

# GOWER AONB Partnership - Terms Of Reference

## Purpose & Function

- 1 The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 places a duty upon the City & County of Swansea ('the Council') to "prepare and publish a management plan which formulates their policy for the management of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it".
- 2 The Act also places a statutory duty on relevant authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB when exercising or performing any functions affecting land in the AONB. "Relevant authorities" are any public bodies including local and statutory authorities, parish councils and statutory regulators.
- 3 The Gower AONB Partnership ('The AONB Partnership ') is 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.

## Structure and Purpose

- 4 **The AONB Partnership** is a membership body, open to any individual or organisation. The only criteria is that they should have an interest in the AONB. The AONB Partnership is an overarching group set up in order to co-ordinate management groups set up under its cover. The AONB Partnership is intended to support the involvement of the community in the management of the AONB.
- 5 The AONB Partnership will be chaired by the Councillor who is Chair of the Planning Committee.
- 6 The AONB Partnership is responsible for nominating the **Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group** ('the Steering Group').
- 7 The Steering Group is responsible for overseeing the Management of the AONB, and is responsible for the development of policy and strategy for the AONB area, particularly through the AONB Management Plan, and influencing the policies and strategies of others. The Steering Group will also take and support action to conserve and promote the AONB.
- 8 The Steering Group will comprise:
  - a. a maximum of 6 Councillors (including the Councillor who is Chair of the Planning Committee).
  - b. 2 representatives from Natural Resources Wales

c. 10 other members who will be elected annually, drawn from the following interests as appropriate:

- Community Councils
- Nature conservation
- History and archaeology
- Land owning/farming/forestry
- Commoners
- Rural business
- Tourism
- Recreation
- Local Interest Groups
- Residents of the Gower AONB

9 The Steering Group will be chaired by the Councillor who is Chair of the Planning Committee. The Steering Group will select a Vice Chair from the Steering Group Members.

10 The Steering Group will elect the following sub-groups to the Steering Group:

a. **Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Grants Panel.**

- This Panel will decide on grant applications to the SDF from funding obtained from the Welsh Government. It will determine how best to use that funding, and will operate an appeals process when considering how funding should be spent.
- This Panel will comprise the Councillor who is Chair of the Planning Committee (who will act as Chair) and seven other members of the AONB Partnership.
- The Panel will be supported by the AONB Officer, and a representative from NRW, as observers.

b. **The SDF Grants Appeals Panel**

- This Panel will handle disputes on how funding should be spent and will decide on appeals for grant applications refused by the SDF Grants Panel.
- The SDF Appeals Panel will comprise the Vice Chair of the Steering Group (who will act as Chair of the SDF Appeal Panel) and seven other members of the AONB Partnership that do not already sit on the SDF Grant Panel.
- The Panel will be supported by the AONB Officer, and a representative from NRW, as observers.

c. **Other sub-groups as required**

- 11 The Steering Group will have the power to co-opt individuals (to itself, or to sub-groups) or organisations or to set up further sub-groups as deemed necessary to fulfil the aims and objectives of the AONB Partnership.
- 12 Members of the Steering Group and of any sub-group will be expected to abide by the City and County of Swansea Members Code of Conduct.

### **Aims and Objectives**

- 13 **The Steering Group** are responsible for:
- Preparation of the AONB Management Plan on behalf of the City & County of Swansea.
  - Co-ordination of the implementation of the AONB Management Plan.
  - Develop and implement a programme of promotion and awareness of the special qualities of the AONB and the Heritage Coast.
  - Preparation of business plans for the Partnership including the annual work programme for the AONB Team.
  - Preparation of an annual report on the work of the Partnership and progress on implementing the AONB Management Plan.
  - Securing additional resources for the implementation of the Management Plan.
  - Commission research and special studies.
  - Operation of the Sustainable Development Fund on behalf of the National Resources of Wales and the Welsh Government.
  - The running of sub-groups as required
  - Holding an annual forum.
  - Holding an annual meeting with Community Councils and City & County of Swansea councillors with wards in the AONB.
  - Communication amongst the Partnership.
  - Forging links with other fora and protected landscapes, including National Parks, through the National Association for AONBs and the Europarc Federation.

### **Meetings**

- 14 **The AONB Partnership:** will meet annually, with the purpose of the meeting to:
- nominate the Steering Group members
  - engage with the public to promote awareness of the AONB and its special qualities
  - report and review the AONB management over the previous year; and
  - identify issues, opportunities and priorities for the coming year.

- 15 An officer from the City & County of Swansea Democratic Services will be present at all meetings to record proceedings. Minutes of each meeting shall be kept and circulated to Steering Group members as soon as possible after each meeting, and made available to the public on the AONB website.
- 16 **The Steering Group:** will meet quarterly, and the meeting dates published annually. Additional meetings will be convened if required. In the absence of the Chair or Vice-Chair at a meeting then the Steering Group may elect a Chair for that meeting. The quorum for Steering Group meetings will be six.
- 17 All meetings of the Steering Group will be open to the public for observation. Each meeting will start with a maximum of ten minutes for public questions relevant to items on the agenda.
- 18 Decisions by the Steering Group shall be made by show of hands with the Chair having the casting vote.
- 19 **The SDF Grants Panel:** will be called to meet by the Grants Panel members and advised by the AONB Team and NRW representative, determined by the timing and number of applications to received. Quorum of the SDF Grants Panel will be four.
- 20 **The SDF Appeals Panel:** will be called to meet by the Grants Panel and advised by the AONB Team and NRW representative, determined by the timing of appeals received. Quorum of the SDF Appeals Panel will be four.
- 21 Further information in relation to the election of Steering Group Members and other procedural matters can be found in the Gower AONB Partnership Procedural / Guidance notes available from the AONB Team.

**Gower AONB Partnership – Management Structure**

