society. An economy is developing which is predicated upon keeping this place special and that, in a nationally Protected Landscape in particular, development must be environmentally sustainable as well as economically and socially sustainable.

5.7 Nature and heritage conservation – that opportunities to conserve and enhance landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and the historic environment should be sought in all projects and developments. There is a need to integrate the conservation of these environmental assets and not see them in isolation from each other, for instance through ensuring that nature conservation work is informed by HERs There is an assumption in this Plan that we will not bring about one environmental benefit at the expense of another, e.g. new woodlands will not be planted on areas with existing biodiversity importance or historic significance, or wind turbines would not be erected where they would damage the character of the landscape.

5.8 Supporting sustainable land management – that almost all of the AONB is in private ownership and that landowners and land managers have played the largest role in creating today's North Pennines – 'natural' beauty is something of a misnomer; supporting land-based farm incomes and the retention of viable upland livestock farming, and promoting sustainable moorland management, are vital factors in keeping the area special.

5.9 Working together – that strong and meaningful collaborations between landowners, conservation bodies, local authorities and local people are the only way to ensure that natural beauty has a bright future; generating consensus takes time and effort but is always worth it, not least because collaborative approaches add immense value to often very limited budgets. This collaborative approach is embedded within the AONB Partnership, the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership and the national AONB Family, it must also be extended across the UK's Protected Landscapes.

5.10 Open to all – that there should be equality of opportunity for everyone to enjoy what this area has to offer – there is more to understand and more barriers to remove to make this possible, from limited public transport, to the need for better information or better infrastructure; the most accessible option, in relation to physical and intellectual access to the AONB, is the one that should be chosen where this does not compromise natural beauty.

5.11 Community and conservation – that local people are at the heart of the AONB and that they should be encouraged and supported to devise projects and initiatives that conserve natural beauty, or become involved in those led by others; that in order to thrive and remain viable, communities need affordable housing, and access to services and facilities, and that these things are compatible with the purpose of AONB designation. People live, work in and visit the AONB and there will be a need for new development so that communities can continue to thrive and evolve.

5.12 Learning and discovering – that in all of the conservation work in the AONB, there are likely to be opportunities for interpretation of, and educational activities based on, the special features being conserved. Education and interpretation are not 'cherries on the cake' but an integral part of the ingredients of what protected area management should be about.

5.13 Costs and benefits – that the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, helping people explore, enjoy and understand the North Pennines and supporting land-based industries is a public good and appropriate resources need to be found for some of it; equally this plan will cover a period of very hard times for public funds and there is a need to diversify conservation income streams further and build new sources of support.

Objectives and actions under three themes

Following the link to the 'What's Special' part of the management plan will allow you to look at the different special qualities of the North Pennines and also at some of the issues they face.

The identification of these special qualities in previous management plan consultations and the widely acknowledged issues facing them, alongside an assessment of recent events in the 'What's New' part of the plan, and the content of the section on our 'common principles' are the basis for the development of objectives and actions.

The Management Plan is focused around three themes which reflect the national objectives of the AONB Family. Within these themes are nested the subjects with which this plan is concerned in detail:

A place to look after

- Landscape
- Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Historic environment

A place to live and work

- Support for an environment-based economy
- Development that sustains the environment and communities

A place to celebrate and explore

- Enjoying and understanding the North Pennines
- Supporting community action for natural and cultural heritage

Underpinning these themes is the intention that the plan should enable people to value, sustain and promote the benefits that the North Pennines AONB provides for society, including biodiversity, clean air and water, food, carbon storage and other services vital to the nation's health and well-being.

The plan does not present an exhaustive list of everything affecting the North Pennines – rather it addresses the things most directly linked to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and helping people to enjoy, appreciate and explore the area.

Reading the Action Plan

Included in the following pages is an action plan under various headings. In the final plan on the website, this will be a standalone document but is presented in a combined document here for ease of reading. It should be read in the context of:

- 'What's special about the North Pennines?' which sets out the area's special qualities and some of the issues affecting them
- The earlier parts of this strategy document, which sets out the background to AONBs and their Management Plans, identifies the principal natural services we derive form the area, establishes some common principles which run through the plan and influence its content
- This Action Plan identifies a series of objectives and sets out how they will be reached; it will be updated annually on the Management Plan microsite and reviewed fully after three years, then five; some actions are shown to cover the full five years of the plan. There is inevitable overlap in some subject areas – this plan tries to take a 'best fit' approach rather than have too much duplication.

The Action Plan is presented in tabular form; see below for how to interpret it:

Objective
Something we want to achieve

Initial lead
They may not do all the work, but they start the process of making it happen and report on progress

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

Priority
1 high – 3 lower

Objective BG1 To conserve, enhance, connect and where necessary restore the Biodiversity 2020 priority habitats within the North Pennines					
Action	**Initial Lead**	**Partners**	**Timescale**	**AONB Team Role**	**Priority**
Expand the programme of grip blocking and bare peat restoration, partly through an EU LIFE project	NPAP	LNP	2014-17	Executive	1

Action
Work towards meeting the objective

Partners
Not an exclusive list of those involved, but those which are central to implementing the action. ***It should be assumed that all land management work is with the consent and participation of farmers and landowners, hence they are not named against each action***

AONB Team Role
The role of the AONB Partnership Staff in this action:
Executive – work it does itself and with others
Catalyst – things it brings others together to make happen
Advocate – things it promotes and champions

6.1 A place to look after

6.1.1 Landscape

The North Pennines is known for its wild moorlands and its gentler dales landscapes, as well as colourful hay meadows, tumbling rivers and stone-built villages. Relics of the lead and other mineral mining industries are also an important part of the character and cultural heritage of the North Pennines.

Beneath the surface of today's pattern of fields, villages and moorland there is a history of settlement and landscape change from medieval to prehistoric times. Norse, Roman, Iron Age, Bronze Age and possibly Neolithic settlers began shaping this land, perhaps as far back as 7,000 years ago

As well as having great scenic beauty, this is also a landscape which provides 'natural services' such as carbon storage, pollination, energy, employment and flood risk management, and which contribute to our health and well-being. As well as all these things, the North Pennines is something very personal to everyone who lives or works here, or who comes to enjoy it as a visitor.

There are many forces for change affecting our landscape. The purpose of Protected Area management in landscapes such as ours cannot be to preserve the landscape in aspic – it must be about managing change so that the special and unique character of the landscape is conserved and so that change is in tune with that character, rather than striking discordant notes.

New landscape characterisation

There are many opportunities to reinforce the special and distinctive character of our landscape. These do not just come from managing development and the character of settlements, but mainly from the approach we take to land management, supporting distinctive features such as walls and field barns, removing or softening conifer blocks, recreating lost woodland or restoring heather moorland.

