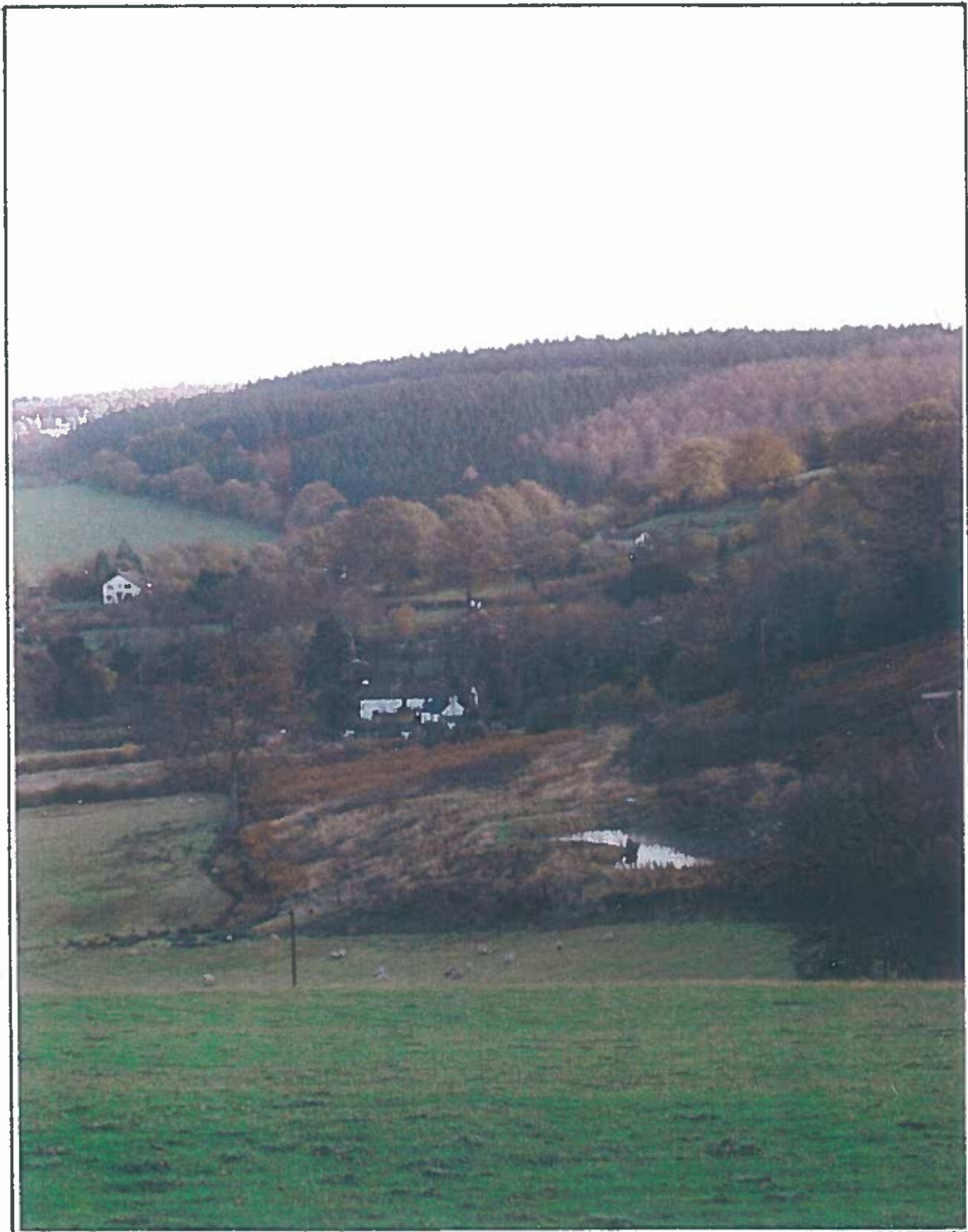


FOREST OF DEAN

REVIEW OF SPECIAL STATUS



Technical Report – Volume 2



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FIGURES

Figure 1 Plans showing the Core Forest, Statutory Forest and the Hundred of St Briavels³

I. INTRODUCTION

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. This technical report (Volume 2) contains the detailed findings from various areas of research undertaken as part of the review of Special Status for the Forest of Dean. The findings arise from a desk study of relevant issues including reviewing previous recommendations, an examination of existing policies and consultations with statutory bodies including briefing meetings and analysis of written comments. Each section embraces a single topic as a "stand alone" document.
- 1.2. This technical report outlines the following information:
- Section 2 History of the Forest of Dean
 - Section 3 Landscape of the Forest of Dean
 - Section 4 Redefining the Value of the Forest of Dean
 - Section 5 Recreation and Tourism
 - Section 6 Economic and Social Welfare
 - Section 7 Minerals
 - Section 8 Analysis of Development Plans policies
 - Section 9 Summary of the findings from the Hobhouse report
 - Section 10 Summary of Existing Designations
 - Section 11 Summary of Consultations
- 1.3. The main findings of the study are repeated separately in the Report of Findings (Volume 1). Its contents are summarised in Box 1

Box 1 Content of the Report of Findings

SECTION 2 describes the Forest of Dean and its setting

SECTION 3 provides an analysis of issues

SECTION 4 reviews the effectiveness of existing policies and designations and concludes that there is underlying need for special status.

SECTION 5 sets out requirements for special status and considers the relevance of existing national designations and other alternatives

SECTION 6 sets out recommendations and conclusions.

TERMINOLOGY

- 1.4. Considerable confusion can arise from the fact that many different terms are used to describe the area and features which make up the Forest of Dean. For the purposes of this report the following terminology has been adopted to minimise uncertainty about which areas are being referred to

Statutory Forest

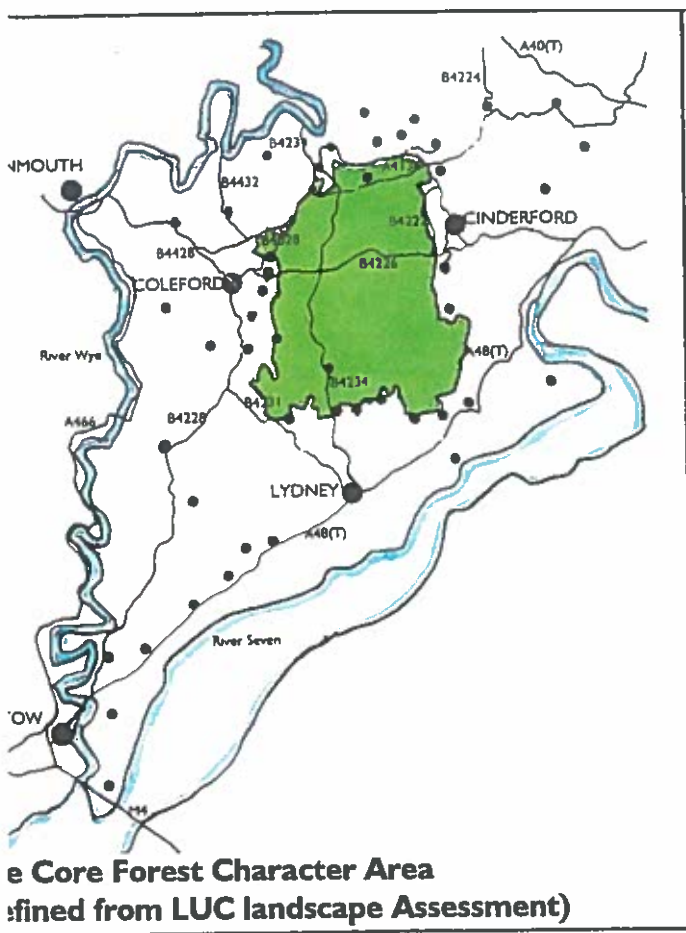
- 1.5. The extent of the Statutory Forest is indicated on **Figure 1**. It is the area within which commoners have privileges of grazing, pannage and estovers. The Forest has expanded and contracted over the centuries. When the Domesday Survey was made the official forest extended south of Hewelsfield and north of Ruardene, enclosed by the River Wye to the west. The appointment of the Commission of 1831, resulted in the perambulation of the Forest of Dean; which is the origin of the statutory forest. The perambulation (or delimitation of the Forest) was usually undertaken by a number of regarders, generally twelve in total, by "metes and bounds", through walking/riding, consultations and detailed surveys of documents.

Hundred of St Briavels

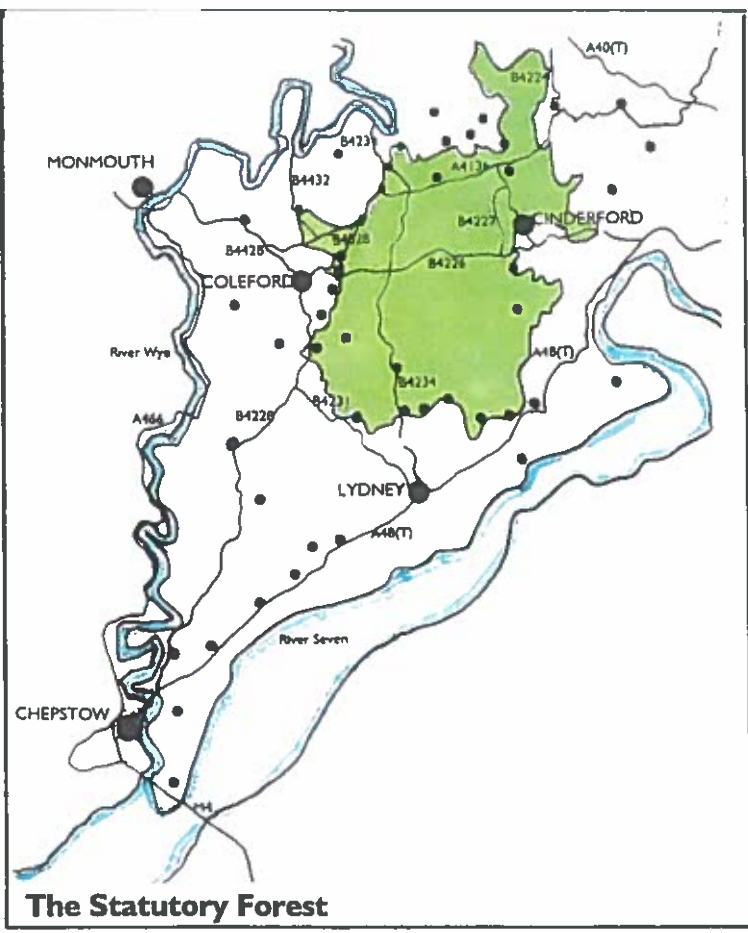
- 1.6. The extent of the Hundred of St Briavels is defined in **Figure 1**. It is an area where the Dean Free Miners have rights to mine coal, iron ore and ochre. Any person born within the Hundred of St Briavels; who has worked for a year and a day in a mine (including open cast) is eligible to become a Free Miner. As a result of the Dean Forest Mines Act, 1838, certain parts of the Hundred is exempt from the rights of Free miners termed "exempted land".
- 1.7. Dr Hart states that the extent of the Hundred, (a term deriving from the Anglo Saxon Charters denoting an area of land held by charter), "seems to have arisen from the area of the Forest at Domesday - before the extensions of the late 11th, 12th or early 13th centuries". The hundred probably defined the administrative boundaries within the area. Over time the extent of the Hundreds of the St Briavels has altered. The area was initially referred to as "the Hundred of the Forest". It is thought that the name changed to the hundred of St Briavels when St Briavels became the administrative centre, however the name "the hundred of the Forest of Dean" continued for several years. The first reference to the Hundred of St Briavels occurs in 1282. (Hart, The Hundred of St Briavels, 1947).

Core Forest

- 1.8. The extent of the Core Forest is defined in **Figure 1**. The Core Forest refers to the Forest of Dean Character Area identified in the LUC landscape Assessment Report, 1991. The boundaries of the character area are coterminous with the following character areas:
- Forest Fringes and Settlements (Character Area 2),
 - Undulating Plateau (Character Area 3),
 - Severn Escarpment - Upper Undulating Slopes (Character Area 6),
 - Ridges and Valleys (Character Area 9) to the east.
 - to the north west and north Limestone Hills (Character Area 10).



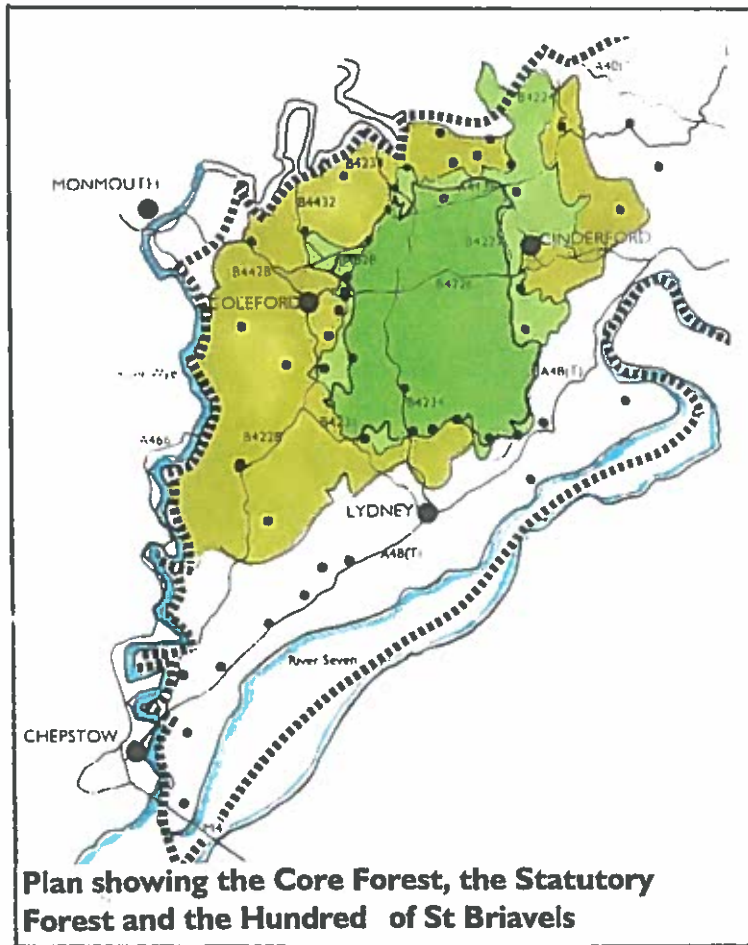
**Core Forest Character Area
(defined from LUC landscape Assessment)**



The Statutory Forest



The Hundred of St Briavels



Plan showing the Core Forest, the Statutory Forest and the Hundred of St Briavels

**Forest of Dean
Review of Special Status**

FIGURE 1 Plans showing Core Forest, Statutory Forest and Hundred of St Briavels





2. HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. The wedge of England bordering Wales bounded by the rivers Severn and Wye in the south, east and west, and a line linking the settlements of Gloucester, Newent and Ross-on-Wye to the north has long been known as the Forest of Dean. The origin of the name is uncertain. The name probably derives from the ancient *forest* of the Saxon kings (from the Saxon word meaning vale or den), first eluded to in the Domesday Book (1086) and the Norman castle of *Dene* which stood near Littledean; hence the name: the Forest (of the castle) of *Dene*. Another explanation for its name is the "Forest of *Danes*", attributed to Giiiraldus who suggested the forest was so named because it was a refuge for the marauding Vikings.
- 2.2. The Forest of Dean is a unique area of Britain, a product of a number of elements both human and physical: its complex geology, topography and hydrology, its geographical and political isolation, and its wealth of natural resources. The Forest is a singular combination of different land uses found nowhere else in the country. Essentially, the Dean is an *industrial forest* where traditional forest/woodland activities and customs have developed alongside mining and industry.
- 2.3. The Forest of Dean contains a wealth of historic remains including iron age hill-forts and Roman villas, extensive industrial remains ranging from Roman iron ore mines and Medieval "bloomery" furnaces to 18th century mineral tramways. The area also includes remnants of ancient forest and traditional woodland management such as wood banks, coppice and charcoal burning. The distinctive form of the forest landscape and its settlements is closely linked to this cultural heritage and woodland history.

"Many things remain ... A few Free Miners ply their trade in adit and level; stone is worked; "Commoners" exercise their privileges; the "scowles", covered with fern and yew, retain their mystery and gloom. An uncovered section of the Roman "Dean Road" is to be seen near Blackpool Bridge. The Crad Oak stands proudly in Sallow Vallets not far from the first conifers. Weymouth pine, planted in Dean c. 1781." Cyril Hart

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Ancient History – c. 10000 BC – 43AD

- 2.4. Despite the Forest of Dean's remote position, evidence of human occupation dates back to the Stone Age. The area showed a steady increase in settlement, with clearing of woodland for agriculture and exploitation of woodland for its natural resources through the Bronze and Iron Ages. The Celts arrived in Britain from central Europe around 500 BC bringing knowledge of iron metallurgy with them, although there is very little evidence of iron working in Britain until c. 200BC. The remains of both the Celtic hill-forts and the Roman settlements and road system indicate that the Dean was important strategically to both cultures.

The Roman Age – c. 43 – 450 AD

- 2.5. By the time of the Roman invasion the Forest of Dean was well known for its iron ore (and to a lesser extent coal) and the woodlands were being managed for the production of timber and charcoal to smelt ore. By 200 AD the area was the main centre of iron production in Britain based on the Roman town of Ariconium near Ross-on-Wye. The "bloomery" iron furnaces employed up to the end of the Middle Ages probably date from the Roman period. The extent of forest or woodland cover is not recorded but it is likely to have been extensive between the Wye, Severn and Leadon rivers.

The Dark Age – c. 450 – 1066 AD

- 2.6. Following the departure of the Romans the Forest of Dean continued to be an important source of timber and minerals under the control of the Celts. However mining and iron working probably only served local needs until production increased again in the 11th century. During the Dark Ages Saxon settlers pushed the Celtic tribes steadily west; Offa's Dyke c.790 delineates the limit of Saxon dominance at the western rim of the Dean. Saxon kings recognised the value of the area for recreation/hunting as well as for raw materials establishing the first verderers court (King Canute c.1000) to protect the "vert and venison" of the forest, probably because of woodland encroachments due to mining activities.

The Middle Age – c. 1066 - 1600

- 2.7. The extent of the Forest in 1086 was roughly coterminous with the current Hundred of St Briavels. At this time the area consisted of a core of extensive tracts of woodland interspersed with open areas of grassland and heath, surrounded by Saxon manorial units consisting of farmland and large woodland blocks.
- 2.8. The Normans were a "civilising" influence on Saxon life, evident in the legacy of their castles and the institution of *forest law* first introduced by William the Conqueror to preserve areas of "wilderness" for the royal hunt. Forest law was established to curb increasing exploitation and encroachment. It has shaped the Forest ever since continuing to be an important factor of the Dean's development today. The 12th or 13th centuries the Forest miners won concessions to mine iron ore on their own account subject to payment of dues to the Crown.
- 2.9. During the Middle Ages the Forest became increasingly populated. The area became important to the monarchy for iron production resulting in the reduction in woodland area due to charcoal production, grazing and settlement. Whilst its importance as a royal chase diminished, the extent of "official" forest expanded and contracted during this period. Over the first 150 years the "official" Forest increased in size to approximately 50,000 hectares however by c.1500 its extent had shrunk to a size comparable to that at Domesday.
- 2.10. In the 16th century the significance of the Forest as a source of ship building timber for the burgeoning navy increased, adding to the demands imposed by iron working. Both Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh are reported to have resided in the area to oversee the supply of naval timber and protect the forest from Spanish threats during the Armada.

The Industrial Age – c. 1600 – 1950

- 2.11. Iron production and related woodland deforestation accelerated during the period c. 1600-1680 largely due to the introduction of new blast furnace technology (replacing the traditional "bloomeries") and the development of water power. The establishment of "Kings Ironworks" throughout the Dean, and particularly the aggressive activities of the Winter family who received grants of large tracts of forest from the Charles I compounded the degradation of the Forest.
- 2.12. Following the Civil War (1643-5) increased concern over the deforestation of the area by mining activities and the continuing demands for ship building timber resulted in the first parliamentary legislation aimed at preserving the forest. The Dean Forest (Reafforestation) Act 1688 gave statutory protection to the Forest of Dean, confirmed its boundary and allowed for enclosure and replanting under the guidance of the Inclosure Commission. The Act also formally recognised the rights of Freeminers for the first time.
- 2.13. However, the 1688 Act met much local opposition and was not successful in arresting the decline of the forest. Continuing woodland encroachments and local unrest frustrated attempts at enclosing and re-planting. In 1788 a commission was set up to "inquire into the state and condition of the woods, forests and land revenues of the Crown". The commission reported that the Forest of Dean, although a valuable nursery for naval timber, was in a poor state. A survey of the Forest was undertaken by Nelson, prompted by a shortage of naval timber, and further legislation was introduced to protect the forest. The 1808 Dean Forest (Timber) Act reinforced much of the 1688 Act and increased powers to enclose up to 11,000 acres of the statutory forest. This second phase of replanting was more successful. Much of the oak woodland for which the Dean is renowned dates from this period along with a range of conifers including Pine, Spruce and Larch. At this time there were only 500 acres (200 hectares) of quality timber left in the Forest of Dean.
- 2.14. As the growth of industry continued, settlements grew and coalesced. A characteristic mixture of "squatter" dwellings developed on forest waste close to centres of coal and iron working. Continuing local unrest and rioting prompted the appointment of a commission in 1831 which revealed that encroachment by squatters amounted to an incursion of over 2000 acres of the forest. The commission also reported on the confusion surrounding rights of "commons" in the Forest (still a matter of debate). The Commission confirmed in principle the rights of Freeminers in relation to iron-ore, coal and stone, leading to the passing of the Dean Forest Mines Act 1838.
- 2.15. Coal mining grew during the 1700s and by 1800 had superseded iron working as the main industrial activity in the Forest. By the end of the 18th century there were 151 pits in operation producing around 1,800 tonnes of coal per week. Iron working continued to flourish and new works opened at Parkend, Lydney and Cinderford. From 1675 onwards there was a shift away from surface iron ore mining to larger underground workings. The production of iron ore in the Dean reached a peak in the 1870s of around 200,000 tonnes but declined by the end of the century. It has been estimated that since ancient times the Forest has yielded in excess of 10 million tons of iron ore and 200 million tonnes of coal (Hart, 1971).
- 2.16. Tram roads and railways were constructed from 1800 to serve the mining industry and local transport needs of the growing Dean settlements, linking the Forest to its ports at

Lydney and Chepstow and to the nearby market centers of Bristol, Gloucester and Monmouth. Although originally constructed as separate networks the iron ore and coal tram/railways became progressively more integrated becoming the world's most concentrated rail network

- 2.17. By the beginning of the 20th century the Forest of Dean supported a wide range of industry from the manufacture of steel and tin plate, to the production of paper, leather and pottery. Other important industries which established in the Forest of Dean by the early 1900s included ochre mining; stone, clay and lime quarrying; coke production; wood chemical and distillation works; fulling, corn mills and agriculture; paper and leatherboard production. In addition several miscellaneous industries such as glass, nails, candles, ropes, pottery, silk, electrical engineering and ship and boatbuilding. The decline of traditional heavy industries like iron, steel and coal in the 1920s and 30s was temporarily stemmed by World War 2. This downward trend continued to accelerate in the post-war years.
- 2.18. The first half of the 20th century saw a number of changes relating to the woodlands of the Forest. In 1919 the Forestry Commission was created and after the 1923 Transfer of Woods Act the Commission took responsibility for the statutory forest and other land in the Dean including Wye woods. The forest was designated as the country's first National Forest Park in 1938. Forestry practice during this period was to replace oak with conifers, reducing broadleaf cover to 25%.

