



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

GOWER AONB PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP

At: Llanrhidian Holiday Park, Llanrhidian, Gower, Swansea

On: Monday, 8 December 2014

Time: 7.00 p.m.

AGENDA

	Page No.
1 Apologies for Absence.	
2 Welcome and Introductions.	
3 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.	1 - 2
4 Public Question Time. (10 Minutes - Questions must be related to Agenda Items)	
5 Minutes. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group held on 22 September 2014.	3 - 6
6 Matters Arising from the Minutes.	
7 Gower AONB - Affordable Housing.	7
8 Renewable Energy and Climate Change.	8
9 Welsh Government Designated Landscapes Review.	9 - 18
10 Gower AONB Management Plan Consultation.	19
11 Planning Matters within the Gower AONB.	20
12 Gower AONB Ranger Report - Quarter 3 2014/2015.	21 - 24

- 13 Sustainable Development Fund Panel Update Report. (Verbal)
- 14 Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group - Member Training. 25
- 15 Date and Time of Next Meeting - 7 p.m. on Monday, 2 March 2015.



Patrick Arran
Head of Legal, Democratic Services & Procurement
1 December 2014

Contact: Jeremy Parkhouse
01792 636016

GOWER AONB PARTNERSHIP GROUP (6)

Councillors

Labour Councillors: 4

Mark C Child	P Lloyd (Chair)
Jan P Curtice	Jane E C Harris

Liberal Democrat Councillor: 1

Richard D Lewis	
-----------------	--

Independent Councillor: 1

Keith E Marsh	
---------------	--

Officers:

Kim Flanders	Planning Policy and Environment Manager, Planning Services
Chris Lindley	Gower AONB Team Leader, Planning Services
Huw Lloyd	Gower AONB Ranger, Planning Services
Mike Scott	Gower AONB Officer
Jeremy Parkhouse	Democratic Services

For Information Email Only:

Phil Roberts	Director of Place
Ryan Thomas	Planning Control Manager
Phil Holmes	Head of Regeneration & Planning
Chris Dale	Countryside Access Team Leader (Rights of Way), Planning Services

Total Copies Needed:

32

GOWER AONB Partnership Group (Aug 2013)

Name	Organisation	Address	Post Code	Telephone
Gordon Howe (Vice-Chair)	Gower Society	Annie's Stables, Middleton, Rhossili, Swansea	SA3 1PJ	01792 390560 mewslade@aol.com
Roger Button	Tourism Swansea Bay	Pitton Cross Caravan and Camping Park, Pitton Cross, Rhossili	SA3 1PN	01792 390593 rogerpitton@yahoo.co.uk
Alan Woodman	Representing Forestry & Farming	57, Gowerton Road, Three Crosses, Swansea	SA4 3PY	07970870490 woodman@lonisa.fsnet.co.uk
Barbara Parry	Gower Walking Groups	127 Broadmead, Dunvant, Swansea	SA2 7RJ	01792 520293 barbara19652@hotmail.com
Stephen Heard	Gower Riding Club / Port Eynon Community Council	Bowstones, Berry Lane, Scurlage	SA3 1BJ	steveheard1@aol.com
Community Councillor P R Hood – Williams	Upper Killay Community Council	50, Pant-y-Dwr, Three Crosses, Swansea	SA4 3PG	Paxton.hood-williams@swansea.gov.uk
Sue Hill	Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust	Heathfield House, 91, Heathfield, Swansea	SA1 6EL	01792 655208 sue@ggat.org.uk
John Davies	BayTrans			01792 205071 johnbaytrans@btinternet.com
Peter Lanfear	Gower Commoners Association	31, Pennard Drive, Pennard, Swansea	SA3 2BL	01792 233624 peter.lanfear@gmail.com
Community Councillor Rod Cooper	Llanrhidian Higher Community Council	The Lodge, Park Road, Penclawdd, Swansea	SA4 3FQ	rcooper@yllety.F9.co.uk
Ceri Daugherty	Natural Resources Wales	Llanion House, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock, Pembrokeshire	SA72 6DY	01792 634981 ceri.daugherty@cyfoethnaturliolcymru.gov.uk
Rebecca Wright	Natural Resources Wales	Maes Newydd, Britannic Way West, Llandarcy, Neath	SA1 8PG	01792 634966 rebecca.wright@cyfoethnaturliolcymru.gov.uk

Disclosures of Interest

To receive Disclosures of Interest from Councillors and Officers

Councillors

Councillors Interests are made in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea. You must disclose orally to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest.

NOTE: You are requested to identify the Agenda Item / Minute No. / Planning Application No. and Subject Matter to which that interest relates and to enter all declared interests on the sheet provided for that purpose at the meeting.

