

Aspirations – People

(See the [explanation](#) of what the Aspirations are)

P(a) Support opportunities for people to have life-changing experiences of nature which in turn promote pro-environmental behaviours.

P(b) Broaden the National Landscape engagement through the new Forum to encourage greater participation.

P(c) Make greater use of arts projects as an engagement tool to reach new audiences.

P(d) Support and promote specific itineraries and products based on visiting and exploring on foot and by bike.

P(e) Seek to engage new sectors in sustainable tourism principles and practices. e.g., creative enterprises, outdoor activity providers and challenge event organisers.

P(f) Develop geological interpretation along the Shropshire Way and update the Shropshire Hills geology trail leaflets.

P(g) Provide more 'changing places' facilities for people with particular needs.

P(h) Develop an Active Travel and Access Priorities map linking gateways and visitor hotspots.



Ukrainian refugees on a supported visit to Stokesay Castle

Extracts from Vision:

Place

The Shropshire Hills are valued and cared for as a special Place

- The working landscape supports livelihoods
- Heritage assets are looked after
- Cultural heritage is celebrated
- The economy is regenerative and circular

Subsections in this 'Place' section of the Plan:

Landscape including landscaping, tranquillity, dark skies

Heritage and historic environment

Sustainable, circular and regenerative economies:

Tourism and visitor economy

Sustainable transport

The National Landscape **boundary, setting and connections to surrounding area**

*Key link to other Plan themes – **Communities, cultural heritage, connection to place***

"When we work in place we can see the impact and respond. Place is the one unit of measurement that allows us to change our behaviour. If we save the places of the world, we save the planet."

Bill Reed, Regenesis Institute.



Landscape

The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as 'An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and human factors'. This view sees people at the heart of all landscapes, each of which has its own distinctive character and meaning.

The Convention is unaffected by Brexit and the UK remains a signatory. The Convention defines three principles of landscape action:

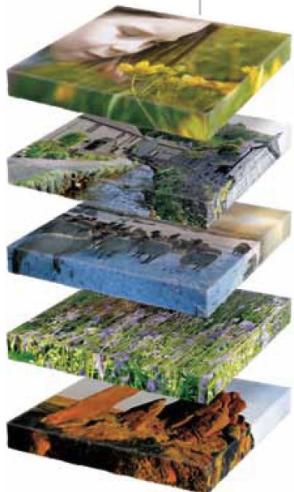
Protect: action to conserve and maintain the significant characteristic features of a landscape, justified by their natural or cultural value;

Manage: action to ensure the sustainable development and ongoing upkeep of a landscape, guiding changes arising from social, economic or environmental necessity;

Plan: strong forward-looking action to enhance, restore or create landscape.



Landscapes comprise a range of components:



Experience – landscapes are all around us and we perceive and value them in many different ways. This can often influence how we manage and care for landscapes.

History – landscapes illustrate time depth. Patterns established in the past, such as field shapes and boundaries, can help to illustrate how landscapes used to be managed and how humans have shaped the landscape.

Land use – current and past land uses help to shape and maintain landscapes, they include all human led processes such as farming, forestry, recreation and settlement.

Wildlife – the natural form of a landscape will affect the types of plants and animals it can support and these, in turn will help to shape the landscape.

Natural form – this includes geology, land form, soils and vegetation. The combination of these can influence how a landscape is used.

Landscaping - good practice for landscaping of new developments would include:

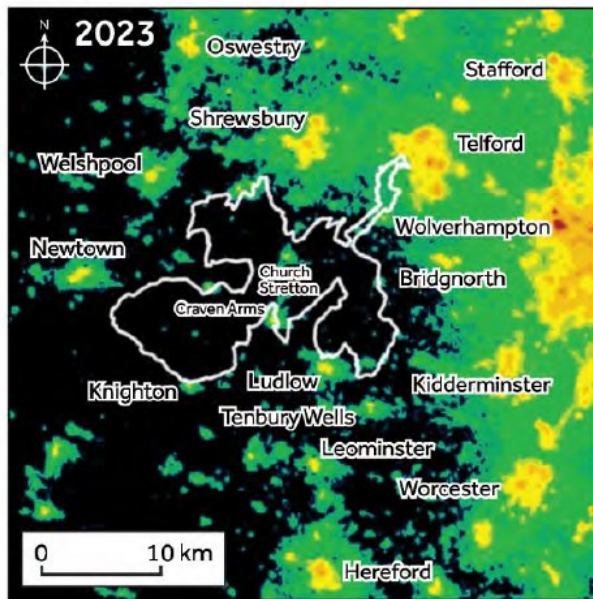
- Careful location, form and design of development (simple 'screening' of poorly considered development is not a substitute for good design, taking into account the character of the local landscape).
- Good landscaping plans which can be understood and commented upon.
- Landscape schemes should be linked to well-designed Biodiversity Net Gain on new developments
- Adopting sustainability principles such as use of local materials, low energy consumption, water conservation, decreasing run-off, etc.
- Retaining and incorporating existing landscape features, including mature trees, old boundary features such as walls and hedges.
- Landscaping which reflects the rural character of the location.
- Minimising use of earth bunding with un-natural form.
- Avoidance of industrial style fencing and especially fencing on top of banks.
- Use of appropriate materials in hard landscaping reflecting rural character, including suitable timber, stone and appropriate bricks where used.
- Well-designed mixed planting of trees and shrubs suitable for the soil type and location. Tree and shrub planting should be predominantly native especially in open countryside locations, but non-native species in character with the area are also acceptable close to clusters of domestic buildings. Native species common in the area include pedunculate and sessile oak, birch, alder, hazel, holly, field maple and various species of willow. Seek advice and see what grows near your site. Avoid conifers such as *Leylandii*.
- Grasslands of higher species diversity, which will often thrive on poorer soils.
- Good maintenance of tree and shrub planting to ensure establishment and growth, including weed control and mulching, protection from browsing animals, and replacement planting where necessary.

Tranquillity, Dark Skies & Light pollution

Tranquillity is one of the less tangible and measurable assets of the National Landscape, but is nevertheless very significant in the way people value the area. CPRE undertook mapping work on this in 2007 and their methodology included assessing a range of objective factors such as levels of noise, light pollution and visual presence of man-made structures, as well as more subjective factors of people's perception, including apparent naturalness and encounters with other people. The Shropshire Hills area is very significant for tranquillity in a regional and local context, and at a national scale, the Shropshire Hills and Marches area generally are significant, along with larger areas of the north and south-west of England.

The key sources of intrusive noise identified in the Shropshire Hills are road and air traffic which are both continuing to increase.

Awareness of light pollution issue has risen, and technology and design has enabled steps to be taken (e.g. street lights which allow much less upward escape of light) and more sensitive security lighting.



Map of artificial light at night clearly shows the value of the Shropshire Hills for dark skies

Heritage and historic environment

The historic environment covers a wide range of heritage assets including buildings and features with statutory protection and those which are locally valued, and also the historic character of the wider landscape and settlements. The character of the landscape, such as the small fields around squatter settlements and different enclosure patterns, has important cultural influences. The physical remains of people interacting with places over time also include archaeological features which are currently unrecorded or unknown.

The historic environment is a finite resource and is continuing to decline and be lost due to development, changes in land management and a lack of understanding and management. This is particularly true of the wider historic landscape and the less visible and undesignated sites which have no protection. Conserving heritage features involves understanding their significance and seeking to manage changes affecting them. There is a need to understand and promote the connectivity of historic sites and their settings as part of the wider landscape in order to effectively conserve and manage historic landscape character. Historic and natural aspects of the environment are closely inter-related – for example hedgerows, veteran trees, parkland and ancient woodland.



Archaeological work on Nordy Bank, Clee Liberty Common

Setting of heritage assets

With better information available now, development proposals which would directly damage defined archaeological features are thankfully rare, but their setting is more often overlooked. Setting is the surroundings in which an asset is experienced, and may be more extensive than its curtilage. All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. Setting is often considered mainly in relation to views, but other factors such as quietness and tranquillity can be an important part of a setting. The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on people's current ability to access or experience the setting. Extensive heritage assets, such as historic parks and gardens, landscapes and townscapes, can include many heritage assets, historic associations between them and their nested and overlapping settings, as well as having a setting of their own.

Case study - Offa's Dyke Conservation project

The Offa's Dyke Conservation Project is a cross-border initiative with Historic England and CADW, Shropshire Council, the Offa's Dyke Association and the Offa's Dyke National Trail. The project aims to showcase the benefits of integrating people, nature and place around the focus of a monument conservation programme. Focussing on the Dyke corridor has delivered benefits throughout a landscape that we today value for its scenic, historic and nature conservation importance. The project is also being identified in collaborative nature recovery initiatives such as Local Nature Recovery Strategies, and the Welsh Integrated Natural Resources Scheme.



Removal of conifers from Offa's Dyke

Case – study - Fix the Fort

The public appeal to raise money to fix Caer Caradoc's worn-down ramparts generated around £4,000. This was boosted in autumn 2022 with additional funding from HF Holidays (£10,000) and Farming in Protected Landscapes (£13,000), enabling the Fix the Fort project to start. After preparatory archaeological and ground work, 50 bags of stone and soil were airlifted onto the hillside by helicopter. Repairs to the ramparts were made over the winter of 2022-23 with support from some Young Rangers and volunteers. The work has created steps at key points where the footpath crosses the earthworks, and repaired other erosion scars.



Sustainable, circular and regenerative economies

Regenerative concepts have become more prominent in farming and in tourism, but can be applicable to economies and places as a whole. This is where there is an emphasis on economic and human activity actually *improving* the environment and society rather than just seeking to avoid harm. It means looking beyond sustainability and seeing how we can create and nurture the right conditions in which living systems are able to regenerate themselves. This approach will focus on 'upstream' interventions and is in contrast to a linear or extractive economy, which is not only less sustainable but will also be less resilient.

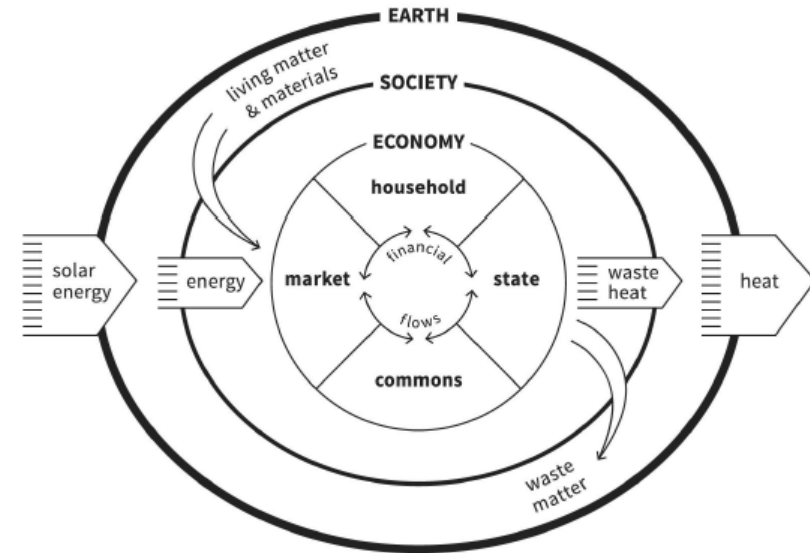
"A regenerative economy means moving away from extractive business models and unlocking the potential for positive contributions for nature and society. Businesses have the potential to be climate positive, socially positive and economically positive by moving beyond a solitary focus on limiting emissions into the environment".

Smith School of Enterprise and Environment, University of Oxford

"The circular economy is a system where materials never become waste and nature is regenerated. In a circular economy, products and materials are kept in circulation through processes like maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling and composting."

Ellen MacArthur Foundation

These concepts are also similar to the 'Wellbeing economy' and to the Doughnut Economics model we have used in our Vision and data portrait profiling.



Economy embedded within society and dependent on the living world

(Credit: Kate Raworth and Marcia Mihotich CC-BY-SA 4.0)

"Economic change that is sourced from place, is a foundational pillar in designing regenerative economies. It deals with the varying aspects of bringing our economies back towards a localised, place-sourced design that derives its thrivability from the five key 'capitals' that surround it – ecological, social, human, production, financial – whilst still operating inside our existing global economy as it slowly transforms."

Really Regenerative Centre

Some key points from the workshop held in the Plan consultation period on Doughnut Economics/ regenerative approaches were:

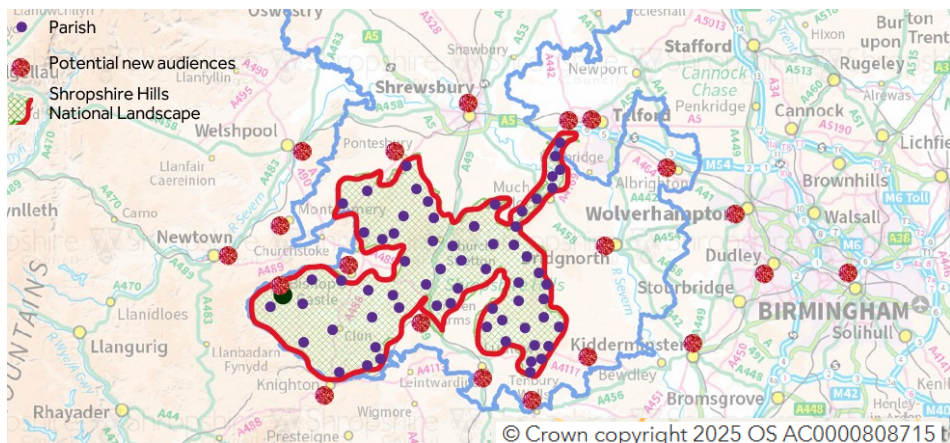
- keep relating local action to wider systemic change,
- highlight threats posed by widening inequality, and
- maintain momentum of these conversations linking with other groups and networks.

The National Landscape boundary, setting and connections to surrounding area

The Shropshire Hills National Landscape boundary has not been changed since it was drawn up in 1957 leading to the designation as AONB. The conclusion from a study of the boundary commissioned in 2006 was that the boundary was fit for purpose, and the Partnership and the local authorities have since then had a clear policy against seeking to change the National Landscape boundary.

The 'setting' of the National Landscape is the area around it, which adds value to the qualities of the designated area. This is not precisely defined geographically, but it should be considered in planning decisions for developments close outside the boundary. The NPPF requires that development within the setting "should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas."