The current approach to landscape characterisation in the North Pennines can be found by linking to the 'What's Special' document. Early in the life of this plan a detailed and more up-to-date landscape characterisation will be produced and consulted upon. This will include detailed guidance on how to strengthen the special and distinctive qualities of individual landscape character areas in the North Pennines and will be presented as a companion document to this management plan. *For more information on the AONB's landscape, visit:* http://www.northpennines.org.uk/Pages/PublicationItem.aspx?DocRef=88 Pages 6-14

Objective 1 To ensure that the distinctive character and qualities of the North Pennines landscape are understood, conserved, enhanced and restored					
Action	**Initial Lead**	**Partners**	**Timescale**	**AONB Team Role**	**Priority**
1.1 Complete detailed landscape character assessment for the area	NPAP	LA, NE	2014	Executive	1
1.2 Develop landscape character area conservation guidelines for use by developers, HLS advisors etc.	NPAP	LA, NE	2014	Executive	1
1.3 Identify 'Indicators of Landscape Change' and establish a monitoring scheme	NPAP	NE, LA	2014	Executive	1
1.4 Ensure that land management decisions, e.g. through HLS, reinforce landscape character	NE	NPAP	2014-17	Executive	1
1.5 Ensure that forward planning and development management decisions reinforce landscape character	LA	NE	2014-17	Advocate	1
1.6 Support the conservation of drystone walls, field barns, bields and other characteristic features of the landscape, through development management and agri-environment schemes	LA / NE	NPAP, EH	2014-17	Executive	1
1.7 Create 300ha of new native woodland, including riparian planting, as part of a larger project in the NUCLNP	NPAP	LNP, FC, WoT, RT, NE	2014-19	Executive	1
1.8 Bring 50ha of ASNW, and 50ha of PAWS into favourable management	FC	NE, WoT, NPAP	By 2019	Executive	1
1.9 Monitor and act on tree diseases, notably Chalara and Phytopthera, which may have a significant impact on the landscape	FC	NE	2014-17	Advocate	1
1.10 Restructure or remove 200ha of commercial forestry plantations	FC		By 2019	Advocate	1
1.11 Establish a programme of planting individual trees as important landscape features of the future	NPAP	LNP, FC, WoT, PC	2015	Executive	1
1.12 Establish a bespoke woodland creation and management scheme for the Northern Upland Chain LNP	FC	LNP	2015	Executive	1
1.13 Encourage and incentivise improved aftercare of woodlands	FC	WoT, LNP	2014-19	Advocate	2

1.14 Underground overhead wires for landscape and visual amenity purposes as part of the Price Control Review scheme for Protected Areas, encouraging links with BT wherever possible	UU, NEDL	NPAP, PC	2014-19 subject to approval	Catalyst	2
1.15 Review the AONB Partnership's 'Guidance on the Management and Maintenance of Rural Roads' and encourage its uptake	NPAP	HA	2014	Executive	1
1.16 Consult the AONB Partnership about new road management and improvement schemes in the AONB	HA	NPAP	Plan period	Advocate	1
1.17 Collaborate to ensure the conservation of the special quality of truly dark night skies in the North Pennines, including investigation of an 'invest to save' programme of street lighting renewal where such lighting currently contributes to light pollution	LA	NPAP, PC	2014-19	Advocate	1
1.18 Identify and gather the data necessary to produce a 'State of the AONB' report to inform monitoring of this plan and production of the next one	NPAP	All	2014	Executive	1
1.19 Investigate the benefits of expanding the Dark Skies Discovery Sites programme to Dark Skies Reserve/Park status	NPAP	LA, LIG	2014	Executive	1
1.20 Produce a research framework for the AONB to help generate the data and information to improvement management	NPAP	NE, EH, FC, EA, UNI	2015	Catalyst	2
1.21 Complete a climate change adaptation plan to inform landscape management decisions such as future tree planting	NPAP	NE, FC	2015	Executive	2
1.22 Establish a survey programme for the area's miner-farmer landscapes and produce guidelines for their conservation	NPAP	EH, FotNP, LIG	2016	Catalyst	2
1.23 Act promptly to remove fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles etc.	LA	PC	2014-19	Advocate	2
1.24 Explore and support opportunities for large-scale 'wildland' projects, and in all activities seek to move the landscape further along a 'spectrum of wildness'	NPAP	NE, LIG, WT	2014-19	Catalyst	2

1.25 Respond to any national programme of boundary review, with an emphasis on the designation potential land around Barningham Moor, Mid Teesdale, and areas of east Cumbria identified as 'areas of search' for future extension in the 2006 Natural England assessment in association with the Lakes/Dales NP extensions	NPAP	NE, LA, PC	Subject to review being brought forward	Executive	3
Conservation of landscape quality and character is addressed further in the 'A Place to Live and Work' section of the plan, especially in relation to the role of landuse planning.					

6.1.2 Biodiversity and geodiversity

The goal for the conservation of biodiversity in the North Pennines should be to create well-managed ecological networks across the area at the largest possible scale.

The North Pennines is arguably the most biodiverse part of the English uplands. Its wildlife riches include:

- 40% of the UK's species rich upland hay meadows and 21% of England's blanket bog
- Over 20,000 pairs of breeding wading birds - this is England's wader hotspot, as well as supporting over 80% of England's black grouse
- The Teesdale Assemblage flora, which is nationally special
- Moor House–Upper Teesdale National Nature Reserve, Britain's largest terrestrial NNR, which supports over 20 species of Europe-wide conservation importance
- 46% of the AONB designated as Site of Special Scientific Interest, and 47% covered by (often overlapping) international designations (five Special Areas of Conservation under the EU Habitats Directive and a Special Protection Area under the EU Birds Directive).

It is not such a wildlife-rich area by accident, and years of sound land management have played a major role in creating what we have today. The role of farmers in supporting biodiversity and ecosystems needs to encouraged, enhanced and appropriately rewarded. Though our uplands are in better state than those of most of the rest of England, there are still much to do if we are to conserve and enhance what we have.

The AONB supports species and habitats of national and international importance; the conservation of some of these requires special intervention, whilst being mindful of the potential impacts of this action on other aspects of the upland ecosystem. The BD2020 habitats of the AONB are: *blanket bog; upland heath; limestone pavement; upland calcareous grassland; upland hay meadows; purple moor grass and rush pasture; Lowland dry acid grassland; lowland calcareous grassland, lowland meadows; broadleaved mixed and yew woodland (broad habitat). (NCA Profile, 2013, Natural England).* Decline in upland biodiversity must be reversed, which will be achieved through the conservation, enhancement, expansion and connection of protected habitats and communities of wildlife.

Artificial drainage systems occur across the AONB, from grips on the blanket bog and heather moorland to field drains in meadows and pastures. The benefits of grip-blocking are well established and a comprehensive programme has been undertaken in recent years which is set to continue. The introduction of new drainage systems to pastures and allotments negatively affects species such as water vole and breeding waders. Insensitive management operations on existing draining systems, including small, natural watercourses, can also reduce habitat quality.