1. If you have a **Personal Interest** as set out in **Paragraph 10** of the Code, you **MAY STAY, SPEAK AND VOTE** unless it is also a Prejudicial Interest.
2. If you have a Personal Interest which is also a **Prejudicial Interest** as set out in **Paragraph 12** of the Code, then subject to point 3 below, you **MUST WITHDRAW** from the meeting (unless you have obtained a dispensation from the Authority's Standards Committee)
3. Where you have a Prejudicial Interest you may attend the meeting but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, **provided** that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise. In such a case, you **must withdraw from the meeting immediately after the period for making representations, answering questions, or giving evidence relating to the business has ended**, and in any event before further consideration of the business begins, whether or not the public are allowed to remain in attendance for such consideration (**Paragraph 14** of the Code).
4. Where you have agreement from the Monitoring Officer that the information relating to your Personal Interest is **sensitive information**, as set out in **Paragraph 16** of the Code of Conduct, your obligation to disclose such information is replaced with an obligation to disclose the existence of a personal interest and to confirm that the Monitoring Officer has agreed that the nature of such personal interest is sensitive information.
5. If you are relying on a **grant of a dispensation** by the Standards Committee, you must, before the matter is under consideration:
 - i) Disclose orally both the interest concerned and the existence of the dispensation; and
 - ii) Before or immediately after the close of the meeting give written notification to the Authority containing:

- a) Details of the prejudicial interest;
- b) Details of the business to which the prejudicial interest relates;
- c) Details of, and the date on which, the dispensation was granted; and
- d) Your signature

Officers

Financial Interests

1. If an Officer has a financial interest in any matter which arises for decision at any meeting to which the Officer is reporting or at which the Officer is in attendance involving any member of the Council and /or any third party the Officer shall declare an interest in that matter and take no part in the consideration or determination of the matter and shall withdraw from the meeting while that matter is considered. Any such declaration made in a meeting of a constitutional body shall be recorded in the minutes of that meeting. No Officer shall make a report to a meeting for a decision to be made on any matter in which s/he has a financial interest.
2. A "financial interest" is defined as any interest affecting the financial position of the Officer, either to his/her benefit or to his/her detriment. It also includes an interest on the same basis for any member of the Officers family or a close friend and any company firm or business from which an Officer or a member of his/her family receives any remuneration. There is no financial interest for an Officer where a decision on a report affects all of the Officers of the Council or all of the officers in a Department or Service.

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE GOWER AONB PARTNERSHIP GROUP

HELD AT GREYHOUND INN, OLD WALLS, GOWER, SWANSEA ON
MONDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2014 AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor R Francis-Davies (Chair) presided

Councillor(s)

K E Marsh

Representing Organisations:

R Button	-	Tourism Swansea Bay
S Heard	-	Gower Riding Club/ Port Eynon Community Council
Community Councillor P R Hood-Williams	-	Upper Killay Community Council
S Hill	-	Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust
B Parry	-	Gower Walking Festival
A Woodman	-	Forestry and Farming

Officers:

C Lindley	-	Gower AONB Team Leader
M Scott	-	Gower AONB Officer
J Parkhouse	-	Democratic Services Officer

Also Present:

A Kearsley-Evans	-	National Trust
I Button	-	Rhossili Community Council
N Randall	-	Resident
C Young	-	Resident
D Cowley	-	Llanrhidian Lower Community Council/ Cilibion Saw Mill
E Cowley	-	Dunraven Farm, Burry Green
M Cowley	-	Dunraven Farm, Burry Green
L Mabbett	-	Manselfold Farm, Llanrhidian
H Jenkins	-	Planning Agent and Consultant
A Cowley	-	Cilibion Saw Mill
H Falconer	-	Gower Studio, Cilibion

18 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J E C Harris, Councillor R D Lewis, Gordon Howe, John Davies, Kim Flanders and Huw Lloyd.

19 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS.**

The Chair welcomed all present to the Greyhound Inn, Oldwalls and commenced proceedings.

20 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS.**

In accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

21 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME.**

Community Councillor I Button, Rhossili Community Council asked a question regarding the very poor broadband service on Gower.

AGREED that the Gower AONB Team Leader drafts a letter to the Welsh Government Minister highlighting this issue.

22 **MINUTES.**

AGREED that the Minutes of the Gower AONB Partnership Group Annual Forum held on 23 June 2014 and Special Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group held on 4 August 2014 be accepted as correct records subject to the following amendment:

Minute 11 - Public Question Time - 23 June 2014

Third paragraph - amend to Community Councillor I Button, Rhossili Community Council.

23 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.**

23 June 2014

There were none.

4 August 2014

A Woodman commented that the new Local Development Plan (LDP) should be worded to be in favour of people who work and live on Gower. It was added that the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was worded in favour of barn conversions for holiday let accommodation on Gower. Therefore, similar wording should be included within the LDP documentation.

The Steering Group commented that the wording cannot be too open-ended and there must be a link to agricultural use of the land. Safeguards must therefore be in place to protect the landscape.

The use of consultants with regards to planning applications on Gower was also highlighted.

The Chair stated that the LDP documentation would be available for comment during the consultation process which commences in January 2015.

AGREED that A Woodman and the Gower AONB Team examine this issue and report back to the next scheduled meeting.

The Gower AONB Officer tabled a draft letter to the Welsh Government which outlined the discussions that took place at the last meeting regarding affordable housing on Gower. It was requested that any comments be forwarded within seven days.