The National Landscape is an asset to Shropshire and to Telford & Wrekin, and has links across the border to Wales. It is connected to the surrounding area and is not and should not be like an 'island'. It can provide benefits economically, environmentally and socially to the wider area. Most Parishes span the boundary in and outside the National Landscape, and potential new audiences lie in the nearby urban areas. These positive connections with the surrounding area can be built as part of the National Landscape model.



Key link to other Plan themes - Communities, cultural heritage, connection to place

The Rural Coalition in 2010 described sustainable rural communities as those "in which people enjoy living and working; which are vibrant, distinctive and in keeping with the character of their surroundings, with a full range of good-quality local services; and which enhance local landscapes, heritage and biodiversity while meeting the challenges of climate and economic change."

The Shropshire Hills National Landscape is 23% of Shropshire by area but contains only 6% of the county's population. Its sparse population means its economy is therefore different from much of the county, with more small, dispersed rural businesses.

Social balance and cohesion are key to successful communities and this relies on sharing spaces where people can mix. Public spaces whether green or built can have an important role in social cohesion, culture and sense of community. In the Church Stretton Neighbourhood Plan, comments were made about community, integration, social issues, the role of voluntary groups, meeting the needs of everyone etc along with comments relating to the need to make changes to the old market square – it was seen by many as having a role as a meeting place, rather than a car park - the need to maintain shops and services in the town centre etc.



Market at Church Stretton
(Church Stretton Town Council)

Cultural heritage includes both physical artefacts and intangible aspects. Though interpretations of history can be contested, there are often aspects of cultural heritage which can unite people from a locality.

A sense of place is key to people’s connection to where they live, work and visit. Heritage contributes to people’s sense of place and belonging and there are lessons from past ways of living which are relevant to some of our modern day problems.

A place-based approach is about understanding the issues, interconnections and relationships in a place and coordinating action and investment to improve the quality of life for that community.

Thinking about the ‘potential’ of a place to be an even better version of what it is now can open up new ways of thinking, and can be more energising than a conventional focus on problem solving. Here are some ideas around future potential for the Shropshire Hills based on its unique qualities, which can be explored further during the Plan period :

Potential of the Shropshire Hills?

The Place

- Headwater sponge
- Carbon sink
- Nature powerhouse
- Tranquil haven
- Vibrant rural area
- Basis of livelihoods
- A ‘source’ area for its surrounding areas



The People/ Community/ Culture/ Protected Landscape

- Connected sharer
- Applicable example
- Inspiring beacon
- Welcoming community
- Model of balance
- Relevant hub



Statutory requirements for Place

(not exhaustive)

Planning – requirements for Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans

Planning requirements to get planning permission for development

Special requirements for major development

Heritage – protection of scheduled monuments and other heritage assets



PLAN POLICIES - PLACE

(See the explanation of what the Policies are)

32. Landscape

i) A holistic view of landscape should be adopted in decision making, respecting the principles of the European Landscape Convention to protect, manage and plan for landscapes, and safeguarding the integrity of the sympathetic interaction between people and landscape.

ii) Local distinctiveness should be celebrated, linked to the natural and cultural heritage of the landscape. All development should consider local character and distinctiveness.

iii) Tranquillity should be protected in all aspects – peace and quiet, views, visual harmony, absence of intrusive influences.

iv) Dark skies should be valued, and planning policy and decisions on public lighting should be used to minimise and reduce light pollution.

v) In remoter locations and on hilltops a perceived sense of wildness should be retained and built structures minimised.

33. Heritage

i) Designated heritage sites and assets should be protected, and development should seek to protect and enhance the significance of all heritage assets (including undesignated assets), including their setting.

ii) Measures should be supported to ensure cultural heritage is better understood and celebrated.

34. Regenerative and circular economies

i) A regenerative economy should be fostered, focussing on wise management and wellbeing – an economy which is nature and climate positive, and good for people.

ii) Waste and resource use should be reduced by supporting a circular economy.

35. Tourism and visitor economy

i) New development for tourism and recreation should be of suitable scale and siting, of the highest standards of design and sustainability and avoid harm to the special qualities and other key characteristics of the National Landscape. Tourism businesses, facilities, activities, and events should adopt high standards of sustainability.

ii) Tourism activities based on nature and heritage should be prioritised, to increase people’s connection to nature and better reveal the significance of heritage assets and their story within the context of the Shropshire Hills.

iii) Development of permanent caravans and chalets should be on a small scale only (e.g. less than 10 units), in suitable locations and following high standards of landscaping of natural and rural character.

36. Sustainable transport

i) Development of infrastructure such as transport and utilities should be sensitive to the special qualities and other key characteristics of the National Landscape and seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing it. The rural character of roads and highway network should be maintained, with design and structures in keeping with the high quality landscape.

ii) The use of excessively large vehicles on small rural lanes should be discouraged, including to protect verges and minimise soil loss to rivers.

iii) Maintaining, and extending public transport provision within the National Landscape should be prioritised over the further development of car-based infrastructure.

37. The boundary and setting of the National Landscape

i) The National Landscape boundary should not be formally amended in the foreseeable future, as any benefits would not be justified against the considerable costs and resources this would entail. Partners should work in ways which strengthen the integrity and identity of the Shropshire Hills as an area of exceptional landscape value. The National Landscape Team will work in a flexible and pragmatic way in relation to the boundary while seeking the best outcomes and delivery for the designated area.

ii) Development in the setting of the National Landscape should be assessed for its impacts on the designated area itself, and also take account of the landscape quality of the setting. Mitigation measures should consider impacts on the special qualities and other key characteristics of the National Landscape.

38. Communities, cultural heritage, connection to place

i) Local councils, including town and parish councils, should support and enable the development of sustainable communities within the National Landscape.

ii) Improved use of built and green public spaces in villages and towns should be encouraged for better social connection and cohesion, and to enhance vitality in communities.

iii) The Shropshire Hills identity and the combined elements of the National Landscape model (Plan, Advisory Committee, Forum, Team, etc) should be strengthened to help support people’s motivation to actively care for the area’s special qualities.

Recommendations – Place

(See the [explanation](#) of what the Recommendations are)

PL 1. Support the development of mixed, balanced and sustainable communities, that are good places for people to live in, and are socially cohesive.

PL 2. Support Parishes and community groups to care for their local landscape. Continue events to link and support community groups taking action for the local landscape.

PL 3. Foster positive economic, social and environmental connections of the Shropshire Hills with its surrounding areas.

PL 4. Promote suitable heritage sites for visitors and encourage greater understanding of heritage.

PL 5. Complete an inventory of public car parking areas in the Shropshire Hills and use this to improve public information for people of all abilities and to aid dispersal of visitors.

PL 6. Take action to bring all Scheduled heritage sites in favourable condition and management, prioritised at sites which are 'At Risk' and 'Vulnerable'.

PL 7. Keep sustainable and regenerative tourism prominent within the area's tourism sector and foster a sense of shared environmental responsibility among both businesses and visitors.

PL 8. Continue targeted conservation action on Offa's Dyke.

PL 9. Continue with the EUROPARC Sustainable Tourism Charter, providing a structured framework for sustainable tourism management, optimise learning from the network and promote appropriately.

PL 10. Make sensitive use of improved signage to encourage sense of place and aid orientation of visitors.

PL 11. Promote and improve existing channels for people to give back to the area, e.g., through membership organisations, through the Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust's Conservation Fund and potential other specific appeals.

PL 12. Give greater recognition to the Shropshire Hills National Landscape as an asset in the strategies and plans of Councils and public bodies.

PL 13. Maintain the profile of the Shropshire Hills and sustainable tourism in the new Local Visitor Economic Partnership.

PL 14. Strengthen links between Management Plan topics and priorities and Local Transport Planning.

PL 15. Continue to monitor economic trends and patterns in tourism to inform future strategies.

PL 16. Foster local area identities within the Shropshire Hills that support the connection of people to places.

PL 17. Encourage the development of heritage-based tourism activities that draw on the rich cultural heritage of the area and help generate support to maintain heritage assets.

PL 18. Reduce volume of air traffic and make alterations to flight path corridors to decrease the volume and noise impacts of air traffic over the National Landscape.

PL 19. Give priority to community consultation ahead of major development and other significant changes to the landscape, and carry this out early in the design and decision making process.

PL 20. Communities and businesses are encouraged to value and celebrate being part of the Shropshire Hills National Landscape.

PL 21. Encourage use of the 'Shropshire Hills' name and the new National Landscape branding, to reinforce identity and sense of place. Discourage the forming and use of acronyms such as NL, SHNL which are a barrier to understanding and engagement.

Aspirations - Place

(See the [explanation](#) of what the Aspirations are)

PL(a) Build shared knowledge of regenerative economies and place-making, with principles and examples which could be applied.

PL(b) Use local food to enhance sense of place, distinctiveness and connection to the area.

PL(c) Prioritise and seek a new generation of strategic investment in infrastructure for active travel and recreational walking and cycling including development of multi-user routes along suitable disused former railway lines.

PL(d) Increase promotion of dark skies as a powerful nature experience and as a motivator for improved sustainability on lighting.

PL(e) Increase celebration of cultural heritage to encourage connection and pride of place.

PL(f) Give greater profile of the National Landscape status for the Wrekin area as an engagement tool for the wider Shropshire Hills landscape.

PL(g) Develop material to raise awareness of geology along the Shropshire Way.

PL(h) Create a scheme for volunteers to participate in caring for monuments and heritage features.

PL(i) Improve provision of training for heritage skills.

PL(j) Help tourism businesses to access good sustainability advice and to promote their good practices and gain recognition for these.

PL(k) Use the qualities of the National Landscape and its culture to build association of the Shropshire Hills as somewhere to have a sustainable holiday/visit e.g. a change of pace, physically active, healthy, and low car miles, with a locally distinctive, authentic experience.

PL(l) Undertake landscape sensitivity and capacity assessment to help guide development.

PL(m) Improve the provision of design guidance for built development in the National Landscape.

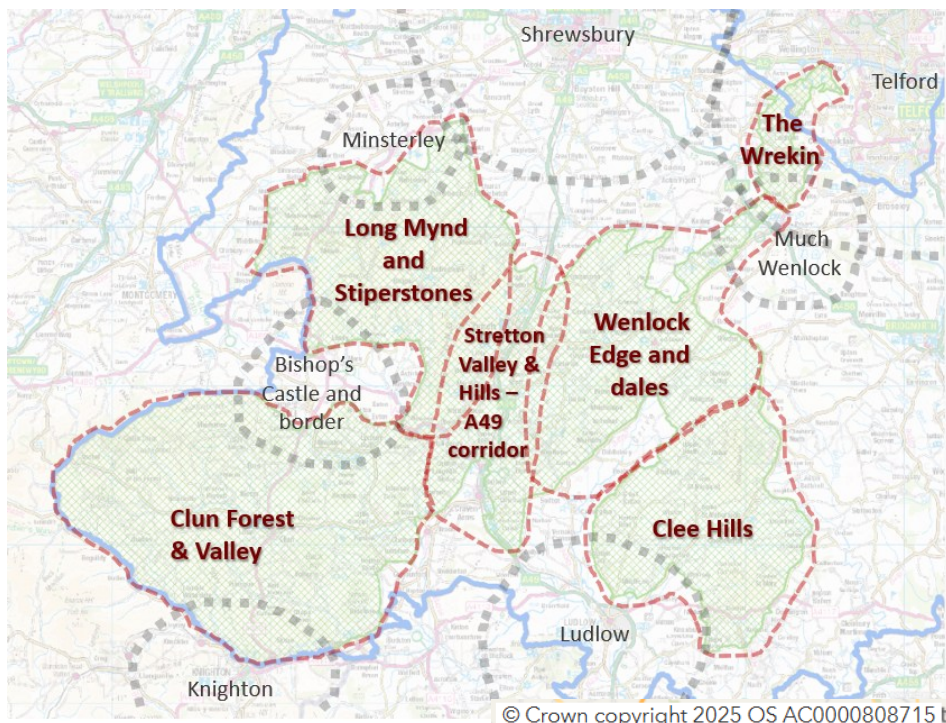
PL(n) Develop work around the re-defined local areas within the Shropshire Hills, and more detailed local sections in the next Plan.



Local priorities for areas of the Shropshire Hills

This part of the Plan looks briefly at the features, particular issues and priorities for six distinct areas within the National Landscape.

The Shropshire Hills is a large area and has much diversity in its landscape. The sections set out here aim to be based on local areas that are meaningful to people's sense of place. This isn't the same for everyone – some people will relate to the areas shown here more than others. Each of these areas also has distinct local places within it. The lines are not absolute, and some of the areas defined overlap others.



Local areas within the Shropshire Hills (red)

and the overlapping generalised hinterlands of nearby towns (grey)



Stretton Valley & Hills/ A49 corridor

This area can justifiably claim to be the heart of the Shropshire Hills, with the Stretton valley containing a major transport corridor and the main town in the National Landscape – Church Stretton. Key themes for future effort here are ensuring development is in keeping with the landscape, developing tourism in a sustainable way, and managing the continued increase in outdoor activities.

The A49 corridor makes this the most accessible but also the least tranquil part of the National Landscape. Church Stretton, the main town within the designated area, has a superb setting among the hills, with the Long Mynd, Caer Caradoc and the Lawley providing some of the most iconic images of the Shropshire Hills. The historic character of the town is enhanced by considerable tree cover.

Tourism is more strongly developed in this part of the National Landscape than elsewhere. Carding Mill Valley is the major visitor 'honeypot' site in the Shropshire Hills, predominantly used by day visitors, especially from Shropshire and the West Midlands conurbation. It is carefully managed by the National Trust but reaches capacity on peak days.

Key Issues

Development pressures are the highest here of any part of the National Landscape. Church Stretton has taken its share of new housing and employment development over the years, and the allocation of future sites continues to be contentious. The town identifies strongly with the Shropshire Hills National Landscape, and is seeking to make the most of its location and potential for outdoor activities in the development of tourism in a sustainable way.

Growth in road traffic on the A49 is a concern, and is affected by development well outside the area, including in Shrewsbury and Hereford, and in north and south Wales. This corridor does however offer opportunities for sustainable tourism linked to the railway line and good bus services, and for capturing passing trade through farm shops and other facilities.

Priorities

- The need to retain character and limit the negative impacts of change and development is probably more acute here than anywhere else in the Shropshire Hills. Church Stretton is an important service centre but is also the only one of Shropshire's defined market towns within a nationally protected landscape. The physical capacity for further development may be more limited than other towns, and it is important that the sensitivities of Church Stretton's location within the National Landscape are fully considered in planning decisions.