The Post-Industrial Age 1950 – present day

- 2.19. Traditional heavy industry continued to decline in the Forest of Dean after World War 2 and Government incentives were introduced to encourage new industries, such as light manufacturing and services, to invest in the Forest. By 1963 the last deep coal mine had closed and the electronics giant Rank Xerox had set up in Mitcheldean as the Dean's main employer. During this period other new industries had established themselves in the Forest such as Beechams Foods in Coleford. Between 1951 and 1966 employment had increased by 60% within the area despite the decline in coal mining. In 1966 the main industries were engineering, timber, paper and rubber products.
- 2.20. The pre-war forestry policy objective of replanting broadleaf woodland with conifers continued in the 50s and 60s on economic grounds. However by 1970 changes in forestry management philosophy, and concern over loss of native woodland to conifer planting, prompted a government directive in 1971 to maintain broadleaf cover at a minimum of 42% in the Forest of Dean.
- 2.21. Since 1970 the Forestry Commission have developed a more balanced approach to forestry management aiming at combining timber production with recreation and wildlife conservation. There have also been a number of important legislative developments in relation woodland and in particular the Forest:

1971 – Wild Creatures and Forest Laws Act - abolished the Monarch's right to "beasts of the forest" and abrogated Forest Law.

1981 – Forestry Act – specifically protects the Forest of Dean from sale.

1985 – Government policy on Broadleaf Woodland.

1989 – Forestry Commission restructuring – creation of the Forestry Authority and Forest Enterprise.

2.22. Appendix I details the chronology of the Forest of Dean from 20,000BC.

3. THE LANDSCAPE OF THE FOREST OF DEAN

INTRODUCTION

- 3.1. The Forest of Dean is an area dominated by a heart shaped plateau of high land wedged between the Severn and Wye Valleys. This upland area is predominantly wooded, encircled by small industrial settlements and surrounded by farmland. Land-use varies from extensive mixed woodland, forest waste and smallholdings with orchards, to mixed agriculture and mineral extraction.
- 3.2. The landscape is of great beauty and variety, particularly in terms of its extensive mosaic of mixed woodland containing many valuable landscape features, both natural and man-made. An important aspect of the Forest landscape is that much of its beauty or "value" is hidden. The writer Dennis Potter described the Forest as "*strange and beautiful ... a heart-shaped place between two rivers, slightly cut off from the rest of England*". This sense of remoteness and concealment coupled with an unusual "soft-wildness" of landscape gives the area an intangible quality.
- 3.3. The Forest of Dean has long been valued for its landscape character and quality. The forest was established as the first National Forest Park in 1938. Since the early 1970s the district has included a large section of the Wye Valley AONB and the Malvern Hills AONB to the north. Furthermore, a large proportion of the district is designated as a Special Landscape Area (SLA).
- 3.4. In a recent landscape assessment (LUC 1991) the district was divided into 15 landscape character areas, 7 of these character areas make up the SLA. Landscape character varies widely from the steep slopes and expansive openness of the Severn Escarpment and Limestone Hills, to the intimate enclosure and local distinctiveness of the core Forest and the Forest Fringes and Settlements.
- 3.5. This chapter aims to outline the evolution of the area's landscape and through a discussion on the 1991 landscape assessment of the Forest of Dean district identify subsequent changes to the landscape since 1991.

THE STORY OF THE FOREST OF DEAN LANDSCAPE

Landscape evolution and identity - landscape character

- 3.6. The landscape of the Forest of Dean is the product of a unique combination of natural and human development, each remarkable in its own way. It includes upland landforms with significant mineral wealth, an extensive mosaic of mixed woodland with a diverse wildlife resulting from the long history of human exploitation; and the distinctive patterns and forms of settlement springing from a singular local culture.
- 3.7. Together, these natural and cultural elements constitute the distinctiveness of the Forest of Dean and form the strong identity of which local people - the Foresters - are justifiably

proud. This identity or local distinctiveness is palpable in landscape and inhabitants alike. The evolutionary relationship of mankind/culture and the land/nature in the Forest is the progenitor of its special landscape character.

Landscape influences

Physical Factors

- 3.8. **Landform:** The study area incorporates a dramatic range of landforms, from the coastal flatlands of the Severn and the banks of the Wye, to upland plateau with elevated areas over 250 metres, as at Ruardean in the north of the Forest. The steep slopes of the Wye and Severn valleys converging in the south contrast with the softer rolling landscape to the north of the district towards Herefordshire.
- 3.9. **Geology:** Geologically, the Forest of Dean is an elevated mass of disturbed old sandstones and limestones. It has been described as a "saucer-shaped" landform defined at the rim by a "horseshoe" of Carboniferous limestone. The formation is tilted to the south and dissected by numerous streams producing an upland landscape of rolling valleys and ridges. The Coalfields/Coal Measures and underlying Carboniferous Limestone series are embedded in a terrain otherwise dominated by great depths Old Red Sandstone. The diversity of the underlying geology has contributed to a rich variety of landscape types.
- 3.10. **Ecology:** The forest area is a nationally important ecological resource. Its geographic location and relative size/scale are two important factors in its ecological significance. It lies at the juxtaposition of lowland England and upland Wales, as a consequence it contains many species from both upland and lowland habitats. The Statutory Forest itself (9,800 ha) is the largest forest in England apart from the New Forest. Due to its large size it maintains a critical mass of species and habitats which act as a valuable reservoir of wildlife for the region.
- 3.11. The forest area contains a diversity of wildlife habitats and species is of national ecological importance. Habitats range from mixed semi-natural woodland, lowland heath, acid grassland, parkland to orchards. The Statutory Forest has 19 nature reserves, 24 sites of Biological interest in addition to 9 SSSI. The diverse range of habitats, such as disused quarries, support ravens, peregrin falcons and bats, and spoil tips and wetlands have large populations of butterflies and dragonflies. Important rare fauna and flora include the Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bat, otter, dormouse, pied flycatchers, hawfinches and lichens.

Cultural Factors

- 3.12. **History:** The majority of the Forest of Dean is essentially an industrial forest where traditional woodland activities, forest laws and customs have evolved alongside mining and industrial activity. Consequently, the area displays a singular concentration of different land uses found nowhere else in the country, perhaps Europe.

- 3.13. The area contains a wealth of historic remains, many of which form important landscape features. These range from iron age hill-forts and Roman villas; extensive industrial remains ranging from Roman iron ore mines and Medieval "bloomery" furnaces, to 18th century mineral tramways; remnants of ancient forest and traditional woodland management such as wood banks, coppice and charcoal burning. The distinctive form of the Forest landscape and its settlements is closely linked to this industrial heritage and woodland management history.
- 3.14. **Settlement:** The Forest of Dean is characterised by its variety of small towns and villages. Due to the complex industrial and social history of the forest a dispersed settlement pattern of small houses and small holdings has developed with larger scale industrial units in valley bottoms and at the periphery. The resulting settlement pattern contains a variety of building styles and materials, enclosed by open edge coniferous forest and punctuated with undefined areas of open space.
- 3.15. **Forestry:** The Forest of Dean has been exploited for timber since the Iron Age. Its extent was already considerably reduced by the time of Domesday and was so severely worked in the 17th and 18th centuries that only about 500 ha of quality timber remained at the beginning of the 19th century. Such was the concern that two Dean Forest Acts of Parliament were passed in 1668 and 1808 to preserve and replant the forest. Consequently, it is Britain's premier oak forest with over 50% broadleaf growing stock. The Forest has the largest stand of "Napoleonic" oaks in Britain (and probably in Europe) planted around 1810 and 1840, occupying a total area of 1000 hectares if the oldest oaks centred in the Cannop Valley are included.
- 3.16. The Statutory Forest (9,800 ha) was handed over to the Forestry Commission by Act of Parliament in 1922. The area is an important timber resource with an annual production on a sustained basis of 55,000 cubic metres. Forestry operations are co-ordinated by Forest Enterprise who manage a total 11,000 ha of woodland in the Forest of Dean district according to multi-purpose forestry principles - to protect and enhance the landscape and provide recreation and wildlife opportunities.
- 3.17. The composition of the Statutory Forest is approximately 50/50 broadleaf to conifer. Notable species include fir, spruce, pine, larch, oak, beech, sweet chestnut and ash. It contains 1000 hectares of prime oak woodland over 150 years old. However, despite the age of the forest very little, no more than 10 ha, is ancient woodland. Forest management is by rolling enclosure in agreement with the Inclosure Commissioners with a limit of 4.450 ha enclosed at any one time. Eight four percent of the woodland is managed as high forest with the remainder as coppice and scrub. Roughly four percent of the forest is "waste", a large amount of which is open space around the Forest settlements considered locally as "commonland".
- 3.18. **Agriculture:** The Forest of Dean comprises of a variety of agricultural land ranging from "common" grazing land and small holdings predominately within the Forest, to dairy and arable farmland forming a green necklace around it. Agriculture is in a state of flux and arable farming has intensified in the last ten years. The trend is a move away from dairy, beef and horticulture towards general cropping. Agricultural employment has declined as small mixed farms have gradually amalgamated into larger units. Sheep rearing is an important activity in the area, particularly in the Statutory Forest where by custom commoners have the privilege of grazing. It is also a contentious local issue with some

residents critical of unrestricted sheep grazing and the nuisance caused in settlements and on roads.

- 3.19. **Quarrying and Mining:** The complex geology of the Forest of Dean has resulted in the concentration of a variety mineral resources in a relatively small area, in particular: iron ore, coal, hardrock and building stone. Historically, the area has long been of strategic importance in relation to minerals - it was the first area of iron production in Britain dating back to early Iron Age (500 BC), and surface or "sea" coal was used by the Romans for heating buildings.
- 3.20. Iron ore was laid down in pockets in the Carboniferous limestone ring around the edge of the core forest. The deposits occurred at or near the surface and are now largely exhausted leaving a legacy of overgrown surface workings or "scowles" and subterranean caves. Associated with iron ore are deposits of ochre traditionally used in paint manufacture.
- 3.21. Coal deposits underlie much of the core forest sandwiched between sandstone and clays, often dipping at shallow angles with the lie of the land. The seams lie close to the surface in some areas cropping out at various places. The coal is of high quality (30% volatiles with low sulphur content) and lying at or near the surface is easily extracted. Much of the coal reserves have been worked out, including the deeper deposits. Some small scale coal mining is still carried out in the area; there are currently around 12 working mines each employing 3-4 people. Opportunities exist for the recycling of spoil-tips for coal, and secondary aggregates such as clay for brickmaking. There is also limited potential for small scale open cast coal mining in areas which would benefit from soil amelioration and landscape enhancement.
- 3.22. Small scale quarrying is a traditional activity of the Forest of Dean supplying the distinctive sandstone of the vernacular buildings. Limestone deposits suitable for aggregates and sandstone as building stone lie predominately in a ring around the Core Forest and, in the case of the limestone, between the Forest and the Wye Valley. The most important deposits (Lower Dolomite) are found on the east flank of the Wye Valley and the western flank of the Forest, particularly to the west of Coleford. Current reserves are found in six quarries, three of which are active; Dayhouse, Drybrook and Stowfield. In recent years, increased demand for aggregates has led to large scale quarrying of hard rock predominately on the Carboniferous limestone to the west of the Forest. The adverse effects such as landscape and HGV traffic impacts, noise, dust and light pollution have lead to much opposition to quarrying from local people.
- 3.23. **Transport:** Transport infrastructure is limited to the A48 to the south of the district running between Gloucester and Chepstow, the A40 between Gloucester and Ross-on-Wye and small routes through the district. County and District transport policy aims to make the best use of the existing road network to promote economic development in the Forest, making improvements where necessary, within an overall context of restraining traffic growth. The intimate scale of the road network is a significant landscape element.
- 3.24. **Industry:** The Forest of Dean has a long industrial history of mining, and iron and steel processing which has steadily declined this century. More recently, there has been the development of light industry and commercial activities such packaging and electronics. Traditional and modern industrial buildings are an integral part of the Forest landscape.

- 3.25. **Recreation and Tourism:** In 1938 the Forestry Commission established the Forest of Dean as the first National Forest Park in Britain to address the growing public demand for outdoor recreation and access to the countryside. Today the Forest is an important recreational resource attracting nearly 3 million visitors per year. The most popular attractions have been identified as Symonds Yat above the Wye Valley, and Beechenhurst and the Sculpture Trail near Speech House.
- 3.26. The Forest of Dean is perceived as a day visitor destination for residents of the area and inhabitants of nearby towns and cities such as Gloucester, Bristol and Newport. Only 8% of the total number of visitors stay over night, which may reflect the shortage of accommodation in the area. Recreational activities range from passive enjoyment of the natural beauty and tranquillity of the surroundings, to active pursuits such as mountain biking. The most popular activities include walking, cycling, horse riding, camping and orienteering.
- 3.27. The development of recreation and tourism is a major issue in the Forest of Dean with many residents opposed to what is widely perceived locally as the commercialisation of the Forest and erosion of the unspoilt natural beauty of the landscape.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT IN THE FOREST OF DEAN

Landscape character and quality

- 3.28. The special character and quality of the Forest of Dean landscape has been recognised for some time. However, despite a wide recognition of its landscape value the Core Forest is as yet unprotected in terms of a landscape designation.
- 3.29. The concept of landscape character assessment has evolved from the more subjective landscape evaluation approach, characterised by the post-war Dower and Hobhouse era. Landscape character is the recognition of different qualities and values attributed to landscape by different cultures. Fundamentally, the objective of landscape character assessment is the identification of local characteristics differentiating one place from another. Landscape character evaluation attempts to value a place in relation to its local significance and distinctiveness rather than judging it against subjective aesthetic criteria.

Previous Landscape Studies and Assessments

- 3.30. Previous landscape studies have identified the Forest of Dean as an important national landscape resource. These reports are as follows:
- The Dower Report 1945
 - The Hobhouse Report/Review 1947
 - Land Use Consultants Landscape Character Assessment 1991
 - Countryside Commission Countryside Character Map 1997

- 3.31. The Dower and Hobhouse reports are the foundation of the current system of statutory landscape designation for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Although the designations have been successful in conserving landscapes, they are sometimes criticised because of their emphasis on subjective, aesthetic criteria and their inability to address current conflicts between development and conservation.
- 3.32. For the Forest of Dean two landscape character assessments exist which represent two different levels at which landscape can be quantified and classified for planning and conservation purposes. At a regional scale the Countryside Character Map of England identifies the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley as a distinct character unit, whilst the LUC assessment worked at the local level, classifies the Forest of Dean District into 15 separate character areas, each with its own clear identity.

Countryside Character Map and Natural Area Profiles

- 3.33. In 1997 the Countryside Commission and English Nature, assisted by English Heritage, prepared and published a map of England depicting the natural and cultural character of the English landscape. A wide range of organisations was consulted to produce a strategic analysis of the landscape, wildlife and natural features. The Character of England map is now an important reference for all landscape appraisal work. In total, 181 character areas were defined, including the 'Forest of Dean and Lower Wye'.
- 3.34. The joint map identifies the Forest of Dean (together with the Lower Wye) as an area. "rich in its variety": varied in history and culture, and rich in landscape and natural assets, including historic settlements, industrial archaeology and nationally important ancient woodland. The history of iron and coal exploitation, woodland management, and distinctive settlement pattern are particularly described, within an area of varied landform and a unifying characteristic of abundant woodland.

The LUC 1991 Landscape Assessment

- 3.35. The 1991 landscape assessment identified 15 distinct landscape character areas in the District as follows:

Forest of Dean

Forest Fringes and Settlements

Undulating Plateau

Wye Valley

St.Briavels Common

Severn Escarpment: Upper undulating slopes

Severn Escarpment: Lower undulating slopes

Severnside Grazing Marshes

Ridges and Valleys

Limestone Hills

Leadon River Valley

Rolling Agricultural Plains

Sandstone Hills

Malvern Hills

Hereford County

Landscape Change in the Forest of Dean

3.36. This section reviews the LUC 1991 landscape assessment prepared for the Forest of Dean District Council and considers the following issues:

- changes since 1991 and predicted imminent change,
- aspects not covered fully in 1991 study - an update in terms of key issues such as settlement patterns,

The findings are incorporated into a summary of current landscape quality, and a summary of change in landscape character and quality since 1971.

3.37. The landscape assessment review focused on the Special Landscape Area, which corresponded largely with the original Conservation Area (AONB) boundary identified in the Hobhouse Report. Malvern Hills and Hereford County were considered to lie outside the scope of the study.

Overview of current landscape issues and forces for change

3.38. The study process has revealed a number of common issues which have affected changes to the landscape.

Forestry and woodland

Current issues and forces for change

- The Forestry Authority's broadleaf woodland policy supports planting new and managing of existing native woodland for landscape and nature conservation benefit
- The Forest of Dean boasts good broadleaf stands especially in valleys and close to roads and contains some nationally important ancient woodland
- The characteristic forest fringe around settlements comprises mature conifer stands of Spruce, Larch and Douglas fir and some broadleaf woodland, often with a distinctive open edge creating a dramatic backdrop to the buildings. With much

forestry stock nearing maturity the settlement edge is vulnerable to landscape change as a result of felling and restocking. To date, very little planting to mitigate future landscape impacts due to felling seems to have been implemented in these areas.

- There is a lack of natural regeneration of trees in some areas. Bracken encroachment of grassland and open woodland is increasing due to reductions in grazing activity.

Agriculture

Current issues and forces for change

- The Commoners privilege to graze sheep is a key issue in the Forest, creating and maintaining the distinctive "open" character of much of the woodland, and the spaces both within and around the settlements. The lack of fencing associated with this privilege is, in itself, an important aspect of landscape character.
- The intensification of arable farming has led to hedgerow loss, and replacement with post and wire fencing. In other cases, management of hedgerows by flailing has created neat low hedges which become gappy.
- Drainage improvements to low lying pasture and unimproved grassland has created a loss of habitat diversity.
- Arable intensification has led to a loss of pasture, particularly in marginal areas.

Quarrying

Current issues and forces for change

- Quarrying is concentrated on the limestone outcrops which underlie character areas 3 and 10. The areas are undulating and relatively open giving rise to visually exposed slopes which are very vulnerable to change
- Quarrying activity has associated impacts such as increased transport which can have adverse landscape effect, for example road improvements such as widening and hedgerow removal.

Industrial and commercial activity

Current issues and forces for change

- Industrial and commercial development tends to be large scale and thus of high landscape impact in relation to the typically intimate scale of the Forest settlements

Housing

Current issues and forces for change

- Current change is typified by small scale residential housing development, mainly infill of individual dwellings with some small developments within existing settlements
- Although in many cases appropriate, infill development is consuming the characteristic intra-settlement open space and needs sensitive planning so as to prevent erosion of landscape character
- The current wide use of red brick for new housing is not in keeping with locally distinctive materials such as pink sandstone, pebbledash and white render. A good example of sensitive use of building materials in new housing can be found at Ruardean Woodside
- Future change can be expected at a more significant scale in response to the need for new housing. Such development should be guided by design and site briefs to build on local distinctiveness.

Transport

Current issues and forces for change

- Significant levels of heavy goods vehicle traffic serve the Forest Fringes and Settlements (character area 2) which, together with associated services such as lorry parks, add to the character of the forest as a working environment.
- Many Forest of Dean residents work outside the district and rely on cars for daily transport.
- Road development is restricted mainly to a limited amount of junction improvement and road widening. These improvements have had some adverse effects on landscape through the intrusion of "urban" road signs and clearance of vegetation.
- The proposed de-trunking of the A48(T) is a potential factor determining levels of future development in the district, especially at related settlements along its length, and therefore potential future landscape change.

Recreation

Current issues and forces for change

- Development of recreational areas and routes has the potential to erode landscape character and quality - picnic sites have been opened up by thinning broadleaf woodland in river valley locations - care needs to be taken not to over-thin the woodland edge and to allow for planting of replacement trees.

- Recreational facility buildings have, for the most part, been designed and introduced sensitively - some, however, could be softened and better integrated into the woodland context with native shrub planting.
- Trails have been developed on disused railways for cyclists and walkers. There has been criticism in some cases about insensitive restoration, inappropriate use of surfacing materials, and the resultant loss of quiet areas and undisturbed habitats.
- Restoration of disused industrial/mining buildings for museums etc..
- There are limited opportunities for the development of golf courses in the Forest of Dean - currently golfing facilities are available at Coleford.

Summary of Key Changes

- 3.39. Detailed notes have been prepared for each character area and are presented in **Appendix 2**. The table below gives an overview of landscape change in the Forest of Dean since 1971.

Box 2 Overview of changes to the landscape since 1971

| |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Forestry and woodland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restocking of conifer plantations with native broadleaves • Protection and management of ancient woodland and heath • Forestry recreation – development of cycleways and trails • “common” sheep grazing of forest/woodland • bracken encroachment of woodland/forest • lack of natural regeneration in some areas |
| <p>Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agricultural intensification - pasture to arable • “common” sheep grazing • loss of hedgerow trees and hedges, and replacement with post and rail fencing • drainage improvements of low lying pasture and unimproved grassland |
| <p>Quarrying and Coal Mining</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • highly visible medium to large scale limestone quarries • restoration of mineral workings: quarries and coal spoil • landscape impacts associated with increased HGV traffic |
| <p>Industrial and commercial activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medium scale industrial development - light industrial units • older, large scale industrial/commercial complexes |
| <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • infill housing development in the Forest Fringes and Settlements • non-vernacular building materials |

| |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• extensions and farm building conversions |
| Transport <ul style="list-style-type: none">• road widening• junction modification• level of HGV traffic• A48(T) development corridor |
| Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of picnic/recreation areas with facilities• Conversion of disused mineral railways to cycle trails• Conversion of derelict industrial buildings to visitor centres/museums etc. |

4. DETERMINING THE VALUE OF THE FOREST OF DEAN LANDSCAPE

INTRODUCTION

- 4.1. This section describes the special nature of the Forest of Dean, examines how it is experienced and perceived, and aims to determine the quality and character of the landscape, focusing in particular on the area of the Core Forest and the Hundred of St Briavels.

ASSESSING THE VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE

- 4.2. Despite the inclusion of the Forest of Dean as a potential Conservation Area (AONB) in the Hobhouse report in 1947 the area was subsequently excluded from the Wye Valley AONB designation in 1971. The reason given for its exclusion was that the area was considered to be adequately protected under the Forestry Commission's guardianship. The landscape quality of the area was never questioned, however due to its present lack of status the unique value of the Forest landscape is yet not fully recognised.

- 4.3. National Parks and AONBs were designated to protect "natural beauty". The criteria for designation originally focused on "scenic beauty", concentrating on an area's visual attributes or landscape aesthetics. Landscape quality judgements tended to be driven by classical aesthetics and preferences of experts, their views were often perceived as being subjective and imposed from the "outside".

- 4.4. It is now accepted that even the wildest landscapes are not strictly natural; they are in part a product of human intervention, in other words culture. Decisions in the 1970s on landscape quality tended not to consider cultural influences, now recognised as a crucial landscape factor informing natural beauty.

"Landscapes are culture before they are nature: constructs of the imagination projected onto wood and water and rock But it should also be acknowledged that once a certain idea of landscape, a myth, a vision establishes itself in an actual place, it has a peculiar way of muddling categories, of making metaphors more real than their referents, and of becoming in fact part of the scenery."
Sharma (1995)

- 4.5. Current landscape assessment thinking (for example, "Putting Landscape First" S. Warnock and N. Brown in LD 3/98, and ECNC Project: Monograph on European Landscapes 11/98) draws an important distinction between landscape character, landscape quality and scenic beauty. Equal weight is given to the natural, cultural and visual dimensions of the landscape, adding rigour to the assessment process and creating a more defensible evaluation of landscape quality.