The Steering Group also commented on the cost of the use of consultants by the City and County of Swansea and the speed of the planning process.

24 **GOWER AONB RANGER REPORT.**

The Gower AONB Officer, in the absence of the Gower AONB Ranger, provided the Steering Group with a verbal Gower AONB Ranger Report.

The Steering Group discussed a number of issues highlighted within the report and commented upon the ongoing work of the Gower AONB Ranger.

The Chair requested that a written report be provided for future meetings.

AGREED that the contents of the report be noted.

25 **UPDATE - SDF GRANTS PANEL MEETING ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2014.**

The Gower AONB Officer provided a verbal report on the SDF Grants Panel Meeting held on 8 September 2014. He provided a full list of applications and decisions made by the Panel and stated that the SDF grants were nearly fully committed for the current financial year.

AGREED that the contents of the report be noted.

26 **UPDATE - AONB DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION.**

The Gower AONB Team Leader presented the Gower AONB Draft Management Plan - Consultation Timetable.

It was highlighted that the consultation process will commence on 26 September 2014. Comments regarding the process can be made via the City and County of Swansea website.

AGREED that the contents of the report be noted.

27 **UPDATE - WELSH GOVERNMENT PROTECTED LANDSCAPES REVIEW.**

The Gower AONB Team Leader reported that the Welsh Government had commissioned an independent panel to conduct a review of designated landscapes in Wales (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The review will take place during the remainder of 2014 and throughout 2015 and will be in two stages. It was added that in conducting its work and in reporting its recommendations, it would be particularly important to gather a variety of types of evidence from both stakeholders and members of the public.

Once the notification is received from Welsh Government, it will be circulated to all Steering Group Members.

AGREED that the contents of the report be noted.

28 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

Renewable Energy

A Woodman proposed that an item on renewable energy be placed on the agenda of the next scheduled meeting.

AGREED that renewable energy be included as an item at the next scheduled meeting.

Chair

The Chair stated that this was his last meeting as Gower AONB Steering Group Chair due to his appointment as Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Regeneration. The new Chair of Development, Management and Control Committee who will be appointed at the Council Meeting scheduled for 30 September 2014, will chair the next Steering Group Meeting.

Steering Group Members congratulated the Chair on his appointment and thanked him for his chairmanship of the Steering Group.

29 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 7P.M. ON MONDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2014.**

NOTED that the next meeting be scheduled for 7.00 p.m. on Monday 8 December 2014. The Democratic Services Officer will circulate the venue in due course.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

CHAIR

Report of Alan Woodman

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 8 December 2014

GOWER AONB – AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Policy EV26 of the Unitary Development Plan states:-

‘Within the Gower AONB, the primary objective is the conservation and enhancement of the area’s natural beauty.’ (Page 40, Policy EV26)

Further,

‘Government guidance requires decisions affecting AONB’s to favour conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape, whilst having regard to the social and economic well being of the area.’ (Page 40, point 1.7.20)

If the Gower AONB is required to contribute to the future housing needs, then that housing must facilitate the conservation and enhancement of the AONB by providing affordable housing for rural workers who contribute to these objectives. Executive housing for people who make life style choices to live on Gower, whilst daily commuting off the AONB for work, education etc, does not contribute or conserve the area and must be resisted. Further, national planning policy recognises the detrimental impact that commuting has on the environment.

Traditionally people employed in the rural economy are amongst the lowest wage earners. It is critical for the future protection, conservation and well being of Gower AONB that sufficient affordable housing – suitably located - for rural workers is provided. For these reasons it is critical that sufficient affordable housing for local workers is a central objective of future planning policy.

The forthcoming Local Development Plan should resist residential development within the AONB except for affordable housing needed for those workers employed within the AONB rural sector. Furthermore, affordable housing away from existing settlements should be considered favourably where such development would support an established, existing rural business site.

Alan Woodman

Agenda Item 8

Report by Alan Woodman

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 8 December 2014

RENEWABLE ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The need to use renewable energy is a more recent pressure affecting many protected areas, from within and outside their boundaries. Government requirements to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and the need to secure alternative sources of energy will have an increasing impact upon development within Gower, its landscape and seascape.' (Gower AONB Design Guide November 2011, Page 12, 2.14 point 4)

Currently the Unitary Development Plan governing Gower AONB gives no clear framework or policy for deciding applications for renewable energy installations within the AONB. The Gower AONB Design Guide gives some guidance.

An increasing number of houses within the AONB have domestic scale solar panel installations either on the roof or within their gardens. Already a number of small, commercial ground mounted solar arrays have received planning approval. An application for a large scale commercial array at Ilston was recently refused planning permission by the Authority; this decision may be the subject of an appeal.

Wind turbines and tidal generation both within and outside the AONB boundaries could impact significantly on the landscape.

The Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group should have a strong, clear policy on renewables and advise / lobby the Council in it's development of the new Local Development Plan.

Alan Woodman

Report of the Gower AONB Team Leader

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 8 December 2014

WELSH GOVERNMENT DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES REVIEW

The AONB Partnership Steering Group is aware of the above review. The Steering Group response to Stage One of the review is attached at Appendix 1.