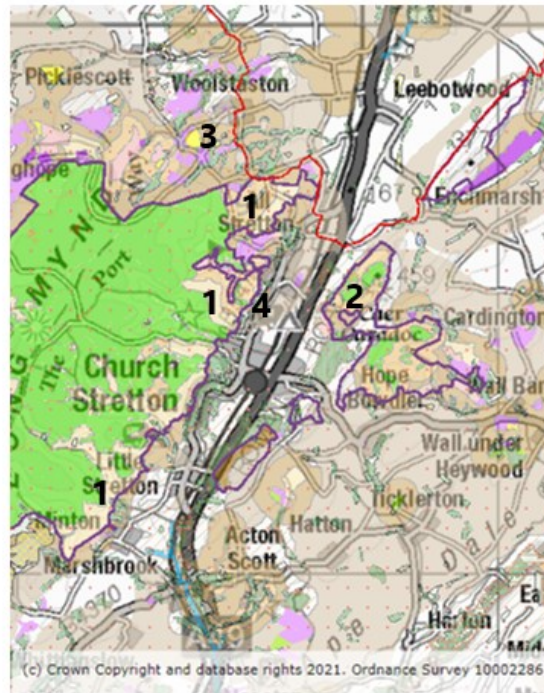
- A sustainable tourism approach is vital in this part of the Shropshire Hills and also made more possible by the good transport links, attractiveness for walking and landscape interest in the area. This part of the Shropshire Hills is a key link for visitors from Shrewsbury, Telford and more populated areas to the north and east. The development of a better located Visitor Information Centre in Church Stretton would be a real benefit.

- The accessibility of the town enables it to provide services for the benefit of other parts of the Shropshire Hills. Developing further the links between Church Stretton and the National Landscape should allow the town to play a greater role in raising people's awareness of the National Landscape and its value, and to develop increasingly as the natural centre or 'hub' of the Shropshire Hills.

Nature recovery network strengths and opportunities

Stretton Valley – A49 corridor

1. The big areas of **upland heathland** (Long Mynd, Stiperstones) can be enhanced by **restoring habitat beyond the margins and creating/restoring heathland on suitable adjacent sites**, especially to connect smaller outlying areas of heathland e.g. the ridge south of the Stiperstones NNR.
2. The **Stretton Hills** have **fragmentary heathland** in amongst grassland, which could be enhanced by less intensive management.
3. The **wooded dingles** between All Stretton north to Wilderley are strong features in the network of habitats, which could be enhanced by further woodland planting and connections.
4. The **woods of the Stretton Valley** form a good network which could be developed further.



Long Mynd & Stiperstones

This is undisputably a 'core' part of the Shropshire Hills in terms of landscape, identity and biodiversity. The important large conservation sites of the Long Mynd and the Stiperstones are also popular walking destinations, and lie among hill farms undergoing significant change, and sparse remote communities. Finding ways to integrate farming with conservation, and of enabling local people to benefit from sustainable patterns of use by visitors, are key to the future of this area.

The area has the biggest concentration of upland and of semi-natural habitat within the Shropshire Hills, including the largest areas of heathland. Much of the high ground is designated for nature conservation, and land ownership by conservation bodies (including Natural England, the National Trust and Shropshire Wildlife Trust) is more extensive here than anywhere else in the National Landscape. Although there is a sense of 'wildness', the upland commons are carefully managed by grazing and linked with the surrounding farms.

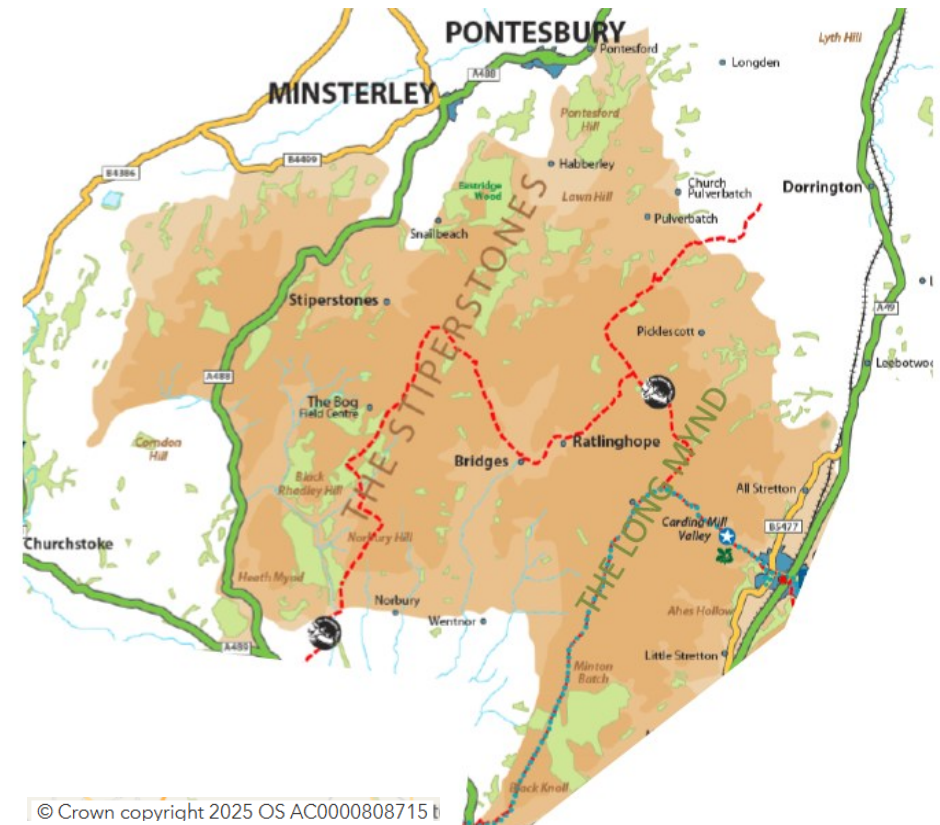
The mosaic of habitats on farmland is also of great value. A high priority needs to be given to retaining and building the inter-relationship between conservation sites and farmed land.

As well as the extensive open access hill land, the area also has many footpaths and a good bridleway network, is crossed by the Shropshire Way and served by the Shropshire Hills Shuttles bus service.

The Onny Valley between the Long Mynd and Stiperstones has a strong farming character, with sparse villages, and some focal points for visitors such as The Bridges and Wentnor. There is a gradual transition down the valleys from upland to more intensive lowland farms with more arable land. To the west of the Stiperstones there are more smallholdings, and links become stronger across the border with Wales.

The area is important for species such as harebell and mountain pansy, small pearl-bordered fritillary and grayling butterflies, otter, dormouse, curlew, lapwing and barn owl. Small hay meadows survive, with woods and scattered scrub on steeper slopes, and high-quality rivers like the East and West Onny. The area has an interesting geology, being crossed by the Pontesford–Linley Fault, and with minerals formerly exploited including lead and barytes.

Historic features include hillforts and prehistoric settlements, classic rectangular Parliamentary enclosure field patterns on Prolley Moor, and mining relics around the Stiperstones. Other significant landscape features include Mitchell's Fold stone circle, Linley Beeches and Bromlow Callow.



Community involvement in wildlife and heritage is strong in this area through groups such as the Upper Onny Wildlife Group and those involved with former mining sites now open to visitors such as Snailbeach and the Bog.

The Upper Onny Farmer Group has become well established in recent years and is providing a very valuable forum for farmers in the area.

Key Issues

The area has long views and is quiet, making it very sensitive to inappropriate development, either visually or through intrusive activities. Retaining upland farming and encouraging its activity to be in keeping with the environment is key to conserving the area's character.

The transition of farm conservation funding to the Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme will be significant. Pasture-fed sheep and cattle are the main enterprises, but mixed farming can also have environmental benefits. Many farms cross the border with Wales, thus adding an extra level of complexity for being in schemes.

Diversification is likely to continue, and the area has high potential for enterprises based on wildlife, landscape, and heritage. Increasing visitor numbers could create problems, and a sustainable, low-impact approach is necessary, minimising traffic and noise. Encouraging visitors to stay longer, experience more and spend more is preferable to simply chasing greater footfall.

Priorities

- Farm environmental schemes are vitally important as a means of delivering conservation activity on the ground, and the continued transition over the coming years is crucial. Continued active engagement with farmers and with the wider community, and advice and exchange of practical ideas have an important role to play.
- For visitors, the connection to the Shropshire Hills and links into it from the north should be developed, e.g. from Pontesbury and Minsterley. Both of these settlements could benefit economically from development of more services for visitors. The profile of the Shropshire Hills in Shrewsbury should be raised and its proximity to this part of the National Landscape is an advantage. The possibility of developing a cycle/multi-user route out of Shrewsbury in this direction would be of benefit to the National Landscape.
- Local food activity has significant potential to act as a bridge between farming, conservation and visitors. The pubs and visitor facilities in the area provide an important means of developing this.

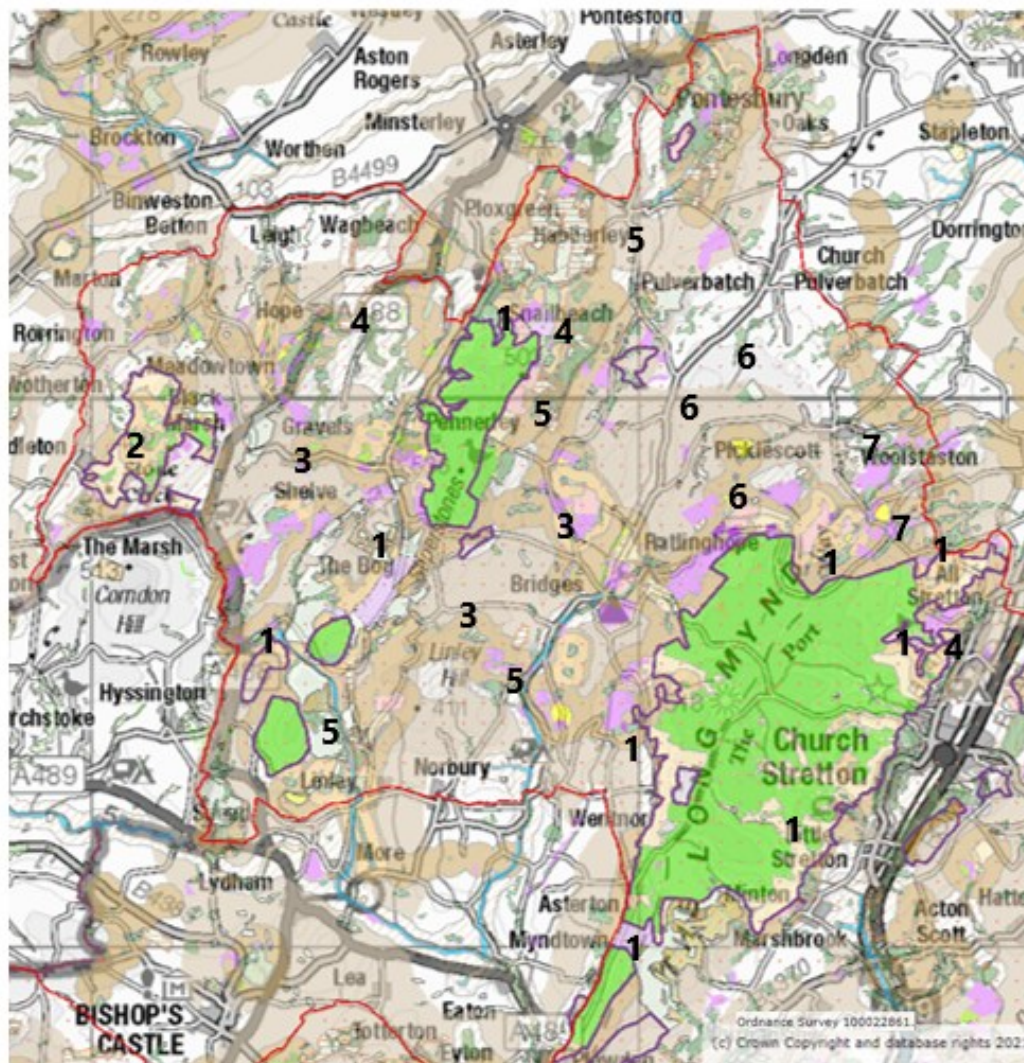


Looking down to the Cardingmill reservoir

Nature recovery network strengths and opportunities

Long Mynd – Stiperstones area

1. The big areas of **upland heathland** (Long Mynd, Stiperstones) can be enhanced by **restoring habitat beyond the margins and creating/restoring heathland on suitable adjacent sites**, especially to connect smaller outlying areas of heathland e.g. the ridge south of the Stiperstones NNR.
2. **Stapeley Common** has **fragmentary heathland** in amongst grassland, which could be enhanced by less intensive management.
3. The **'bridges' of higher land between Long Mynd and Stiperstones** are obvious (around Gatten Hill and Linley/Norbury Hill) to enhance links of better quality habitat, probably more of rough grassland with ffridd and scrub than heathland. There are similar links west from Stiperstones across the high ground around Shelve, towards Stapeley Common.
4. The **woods** around the Stiperstones and Hope Valley form a strong network to enhance with further planting and connections, similarly the woods of the Stretton valley.
5. The **Habberley Brook catchment** has strong potential for enhanced habitat networks, starting up at the Stiperstones and leading down to the important area of mixed good habitats around Earl's Hill. The East and West **Onny Valleys** also have good potential. |
6. The potential of connecting better upland habitats along the **high ground of the Portway north of the Long Mynd**, Cothercott/Wilderley Hill and Paulith Bank is under-represented on the map, as is the potential for enhancing woodland, grassland and scrub/rough habitats in the valley above Pulverbatch.
7. The **wooded dingles** between All Stretton north to Wilderley are strong features in the network of habitats, which could be enhanced by further woodland planting and connections.



Existing priority habitats are the brighter colours – green is heathland and grassland, purple is good semi-improved grassland. The Moorland Line is edged in purple. The more extensive pale brown areas are zones defined for network enhancement and expansion and action to address fragmentation.

Clun Forest & Valley

This very rural area is perhaps more dependent on farming than any other part of the Shropshire Hills. Some strong networks have been established, and these are important for managing change in farming to provide the best outcomes for both the landscape and the community. The River Clun and its catchment is a focus for conservation activity, and people enjoy the heritage and tranquillity of this area.