- 4.6. The addition of cultural and ecological criteria to landscape evaluation introduces a broader perspective to judgements on landscape quality, which consequently can enjoy a wider degree of consensus. Current evaluation practice encourages a cross-section of

both objective and subjective views from a range of experts and local people, providing a combination of both "insider" and "outsider" perspectives. Current practice considers the more intangible (emotional and aesthetic) aspects and associations in the evaluation process. Consequently the resulting judgements on quality carry greater legitimacy and stronger justification.

- 4.7. Appraisal work undertaken by LUC for the present study reveals that the landscape importance of the Forest of Dean district has previously been undervalued. This is particularly true for the Core Forest where much of the landscape quality (and many of the landscape features) are hidden or unknown to the less trained eye, and are therefore not readily presented to the eye in the way other valued landscapes tend to be. However, in the local consciousness and perceptions, the Forest's hidden qualities are ever present.

THE SPECIAL NATURE OF THE LANDSCAPE

- 4.8. The Forest of Dean comprises of a range of macro and micro-elements, both natural and man-made, which relate to landscape character and offer a variety of landscape experience. Landscape experience throughout the area differs in terms of expansiveness and intimacy, openness and enclosure, views in and views out, concentrated and panoramic views, and the absence of views.
- 4.9. A distinction can be made between the landscape experience of different landscape character areas, especially between the Core Forest (1), and the surrounding "green necklace" comprising of the Limestone Hills (10), Ridges and Valleys (9), Severn Escarpment: Upper Wooded Slopes (6), and Undulating Plateau (3) character areas.
- 4.10. The "green necklace" ranges from the rolling, open farmland of the Limestone Hills and Undulating Plateau to the steep slopes and axial landscapes of the Ridges and Valleys to the north. Views tend to be longer with concentrated and panoramic views in and out.
- 4.11. By contrast, the landscape experience of the Core Forest must be appreciated from within. The landscape itself varies in structure from the "semi-open" enclosure of the extensive woodland cover to the intimate enclosed spaces of the "scowles" and old quarry workings. Due to the nature of landform and landcover in the Forest, views in and out tend to be short distance, concentrated or filtered. Panoramic views of the Core Forest exist from only a few vantage points like New Fancy and some forest edge locations. The experience of landscape differs from the classic one where a scenic area can be viewed from a detached position of vantage, as is the case for example, with the Malvern Hills and Wye Valley.
- 4.12. In summary, the experience of landscape in the Core Forest is predominantly one of enclosure, with close, filtered views in and out, a fact that bears on the perception and evaluation of the landscape.

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THE EXPERIENCE AND PERCEPTION OF THE FOREST OF DEAN LANDSCAPE

Landscape quality and perception

- 4.13. Justifying statements of landscape quality and decisions on boundaries are fraught with difficulty. Whilst landscape character, a product of a combination of physical and human factors, can be classified and mapped with a relatively high degree of impartiality, landscape quality is more difficult to assess objectively.
- 4.14. As previously mentioned the concept of landscape is in itself a subjective one, necessitating a point of view (both literal and conceptual). Determining the value of one landscape over another is dependent on the viewers' perceptions and associations made within a specific system of values. In the realm of landscape appreciation beauty is very much "in the eye of the beholder".
- 4.15. An individual's perception owes a great deal to cultural influences such as literature, painting and photography. Writing, images and works of art convey information on how people perceive their surroundings revealing important associations and messages that lie hidden in a landscape. Studying public perception assists in developing an understanding of landscape preferences and the local significance of different landscapes. The following quotes from various literature on the Forest of Dean illustrates the significance of the place in local consciousness.

Forest of Dean perceptions

- 4.16. Dennis Potter was born and brought up in the Forest of Dean. During his last interview he described the Forest of Dean as "*a strange and beautiful place*". He also referred to the Forest as full of:

"rather ugly villages in a beautiful landscape, a heart shaped place between two rivers, somehow slightly cut off from the rest of England... with people as warm as anywhere else, but they seemed warmer to me" D. Potter.

- 4.17. The following writings and images are presented to illustrate the idea of Forest of Dean in the minds of both locals and visitors:

"Many things remain ... A few Free Miners ply their trade in adit and level; stone is worked; "Commoners" exercise their privileges; the "scowles", covered with fern and yew, retain their mystery and gloom. An uncovered section of the Roman "Dean Road" is to be seen near Blackpool Bridge. The Crad Oak stands proudly in Sallow Vallets not far from the first conifers, Weymouth pine, planted in Dean c. 1781."

C. Hart 1965

*"Can I forget the sweet days that have been
Ere poetry first began to warm my blood
When from the hills of Gwent I saw the earth
Burned into two by Severn's silver flood"*

W.H. Davies

*In Devil's Chapel they dug the ore
Two thousand years ago and more,
Earth's veins of gleaming metal showing
Like crusted blood first set a-glowing
Phoenician faces"*

F.W. Harvey

*"Nor wilt thou then forget
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me,
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake"*

Wordsworth

"There are, deep in the earth, vast caverns scooped out by men's hands, and large as the aisles of churches; and on its surface are extensive labyrinths worked among the rocks, now long since overgrown with woods "

G. Wyrall 1780

*"There twice a day the Severn fills,
The salt-sea water passes by
And hushes half the babbled Wye
And makes a silence in the hills"*

Tennyson

*"Give me a hill
high on the forest's edge
with a ploughed field
and a view of mountains
older than prehistory"*

*"They say the Forest
belonged to the Dobunni tribe
before the Romans came –
What think you?*

...

*He paused long – his thoughts
no deeper than a scowle.
No-couldn't be
Silures then?
You think they crossed the Wye?
He glanced west
But saw no further than the Staunton meend,
Then shook his head.
Then who?*

*They was Foresters.
They was always Foresters.....
and Foresters be miners,
he added."*

B. Walters 1988

EVALUATING THE CORE FOREST AND HUNDRED OF ST BRIAVELS LANDSCAPE

- 4.18. Following the review of the landscape character of the Forest of Dean this section explores the case for the designation of the Hundred of St Briavels as a special status area on landscape, nature conservation and cultural heritage grounds. The objective is to analyse the Core Forest character area identified in the 1991 LUC report to determine whether the landscape meets the Countryside Commission's criteria for designation as a National park or AONB.

Hundred of St Briavels

- 4.19. The Hundred of St Briavels constitutes a justifiable area for special status on cultural heritage grounds because it:
- corresponds to the original Saxon charter,
 - is coterminous with the approximate extent of the forest at Domesday,
 - has legal status, representing the bounds of the rights and privileges of Foresters – Freeminers and Commoners.
- 4.20. If the Core Forest area is accepted as being of AONB quality then a buffer zone roughly corresponding to the remaining area contained within the Hundred of St Briavels is necessary to contain and preserve the integrity of the Core Forest.
- 4.21. The case for defining the Core Forest as a of AONB quality is supported by the following findings:
- character areas 3 and 10 were identified as of equivalent AONB quality in 1991 which has been confirmed by the consultants 1998/9 landscape character review;
 - the consultants 1998/9 landscape character review recommends that the sections of character areas 6 and 9 contiguous with character areas 1, 3, and 10 are of AONB equivalent quality;
 - research and comparison with existing AONBs and National Parks shows that the context of a landscape unit, for example its proximity to areas of landscape quality, i.e. views into and out of an AONB or National Park, is a material consideration in judgements of that unit's quality.

THE CORE FOREST LANDSCAPE EVALUATION

Landscape quality assessment

- 4.22. Each of the relevant landscape character areas making up the Forest area was analysed and evaluated against the Countryside Commission criteria for designation (CCP 423 p 25) as follows:

Box 3 Countryside Commission Criteria

Landscape as a resource

The landscape should be a resource of at least national (regional, county, local) importance for reasons of rarity or representativeness.

Scenic Quality

It should be of high scenic quality, with pleasing patterns and combinations of landscape features, and important aesthetic or intangible factors..

Unspoilt Character

The landscape within the area generally should be unspoilt by large-scale, visually intrusive industry, mineral extraction or other inharmonious development.

Sense of Place

It should have a distinctive and common character, including topographic and visual unity and a clear sense of place.

Conservation Interests

In addition to its scenic qualities, it should include other notable conservation interests, such as features of historical, wildlife or architectural interest.

Consensus

There should be a consensus of both professional and public opinion as to its importance, for example as reflected through writings and paintings about the landscape.

- 4.23. A preliminary assessment of landscape quality for each relevant character area lying within the Hundred of St.Briavels is given in Appendix II.
- 4.24. When the Core Forest character is assessed according to the current evaluation criteria for designation the following key attributes can be identified:

Landscape as a resource – The Forest a nationally, possibly internationally important landscape for cultural heritage, nature conservation and recreation. It constitutes:

- Britain's premier oak forest
- England's second largest extensive woodland / wooded area
- The first area of iron working in Britain

- A nationally important ancient forest with unique institution of Freemaners

Scenic quality - an area of high, rare scenic quality displaying pleasing patterns (mixed woodland), combinations of landscape features (natural and man-made), and important aesthetic and intangible factors (cultural heritage /associations) but differing from conventional "natural / scenic beauty" for reasons of landform, landcover and visual dynamics

- Singular scenic beauty
- Intangible aesthetic factors contribute significantly to "scenic/natural beauty"

Unspoilt character - a largely unspoilt area but with some small pockets of intrusive settlement and industry that impact heavily

- Extensive tracts of unspoilt woodland
- Large tracts of unspoilt agricultural landscape

Sense of place - a locally distinctive area with a clear sense of place; a strong visual unity disrupted only in places by settlement

- Identified as distinct character unit (Forest of Dean and the Wye Valley) by Countryside Commission
- Geology/landform imbues subtle "genius loci"
- Locally distinctive character of woodland structure, settlement pattern and building materials creates strong sense of place
- Ancient forest laws and customs intangibly add to local distinctiveness

Conservation interests - an area rich in relatively untapped archaeological and wildlife interest

- Nationally important area for archaeology and industrial archaeology containing 45 SAMs and over 1000 listed sites (currently under review by English Heritage and GCC Archaeology Dept.)
- Nationally important wildlife area including a variety of rare habitats and species - 14 SSSIs, 1 NNR, 58 GWSs

Consensus - strong consensus recognising the importance of the Forest of Dean but little support in mainstream literature in painting

- Countryside Commission literature and recent landscape assessments recognise the importance and outstanding qualities of the Forest of Dean
- Strong local recognition and support of both natural and cultural landscape value
- History and culture of the Forest is well documented by local writers, in particular by Dr.Cyril Hart

THE SPECIAL QUALITY OF THE LANDSCAPE

- 4.25. The following paragraphs examine the special qualities of the Forest of Dean and distinguish between the tangible and intangible nature of these qualities.

Perception, experience and description of landscape quality

- 4.26. How a landscape is perceived, experienced and described is to a large extent subjective and culturally determined, reflecting both individual values and the value society places on a particular landscape at a particular time.
- 4.27. Until recently, valued or "high" quality landscapes have been conventionally described in the beaux-arts terminology of the 18/19th century romantic school of poetry and landscape painting.

Traditional beaux-arts superlatives e:

natural
wild (wilderness)
open
sublime
inspirational
awe-inspiring
dramatic
breathtaking

Superlatives to describe the Dean Forest:

- 4.28. How might the "unconventional" landscape quality of the Forest of Dean be experienced and described? The following are a number of superlatives that might be used to describe the Forest:

ancient/historic
semi-natural
enclosed
secure
intimate
concealed
deep
uniform
complex
democratic

- 4.29. The above descriptions of/associations with the Forest of Dean are useful in exploring the special nature of its qualities and distinguishing between tangible and intangible quality.

Intangible nature of cultural landscapes

- 4.30. The problem for landscapes with a strong cultural value component is that they invariably do not fit the conventional paradigm/perception of scenic quality and natural beauty. Not only does the cultural landscape differ in its composition and appearance from classic examples of "natural beauty", but crucially, its value and qualities are often intangible or hidden. This inaccessibility or concealment of value/quality in a landscape can take two forms:
- the value/quality is physically hidden - the object of value is not in view or does not present itself readily to the eye
 - the value/quality is conceptually hidden - the observer is not conscious of the object's of value

Tangible landscape qualities of the Forest of Dean

- 4.31. The tangible qualities of a landscape are those of which we are directly aware through the senses of sight, sound and smell. They consist predominantly of the physical and visible aspects of landscape - landform, water, vegetation, buildings and structures - and are experienced as a combination of forms, textures, colours and patterns. Tangible landscape elements typically are valued for their contribution to scenic quality or natural beauty, for example: steep slopes, bare rock, rivers and watercourses, and woodland.
- 4.32. In the case of the Forest of Dean these tangible qualities include:

upland landform with slopes and valleys
extensive, mosaic of mixed woodland
areas of open woodland - wood pasture
open space areas of forest waste, heath and bracken
small rivers, brooks and streams
lakes, ponds, pools and wetland
exposed rock
areas of ancient mineral working - "scowles" and quarries etc.
historic remains, industrial buildings, structures and routes
natural and man-made micro-landscapes
seasonal variation of woodland

Intangible landscape qualities of the Forest of Dean

- 4.33. As has already been stressed, much of what is significant about the Forest of Dean, marking it out as different from other places, particularly from a cultural point of view, is concealed and/or intangible.

4.34. The main intangible elements of the Forest of Dean landscape include:

ancient/historic – sense of being in an “other world” and “other time”
semi-wild / semi-natural - sense of being in “tamed” nature
enclosed - sense of being contained by the landscape
secure - sense of being “sheltered/cradled” by the landscape
intimate - sense of being “inside” the landscape
concealment - sense of anticipation/discovery/mystery in the landscape
depth - sense of a sub-surface third dimension
diffusion - sense of absorption/dispersal of features throughout the forest / losing oneself in the forest
uniform/complex- sense of being one large homogenous landscape containing subtly different landscapes
democratic - sense of freedom in the landscape
rarity/singular - sense of uniqueness of the landscape

These characteristics are described in more detail below.

- 4.35. **Semi-wildness / semi-natural** - the landscape quality that results from the wildlife value/biodiversity is relatively invisible and intangible. Valuable habitats and rare plants, animals and insects are rarely prominent or necessarily equated with natural beauty and scenic beauty
- 4.36. The Forest of Dean is widely acknowledged as a large, valuable reservoir of diverse wildlife, including many important habitats and rare species, a number of which are identified in the Gloucestershire County Council's Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 4.37. **History** – the past manifests itself as a “palimpsest” (an ancient parchment which has been repeatedly rubbed out and written on again). The Forest of Dean is a landscape where the old is revealed through the recent and new.
- 4.38. According to English Heritage and Gloucestershire County Council Archaeological Department the Forest of Dean is of national historic importance. The wealth of history and its remains ranges from: Paleolithic cave dwellings, iron age settlements and forts, and Roman buildings, roads and mines; to Saxon boundaries and places names, Norman castles and customs, and Medieval and Industrial Age iron/coal workings and structures. Dr Hart's description of the Forest - “*Many things remain ...*” quoted in the section above on perception captures well this intangible quality. Literal examples of this are the exposed Roman Road at Blackpool Bridge.
- 4.39. **Uniqueness/rarity** - In common with the majority of valued landscapes in Britain, the Forest of Dean is a product of both natural processes and human activity - culture. What distinguishes it from other areas, however, is the combination of natural and cultural heritage: the long history of combined industrial and rural land uses; the survival of ancient practices, artefacts and landscapes to this day and; the way the cultural and natural elements are arranged and to a large extent concealed. Thus, it is justifiable to describe the area as unique.

Intangible elements

- 4.40. **Enclosure** - created by both landform and landcover and experienced as a containment. The geology of the Forest has given rise to a saucer-like plateau surrounded by a ring of high ground, creating a natural arena, which forms a large-scale enclosure. Contained within this, and spilling out at various places, is an extensive cover of mixed woodland. The form and composition of the woodland - its variety of conifer and broadleaf species arranged in small compartments, areas of forest waste, and intricate network of paths and rides - gives a second, smaller scale of enclosure. At this more intimate level of enclosure the diversity of tree planting and complexity of open space types carved out of the woodland mass provides a great variety of landscape experience. From the traditional wooded landscapes of open, oak high forest, serpentine paths and irregular open spaces of waste, to the contemporary "closed" conifer plantings dissected by regular paths and rides.
- 4.41. **Security** - a product of enclosure and shelter/protection by the landform and landcover. It is perhaps the most subjective interpretation of this quality but grounded in the theory of prospect and refuge (habitat theory) where woodland edge provides humans with opportunities involving both potential danger and safety of cover. The diverse woodland structure of the Forest with its small compartments, many rides and open spaces endows the landscape with a strong sense of security.
- 4.42. **Concealment** - a product of the particular wooded character of the Forest of Dean with its interrupted and short views. The varied experience of landscape produced by the characteristic arrangement of mass and space in the forest is also dictated by the nature of the views between and within the spaces. These range from: the distinctive short and filtered views in the traditional oak woods; to the longer, concentrated, axial views within conifer plantings. The short, filtered and interrupted views imbue an air of concealment and mystery to the forest. As Cullen pointed out in *Townscape* there is a strong quality of anticipation and discovery associated with intricate spatial relations and interrupted views, which is very powerfully felt in the wooded context of the Forest.
- 4.43. The sense of concealment extends to much of the historic remains of the forest, which are hidden by woodland, vegetation and centuries of deposition. Furthermore, it has been suggested (attributed to Giraldus in Nicholl's *Forest of Dean*) that the name Forest of Dean derives from the Forest of Danes, where the marauding Vikings concealed themselves from a revengeful local populace. It should be noted that the lack of long, panoramic views in the forest is in itself a defining intangible quality of the area's landscape.
- 4.44. **Intimacy** - a product of the small scale enclosure and the sense of concealment. The Forest comprises of a network of intimate spaces and places within the wooded whole. These are created by variations in: landform - narrow valleys, ravines and man-made excavations; landcover - woodland, waste and water bodies and; landscape character - traditional open, oak forest and "closed" conifer plantations
- 4.45. **Depth** - the three dimensional nature of the Forest. Since the Iron Age, the Forest of Dean has been mined for iron ore, coal and stone, activities that have left a labyrinth of surface striations/depressions called scowles and underground tunnels and caves

throughout the area. This sub-terranean dimension, though largely invisible, is no less valuable in cultural terms than the swales and swallow holes of the karst landscapes in carboniferous limestone areas. In addition, many of these old mine and quarry workings have become niche habitats colonised by rare plants and animals, especially bats and birds. In recognition of this quality, English Nature has recently designated a number of former mine workings as SSSIs, including both surface and underground elements.

- 4.46. **Diffusion** - the qualities of the area are well dispersed throughout the Forest. With a few exceptions, such as Speech House and New Fancy, there is a diffusion of landscape elements, features and qualities in the Forest. Hence, the landscape qualities are dispersed rather than concentrated, appearing to dissolve into the woodland and reappear as "efflorescence" throughout the Forest of Dean. Also, recreational activities and people are well spread out across, and absorbed by, the forest due to its openness and free access. The lack of focal points and visible landmarks makes orientation difficult and increases the feeling of diffusion.
- 4.47. **Uniformity and Complexity** - At one level the Forest is a uniform wooded landscape which varies subtly in terms of landform and tree species. This uniform appearance, however, is deceptive. On another level, the Forest is a complex landscape of historic and semi-natural elements, traditional practices and customs, and contemporary activities. This strange juxtaposition of old and new, wild and tame is a defining characteristic of the area.
- 4.48. **Democracy** - the "right to ramble" / free access on foot, the rights of Freemaners, and the privileges of Commoners are an important intangible quality. The open character of the oak woods and areas of forest waste in the Forest, once the hallmark of forest law, has come to symbolise the democratic/public nature of the statutory forest with its constitution of "open" access. The distinctive "open" woodland character is a product of both woodland management objectives and the ancient custom of "common" grazing which is still practised and vigorously guarded in the Forest. This visible characteristic, together with the ancient rights of Freemaners represents the independent spirit of the Forester and the democratic gains won from monarch and state. Democracy manifests as free, open access, it is a significant, intangible quality of the Forest of Dean.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The "hidden" quality of the Forest of Dean

- 4.49. A crucial aspect of the Forest of Dean is that much of its significance, cultural and natural, is hidden from view. This applies both in space and in time, literally and conceptually. For example: the ancient customs of forest law and mining rights handed down from the Normans still persist, and traces of past human activity lie scattered throughout the forest; a labyrinth of tunnels extends below the surface completing a three-dimensional landscape scene that is ever present in the minds of Foresters but concealed from the visitor.
- 4.50. These features are to a great extent intangible but contribute significantly to the quality of the Forest. Ironically, this key quality of the area, its "concealment": the ability to hide

both itself and its contents, obscures its significance in the evaluation process. The following analysis of the landscape of the area aims to draw out the intangible qualities in order to reveal/elucidate the full value of the Forest of Dean.

The cultural significance of Forest of Dean landscape

- 4.51. The cultural significance of landscape has been overlooked in the past. Forest Enterprise has described the Forest of Dean as a "working forest" where the balance between human need and nature is carefully managed for the benefit of the public. Historically, the area has long provided for the basic needs of human existence - shelter, fuel and food - and its current form and content are a product of that development, a combination of natural and cultural processes. The present day Forest is predominantly a cultural landscape of forestry, agriculture and industry but because of the historic continuity and scale of woodland cover it has an important natural dimension of great beauty. However, the significance of the Forest, like Cannock Chase and other valued landscapes such as the South Pennines, arises from its status as a cultural landscape.

"We see the cultural landscape in two main ways. Firstly, the landscape stems from a long series of human decisions, including land tenure, inheritance, agricultural practices, exploitation of minerals, and the spiritual values of our ancestors. Secondly, our own perceptions of what is beautiful, natural or normal are themselves the product of our own history." Countryside Commission (1996) "Views from the Past".

5. INFORMAL RECREATION AND TOURISM ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

- 5.1. The Forest of Dean has become an attractive day visitor destination accommodating nearly three million visitors per annum, within easy access of major towns and cities. The area is reliant on its landscape, wealth of cultural heritage and nature conservation. Due to the densely wooded nature of the area visitors are easily absorbed into the landscape.

THE DAY VISITOR

- 5.2. In previous decades the Forest of Dean has been for the most part a local day visitor destination for communities of the Dean, and also for residents of nearby towns and cities such as Gloucester and Bristol. It still remains a very popular day visitor destination and word of mouth marketing is an important aspect in this respect. An estimated 2,782,200 day excursionists visited in 1997 and this is a high figure in relation to a population of 76,000, giving a day visitor intensity ratio of 36.6 and indicating a potentially high impact on a rural population.
- 5.3. However, the dispersion of the visitor throughout the Forest is an important factor. While it is not possible to determine a precise visitor density ratio, the area covered by the Forest of Dean District Council amounts to some 52,666 hectares. Forest Enterprise is one of the main landowners within the district. As a guiding principle it encourages recreational access on foot through its woodland. It has also continued to invest in recreational facilities and these two factors together form an essential part of the management of visitors. Consequently, the easy accessibility to extensive tracts of Forestry Commission woodland has led to a relatively wide dispersion of visitors for outdoor recreation. In turn this has meant that the preferred attributes of the area, peace and quiet, and the appeal of the landscape are retained at most locations throughout the year.
- 5.4. There are a limited number of exceptions where demand is heavy and concentrated. Some of these locations have been the subject of considerable discussion by a wide range of organisations and solutions have been put forward in management reports. These honeypots are, however, small in number. There are, for example, only two locations which attract over 100,000 visitors per annum; Symonds Yat receives well over 300,000 and Beechenhurst 250,000 (Gloucestershire Tourism, 1998). A number of other key recreational sites attract an estimated demand of between 50,000 and 100,000 visitors per annum including Clearwell Caves, The Speech House, Mallard's Pike, and Wenchford. The emphasis placed on the natural environment and landscape tends to be reinforced in promotional campaigns and clearly reflects the strengths of the Forest of Dean as a visitor destination.
- 5.5. In contrast, visitor attractions (which feature either crafts or heritage) in the Forest of Dean do not enjoy similar levels of visitation. Most receive less than 40,000 visitors per annum and demand is either static or has declined. While these attractions are important

in portraying the life of the Forest in past times, especially its industrial heritage they are secondary to the natural landscape.

