

## GOWER AONB ~~Advisory Group~~Partnership - Terms of Reference

### STATUTORY ROLE & FUNCTION 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 Advisory Group~~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.

**Commented [MS(1)]:** Change to emphasise the "statutory" part of this section

### 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~~
- ~~6) The AONB Partnership will be chaired by the Councillor who is Chair of the Development Management & Control Committee.~~
- ~~8) The AONB Partnership is responsible for nominating the Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group ('the Steering Group').~~
- ~~10) 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.~~
- 4) The Gower AONB Advisory Group will comprise:
- 11) The Steering Group will comprise:

**Commented [MS(2)]:** The shift from a "steering group" to "Advisory Group" follows the legislation - but it is really just a change of name. In reality, the Partnership was not the advisory body, rather its steering group had that role, with stakeholder members appointed by the Partnership at a public meeting. At the public meeting, anyone who attended could vote for up to 10 previously nominated people - attendance could be poor, with issues about representation and accessibility.

**Commented [MS(3)]:** A change to separate "structure" and "purpose" which is intended to make the text easier to follow. The proposed "structure" is simpler, while retaining the same purpose and responsibilities. The "purpose" part is covered lower down. The issue of the "AONB Partnership" is dealt with later in a separate section.

- a maximum of 6 Councillors (including the Councillor who is Chair of the Planning Committee~~Chair of the Development Management & Control Committee~~), who will be appointed by the Council.
- 2 representatives from Natural Resources Wales
- 10 other local members ~~who will be elected for a term of two years~~, drawn from the following local 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

~~5) The Advisory Group will be chaired by the Chair of the Planning Committee., with a Vice Chair selected from the members of the Advisory Group.~~

~~6) The term of appointment will be the same as the electoral term.~~

~~7) The Advisory Group will invite applications for new members towards the end of the term of appointment. The new members will be appointed by the incoming Councillors appointed to the Advisory Group following Local Government elections.~~

~~8) The Advisory Group will encourage applications from individuals who are local, and can represent local interest groups, with a selection process based on their ability to contribute to the Advisory Group, through their local knowledge, experience and representation of that interest group.~~

~~12) The Steering Group will be chaired by the Chair of the Development Management & Control Committee.~~

~~13) The Steering Group will select a Vice Chair from the Steering Group Members.~~

### PURPOSE & RESPONSIBILITY

~~9) The Advisory Group's purpose is to oversee the management of the AONB and is responsible for the development of policy and strategy for the AONB, particularly through the AONB Management Plan, and influencing the policies and strategies of others. The Advisory Group will also take and support action to conserve and promote the AONB.~~

~~9) The members of the Advisory Group will appoint~~

~~15) The Steering Group will elect the following sub-groups to the Steering Group:~~

**Commented [MS(4)]:** This change reflects a change in Council titles.

**Commented [MS(5)]:** This change will bring the stakeholder members into line with the nominated Councillors, appointing them for an electoral term - see para 6 below.

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**Commented [MS(6)]:** This statement of the purpose of the AONB Advisory Group outlines better what the group is able to do, and replaces a section below.

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**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 ~~Chair of the Planning Committee~~~~Chair of the Development Management & Control 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 ~~Advisory Group 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**

46) ~~10~~ The ~~Advisory Group 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 ~~Management Plan~~~~Partnership~~.

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47) ~~11~~ Members of the ~~Advisory Group Steering Group~~ and of any sub-group will be expected to abide by the City and County of Swansea Members Code of Conduct.

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**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

48) ~~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.~~

**Commented [MS(7):** This section is not really useful or appropriate, and has been replaced with a shorter section "Purpose & Responsibility". These "aims & objectives" really belong to the AONB Team, or can be carried out on behalf of the Advisory Group, by the AONB Team.

- ~~Operation of the Sustainable Development Fund on behalf of NRW and the Welsh Assembly 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 Europare Federation.~~

## MEETINGS

19) ~~The AONB Partnership~~ will meet annually, with the purpose of the meeting to:

- ~~nominate the Steering Group members as required~~
- ~~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.~~

12) 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 ~~Advisory Group Steering Group~~ members, and made available to the public, as soon as possible after each meeting.

20) ~~13 The Advisory Group~~~~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 ~~Advisory Group Steering Group~~ may elect a Chair for that meeting. The quorum for ~~Advisory Group Steering Group~~ meetings will be six.

21) ~~14) All meetings of the Advisory Group 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.~~

22) ~~15) Decisions by the Advisory Group Steering Group~~ shall be made by show of hands with the Chairman having the casting vote.

23) ~~16) 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.

24) ~~17) 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.

**Commented [MS(8):** A new section on the "AONB Partnership" is at the end of the document, replacing this section. The AONB Partnership is a loosely defined body, open to "anyone with an interest in Gower", acting as "a sort of supporters group". Currently the AONB Partnership meets annually, to appoint the external members of the Steering Group. It undertakes no other role, nor any other activity. There does not appear to be an appetite for more partnership working at present amongst the group - the work of the current Steering Group (and future Advisory Group) seems to be sufficient. Currently the annual AONB Partnership meeting is an opportunity to promote the work of the AONB Team (and the Steering Group) - we would be keen to see this engagement role continue, and the proposed ToR would enable this.

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**Commented [MS(9):** The use of hybrid meetings means that they are now available to the public, and are also recorded. This makes the work of the Advisory Group more open to public scrutiny (Wales On Line now report on the meeting regularly, something which never happened before). We believe that the hybrid meetings also give an opportunity to attract a wider range of members to the group, to better represent the views of the many interest groups within Gower.

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10) ~~18)~~ Further information in relation to the election of Advisory Group ~~Steering Group~~ Members and other procedural matters can be found in the Gower AONB Partnership Procedural/ Guidance notes available from the AONB Team.

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**THE AONB PARTNERSHIP**

19) The Gower AONB Partnership will be a membership body, open to any individual, group or organisation that has an interest in the AONB and will be chaired by the Councillor who is Chair of the Planning Committee.

**Commented [MS(10):** This section sets out the membership and role of the Gower AONB Partnership - providing a means of acting and speaking on behalf of the AONB, when the Council may be unable (or unwilling) to act or speak directly. The role of the Partnership is important (as emphasised by the legislation and guidance), but its current role in the appointment process is not really very clear. The role proposed is taken direct from the legislation, but is flexible enough to meet a range of roles in the future, and retains the link to the Advisory Group through the shared chair.

20) The role of the partnership is to:

- protect, conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the Gower AONB ("the primary purpose").
- promote the sustainable social and economic development of the area, where it is consistent with the primary purpose of the AONB.
- encourage the enjoyment and understanding of the area, where it is consistent with the primary purpose of the AONB.

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**Gower AONB Partnership – Management Structure**

**Commented [MS(11):** This section is for illustration only, and will not be part of the Terms of Reference.

