

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Management Plan**

1.1.1 This is the Management Plan for the Llŷn Peninsula Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Plan has been drawn up by Gwynedd Council and associated partners and is relevant to the section of the Llŷn Peninsula designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1957.

1.1.2 It is a statutory requirement of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act that a Management Plan must be prepared and revised for every Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The first Llŷn AONB Management Plan was published in 2005 was revised in 2009/10. This is a further revision of the original Plan and will be operational from 2014 to 2019.

### **1.2 What is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)?**

1.2.1 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have been designated due to the exceptional quality of the landscape and views. From this perspective, AONBs are as important as National Parks in terms of conservation – and they have been designated under the same act – namely the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Together AONB's and National Parks are nationally classified as protected landscapes.

1.2.2 The main reason for designating an area as an AONB is to protect and enhance the natural beauty, which includes protecting plants, wildlife and geographical features as well as the features that relate to the landscape. Also the influence of people on the landscape is important and therefore there is a need to protect archaeological historical and architectural remains. People and society is a key part of the character of the area, therefore it is required to care for the social and economic welfare of AONB's, addressing agriculture, forestry and other rural industries as well as the social needs of local communities.

1.2.3 Because they are attractive areas, AONB's are popular with tourists. The local economy gains from the tourism industry but there are also some negative effects such as litter on popular sites, traffic and pressure on local services. A balance must be sought in order manage impacts and protect the natural beauty which makes the area so attractive in the first place.

1.2.4 The Assembly Government's principal planning policy document - Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7) 2014 confirms that AONBs and National Parks are equal in status and must be safeguarded:

*"The primary objective for designating AONBs is the conservation and enhancement of their natural beauty. [Planning] policies and development control decisions affecting AONBs should favour conservation of natural beauty, although it will also be appropriate to have regard to the economic and social well-being of the areas. Local authorities, other public bodies and*

*other relevant authorities have a statutory duty to have regard to AONB purposes” Para 5.3.5.*

*“National Parks and AONBs are of equal status in terms of landscape and scenic beauty and both must be afforded the highest status of protection from inappropriate developments. In development plan policies and development management decisions National Parks and AONBs must be treated as of equivalent status. In National Parks and AONBs, development plan policies and development management decisions should give great weight to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of these areas.” Para 5.3.6.*

1.2.5 The Gower Peninsula was the first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to be designated in Britain in 1956. Then in 1957, a section of the Llŷn Peninsula was designated an AONB (the third area in Britain). There are now 46 AONBs in the United Kingdom, with a total of 33 in England, 4 in Wales, one on the border between Wales and England and 8 in Northern Ireland.

1.2.6 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are landscapes rich in history, culture and heritage that have developed over thousands of years. This is why AONBs were classified as Category V landscapes by the World Conservation Union (IUCN). Landscapes in this Category were defined in 1994 as an:

*“Area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such areas.”*

1.2.7 The AONB Management Plan has a key role to play in terms of the relationship between the standard of the landscape, the economy and local people and seeks development which sustains and respects all these aspects. This encapsulates sustainable development which is at the heart of the Management Plan.

### **1.3 The Llŷn Peninsula**

1.3.1 The Llŷn Peninsula, or Penrhyn Llŷn in Welsh, is renowned for its diverse and interesting coastline. The beautiful landscape was the basis for its designation. The AONB encompasses around one quarter of the peninsula a total of 15,500 hectares, mostly along the coast, but it also extends inland and includes prominent igneous protrusions.

1.3.2 Llŷn, whose complex geology includes ancient pre-Cambrian rock formations, is a natural extension of the Snowdonia massif. The geology is typified by the wide variation of coastal landscapes, ranging from the steep cliffs of Aberdaron Bay and promontories to the sand dune systems in the Abersoch area. The highest point in Llŷn is the Eifl (564m) mountain range which levels out to a plateau that extends towards the sea and the black

rocks of Mynydd Mawr at the tip of the Peninsula. The area is typified by narrow and winding roads, farms and whitewashed cottages and also includes open areas of ancient common land.