The populations of a number of non-native species are steadily increasing in the AONB, for example grey squirrel, American mink and Himalayan balsam. Many non-native species pose a threat to native species and habitats through the introduction and/or carriage of disease, competition for food and/or space or direct predation.

The Uplands Evidence Review, led by Natural England, should be seen as an important process by which future management should be guided.

Sound grouse moor management can contribute significantly to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. Despite the Uplands Evidence Review, the burning of dwarf shrub communities continues to be an area of debate, as does burning blanket bog. Meanwhile the populations of several species of bird of prey are artificially low, or unable to establish at all; the significant factor in this is still likely to be illegal persecution.

Possibly the most contentious issue in the uplands is that of stocking levels. Blanket prescriptions will not bring about the right conditions for farming or conservation and an outcome focused approach is necessary.

There is always much discussion of ‘wildness’, ‘wild land’ and ‘rewilding’, though nothing is truly wild here or truly artificial either. Wildness depends on processes of growth, decay and natural disturbance operating to the full, and all of these are limited to a greater or lesser extent by human activity. Parts of the UK’s landscape might be seen to be at different points along a spectrum; much of our North Pennines landscape is perhaps further along the spectrum towards ‘naturalness’ than in many

parts of the country. Whilst grand-scale 're-wilding' is not a realistic option, the idea of moving some areas of habitat further along the spectrum towards the natural is an important one and one that the Local Nature Partnership in particular might be charged with taking forward during the life of this plan. The 'climate space' for some local species may disappear and such species will gradually disappear from the North Pennines. Equally as conditions change, other species may be able to colonise the area. Moving further along a 'spectrum of wildness will help species and habitats to cope better with inevitable change.

Since the last management plan, biodiversity offsetting and carbon offsetting have risen in prominence. There are opportunities to bring to the North Pennines through these approaches, and through generating payments for the conservation of ecosystem services (PES).

Many long-standing issues are still current, notably the need for better data (and data sharing), the need for trust and close working between farmers and the wider conservation community and the need to take joined-up conservation action at the largest possible scale.

The North Pennines has a world class geological heritage, celebrated in part through our European and Global Geopark status. Sites and features of geological interest are under occasional threat from development and inappropriate land management, but there are opportunities for geoconservation too, often associated with extant quarrying permissions and restoration schemes. The mineral wealth of the North Pennines continues to be under threat from unregulated and often illegal collection.

To find out more about the area's biodiversity and geodiversity, some of the issues it faces in keeping it special, visit: http://www.northpennines.org.uk/Pages/PublicationItem.aspx?DocRef=88 Pages 7-9 and 15-24

Objective 2	To ensure the conservation, enhancement, expansion and connectivity of habitats, creating resilient ecological networks across the North Pennines and beyond with a focus on Biodiversity 2020 priorities
Objective 3	To reverse the decline in biodiversity amongst populations of characteristic species
Objective 4	To ensure the conservation and enhancement of features of geodiversity interest in line with the North Pennines Geodiversity Action Plan

Objective 2 To ensure the conservation, enhancement expansion and connectivity of habitats, creating resilient ecological networks across the North Pennines and beyond with a focus on Biodiversity 2020 priorities					
Action	**Initial Lead**	**Partners**	**Timescale**	**AONB Team Role**	**Priority**
2.1 Complete ecological networks mapping for the North Pennines and wider LNP	NPAP	LNP	2014	Executive	1
2.2 Seek and exploit opportunities to create, connect and expand habitats at a landscape scale	NPAP	LNP, NE, FC EA, WT, RT, WoT	2014-17	Executive	1
2.3 Expand the programme of grip blocking and bare peat restoration, partly through an EU LIFE project	NPAP	LNP	2014-17	Executive	1
2.4 Establish a Pennine Peat Partnership to support local action, sharing good practice etc. whilst continuing to learn from good practice further afield	LNP	NPAP, NE, EA, NWL	2014	Executive	1
2.5 Support research into peatland hydrology, vegetation cover, grazing, burning, biodiversity, carbon storage and the historic environment. Use research findings to guide peatland management	UNI	NPAP, NE, EH	2014-17	Executive	1
2.6 Complete and disseminate the information from a project on the use of plastic mesh for track construction	NPAP	MA, NE	2014	Executive	1
2.7 Deliver the Nectarworks project aimed at conserving, enhancing and expanding species rich meadows and banks	NPAP	NE, LA	2014-17	Executive	1
2.8 Develop a more conservation-friendly approach to the management of species rich road verges	HA	NPAP, PC, NE, WT	2014-17	Catalyst	1
2.9 Conserve and restore species rich hay meadows through agri-environment schemes, practical projects, and the application of sound evidence	Farmers	NPAP, NE	2014-17	Executive	1
2.10 Use agri-environment schemes to influence the management of drainage in meadows and pastures to support 'Section 41' priority species	NE	EA	As schemes are renewed	Advocate	1
2.11 Secure funding for and implement a calaminarian grasslands project	NWT	NPAP, NE	To 2014	Catalyst	1

2.12 Encourage a more outcome focussed approach to agri-environment schemes rather than a more prescriptions led approach	NE		As schemes are renewed	Advocate	1
2.13 Establish a pilot High Nature Value Farming project, as part of a wider LNP initiative	LNP	NE, UTASS, NFU	2014	Executive	1
2.14 Hold a series of on farm demonstration events to promote good practice in biodiversity, landscape and historic environment conservation	NPAP, RSPB, UTASS, NFU, EH	NE	Annual	Executive	2
2.15 Implement Catchment Management Plans for the area's main rivers, linked to River Basin Management Plans and the AONB Management Plan (actions include achieving good water body status, reducing bankside erosion, reducing run-off into rivers, improving watercourse management and favouring natural solutions over engineered)	RTs	EA, NPAP, NE, WT, NWL, UU	To 2019	Executive	1
2.16 Improve the sharing of data between conservation organisations, local authorities and other relevant bodies	NE	ALL	2014-19	Executive	1
2.17 Deliver a Landscape Partnership Scheme with multiple conservation objectives in the Allen Valleys	NPAP	HLF, LA, EH,NE, PC, EA, FC, WT, RT, WoT, LIG	2014-19	Executive	1
2.18 Develop and if successful at Stage 1 deliver Landscape Partnership Scheme with multiple conservation objectives in the Carlisle area of the East Fellside	NPAP	HLF, LA, NE, PC, EA, FC, WT, RT, WoT, EH, LIG	2015	Executive	2
2.19 Support the continued work of biological records centres	LA	NE	2014-19	Advocate	1
2.20 Develop an LNP-wide approach to maximise the opportunities of biodiversity offsetting and carbon offsetting, and Payments for Ecosystem Services	LNP	NPAP, LEP, LA, NE	2014-17	Executive	1
2.21 Develop a programme with LEPs to deliver environmental and economic benefits to the North Pennines	LNPs	NPAP, EA, WT, LA, NE	2014	Executive	1