As part of a series of events around Wales, Welsh Government arranged a workshop to discuss the review at Parkmill on 10 November. Notes and conclusions from the meeting will be published on the Welsh Govt website

Gower AONB Team Leader attended an evidence session along with the NAAONB Chief Exec (Howard Davies) and the other Welsh AONBs on 21 November. Draft notes from session are expected to be circulated shortly.

The Review Panel are expecting to report back to the Minister for Natural Resources early in the New Year.

Chris Lindley
AONB Team Leader



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

By Email:

Professor Terry Marsden
Chair, Review of Designated Landscapes in
Wales
Designatedlandscapesreview@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:

Chris Lindley

Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrchol:

01792 635094

E-Mail:
E-Bost:

Chris.lindley@swansea.gov.uk

Our Ref:
Ein Cyf:

Your Ref:
Eich Cyf:

Date:
Dyddiad:

4th November 2014

Dear Professor Marsden

**THE REVIEW OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES IN WALES
GOWER AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)**

Thank you for your letter and attachments of 29 September 2014 regarding the above review.

I am responding in my capacity both as:

- Chair of Development Management and Control committee of the City and County of Swansea ('the Council') – the local planning authority responsible for the Gower AONB; and
- Chair of the Gower AONB Partnership - an advisory group to the Council, convened by them, to facilitate the management of the Gower AONB, in fulfilment of their legal responsibilities and duties with regard to the Gower AONB.

The Council and the Gower AONB Partnership welcome the opportunity to engage with the Review and intend to do so as fully as possible.

This response has been developed by the Gower AONB Partnership and officers of the Council with responsibility for managing the AONB. The views expressed are the collective ones of the AONB Partnership, although individual organisations/members of the AONB Partnership may also wish to submit responses to the Review Panel, highlighting issues of particular concern to themselves.

Civic Centre, Oystermouth Road, Swansea, SA1 3SN
Canolfan Ddinesig, Heol Ystumllwynarth, Abertawe, SA1 3SN

☎ (01792) 635600

🌐 www.swansea.gov.uk

The enclosed Annex to this letter provides our initial evidence and views on the matters to be considered in Stage One of the Review.

We look forward to our involvement with the Review over the coming months.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Paul Lloyd
Chair of Gower AONB Partnership
City and County of Swansea

Annex

Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Evidence for Designated Landscapes Review – Stage One

Introduction and Context

Gower became the first AONB in England and Wales in 1956. The AONB covers 188 square kilometres of the Gower peninsula, immediately west of Swansea.

The Panel already has a good understanding of the Gower AONB – including its special qualities and natural beauty – and the background and history of the designation; we have therefore not included any detail on these matters here.

The City and County of Swansea ('the Council') is the local authority responsible for the management of the Gower AONB under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

We refer you to the current Gower AONB Management Plan (2006) which formulates the Council's policy for the management of the AONB and for the carrying out of the Council's functions in relation to it. A revised AONB Management Plan is out for public consultation until 19 December 2014. Both these documents are available from the following link:

<http://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/2245/Gower---managed-in-partnership...>

The Gower AONB Partnership ('the Partnership') is the advisory body to the Council regarding the AONB and its management. The Partnership works to support the activity of everyone – local landowners, farmers, businesses, visitors, community groups and individuals – in their conservation and enhancement of natural beauty in the AONB. Partnership members represent a wide range of interests. The Partnership Terms of Reference are incorporated into the Council constitution and have been attached with our evidence for your information. The Partnership Steering Group is chaired by the Chair of the Development Management and Control Committee and includes other local councillors, NRW representatives and 10 others elected at the AONB Annual Forum.

Gower AONB has a core-funded team of three; core funding is currently reliant on direct grants from Natural Resources Wales. The Welsh Government Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) is administered by the team and provides valued funding for delivering local projects. Another team of four is engaged on the Gower Landscape Partnership – an Heritage Lottery Fund - supported programme to conserve and celebrate the unique qualities of Gower.

Our evidence is largely based on the Partnership's experience of the AONB designation as it relates to Gower and how we believe that this compares with other protected landscapes in Wales. We confirm that the Partnership has also been involved with the development of the evidence being presented to the Panel by the National Association for AONBs.

Our evidence has been presented below using the questions for Stage One of the Review – as provided in the Review Terms of Reference.

Question 1 – Are designated landscapes equipped to meet the current and future needs of Wales?

AONB Statutory Purpose, Management and Governance

The concept of ‘natural beauty’ is a long standing one, allowing a broad and flexible approach to the management of protected landscapes. Clarification of the term is provided in the Countryside Council for Wales’ ‘Statement on Natural Beauty (CCW, 2006).

Local development of the 2006 Gower AONB Management Plan– along with guidance from Countryside Council for Wales - identified the ‘special qualities’ of Gower under the following four main themes and components:

- **Natural** – Wildlife, Geology, Landscape and Seascape
- **Cultural** - Archaeology, Historic Landscapes, Parks and Gardens, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas
- **Environmental** – Quality of Air, Water, Soil and Tranquillity
- **Recreational** – Rights of Way Network, Access Land and Beaches

The AONB Partnership Steering Group is responsible for preparation of the AONB Management Plan and the coordination of its implementation. National guidance is provided by Natural Resources Wales – with representation on the Steering Group and a specific role to advise on the management plan under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.

