

Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan

Written Statement by the Llŷn AONB Joint Advisory Committee

The Llŷn AONB Joint Advisory Committee was established in 1997 in order to contribute to the work of protecting and looking after the AONB. Members include local Councillors, members of Community Councils and representatives of local organisations and agencies such as Friends of Llŷn, the Agricultural Unions and the National Trust. Members discuss national and local issues, including planning matters, and contribute to the work of preparing and reviewing the AONB Management Plan.

Comment 806

1. Which part of the Plan is considered unsound?

Strategic Policy PS16 - Protect and Enhance the Natural Environment.

2. Which tests of soundness are not met?

The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a geographical area which has a statutory designation under the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949. Planning Policy Wales (Issue 8, 2016) states that the main objective while designating an AONB is to safeguard and enhance its natural beauty. It is noted that the AONB has the same status as the National Parks in terms of visual beauty and they should be afforded the highest status of protection from inappropriate developments. It is also noted that planning policies should place a large emphasis on safeguarding and enhancing natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.

There is no specific policy on maintaining and protecting the AONB in the Deposit Plan. Rather, there are general references in policy PS16 as follows:

- "Safeguarding the Plan area's habitats and species, geology, history and landscapes"
- "Protecting and enhancing sites of international, national, regional and local importance ... in line with National Policy".

3. Why does it fail?

It is not believed that the general policy PS16, and reference to national policies, is adequate in terms of maintaining and enhancing the AONB.

As noted, the AONB is a statutory conservation designation which has the same status as a National Park. For the interests of the Plan users, it is believed that there is a need to be specific and refer to the statutory designation of the AONB in an individual policy. This happens in the case of the Denbighshire Local Development Plan (adopted in 2013) - see Policy VOE 2.

4. How can the plan be made sound?

It is believed that a specific policy is required in order to maintain the AONB, similar to Policy B8 in the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan. A number of other Local Development plans also contain specific policies on protecting national designated landscapes.

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Comment 810

1. Which part of the Plan is considered unsound?

Policy AMG3 - Coastal Protection

2. Which tests of soundness are not met?

The policy relates to protecting the coastline of the Plan Area. Despite recognising the "Heritage Coast" designation, the policy itself does not distinguish between that area and the rest of the coastline. The policy does not give additional protection to the designated area.

3. Why does it fail?

The Heritage Coast is an important designation which follows the coastal boundary of the AONB in Llŷn (except for the Castellmarch and Llanbedrog area on the southern coast). Also, the Anglesey Heritage Coast (which is in three parts) reflects parts of the AONB.

The basis of the designation was research reports by the Countryside Council at the beginning of the 1970s which looked at changes which had affected the coast and the importance of maintaining the best and most natural parts of the coast. The Government of the day was supportive of the reports and Local Authorities were encouraged, in collaboration with the Countryside Council, to designate Heritage Coasts.

Following this, several Heritage Coasts were designated throughout the UK, based on the following criteria:

- That they contain a coast of outstanding scenic value;
- Longer than one mile long;
- Largely undeveloped;
- Include features of special significance and interest, be they natural or man-made.

Though a non-statutory designation, the Heritage Coast is important and based on research and agreement between Local Authorities and experts.

4. How can the plan be made sound?

It is believed that the policy should reflect the designation more positively by giving more protection to the Heritage Coast.

A new policy could be included or the existing policy could be adapted in order to give more recognition and protection to the Heritage Coast in Gwynedd and Anglesey.