

Arnside & Silverdale AONB Partnership Response to the South Lakeland Local Plan Development Management Policies Issues and Options Discussion Paper

17th December 2015

Thank you for consulting the AONB Partnership on this document.

Paragraph 1.10 of the Discussion Paper refers to the preparation of a separate Local Plan for the Arnside & Silverdale AONB and development management policies bespoke to the AONB. However, many policies in the South Lakeland Development Management Policies DPD will also apply to the AONB and it is crucial that, where relevant, these policies take into account the AONB designation. It is also important to acknowledge that all policies within the South Lakeland Development Management Policies DPD will apply to areas in South Lakeland which form the setting to the AONB and therefore should ensure conservation of landscape character and the special qualities of the AONB.

The AONB Partnership is responding to the current consultation on the AONB Local Plan and it is essential that these two documents work together to ensure the conservation of the AONB. Certain comments made in the consultation on the AONB Local Plan may also be relevant here.

The AONB Partnership's comments on the SLDC DM Issues and Options Discussion Paper are set out below.

2 General Requirements for all development

Q1/2 Option 2. It may be possible to condense some of these requirements into a smaller number of development management general policies but specific and detailed policies should be included for issues such as biodiversity, archaeological and geological interests, impact on landscape character and visual amenity and the historic environment. It is important that impact on landscape/seascape character (referencing the Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit and local landscape character assessments where available) is taken into account and not just visual amenity. The cumulative impact of development on both landscape character and visual amenity must also be taken into account. Such impacts on the setting of the AONB are of particular concern.

3 Housing

It is assumed that the AONB DPD will cover all aspects of housing within the AONB.

4 Economy, Town Centres and Tourism

Tourist Accommodation - Caravans, Chalets and Log Cabins

Q21 Option 2 – new policy with amended/updated criteria. Retention of policies T6 and T7 or similar will be relevant to development proposals within the setting of the AONB. It must be made clear that any policies to replace T6/T7/(and T8) refer to outside the AONB. There are to be specific policies in the AONB DPD regarding this type of development within the AONB.

Q22 The wording needs updating to ensure chalets/lodges/cabins/pods etc. and any future new forms of tourist accommodation are included. Policies should include criteria on matters such as landscape, local road capacity, wildlife, heritage assets, as in existing policies, as this makes it very clear to developers what is to be specifically considered under this policy in the determination of any application. Criteria should also include impact on visual amenity and heritage assets and the setting of the AONB. Any development outside the AONB but adjacent or near to the boundary could have adverse impacts on the AONB such as on the landscape character of the AONB, its setting, views out from the AONB, traffic on local roads into and across the AONB.

Reference to the AONB should be retained as in T7.

Q23 Does Appendix C still hold relevance? Are updated guidance/standards needed? The comments provided in our response to the AONB DPD Issues and Options Consultation are relevant here.

Self-Catering accommodation (excluding caravans and chalets/log cabins)

Q24. Option 2 – new policy with amended/updated criteria

Q25. Existing criteria b, c, d and e should be included in any new policy. Criteria should also include that development should not be detrimental to landscape character and visual amenity.

Paragraph 4.19 refers to Core Strategy Policy CS1.2 - *exceptionally, new development will be permitted in the open countryside where it has an essential requirement for a rural location, or is needed to sustain rural businesses, is an appropriate extension of an existing building, or involves the appropriate change of use of an existing building.* It should be made clear in the South Lakeland Development Management Policies DPD or in the AONB DPD that this exception should not necessarily apply within the AONB as there are other considerations to be taken into account, specifically impact on landscape character and special qualities of the AONB.

5 Quality Environment and Quality Design

We expect there to be specific policies within the AONB DPD to cover Quality Design, Advertisements and signs, Nature Conservation, Trees and Landscaping and the Historic Environment.

Historic Environment

The AONB Partnership would like to see stronger protection for undesignated heritage assets and their settings. A DM policy specifically addressing the protection of non-designated heritage assets or their settings should be included. Specific policies regarding development affecting the different designated heritage assets and their settings (including Conservation Areas) should also be considered.

CS8.6 refers to the preparation of a local list of buildings and features of local architectural or historic importance but the reasoning for this is to 'assist in the planning of a prioritised programme of conservation management'. The AONB Partnership is aware that SLDC are preparing a local list of heritage assets within the district. A policy regarding the protection of assets on this list should be considered.

Paragraph 5.21, Historic Environment, refers to the council currently working on the preparation of a district wide Heritage Strategy. The AONB Partnership welcomes such a strategy and would like to ensure that the AONB is included. We would also ask to be kept informed of future developments.

Coasts and Watercourses

A significant area of the AONB is a coastal landscape and it is anticipated that there will be a specific policy within the AONB DPD relating to coastal development.

The coast to the north and south of the AONB, and across the estuary, forms part of the setting of the AONB. Impacts of development on the coastal setting of the AONB must be considered in any wider coastal policies. The management of development should be guided by the Arnside & Silverdale AONB Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment as well as the Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit with recognition of the distinctive characteristics identified in the Landscape and Seascape Character Types and Character Areas. These documents should be given due consideration in relation to their recommendations/outcomes/guidelines in determining planning applications and this should be reflected in policy.

Please also see relevant comments in the AONB Partnership's response to the AONB DPD consultation.

Q47/48 Option 2 - new policy. The provisions of the saved local plan policies (in particular C24) should also consider the impact of development on water quality.

Pollution

Noise and light pollution can have a detrimental impact on tranquillity and dark skies and it is expected that these issues will also be considered within the AONB DPD.

Q50 Other forms of pollution from development both within and outside the AONB, such as air and water pollution, could have adverse impacts on the AONB environment and a policy to mitigate and reduce levels of pollution would seem to be a good idea.