The Clun Forest (the old name for the Clun uplands) and the Clun Valley are the most deeply rural part of the National Landscape and is amongst the most sparsely populated parts of England. Bounded to the west by the Welsh border, the area comprises the catchment of the River Clun and part of that of the upper River Teme. Relative soft shale and siltstone rocks create a rolling, rounded topography, with enclosed and cultivated fields right up to the hilltops, except where remnant and restored heathland remain, such as at Rhos Fiddle and Mason's Bank. There are a number of large, mainly coniferous Forestry Commission woods in the lower Clun valley, some of which support the nationally rare Wood White butterfly. Smaller conifer woods higher up are valued for shelter but could be improved for landscape and nature. Broadleaved woodlands are less common and tend to be small and on steeper slopes and gullies.

Just outside the National Landscape, a section of the River Clun close to its confluence with the Teme is designated a Special Area of Conservation for the rare freshwater pearl mussel, which is in serious decline. The River Clun and its tributaries are largely tree-lined, but alder disease, stock access to riverbanks and factors affecting water quality such as nutrients and siltation, are contributing to poor condition of the river for the pearl mussel and other wildlife. Much project work over a period of years targeted at these factors has made some progress, but the issue is becoming more critical.

Offa's Dyke runs north-south across the area, in some of its best preserved and dramatic sections. It connects the Shropshire Hills with other areas along the border including Herefordshire and Radnor and the Clwydian Range. Other archaeological earthworks in the area include Bury Ditches hillfort, and the Upper and Lower Shortditches near the Kerry Ridgeway. The small town of Clun is a natural centre for the area, and its prominent ruined castle shows that this has long been the case. The market towns of Bishop's

Castle and Knighton lie just outside the National Landscape to the north and south, with Craven Arms to the east.

The pattern of landholding here is more of medium-sized family farms, with fewer large estates and less smallholding than elsewhere. Livestock rearing dominates, but as the soil is relatively good, potatoes and other crops are cultivated even high up. Tourism and recreation are generally at a lower level than elsewhere in the Shropshire Hills, although Clun and the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail are popular with visitors, and promoted walks are helping to develop the area's potential for sustainable tourism.



Key Issues

Changes in farming will probably have the greatest influence on this area's future. A high age profile in the farming community, rising costs and the difficulty of making livestock products pay in a competitive global market are felt as keenly here as anywhere, sometimes compounded by the relative isolation of the area. Uptake of former agri-environment schemes was very high, and the transition to new schemes will be significant for both the landscape and farm incomes.

The National Landscape team has given support over many years to the Land, Life & Livelihoods group which aims to bring farmers and the rest of the community together and help to secure a sustainable future for the upper Clun Forest part of the area. The group has held many events and practical steps such as advice workshops for farmers. The Upper Clun

Community Wildlife Group is also active in monitoring important species, and in encouraging land-owners and managers to maintain and improve habitats for them.



The National Landscape Team has been very active in the Clun Catchment for many years, working with farmers on riparian habitat management, community involvement and an integrated catchment approach. The Clun Catchment Partnership helps to improve co-ordination and raise the profile of the issues with organisations, landowning and community representatives.

Large scale poultry farming has been expanding and is now found further up in the catchment, prompting concerns about landscape impacts and cumulative nutrient input.

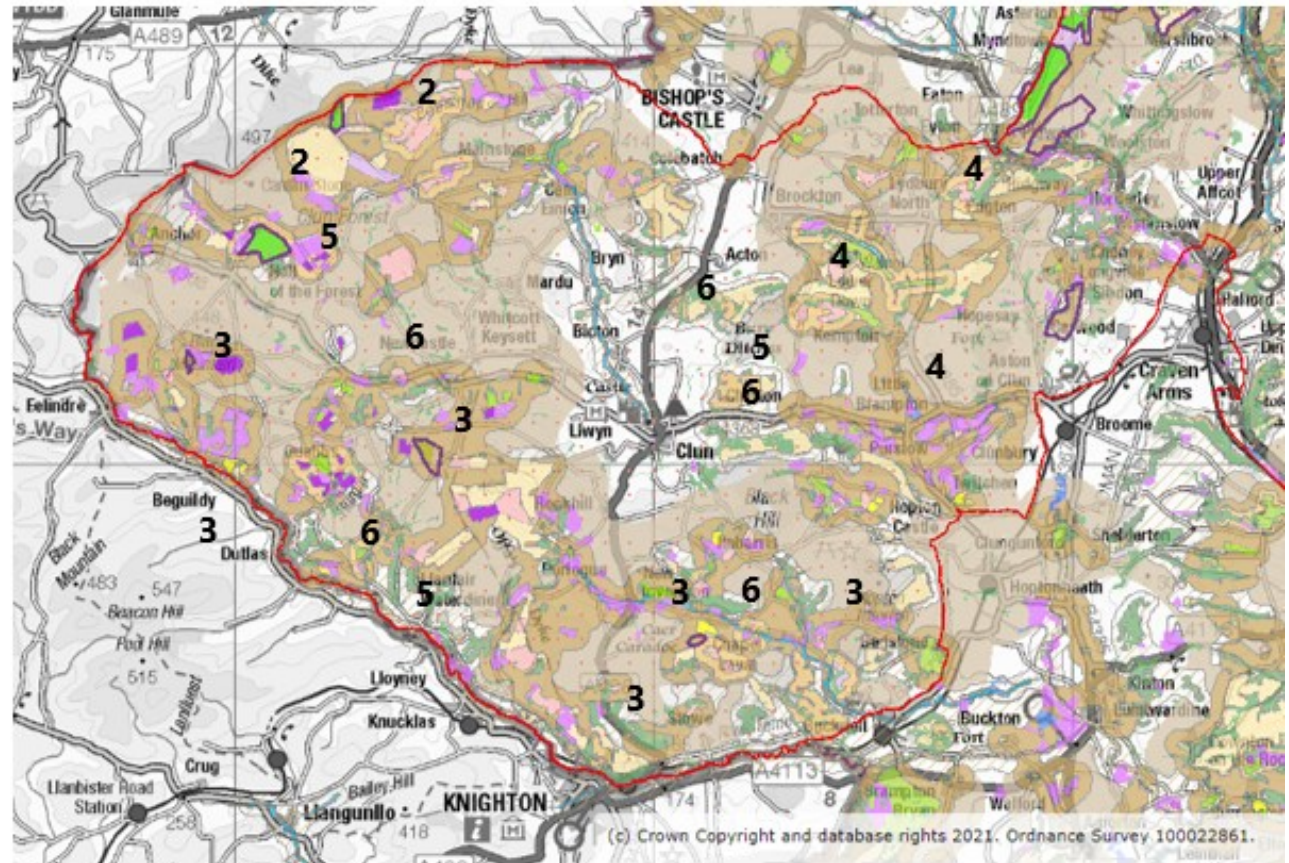
Priorities

- The condition of the rivers (the River Clun SAC and the River Teme SSSI) is an over-riding priority, and links with many other aspects, as it is dependent on activity throughout the catchments. The planning aspects of the River Clun are discussed elsewhere in the Plan. The quality of water and habitats is affected by land management practices near to the rivers themselves, but will also benefit from restoration of heath and wetland habitats and any increases in woodland and tree cover. Continued co-ordinated partnership working and funding for the Clun catchment will be necessary to address the significant issues here.
- The future of farming brings big challenges and issues which are not easily tackled. The continuation of livestock rearing and appropriate cropping are both important for the landscape. Initiatives to reach local markets have been used by some farmers, but the capacity of local markets may not be adequate for this to work for a majority of farmers. Continued development of farmer and community networks and working together will be crucial.
- Tourism development will need to be very sensitive to avoid spoiling the area's quiet rural character. Approaches which make the most of tranquillity and opportunities to slow down and appreciate the natural, historic and cultural features of the area will be the most appropriate.



Nature recovery network strengths and opportunities Clun Valley

1. **Heathland and good quality grassland habitat is limited in extent and very fragmented** across the whole area. There are however **extensive areas of high ground** with improved grasslands which have potential to link the better patches in good habitat networks.
2. The **headwaters of the Folly Brook and the Unk** is the strongest area of upland habitat network, from Rhos Fiddle north-east towards the Kerry Ridgeway. Habitat restoration in the connecting areas would be a top priority.
3. The potential network of good upland habitat across **high ground south of the River Clun** extends for the full length of the valley from around Black Mountain through Llanfair Hill, Stowe Hill above the Teme and Black Hill to Hopton. The high ground and habitat network extends over the border into Wales.
4. A different network of **lowland habitats is obvious in the lower Clun valley and the Kemp valley** (Walcot to Clunbury). This connects in the north to the Onny Valley around Plowden.
5. This map and modelling undervalues the **river corridors** – the main River Clun and other tributaries and the River Teme SSSI are all important habitat network corridors, as well as the Redlake and Unk which are shown.
6. The **woodland networks** along the River Clun, Teme and Redlake are strong (also around Bury Ditches) and should be linked with more woodland creation.



Existing priority habitats are the brighter colours – green is heathland and grassland, purple is good semi-improved grassland. The Moorland Line is edged in purple. The more extensive pale brown areas are zones defined for network enhancement and expansion and action to address fragmentation.

Clee Hills

This large part of the National Landscape contains very contrasting areas, but is characterised by the influences of the minerals industry, of traditional farming and of larger settlements further to the east. Maintaining and enhancing quality in the landscape and making the most of the area's undervalued features of interest are important challenges for the future.

The south-eastern part of the Shropshire Hills is dominated by the main hills of Brown Clee (Shropshire's highest point) and Titterstone Clee. Heath and common land on the tops of these are accompanied by disused and active quarries as well as prominent telecommunications and radar structures. The mark of industry is strong here, and the beauty of a harsher kind than elsewhere in the Shropshire Hills.



The Clee Hills are a distinct area of upland separated from those further west. There are some significant areas of common land including Clee Liberty, Clee Hill and Catherton Commons. The hills are surrounded by a high plateau of sandstone with red soils and mostly enclosed pastoral land. Villages are often small and scattered, and there are some medieval deserted settlements. Clee Hill is the largest village, and bears a strong influence of past and present mining and quarrying. The high point of the A4117 on Clee Hill Common provides remarkable views south to the Malvern

Hills, Herefordshire and beyond. The old squatter settlements associated with former mining result in a surviving pattern of small land holdings, including non-agricultural uses. Small hay meadows and high quality grasslands survive in amongst these.

In the west the area extends to the perimeter of Ludlow and along the edge of the Corve Dale, where larger traditional country estates are found. To the east lie very rural villages like Ditton Priors and Burwarton, but there are increasingly good links with the market towns of Bridgnorth and Cleobury Mortimer, and also more commuting to the West Midlands conurbation. There are substantial woodlands on the eastern flanks of Brown Clee near Burwarton.



The Clee Hill Community Wildlife Group is well established. Clee Liberty common participated in the national 'Our Upland Commons' project and is now in Higher Level Stewardship. The Clee View Farmers Group has gained momentum in recent years and now covers a large area both within and beyond the National Landscape.

Key Issues

The issues of change in farming, especially in the livestock sector, are found here as elsewhere. The proximity of Ludlow and its local food culture is a factor in the south and west of the area. Woodlands are also a valuable resource in the area, and retaining their landscape value is important as they are affected by fluctuating timber prices.

Priorities

- Improving habitat networks, especially around the main hills is important. Farm environmental schemes and co-operative working with landowners and commoners will be important means of achieving this.
- Developing tourism sustainably will mean a small scale of developments in remoter locations, connecting to walking, cycling and horse riding opportunities. It should involve drawing on the potential of industrial archaeology and geological interest through improved interpretation. Patterns of anti-social use of some of the less attractive former mining and quarrying sites may require concerted efforts to influence.
- The heritage of the area including 19th Century quarrying remains and hydro scheme are significant and there is potential for conservation activity, community involvement, volunteering, and interpretation linked to these.

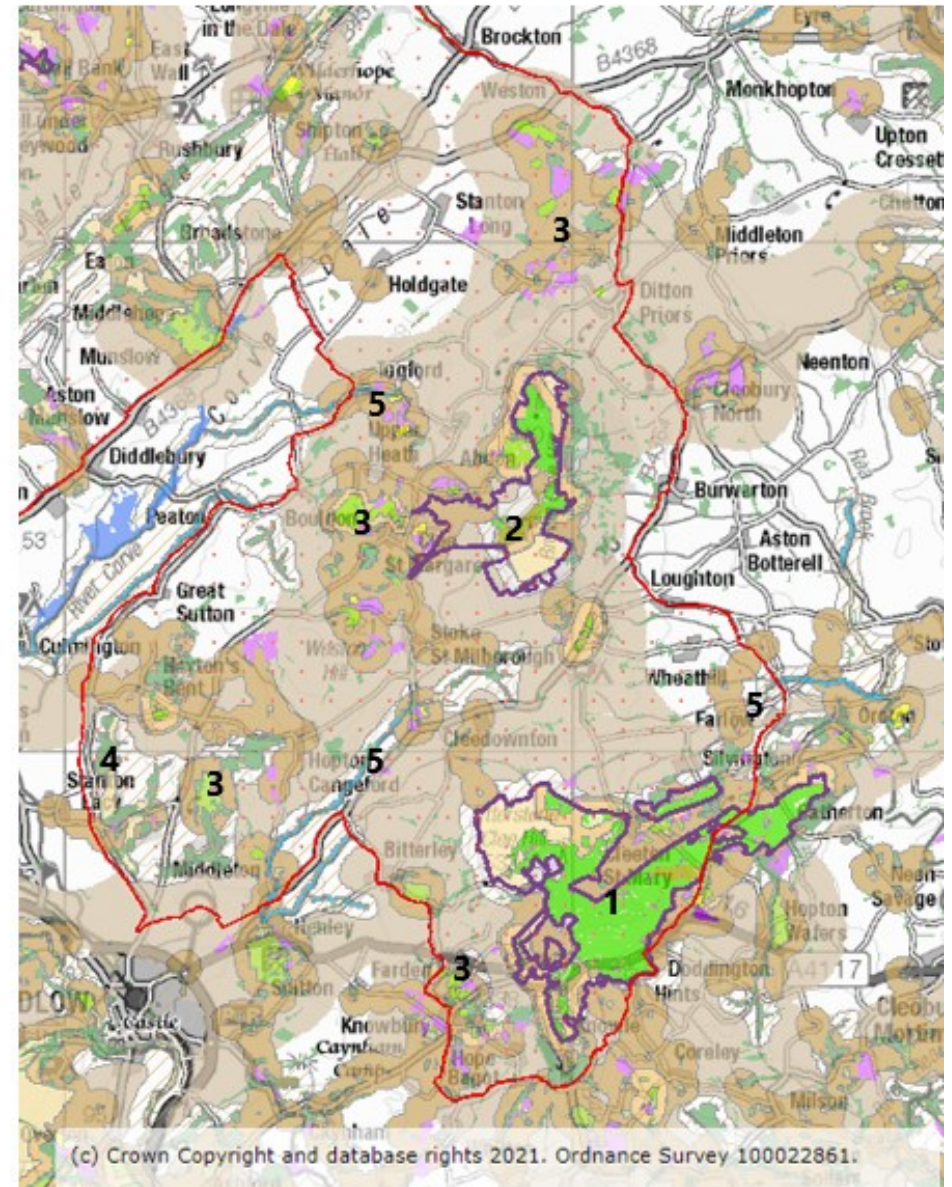


Nature recovery network strengths and opportunities

Clee Hills

1. The **extensive upland heaths and grasslands of Titterstone Cleve/ Clee Hill** are the strongest habitat network, extending east out of the National Landscape at Catherton Common. Improving condition of the core sites and habitat creation/ restoration around the margins would be a high priority.
2. The **upland heathlands and grasslands at Brown Clee** are also an important network, with similar priorities.
3. Other network potential areas shown are mostly based on good **lowland grassland habitats, and with woodlands interspersed**. Habitat creation in the connecting zones would be the priority, avoiding establishing any new woodland on good grassland habitat. There are further small hay meadows are scattered across this area which do not show at this scale.
4. The **western edge of the Clee plateau** has strong woodland networks which could be enhanced by further connecting planting.
5. The **stream corridors** are always important network elements, though in this part of the Shropshire Hills they are mostly small headwater streams.