- 1.3.3 Ynys Enlli, which is within the AONB, is a very special island. Its links with Christianity date back to a very early period and pilgrims from near and far have flocked there over the ages. It occupies a prominent place in Welsh folklore and, according to legend, 20,000 saints are said to be buried here. The island has an abundance of historic remains and buildings and is home to a rich variety of wildlife.
- 1.3.4 The peninsula itself also boasts a rich heritage, with important archaeological sites of all periods. These include flint scatters discarded by our earliest prehistoric ancestors about 10,000 years ago to twentieth century military remains. Most of the peninsula and Ynys Enlli are included on the Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales (Cadw 1998).
- 1.3.5 In general, agriculture in Llŷn comprises small traditional units and this has helped to protect the landscape and the environment. However, in common with other places, the agriculture industry has witnessed many changes over the years which have resulted in a sharp fall in the number of people who make a living out of farming. There has also been a decline in the fishing industry. Full-time fishermen are few and far between, although there are a number of part-time fishermen. Mineral extraction workings and quarrying industries were extremely important in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- 1.3.6 Due to the lack of job opportunities many local young people and people of working age have moved away and have been replaced by people who have moved in from other parts of Wales and the UK. Many incomers are retired which has increased the percentage of older, non-economically active people, but of late there has been more families moving in. Most incomers have no knowledge of the language or culture and this has had an impact on the cultural character of the area and the use of the Welsh language - however the percentage of Welsh speakers is still among the highest in Wales.
- 1.3.7 Tourism is vital to the local economy, but puts seasonal pressure on local services, infrastructure and the environment. Many of the coastal villages such as Abersoch and Nefyn are now popular tourist destinations. These popular tourist resorts see an increase in population, travel and activities during the holiday season, as well as during other times of the year, although to a lesser degree. This means that the area as a whole is under pressure, but more so along the southern coastline due to the level of activity on the beaches, roads, car parks, boat launching areas and on the sea itself.

## **1.4 Why is it necessary to prepare an AONB Management Plan?**

1.4.1 Section 89 (2) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a responsibility on relevant local authorities, such as Gwynedd Council, to: *“prepare and publish a plan which formulates their policy for the management of the area of outstanding natural beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it”*. It also states subsequently in the Act (**Section 84**) that local authorities should:

*“take all such action as appears to them expedient for the accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty or so much of it as is included in their area.”*

1.4.2 The AONB Unit, Gwynedd Council and the AONB Joint Committee lead on the work of preparing and co-ordinating the Plan. Representatives of numerous organisations and bodies on the JAC include Gwynedd Council, Community Councils, Agricultural Unions, The National Trust and Cyfeillion Llŷn.

1.4.3 It is important to note that even though it is Gwynedd Council and the JAC who are responsible for preparing the Plan, the Plan is relevant to all individuals living and working in the area, all types of visitors and the various organisations and bodies that are active locally.

1.4.4 The Management Plan is one of the most important documents as regards the future of the AONB. Other key documents include Gwynedd key Strategies, the Local Development Plan (which deals with the planning system) as well as other Strategies and Plans by other active organisations in the area.

1.4.5 The Management Plan is a document which provides an overview of all other relevant plans and acts as a means of interlinking them, as well as co-ordinating other strategies and actions. The Management Plan has a vital role therefore in terms of ensuring that the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 are met, including the responsibilities placed upon every public body *“to have regard for the purpose of the AONB”* in their actions (**Section 85**).

## **1.5 What is the purpose of the Management Plan?**

1.5.1 The purpose of the Management Plan is to manage change in a positive way and influence developments within the area. The Management Plan also supports improvements in the local economy and social welfare in a way beneficial to the natural beauty and other special features.