2.22 Support the delivery of agri-environment schemes with targeted on farm advice	NE	NPAP, RSPB	2014-19	Executive	1

Objective 3 To reverse the decline in biodiversity amongst populations of characteristic species					
Action	**Initial Lead**	**Partners**	**Timescale**	**AONB Team Role**	**Priority**
3.1 Map NERC Section 41 priority species in the AONB and take action for their conservation	NPAP	NPAP	2014-19	Executive	1
3.2 Develop and support initiatives to conserve and enhance upland bird communities, including supporting the Hen Harrier Recovery Plan	RSPB	NPAP, NE, WT, GWCT	2014-19	Executive	1
3.3 Develop and support conservation, enhancement and research initiatives for mammals with a focus on NERC section 41 species	NPAP	MA, RSPB, NPAP, WT	2014-19	Catalyst	1
3.4 Develop and support conservation, enhancement and research initiatives for invertebrates with a focus on NERC section 41 species	NPAP	BC, PL, WT, EA, NPAP	2014-19	Catalyst	1
3.5 Develop and support conservation, enhancement and research initiatives for plants with a focus on NERC section 41 species	NPAP	PL, NPAP, WT, EA	2014-19	Catalyst	1
3.6 Develop and support research initiatives for the reintroduction of recently lost species, with a focus on NERC section 41 species"	RSPB	PL, NPAP, WT, EA, NE	2014-19	Catalyst	3
3.7 Monitor and seek to manage fungal attacks on native tree species, notably chalara and phytopthora	DEFRA	NPAP NE, FC	2014-19	Catalyst	2
3.8 Establish a forum to influence those who may be involved to end the persecution of raptors, and continue to promote compliance with the law. Publicise incidences of raptor persecution	LNP	MA, RSPB, NPAP, NE	2014	Catalyst	1
3.9 Co-ordinate an invasive and non-native species assessment and establish a rapid follow-on programme to act on the findings	NE	NPAP, WT, LA, RT	2015	Advocate	1
3.10 Develop a project on moorland fringe habitats to support a suite of upland species	NPAP	NE, WT, GWCT, RSPB	2016	Executive	2

Objective 4 To conserve and enhance features of geodiversity interest in line with the North Pennines Geodiversity Action Plan					
Action	**Initial Lead**	**Partners**	**Timescale**	**AONB Team Role**	**Priority**
4.1 Carry out condition monitoring of geological SSSIs in the AONB	NE	NPAP	2015	Advocate	1
4.2 Ensure that no features of interest are lost to development or unsympathetic land management	LA / owners	NE	ongoing	Advocate	1
4.3 Review the North Pennines AONB Geodiversity Action Plan	NPAP	BGS, Killhope, NE, WTs	2015	Executive	2
4.4 Establish a widely agreed mineral collecting code for the AONB drawing on experience from elsewhere and appropriate for the area's UNESCO Global Geopark status	NPAP	BGS, Killhope, NE, WTs	2015	Executive	3

6.1.3 Historic environment

Recent work, notably that through the AONB Partnership's Altogether Archaeology project and the English Heritage-led Miner-Farmer project, demonstrates that the North Pennines AONB contains a unique and complex historic environment, components of which extend back some 10,000 years to the hunters and gatherers who settled here after the end of the Ice Age. In fact the appearance of the present day landscape, far from being entirely 'natural', is the result of the interaction between people and nature over the millennia; this applies as much to the wild moorlands as it does to the dales and villages.

Although much important work has been done over recent years, there is still a pressing need for improved data relating to the historic environment in order to improve our understanding of it and to inform its effective management. In the past research has tended to concentrate to a large extent on post-medieval industrial archaeology, and especially on the internationally significant North Pennines lead mining industry: this remains a priority area, but must be studied within the context of an archaeological heritage extending back through medieval, Roman and prehistoric times.

Piecemeal consideration of the historic environment as a series of isolated sites and features divorces these from their context and dilutes the integration of historic environment work with other aspects of land and heritage management. There is a need to ensure that landscape-scale conservation of the historic environment is effectively integrated with conservation of biodiversity and landscape character.

It is crucial to enthuse, engage and enable local communities with regard to the recording, management and celebration of their heritage; this is important for its own sake, but also because greater involvement leads to greater concern for the historic environment, brings new aspects of our historic environment to light, and should lead to stronger measures for its conservation. The 'Altogether Archaeology' project helps local people to discover and celebrate their heritage through direct involvement in archaeological research at a range of locations throughout the North Pennines.

The AONB contains a wealth of fascinating and often very attractive buildings, ranging in condition from well maintained and occupied structures to fragmentary ruins. The conservation of these is essential to the maintenance of local distinctiveness throughout different areas of the AONB. Some of the AONB's historic settlements are designated as Conservation Areas (details of which

are held by local planning authorities), which should help to ensure the conservation of their local distinctiveness. For more information on the AONB's historic environment, visit http://www.northpennines.org.uk/Pages/PublicationItem.aspx?DocRef=88 Pages 24-26

Objective 5 To ensure an increase in professional and public knowledge and understanding of the AONB's historic environment

Objective 6 To ensure effective conservation and management of the North Pennines historic environment, including historic buildings, archaeological sites and heritage landscapes

Objective 5 To ensure an increase in professional and public knowledge and understanding of the AONB's historic environment					
Action	**Initial Lead**	**Partners**	**Timescale**	**AONB Team Role**	**Priority**
5.1 Enhance the county Historic Environment Records, to enable more informed landscape management	LA	EH	2014-19	Advocate	1
5.2 Establish projects which empower local people to record and celebrate what's special to them about their local historic environment	LIG	NPAP, FoK, FotNP, EH	2015	Catalyst	**2**
5.3 Support and undertake research within the AONB, where possible in collaboration with local communities, guided by a research framework	UNI	EH, LIG, NPAP	2014-19	Advocate	1
5.4 Obtain funding for exploratory lidar and air-photographic landscape surveys as the most cost-effective method of completing initial surveys of extensive landscapes, discovering new sites, leading to more detailed clarification of the nature and condition of sites and landscapes	NPAP	EH	2014	Executive	2
5.5 Establish joint research projects with neighbouring upland Protected Landscapes in areas of mutual relevance and benefit, eg Bronze Age landscapes, landscapes of industry	LNP	NPAP, EH, NE	2014-19	Catalyst	2
5.6 Arrange workshops and other events primarily aimed at local landowners, farmers and land managers to raise awareness of the historic environment and good practice in its management, based initially on Alston Moor using results of the Miner-Farmer project	NPAP	EH, NE, LIG, FotNP	Biennial	Catalyst	2