Existing priority habitats are the brighter colours – green is heathland and grassland, purple is good semi-improved grassland. The Moorland Line is edged in purple. The more extensive pale brown areas are zones defined for network enhancement and expansion and action to address fragmentation.



Wenlock Edge & Dales

More lowland in character than much of the Shropshire Hills, the Apedale and Corvedale either side of Wenlock Edge are relatively quiet and secluded. The National Trust own and manage substantial parts of Wenlock Edge. This famous wooded limestone escarpment is a major landmark, running over 20 miles from near Much Wenlock to Craven Arms and separates Ape Dale from the Corve Dale. There are significant former quarry sites on the back of Wenlock Edge, along with areas of species-rich calcareous grassland. The Corve Dale lies mostly outside the National Landscape but is of conservation value through its many heritage features, the River Corve itself, veteran trees including black poplar, and in views between Wenlock Edge and the Clee Hills.

Key Issues

Farming is more diverse in this area due to lower-lying and better quality land, and so has more options for the future than the uplands. More intensive methods and large agricultural buildings therefore have potential to impact the landscape quality of the area.

Ash dieback will be a particular issue in this part of the Shropshire Hills where ash is more common on the lime-rich soils, especially around Wenlock Edge.

Some former quarry sites on Wenlock Edge have been re-used for industrial activities, which may have limited the areas potential of this part of Wenlock Edge to develop into a really significant visitor destination and contributor to the sustainable tourism economy. There remains a need to maximise opportunities for conservation and quiet enjoyment where possible.

Priorities

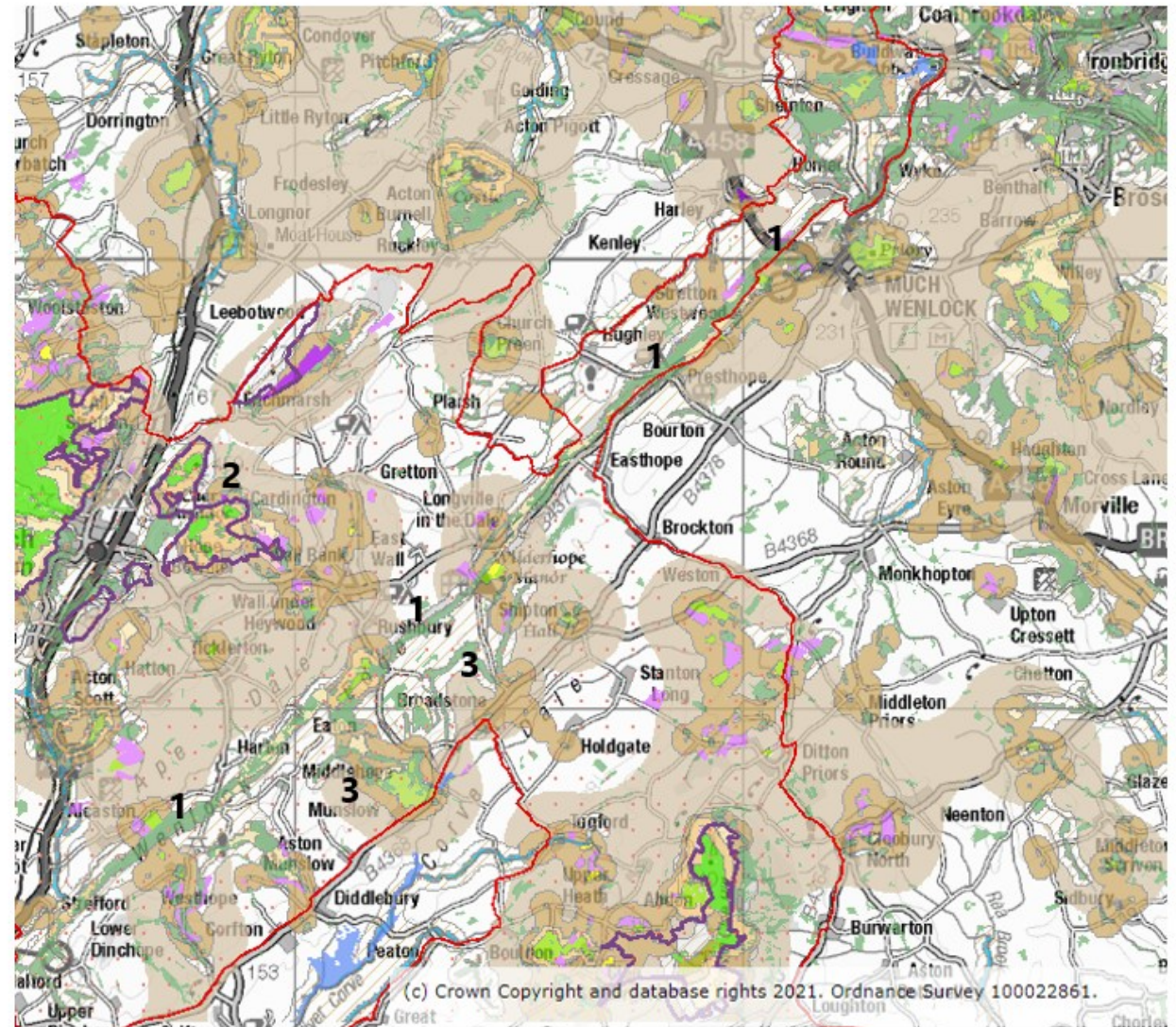
- Sustainable farming activities here will include more measures for arable land such as field margins.
- The recently re-opened Acton Scott Heritage Farm has important potential for sustainable tourism and for traditional skills education.
- Improved off-road cycling provision along Wenlock Edge as a strategic route would be beneficial.



Nature recovery network strengths and opportunities Wenlock Edge and Dales

1. The narrow but continuous **woodland along the steep face of Wenlock Edge** is one of the strongest habitat network features. Close around it are some valuable calcareous grasslands, with potential for more of these. New woodland planting should avoid sites with good potential as grassland habitat.
2. The **Stretton Hills** form the main area of upland habitats, extending south and east into more lowland grassland with woodland network areas.
3. The **south side of Wenlock Edge** has some well developed **wooded dingles** leading down to the Corve Dale, also with pockets of good grassland.

Existing priority habitats are the brighter colours – green=heathland and grassland, purple is good semi-improved grassland. The Moorland Line is edged in purple. The more extensive brown areas are zones defined for network enhancement and expansion and action to address fragmentation.



The Wrekin

The Wrekin area is rich in geology, wildlife and views. Extending into the Telford & Wrekin Council area, it also has its own users, audiences and partners. The same principles of retaining and enhancing landscape quality and engaging with local people are nevertheless still relevant. The need here to protect the environment and to manage people's enjoyment of it, is as significant as anywhere in the Shropshire Hills.

The Wrekin is Shropshire's iconic hill, and being surrounded by lower ground, affords excellent views over much of the county and beyond. Lying on the urban fringe of Telford, with significant new development nearby it has high levels of recreational and community use.

The woodlands on the Wrekin and the Ercall are of high quality (SSSI), and important for their geology. The area is rich in industrial archaeology and has strong connections to the nearby Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site. The town of Wellington has very strong cultural links with the Wrekin. The National Landscape boundary is drawn tightly around the wooded hills of the Wrekin and the Ercall, and so the quality of the surrounding area is very important as a setting for the National Landscape. The Wrekin is very important both locally and for those visiting the area, especially the main path up the north side of the hill, which is valued by a wide cross-section of people for fresh air, views and exercise.

Key Issues

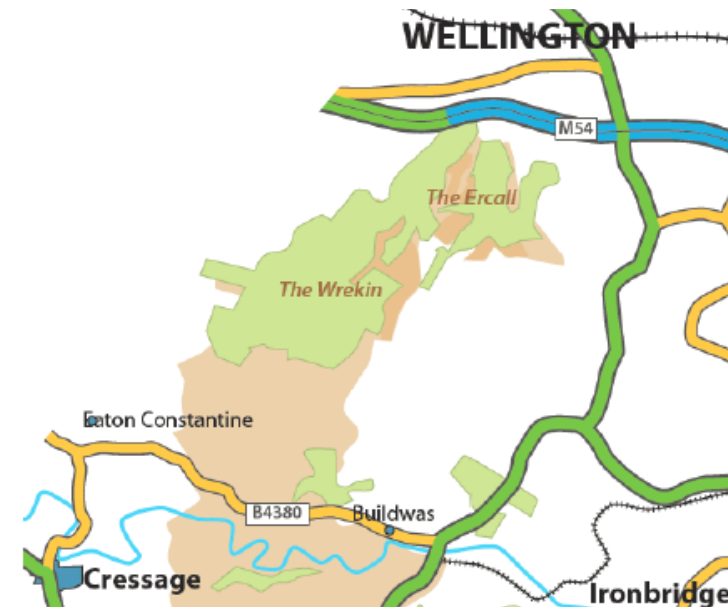
The high level of recreational use of the Wrekin creates pressure, including unauthorised mountain biking as well as the volume of foot traffic. There is no real framework or adequate resources to manage this pressure, resulting in the landscape quality and visitors' experience being less than optimal.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust manage the main car park at Forest Glen. Visitor management at the Wrekin would however benefit from a more co-ordinated approach and adequate resourcing, given its importance and scale of use. There is scope to further improve parking provision and visitor facilities at or in proximity to the Wrekin, managing pressures and strengthening the quality of recreational offer. These however need to be

planned with sensitivity to the location and to visitor management issues and have a viable business model.

Telford & Wrekin Council have defined the Wrekin Forest (a wider area than that included in the National Landscape) as a 'Strategic Landscape' in their Local Plan, which gives it some additional recognition and protection.

The redevelopment of the former Ironbridge Power Station close to the National Landscape near Buildwas will be a big factor over the coming years. The implementation of development needs to be appropriate and sensitive to this location.



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Priorities

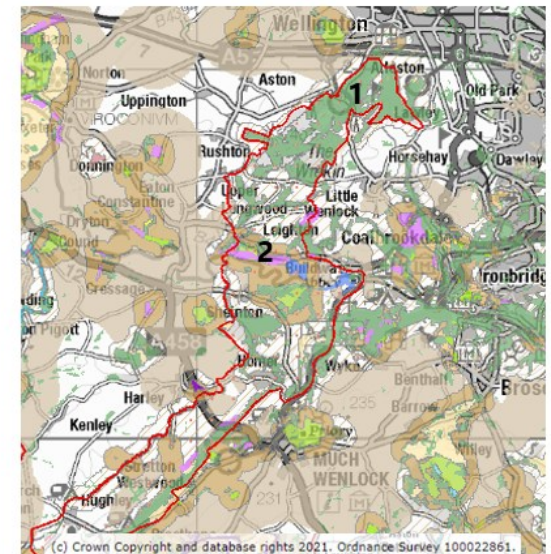
- Development on the eastern fringes of the Wrekin and near Ironbridge needs to respond to the distinctive character of the area.
- A stronger mechanism is desirable for managing the high environmental quality of the Wrekin area and its continued use by visitors. On the ground capacity to take practical action and engage with visitors is a key tool to maintain the quality of a well-used countryside site.
- Enjoyment of the Wrekin area's countryside should go along with promoting understanding of its qualities. Opportunities for participation through activities such as conservation volunteering can be improved.
- Recognition of the national importance of the National Landscape designation could be given a higher profile in the Wrekin area. Management of the Wrekin area should link in different directions to the wider Shropshire Hills, to Telford's green infrastructure, and to the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site.
- Priority areas for conservation action will continue to include the woods, other habitats and wildlife, and cultural heritage. Strengthening connections with local people, improvements to access, and community involvement through events, education and volunteering also remain key themes.



Nature recovery network strengths and opportunities

The Wrekin

1. The **Wrekin/Ercall** is a very strong woodland habitat network, linking with the more extensive woods of the Severn Valley.
2. The **River Severn** is an important river habitat corridor, though only a short length is within the National Landscape.



Delivery

The Plan is for the Shropshire Hills as an area and not for any single organisation. There is no single budget or programme for delivery, so the Plan seeks to influence, guide and suggest rather than setting out a defined schedule of actions which may not prove feasible.

This section sets out information and some priorities on:

- **Overall model for shared delivery**
- **Deliverers** – the wide range of organisations and actors that have a role
- **Funding** – from many potential sources
- **Partnership working** – structures, processes and culture which support delivery
- **Potential project themes** – suggested priority projects flowing from the earlier theme sections



Overall model for shared delivery

A wide range of organisations, as well as land managers, community groups and individuals, do things which deliver and support the vision of the Plan. They don't all do these things directly because of the National Landscape or because of the Plan. There is a complex overlay with the varied drivers and priorities of deliverers, including many synergies – especially with activities such as nature and heritage conservation, sustainable land management, promotion of outdoor recreation and management of visitor sites, and youth involvement.

The Plan and the processes that support it have potential to:

- maximise the **synergies** between others' priorities and those of the National Landscape,
- help to **co-ordinate activity** between partners and deliverers,
- provide a '**centre of gravity**' and focus which builds momentum,
- through understanding and dialogue, help to **minimise any conflicting directions** within partner activity, and encourage partners to adapt their activities where possible to achieve better benefits for the National Landscape.