The AONB Partnership meetings are also opportunities for local debate on relevant issues affecting the AONB and the communities that live there. Recent topics have included affordable housing and broadband connectivity. However, the Partnership has no planning function – it does not debate (or provide a view to the local planning authority) specific planning applications affecting the AONB. Planning applications do often raise very relevant topics for debate (a recent application for solar energy development within the AONB being a good example). However, such debate is difficult as county councillors on the Steering Group also sit on Council planning committees (that determine planning applications) and must ensure they avoid any element of predetermination.

Management Planning and Reporting

The AONB management plan process is considered to provide a robust framework for identify priorities for management. However, the ongoing review of the Plan has raised issues and difficulties around:

- Resources for delivery – priority actions are identified within a five year action plan, but delivery is dependent on availability from existing budgets (see below) and/or securing funding from other sources;
- The ability of partners to make firm commitments to plan delivery;
- Compiling reporting on actions and monitoring by partners – particularly as reporting mechanisms are often aligned to other responsibilities; and
- The low profile of the national accountability that the Council and Partnership have to conserving and enhancing the AONB.

We suggest that some of these issues could be addressed in the future by strengthening the statutory requirements of public bodies in the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty in designated landscapes by expecting their:

- Participation in the preparation of the management plan
- Confirm how they will actively fulfil their roles and duties in the area; and
- Report on how they have contributed to its delivery.

Resources and Delivery

As well as the AONB Team, a number of other teams directly contribute to delivery of AONB management, particularly:

- Nature Conservation;
- Countryside Access;
- Planning Policy;
- Planning Control.

A range of other areas of Council services also support or link with delivery of AONB purposes e.g.:

- Highways;
- Democratic Services;
- Culture and Tourism.

So, although the discrete AONB team is small, indirect local authority expenditure on AONB management will be much more significant; however, alignment of reporting and budgeting is across the authority – not just within the AONB – so it is difficult to give direct costs or make comparisons with costs in other AONBs or National Parks. Similarly, this arrangement presents difficulties with collating and reporting information and progress with actions and condition of the AONB.

To summarise the local context to current public sector reform and budgets:

- Gower AONB will be likely to remain within the boundary of a single local authority - whether or not Swansea merges with any neighbouring authority as part of the review of local government;
- In the short-term, the City and County of Swansea need to reach a savings target of £70M over the next three years;
- The Council programme to deliver these targets and shape Council service change is outlined in 'Sustainable Swansea: Fit for the Future'.

Local authority resource for AONB management is subject to these pressures as much as any other Council service or duty. Other sources of funding and support are becoming increasingly important for the positive management of the natural beauty of the AONB. The Gower Landscape Partnership is the key example of this: the Council has been committed to acting as the lead body in the development of the GLP programme and in its current delivery. The AONB Partnership members have worked collaboratively to develop and agree outcomes for the programme.

National Collaboration, Policy and Leadership

The NAAONB response to the Review draws attention to the current collaborative approaches of the NAAONB and our colleague AONB units in Wales. From the Gower AONB Partnership perspective, we continue participate in - and gain value from – these approaches.

We support the NAAONBs call for a clear national leadership role for Natural Resources Wales for Protected Landscapes.

Coastal and Marine Issues

As a coastal peninsula, much of the natural beauty of Gower is derived from its relationship with the sea. Many of the key areas have elevated views, presenting wide panoramas of open, undeveloped sea and distant views of Pembrokeshire and the English coast. The landscape/seascape is of great sensitivity to coastal and offshore developments.

In addition, much of the recreational use and opportunities of Gower are associated with the coast and inshore waters – surfing, diving, coastering, fishing, boating and canoeing.

However, the AONB designation only includes land within the local authority area down to low tide. There is currently limited scope for management to positively address issues in the associated marine area that affect the AONB. The Partnership would welcome the Review Panel's investigation and consideration of how best to address this. Clearly the current development of the Marine Plan for Wales is relevant in this regard.

Question 2 - Should there be a single designation of protected landscape in Wales?

Protected landscapes and their status

The Review Panel members are already aware of the statutory context for the designations of National Parks and AONBs in England and Wales, as well as their historical evolution and development.

The Partnership supports the widely accepted principle that AONBs and National Parks are of equal status in terms of their scenic quality – their distinctive character and natural beauty are so precious that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them. The Partnership applies the interpretation of 'natural beauty' given in CCW's Statement on Natural Beauty (2006).

Gower AONB (in common with the other AONBs and National Parks in Wales) is internationally recognised as a Category V protected area by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN):

Category V: A protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value: and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values.

Whatever the recommendations or outcomes arising from the Review, the Partnership feel strongly that the designation, purposes and governance for Gower (as a protected landscape) should ensure that this national and international recognition is continued.

Current statutory purposes and practice

The Partnership understands that the derivation of National Parks and AONBs as two different designations has arisen as a function both of their size/scale and (for National Parks) the opportunities they afford for 'open-air recreation'.