5.7 Research the underground mining heritage of the North Pennines and identify a body that would be responsible for archiving the material	NPAP	LIG, NE, EH, UNI	2018	Catalyst	2
5.8 Hold biennial conferences on new research into aspects of the historic environment of the North Pennines	NPAP	LIG, LA, EH, FotNP, UNI	2015/17/19	Executive	2
Further work on the historic environment is included in 'A place to celebrate and explore'					
Objective 6 To ensure effective conservation and management of the North Pennines historic environment, including historic buildings, archaeological sites and heritage landscapes					
Action	**Initial Lead**	**Partners**	**Timescale**	**AONB Team Role**	**Priority**
6.1 Support an increase in landowners entering into Section 17 management agreements with English Heritage, or Environmental Land Management scheme agreements with Natural England	EH/NE	NPAP	2014-19	Advocate	1
6.2 Support the continued employment of historic environment specialists within local authorities, Natural England and other appropriate bodies	LA/NE	NPAP	2014-19	Advocate	1
6.3 Undertake conservation or survey projects on prioritised sites and landscapes, including Heritage Assets at Risk	LIG	NPAP, EH, NE, UNI, FotNP	1 per year	Executive	1
6.4 Carry out projects linking aspects of the historic environment with geology and ecology	NPAP	NE, EH, LIG, UNI	1 per year	Executive	1
6.5 Complete Appraisals and Management Plans for all Conservation Areas within the AONB	LA	EH	2015	Advocate	1
6.6 Scope a project to study historic woodland, and provide guidance for future woodland creation and management based on sound historic data	EH	NPAP, UNI, LIG, FC	2016	Advocate	3
Further work on the historic environment is included in 'A place to celebrate and explore'					

6.2 A place to live and work

6.2.1 Support for an environment-based economy

A high quality natural environment underpins the economy of the North Pennines, and ecologically and environmentally sound policies should underpin those for development, tourism, farming and the many other things which influence the future of the North Pennines.

The main economic activity connected to the area's natural environment centres around farming, other land management, tourism and to a lesser extent mineral extraction.

The North Pennines has to be a place where people can make a living, travel around, learn new skills and grow and diversify the economy if it is to have an environmentally sustainable future. Alongside what we might see as our 'natural capital' and our 'economic capital', there is a 'social capital' in which we need to invest in order to promote long-term conservation.

Incomes from farming and forestry

One of the biggest challenges facing the North Pennines is to support land-based farm incomes, as a secure future for nature conservation and environmentally sensitive, economically sustainable farming go hand in hand. The modern reality is that the market needs support and upland farmers cannot simply rely on it to provide for their needs if they are going to be stewards of the countryside. The uncertainty over reform of the Common Agricultural Policy at the time of writing means that looking to the future with any clarity is not easy. However, there needs to be an acceptance that farmers generate public goods and that there need to be outcome-based schemes that put farmers at the heart of decision-making with appropriate rewards, whilst conserving our landscape and wildlife. A High Nature Value Farming approach will be developed the lifetime of this plan.

The majority of farms in the AONB are only marginally financially viable and there is a constant pressure to increase farm incomes. This can result in a gradual but steady intensification of farming in the form of the amount of fertiliser used (farmyard manure and/or artificial fertiliser), the number and type of livestock kept, the speed of hay timing, an increase in haylage/silage making, reseeding and the loss of small-scale unfarmed habitats. With steady farm intensification there tends to be an associated steady decline in farm biodiversity.

Buying locally produced food and other products can help to reinforce local distinctiveness, adds value to the local economy and can reduce food miles.

Profitability of forestry is very dependent on world market prices and the cost of transport, although with new interest in woodfuel heating more local markets for wood products may develop. Encouraging management of our trees and woodland and the creation of new woodlands on a large scale will benefit the economy and the environment.

There is much emphasis on diversification, but people have the land they have, in the place they have it and in their own family circumstances – the single farmer on rough ground off the beaten track can't easily diversify; however, those who want to should be supported to do so. Short-term tenancies and insecurity over succession create a disincentive to invest in tenanted farm businesses, as does the potential rent increase associated with making the business more profitable. There are also important issues to address around succession and skills transfer in the farming community.

Nature and culture-based tourism

The tourism offer in the North Pennines is based on the area's natural assets or special qualities, qualities which also lie at the heart of quality of life for local people. A common strategic approach is needed in order to improve the sustainable development and management of tourism which takes account of the needs of the environment, visitors, residents and local businesses. This includes a shared approach to the pre-arrival marketing and promotion of the (in particular nature and culture-based) opportunities for visitors to the North Pennines. Organisations responsible for carrying out pre-arrival marketing need to send out accurate, appropriate and positive messages about the tourism offer in the AONB, and this will need further cross-boundary collaboration. The AONB and Geopark designations are enormous assets to the tourism industry and are often under-utilised in destination marketing.

The tourism offer in the North Pennines is based on the area's natural assets or special qualities. Visitors need effective information about the special features of the area, how they can experience them and how they can support their conservation. There also needs to be appropriate infrastructure in place to enable them to make the most of what the North Pennines has to offer.

It is critical that the tourism industry is helped to 'green' its operations; if we are to promote the North Pennines as a 'green destination' where visitors can 'get away from it all' and experience fantastic, high quality landscapes, wildlife and culture then we will need an environmentally responsible industry to back up the claim.

Travel and communication

Local people need to use private cars for most journeys and this is inevitable. Equally the vast majority of visitors to the North Pennines arrive by private car. However more needs to be done to encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking as alternative means of getting around and enjoying the special qualities of the AONB. The cross boundary nature of the area makes the provision of public transport which 'makes sense' for

local communities and visitors to the North Pennines a particular challenge. There are likely to be new opportunities in relation to growing the market for electric bike / car use in the area.

Businesses operating in the North Pennines have to overcome a range of communication issues closely associated with their relatively remote location. Access to training is also more limited than in less sparsely populate areas, making skills acquisition sometimes more costly and time consuming. Over the lifetime of this plan, high speed broadband should reach the whole area – the provision of the infrastructure to support these services may need sensitive siting.

Skills for the future

To take advantage of the economic opportunities presented by the conservation and celebration of natural and cultural heritage, there need to be opportunities to increase skills in land-based industries, tourism, interpreting our heritage and more.