This Plan for the first time applies the 'theory of change' approach, to help understand the processes and pathways to achieving the outcomes that the Plan seeks. We have not undertaken a full Theory of Change methodology, but the analysis on the following page has proved useful. It highlights the importance of the 'hearts and minds' link, and people's attachment to 'place' in motivating them to take action. **'Projects' and delivery often tend to focus on technical solutions, but their impact can be greater if at the same time, we are also trying to shift institutional and cultural norms, systems, and wider still to tap into or shift underlying values.** These broader or higher levels will be more effective for generating lasting and transformative change.

Analysis informed by Theory of Change

The Protected Landscape model – designation, structure etc

Recognition as a special place
 Pride & connection
 Political support
 Greater knowledge and understanding of the landscape and issues
 Support/ networks/ encouragement
 Funding & resources
 Partnership structure
 Staff team capacity to convene/enable/deliver
 Part of wider family/network
 Opportunities for enjoyment
 Opportunities to support and get involved



How is this implemented in practice?

Management Plan
 Partners
 Staff
 Projects
 Events
 Communications
 Charitable trust

Also through partners:
 Grants
 Advice & guidance
 Demonstration sites
 Volunteering opportunities
 Regulation
 Conservation ownership



Connection and Pride ('Hearts and minds')

plus **Inspiration**
 plus **Support**
 plus **Shared sense of ownership**

leads to

Motivation and Skills to act, e.g.

- Managing land differently
- Joining in group actions
- Behaviour choices
- Using economic power as consumers
- Advocating to others
- Action reinforces people's commitment

by

Stakeholders (who)

National Landscape Team, Partnership, & Trust
 Key partner organisations (especially relevant authorities)
 Land managers
 Other partners
 Community groups & organisations
 Businesses
 Individuals – residents, visitors



Outcomes:

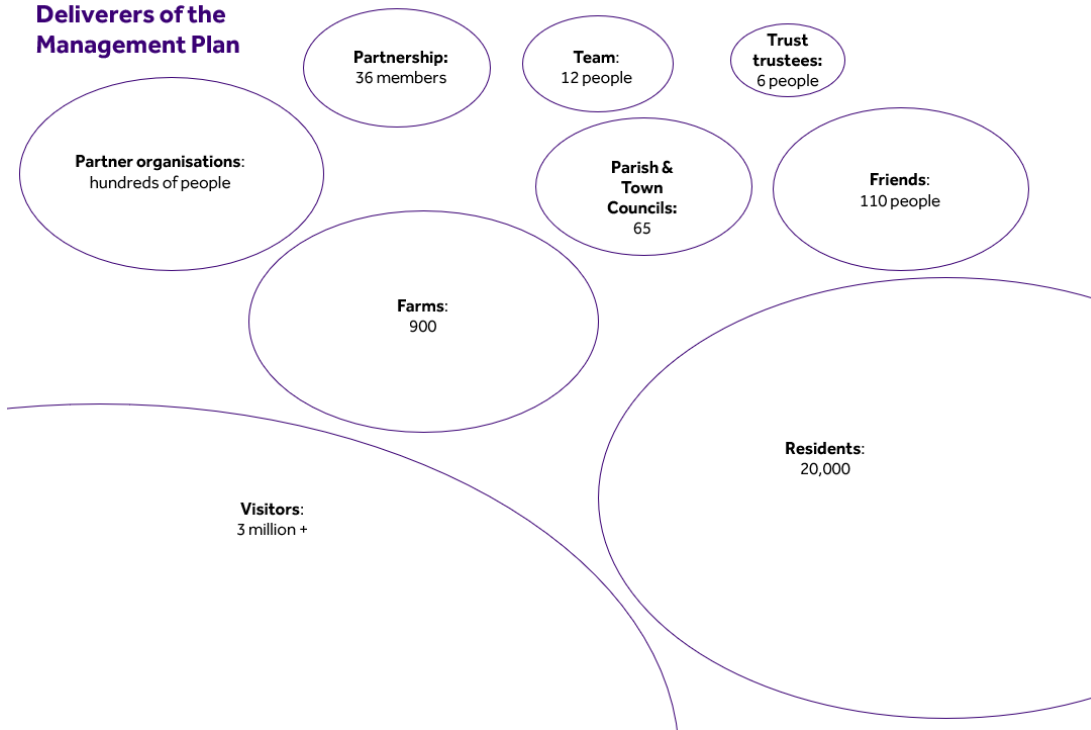
More activity to support the landscape, nature, climate
 Nature, climate, landscape & heritage in better condition
 More people, further involved and with improved wellbeing
 Stronger sense of community
 Reduced conflict, more consensus
 People alter environmental behaviours more generally
 Protected landscapes influence the wider world – as models of sustainability

Deliverers

Public bodies have strong role and a duty to seek further the purpose of designation and the Plan helps guide how they can do that. The National Landscape Team are there to deliver some of the Plan's ambitions, but also to enable, support and animate others and provide a degree of coordination. The Team are only one part of delivery.

The dozens of organisations, 65 parish and town councils, the 900 farmers, hundreds of businesses, 20,000 residents and over 3 million visitors a year can all play their part, and this is key to upscaling activity in support of the National Landscape.

Deliverers of the Management Plan



Relevant authorities (for the new duty to 'seek to further' the purpose)

Further detail on the duty is in [Appendix 3](#).

Relevant authorities who are currently well engaged include:

- Shropshire Council
- Telford & Wrekin Council
- Forestry Commission
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Parish & Town Councils (variable engagement)

Relevant authorities currently not well engaged include:

- Statutory Undertakers – rail and utilities companies (water and sewerage such as Severn Trent, electricity, gas, telecommunications)
- National Highways
- Government departments
- Some departments of the Councils

Plus many other public bodies which are relevant authorities.

There is also a need to liaise with neighbouring local authorities such as Herefordshire and Powys Councils regarding cross-border issues.



Stakeholder delivery – priority actions

We can identify some key roles for certain organisations as follows:

Organisation/Stakeholder	Desired role and priority actions regarding the Shropshire Hills National Landscape
DEFRA	Update, broaden and strengthen legal purposes. Provide consistent funding. Operate ELM scheme.
Natural England	Responsible for SACs, NNRs and SSSIs. Operate Catchment Sensitive Farming initiative. Undertake enforcement roles appropriately.
All Relevant Authorities	Recognise the special qualities of the National Landscape, make it a priority area for action and different to other places.
Forestry Commission	Grants and regulatory roles for woodlands.
Environment Agency	Regulatory roles on rivers and pollution. River Basin and Catchment Management.
Historic England	Regulatory role for protected heritage features.
Town & Parish Councils	Use the Management Plan to inform Parish level plans and when considering planning applications. Implement local nature recovery actions. Celebrate being part of the National Landscape and help to raise awareness.
Conservation organisations	Recognise the special qualities of the National Landscape, and adapt activities to fit with the Plan.
Farmers, landowner and land management organisations	Use the Management Plan to guide land management, and development proposals, to align with the Plan's aims and deliver public benefits.
Tourism organisations and businesses	Support a sustainable or regenerative tourism ethic. Encourage contribution to conservation.
Developers, and infrastructure providers (including utilities) –	Use the Management Plan to guide development proposals, and to avoid adverse impacts, mitigate and where necessary compensate.

The local authorities have a very important role, across many topics:

Council department (generic description)	Role regarding the Shropshire Hills National Landscape
Planning	Protect the National Landscape against inappropriate development, encourage sustainable and compatible forms of development.
Outdoor Recreation	Manage and promote appropriate public access, and manage council countryside sites.
Policy & Environment	Specialist support e.g. on biodiversity, data, policy, management of trees and historic buildings.
Public Health & Biodiversity	Local Nature Recovery Strategy, nature and landscape protection through input to planning. Enforce Environmental Health and pollution standards, maintain standards in food and animal health.
Culture Leisure & Tourism	Raise awareness of and interpret the Shropshire Hills through Museums and cultural venues, websites and events. Support relevant training and skills.
Transport planning and public transport	Plan for sustainable transport, provide public transport, support active travel including walking and cycling.
Economic Development	Promote sustainable forms of development, including in tourism, farming and environmental technology.
Climate Change	Support climate mitigation and adaptation action within the Council and in the wider community of the county.
Communication	Support appropriate promotion of the National Landscape and raising awareness of special qualities.
Highways	Support sustainable transport policy, manage roads to sympathetic designs and standards.
Waste	Encourage sustainable behaviour and resource use, avoidance of flytipping.
Education	Encourage understanding, participation and enjoyment of the countryside.
Social care	Encourage wider participation and enjoyment of the countryside.
Legal & Democratic services	Support for legal requirements of the designation, administer aspects of Common Land.

Shropshire Hills National Landscape Team

The National Landscapes Association describes the roles of National Landscape Teams as to **Convene, Enable and Deliver**.

The Team is made up of currently 13 people, made up of core and project staff. Current key activities of the team include:

- Farming in Protected Landscapes programme
- Convening and supporting partnerships
- Ancient Woodlands restoration project
- Delivery of Defra capital funding
- Sustainable tourism delivery including Shuttles
- Clun headwaters
- Young Rangers and outreach work
- Strategic work and input to consultations
- Support to Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust
- Communications and engagement
- Collaboration locally and in wider networks

The Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust is a charity dedicated to promoting the conservation and enhancement of the of the Shropshire Hills and integral to the composite structures of the National Landscape. The majority of the Trust's work is achieved through the Conservation Fund, supported by the National Landscape Team. This is a small grant pot to support practical projects by community groups that help the Shropshire Hills to be a beautiful landscape where nature and people thrive together.

Priority areas for projects are:

- Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, landscape, wildlife or heritage of the Shropshire Hills.
- Educational and awareness-raising activities relating to the area and its conservation, especially involving young people.

Funding

Government funding

In scale, agri-environment is the largest area of government funding in support of the National Landscape, though it is not directly linked to National Landscape structures. The transition to the ELM schemes has been difficult, and at the time of writing, farmer confidence is not high.

National Landscapes funding – Defra funding has in recent years been variable, with an uplift in core revenue funding in 2024-25 and then a reduction for 2025-26 back to the level of 2022-23, which with inflation is a significant real terms cut. Capital funding has been provided by Defra in recent years, which has enabled some good projects through partners. However the National Landscape team holds no assets to invest capital funding in directly. The late announcement of government funding, short periods of funding agreements, and short notice new programmes make forward planning very difficult and this is a key reason why a detailed implementation plan is not included in this Plan.

The Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme has been extended twice, into a fifth year (2025-26). This is very welcome, but the future of the programme is uncertain at the time of writing.

Defra have undertaken to develop a new formula for Protected Landscapes, and to improve overall funding for National Landscapes.

Major project funders

The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), is a significant fund, especially the large scale new 'Landscape Connections' programme offering projects with 8 years of delivery.

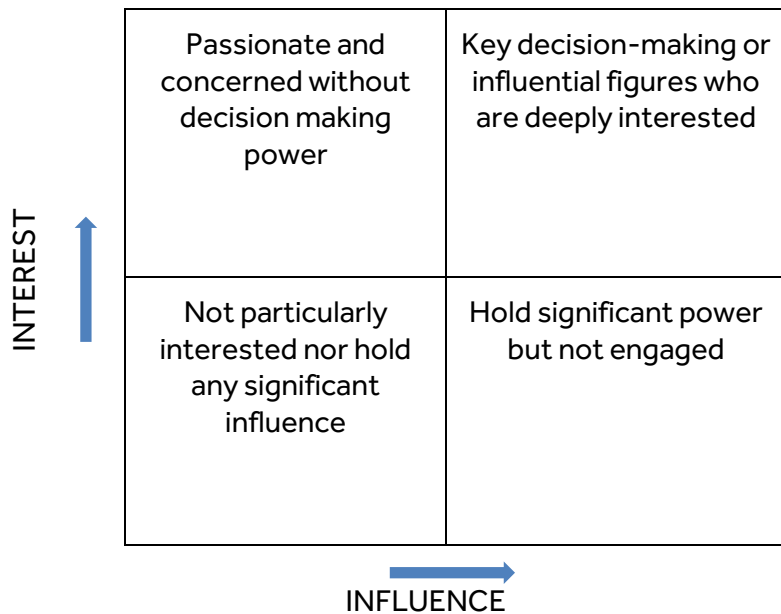
Green Finance

The National Landscape team have explored with the National Landscapes Association team potential theme areas for green finance relevant to the Shropshire Hills, including Peat, Wood & Trees, Water and Agriculture. This is an active area for further exploration. Green Finance may be used directly by landowners without involvement of the National Landscape team.

Partnership working

Partnership working includes the structures, processes and culture which support delivery. To support implementation of the Plan, the National Landscape structures and ways of partnership working are being modernised. This has been informed by good practice elsewhere, and by the stakeholder matrix below, to enable better engagement with high influence stakeholders, and at the same time to enable more people with high interest to get involved.

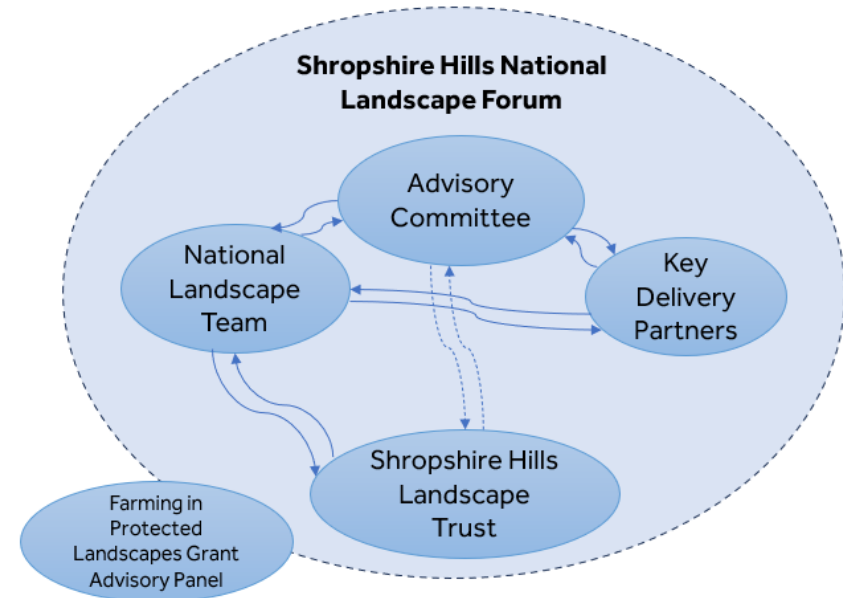
Matrix of stakeholders



The changes being taken forward with the Plan include:

- More regular but flexible liaison with **Key Delivery Partners** (especially relevant authorities), supported by occasional Topic Groups.
- Creating a **broader and more informal Forum**, with meetings twice a year, to broaden engagement and explore topics. This style of group will be more inclusive and participative than the previous Partnership.
- Re-forming a smaller **Advisory Committee** to have advisory oversight of the team's work and advise the Councils where needed in relation to the National Landscape.