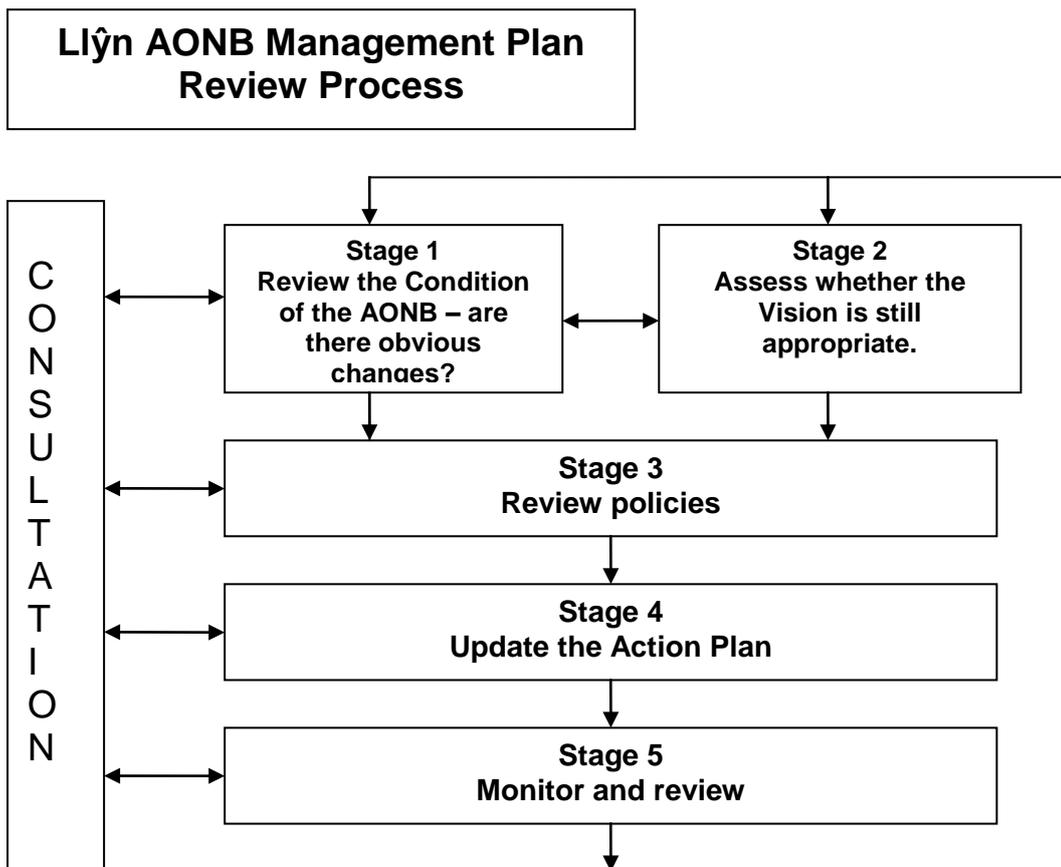
1.5.2 The Review of the Condition of the AONB forms a core part of the Plan and is crucial in order to oversee the condition of various resources in the area. This information will need to be monitored and updated and will indicate trends and changes over time. Actions beneficial to the AONB can be

promoted based on the information gathered and detrimental developments controlled or limited.

- 1.5.3 Preparing a Management Plan using this balanced and logical approach will provide a comprehensive and clear picture of the area's condition, agreement on how the area should be managed and the inclusion of suitable measures for achieving this. Consultation is clearly a crucial element of preparing and reviewing the Management Plan in order to secure the agreement and co-operation of various bodies and individuals.
- 1.5.4 Another of the Plan's key functions is to promote and raise awareness of the AONB. This will include demonstrations to show what these areas have to offer in terms of enjoyment, leisure opportunities, health benefits, local produce and so forth. The Plan will also indicate what developments exert pressure on the area and identify its proposals which should hopefully, in turn, generate backing to support the area. In addition, the Management Plan also:
- Determines where activities and resources should be directed;
  - Helps support grant applications.

## **1.6 How was the Plan reviewed?**

- 1.6.1 The Countryside Council for Wales provided detailed guidance on how to review AONB Management Plans in a document published in 2009 namely "Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – Guidance on Reviewing management plans". The Guidance states the need to address many key issues in order to effectively revise the Management Plan.
- 1.6.2 Also, in order to revise the Plan in this instance, Natural Resources Wales commissioned Craggatak to prepare guidelines on how to incorporate the Ecosystem Approach into the Management Plans.
- 1.6.3 The following diagram broadly shows the various stages of reviewing the Plan:



1.6.4 As is evident from the diagram, consultation is vital when reviewing the Management Plan. Whilst reviewing the Plan, the AONB Unit had regular consultation with co-workers, partners and the public:

- Gwynedd Council key staff;
- Organizations stated in Section 85 of the Countryside Act as 'relevant organizations' such as Community Councils, Statutory Contractors, etc.
- Local Members;
- Local relevant bodies and organizations such as the Farming Unions, Cyfeillion Llŷn and the National Trust (mainly through the Joint Committee)
- Local individuals - through events, questionnaires and website.

## 1.7 How will the Plan be implemented?

1.7.1 This Plan will be implemented by the AONB Unit, various Departments within Gwynedd Council and through the work of the partners such as Natural Resources Wales, Keep Wales Tidy and the National Trust. It will be the AONB Unit co-ordinating the work of implementing the Plan in co-operation with the Joint Advisory Committee.