Objective 7	**To ensure that the returns from farming and land management are sufficient to sustain the farming community and support the conservation of natural beauty**
Objective 8	**To ensure that the tourism industry is environmentally and economically sustainable, based on, and actively supports, the special qualities of the North Pennines and brings benefits to the community**
Objective 9	**To ensure that there are more, greener and better travel and communication links in the North Pennines**
Objective 10	**To ensure an increase in skills in farming and land management, heritage management, tourism / hospitality and outdoor education to help secure the future of the area**

Objective 7 To ensure that the returns from farming and land management are sufficient to sustain the farming community and support the conservation of natural beauty					
Action	**Initial Lead**	**Partners**	**Timescale**	**AONB Team Role**	**Priority**
7.1 Establish a pilot High Nature Value Farming project, as part of a wider LNP initiative	LNP	NE, UTASS, NFU	2014	Executive	1
7.2 Through grants and advice, support farm diversification which increases economic sustainability and helps to conserve and enhance the natural environment	LEP	LA, AAP	2015-19	Advocate	1
7.3Encourage markets for timber and wood products to support woodland management	Owners	FC, NPAP Northwoods Cumbria Woodlands	2014-19	Catalyst	1
7. 4Support NAAONB and other bodies' lobbying for CAP reform which benefits farming and wildlife	NPAP	NAAONB, RSPB, NFU	2014	Executive	1
7.5 Promote the development of infrastructure to support land management practices, e.g local abattoirs, marts and sawmills	LEP	LA, AAP	2014-19	Advocate	2
7.6 Support and encourage the development, production and use of local food, wool and other products, especially those linked to natural beauty	NPAP	LIG, AAP	2014-19	Advocate	2

Objective 8 To ensure that the tourism industry is environmentally and economically sustainable, is based on and actively supports the special qualities of the North Pennines, and brings benefits to the community					
Action	**Initial Lead**	**Partners**	**Timescale**	**AONB Team Role**	**Priority**
8.1 Carry out cross-border marketing campaigns which major on the special qualities of the AONB, promoting it as high quality 'green' destination	DMO	NPAP, LA, LTBG	Biennial	Catalyst	1
8.2 Provide clear, accurate and positive messages about the special qualities of the North Pennines that can be used in marketing literature	NPAP	DMO LTBG	2014-19	Executive	1
8.3 Facilitate familiarisation visits for tourism professionals and journalists/travel writers.	NPAP	DMO, LTBG	2014- 19	Catalyst	1
8.4 Undertake a process of business and community engagement / tourism development that leads to the award of the Europarc Charter for Sustainable Tourism for the North Pennines	NPAP	DMO, LTBG, LA	2017	Executive	1
8.5 Support initiatives to improve and diversify the visitor accommodation available in the North Pennines	LEP	LA, DMO LTBG	2014-19	Advocate	1
8.6 Initiate projects to encourage the further development of nature and culture based attractions including Killhope Museum, Bowlees Visitor Centre, Harehope Quarry, South Tynedale Railway and others	Operators	DMO, LA, LEP, LTBG	2014-19	Executive	1
8.7 Secure improvements in highways signage to support tourism businesses without adding unduly to roadside clutter	LA	LTBG, DMO	2015	Advocate	2
8.8 Set up a green business network and provide information and support to others on the economic and environmental benefits of greening business	NPAP	LTBG	2014	Executive	2
8.9 Support improvements in facilities and information provision in relation to cycling and cycle hire, e.g. cycle racks at attractions, networked hire businesses	LTBG	NPAP	2014-19	Executive	1
8.10 Develop and promote an e-bike network across the AONB	NPAP	LTBG	2014	Executive	1
8.11 Develop shoulder season activities, such as winter walking, geology-theme events, dark skies and industrial heritage	LTBG	NPAP	2014-19	Executive	1

8.12 Support the development and promotion of nature/culture based packages in the AONB	LTBG	DMO, LIG, NPAP, NE, RSPB, RT, WT,	By 2015	Executive	1
8.13 Produce and distribute annual post-arrival information on the North Pennines, including investigating the potential for commercial sponsorship	NPAP	DMO, LA, Businesses	Annual	Executive	2
8.14 Increase joint promotion/ticketing, and cross marketing of attractions	Operators	DMO, LTBG	2014	Advocate	3

Objective 9 To ensure that there are better and greener travel and communication links in the North Pennines					
Action	**Initial Lead**	**Partners**	**Timescale**	**AONB Team Role**	**Priority**
9.1 Support the retention and greater integration of public transport services in the AONB	LA		2014-19	Advocate	1
9.2 Develop and support demand-responsive transport options	LIG	LA	2014-19	Advocate	2
9.3 Expand the network of electric vehicle charging points and electric bike hire/charging	LA	NPAP	Each dale and the East Fellside by 2019	Executive	1
9.4 Support the roll-out of high speed broadband, especially to harder to reach less commercially attractive locations, ensuring the sensitive siting of necessary infrastructure	LA	AAPs, PC	2016	Advocate	1

Objective 10 To ensure an increase in skills in farming and land management, heritage management, tourism / hospitality and outdoor education to help secure the future of the area					
Action	**Initial Lead**	**Partners**	**Timescale**	**AONB Team Role**	**Priority**
10.1 Support the development of an expanded farmer traineeship scheme as a successor to 'Farmers of the Future' in Teesdale	UTASS	NPAP, AAP	2015	Catalyst	1
10.2 Develop traineeships in nature conservation and land management	NPAP	WT, RT	2014-17	Executive	1
10.3 Support heritage skills development linked to the Heritage Skills initiative, and encourage appropriate training and CPD amongst local building contractors	EH	NPAP	2015-18	Executive	1
10.4 Develop training related to sustainable tourism and the AONB for front-line staff and volunteers e.g. Visitor Information Centres and walks leaders	DMO/CT	NPAP, LA	2015-18	Executive	1

6.2.2. Development that sustains the environment and communities

New development is essential in order to support the prosperity and sustainability of local communities, but great care must be taken to ensure that this development is in keeping with the character of the local landscape in nature, scale and location and of the highest quality design. This is not about keeping everything looking 'old' – there is space for new and bold design, where this complements, and where possible adds to, its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework, Local Development Documents and Neighbourhood Development Plans all provide planning context for the AONB. In 2010 the AONB Partnership and the area's Local Planning Authorities produced **North Pennines AONB Planning Guidelines** and an **AONB Building Design Guide,** to give greater expression to some of the more broad-brush policies in these other documents. The Building Design Guide in particular has influenced the production of the Allendale Neighbourhood Development Plan. *The Planning Guidelines and the Building Design Guide can be found here (they are not part of the management plan consultation, having already been consulted on and adopted by Local Planning Authorities)*:
http://www.northpennines.org.uk/Pages/PublicationItem.aspx?DocRef=155
http://www.northpennines.org.uk/Pages/PublicationItem.aspx?DocRef=154

The Planning Guidelines document sets out some of the forces for change affecting the North Pennines landscape. *These include:* pressure from wind farms in the setting of the AONB, or very large turbines either in the setting or within the boundary, (as distinct from the benefits of accommodating well-sited and designed small-scale renewables, which have thrived in recent years in the AONB); the need to manage the piecemeal erosion of rural character in settlements; carefully managing the potential expansion of quarries for the extraction of local stone if the character of buildings and settlements is to be conserved and new development is to respect this character; and the need to keep roads safe and in good order whilst sensitively managing the roadside environment to avoid clutter and biodiversity loss.