The Shropshire Hills National Landscape has a composite structure, with no legal entity organisation. The new structure can be represented as:



Effective partnership processes include understanding the nested systems of organisations and people, and their key nodes and flows. From this can be judged where to have the best input. Partnerships with other organisations may need to be formalised in appropriate ways. Reporting of partner activity supporting the Plan will be encouraged.

The culture of partnership working comes from things such as:

- Listening and respecting other viewpoints
- Taking the time to develop relationships
- Being sensitive to cultural differences and power dynamics
- Understanding the motivators and drivers for other partners
- Considering whose voices aren't being heard
- Good communication, honesty and assertiveness
- Being willing to adapt our own activities
- Working for mutual benefit
- Collaborating not competing

Appropriate values will be encouraged in partnership work.

Potential project areas

Ideas for potential new projects arising from the Recommendations and Aspirations are identified here (which could be led by any variety of organisation and in partnership with any combination of partners).

Good projects will often address a number of the plan themes at once e.g. nature, climate and people, rather than just nature. Note that not all actions are ‘projects’ – ongoing routine activities are still very important and the Policies can guide how many of these can best be done.

The following list is exploratory and not exhaustive.

Potential project	Main themes addressed					
	Nature	Climate	Water	Land	People	Place
Shropshire Hills Landscape Connections (project under NLHF funding stream, in early stages of development)	x	x	x	x	x	x
Significant project for the Teme Headwaters focusing on re-naturalising hydrology	x	x	x	x	x	
Landscape Recovery project(s)	x	x	x	x	x	x
Development of farmer clusters and a local network for these	x	x	x	x	x	x
Restoration of deep peat areas	x	x	x			
Targeted projects to bring priority nature sites into good condition	x	x	x	x		
Targeted habitat creation, enhancing the nature recovery network and contributing to 30x30 targets	x	x	x	x		

Potential project	Main themes addressed					
	Nature	Climate	Water	Land	People	Place
Agroforestry, wood pasture and trees outside woods	x	x	x	x	x	x
Structured and enhanced support for parish level nature recovery activity	x				x	x
Control of invasive non-native species	x		x	x		
Exploration of Green Finance and trial projects	x	x	x	x		
Further controlled release of beavers in selected carefully managed sites	x		x			
Ongoing targeted work on curlew conservation	x					
Expansion of farm carbon audits		x		x	x	
Community-led renewable energy project		x			x	x
Further production and use of biochar	x	x	x	x		
Expansion of natural flood management	x	x	x	x		
Further work on soil carbon, sequestration and storage, expanding knowledge and disseminating	x	x	x	x		
Soil protection, erosion risk mapping	x	x	x	x		
Further work on highways including sustainable drainage and road verges	x		x	x		x
Expansion of demonstration farms	x	x	x	x	x	
Co-ordinated deer management to benefit woodlands	x	x		x		

Potential project	Main themes addressed					
	Nature	Climate	Water	Land	People	Place
Support for citizen science, such as monitoring and recording	x		x		x	x
Volunteer maintenance and monitoring of historic monuments				x	x	x
Targeted projects to bring priority heritage sites into good condition					x	x
A competition or awards scheme to support National Landscape priorities e.g. good quality development, land management, tourism businesses	x	x	x	x	x	X
New multi-user access routes					x	X
Arts projects for engagement	x	x			x	X
More youth activities	x	x			x	x
Awareness raising on low carbon activities and lifestyles		x			x	
Promote and maintain a network of the best geological sites				x	x	x
Scheme to encourage visitors and tourism businesses to donate towards conservation projects	x				x	x
Support to tourism businesses to develop regenerative approaches	x	x	x	x	x	x
Dark Skies project raising awareness of light pollution					x	x

Potential project	Main themes addressed					
	Nature	Climate	Water	Land	People	Place
Expanded delivery of Climate Fresk and carbon literacy training and support to local climate groups		x			x	
Developing and publicising recreation opportunities using public transport					x	x
Events for the public celebrating nature, heritage and cultural heritage	x			x	x	x
Structured interpretation improvements at key visitor sites	x	x	x	x	x	x
Integrated conservation, heritage and visitor management in the Wrekin area.	x	x	x	x	x	x
Local food – promotion and linking producers with outlets				x	x	
Projects trialling alternative economic models	x	x	x	x	x	x
More delivery of access for all physical improvements					x	x
Social prescribing for outdoor activities					x	x
Targeted new engagement and opportunities for outdoor and nature experiences for under-represented groups, both residents and visitors.					x	x
Developing and promoting new opportunities for active travel and recreational walking and cycling					x	x
Revitalising green and built public spaces in villages and towns	x	x		x	x	x

Monitoring

This section relates to monitoring of **condition** of the Shropshire Hills – the state of the National Landscape and trends in this, through data and indicators. This relates to the **outcomes** of activity, but at a landscape level, data often only show net trends, which can include pressures pushing the wrong way, e.g. hedgerows planted and others lost.

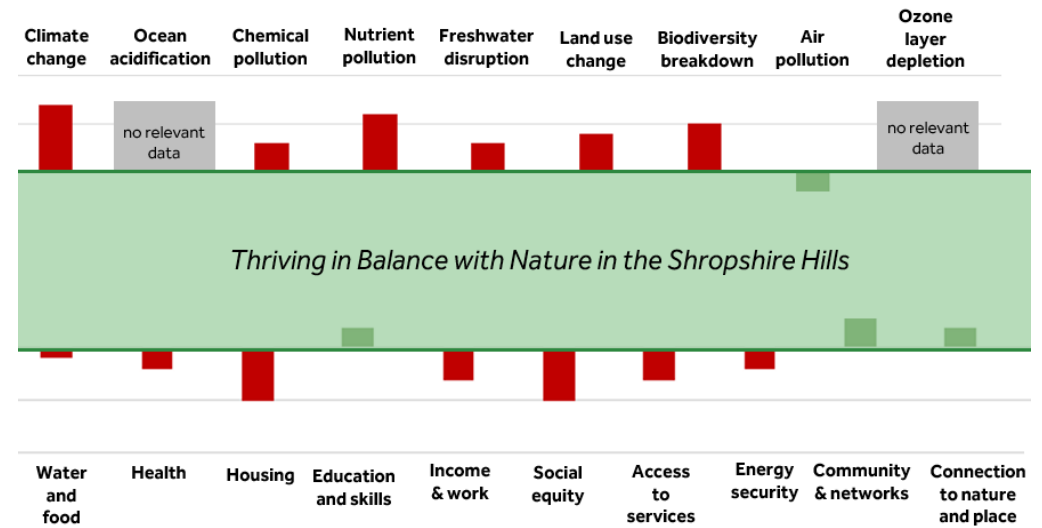
This will be principally led by the **Targets and Outcomes Framework**, which focuses on environmental targets. While online data, mapping tools etc continue to improve, the capacity of public sector bodies to work with data and monitoring has decreased, and this includes the National Landscape team. Water is notably absent from the Framework, and the **% of watercourses in good ecological status** is a useful indicator also to follow, for which data is available. A suite of 55 headline indicators are included in the beginning of the State of the Shropshire Hills report.

There is a tension between what is measurable (and for which data exists) and what is important. The Sustainable Tourism Strategy set out measures or indicators of sustainability, focusing on what matters rather than being driven by data availability:

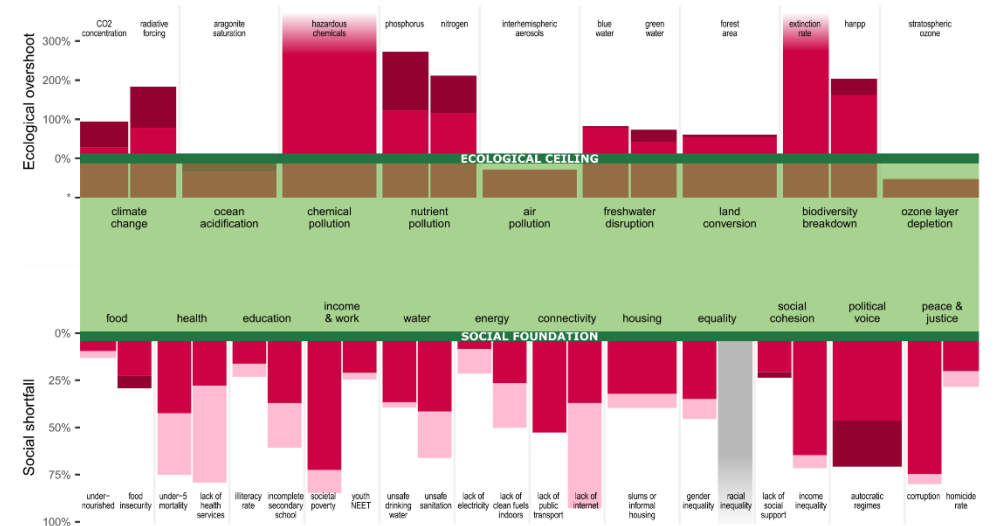
- Carbon emissions from travel to and within the area.
- Carbon emissions from tourism businesses e.g. energy use, footprint of food, drink and products.
- Negative environmental impacts from tourism e.g. path erosion, wildlife disturbance, loss of tranquillity, harm to water environment.
- Financial support for conservation and nature recovery through tourism and visitors.
- Proportion of sustainable and local food and drink used by visitors.
- Degree of social inclusion of tourism and among visitors.
- Social benefits, and avoidance of harm, to local communities from tourism.
- Improved health, wellbeing, learning and connectedness to nature among visitors.
- Degree to which visitors show or develop pro-environmental behaviours.
- Adaptation to climate change (e.g. repairs plus improvements to infrastructure).
- Inclusive governance and partnership.

This approach requires us then to see what we, with partners, can discern or discover about these factors.

The version of the Doughnut unrolled methodology used in this Plan is similar, focusing on what is important, using data where available and complementing this with informed assessment. It is intended to develop the Doughnut unrolled dashboard below as a monitoring tool for the Plan:



This is in line with the 2025 development of the global Doughnut unrolled, shown below, which shows **trends** through the shading of the colour bars (pink shows an improvement and crimson shows a deterioration):



Appendices

1. The Landscapes Review (the Glover Review)

The government commissioned in 2018 an independent review into whether the protections for National Parks and AONBs were still fit for purpose, and what might be done better. The Review Panel was chaired by Julian Glover, who visited the Shropshire Hills in January 2019 as part of the Panel's evidence gathering. The [Landscapes Review final report](#) was published in September 2019, and its effects have been working through during the last Plan period. Among the review's 27 recommendations were strengthening AONBs, with updated legal purposes, more powers and doubled core funding.

The government ran a [consultation from January 2022](#) in response to the Landscapes Review, with promising interest in a range of improvements. On 29th November 2023 the government published the [outcome](#) of the consultation, with disappointing news of those of the Review's recommendations which were not being enacted. This stage effectively brought to a close the 'once in a generation' process of the Landscapes Review, and uptake by government of the review's recommendations had been partial. A step change was possibly achieved for National Landscapes, but not such a big step as had been hoped for. Subsequent developments including the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme have helped raise further the funding, role and profile of National Landscape teams.

There are some areas which were highlighted in the Review which Defra has indicated it is still interested in progressing, including:

- Work on a new funding formula for protected landscapes (National Landscapes and National Parks)
- Update and potential expansion of legal purposes of designation
- Potential for statutory consultee status in planning (though the legalities of this are not easy as most National Landscape bodies are not legal entities).

2. Rebranding as National Landscapes

[Rebranding to National Landscapes](#), as part of a range of measures to update and strengthen the AONB designation, was proposed in the Glover Review report of 2019. This recognised the longstanding problems with the awkward and inaccessible AONB acronym, and the very long full name. Rebranding was taken forward by Defra and the National Association for AONBs, including consultations with various stakeholders. New branding proposals were developed over a year or so, informed by work with AONB staff teams, partners, government, businesses, farmers and people from communities who are under-represented as visitors to the areas. As well as a brand strategy and communication guidelines, the work involved developing a new identity for the NAAONB as the 'National Landscapes Association', and for the family of National Landscapes, both collectively and individually. New logos for each National Landscape were designed as part of a coherent set, taking inspiration and cues from photographs and information supplied by the teams on the special characteristics of each area.

The rebranding was launched successfully in November 2023. It is much more than a cosmetic change of logos, but marks a new era for these areas as National Landscapes, with a greater focus on nature recovery, on appealing to wider audiences and being a stronger, more coherent national network.

The wording in the legislation remains 'area of outstanding natural beauty' and there may be some occasions where use of these words in addition is a useful clarifier. However, government have fully embraced the National Landscape name in both Defra publications and in planning policy such as the National Planning Policy Framework. Since one aim of rebranding was to get rid of an acronym which was a barrier to understanding, the use of new acronyms such as NL or SHNL is not encouraged.

3. Legal framework for National Landscapes, including strengthened legal duty on public bodies

The **primary purpose** of the designation is **'to conserve and enhance natural beauty'**. The **1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act** first established the 'area of outstanding natural beauty' designation and this statutory purpose. The Act provided these areas with protection under planning law against inappropriate development and gave **local authorities general powers to take action in support of the purpose** (which remain in place). Government have published [guidance](#) on the designation and management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Natural beauty goes well beyond scenic or aesthetic value. The natural beauty of a National Landscape is to do with the relationship between people and place. It encompasses everything - 'natural' and human - that makes an area distinctive. It includes the area's geology and landform, its climate and soils, its wildlife and ecology. It includes the rich history of human settlement and land use over the centuries, its archaeology and buildings, its cultural associations, and the people who live in it, past and present.

The Landscapes Review recommended updating and extending the purposes of designation to encompass aspects such as nature recovery, cultural heritage and social inclusion. This was not taken up in the government's response to the Review, but in December 2024 the new government committed to bringing forward primary legislation to update the purposes of designation of protected landscapes. The broad view taken by this Plan therefore represents the direction of travel.