1.7.2 The AONB Unit is located at the Gwynedd Council Offices, Ffordd y Cob, Pwllheli. The other main responsibilities of the Unit are:

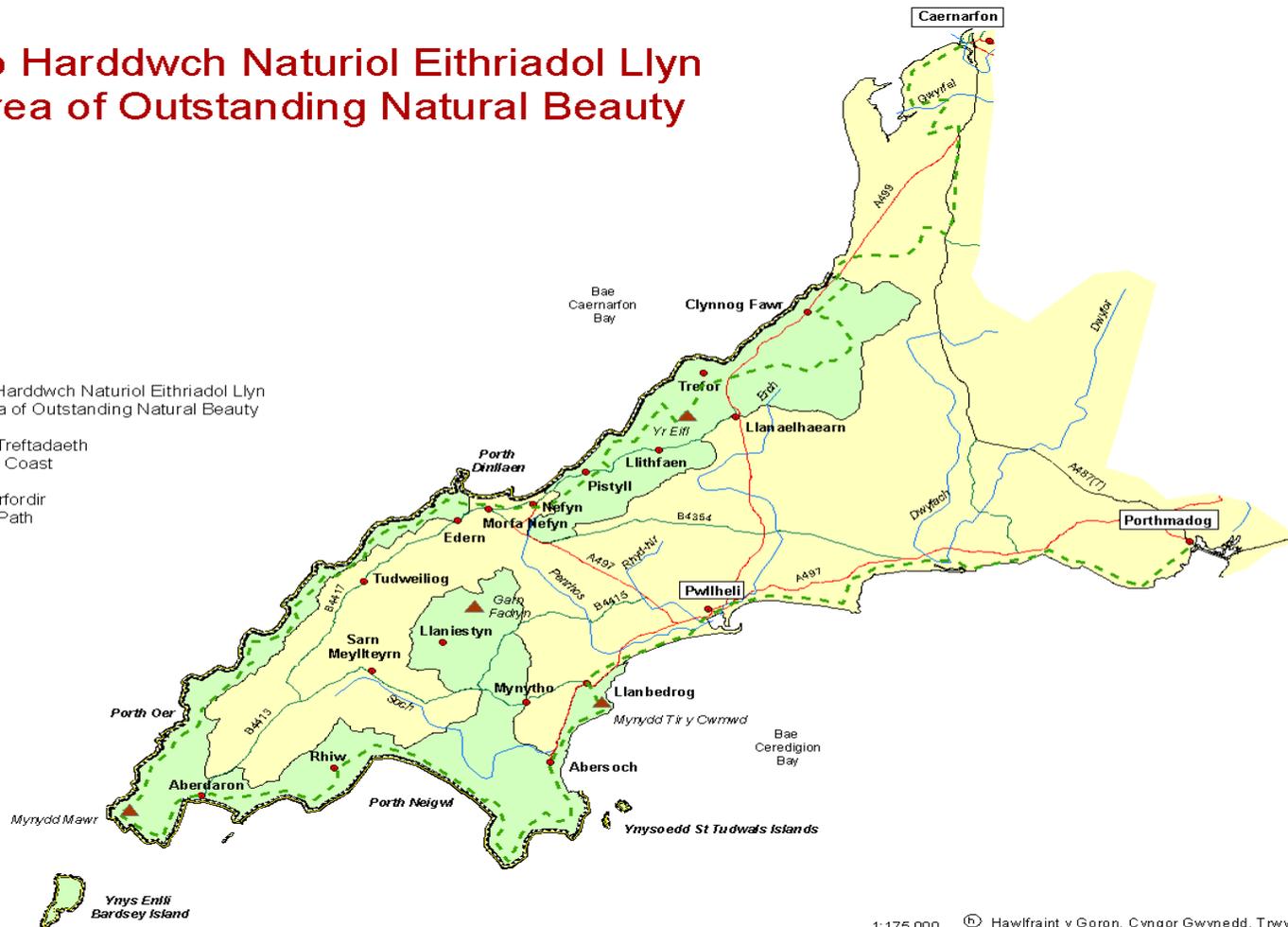
- Co-ordinating the work of the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC);
- Promote policies and actions to safeguard, improve and manage the AONB;
- Lead the Council's work on AONB's nationally;
- Raise awareness and increase the understanding of the area;
- Make representations on development applications;
- Search for funding opportunities and prepare grant applications;
- Develop and lead projects which benefit the AONB;
- Provide the Council and its partners with professional advice on duties and responsibilities;
- Manage and deliver the Sustainable Development Fund.

1.7.3 The Llŷn Joint Advisory Committee was established in 1997. Its members include Gwynedd Council, Community Councils, Farming Unions Representatives, the National Trust and other public and voluntary bodies. Its role is to advise local authorities and other bodies on general countryside and environmental management issues and act as a forum for discussion. The Joint Committee has been responsible for co-ordinating the work of reviewing this Management Plan through a series of meetings.

# Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol Llyn Llyn Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## Nodiant Notation

-  Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol Llyn  
Llyn Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Arfordir Treftadaeth  
Heritage Coast
-  Llwybr Arfordir  
Coastal Path



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