- 5.6. One site, which is clearly saturated, is Symond's Yat. While this is the subject of a management plan which seeks to reduce the congestion created by visitors it still remains a problem. Current promotional literature often play downs Symond's Yat as a visitor destination but strong word of mouth marketing tends to override any attempts to lessen demand to a manageable number. The main issue is traffic with large numbers of cars arriving with a short time space on any given day in the summer. Illicit parking on narrow access roads exacerbates this problem, especially the section between Huntsam Bridge and Yat Rock. Visitor pressures from others arriving by non-motorised forms of transport are minimal in comparison, but as elsewhere car journeys account for over 80 per cent of trips to Symond's Yat.
- 5.7. Beechenhurst is different in that the facility is designed specifically to cater for a large number of casual recreationalists and the Sculpture Trail has been an enormous success at this location. In general, site management is therefore far less problematic than at Symond's Yat, but traffic considerations persist and there would be congestion and parking problems if visitor numbers increase above current levels. These problems, however, might only occur on 20-30 days per annum during the main season.
- 5.8. The main problems experienced elsewhere also relate to traffic and parking issues as 82 per cent of day visitors arrive by car. Heavy traffic is detrimental to the quiet nature of the forest and parking on commons and by roadsides brings considerable visual intrusion but also makes it far more difficult for those cycling or horse riding. There is no real measure of the extent of visual intrusion, nor of the impact that heavy flows of traffic have on village communities within the Forest of Dean. Any future study should measure these dis-benefits as they clearly exist during the summer months but whether or not they are significant would need to be verified by empirical data which is currently not available.

THE STAYING VISITOR

- 5.9. There are an estimated 240,000 staying visitors per annum in the Forest of Dean staying 696,000 nights. This gives an average stay of 2.9 nights. The Forest of Dean District Council has for a number of years now pursued a strategy of increasing the number of short breaks taken within the Forest and this is where the greatest potential lies in stimulating the tourism sector. One of the main aims is to convert day visitors into staying visitors. In this way the tourism sector gains increased revenue per day and environmental impact brought by car borne day visitors can be lessened.
- 5.10. The staying market can be split very crudely into a number of segments. One important segment are those who come to caravan or camp. There are a significant number of families or groups in this segment, which accounts for 52 per cent of staying visitor trips and 55 per cent of nights. There are a small number of large-scale sites within the Forest, which cater for this segment. The self-catering market is only 3 per cent of the market and 6 per cent of nights. There is also a larger than usual sector catering for youth travel such as the youth hostel at St Briavels and bunkhouse accommodation elsewhere. This accounts for 6 per cent of trips and 8 per cent of nights. The serviced sector represents

15 per cent of the market but only 10 per cent of nights. This segment is primarily a couples market staying for one or two nights only.

- 5.11. There is considerable capacity in the serviced accommodation sector and in the caravan and camping sector. Self-catering accommodation enjoys a much higher occupancy level even during the low season. There is little capacity available in the supply of self-catering accommodation.

ACTIVITIES IN THE FOREST

- 5.12. Walking is the major activity undertaken by visitors. This has been a traditional pursuit in the Forest and is much appreciated by residents too. It is essential that the existing rights of way network is maintained to satisfy the expectations of the walking market and that the networks offers access to observe wildlife and fauna at close quarters except in sensitive areas.
- 5.13. Forest Enterprise manages large areas of woodland within the Forest of Dean and has made considerable investment in association with the Forest of Dean District Council to encourage appropriate recreational use of the forest by cyclists. In recent years the growth of off-road cycling has caused some concern in the local communities.
- 5.14. A number of pressure groups within the Forest of Dean have campaigned against the encouragement of recreational cycling mainly on the grounds that it will generate large numbers of visitors from longer distances, and that it will increase tensions between cyclists and other Forest users. A survey of cyclists undertaken by Forest Enterprise indicated that 50 per cent of cyclists were local and that 75 per cent came from within a 20 mile radius. There is no evidence to suggest that day cyclists will be attracted to the Forest of Dean simply because the supply of more local opportunities, for example, closer to Birmingham or Bristol are now available. Secondly, Forest Enterprise has instituted a series of measures to manage off-road cycling including zoning cycling access with marked trails, designating a clearly defined off-road mountain-bike area and setting down cycle exclusion zones. These measures are reflected in the visitor survey results of 1995/1996. In terms of the short break market, casual cycling (rather than off road mountain cycling) are a major growth area and the existing infrastructure for cyclists is a major asset. To encourage visitors to stay for short break activity holidays.
- 5.15. Forest Enterprise has implemented a number of management measures to improve access for horse-riding and the pursuit of orienteering. Other pursuits such as caving and angling are also important within a local context.

IMPLICATIONS

- 5.16. The implications from this initial review are that the day visitor market is large and strategies should seek to stabilise this rather than encourage growth. A percentage of new and possible repeat day visitors could be encouraged to stay overnight. This will not be an easy task as most day visitors, and particularly repeat visitors, are very local and hence this would not be appealing to them. However, it is estimated that 25 per cent of

day visitors are touring in the area and spend the night elsewhere. Even a marginal switch of day visitors would help to maintain the tranquillity of the destination.

- 5.17. A second major implication is how to encourage an understanding of the underlying principles of sustainable tourism and how the visitor can be part of this process and still enjoy the very appeal which makes the Forest of Dean such an enchanting destination. It has been suggested by Speakman, for example, that the Forest of Dean could become a far more attractive place if "green points" were established where cars are parked, information provided and alternative preferably non motorised forms of transport used to get about the key zones within the forest. While this would discourage car trips to the Forest of Dean it would help to minimise them within the Forest.
- 5.18. A third major strategic input would be to encourage the short break and 5-7 day stay within the Forest possibly by way of encouraging multi activity stays. This is far more appropriate than existing day visitor and extends current policy direction of the local authority and many tourism providers. This matches trends, which indicate an increase in activity break including by those in the 40 to 60 age group.

CONCLUSION

- 5.19. In conclusion, it is unlikely that day visitor numbers will increase significantly in the Forest of Dean given the increasing supply of outdoor opportunities and retailing-leisure developments in surrounding urban areas. Thus, in the short term the main problem lies in finding appropriate solutions to manage demand at locations experiencing excessive numbers of visitors in the summer season. The major challenge is also to increase the short break market, most likely through converting some of the day visitor market to stay and by attracting first time visitors. They should be the lifeblood of tourism in the area and an increase in this segment will offset any loss through a stabilisation or decline in the day visitor market. Across Europe, visitors have higher expectations and this includes about the environment.
- 5.20. In order to maintain an unspoilt visitor environment it will be essential to continue to apply current management techniques and wherever possible to improve access for non-motorised trips and seek ways to reduce traffic. This will enable the Forest of Dean to maintain its tourism potential against what is increasingly intensive competition for tourism and recreational opportunities.

6. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WELFARE

INTRODUCTION

- 6.1. This chapter briefly summarises the main issues relating to the economic and social welfare within the Forest of Dean. The local economy of the area is strongly linked with the industrial history of the district, and has been largely reliant on manufacturing and mineral extraction as the main sources of employment within the area.

POPULATION STRUCTURE

- 6.2. The Forest of Dean is the smallest and slowest growing district in Gloucestershire with a population of 75,900 in 1997. The average population growth rate in the county is 9.9% compared to Forest of Dean district's of 3.7%. The area is the second least densely populated district in Gloucestershire after the Cotswolds with 144 persons per square km. The four main towns only constitute 1/3 of the total population of the District. Whilst the population is evenly balanced between male and female it does have a slightly older age profile than the county as a whole with 22.8% of residents over 60 years of age and more than half the population over 40.

ECONOMY

Income Levels

- 6.3. Average incomes within the Forest of Dean are low, the area has the second lowest income levels in the county and lies just out of the bottom third within English ranking. A higher than average proportion of the population receive Income Support, the second highest level of Income Support in Gloucestershire, 11% of the adult population claiming support in 1996.

Employment Structure

- 6.4. The employment structure is split, between 53% of employees who are men and 47% women. The employment ratio differs significantly from national figures, which indicate that 88% of men and 53% of women are in employment.
- 6.5. Employment is expected to rise within the district by around 7.9% between 1998 and 2010. However over the short to medium term the Forest is expected to perform less well than the remainder of the county and the UK. Employment historically has been split between the mainly high-grade agricultural land to the north and an economy heavily dependent on manufacturing and mineral extraction in the south, making the area more vulnerable to recession. Tourism despite the recreational opportunities provided by the

Forest of Dean is under represented in the region. Expected growth rates will tend to be orientated towards the financial and business services..

- 6.6. **Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing:** The number of employees directly employed in agriculture is difficult to determine, due to the high number of self-employed. However it is considered that the Forest of Dean is in line with the remainder of the south-west at 2%, with above average employment in forestry. Like the remainder of the country numbers employed in agriculture have fallen dramatically due to the intensification in production, increase in technology and contracting out. Smaller farms have amalgamated. Employment has diversified into landscaping, tree surgery and general forestry.
- 6.7. **Mining and Quarrying:** The majority of employment with the area is concentrated in mineral extraction, mainly quarrying. Gloucestershire produces 2.5 million tonnes of limestone for aggregate of which 75% is produced within the Forest of Dean. Over half is distributed by road within the county and a further third to adjacent areas of the West Midlands, the South-east and Wales. The employment within the coal industry is expected to decline steadily.
- 6.8. **Manufacturing:** Manufacturing and agriculture account for 33% of employment. The Forest of Dean is one of only two districts within Gloucestershire experiencing a net increase between 1989-1992. The sector is dominated by a small number of employers, four of the largest firms employ more than half the total manufacturing workforce. A recent announcement by Rank Xerox at Mitcheldean (the largest employer in the area) of its plans to cut 500 skilled jobs is a significant set back, along with another large employer in the District, Smith Kline Beechams at Coleford who have recently decided to put workers on a four day week. Future employment in this sector is forecast to decline steadily.
- 6.9. **Construction:** The construction industry has largely recovered from the 1995 recession. The Forest of Dean has a high level of housing starts, creating a beneficial effect on the local trade. Predictions indicate that this sector will continue to rise against a national trend of decline.
- 6.10. **Retail, Wholesale, Hotels and Catering:** Despite the prominence of recreation in area this sector has a low number of employees. The focus of employment has concentrated on central locations, away from smaller shopping locations. The Forest of Dean shows a below average level of growth, up to 2010 compared nationally.
- 6.11. **Tourism:** Tourism is estimated to sustain more than 8% of employment in the Forest with an annual income in excess of £38 million. Over 1,400 people are employed directly in tourism with a further 700 employed indirectly through associated business. Figures from the Gloucestershire Tourism Board indicate that an annual income of nearly £39 million is accrued from tourism activities, most from day visitors. Nationally the trend is away from two week holidays in the UK to short breaks and day trips. Self-catering tends to have the longest stay period averaging 5 nights against serviced accommodation which tends to be 2 nights. Young tourists and those in-groups e.g. school parties tend to be high. The Forest of Dean accounts for 5% of bedstock in the county. It also has a high level of campsite and hostel accommodation.
- 6.12. **Transport and Communication:** The Forest of Dean is under represented in the transport and communication sector. Employment, including tour operators, travel

agencies and road transport is expected to rise slightly, road transport provides 2/3 of the total employment in this sector.

- 6.13. **Financial and Business Services:** Employment within this sector is expected to rise locally and nationally (industrial cleaning is the largest employer in this group). Professional services such as property and renting are due to increase whilst banking and finance will remain static.
- 6.14. **Public and Other Services:** This is the second largest employment sector. Employment is mainly focused within health, social work and education which are expected to grow steadily, however other services including leisure will grow at a faster rate. Whilst employment in public administration and defence employment are expected to decline.

Commuting Patterns:

- 6.15. Over 40% of employed residents work outside the district and many outside Gloucestershire, due to the lack of suitable employment in the area. Within Gloucestershire the main concentration of employment are within Gloucester, Tewkesbury and Cheltenham. Relatively few commuters travel into the Forest of Dean district from outside.

Unemployment

- 6.16. Unemployment in the Forest of Dean is low at 3.7% in July 1998, well below UK rate of 4.8%. Rates are however slightly higher than Gloucestershire as a whole which in July 1998 had an unemployment rate of 2.8%. Although long term unemployment is less of a problem than elsewhere in the county the proportion of unskilled among the unemployed is a concern. Many unemployed surveyed considered that training would help to get them back to work. It was also felt that work is not available within travelling distance. Transport difficulties cited as a barrier to employment.

Land available for employment and housing

- 6.17. **Available Employment Land:** A wide range of employment land is available. The majority of land is concentrated in the 3 towns of Cinderford, Coleford and Lydney which has the greatest concentration of land available.
- 6.18. **Housing:** Current housing allocations under the Gloucestershire Structure Plan and Forest of Dean Local Plan anticipate 4,200 new dwellings in the south and 800 in the north between 1986 to 2001. Housing stock is mainly detached. The rate of new housing is relatively high standing at 5.45 compared with the county average of 3.3%, over 75% of the housing is owner occupied. Of particular note is the lack of affordable houses for lower income families and a shortage of rented accommodation.

SOCIAL WELFARE

- 6.19. **Education and training :** There is a wide range of education facilities within the Forest of Dean. Education standards are high with GCSE achievements well above the UK average, however standards are below average for the county as a whole. Whilst the Forest of Dean has an average number of well-qualified individuals, the area is lacking in low level qualifications, possibly as the quality of life is attracting managers and professional staff who can afford to live in the area but work elsewhere.
- 6.20. **Public transport:** There are significant gaps in the local bus infrastructure during week days, evening and weekends. The existing rail network and services are limited. Various recommendations have been put forward by the local authorities to meet these problems including the strengthening the County Surveyor's role as co-ordinator of public transport. Community transport initiatives such as a community bus, taxishare or shared taxi schemes are being developed in the region.
- 6.21. **Childcare:** The district has the highest fertility rates in the county, above the UK average. The area has the second highest birth rate in the county but the percentage of low birth weights is high both regionally and nationally. Childcare facilities, especially state provided childcare facilities are limited, there are 66 places for every 1,000 children, a figure which is lower than elsewhere in the county.
- 6.22. **Community Safety:** Crime levels are the lowest in the county and rates of detections are high.
- 6.23. **Support for the older residents:** Many initiatives are underway to care for older residents including Anchor Staying put Agency, Linkline Community Alarm System, Extra Care Scheme, Other Sheltered Housing Schemes and Home Safety Check Scheme.

CONCLUSION

- 6.24. The district has been dependent for a long period on manufacturing and mining extraction for employment however these sector of employment are slowly declining, being replaced by a rise in employment in the public service sector. The district is one of the least densely populated areas of the county, income levels are low and there is a high percentage of unskilled labour amongst the unemployed. A significant number of the population commute out of the area as there is a lack of suitable employment.

7. MINERALS

- 7.1. Mineral extraction within the district has been an activity dating back to the Roman era, and the scars and relics of industry within the forest are imprinted on the landscape. This chapter summarises briefly the historical context relating to minerals and the existing position of the mineral planning authority, the developers, the action groups, and the Freeminers and the Small Mines Association.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- 7.2. Gloucestershire Mineral Planning Authority Review Panel proposed extensive areas of search for potential hardrock extraction in Forest of Dean (and Cotswolds AONB) in 1996/7.
- 7.3. A month before the general election in 1997 Frank Dobson (then Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment) visited the Forest of Dean to see for himself locations identified as potential areas of search for mineral working by Gloucestershire County Council. He made the following statement:

"Today the Forest of Dean is faced with proposals for mineral workings, in particular limestone quarrying on a scale which poses a major threat not just to the beauty and character of the Forest itself but also to the adjacent woodlands of the Wye Valley which have been officially recognised as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty...."

"In the absence of any special planning protection the forest is vulnerable to proposals both for quarrying limestone and opencast coal mining".

"We believe therefore that the time has come to offer special planning protection to the Forest of Dean. And we want that protection to reflect the unique character of the Forest and the needs of the people who live in and around it, many of whose livelihoods, depend upon it. We don't proposal simply to apply any of the existing categories of protection."

"We proposed instead to offer the Forest of Dean a new "custom built " special status appropriate to its unique history and character, which matches up to the threats it faces while retaining the flexibility necessary to ensure a secure future for the local communities. After the General Election we will consult local people, local groups, and local businesses, the local council, the county council and the Forestry Commission about how best to achieve the twin objectives of sustaining both the character of the Forest and the prosperity of local communities." (Labour Party Press Release. 1st April 1997)

- 7.4. Since 1 May 1997 local campaigners have continued to press for the Forest of Dean to be given special status to provide some form of "protection" from further quarrying within the area."
- 7.5. The preparation of the Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan has continued to stimulate debate and maintain the lobby for action. Representatives of the District Council and the MP for the Forest of Dean, Diana Organ have raised the issue of Special Status

with Richard Caborn, MP Minister for Regions, Regeneration and Planning. The advice given by his department, the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) was that:

"the best way of taking forward public debate would be to progress the Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan, allowing the issues to be properly investigated through the development plan process and in due course the public enquiry"

(R Caborn, 15 November 1997).

- 7.6. Following the Countryside Commission advice to government on protection of the countryside (CCP 532, 1998) the issue of special status was raised in an adjournment debate in the House of Commons. In response to the points raised by Diane Organ, Richard Caborn stated that

"As a follow up to that advice, my right hon, Friend the Minister for the Environment has asked the Countryside Commission to look again at the Forest of Dean..." (Hansard 25 June 1998).

MINERAL PLANNING AUTHORITY'S POSITION

- 7.7. Representatives of the Gloucestershire Mineral Planning Authority have stated that clearer guidance is required from Government on the patterns of future mineral development and the practicalities of how regional apportionment of aggregates should be met, in particular for counties like Gloucestershire where the majority of aggregates is quarries from AONBs which constitute 50 % of the administrative area.
- 7.8. The EIP Panel on Structure Plan has called for statement of vision on how individual policies in Structure Plan should inter-link. The Environmental Assessment of the Minerals Local Plan has also recommend that a "vision" should be proposed for the Cotswold Water Park. However there are practical difficulties in developing a consensus on 'vision' when controversial development is involved.
- 7.9. Insufficient information is known about the extent of the limestone resources due to the limited level of existing geological surveys. Notwithstanding the lack of geological information, sieve mapping exercise has revealed potential sites with lowest environmental impact. It is impossible to increase the area available for hardrock extraction without prejudicing other policy aims and objectives for environmental protection.
- 7.10. The Mineral Planning Department has expressed concern that the volume of resources available within preferred areas and areas of search might be insufficient to meet 10 year landbank. However this does depends on production rates and changes in levels of demand which have been falling in recent years. It is anticipated that reduced national and regional production target will be included in a future revision of Mineral Planning Guidance 6 (expected to be released in draft in 1999).

- 7.11. The County Council recognises that there are major problems with transport routes and traffic in Forest of Dean. Gloucestershire County Council does not have resources to upgrade primary road network.

ACTION GROUPS

- 7.12. Further to Frank Dobson's promise that the Forest of Dean will be protected against mineral development Local Action Groups have actively campaigned for a moratorium on quarrying within the Dean.
- 7.13. The groups consider that AONB status would be inadequate to protect against quarrying. They believe that the Mineral Planning Authority are too remote, officers are ill-informed or 'professionally biased' and suggest that an inadequate public consultation has been undertaken. It is agreed that a local decision-making process is required for mineral planning.
- 7.14. The main concerns of the action groups are that existing Government policies and planning guidance conflict with each other. It is possible to reconcile protection of areas of high environmental sensitivity with continued production of low cost aggregate quarried from the same areas. It is argued that the current scale of working within the Forest bears no relationship to historic patterns. New quarrying activities are much larger and more obtrusive, with longer timescales of permissions.
- 7.15. The damage to local economy (recreation and tourism) outweighs any benefit brought by quarrying. Quarrying provides little employment for the local communities, and individual proposals are unacceptable on environmental, social and economic grounds. Sites in the Cotswolds could be worked with less impact on local communities
- 7.16. Forest of Dean limestone is not hard enough for use as a wearing course in road construction. Stone is already imported into the Forest from outside the region. The analysis of an average of 25-30 miles radius for delivery of local materials by the minerals industry is regarded as fallacious. The existing pattern of road haulage is unacceptable on inadequate local roads.
- 7.17. The Action Groups maintain they are fully representative of public opinion in Forest of Dean as proven through public attitude survey targeting different sectors. They express concern that Forest Enterprise as guardian of Forest is not representing the public interest, because it also has the status of Mineral Landlord and obtains substantial payments in the form of mineral royalties.
- 7.18. On the basis of these arguments Action against Quarrying concludes that:
- Quarrying in the Dean is environmentally and socially unacceptable.
 - The terms of 'Special Status' should introduce a total ban on quarrying.
 - Consideration should be given to importing material from other sources.

MINERAL INDUSTRY

- 7.19. Representatives from the mineral industry have previously cautioned the Minerals Local Plan Review Panel against disclosing unrealistically large areas of search, as this approach has already resulted in public outcry. In view of the progress made in refining potential areas of working it has been suggested that previously identified areas of search should have been included in the Minerals Local Plan. This could have provided a more balanced view of the constraints under which the industry is operating.
- 7.20. The developers regret that there was no discussion with the industry before proposals for Special Status of the Forest of Dean were announced. Industry representatives believe that if the industry had been able to state its position, a more realistic view would have been presented of the need for continued mineral working.
- 7.21. The industry has stated that production rates have not increased in recent years. Rates are currently lower than projected 2.25 mt/annum quoted in Minerals Local Plan. The previous history of mining and quarrying within the Dean entailed much greater disturbance to surface area of the Forest and greater despoliation of the environment, than current quarrying operations. Nowadays companies are following an enlightened approach towards working and restoration, with full regard for the environment. The industry welcomes the focus in Minerals Local Plan on rehabilitation of workings, and proposals for detailed bio-diversity and site management plans to be produced.
- 7.22. Notwithstanding the reductions in output, the industry believes that a 15 year landbank is required for hard rock. However the overall scale of mineral working must be put into perspective. The area required for a 15 year landbank i.e. 25 year working period is 67.9 ha which would be only 0.13% of the surface area of Forest of Dean District.
- 7.23. Industry representatives maintain that they have been unfairly criticised over the transportation of aggregates. Aggregates are not transported more than 25 miles by road in most circumstances. If permission is refused for working locally then inevitably this distance increases. The wearing course material with Polished Stone Values meeting DETR Specifications for Trunk Roads and Motorways is imported from south Wales (Pennant Sandstone).
- 7.24. Representatives of the quarrying companies state that they have held regular liaison meetings with Parish councils / and other local interests. The level of complaint over standard working practice bears no relationship to the current concern registered by action groups.