Countryside Commission guidance of 1991 defined **secondary purposes** for areas of outstanding natural beauty. These do not carry the same weight but have not been removed or updated so they are still relevant:

- *In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, and other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities.*
- *Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves, conserve and enhance the environment.*
- *Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.*

The **Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000** (CRoW Act) was a significant step forward and added additional legal responsibilities:

- **a statutory duty on local authorities to prepare a Management Plan** 'which formulates their policy for the management of their area of outstanding natural beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it', and to review the Plan every five years. Where a National Landscape involves more than one local authority they are required 'act jointly'.
- **a statutory duty in Section 85 on all 'relevant authorities'** to 'have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty' of areas of outstanding natural beauty when coming to any decisions or carrying out activities relating to or affecting land within these areas. The CRoW Act defines relevant authorities as:
 - Government Ministers,
 - Public bodies, include local authorities, Parish and Town councils, amongst others.
 - Statutory undertakers include rail and utilities companies (water and sewerage, electricity, gas, telecommunications).
 - Any persons holding a public office - including Elected Members.

The **Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023** (LURA) strengthened for English National Landscapes the S85 statutory duty from 'have regard' to the purpose, to 'seek to further' the purpose:

85.— General duty of public bodies etc.

*(A1) In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty in England, a relevant authority other than a devolved Welsh authority **must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.***

(1A) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision about how a relevant authority is to comply with the duty under subsection (A1) (including provision about things that the authority may, must or must not do to comply with the duty).

This is a very significant change. Government guidance has been published on the new duty in December 2024 and further regulations through statutory instrument are expected on this. The guidance is considered to be weaker than similar provisions in legislation on duties for public bodies e.g. on equality. In particular, the consideration of what is 'reasonable and proportionate' is down to the relevant authority itself to determine, which undermines accountability and strength of the duty. Additional guidance for relevant authorities on the new duty has been published by the National Landscapes Association.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 also enables the Secretary of State by regulations to make provision:

- Requiring a National Landscape **Management Plan to contribute to the meeting of Environment Acts targets** and setting out how (Section 90 (2A))
- Requiring a **relevant authority to contribute to the preparation, implementation or review of the Management Plan** and setting out how (Section 90A).

These regulations have not yet been prepared. The requirement for relevant authorities to contribute to the implementation of a National Landscape Management Plan is new, and could be a significant positive change. Previously the statutory duty only extended to preparing and reviewing the Plan, which was an obvious loophole.

4. 30 by 30 and Environmental Improvement Plan targets

The government have committed to protecting 30% of the UK's land by 2030, which is target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The ultimate goal of this is to halt and reverse the steep decline of biodiversity worldwide, an outcome based on seeking a transformative change in the way humans manage our shared planet. The Global Biodiversity Framework is articulated as a step towards the objective of "people living in harmony with nature" by 2050. The Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 sets out the approach to delivering 30 by 30 on land in England by:

1. Strengthening: ensuring effective policy and statutory safeguards and powers are in place to improve management for nature, preventing degradation and ensuring appropriate access for people.
2. Extending and creating: designating new protected areas and restoring or creating wildlife rich habitat outside of these
3. Investing: investing in habitat restoration across our protected areas and beyond.

In October 2024 Defra published criteria that land needs to meet to contribute towards 30by30 in England. These focus on 3 themes:

Purpose - demonstrate that their purposes or management objectives will ensure the delivery of in-situ conservation outcomes.

Protection - demonstrate that in-situ conservation will be sustained over the long term (at least 20 years)

Management - be effectively managed and able to demonstrate overall progress towards in-situ conservation outcomes.

5. International context

National Landscapes are recognised by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as 'Category V Protected Landscapes, defined as:

'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.'

They are recognised therefore as cultural landscapes, in distinction to other categories of natural or near-natural areas. They have also come to be recognised as leaders in area-based sustainable development, pioneering integrated countryside management based on voluntary partnerships engaging and working with local communities to secure common goals.

The Shropshire Hills is a member of the EUROPARC Federation which provides a forum to share experience, collaborate and progress common aims among protected areas in 40 countries. The Shropshire Hills participates in a number of EUROPARC programmes including the Sustainable Tourism Charter and Young Rangers. The Shropshire Hills is also active in the EUROPARC Atlantic Isles section.



National Landscapes are within a grouping of Landscape, Regional and Nature Parks (as distinct from National Parks), of which there are around 900 across Europe, with slightly different models in different countries.

6. Shropshire Hills National Landscape structures – the Team, the Trust, advisory oversight and partnership

The Shropshire Hills National Landscape Team currently comprises 12 staff, employed by Shropshire Council to work for the purpose of the National Landscape and the aims of the Management Plan. The team are core funded by Defra with contributions from the two local authorities. As well as direct delivery, the team act as 'animators' – facilitating, advising, and supporting action by a wide range of partners.

The Shropshire Hills National Landscape Partnership was, up to the end of 2025, the joint advisory committee structure established by Shropshire Council and Telford and Wrekin Council to prepare and oversee delivery of the management plan for the National Landscape.

With the formal approval of this Plan will go approval by the two Councils of a new smaller **Advisory Committee** which will scrutinise and advise on work of the Team. Along with a new broad and more informal **Forum** to engage wider stakeholders, and new working arrangements for collaboration with **Key Delivery Partners**, the new structure will strengthen governance and partnership working for the National Landscape.

The Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust is a charity formed in 2016, dedicated to promoting the conservation and enhancement of the of the Shropshire Hills National Landscape. The Trust works in a collaborative and complementary way with the Team to raise money and distribute it, mainly through the Conservation Fund, a small grant pot to support practical projects by local groups.

7. National Landscapes Association

The [National Landscapes Association](#) is a charity which supports the UK's network of National Landscapes to help them to be as effective as possible. Its Vision is **"Beautiful landscapes where nature and people thrive together"**.

The Association has defined its purpose as to lead and champion activity, in partnership with National Landscapes, to protect and restore the UK's most outstanding landscapes and make sure everyone can enjoy them.

The summary page of the Association's current strategy is shown below.



8. The Plan review process

The Plan cycle was delayed by one year to bring it into the 2025-2030 cycle, at the suggestion of Defra in a ministerial letter of July 2022. A review statement was published in July 2023 confirming the one year delay, identifying new issues and clarifying that the previous Plan would remain valid until 2025 when this new one is in place.

The process followed as far as possible the draft Management Planning guidance from Natural England, though in some places this was felt to be over-complex. Government published [Management Plan guidance](#) in June 2025, when this Plan was already fully drafted and out for public consultation. A scoping stage involved gathering data, and information on community views through a public survey carried out during 2024. The Plan review was brought to every meeting of the Partnership through 2023 and 2024, which proved very useful for sense checking. The Sustainability Appraisal process has been carried out alongside as detailed below. A meeting of a new key partner delivery group was held in January 2024.

The main review stage involved looking at existing policies and plan content, creating a new vision and new topic sections. Two meetings of topic groups were held in July 2024 – for 'Landscape, Natural Beauty and Land Management' and for 'Planning'.

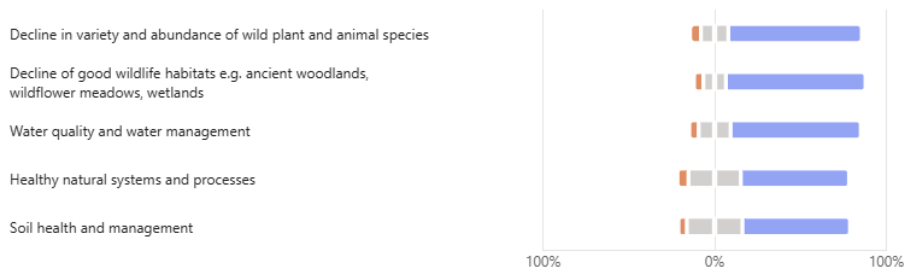


General inputs to Plan review process

During drafting a number of people have had input into sections and provided comments. An external contractor (Cragattak, who also completed the State of the Shropshire Hills report) undertook an independent critical review of the draft Plan. All of these inputs have been very useful.

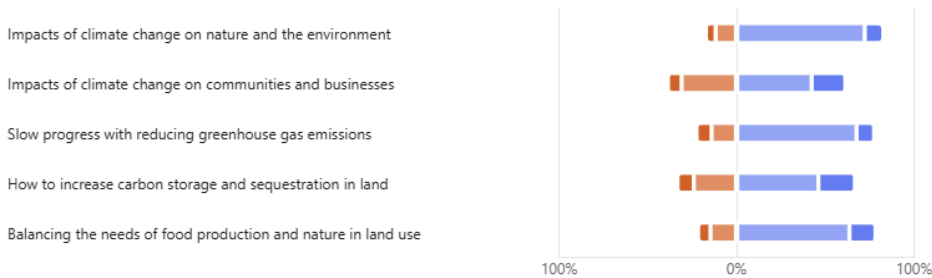
Answers to how concerned people are on various topics:

● Not concerned ● A bit concerned ● Very concerned



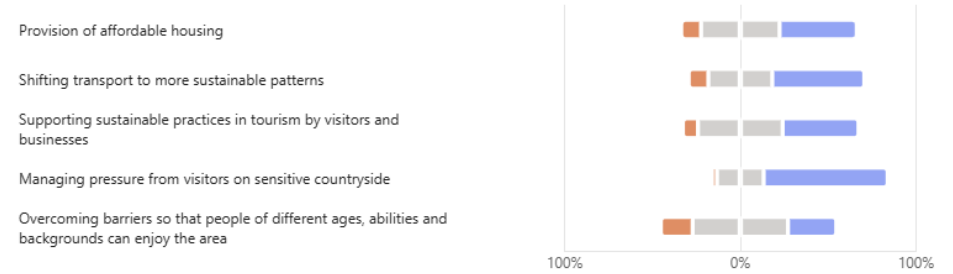
Climate

● Not concerned ● A bit concerned ● Very concerned ● Somewhat concerned



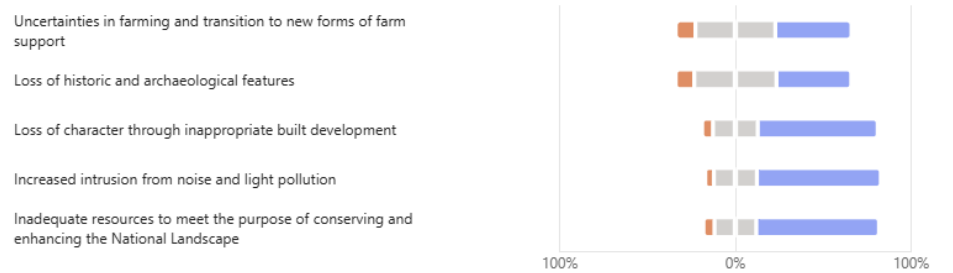
People

● Not concerned ● A bit concerned ● Very concerned



Place

● Not concerned ● A bit concerned ● Very concerned



Consultation

After a delay due to the local government elections, the public consultation period for the Plan ran from mid-May to mid-August 2025. Significant efforts were made to engage people with the Plan - a 2 minute audio introduction was produced and the Summer Forum event on 5th June acted as a launch of the draft Plan with 85 people in attendance. A 20 minute presentation on the Plan was given by members of the Team to around 10 groups reaching several hundred people. This included four online sessions with 'key delivery partners'. The presentation was also made available on YouTube. An online questionnaire was opened, along with a new web page communicating the Vision and main themes of the Plan. A workshop was held on Doughnut Economics and regenerative approaches on 24th July which was a useful addition to the consultation process. A face to face meeting was held with representatives of the NFU and Clee View Farmers Group. An informal consultation was held with the Young Rangers group.

In making changes to the draft Plan, the balance of all the comments received were considered. Some partner organisations were involved in further discussions on the matters raised.



9. Supporting documents and processes

Documents relating to the following mandatory processes supporting the Management Plan are available [here](#).

Sustainability appraisal

The process of Sustainability Appraisal of the Management Plan runs in parallel with the Plan review and meets the legal requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment, while also going further, to assess the Plan against economic and social aims. The process is based on Natural England's guidance and the practice of local authorities on sustainability appraisal for Local Plans.

The Scoping Report was published in December 2024 and includes a review of current policies and strategies affecting the Plan.

The Sustainability Appraisal report and non-technical summary were published in August 2025 to complement the draft Management Plan and some useful feedback was received from consultees.

The report identified ways in which areas of potential conflict identified might be resolved, including:

- The policies of the Management Plan are **generally strong for overall sustainability** as well as conserving and enhancing natural beauty, and there are many more positive interactions between issues than negative ones. The National Landscape and processes supporting it, including the Management Plan, are an important means to navigate some of the key issues for the area towards a sustainable future.
- It remains important to **demonstrate the positive economic effects of the environment and of looking after it.**
- A robust system is required to **ensure that affordable housing can be provided to meet social needs**, but in keeping with the high quality landscape.

- We need to be **willing to embrace landscape change which is positive ecologically**.
- There is rightly an increased urgency to tackling climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero . There is a **need to plan for 'just transition'** where sections of society could be disproportionately affected by changes.
- The relative lack of detailed guidance for **renewable energy** means that decisions will probably continue to turn on case by case merits. All means of reducing carbon emissions need to be actively promoted, including energy conservation, carbon management in soils, biomass and small scale renewables.
- **Both climate change mitigation and adaptation are needed.** Despite overwhelming scientific evidence there is still work to do to convince some people that the current unprecedented changes to climate are human-induced and that action on emissions by the UK is worthwhile since every country must act if there is to be a global solution.
- To avoid any potential tension between nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and nature recovery, the **climate and ecological crises need to be addressed together by integrated measures**.
- As a rural area, many people are very **dependent on transport by private car and some people are very constrained in travel opportunities and choices by cost**. Influencing patterns of behaviour on private car use will be a long-term process and will require significant investment and commitment to alternatives. There is evidence of the economic and social value of reducing transport, and the level of homeworking is increasing.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

The Habitats Regulations require assessment of the Plan's proposals against any Natura 2000 sites. The only site protected under the Habitats Regulations within the National Landscape is the Stiperstones and the Hollies SAC. Just outside the National Landscape boundary, and clearly affected by activities within it, is the River Clun SAC. Slightly further outside the boundary is Downton Gorge SAC. The HRA Scoping report assesses the Plan against these three sites.

The assessment concluded that the proposal can be screened out from further stages of assessment because significant effects are unlikely to occur, either alone or in combination with other 'plans'. On the basis of the information provided, Natural England concurred with this view.



**Shropshire
Hills**
National
Landscape

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