The start point for approaching new development which meets community need (including major development if it is in the national interest) should be to ask how it can be successfully accommodated, not how it can be opposed.

The legislative requirements in relation to AONBs are addressed earlier in this plan.

Objective 11 To ensure that development in the AONB and its setting, is of a nature, scale, location and design so that it meets community need without compromising the special qualities of the North Pennines

Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB Team Role	Priority
11.1 Establish robust detailed policies in local plans and neighbourhood development plans which support the purpose of AONB designation. Such policy should - reflect the national importance of AONBs and prioritise the conservation of tranquillity, wildness and remoteness, local distinctiveness and landscape quality and character. It should also protect the AONB from the adverse effects of development in its setting	LPA	NPAP, PC	2014-17	Advocate	1
11.2 Use the North Pennines AONB Building Design Guide and North Pennines AONB Planning Guidelines to provide the detailed guidance to support development management decisions	LPA	NPAP, PC	2014-17	Advocate	1
11.3 Support the development of parish, community and neighbourhood plans to include a strong focus on the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the North Pennines	PC	LPA, NPAP	2014-19	Catalyst	1
11.4 Provide pre-application advice to help developers understand and address landscape and other heritage / conservation issues	NPAP	NE, LPA, EA	2014-19	Executive	1

11.5 Comment on all development proposals which may have a significant impact on the purpose of AONB designation or which may provide opportunities for enhancement, and comment on emerging policy in any draft local plan consultation or review	NPAP	NE, EA, FC	2014-19	Executive	1
11.6 Support the retention and expansion of local services to support community life. Apply the AONB Partnership's Sustainable Development Fund (where budgets allow) and other funds to suitable projects	LA	NPAP, PC	2014-17	Advocate	1
11.7 Review the AONB Partnership's 'Guidance on the Management and Maintenance of Rural Roads' and promote its recognition in the next round of Local Transport Plans	NPAP	HA	2014	Executive	1
11.8 Consult the AONB Partnership about new road management and improvement schemes in the AONB	HA	NPAP	Plan period	Advocate	1

6.3 A Place to Celebrate and Explore

6.3.1 a)Enjoying and understanding the North Pennines

Our outstanding landscapes are places where people will make memories that they will always carry with them. They are places of great beauty and also places with an enormous capacity for supporting mental and physical health and well-being. Importantly for conservation, only if people can explore and enjoy the North Pennines landscape will they grow in understanding of all that it has to offer and want to care for it into the future, which in turn will sustains the benefits it brings.

The North Pennines has fantastic opportunities for outdoor activities such as walking, cycling, riding, skiing, canoeing and bird watching. People wanting to explore the area and to enjoy these activities need to have the highest quality information, events and interpretation to enable them to make the most of what the North Pennines has to offer and to help them support conservation as part of their visit.

There are over 2,000 miles of public rights of way in the AONB and they are the arteries that carry the lifeblood of the area's recreation and tourism potential. There should be a high expectation placed on their ease of use. Open access land, covering 131,000 ha or 61% of the AONB, provides a tremendous opportunity to enjoy wild countryside, and there needs to be easy access to high quality information about its availability. The Highway Authorities need to allocate appropriate resources to this essential service for the rural economy and one of the country's (and the countryside's) greatest assets. There is a continued perception that the use of mechanically propelled vehicles causes damage to the fabric of the rights of way network and reduces tranquillity and amenity for visitors and local people. The genuine impacts need to be assessed on a case by case basis but action needs to be taken to address genuine problems. Local Access Forums in the three counties have a significant role to play in all of this work. A new National Trial Partnership for the Pennine Way will also emerge early in the life of this plan.

There are also many gentler ways to explore and enjoy the North Pennines, taking in local art, crafts, chapels, industrial heritage music or food rooted in the area. These aspects of how people enjoy the North Pennines also need supporting and developing.

The North Pennines is already one of the most active and successful of the UNESCO European Geoparks and there is a need for ever increasing activity on geotourism, education and interpretation co-ordinated by the AONB Partnership, but also delivered by other partners such as Killhope Museum, Natural England and local groups and societies. The North Pennines will undergo reassessment for its European Geopark status in 2014 and 2018.

6.3.1 b) Education and Lifelong Learning

There is immense scope for the North Pennines to be an outdoor classroom where the national curriculum can be delivered in exciting and engaging ways. There is a need for more support to teachers (programmes and training), more support for school travel costs, more joined up infrastructure of places to learn so as to make the journey here worthwhile, and greater co-ordination of effort to bring this about.

There is a proud tradition of lifelong learning in the North Pennines stretching back to the heyday of lead mining. Recent activities, like geologically focused evening classes and the annual evening course on the nature of Teesdale, have shown the continued appetite for this kind of learning and more can be done to satisfy this need.

Objective 12 To ensure that people have a wide range of opportunities to explore, enjoy and learn about the North Pennines					
Action	**Initial Lead**	**Partners**	**Timescale**	**AONB Team Role**	**Priority**
12.1 Establish programmes of events and festivals which highlight the area's special qualities and provide information on reaching them by public transport	NPAP	DMO, NE, LA, Killhope, EH, LIG, HQP, LTBG, AAP, FotNP	Annual	Executive	1
12.2 Establish, maintain and promote an events portal for the North Pennines	NPAP	LEP, LA, DMO, NE, WT, LIG, RSPB, LTBG	2015	Executive	2
12.3 Identify gaps in the provision of walking, cycling and riding trails and produce new material where required in a variety of formats and ideally linked to public transport and population centres	NPAP	LTBG, LA	2014-19	Executive	1