FREEMINERS ASSOCIATION AND FOREST OF DEAN SMALL MINES ASSOCIATION

- 7.25. **Freeminers Association:** The Freeminers Association claim that their rights are being eroded. They state that Forest Enterprise are hostile to their legitimate activities and that regulations are being imposed unreasonably in particular the 1994 Coal Act which requires that all mines are licensed and requires payment of a fee.

- 7.26. **Forest of Dean Small Mines Association:** Forest of Dean Small Mines Association (FODSMA) are a different organisation to the Freemaners Association. The FODSMA has represented all working mines in the Dean since the late 1940's with particular emphasis on those for whom mining is their main livelihood. There are currently 10 licensed mines involving 30 individuals within the Hundreds of St Briavels. Not all of these mines are currently operational. The FODSMA consider that they have a good relationship with Forest Enterprise, who have been very accommodating, with the deputy Gavellor playing an important advisory role. Their main concerns are that there is no financial assistance for small mines and no incentives to train or employ staff.

CONCLUSION

- 7.27. There are various opposing views to mineral extraction and quarrying. Many bodies consider that mineral extraction, in particular quarrying of carboniferous limestone for aggregate, is a major threat to the integrity of the Dean landscape. Hard rock quarrying is considered to be visually intrusive, generating dust, noise and light pollution, and traffic as well as disturbing wildlife.
- 7.28. The opposing view of operations is that the threat from quarrying is exaggerated. Quarrying is a traditional activity in the area, shaping the area's cultural heritage. It meets the local needs with Gloucestershire and covers only a small extent of the district.

8. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

- 8.1. The following review of statutory and non statutory plans we have undertaken as part of the present study:

Forest of Dean District Council: Forest of Dean District Local Plan 1996
Forest of Dean District Council: District Local Plan Review, Consultation Draft 1998
Forest of Dean District Local Plan Review - Environmental Appraisal 1998
Gloucestershire County Structure Plan 2nd Review 1998
Gloucestershire County Structure Plan 2nd Review 1998, Proposed Modifications
Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan Consultation Draft October 1998
Forest Enterprise - The Management of Broad-leaved Woodlands in the Forest of Dean
Forest Enterprise - Forest Design Plans
Gloucestershire Biodiversity Challenge Document 1997
Rural Development Areas Needs Analysis
Rural Development Area Strategy
Rural Development Area Operating Plan

- 8.2. Key issues relating to the Forest of Dean have been extracted from each of the documents.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Conserving and enhancing character

- 8.3. Various policies within the District Local Plan and County Structure Plan highlight the need to protect and enhance particular qualities of the Forest which make the area unique. Policy FCL on forest waste stipulates that "*the District Council will not permit the change of use of Forest waste where the land concerned is of amenity, recreational, environmental or historic value*". The Structure Plan emphasises the need "*to protect the relict industrial landscapes (especially those resulting from mining activities in the Forest of Dean)...*" (Policy NHE 1). The development plans recognise and identify the need to protect the distinctive character of the ring of settlements around the forest; distinctive as a result of the mixing of forest waste and other forms of open land. The plans also recognise the special character of the Severn estuary. The Gloucestershire Structure Plan second review proposed modifications, Policy NHE7 states that "*development will not be permitted which has a detrimental impact on the scientific value, landscape setting and character and the archaeological remains of the Severn estuary. The integrated management of the estuary will be essential to the protection of its special qualities.*"

Protecting the Dean from inappropriate development

- 8.4. The District Local Plan highlights the need to protect AONBs in Policy FCL2. *“Development which would harm the natural beauty of the landscape will not be permitted. Major industrial and commercial development will only be permitted where it cannot be located elsewhere and is justified by proven national interest”* however policies to prevent development within Special Landscape Areas (which includes the Forest of Dean) are less forceful; *“development must full respect the key characteristics of the surrounding landscape type except where surrounding landscape has suffered decline and is now of a poor quality, when that landscape must be enhanced”* (Policy FCL 3). Policies outlined in the structure plan proposed modifications policy are slightly more forceful, policy NHES states that *“provision should not be made for development that would detract from the particular landscape qualities and character of the SLA.”*

Enhancing social and economic opportunities

- 8.5. The District Plan is supportive of the need to promote growth in employment, housing and development in the south of the District whilst generally there is an attitude of restraint elsewhere.
- 8.6. The Forest of Dean Local Plan Review Consultation Draft highlights that housing priority has been given to 4,500 houses between 1991-2011 in addition to housing expected as a result of “windfalls”. Gloucestershire Structure Plan second draft proposed modifications identifies in Policy H4 and E2 that housing provision within the district has been reduced from 9520 to 7,700 between 1991 and 2011. The main areas for housing allocation are centred in Lydney, Coleford and Cinderford (primarily in the south of the District).

Additional small housing developments in other settlements will only be permitted where they can be integrated into the framework of the settlement and be close to the existing public transport infrastructure.

Providing recreational opportunities for visitors and local people

- 8.7. The District Local Plan supports the development of recreation and leisure facilities and activities but highlights that there is a need to maintain a balance between the recreation pressures and the quality of the landscape and the countryside (Policy FRI). The Plan support proposals for circular way marked trails, long distance routes with attention given to old railway lines and tram tracks.
- 8.8. The District Plan indicates that proposals for tourism development will be permitted so long as this does not result in unacceptable additions to visitor pressures upon the countryside and landscape or detract from the overall quality of the environment (Policy FTO 1).

9. SUMMARY OF THE HOBHOUSE REPORT AND DECISION

- 9.1. A brief summary of a review of the Hobhouse report and decision are discussed below; further details are outlined in Section 10 and in Appendix III.
- 9.2. In 1959 the National Parks Commission (now the Countryside Agency) started to consider the designation of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty based on original proposals drawn up by the Hobhouse Committee in 1947. One of the areas identified included the Wye Valley and the Forest of Dean, covering the Forest and a significant area of the surrounding landscape.
- 9.3. In 1968 the National Parks Commission initiated the formal process of considering the Forest of Dean as part of the proposed Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). However in 1971 the boundaries of the AONB were reduced dramatically. It was decided to exclude the Forest of Dean from the proposed designation because it was considered that the Forest was a distinct entity, and the area was largely in the hands of the Forestry Commission. *"The Commission felt that the Forest of Dean was already in good hands being largely administered by the Forestry Commission who will have wide powers for meeting amenity and recreational needs under the Countryside Act. It was also felt that the Forest of Dean was a distinct entity and that it would not be illogical to limit designation to the Lower Wye Valley."* However the importance of the landscape outside the boundary of the existing Wye Valley AONB has been recognised by local authorities and given regional protection through development plans.
- 9.4. The decision to exclude the Forest of Dean from AONB status and the increasing threat of additional quarrying activity in the area has fuelled public debate and raised several calls for a reassessment of the Forest of Dean status. The Government has subsequently asked the Countryside Commission to re-examine the Forest of Dean; reviewing the need for special protection for the area.
- 9.5. In two recent papers by the former Countryside Commission on guidance relating to AONBs the Commission stated that it *"cannot close its mind to further designations. But apart from the New Forest and possibly the Forest of Dean we take the view that our limited resources are best applied to securing better management of the areas that have been designated, rather than seeking to designate ever more land and devaluing the concept in the process"* (CCP 532). The Commission compared the Forest of Dean with the already designated AONB Cannock Chase stating, *"nationally similar areas include the New Forest and the Forest of Dean, which are both recognised for their outstanding landscape qualities. Cannock Chase ranks as being of equal importance, despite its smaller size"* (CCX 33).

10. SUMMARY OF EXISTING DESIGNATIONS

INTRODUCTION

- 10.1. This section summarises the development of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in England and Wales, and new designations /practices in Britain and the remainder of Europe. Details of legislation and planning policy for National Parks and AONBs are indicated in Appendix IV and V.

NATIONAL PARKS

Summary

- 10.2. National Parks are statutory designation applying to England and Wales. The main legislation relating to National Parks is contained within the following acts:
- National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949,
 - Countryside Act 1968,
 - Local Government Act 1972,
 - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981,
 - Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment) Act 1985,
 - Environmental Protection Act 1991,
 - Environment Act 1995.
- 10.3. National Parks have a dual purpose, to conserve the natural beauty of the area, including their flora, fauna, geological and physiographic features; and to promote their enjoyment by the public. Ten National Parks were established in the 1950's in England and Wales. Since then there have been two more recent additions/proposals of similar status, the Broads and the New Forest. The Broads Authority was established in 1989; although not a National Park by name it enjoys equal status through its own Act of Parliament. The New Forest is also considered to be of comparable status to National Parks. Legislation is proposed in order to designate the New Forest as an area of national significance, providing the same protection as a National Park but with special administrative arrangements tailored to the locality. A detailed discussion of National Parks is outlined in the following paragraphs.

History of National Parks

- 10.4. National Parks originated in 1872 with the designation of the great Yellowstone National Park in the United States. From this beginning National Parks were established in several countries.

- 10.5. The National Parks movement in England and Wales was conceived through the active enthusiasm of voluntary organisations such as the RSPB, Ramblers Association, CPRE, CPRW and the NT (founded in 1895). In July 1929 CPRE (established in 1926) requested that the government should study the problem of establishing National Parks. A Committee of Enquiry was set up under the chairmanship of Dr Addison to consider the desirability and feasibility of setting up National Parks in Great Britain. The official report "*The Report of the National Park Committee*" also known as the Addison report was published in 1931. This report however was overshadowed by a national financial crisis and it wasn't until 1942 that the issue of National Parks resurfaced through the Scotts Committee report on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas. One of the report's recommendations was that National Parks should be established for the enjoyment of the whole nation.
- 10.6. During the 2nd World War the Government requested John Dower to study the problem relating to the establishment of National Parks in England and Wales. His report published in 1945 "*Report on National Parks in England and Wales*" analysed the theory and purpose of National Parks. Dower defined National Parks as:
- "An extensive area of beautiful and relatively wild country for the nations benefit and by appropriate national decision and action.
- the characteristic landscape beauty is strictly preserved,
 - access and facilities for public open-air enjoyment are amply provided,
 - wild life and buildings and places of architectural and historic interest are suitably protected, while
 - established farming use is effectively maintained."
- 10.7. Dower surveyed possible National Parks based on the above definition examining their characteristics, boundaries, problems and requirements. His survey resulted in a preliminary list of ten national parks totalling 2 million hectares and a second list totalling twelve potential parks. Dower advocated that National Parks should be supported through national funding and proposed the establishment of a main headquarters, the National Parks Commission. Aside from the main headquarters, each National Park would have its own personnel.
- 10.8. Dower's report was controversial at the time. However, due to a change in government, several of his proposals were implemented. The Hobhouse Committee chaired by Sir A. Hobhouse was set up to make specific recommendations arising out of the Dower report for England and Wales and a Wildlife Conservation Committee ran parallel to this.
- 10.9. The "Hobhouse Committee" Report of the National Parks Committee (England and Wales) July 1947 recommended that 12 National Parks should be declared in annual instalments of four for a period of 3 years immediately following legislation. The report omitted one of Dowers original suggestions, North Cornwall but added from Dower's reserved list the Boards, North York Moors and South Downs. The Committee proposed a National Parks Commission for central co-ordination. Local administration of each area would be undertaken by a local *ad hoc* executive body on behalf of the planning

authority and the National Parks Committee. However the passing of the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 made this administrative concept less acceptable as it gave strong powers to local authorities.

- 10.10. Following the Second World War when the emphasis was on the development of forestry and agriculture, the National Parks Committee's proposals were enveloped in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Once the legislation was passed, the National Parks Commission was established and began its programme of designations.

Purpose of National Parks

- 10.11. The purpose of National Parks was defined by John Dower in his report "National Parks in England and Wales" (as outlined previously), and the essential requirements of a National Park was described in the Hobhouse report. A National Park should have "*great natural beauty, a high value for open air recreation and substantial continuous extent*" (Report of the National Parks Committee, 1947). The distribution of them should be such that "*at least one should be quickly accessible from each of the main centres of population*". The Committee highlighted that the variety and wide diversity of landscape was important and it would therefore be wrong to confine areas to rugged mountains and moorland, excluding "*other districts which, though of less outstanding grandeur and wilderness, have their own distinctive beauty and high recreational value*". These main objectives were reiterated in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The purpose for National Parks is to:

- preserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the areas,
- promoting their enjoyment by the public, and,
- proximity to centres of population.

- 10.12. The purpose of National Parks has remained virtually unchanged from their original objectives. Section 61(1) of the Environmental Act 1995 defines the purpose of National Parks as:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Parks;
- promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities (of the parks) by the public.

- 10.13. The Environmental Act also places a duty on the National Park Authority to

"seek to foster the economic and social well being of local communities within the National Park, but without incurring significant expenditure in doing so, and shall for that purpose co-operate with local authorities and public bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic or social development within the area of the National Park" (Environment Act, Section 62).

National Park Reviews

- 10.14. National Park objectives have been constantly reviewed. The first major review was undertaken by Lord Sandford's Committee between 1971 and 1974. One of the most important recommendations arising from the review was that where there was a conflict between the conservation of natural beauty and recreation, conservation should prevail; later known as the "Sandford Principle".
- 10.15. An Economic Efficiency Review was undertaken in 1983 and the most recent review by the National Parks Review Panel was undertaken under the chairmanship of Professor Ron Edwards in November 1989. The main purpose of the study was to:
- identify the main factors, including likely development in the future, which affect the ability of National Parks to achieve their purpose;
 - in light of the point above, assess the ways in which National Parks purposes might be most effectively be achieved in the future;
 - recommend how the ways in the point above could be put to into practical effort.
- 10.16. Countryside Commission guidance produced as a result of the study "Fit for the Future" (CCP 337, 1991) identified many important changes required to National Parks. Several of the recommendations were taken on board in National Park Sections and Schedules of the Environment Act 1995. Recommendations by the Commission highlight that the "essence" of National Parks should lie "in the striking quality and remoteness of much of their scenery, the harmony between man and nature its displays, and the opportunities it offers for suitable forms of recreation".

Future Proposals

- 10.17. The Commission in a recent publication "Protecting Our Finest Countryside; Advice to Government" (CCP 532, 1998) call for the Government's forthcoming White Paper on the countryside to "*make clear that its policies for protected countryside, particularly its planning policies, should be applied by all agencies, authorities and operators*". The report mentions in particular that government legislation should enforce a statutory obligation of all public bodies, especially with regard to AONBs. Such as duty is imposed in relation to National Parks by Section 11A (2) of the 1949 Act (inserted by Section 62(1) of the 1995 Act). No obligation exists in respect of AONBs.
- 10.18. The document states that the Commission is frequently under pressure to designate new areas of countryside as National Parks. In both AONB and National Parks the Countryside Agency highlights that the definition of "natural beauty" is interpreted from the 1949 Act, Countryside Act and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 " as including flora, fauna and geological and physiographic features".

Administration

- 10.19. Since April 1997 National Parks have been administered by National Park Authorities (NPA's). The membership of the boards and committees is made up of 2/3 local authority members and 1/3 appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment.
- 10.20. The effects of a National Park designation depend upon a combination of the statutory provisions of the primary legislation, statutory instruments, government policies set out in circulars and planning policy guidance notes, development plan policies for LPAs, NPAs and practical management schemes.

Funding

- 10.21. Currently Government provides 75% funding to the National Parks Authorities through a National Parks Grant (NPG) and the local authorities provide 25% of the approved expenditure. The latter element is largely reimbursed to the local authorities concerned through the provision of the Standard Spending Assessment (The National Park Authority, CCP230 and CCP532). Funding is decided on a yearly basis for each Authority. National Parks Authorities can also generate income themselves and borrow or receive funding from the European Union.

Box 4 Summary Table of National Parks (from CCP 230 and CCP532)

Purpose

- preserve and enhancing the natural beauty of the areas;
- promoting their enjoyment by the public

Criteria for designation

- *extensive tracts of country* (Section 5 (2))
- *natural beauty* (Section 5 (2)(a))
- *opportunities afforded for open air recreation having regard to their character and to their position in relation to centres of population* (Section 5 (2) (b))

Structure

National Park Authorities which came into being on 1st April 1997 are responsible for a National Park functioning either as a county council committee or as a planning board 2/3 of the members of each authority are appointed by local government and 1/3 by Secretary of State for the Environment

The National Park Plan

Each NPA are obliged to prepare a National Park Plan which includes policies for the management of the Park and forms the basis for working with statutory and voluntary conservation organisations and other public and private landowners

Planning

NPAs have powers to influence and control land use and development.

Development plans: Each NPA is required to produce a local plan, plus a waste and management plan

Designation of a National Park

The decision to designate is the responsibility of the Countryside Agency, which is required by Section 6 (1) of the Act to make the order designating the National Parks, and in preparing the order, to consult with every local authority having areas affected (Section 7 (1)) and to ensure that the order and designation map are publicised according to the provisions of Schedule 1 of the Act before the Order is submitted to the Secretary of State. The representations made can lead to the holding of a public inquiry. The Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions may then confirm, vary or decide against the Commission's designation.

Finance

Government approves a spending programme each year. Programmes are 75% funded through the National Park Supplementary Grant, the remainder from LPAs. The NPAs can contain income from trading activities such as car parking fees, planning application etc

Major development: Major development should not take place other than in exceptional circumstances.

Application should be rigorously examined and shown to be in the public interest

Roads: Investment in motorways and trunk roads should aim to develop routes for long distance traffic that avoid National Parks. No new routes should be developed within National Parks unless there is a compelling need.

Permitted Development Rights: Some permitted development rights are reduced or withdrawn, some types of development allowed elsewhere are controlled.

Farming and Forestry

Encouragement of farmers and other landowners to work together, NPA offers grant schemes. NPA act in a consultative role. Government guidance on indicative forestry strategies.

Nature Conservation

NPA's work closely with English Nature, advise and grant aid farmers and help voluntary conservation bodies obtain reserves.

Tourism

Development of tourism is strictly controlled, however the Government acknowledges that some tourism developments might be justified providing they do not conflict with the purposes of the park and that their numbers, location and extent are strictly controlled

Cultural Heritage

Offer grants and technical; advice to owners of historical buildings, designate conservation areas, remove eyesores, protect field monuments ad restore relics of industrial history, working closely with English Heritage.

Access/ Recreation

Most NPAs are responsible for public paths. Provide and information service ranging from visitor centres to guided walks and living history demonstrations. Car parks, picnic sites etc assist visitors to the area

Future Proposals

A review of National Parks was completed in 1991. Recommendations include a new National Parks Act, restatement of National Parks purposes, wider powers, more resources, clear statement of planning principles, integration of nature conservation and landscape and concern for the needs of Park residents. Government have announced that it will restate the purpose of National Parks, create them as independent bodies, secure financing to take account of needs a responsibilities and provide protection for the New Forest

THE CONCEPT OF CONSERVATION AREAS / AONB'S

Summary

- 10.22. AONBs are a statutory designation to conserve and enhance natural beauty, including flora, fauna, geology/geomorphology and landscape. AONBs are intended to meet the demands of recreation though it is not an objective of designation.. AONBs are designated by the Countryside Agency and Countryside Council for Wales, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State. No statutory implications exist on the administration of AONBs but local authorities are given powers through development plans to preserve and enhance natural beauty. However wide variations in the manner in which local planning authorities deal with the planning and management of AONBs exist.

There are presently forty AONBs; thirty five in England, four in Wales and one straddling the border (Wye Valley). Fifteen of the AONBs include coastlines defined as Heritage Coasts and covered by other Countryside Agency policy statements. Over 15.6% of land in England and Wales are designated AONBs. They vary greatly in size from the smallest the Isles of Scilly totalling 16sq km and Cannock Chase 68 sq. km to the largest, the Cotswolds which covered 2038 sq. km.

History of AONBs

1931 -

- 10.23. The concept of AONBs developed from 4 reports; Addison (1931), Scott (1942), Dower (1945) and Hobhouse (1947). John Dower highlighted that apart from the need for National Parks there should be areas which whilst not suitable as National Parks due to their limited size and lack of "wilderness" qualities should be safeguarded for their landscape beauty providing some status as "other amenity areas".
- 10.24. The Hobhouse Committee's "Report of the National Parks Committee (England and Wales)" July 1947 endorsed Dower's suggestions. In addition to defining proposed areas of National Parks, the Committee called for some areas of land "which do not call for the positive management required in National Parks or the closer scientific control" to be designated Conservation Areas (later termed Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The report identified these areas as being so important to the "contribution to the wider enjoyment of the countryside" that "special measures should be taken to preserve their natural beauty and interest".
- 10.25. The report identified and recommended that the Minister of Town and Country Planning should designate 52 Conservation Areas (including the Forest of Dean and the Wye Valley) as areas of "high landscape quality, scientific interest and recreational value". Omitted from the designations were smaller areas of countryside covered by local planning protection i.e. Green Belts, Open Spaces, Rural Zones or Nature Reserves.
- 10.26. Huxley's Wildlife Conservation Special Committee which ran in parallel with the Hobhouse Committee also recommended the same 52 areas. Whilst both committees

were unanimous in defining the proposed areas there were significant difference between the Committees over the objectives of AONBs. The Hobhouse Committee considered that recreation should be an important function of AONBs whilst the Wildlife Committee expressed concern over the adverse effects of recreation on the landscape. It was finally agreed that *"conservation areas should have the protection of natural beauty and interest as a principal consideration above that of open air enjoyment"* (Blunden and Curry , 1990).

- 10.27. The designation of AONBs began in 1955 and by the time of the Countryside Act in 1968 23 areas had been designated by the then National Parks Commission.

1971-

- 10.28. Following consultations in 1970, which supported the continuing designation of AONBs and the re examination of the Commission's policy on AONB in April 1971, it was concluded that a large-scale increase in AONBs would be inappropriate. The Commission however highlighted that there was a need for *"a comprehensive review of existing and proposed AONBs, in order to provide a limited programme of new designations designed to remove present anomalies and provide greater consistency, without debasing standards."* Thirty-two proposed AONBs (only 18 from the Hobhouse report) were assessed to determine the quality of the landscape. The assessment was based on a subjective judgement using three criteria (each with a weighting score):

- 1) Quality of landscape, natural beauty, unspoilt or special quality (e.g. remoteness), of natural significance; (weighting score of 3),
- 2) Extent in terms of both total area and continuity, a smaller area being acceptable for extensions than for new designations; (weighting score of 2),
- 3) Unusual character in the sense of having unique characteristics or being of a landscape type under represented amongst existing designated areas and heritage consists e.g. Lowland valley; landscapes, sandstone ridges, islands, estuaries. (weighting score of 1).

- 10.29. Six areas were considered of higher quality including the North Pennines. However, the Forest of Dean was not included amongst the 32 areas studied.. A new programme of designations was drawn up and between 1968 and 1978 a further 10 AONBs were designated.

1978

- 10.30. During the 1960's and 1970's the Commission sought to encourage local planning authorities to set up joint advisory committees, and to produce statements of intent, and clearer management and planning policies for AONBs. However alongside these moves there was growing opposition from farming and land owning interests. The Commission decided to undertake a review of AONBs and asked Himsworth in 1978 to *"appraise the effect of AONB designation and consider how far statutory purposes has been achieved"*. Himsworth concluded that AONB designation had some beneficial effects on the landscape protection, although the overall effect was uneven. An AONB designation also seemed justified in the public interest. Despite some doubts he recommended that the Commission improved the designation process (CCP 116, 1978).