Landscape

Landscape is not identified as a policy topic within the Issues and Options Discussion Paper. It is acknowledged that Core Strategy policy CS8.2 addresses the issue of landscape impact and refers specifically to the protection and enhancement of landscape and settlement character.

We would like to be reassured that the policy approach robustly covers the AONB and its setting. Please see the AONB Partnership's comments on the AONB DPD Issues and Options Consultation regarding the setting of the AONB; also, Lancaster City Council's development management policy DM28 which covers development and landscape impact.

The requirement for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA) appears to be currently only referenced for renewable energy developments. The AONB Partnership would like to see included in the DM policies a requirement for all development proposals which are considered, due to their scale or location or nature, to have potential adverse impacts on the local landscape character and visual amenity (including the setting and views into/out of the AONB) to be accompanied by a LVIA. Please see further comments on LVIA requirements under Q59 below.

Biodiversity/geodiversity

Biodiversity/geodiversity is not identified as a policy topic within the Issues and Options Discussion Paper. It is acknowledged that Core Strategy policy CS8.4 addresses these issues but the AONB Partnership would like to see specific DM policies on protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity which include development affecting internationally, nationally and locally designated sites. We would also like to ensure that development is not permitted which destroys or damages priority habitat.

6 Sustainable Communities and Health and Well Being

We expect there to be specific policies within the AONB DPD to cover Green Infrastructure and Open Space, Equestrian Development, Renewable energy, and Telecommunications.

Community Facilities

Q56/57 Option 2 – new policy with amended/updated criteria. We would like to see the wording of policy H13 regarding conversion of rural facilities for residential use retained, either as is, or included within a new wider policy to include change of use of any type of community facility to any use. The specific wording of H13 may be particularly relevant to the rural nature of the AONB and its settlements and could be considered to be included in the AONB DPD.

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

We expect there to be specific policies within the AONB DPD regarding renewable and low carbon energy. Renewable energy developments can, however, impact on the setting, views into and out from the AONB and the special qualities of the area.

Q58/59 Option 2. Any new policy should account for new technologies now and into the future. In particular, solar farms as these are not mentioned in CS7.7 or in any saved Local Plan policies and a series of applications have been recently made. CS7.7, whilst mentioning avoiding significant/harmful effects on sites of international nature conservation importance and the historic environment, does not mention avoiding significant harmful effects on protected landscapes. Renewable energy developments have the potential to harm the setting and special qualities (including views into and out) of the Arnside & Silverdale AONB and this should be included as a criteria in any new policy.

The AONB Partnership strongly supports the retention of criterion (b) in C26: *the proposal would not have a significant adverse impact on any nationally important landscape designation, including their visual amenity and setting*. This criteria should be applicable to any technology, not just wind energy proposals and must be included in any new policy or policies.

Other criteria in C26 which should be retained in order to conserve the special qualities of the AONB and its setting include (c), (f), (g) and (h). Again, these criteria should be applicable to any technology, not just wind energy proposals.

Criterion (g) refers to the cumulative effects of a proposal. It is crucial that this criterion is retained in any new policy but the wording needs to be amended to include the cumulative effects of all types of renewable energy schemes, not just wind energy: the cumulative effect of the proposal, with existing, permitted or other proposed renewable energy schemes, should not have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area. The wording should also be amended

to ensure there is no significant adverse impact on the AONB, its setting and views into and out of the AONB.

The AONB Partnership expect to see Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA) prepared in support of these types of development. This requirement should be included in any new policies.

LVIA's must use the best available data and information, have taken into full account the provisions of the NPPF regarding AONBs and ensure that visualisation work that supports such applications is in accordance with the requirements of relevant good practice (such as Highlands Council Standards). A range of viewpoints within the AONB must be included (see our AONB DPD consultation comments) and Glint and Glare studies, specifically assessing the potential impact upon receptors within the AONB, should be required.

The Cumulative Impact of Vertical Infrastructure Assessment and Guidance, published by Cumbria County Council earlier this year, should be used in the assessment of wind energy and similar applications.

Telecommunications and Broadband Provision

We expect there to be specific policies within the AONB DPD regarding telecommunications. Communications infrastructure located outside the AONB can, however, impact on the setting, and views into and out from the AONB. The South Lakeland Development Management DPD should ensure, through appropriate policy, that such development does not adversely affect the AONB and its setting.

7 Sustainable Travel and Access

We expect there to be a specific policies within the AONB DPD regarding sustainable travel.

Protection and creation of recreation routes

Q63 The AONB Partnership would like to see the wording of L10 retained but amended to include visual amenity as an additional criterion. Consideration should also be given to the development of pedestrian and cycle access across the Arnside viaduct. Development of the England Coast Path will also need to be considered here.

8 Other Saved Local Plan Policies

Q66 T8 - Policy relating to tented camping sites within the AONB is expected to be included within the AONB DPD. However, large scale camping sites could impact on the setting and views into/out of the AONB and also the capacity of local roads running into the AONB. T8 refers to 'small scale proposals will be permitted ...' and lists three criteria. If T8 is not retained, how would restrictions on the scale of this type of development be implemented? We consider that T8 should be retained and the criteria should include impact on visual amenity and the setting of and views into and out of the AONB.

C6/C7 – See comments on biodiversity/geodiversity above.

E10 – We would like to see this policy retained.

Other comments

Hydraulic fracturing (fracking) Although the current government view is not to permit fracking within designated landscapes above 1200m depth, there remains the potential for development adjacent to the AONB boundary and within the setting of the AONB. The impacts on the AONB designation could be significant.

We feel that the DM document should consider the impacts on the AONB and its setting of the infrastructure associated with hydraulic fracturing.