Accepting that Gower is of a smaller scale than the National Parks of Wales, the AONB is still a landscape of natural beauty that provides opportunities for open-air recreation. For example, Gower:

- Is within an easy 30-minute drive of more than 10% of the population of Wales, including Swansea as Wales' second largest city.
- Has a public rights of way network of more than 400km, including 60km of the Wales Coast Path
- Includes more than 3100 hectares (16.7% of the AONB) with rights or permissions for public access e.g. open country under the CRow Act 2000, NRW public forest estate
- Has more than a dozen beaches, including four blue flag beaches

The attraction of this resource is reflected in the number of visitors to the area and the reasons that they visit. The wider Swansea Bay area welcomes more than four million visitors every year, most of whom would have visited the AONB. A 2012 visitor survey found that the factors which most influenced their decision to visit the area were the coast (44%), scenery/landscape (44%) and beaches (35%). Low level walking (2-8 miles distance) has been the most popular activity undertaken by surveyed visitors every year since 2005 (and 52% of visitors in 2012).

Visitors are welcome on Gower and are important to the local economy; however recreation activities and related infrastructure have environmental impacts on natural beauty and the special qualities of the AONB e.g. landscape/visual impacts from static caravan sites, traffic and parking congestion at peak times, erosion of footpath routes.

AONB management must be focussed on the statutory purpose of the designation – to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. However – given the above context – the Council and the Partnership recognise the need to act as if the AONB includes the second purpose given to National Parks – ‘to promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the area’s special qualities’.

At this point, it is worth highlighting that public understanding and enjoyment of the AONB is necessary and integral to the conservation and enhancement of its natural beauty – through understanding and the enjoyment the area, people come to value to the landscape and are prepared to respect and support its conservation and enhancement.

The consultation draft of the Gower AONB Management Plan addresses the need to provide opportunities for providing open air recreation. The Plan includes a framework for managing recreation resources, and raising public awareness and understanding of the AONB.

Natural Resource Management and the Well-being Goals for Wales

We note and welcome the clear direction the Review Panel has to consider how designated landscapes can best deliver natural resource management and pursue achievement of the six well-being goals for Wales – as set out within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill.

The Partnership suggest that - for Sustainable Development to be the central organising principle - the well-being of current and future generations should be integral to the statutory purposes of designated landscapes in Wales.

In this context, we suggest that the statutory purposes for designated landscapes in Wales could be revised to have two simple and clear purposes:

- To conserve and enhance beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area
- To improve the well being of current and future generations

We assert that the Welsh National Parks and AONBs are all nationally important landscapes and deserve the same consideration in terms of their definition and statutory purposes.

Summary Conclusions

- The Council and the AONB Partnership welcome the opportunity to support and participate in the Designated Landscapes Review
- As AONBs and National Parks are both nationally important landscapes, there is much merit in considering how they can be brought into one type of designation
- The designation and its definition should continue to recognize existing protected landscapes as being of national value and comply with the international standards of protected areas.
- With one designation type, the statutory purposes of the designation should be the same for all
- Those statutory purposes should continue to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the designated landscapes and should include strong links to the well-being goals for Wales.

Prepared by:

**Chris Lindley
Gower AONB Team Leader on behalf of the
Gower AONB Partnership**

October 2014

Report of the Gower AONB Team Leader

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 8 December 2014

GOWER AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION

The public consultation on the draft AONB management plan commenced 10 October and closes on 19 December. Invitations to comment have been sent to all email addresses on the AONB Partnership distribution list. There has also been a press release and a special edition of the AONB newsletter has been prepared for distribution, focussing on the plan review. The reviewed plan is available for download and comment through the following link:

<http://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/9628/AONB-management-plan-review---have-your-say-...>

AONB Team Leader will update the Steering Group on the number of responses received at the meeting.

Following the consultation, the intention is to review the plan in the light of the comments we receive, and to formally adopt the plan during 2015.

Chris Lindley

Agenda Item 11

Report of the Vice-Chair of the Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 8 December 2014

PLANNING MATTERS WITHIN THE GOWER AONB

We are repeatedly told that this Group cannot discuss any matter that has in any way a planning aspect. In my opinion this does not allow the Partnership to express any sort of collective view on many issues that affect the long term viability of the AONB.

We have a Committee that is chaired by an elected City and County of Swansea Councillor (CCC) and has a total of 6 other elected CCC Members on it. All of these members are not allowed to be seen to 'predetermining' any planning issue. As a consequence, in my opinion, some issues that affect the AONB are neither discussed nor commented upon by the whole Committee. On one occasion the CCC members did leave the room and the remaining Members of the Steering Group were able to make an observation on a particular point. However this procedure was not comfortable and it was procedurally difficult.

I would like to discuss this matter.

Another aspect concerns the perceived lack of requested input from the AONB Officers into the weekly Planning process. As I understand it the officers are rarely consulted on what are often key planning issues that can affect the AONB. I note that Mark Winder is recorded as very often having an input into planning applications (environmental, barn owl, bats and the like) and the effect upon the AONB is minor in comparison with key planning issues.