- 10.31. Following the review the Commission published a policy statement on AONBs in 1980 with recommendations to government (CCP141, 1980). The report suggested the need for a more co-ordinated management approach with planning and management proposals /strategies, administration and funding. The Government response was made in a policy statement (Hansard, 1982). The statement supported the Countryside Commission proposals but disagreed with their proposals on mineral workings, agricultural notifications and recreation. The Countryside Commission subsequently issued a revised policy statement in 1983 taking into account the governments recommendations. These are summarised below.

All existing AONBs to be retained and a further five new designated.

Conservation of natural beauty should be the primary objective of the designation; demands should be met for recreation where it is consistent with this and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses. Account should be taken of the needs of rural and local communities and in pursuing the main objective.

Joint Advisory Committees should be encouraged in multi authority AONBs. For each AONB there should be an AONB officer.

A Statement of Intent should be encouraged for each AONB linked with statutory development plans and where appropriate management plans should be implemented.

For development control: clear recognition of the national importance of AONBs, new developments being regarded as unacceptable unless in the national interest and there is no alternative. Mineral workings and road schemes to be subject to rigorous examination; sympathetic treatment of small scale industries where associated with settlements; informal notification arrangements to be encouraged for farm buildings; and improvement by statutory agencies of their consultations on major developments.

High priority to grant aid for landscape conservation, visitor management, preparation of management plans. (A People's Charter, 1989).

1989 -

- 10.32. In May 1989 the Countryside Commission appointed Professor G Smart and Dr M Anderson to undertake a further review. They were commissioned to undertake the following work:
to outline progress and action in the planning and management of AONBs since the 1980 policy statement,
to note changes affecting AONBs and policy relationship with the wider countryside;
and to suggest possible changes in direction for the Countryside Commission to consider.
- 10.33. Their report highlighted the fact that the "*range of action on the ground is wide, but it is very thinly spread and not expanding much at present*" (CC295, 1990). The report expressed concerns over afforestation, agricultural development, mineral workings, recreation and golf courses developments and that the public were at large not aware of the importance of AONBs.
- 10.34. Specific recommendations included the "*strengthening the local authority co-ordination of AONB management, promoting greater awareness of the importance of AONBs and increasing substantially the funds available to conserve them*"(CCP 532, 1998).
- 10.35. Following the publication of Smart and Anderson's report in 1990 the Commission published a new policy statement (CCP302, 1990) responding to their recommendations.

This include the concept of "sustainable forms of social and economic developments which in themselves conserve and enhance the environment". New policies were proposed as follows:

"Measures to increase understanding of AONBs and to increase commitment to their purpose, including regional meetings, maintaining an AONB directory, publishing landscape assessments, and encouraging adoption of a distinctive logo for each area. Enhanced measure for administration including establishment of Joint Advisory Committees (JACs) for all AONBs; nomination of an AONB officer and, in some cases, appointment of a 'dedicated' specialist officer and establishment of supporting AONB units; and identification of specific budgets for management actions.

Encouragement for Statements of Intent, underpinned by management plans, for all AONBs.

Restatement and amplification of policies on development plans and development control, with stronger wording than the 1983 statement on major development and major roads and motorways and a call for the "most rigorous examination" of proposals for mineral workings to assess both need and environmental effects.

New emphasis on management actions, including encouragement for new support schemes for environmentally sensitive farming and forestry, promotions of management action by local authorities and diverse approaches to achieving action on the ground. 'Pump-priming' funding for countryside management, professional assistance with management plans, and experimental approaches to management; and new funding for AONB officers for limited AONBs meeting specified criteria."

- 10.36. The government responded to the policy statement CCP 302, 1990 in 1991 endorsing the Commission's proposals but highlighting the government's need to consult further on the assessment of mineral applications. A revised policy statement was issued in 1991 with slight alterations, more detailed proposals on funding, guidance on statements of intent and administration (CCP 356 1991).

1996 - present

- 10.37. In 1996 the Commission reviewed the progress of AONB designations concluding that "work to promote conservation of these nationally important landscapes and to provide for and manage recreation in AONBs has been seriously hampered. No-one has a legal responsibility for managing them positively and resources are inadequate". The "conservation and arrangement of AONBs could take a backward step over the next few years unless improvements can be made" (CCP523, 1998).
- 10.38. In order to produce advice to government the Commission undertook 3 studies examining the management, administration and funding of AONBs. It launched a Consultation Paper "Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Providing for the Future" (CCWP 8) together with a questionnaire in September 1997. The Commission also undertook a study on "Conserving the South Downs: Providing for their needs" and "Protected Areas Funding Study: Summary" (CCWP 10). Conclusions drawn from these documents are discussed in "AONBs; Protecting our finest countryside" (CCP532, 1998). The documents states that:

- *"The Commission believes: the extent of countryside designated as outstanding is about right; and that at present further designation would unacceptably dilute the value of the protection given to that already designated; however does point out that "its cannot close its mind to further designations. But apart from the New Forest and possible the Forest of Dean, we take the view that our limited resources are best applied to securing better management of the areas that have been designated , rather than seeking to designate ever more land and devaluing the concept in the process".*
- *There may still be a case for selective adjustments to boundaries – either to add land, or to delete it where its outstanding quality has been compromised forever. The Government should legislate to make it easier and cheaper to adjust where necessary the boundaries of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty."*

10.39. The Commission called for the Government to confirm that the landscape qualities of National Parks and AONBs are equivalent and policies should be put in place to indicate this:

"there should be a end to arguments about first and second division designated areas. The Government should confirm that the landscape qualities of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are equivalent and that equivalent policies for their protection against inappropriate development are in place".

10.40. The report went onto state that the Government should create *"an explicit statutory obligation on all public bodies (including local authorities), in exercising their functions in relation to or so as to affect an AONB, to have regard to the need to enhance the natural beauty of AONBs."* as no statutory obligations exist at present (CCP 532, 1998). The document outlined key areas for concern:

- **Traffic and transport:** Public authorities and in particular highway authorities should become active partners in the *"protection and enhancement of our finest countryside"*. Transport proposals should seek to *"reduce the damaging effects of excessive traffic or insensitive provision for it, and to repair what has already been done "*.
- **Land Management:** The UK should become active in using agri-environment programmes and the European funds, which support them. Coverage of agri-environment schemes should be extended to bring the best features of the Environmentally Sensitive Areas scheme to all farmland in all National Park and AONBs, pressing the radical reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. In addition there should also be incentives for woodland management.
- **Recreation and Tourism:** Authorities managing areas should have the costs of providing management services for visitors and recreation to agreed benchmarks, allocated to them from the public purse and funding supplemented by locals funds and other sources.
- **Cultural Heritage:** All aspects of cultural heritage are being eroded. English Heritage should increase level of grants available for historic buildings and ancient monuments in protected countryside and highlights the need to *"record, conserve and improve the cultural heritage of protected countryside should be recognised in the allocation of public funds to their managing organisations"*.

10.41. The report also highlighted the main development pressures on AONBs as summarised in the following table.

Box 5 Summary Table from CCP 532 on Today's Pressure in AONBs

Today's pressures on AONBs

- **New patterns of agriculture and woodland management affecting landscapes and habitats.** Agriculture has become less intensive in areas such as the Malverns, leading to scrub invasion and bracken encroachment. In other AONBs, like East Hampshire and the North Pennines, it has intensified, leading respectively to intensive arable cultivation replacing much of the traditional mixed downland farming and to overgrazed moorlands. The area and management of natural and semi-natural woodlands have declined. Demand for woodland products has fallen and ancient woodlands have been converted to more intensive forestry. Unimproved Jurassic limestone grassland in the Cotswolds AONB has declined from an estimated 45 per cent of the area in 1935 to around 1.5 per cent today. The landscapes of many AONBs have also lost traditional features such as stone walls, hedgerows and ponds.
- **Greater development pressures** from housing, mineral extraction, road building and road improvements, wind power stations, tourism and recreation.
- **Adverse changes to the special character and qualities of AONBs.** The cumulative effect of creeping suburbanisation and new developments including golf courses, pond paddocks and security lighting are eroding the distinctive character of individual AONBs. These and other pressures, such as increased in traffic and visitors, are tending to reduce peace and tranquillity - qualities which surveys have shown are much valued by visitors and those living nearby. All types of pollution are a threat. Coastal AONBs are particularly threatened by water pollution.
- **Changing patterns of recreation and more visits than some National Parks.** The majority of visitors to AONBs now travel there by car and tend to be frequent day visitors from nearby areas. Many large towns and cities are near AONBs. For example, one fifth of England's population lives within easy driving distance of the Chilterns AONB. As a result, traffic congestion and associated problems, such as car parking, have increased. Nationally, demand for outdoor activities is growing. Some AONBs attract people from all over the country. For example, the Wye Valley is a national focus for rock climbing, salmon fishing, canoeing and walking. Coastal AONBs in the South and the West Country are popular holiday destinations.

As a result many AONBs have significant visitor pressure. Some, such as the Sussex Downs and Malvern Hills, have higher estimated levels of visitors than comparably sized National Parks. The wear and tear that results requires continuing maintenance of footpaths and visitor facilities to maintain the quality of these nationally important landscapes.
- **Significant alterations in the local economy and society of AONBs.** Jobs in traditional rural work such as farming and fishing have declined and employment in other sectors, particularly tourism, has grown. Tourism is now the main employer in some AONBs. For example, in the North Pennines and South Devon AONBs there are 35 per cent and 64 per cent tourism related jobs respectively, compared with 25 per cent and 10 per cent in agriculture. Local people have moved away from some

AONBs leading to depopulation. However, in some of these, and in other AONBs, new residents have moved in from towns to live in attractive countryside. They tend to bring new demands for new developments and more urban standards.

As in other rural areas, services, such as public transport, local shops and schools, have declined. Fewer people have the skills needed to maintain features in the AONB landscape such as hedges and walls, and traditional knowledge of local styles is being lost. People involved in the newer types of employment (such as tourism or teleworking from home or in converted farm buildings) have no direct link with managing the landscape.

- 10.42. **Management:** The document called for the need for "*local authorities should be statutorily required to pursue the objective for which AONBs were designated and to produce statutory AONB Management Plans*". Local authorities should be able to discharge this duty through the formal constitution of Conservation Boards. The purpose of the Boards should be:
- *statutory consultees on planning matters, with the right to be heard (in order to strengthen the protection of AONBs from inappropriate development);*
 - *consultees on the development of recreation policies and plans (in order to influence the management of visitors at a strategic level and across the whole AONB);*
 - *consulted on agricultural policy and the delivery of agri- environment schemes as they affect the area(in order to ensure maximum benefit for the conservation of the AONB through agri-environment scheme resources).*
- 10.43. **Funding:** The report goes on to state that organisations which protect the countryside require increased and secure funding through:
- *government funding of the core costs of managing AONBs, via a 50 percent national Government grant administered the Commission, with the balance funded locally;*
 - *government funding of a Countryside Commission administered AONB fund for special projects;*
 - *priority allocation of funds to projects within AONBs from appropriate challenge funds e.g. Heritage Lottery Fund."*
- 10.44. Core funding for the management of protected countryside should be found from the public purse. National Parks and AONB organisations should search for supplementary funding e.g. exploiting EU funding programmes etc.
- 10.45. Conclusions from the study are that there should be a permanent charged with responsibility for pursuing the statutory purpose of designation, promoting awareness, stimulating action, co-ordinating the support and activities of other bodies and drawing resources from other sources.

Criteria for Designation of AONBs

- 10.46. Criteria for designating AONBs have altered little since Hobhouse's definition in 1947. Commission guidance, CCP 157, 1983 defines the purpose of AONBs as *"to conserve and enhance natural beauty which includes protecting flora, fauna and geological as well as landscape features"*. The main aims are outlined below:
- The primary purpose of designation will be to conserve natural beauty.
 - Recreation will not be an objective of designation, but AONBs should be used to meet the demands for recreation as far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other users.
 - In pursuing the primary objective of designation, account should be taken of the need to safeguard agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities/
- 10.47. These criteria were reaffirmed in a more recent policy statement by the Countryside Commission, CCP 356, 1991 as listed below:
- *The primary purpose of designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty; nature conservation is not a formal objective except in so far as it is included in the statutory definition of "natural beauty". Nevertheless, the AONBs do contain a large proportion of land notified as SSSIs or is managed as nature reserve, both of which provide additional safeguards to the quality of the landscape.*
 - *In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, 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, which 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.*
- 10.48. The Commission reiterated in their more recent guidance on AONBs CCP 532 that the sole purpose of AONBs was *"conserving, enhancing their natural beauty (Recreation is not a statutory purpose of designation)"*.

Box 6 Summary Table of AONB's (from CCP 356 and CCP 532)

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| <p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the primary purpose is to conserve and enhance natural beauty,• in pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of the local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable development, which 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. | <p>Creating an AONB</p> <p>Commission is given the function of marking the Order to designate an AONB (Section 87 (1), and in preparing that in order to consult with every local authority affected, and to ensure that the order and designation map are publicised according to the provisions of the Act (Section 87 (2)). The Commission submits the order to the Secretary of State, together with any presentations not provided for in the order. The Secretary of State may confirm, vary or refuse to confirm the order. Only one public inquiry has been held to consider an AONB order</p> |
| <p>Administration</p> <p>Planning and management responsibilities are split into county and district councils.</p> | <p>Statements of Intent</p> <p>LPA's are encouraged to produce statements of intent for AONBs, these should describe the landscape qualities that designation is intended to conserve and the elements most crucial to each landscape area. They should also set out LPA policies for development control and management of recreation and landscape.</p> |
| <p>Management Plans</p> <p>Management plans have been prepared covering all or part of a number of AONBs. They should set out positive policies and programmes of action and drawn up with the support and approval of all those interested in the area</p> | <p>Financial Support</p> <p>Countryside Commission funding is dependant on the circumstances of the area. Funding is available for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• supporting the setting up of countryside management services• supporting the appointment of an AONB officer• providing grant aid to local authorities that need professional assistance on the production of management plans encouraging a variety of approaches to achieve an enhanced level of management. |

Examples of existing and proposed AONBS

Cannock Chase AONB

- 10.49. Cannock Chase is the second smallest AONB totalling 68 sq. km. The Chase was once an expansive medieval hunting forest with parklands, deer herds and iron age fort. A settlement ring runs around the forest, consisting of towns such as Stafford, Rudgley, Burntwood and Cannock. The area lies close to Wolverhampton.
- 10.50. The Chase itself is a block of high sandstone heather and bracken heathland with birch /extensive pine plantations. The area is dissected by secluded valleys and edged by parkland and attractive villages. The AONB has the last oak remnant of ancient Cannock Forest. It still has a deer population along with red squirrels and nightjars which are monitored regularly. A large part of the Chase is used for commercial forestry, 20,000 tonnes of timber are felled each year, part of the area is used for military use and other areas consists of mixed agriculture and sand/gravel extraction. The area has eight landscape character types, the Forest heathlands, forest fringe and historic parkland forming over 90% of the AONB. The heathland, woodland and valley wetland habitats are largely SSSIs.
- 10.51. The area is an important recreation area for people living in the Midlands, 3 million people live in close proximity to the area, however it is not perceived as a holiday location, though there are many recreational footpaths, trails, bridleways, reserves and motorless zones. The Chase contains one of the largest country parks in England and has an Iron Age fort at Castle Ring.
- 10.52. Cannock Chase is described as "*a product of the complex physical and human influences which have interacted throughout man's occupation of the area.*" (CCX 33, 1995). During the Roman period the Chase was heavily wooded, during the Norman period the Royal Forest of Cannock was created and protected by strict laws. In the 16th century large wooded areas of the Chase were felled for ironmaking, this combined with intensive grazing by commoners transformed the forest into wasteland or heathland. Grazing has prevented the area regenerating naturally and the intensification of agriculture in the 18th and 19th centuries transformed the surrounding landscape. Ironmaking, glass smelting and coal mining during the Middle Ages and the subsequent revival of industry in particular coal mining in the mid 19th century has had a significant impact on the landscape, resulting in a bleak and exposed landscape, which has only "recently" changed as a result of planting.
- 10.53. Policies within local plans include the enhancement of the landscape, habitats and wildlife interest. Policies seek to avoid large scale highway improvements as a means of minimising traffic growth within the area. The Commission policy document CCX 33 (1995) states that "*nationally similar areas include the New Forest and the Forest of Dean, which are both recognised for their outstanding qualities. Cannock Chase ranks as being of equal importance, despite its smaller size*".

Administration

- 10.54. The Chase is managed by the local authority and Forest Enterprise as a commercial forest. There is no designated AONB ranger service.

South Downs

The South Downs are distinctive, steeped in history and contain a rich diversity of wildlife habitats. An area of rolling chalk hills, steep escarpments, ancient pastures and hidden coombes, renowned for its scenic beauty. The South Downs are also important in their proximity to London, both in terms of their recreational potential and vulnerability to development. In response to these pressures the Sussex Downs and the chalk hills of East Hampshire were designated as AONBs in the 1960s, both with adjacent parts of the Weald.

- 10.55. John Dower in his report on National Parks proposed to put the South Downs in the list of "34 other amenity areas" and in 1947 the National Parks Committee (Hobhouse Report) recommended National Park status for the area. In 1956 however the area was re-examined by the National Parks Committee and it was decided that due to the intensification of agriculture the existing recreational resources had diminished and there were "insufficient wilderness areas", therefore, National Park status was considered inappropriate and consideration for AONB status was proposed: East Hampshire AONB was designated in 1962 and Sussex Downs in 1966.

The East Hampshire AONB set up a Joint Advisory Committee in 1991 and the Sussex Downs AONB set up a Conservation Board in 1992 as a six year experiment in the planning and management of AONBs

Sussex Downs Conservation Board

- 10.56. The purpose to the Sussex Downs Conservation Board is outlined in the Boards objectives as below:
- to protect, conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Sussex Down AONB including its physical, ecological and cultural landscape;
 - to promote the quiet informal enjoyment of the Sussex Down AONB by the general public but only so far as consistent with the first objective; and
 - generally to promote sustainable forms of economic and social development especially working with farmers and landowners to encourage land management which supports the two objectives above.
- 10.57. The objectives of the Board are wider than the single objective of an AONB.
- 10.58. Initially the structure of the administrative body was formed out of a forum of local planning authorities and land and user groups meeting annually. The forum however

lacked any status and as a result of growing concern generated over increasing pressure from urban development, degradation of landscape quality and increasing visitor pressure it was felt that a more appropriate management structure should be formulated resulting in the establishment of a statutory Joint Committee. The Board was originally established as a pilot for a six year period to establish a co-ordinated and integrated management service. Further to an application to the Countryside Commission for further funding an extension was agreed on condition that the Board became a permanent organisation.

Administration/Functions

- 10.59. The Board consists of 36 members from County, District and Borough councils and 6 members appointed by the Countryside Commission. Central planning policies are similar to any other AONB, however the creation of a conservation board resulted in local level involvement. The Board sought to include policies to conserve and enhance the special character of the AONB within development plan policies. The Board has no executive powers in terms of development control, but has significant rights and duties as a consultee.

Funding

- 10.60. The contribution by the Countryside Commission is significantly higher than for other AONBs, reflective of the experimental nature of the project. The annual budget is £1.3 million funded by the Countryside Commission, and West and East Sussex County Councils.

Future Proposals

- 10.61. In 1996 the Sussex Downs Conservation Board undertook a public consultation exercise on the future of the AONB. In May 1997, the new government, recognising the South Downs as a special case, asked the Countryside Commission to advise on a course of action for the protection and organisation of the South Downs. The Countryside Commission recommended to the Secretary of State that the most appropriate option would be an AONB designation with enhanced powers, also extending the Conservation Board's control to include the East Hampshire as well as the Sussex Downs AONBs.

Malvern Hills AONB

- 10.62. The Malvern Hills AONB is a relatively small but extremely varied area occupying approximately 105 sq. km of open upland, wooded hills and vale. The majority of the AONB (93%) straddles the boundary between Herefordshire and Worcestershire with a small section (7%) in Gloucestershire. The distinctive Malvern Hills ridge is protected by Act of Parliament 1884 and remains under the ownership of the Malvern Hills Conservators.

Administration/Functions

Malvern Hills Conservators have a unique statutory role in independently administering 11% of the AONB and are responsible for countryside management of their land, consisting mainly of upland and commons, which is the most visited part of the AONB.

- 10.63. Day to day running of the AONB is administered by an appointed officer and managed by means of a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC). The JAC is made of both elected (i.e. Local Authority officers, parish councils representative) and non-elected members (ie. consultees such as English Nature, Forest Enterprise, Country Landowners Association), with and without voting rights respectively. The recently published Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan sets the strategic framework for management. Other bodies involved in the AONB include: the Technical Officers Working Party (TOWP) and committees set up to steer specific projects or initiatives such as the current Interpretation Strategy and the recently established "Malvern Hills Hopper" bus service.

Funding

The AONB is funded in part by the Countryside Commission and pro-rata, according to area, by the county and district councils involved. Other funding is levered on the basis of these contributions and in relation to specific initiatives aimed at enhancing the AONB, for example the current Royal Commission for Historic Monuments.

An approximate annual budget of £ 65000 is contributed to as follows:

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|------------------------|-----|
| Countryside Commission | 35% |
| Local Authorities | 42% |
| County Councils | 23% |

Key Issues

Key issues in the Malverns include:

Commons – re-introduction of grazing,

Agricultural land – CAP reform,

Lack of continuity of staffing,

Lack of funding security,

Cross boundary problems,

Visitor management.

Charnwood Forest

- 10.64. Charwood Forest special character was identified in the Leicestershire Regional Planning Report in 1932 which recommended that the area should become a National Park. The Hobhouse report subsequently proposed that the Forest could be a possible Conservation Area. However further to a Countryside Commission's review of AONBs in 1973, recommendations to propose Charwood Forest as an AONB were overturned. The Commission considered that the area was "*a fairly small area, adversely affected by motorway and quarrying*". However the Forest is designated in Structure Plan as an "Area of Particularly Attractive Landscape". Charnwood is a distinct Countryside Commission Character/Natural Area and Leicestershire County Council are currently seeking AONB status for the area.
- 10.65. Charwood Forest contains areas of pre cambrian rocks the most prominent outcrops are Beacon Hill and Bardon Hill. The Forest contains mixed and coniferous woodland, many ancient woodland sites and examples of wet woodland habitats , with some unmanaged woodland, mostly protected by Charnwood Area Tree Preservation Order. The area has mixed arable and pastureland, areas of parkland and estates. Bradgate Park contains ancient oak pollards and a medieval deer park. Within the areas are small areas of uncultivated heathland. The areas is of national importance ecologically as it is the south eastern limit for many species and a rich – composite of N/S and upland/lowland habitats – hunting parks and ancient forest. Over 2/3 of Charnwood Forest is in the National Forest.
- 10.66. Settlement patterns consist of small scattered farms and other dwellings with larger settlements around the edge of the area. The use of local stone gives the area a distinctive character.
- 10.67. Quarrying is active and important in the area, extracting granite and supplying markets in the south east. Most of the quarries have railheads and long periods of planning consent, they are generally unobtrusive apart from some viewpoints. Telecommunication masts are prominent from Copt Oak and Bardon Hill. Due to the topography there are long distance views of the open countryside. Charwood is attractive to visitors and does create in some areas pressures on the local communities.

Key issues are:

- lack of woodland, hedgerow and hedgerow tree management,
- poor state of repair and/or part removal of drystone wall field boundaries,
- insensitive or inadequately mitigated built development,
- pressure to extend existing quarries,
- visitor pressure in popular areas.