12.4 Produce and promote itineraries throughout the North Pennines which use (either partially or wholly) sustainable transport options	NPAP	LIG, DMO/CT	2 per year	Executive	2
12.5 Standardise and replace the AONB boundary signs and add a reference to the Global Geopark status of the area	LA	NPAP	2015	Catalyst	3
12.6 Further develop Explorenorthpennines.org.uk and produce an app	NPAP	LTBG	2014	Executive	1
12.7 Use the AONB Partnership website and other means to ensure wider access to information about the North Pennines natural and historic environment, including reports on survey/research projects	NPAP	NE, EH. WT, LIG, RT	2014-19	Executive	1
12.8 Develop a pilot visitor giving scheme in the Allen Valleys and expand it to the rest of the North Pennines if possible	NPAP	LTBG	2014-18	Executive	1
12.9 Develop a series of events, interpretation and activities with a geological component throughout the year to support retention of the European/Global Geopark status	NPAP	Killhope, BGS, LIG FotNP, NE,	Revalidations 2014/18	Executive	1
12.10 Provide appropriate resources of staff and funding to help maintain the AONB's public rights of way network to the highest standards	HA		2014-19	Advocate	1
12.11 Engage with the new National Trail Partnership for the Pennine Way and secure sufficient resources to enable high standards of management	HA	NPAP, LIG, NE	2015-19	Catalyst	1
12.12 Allocate resources to ensure high standards of management on strategic regional routes such as the Pennine Way, C2C cycle route, Coast to Coast walk, Teesdale Way and Weardale Way	HA	Sustrans, Wainwright Society	2014-19	Advocate	1
12.13 Carry out a review of Open Access and maintain an accurate website with information on access land availability	NE		2014-19	Advocate	1
12.14 Use the Making the Best of Byways guidelines to manage routes through impact assessment, monitoring and TROs if required.	HA	LARA, TRF, LIG	2014-19	Advocate	1
12.15Adopt a precautionary approach to claimed byways, limiting use of claimed routes to footpath or bridleway until inquiries have decided claims	HA	LARA, TRF, LIG	2014-19	Advocate	1
12.16 Support activities in the countryside which promote good health and a sense of well-being, such as health walks and conservation work projects	NPAP	NE, LA, LIG	2014-19	Executive	1
12.17 Support and develop programmes linked to local and national cultural figures that have celebrated and been inspired by the North Pennines	LIG	NPAP, LA,	2014-19	Executive	1
12.18 Promote and support local artists, writers and crafts people that draw their inspiration from the landscape	LIG	NPAP	2014-19	Executive	2

12.19 Support lifelong learning opportunities with staff time, in kind contributions, funding and promotion	NPAP	RT, NE, WT, RSPB, LIG	2014-19	Executive	1
12.20 Develop the provision of outdoor and environmental education and the development of educational resources, school travel grants and other support	NPAP	RT, NE, WT, RSPB, Killhope	2014-19	Executive	1
F12.21 Further develop easy access routes in the North Pennines	NPAP	LA, NE, LAF, Disability groups	By 2015	Executive	1

Supporting community action for natural and cultural heritage

Local people, as individuals or in groups, as communities of place or interest, already play the defining role in looking after and celebrating our natural and cultural heritage. Every effort should be made to support this activity and to provide opportunities for initiatives such as local heritage research, the development of Parish Plans, community archaeology and conservation volunteering.

Local people should have an increasing role in identifying what is special and distinctive about where they live and they should be supported to celebrate it. This might include events, interpretive publications and initiatives such as oral history projects.
Culture doesn't just mean things from the past; the living culture of the North Pennines contributes much to the sense of place, whether that is the 'chapel' culture of the non-conformists church groups or the Tar Bar'ls at Allendale or the way local artists and crafts people draw inspiration from the landscape in their work. Local culture and traditions give people a way to give expression to their emotions about the place they live and work in, but they can also help other people understand the value of the North Pennines.

Objective 13 To ensure that a wide range of opportunities exists for everyone to get involved in conserving and celebrating the North Pennines

Action	Initial Lead	Partners	Timescale	AONB Team Role	Priority
13.1 Support the ongoing development of the Friends of the North Pennines to increase public involvement in the conservation and celebration of the AONB and reach 500 members	FotNP	NPAP	2014-19	Catalyst	1

13.2 Build the capacity of community-based projects linked to natural and cultural heritage through grant aid and in kind support	NPAP	NE, LA, EH, FotNP	2009-14	Executive	1
13.3 Establish oral history projects focusing on mining and farming history	LIG	NPAP, FotNP	2016	Executive	1
13.4 Develop and support projects which give communities, networks and individuals opportunity to express what their 'place' means to them e.g. through the Allen Valleys Landscape Partnership	LIG	NPAP, FotNP	2014-19	Executive	1
13.5 Further develop the AONB Partnership's 'Wildwatch' community wildlife recording and education project	NPAP	LIG	2014-16	Executive	1
13.6 Develop 'Cold-blooded and spineless' focusing on invertebrate recording and education as a successor to WildWatch	NPAP	LIG	2015-19	Executive	1
13.7 Complete the three year Altogether Archaeology project and develop a successor community archaeology programme	NPAP	LIG, EH, UNI	2014-16	Executive	1
13.8 Deliver community projects relating to species rich grasslands through the Nectarworks project	NPAP	NE, LIG, WT	2014-16	Executive	1
13.9 Develop new opportunities for people to participate in survey, monitoring and hands-on conservation activities for the natural and historic environment	NPAP	NE, LIG, RT, WT, EH, FotNP	2014-19	Executive	1
13.10 Explore the establishment of a 'Community Panel' or similar body as an Advisory Group for the Partnership, similar to those developed for particular themes	NPAP	FotNP, LIG	2014	Executive	1
3.11 Develop a Junior or Youth Rangers programme to engage involve young people in new ways, and optimise opportunities from linking with the Europarc Federation network	NPAP	Europarc	2015	Executive	2
13.12 Establish a young archaeologists club	NPAP	LIG, UNI, LA	2015	Executive	2
13.13 Establish an Allendale heritage group as part of the Allen Valleys Landscape Partnership	NPAP	LIG	2015	Executive	2
13.14 Develop opportunities to promote volunteering as part of corporate social responsibility programmes	NPAP		2014-19	Executive	2

Abbreviations used in this Action Plan

BAP – Biodiversity Action Plan
BGS – British Geological Survey
CEH – Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
DMO – Destination Management Organisations
DWT – Durham Wildlife Trust
EA – Environment Agency
EGN – European Geoparks Network
EH – English Heritage
FC – Forestry Commission
FoK – Friends of Killhope
FotNP – Friends of the North Pennines
GWCT – Game and Wildlife Conservancy Trust
HA – Highway Authorities
HQP – Harehope Quarry Project
Killhope – The North of England Lead Mining Museum
LA – Local Authorities
LAF – Local Access Forums
LARA – Land Access and Recreation Association
LEP – Local Enterprise Partnerships
LIG – Local Interest Groups
LNP – Local Nature Partnership
LPA – Local Planning Authority
LTBG – Local Tourism Business Groups
MA – Moorland Association
NAAONB – National Association for AONBs
NE – Natural England
NFU – National Farmers' Union
NPAP – North Pennines AONB Partnership
NWL – Northumbrian Water Limited
NWT – Northumberland Wildlife Trust
PC – Parish Councils
OWNERS – landowners and tenants
ROWIP – Rights of Way Improvement Plan
RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RT – Rivers Trusts
TRF – Trail Riders Fellowship
TRO – Traffic Regulation Orders
UNI – Universities
UTASS – Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services Ltd
UU – United Utilities
WT – Wildlife Trusts
WoT – Woodland Trust

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