I would like to know why the AONB Team are not consulted and have an input to planning issues that affect the AONB.

Gordon R Howe

Representative of the Gower Society
and Vice Chair of the Partnership Group

GOWER AONB RANGER REPORT – Q3 - 2014-15

Work Area No.	Gower Ranger Objective(s)	Actions to achieve objectives – including dates to be achieved by	Reporting mechanism	Report
1 – Awareness raising (not targeted)	<p>49.1 Increase contact with the public (residents and visitors) 'on the ground'.</p> <p>49.2 Provide informal opportunities to increase understanding and awareness of the AONB, both on site and off, through media including social media.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to AONB web-pages, including use of social media. Social media to be updated weekly. Provide advice and information on site as requested and especially at key sites such as Port Eynon/ Horton and Pennard Valley/ Three Cliffs by 31st March 2015. Contribute at least 1 article to the Annual AONB newsletter and produce at least 2 press releases relating to the work of the AONB Ranger by 31st March 2015. Distribute leaflets and AONB Newsletter to main outlets (list required) and TIC's in Swansea and Mumbles by 31st March 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate link to page or blog when it goes live. Report on progress to GRLG. Keep a record of advice provided, to be provided upon request. Report on progress to GRLG. Provide copy of AONB newsletter and any press releases when produced (circulate draft for comment as well). Keep a record of leaflet/ newsletter deliveries to be provided upon request. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pinterest page has been updated, however recurrent IT problems currently prevent regular updates. NT Facebook and Twitter are including AONB Rangers work (joint working) and input is highlighted. Working to resolve IT problems with CapGemini, particularly with laptop power supply. Problems accessing Pinterest, and loading photos continuing – currently having log-in problems. Providing information on request - 4 people advised about The Dingle during conversation at Caswell – 4 July. Continuing to provide information as and when opportunity arises. Gower College have had guided walks around the Dingle and up to the chapel. Other members of the public have also been given information and advice around Bishopswood LNR. Contributed to production of AONB Newsletter (produced in time for Gower Show – end of July 2014). Reynoldston Community Newsletter included an article on AONB Ranger and his role, received a number of phone calls reporting issues as a result. Ongoing - leaflets provided for Mumbles TIC - 2 July 2014. Further distribution after production of Newsletter, as before. Newsletter, general leaflets, events booklet and walks leaflets distributed as requested to outlets across Gower.
2 – Guided walks & events (targeted awareness raising)	<p>49.3 Provide structured opportunities for local residents (including schools) and visitors to engage with the AONB and learn about issues and opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to delivery of Gower Walking Festival June 2015 – development and lead/support 3 walks. Attend Gower Show on 3rd August 2014. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on Gower Walking Festival to GRLG and as part of standard claim reporting to NRW. Report on Gower Show to GRLG and as part of standard claim reporting to NRW. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No report from Gower Walking Festival to date. Requesting meeting with new GWF team to discuss AONB Team contribution for 2015. Guided Walk for St. Madoc's Centre to Pwll Du on 12th September, 20 people in group. Director of Arocha (international Christian conservation charity) was a member of the group. Gower College group given guided walk around Bishopswood – the group will be coming out with the AONB Ranger as volunteers on a regular basis. AONB Team attended Gower Show - sharing GLP tent. Tent was good, but visitor engagement was low.