OTHER NATIONAL DESIGNATIONS

10.68. In recent years a number of individual designations have been introduced or proposed, to accommodate areas of special landscape and environmental quality which were not covered by earlier designations. These include the Norfolk Broads, New Forest and the South Downs. The nature of these designations is discussed below.

The Broads

10.69. Under the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988, the Broads have a status equal to that of a National Park and exercises similar functions to those of a National Park Authorities. The purpose of the Broads are to :

- conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Broads
- promote the enjoyment of the Broads by the public, and
- protect the interest of navigation

10.70. The Broads aims are similar to those of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, however the last aim is unique and reflects its mix of waterways, wet woodlands, fens and marshes.

10.71. National Parks status for the Broads was proposed in both the Dower and Hobhouse report, however further to consultations the National Parks Committee announced that they did not consider the designation of National Park appropriate.

10.72. Further to reports highlighting the concern over the deterioration of the Broads from an ecological perspective, the Countryside Commission undertook to produce two consultation papers in 1976 and 1977. As a result the Broads Authority was set up in 1978 to manage the area, membership consisted of the County Council, District Council, Port Authorities, Environment Agency and the Countryside Commission. The authority was part funded by authorities with 50% grant aid from the Commission. In 1983 the Commission reviewed the performance of the Broads and commented on three options for future management and administration. The review and subsequent report lead to the conclusion that a single body should administer the Broads.

Administration

10.73. The new authority began on 1st April 1989, it is responsible for an area 303sq km, has an estimated population of 5,600 and attracts over 2 million visitors per annum. The authority has 35 members from the County and District Councils, the Countryside Commission, English Nature, Great Yarmouth Port Authority, Environment Agency, Statutory Navigation Committee, and representatives for the Secretary of State. The authority is required to establish a Navigation Committee of 13 members, and consult with the committee before exercising its navigation powers. The authority employs approximately 80 to 100 staff. The authority is responsible for the local plan and development control, but not for the structure plan, minerals and waste local plan.

Planning applications are passed to the district councils who passes them onto the Broads authority for decision.

Planning

- 10.74. Planning policy guidance notes make specific reference to the Broads. Permitted development rights have been amended within the Broads so that some types of minor development require planning permission and lower volume limits apply for extensions to dwellings etc. A greater proportion of Schedule 2 proposals require an EIA. The authority is the sole planning authority for the Broads.

Funding

- 10.75. The Broads authority has two accounts, a general and separate navigation account. Central government provides 75% of funding for the general account, the local authorities fund the remainder. The Navigation Fund is supported by levying tolls on commercial and pleasure craft using the Broads.

Management

- 10.76. The Broads authority is responsible for managing the area and carrying out certain management works. Its main "role is to act as a catalyst, co-ordinating and influencing others, listening, consulting and drawing on the skills and knowledge of others to secure the best future for the area". Key priorities are the long-term restoration of the Broads through improvements to water quality, flood alleviation, fen and wetland management, enhancement of the built environment, interpretation and education.

New Forest Heritage Area

- 10.77. The New Forest Heritage Area is approximately 58,000 ha of internationally important ancient forest comprising of historic parkland, woodland, heath and grassland. The product of a long history of human exploitation with large tracts designated as SSSI it is very important in terms of both cultural heritage and nature conservation. Its proximity to centres of population, such as Southampton makes it an important recreational resource. Roughly half the area is crown estate land managed by the Forestry Commission.
- 10.78. The purpose of the New Forest Heritage Area is to:
- *"to conserve and enhance its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage;*
 - *to maintain the historic dispersed pastoral regime relating to commoning; and*
 - *to foster public understanding and sustainable enjoyment of the New Forest Heritage Area" (New Forest Committee)*

The area has some strong similarities with the Forest of Dean including:

- large tract of ancient forest,
- similar ancient customs and organisational structure/legislation,

- high nature conservation value,
 - high recreational value and pressures,
 - currently managed by Forest Enterprise.
- 10.79. The New Forest Committee decided in May 1997 to pursue legislation to designate the Heritage Area and to create a special authority to co-ordinate management in the Forest. A public consultation exercise was undertaken and the Committee's recommendation have been put forward to the Secretary of State. The Countryside Commission stated that they were supportive of the proposals for the New Forest to be designated a Heritage Area, equivalent to National Park. The new authority should be able to undertake the following:
- act as a statutory consultee,
 - provide financial assistance to landowners,
 - prepare management plans.
- 10.80. The Commission indicated that if parliamentary time was not provided to establish such an authority, the Commission would utilise its powers under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to designate the New Forest as a National Park.
- 10.81. The New Forest Heritage Area still lacks official designation; it is only defined in local plans. In the early 90's the government announced that the New Forest Heritage Area should be treated as a National Park for planning purposes but the undertaking has not yet been formalised.
- 10.82. There is currently a call for National Park designation of a wider area than the existing Heritage Area including the Avon Valley and the Solent coastal strip on the basis of:
- historic links,
 - backup grazing,
 - "scientific" importance of wildlife sites,
 - existence of South Hampshire Coast AONB,
 - complimentary character of adjacent landscapes.
- 10.83. In June 1998 the Commission advised Government that New Forest should have National Park equivalent status and would be most efficiently managed though tailor made arrangements secured by special legislation. The Commission is still awaiting a decision by parliament on where a new status for the New Forest will be granted.

RELEVANT MAINLAND EUROPEAN DESIGNATIONS

Parc Naturals Regional

10.84. The concept of regional nature parks was developed in the early 1960's by DATAR, an agency responsible for establishing regional planning policy and the first park, St Amand - Raismes was created in 1968. There are thirty-five regional nature parks in France. The Parc Naturals are intended to protect ecologically fragile sites. In order to qualify an area must be of particular interest for the quality of its natural and cultural heritage, for public education, recreation and relaxation and research. Based on the most recent Article R-244-1 of the Decree of September 1994 the "overall aim of regional nature parks is to promote concerted actions for coherent management and economic development of their respective regions. The specific objectives of regional nature parks are:

- to protect the national heritage, particularly by appropriate management of nature and landscapes;
- to contribute to rational land use planning;
- to promote economic, social and cultural development and improve quality of life;
- to attract, educate and inform the public; and
- to conduct experimental and exemplary actions in the above fields and contribute to research programme." (Scottish Natural Heritage, 1998)

Establishment, Administration and Funding

- 10.85. Proposals for a regional park are initiated by the respective region, through the submission of a charter and management plan to the Ministry of Environment. The Charter establishes the goals of the parks, outlines the actions need to achieve the objectives and the means of implementing these objectives. It also includes a budget for investment and operating costs. The charter is drawn up in common agreement between the region and interested local communities, all relevant bodies are consulted over a four month period.
- 10.86. The charter is a 10 year undertaking by elected representatives, departmental, regional and national government. A regional nature park is declared by the Minister for Environment, further to the recommendation by the Commission for Regional Nature Parks.
- 10.87. The administrative management of the parks is specified in the charter. Administrative responsibilities can be managed by a public or private body. Most of the parks are managed by a board who delegate administrative responsibilities to a director.
- 10.88. Funding is from the regions (40%), departments (27%), communes (20%), and Ministry of Environment (10%). The management policy specified in the Charter is valid for 10

years. When the 10 years has been completed a review procedure is undertaken which assesses the past accomplishments and determines whether the park should renew its charter, establishing further objectives for the next 10 years.

OTHER NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DESIGNATIONS

SSSI's

- 10.89. A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is an area of land which English Nature or Countryside Council for Wales has identified as being of "special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features" (section 28(1) of 1981 Town and Country Planning Act). The SSSI series is intended to form a national network of sites, which represent the best examples of the full range of features of value to nature and/or geological conservation in Britain. Most of the SSSI are in private ownership and English Nature and Countryside Council for Wales are responsible for their notification.
- 10.90. The legal provision for SSSIs can be found in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 - Part II, Section 28, 32 and 33 as amended by the Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment) Act 1985, section 2 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act (Services of Notices) Act 1985, Section 2. Previously provision was made in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 -Part III, section 23. Other relevant legislation includes the Countryside Act, 1968 and the Environment Act 1990.
- 10.91. There are 4,968 SSSIs, including coastal sites, in England and Wales (as at January 1999) covering a total of 1,219461.6 ha.

Box 7 Summary Table of Total numbers of SSSIs in England and Wales

| SSSI data: 28.1.99 | Total number | Total area in hectares |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Wales | 946 | 222661.6 |
| England | 4022 | 996800.0 |

Criteria for Notification

The criteria used to assess each site are:

- naturalness
- rarity
- fragility
- representatives
- recorded history
- position in an ecological/geographical unit

- potential value
- intrinsic appeal

10.92. In addition to these criteria are a number of specific criteria used to select SSSIs. Application of these criteria are complex and different criteria or different combinations or emphasis are placed on site evaluation and selection.

Notification

10.93. English Nature and Countryside Council for Wales have a duty to notify the local planning authority, the owner and occupier of the land and the Secretary of State. English Nature and Countryside Council for Wales also have a duty to inform the Environment Agency, all relevant water companies. The notice should specify the reasons why the land is of special interest and list the operations which would be likely to damage the flora, fauna or special features. The notification should also contain a statement that representations or objections to the designation of an SSSI on the identified land the notification was given. If representations or objections are made, English Nature or Countryside Council for Wales must decide within 9 months as whether to withdraw or confirm the notification. A formal notification is registered as a local land charge.

Changes to the SSSI

10.94. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 indicates that a notification and confirmation tends to be a once and for all exercise, with no alterations. English Nature and Countryside Council for Wales however can modify the notification where changes materially affect the protection given to the site or where it would support the case of the site's protection. A proposal to extend an existing SSSI is not possible through altering the notification. If English Nature decides to extend the area then the full notification procedure has to be repeated.

10.95. On sites of national or international importance the Secretary of State can make a Nature Conservation Order (NCO), under the 1981 Protection Act to protect threatened sites. Such an order extends the period for negotiation of a management agreement to up to 12 months. *"All sites of national or international importance on land (Including National Nature Reserves (NNRs), Nature Conservation review (NCR) and Geological Conservation review (GCR) sites, Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar Sites) are notified as SSSIs "* (PPG7 para A4)

Implications of Notification

10.96. Where a formal notification is served on the owner/occupier of the land he should not carry out any operations specified in the notification unless:

- written consent is given by English Nature and Countryside Council for Wales;
- the operation is covered by a management agreement;
- four months have expired since written notice was given.

- 10.97. Failure to obtain consent and "without reasonable excuse" can result in a summary conviction or fine.

Management Agreements

- 10.98. The agencies are also able to offer management agreements which may include payments or grants to the owners or occupiers. In some cases grants may be made to the owner to undertake positive work to maintain or enhance the value of the site.

AREA OF SPECIAL PROTECTION

- 10.99. Statutory protected areas in England and Wales identified in the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act with the purpose of protecting individual bird species or special areas of importance to birds from human disturbance. There are 2 in Wales and 27 in England.

Box 8 - PPG 9 October 1994

"Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are intended to protect the habitats of threatened species of wildlife.

Article 4 of the Birds Directive requires that special measure to taken to conserve the habitat of the species listed in Annex I of the Directive in order to ensure their survival and reproduction in their area of distribution. In particular, Member States are required to classify the most suitable areas for these species as SPAs. Similar measures are to be taken in respect of regularly occurring migratory species not listed in Annex I.

- Article 2 of the Habitats Directive states that the Directive's aim is to contribute towards bio-diversity through conserving natural habitats and wild fauna and flora of Community importance. Measures taken pursuant of the Directive are to take account of economic, social and local characteristics.

- Article 3 of the Habitats Directive requires Member States to contribute, according to the selection and designation procedure set out in Article 4 and Annex III, to a coherent Community-wide network of SACs called Natura 2000. The SACs will be selected for their importance as natural habitat types and as habitats of the species listed in Annexes I and II of the Directive. All Birds Directive SPAs will also be part of the Natura 2000 network under Article 3 (1) of the Habitats Directive.

- Article 6 (2) of the Habitats Directive requires Member States to take appropriate steps to avoid, in SACs and SPAs, significant deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species as well as disturbance of the species for which the sites have been designated.

- Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive requires that proposed developments ⁽¹⁾, not directly connected with or necessary to site management, which are likely to have a significant effect on an SAC or an SPA, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, should be assessed according to their implications for the sites' conservation objectives. The development may go ahead if, as a result of the assessment, it is found that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site. If the assessment shows there will be a negative effect, the scheme may only be allowed if there is no alternative solution and if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In such instances, Member States must take compensatory measures to preserve the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network. There are special considerations for sites which host priority natural habitat types or priority species, which are particularly at risk and are marked within Annexes I and II to the Habitats Directive (see Annex G of this PPG). In such cases, schemes can only be considered in terms of overriding

reasons of human health and public safety, or beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the European Commission following consultation by the Government, other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

- Article 7 of the Habitats Directive applies Articles 6 (2), (3) and (4) of the Directive to the Birds Directive. These provisions supersede the first sentence of Article 4 (4) of the Birds Directive.

- Article 10 of the Habitats Directive requires Member States to encourage in their land-use planning and development policies the management of landscape features which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora (see paragraph 16 of this PPG)."

(Annex A para 15)

"The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (the Habitats Regulations) made provision for the purposes of implementing the Habitats Directive. Among other things, they apply the relevant requirements of Article 6 to specified provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Pipe lines Act 1962, the Highways Act 1980, the Cycle Tracks Act 1984, the Electricity Act 1989 and the Transport and Works Act 1992. They also provide for the designation of SACs under the Habitats Directive. In the Regulations, SACs and SPAs classified pursuant to the Birds Directive, are known as European sites."

(Annex A, para 16)

"Areas of Special Protection for Birds (AOSPs) are established under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 by orders made by the Secretary of State after appropriate consultation with owners and occupiers. The purpose of such orders is normally to provide sanctuary to particularly vulnerable groups of birds. The protection given by such Orders can vary to meet particular circumstances. AOSPs replace the establishment of Bird Sanctuaries under the Protection of Birds Act 1954 but sanctuaries established under the Act still enjoy protection " (Annex A para 21)

BIODIVERSITY SITE

10.100. An international designation that aims to conserve biological diversity, and promote the sustainable use of its components and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources. The UK Government does not propose to establish any such sites and has opted for the production of Biodiversity Action Plans instead.

BIOGENETIC RESERVE

- 10.101. A European designation that aims to establish a European network of reserves of flora, fauna and natural areas. There are 15 in England and 1 in Wales.

Box 9 - PPG 9 October 1994

"Biogenetic Reserve. A number of National Nature Reserves and some important SSSIs have been identified as Biogenetic Reserves under a Council of Europe programme for the conservation of heathlands and dry grasslands. Sites of international importance are designated by the Secretary of State in the light of recommendations made by English Nature. These recommendations are made only after consultation with local authorities and the owners and occupiers of the land concerned. The Secretary of State takes any comments into account before reaching a decision. Relevant local authorities are informed of any designations by English Nature". (Annex A, para 18)

BIOSPHERE RESERVE

- 10.102. A non-statutory international designation that aims to develop scientific bases for: the rational use and conservation of the biosphere; and the improvement of the global relationship between man and the environment. The reserves are generally large areas of landscape. There are 3 in England and 1 in Wales.

CONSERVATION AREA

- 10.103. A national statutory designation made under the Planning Act of 1990 to afford protection to "areas of special architectural or historic interest" the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The main purpose is to protect the built environment and associated features but recently the designation has been used to protect a few historic landscapes. The concept of "Rural Conservation Areas" was discussed in the 1980s but not pursued. There are over 6,000 Conservation Areas in England and 400 in Wales.

Box 10 - PPG 15 September 1995

"Conservation Areas. Section 69 of the Act imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. There are now more than 8,000 conservation areas in England. Whilst listing procedures are focused on the protection of individual buildings, conservation area designation is the main instrument available to authorities to give effect to conservation policies for a particular neighbourhood or area. Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest.". (para 4.1)

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREA

- 10.104. A statutory designation, part of the EC Agri-Environment legislation (Reg 2078/92 on Environmentally Sensitive Farming) with the aim of supporting agricultural practices compatible with conserving natural habitats and maintaining adequate income for farmers. ESAs are designated to maintain specific agricultural practices in order to conserve the natural beauty and wildlife in areas of national environmental importance as designated by MAFF. There are 16 ESAs in England covering 813,000 hectares and 5 in Wales.

Box 11 - PPG 7 Revised February 1997

Environmentally Sensitive Area. Environmentally sensitive areas are areas of special landscape, wildlife or historic interest which can be protected or enhanced by supporting specific agricultural practices. (para 4.15).

HERITAGE LAND

- 10.105. Includes tracts of land normally in a single ownership recognised as of outstanding scenic, historic or scientific interest and once so classified, eligible to be exempt on certain conditions from capital tax on disposal or transfer by the owner. Designated under powers in the Inheritance Tax Act 1984 with the purpose of allowing relief from capital taxation that would otherwise force owners to dispose of property, thus threatening the integrity of the landscape.

HERITAGE COAST

- 10.106. These areas were originally defined by the Commission and local authorities to focus on the management needs of the England and Wales finest undeveloped coasts and adjacent inland areas. Non-statutory areas recommended by the Countryside Commission of undeveloped coastline of high scenic quality given official recognition through PPG20. Local authorities are encouraged to draw up management plans and appoint Heritage Coast Officers. 45 separate Heritage Coasts accounts for just over one third of the total coastline in England and Wales. The main objectives which are summarised from the Commission's policy document CCP 397 are:

to conserve, protect and enhance natural beauty of the coasts, including their terrestrial, littoral and marine flora and fauna, and their heritage features of architectural, historical and archaeological interest;

to facilitate and enhance their enjoyment, understanding and appreciation by the public;
to maintain and improve the environmental health of inshore waters affecting coasts and their beaches;

to take account of the needs of agriculture, forestry, fishing, and the economic and social needs of the small communities on these coastlines.

Box 12 - PPG 7 Revised February 1997

Heritage Coast. PPG20 sets out planning policy for coastal areas. Parts of the coast valued for their landscape or nature conservation importance are included in statutorily designated areas such as National Parks, AONBs and SSSIs, and may be defined as Heritage Coasts in development plans. (para 4.17)

LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

- 10.107. Non-statutory areas reserved for of nature conservation, education research and public enjoyment, designated by local authorities for community use. Many are found in urban areas and some are also SSSIs.

Box 13 - PPG 9 October 1994

"Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) may be established by local authorities under section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. These habitats of local significance can make a useful contribution both to nature conservation and to the opportunities for the public to see, learn about, and enjoy wildlife. Authorities are required to consult English Nature about the establishment of such a reserve. English Nature can give practical help and, in some circumstances, grants, as well as advice on byelaws to protect the reserve. Such byelaws should follow the model available from the Department of the Environment and require confirmation by the Secretary of State.." (para A22)

MARINE CONSULTATION AREA

- 10.108. A non-statutory designation, now largely abandoned, intended to identify marine areas which are important to nature conservation and where there is significant potential for other conflicting activities with the aim of safeguarding marine conservation interests on a wide scale through voluntary involvement of those interests.

MARINE NATURE RESERVE

- 10.109. Designated under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside in order to conserve marine flora, fauna and geology/geomorphology and provide opportunities for marine environment study and research. There is 1 in Wales with 2 more proposed and 1 in England.

Box 14 - PPG 9 October 1994

"Marine Nature Reserves (MNRs) are designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to conserve marine flora or fauna or geological or physiographical features or to allow study of such features. Following an application by English Nature, the Secretary of State may apply such a designation to any areas of land covered (continuously or intermittently) by tidal waters or to parts of the sea up to the seaward limits of territorial waters. An MNR has already been established at Lundy. A voluntary marine park has been established at the Isles

of Scilly". (para A19)

"English Nature may make byelaws for the protections of MNRs, except where these would interfere with the byelaw-making functions already vested in another authority. Local authorities can contribute to the successful operation of reserves by making complementary byelaws to control activities on the foreshore or other parts of MNRs within their boundaries."
(para A20)

NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

- 10.110. A statutory designation to cover areas of nationally important scientific interest representative of the main semi-natural ecological systems found in Britain. Designated and administered by English Nature and the Countryside Council for Wales to conserve and provide opportunities for the scientific study of wildlife habitats, communities and species, and geological features. Most NNRs are based on SSSIs.

Box 15 - PPG 9 October 1994

"National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are areas of national, and sometimes international, importance which are owned or leased by English Nature or bodies approved by them, or are managed in accordance with Nature Reserve Agreements with landowners and occupiers. The essential characteristic of NNRs is that they are primarily used for nature conservation".
(para A14)

RAMSAR SITE

- 10.111. Designation under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Wildlife Habitat 1971 to stem progressive encroachment on, and loss of, wetlands. Designation represents recognition by the UK Government of the site's international importance. There are currently 60 Ramsar sites in Britain.

Box 16 - PPG 9 October 1994

"The Ramsar Convention requires signatory states to protect wetlands that are of international importance, particularly as waterfowl habitats. Ramsar sites are listed by the Secretary of State. The provisions of the Ramsar Convention include requirements for contracting parties to promote wetlands generally and to:

- a. *"formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the list, and as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory";*
- b. *"designate alternative sites of the original habitat type should the development of any of the presently designated sites become necessary in the urgent national interest"*.
(para A17)

SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT

10.112. The main form of statutory protection for archaeological and historic features including a wide range of buildings, structures, sub-surface remains and artefacts together with land essential for their support, designated for their national importance under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. There are over 12,000 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in England and new sites are being added as the existing Schedule is reviewed.

SPECIAL AREAS FOR CONSERVATION (SAC)

10.113. A European designation arising from the Habitat and Species Directive created to stem deterioration of natural habitats across Europe with the aim of contributing towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and wild flora and fauna. SACs are often drawn from existing land-based SSSIs and is intended that they will complement Special Protection Areas (see below) and together form part of the proposed Natura 2000 network of specially protected sites.

SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS (SPA)

10.114. A designation under the EC Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds requiring the provision of areas for the protection, management and control of all species of naturally occurring wild birds in the European territory in order to maintain their population at an ecologically and scientifically sound level. In 1994 there were 86 SPAs in GB. The majority of SPAs are coastal and wetland areas and all are notified as SSSIs.

Box 17 - PPG 9 October 1994

"Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are intended to protect the habitats of threatened species of wildlife.

Article 4 – special measures must be taken to conserve the habitat of species listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive

Article 2 – aim of Habitat Directive is to contribute towards bio-diversity through conservation of natural habitats

Article 3 – of the Habitats Directive requires setting up of coherent Community-wide network of SACs called Natura 2000

Article 6 – under the Habitats Directive only development that does not adversely affect the integrity of the site will be allowed

Article 10 – of the Habitats Directive requires planning policies to encourage the management of landscape features which are of major importance for wild flora.

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations 1994 (the Habitats Regulations) make provision for the purposes of implementing the Habitats Directive. Among other things, they apply the relevant requirements of Article 6 to specified provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Pipe lines Act 1962, the Highways Act 1980, the Cycle Tracks Act 1984, the Electricity Act 1989 and the Transport and Works Act 1992. They also provide for the designation of SACs under the Habitats Directive. In the Regulations, SACs and SPAs classified pursuant to the Birds Directive, are known as European sites."(para A16)

WORLD HERITAGE SITE

- 10.115. A non-statutory designation adopted under the World Heritage Convention 1972 by the General Conference of UNESCO aiming to establish an effective system for the collective protection of sites or areas of cultural or natural heritage of outstanding universal value. The onus is on local authorities to be responsible for and to manage sites. In practice most World Heritage Sites in Great Britain are already designated within either National Parks or AONBs or as SSSIs (natural sites) or Listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments or Conservation Areas (cultural sites). To date, 12 sites of cultural interest in Great Britain have been listed.