<p>3. Visitor Management</p> <p>Note – during the period April to September this is to be the key focus for the ranger and is more important than any other element of the programme</p>	<p>4.1 Raise awareness of impact of anti-social behaviour on the special qualities of Gower.</p> <p>4.2 Tackle antisocial behaviour (which impacts upon the special qualities of Gower) at specific locations.</p> <p>4.3 Monitor and manage key visitor sites to ensure that visitors are able to enjoy the special qualities of Gower.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend all Gower Safe Partnership meetings and deliver agreed actions relating to patrolling key sites. E.g. agreed patrol rota and delivering presentations within schools as part of the Gower safe partnership. Inspect key visitor sites quarterly completing a formal checklist and ensuring that practical work identified is carried out. Additional informal inspections to be carried out as appropriate. In addition to the Gowersafe rota, Patrol Port Eynon, Horton and Pennard Valley as least as often as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly between Sept & April; Weekly May – June; Twice weekly July – August Carry out Fire Survey Patrols, main focus on inland commons. Collate weekly map showing burn sites during March – May 2014. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate notes/ minutes/actions from Gower Safe meetings to GRLG and keep a record (including map of geographical locations) of illegal camping/ fire sites and anti-social activities encountered. Attend all agreed rota shifts and presentation events. If, for valid reasons, attendance is not possible ensure Gower Safe partners are notified and, wherever possible (i.e. unless a last minute emergency) cover is provided. Submit quarterly inspection sheets to GRLG along with a list of completed actions and programmed actions. Keep a record (including a map of geographical locations) of illegal camping/fire sites and anti-social activities encountered. Keep a record (including a map of geographical locations) of burn sites and date recorded. Provide a report as an appendix to Annual Report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GowerSafe patrol attended on 11 July 2014. No problems.. Patrol on 22nd August was cancelled by Police, due to pressure on officers. GowerSafe patrols for 2014 have now finished – a meeting to wind up and plan for 2015 is needed. Inspections carried out as programmed. Inspection sheets for July and October completed. Patrols of sites is being carried out to programme, records of sites are being kept. 15 reports have been fed back to the 101 phone number over the summer – several of these included multiple sites, with the good weather over the first half of the summer tempting many people out. Wildfire Officer Wales (Richard Hammond) is providing information about all wildfires on Gower. AONB Ranger will collate this and provide a record in an agreed format for NRW - agreed with Glyn Lloyd-Jones.
<p>4. Practical Countryside Management</p>	<p>1.1 Carry out practical countryside management tasks to support management plans (including Swansea LBAP).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Ranger Job Sheets to assist programming of practical works. Ensure feedback is provided to those partners submitting the sheets within 10 working days of receipt of the proforma. Projects to be delivered will be determined by the AONB Officer and AONB Ranger. By 31st March 2015, undertake practical countryside management works as determined through Ranger Job Sheet. During the months April – September these are to take place on no more than 2 days per week and not on any day where a joint patrol has been agreed as part of Gowersafe. Works can take place on any agreed sites across Gower and can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCS owned sites; Any GRLG partner owned sites e.g. NT, WTSWW, NRW; Third party sites (SSSI's) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply copy of proforma to GRLG partners. Report to GRLG on numbers received, feedback times and numbers delivered. Report to each GRLG on progress with targets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ranger Job Sheets being used, and records kept as agreed. 1 feedback note has been received to date. Report provided for GRLG (16 July 2014) – next GRLG meeting 8 October 2014. A wide variety of groups and individuals have volunteered with the Ranger, They have picked litter, cut and raked bracken, pulled ragwort, erected benches and a goat seesaw, and cleared paths. Sites worked include Coeden Fach, Bishopswood, Llanmadoc, Whiteford, Gower Heritage Centre, and CHAPS (Three Crosses). HSBC volunteers continue to come out on a regular basis – clearing view point at Caswell, also working with CHAPS (moving stone and timber, painting the centre, building keyhole gardens, constructing a firepit and benches). Work at Bishopswood includes building a camera obscura, clearing paths, clearing litter and removing fallen trees from paths. At Coeden Fach, work has included adding fresh topsoil, and clearing scrub. Clearing ragwort from Pwll Dw Head, on SSSI site. Constructed goat see-saw at Gower Heritage Centre. Bracken clearance at St Madocs. Starfish survey, at Worms Head causeway, with Judith Oakley.

5. Volunteer Resource Development	<p>1.1 Carry out practical countryside management tasks to support management plans (including Swansea LBAP).</p> <p>1.2 Provide opportunities for volunteering in support of management plans (including Swansea LBAP).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the corporate volunteer model developed with HSBC across the Swansea area and investigate demand for further developing this. Use the work proforma agreed in work area 4 to plan work for volunteers on sites across Gower – required if Gower Ranger is supervising the group and therefore leading the task, not required if group has been 'handed over'. Ranger will not generally attend once groups have been handed over. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to each GRLG on progress with targets. Report on progress to GRLG. Maintain records of volunteer hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HSBC group is going well, with regular workdays. Last HSBC group cleared viewpoint at west side of Bishopswood LNR. HSBC groups continue to come out and work with the Ranger – a variety of work is being undertaken across the AONB. Ranger Job Sheets are in use – see Job Sheet Summary for details.
6. Governance	<p>Delivery of AR3 – support effective governance arrangements for the management of the AONB.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to quarterly GRLG on work programme. Produce written reports for the Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group. Produce an illustrated Annual Report for the period 1st April – 31st March. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend GRLG, provide a written report on the quarter's activities against the work areas in this programme as well as evidence as listed above. Input into development of work programme. Provide a written report for each Gower AONB Partnership Group meeting. Provide a draft Annual Report for comment with each End of Year/Final claim to NRW. A final report is to be provided by 1st July 2014. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ranger attended GRLG meeting on 16th July 2014, next meeting due 8th October 2014. in progress Annual Report for 2013/14 provided by agreed deadline.

Report of the Gower AONB Team Leader

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 8 December 2014

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group - Member Training

The National Association for AONBs has arranged a bespoke training event for members of Welsh AONB partnerships.

Details of the course will be available very shortly, but is expected to cover the background context for the AONB designation, statutory duties etc, and how AONBs are funded/ managed. Also, the course will be a great opportunity to network with - and learn from - other AONB group members.

Dates: Monday-Tuesday 26 &27 January 2015. The course will start with a lunch on the Monday and end mid-afternoon on the Tuesday.

Venue: Snowdonia National Park Study Centre, Plas Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog:

<http://www.eryri-npa.gov.uk/study-centre>

We have two available places allocated to us. The cost of the course and accommodation/food are all covered, and we should be able to coordinate travel arrangements. If anyone is interested, please let me know as soon as possible.

Chris Lindley
AONB Team Leader
1 Dec 2014