Box 18 - PPG 15 September 1995

"Details of World Heritage Sites in England are given in paragraph 6.35. No additional statutory controls follow from the inclusion of a site in the World Heritage list. Inclusion does, however, highlight the outstanding international importance of the site as a key material consideration to be taken into account by local planning authorities in determining planning and listed building consent applications, and by the Secretary of State in determining cases on appeal or following call-in. (para 2.22)

Each local authority concerned, taking account of World Heritage Site designation and other relevant statutory designations, should formulate specific planning policies for protecting these sites and include these policies in their development plans. Policies should reflect the fact that all these sites have been designated for their outstanding universal value, and they should place great weight on the need to protect them for the benefit of future generations as well as our own. Development proposals affecting these sites or their setting may be compatible with this objective, but should always be carefully scrutinised for their likely effect on the site or its setting in the longer term. Significant development proposals affecting World Heritage Sites will generally require formal environmental assessment, to ensure that their immediate impact and their implications for the longer term are fully evaluated (see paragraph 2.13 above)." (para 2.23)

"The World Heritage Convention (adopted by UNESCO in 1972) was ratified by the United Kingdom in 1984. The Convention provides for the identification, protection, conservation and presentation of cultural and natural sites of outstanding universal value., and requires a World Heritage List to be established under the management of an inter-governmental World Heritage Committee, which is advised by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN). Individual governments are responsible for the nomination of sites, and for ensuring the protection of sites which are inscribed in the List. There are, at present, ten World Heritage Sites in England:

1. *Durham Cathedral and Castle*
2. *Fountains Abbey, St Mary's Church and Studley Royal Park*
3. *Ironbridge Gorge*
4. *Stonehenge, Avebury and associated sites*
5. *Blenheim Palace and Park*
6. *Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey*
7. *City of Bath*
8. *Hadrian's Wall Military Zone*
9. *The Tower of London*
10. *Canterbury Cathedral (with St Augustine's Abbey and St. Martin's Church)." (para 6.35)*

"Full details of the operation of the World Heritage Convention, including the selection criteria for cultural and natural sites, and contained in the 'Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention'." (Para 6.36)

"The significance of World Heritage designation for local authorities' exercise of planning controls is set out in section 2 (paragraphs 2.22 - 2.23). Local planning authorities are also encouraged to work with owners and managers of World Heritage Sites in their areas, and with other agencies, to ensure that comprehensive management plans are in place. These plans should:

- appraise the significance and condition of the site;*
- ensure the physical conservation of the site to the highest standards;*
- protect the site and its setting from damaging development;*
- provide clear policies for tourism as it may affect the site.*

ICOMOS can provide advice and assistance in carrying forward this work." (para 6.37)

11. CONSULTATION WITH SELECTED BODIES

INTRODUCTION

- 11.1. In order to ascertain the main issues and concerns within the Forest of Dean, LUC was asked, as part of the study, to undertake a limited consultation exercise. Two briefing meetings were held, as well as individual meetings with a variety of organisations ranging from Action against Quarrying, and quarry developers to bodies such as the Freeminers and Forest of Dean Small Mines Association, and the local planning authorities. A full list of people consulted is outlined in Appendix VI along with minutes from the two briefing meetings and a list of the invited audience.
- 11.2. In addition to the comments from the various meetings, written comments were also received. This chapter summarises the main concerns and issues raised. A more detailed breakdown of the written comments is set out in Appendix VII.

TOPICS RAISED

Designation/Status:

- 11.3. Varied views were received on the need for a special status. Out of the 43 comments received the majority of writers stated that they were in favour of a special status for the Forest of Dean. However many voiced concern as to how this would be implemented. Specific questions were asked including the following:
would there be a blanket restriction on major developments, permitting only small scale developments?
would special status impose restrictions on some developments such as quarrying but be relaxed on proposals relating to tourism?
- 11.4. Other writers commented that an AONB or enhanced AONB status would be appropriate, but expressed concern that the principles underlying AONBs are frequently ignored by local planning authorities, or breached on appeal by developers. Only a limited number were in favour of a National Park option stating that it would offer stronger protection from certain developments.
- 11.5. The Quarry Producers Association, Bardon Aggregates and Tarmac stated that whatever status were to be recommended careful consideration should be given to all the environmental and economic issues affecting the area, ensuring that any proposals would not be influenced solely by one issue – namely quarrying.

Tourism

- 11.6. The majority of writers expressed the need to promote recreation and tourism, focusing on their economic and environmental benefits rather than mineral extraction. Tourism should draw on the importance of cultural heritage of the area. Many writers however expressed reservations about developing the area into a "theme park", there should be some restrictions over the scale of new tourism proposals.

Housing

- 11.7. Comments were raised about the development of new large scale housing estates. These are often poorly planning and do not integrate well into the surroundings.

Transport

- 11.8. A common concern related to the limited transport infrastructure in the area. Due to the heavy bridge tolls over the Severn many lorries avoid these crossings and detour through the Forest adding to congestion in the area. Quarrying activities within the forest, and road haulage to and from these sites, exacerbates problems, generating dust and noise. The existing roads are dangerous and there are limited public transport facilities.

Environment

- 11.9. The majority of writers stressed that the area was unique for its natural beauty and unspoilt character, and agreed this should be maintained.

Quarrying

- 11.10. Conflicting views were presented on mineral extractions and quarrying. Some correspondents were in favour of small-scale extraction however many demanded a moratorium on large scale new quarrying. The opposing arguments were that the threat of quarrying is perceived rather than real, quarrying is a traditional activity which has shaped the area's cultural heritage, it meets the local needs within Gloucestershire and covers on a small extent of the district.
- 11.11. An important issue raised was the need to recognise the underground beauty of the forest, with its network of underground mines and caves, providing a three dimensional perspective of the forest.

Local Economy

- 11.12. There was widespread recognition of the need to provide sufficient jobs for the local unemployed, promoting small to medium labour intensive industries. Inward investment in the area should focus on the generation of small-scale workshops and industrial units which would be well integrated into the surroundings. However various writers stated that a balance should be achieved between conserving the landscape and supporting the local economy.



APPENDIX I - CHRONOLOGY



CHRONOLOGY

THE STONE AGE

20000-10000 BC *Paleolithic Period*

Cave dwellings of the Wye Valley –King Arthur's and Merlin's Caves were occupied by hunter gathers from the end of the last Ice Age c. 10000 BC to at least Roman times

10000-3000 BC *Mesolithic Period*

Mesolithic occupation of sites near rivers at Tideham and Flaxley point to early exploitation of the forest edge

3000-1900 BC *Neolithic Period*

Neolithic settlers from mainland Europe brought introduced agriculture – both arable and livestock farming

THE BRONZE AGE

1900-1700 BC *Beaker Period*

The Beaker people (named after their characteristic beaker-shaped pottery) set up large stones or megaliths i.e. The Long Stone near Coleford

1700-450 BC *Bronze Age*

Native Neolithic communities concentrated mainly in the Wye Valley and along the Severn Estuary built barrows, made pottery, and developed sophisticated bronze tools and weapons

Evidence of early iron smelting taking place in the Dean c. 1000 BC at the Drummer Boy Stone

IRON AGE

450 BC – 43 AD

Celtic immigration from the Continent from c.700 BC brought iron making technology to Dean – first significant iron working dates from c.200 BC

Many hill forts were constructed e.g. at Symonds Yat, Tidenham Chase and Lydney Park reflecting the tribal rivalry of the age

The Dobunni tribe, a fairly advanced civilisation using coins, were a dominant force in the area surviving well into the Roman Age

THE ROMAN PERIOD

43-410 AD

Roman occupation of Britain marks increased iron working – the ancient "scowles" i.e. The Devils Chapel and other underground workings e.g. at Clearwell date from this period

Bloomery furnaces were probably introduced by the Romans

The use of coal is first recorded – used for heating in Roman buildings

2nd century AD - Forest of Dean superceded the Weald as Britain's main iron production area

The Roman built roads in the Dean , some possibly based on earlier routes.

THE DARK AGES/SAXON PERIOD

410-1066 AD

Celtic customs were still evident in Dean long after the Romans departure from Britain

577 - the battle of Dyrham

c. 790 - Offa's Dyke constructed

Saxon kings instigate use of the forest for "recreation"

Saxon "charters" and "hundreds" mark the first administrative divisions of the Dean

c. 1000 - King Canute is thought to have instituted the first forest or verderers court – to preserve the "vert and venison" of the forest

The Vikings were a constant threat in the late Dark ages to areas accessible by river i.e.

The Severn and Wye. A few low-lying settlement names are of Norse origin e.g. Awre

THE MIDDLE AGE

1066-1154 Norman Period

c. 1067 - William the Conqueror institutes Forest Law c. 1067 to preserve the Forest for the Royal hunt

1086 - Domesday Book - does not identify the Forest of Dean by but provides first evidence of the extent of the Forest at that time- approximately 50,000 hectares

c. 1130 - A number of castles date from this time e.g. St Briavels c. 1130 Lydney and Ruardean

Forest miners allowed to win iron ore on their own account subject to dues – exact date of granting of privilege unknown - possibly 12th century

1154-1600 Medieval Period

During this period the Forest became increasingly important nationally for iron production resulting in reduction in tree cover for charcoal – furthermore, its importance as royal chase diminished and its importance as a source of ship building timber for the burgeoning Royal navy increased.

Subsequent monarchs (Edwards, Richards and Henrys) continued to exploit the Forest for recreation and "fruits of the table" -

Over period of 150 years the official Forest (area subject to Forest Law) was extended to include the area between the Wye and Severn and a line from the bridge west of Gloucester to Newent and then to Ross in the north

1244 – Forest miners allowed to win coal on their own account subject to dues

1282 - The Forest Eyre was authorised by Edward I to investigate concern over encroachments and despoilation of the Forest e.g. due to iron working and poaching – the resulting "roll" identifies 59 itinerant forges and bloomeries at work in the Forest and mentions the Hundred of St. Briavels for the first time.

c. 1300 - Edward I concedes reduction in extent of Forest and grants rights to Freeminers

1335 – first record of Verderers Court held at Kensley House

1600 - official Forest reduced to original size at Domesday– roughly coterminous with the present boundary of the Hundred of St. Briavels

THE INDUSTRIAL AGE

1600-1700 Pre-Industrial Period

Iron production and related woodland exploitation/deforestation accelerated during the period c. 1600-1680 by the introduction of new blast furnace technology and the establishment of Kings Ironworks throughout the Dean, and particularly through the aggressive activities of the Winter family who received grants of large tracts of forest from the Charles I

A period of change and local unrest during which orders were given to close down all iron works and the Medieval bailiwicks (forest divisions) were replaced by six "walks" each named after a monarch

1634 - Justice Seat in Eyre – Charles I attempt to resuscitate Forest Law and the Verderers Court later became the Speech Court held at Kensley House and subsequently at Speech House from 1676

1643-5 – Forest of Dean (together with the City of Gloucester) was a Roundhead stronghold in the Civil War during which iron production greatly increased

1653 - Act for the Deafforestation, Sale and Improvement of the Forests - the Forest of Dean was expressly excluded causing local unrest

1657 Forest Act - enacted "for the mitigation of the "rigour" of the forest laws within the Forest of Dean and for the preservation of wood and timber in the said Forest."

1660 – Restoration of the monarchy – Charles II –by the time of the Restoration, despite enclosure and replanting the Forest of Dean was greatly reduced – possibly only 200 hectares of quality timber left – from this point the Crown gave up its iron "concessions"

1668 – The Dean Forest (Reafforestation) Act – enacted to arrest the decline of the forest

1674 –Kings Ironworks demolished

1675 onwards saw a shift away from surface iron ore mining to larger underground workings

1676 - Speech House opened

1700-1950 Industrial Period

Continuing local opposition to enclosure of the forest frustrated attempts at enclosing and replanting the Forest made possible by the 1668 Act

Coal mining superseded iron working as the main industrial activity in the Forest – by the end of the 18th century there were 151 pits in operation producing around 1800 tons of coal per week

Tramroads and railways were constructed to serve the mining industry and local transport needs linking the Forest to its ports at Lydney and Chepstow and to the nearby markets of Bristol, Gloucester and Monmouth.

The growth of industry required labour and settlements grew and coalesced – characteristic "squatter" settlements with dispersed dwellings developed on forest waste close to centers of coal and iron working

1788 – A commission set up to "inquire into the state and condition of the woods, forests and lands revenues of the Crown" reported that the Forest of Dean was a valuable nursery for naval timber but in a poor state

1808 - The Dean Forest (Timber) Act 1808 reinforced much of the 1688 Act and provided powers to increase enclosure to 11000 acres

1831 – the perambulation of the Forest of Dean established – origin of the statutory forest - following the appointment of the Commission of 1831 which revealed that encroachment of the forest by squatters amounted to over 2000 acres. It further

reported on the confusion surrounding rights of "commons" (still a matter of debate) and confirmed the rights of Freemaners

1838 – The Dean Forest Mines Act – defined and clarified the rights of Freemaners

1919 – Forestry Commission established

1923 – Transfer of Woods and Forests Act

1927 – Forestry Act

1929 – Forest of Dean Byelaws

THE POST INDUSTRIAL AGE

1950-Post Industrial Period

1960 – FC Working Plan - aimed to achieve 75% conifer planting

1962 – Inclosure Commissioners appointed

1971 - Wild Creatures and Forest Laws Act – abolished Monarch's right to "beasts of the forest" and abrogated Forest Law

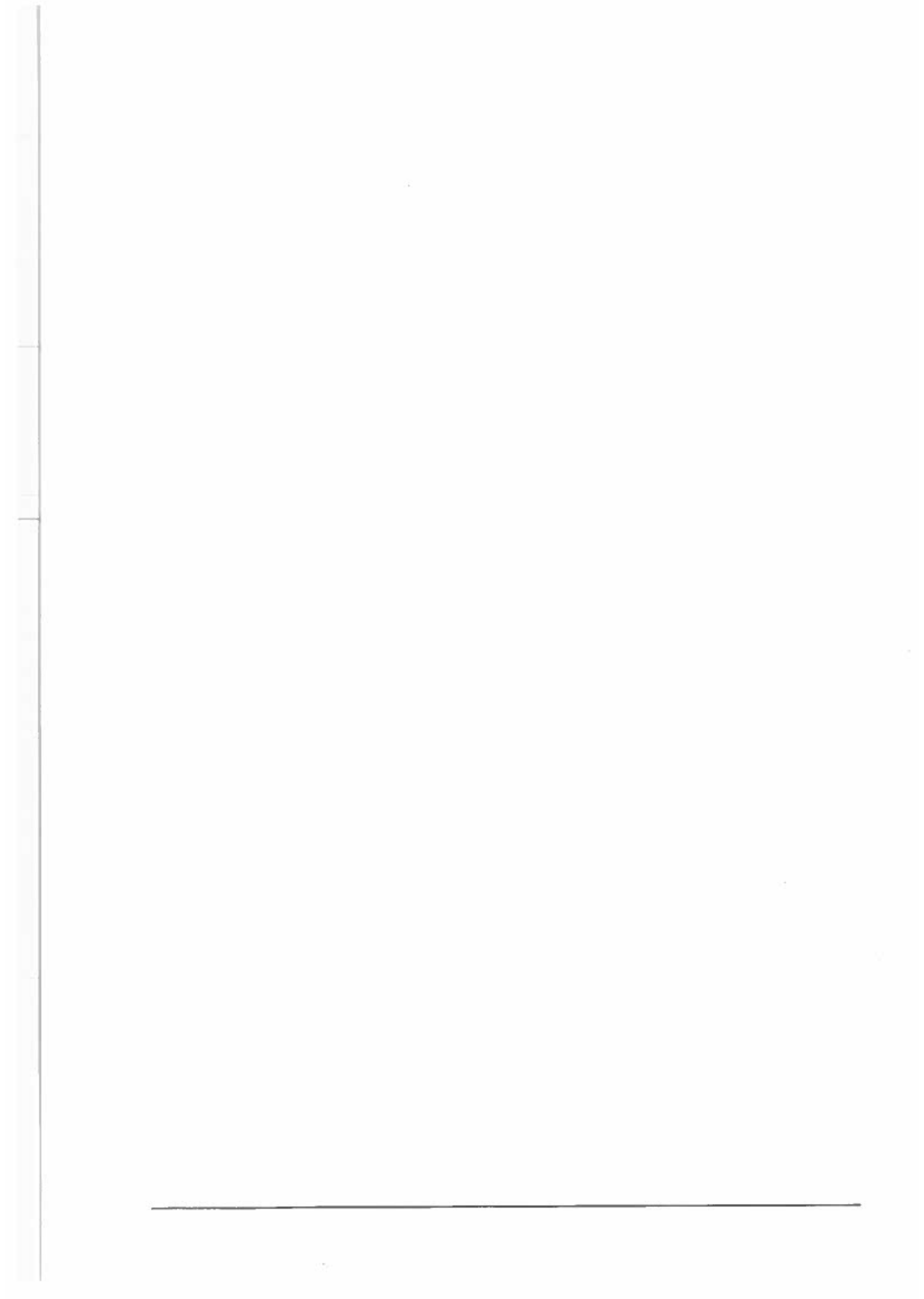
1971 – Government directive setting minimum limit of 42 % broadleaf cover in the Dean

1981 – Forestry Act – specifically protects the Forest of Dean from sale

1985 – Government policy on Broadleaf Woodland

1989 – Forestry Commission restructuring – creation of the Forestry Authority and Forest Enterprise

APPENDIX II – Landscape Appendix



LANDSCAPE QUALITY ANALYSIS BY CHARACTER AREA

Character area 1 - Forest of Dean

Planning status

- Included in Hobhouse Conservation Area
- Currently designated as a Special Landscape Area
- Designated a National Forest Park 1938
- Within the "Wye Valley and Forest of Dean" Countryside Character Area and Natural Area

Landscape Features

Mine workings – above and below ground

Industrial structures/archaeology

Roman roads – Dean Road

New Fancy vantage point

Mallards Pike

Speech House

Speech house Arboretum

Sculpture Trail

Vernacular buildings e.g. Cannop Valley

Forest waste

I. FOREST OF DEAN

landscape character and quality – strengths and weaknesses

| Weaknesses/negative attributes | Strengths/positive attributes |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• uniform topography and landcover• few good long distance views• enclosed landscape – short / filtered views• difficult to orient oneself• lacks distinct identity/physical form when viewed from outside (unlike other upland areas and AONBs e.g. Malvern Hills or Quantocks)• commercial forestry (perceived as threat to AONBs)• “young” appearance of forest unlike• appearance of settlements and dispersed/irregular settlement pattern• quarrying and mining activity• no sublime natural feature as “honeypot” i.e. like Wye Valley gorge/Symonds Yat• qualities are intangible, subdued, dispersed throughout the Forest | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• extent / scale of woodland cover – 2nd largest wooded area in England• mosaic of broadleaf and conifer planting• uniqueness / rarity of landscape and its features• openness – lack of enclosure and open character• remoteness – secluded nature• open / free access – right to roam anywhere• Glos County Archaeology Dept. and English Heritage consider the Forest a nationally important resource• sense of enclosure – security / prospect-refuge theory• sense of mystery – short, interrupted views create anticipation/expectation of discovery• intangible qualities – ancient and industrial archaeology, ancient customs, rights and privileges• critical mass of natural capital – scale and diversity of wildlife resource |

I. FOREST OF DEAN

landscape character and quality – evaluation

Landscape as resource

The Forest of Dean is a nationally important resource:

- England's second largest forest/wooded area
- Britain's premier oak woodland – 50/50 deciduous to conifer
- first National Forest Park (1938)
- rare example of self-supporting/sustainable mixed forestry
- unique industrial and forest history
- unique nature conservation complexity
- nationally important recreational resource – extensive area of open access

Scenic quality

Study of perception of landscape images concluded that perceived scenic quality was dependent on mainly on three physical dimensions – landform/relief, naturalness/vegetation cover and presence of water. The presence of such elements, occurring either singly or in combination are likely to confer scenic quality on particular areas.

As the Forest of Dean displays a combination of key landscape elements as listed below it qualifies as an area of high scenic quality:

- upland
- steep slopes
- rivers and watercourses
- small lakes and ponds
- bare rock
- grassland
- roughland, heath, bracken and gorse
- deciduous and conifer woodland

Unspoilt character

Although the Forest has been heavily exploited since Roman times, and is currently important in terms of commercial forestry and recreation, its character today is largely unspoilt and includes:

- large tracts of open (both in terms of character and access), mixed semi-natural woodland
- secluded ravines/ intimate river valleys, small lakes and ponds
- diverse woodland, wetland and man-made wildlife habitats
- widely dispersed and varied archaeological and historic features
- attractive historic buildings and structures
- Roman buildings, roads and iron ore workings
- Medieval iron ore, coal and stone workings
- Industrial age workings: iron, steel, coal, water powered mills, tramways and railways

Intangible qualities/Sense of place

A crucial aspect of the Forest of Dean is that much of its significance is hidden from view, both in space and in time - literally and conceptually. The ancient customs of forest law and mining rights handed down from the Normans persist, and traces of past human activity lie scattered throughout the forest, and a labyrinth of tunnels extends below the surface completing a three-dimensional landscape scene that is ever present in the minds of Foresters. This and much more makes up the intangible quality – the *genius loci* – of the Forest of Dean.

The underlying geology of the Forest is sandstone and coal measures that have been folded to form a shallow basin-like, upland plateau, acting as a container for the woodland. The resulting saucer-shaped, wooded landscape forms a subtle "arena" looking inward on itself. This gently enveloping landform combined with the extensive mixed woodland cover and its hidden traces of human lives creates a powerful sense of place

- saucer-shaped landform
- extensive mixed semi-natural woodland
- open woodland / wood pasture
- unique historic artefacts and structures
- locally distinctive building materials – sandstone and clay

Nature conservation interests

The Forest of Dean's location at the juxtaposition of lowland and upland habitats, and its long history of human exploitation, has resulted in the unique combination of a range of natural and man-made wildlife habitats spread over a large area. The scale/extent of semi-natural vegetation is important in that it maintains a critical mass of biodiversity that acts as a reservoir of wildlife from which nearby, stressed, fragmented or damaged habitats can regenerate

- extensive semi-natural woodland, much on ancient woodland sites with rich native ground flora
- 14 SSSIs
- Nagshead National Nature Reserve
- 58 Gloucestershire Wildlife sites

Cultural heritage interests

Long history of human exploitation of woodland and mineral resources has left unique customs and lifestyles, and countless sites and artefacts of archaeological/cultural heritage value.

- traces of traditional woodland management
- iron age forts

Recreational interests

Forest National Park was established in 1938 – allowing the development of an excellent recreational infrastructure

- free access on foot
- extensive network of walking
- trails/paths, bridleways and cycleways
 - camp sites and picnic areas
 - visitor attractions/facilities

Consensus

With a few exceptions, there is strong consensus recognising the high quality of the Forest of Dean landscape

Discussion

The Forest of Dean is a unique place – a cultural landscape of great beauty consisting of many complex natural and cultural elements. There is a strong case for designation on grounds of rarity alone. In addition to its important tangible qualities, the Forest comprises of a number of significant intangible qualities, which are discussed in detail in the next section.

Character area 2 – Forest Fringes and Settlements

Planning status

Within the “Wye Valley and Forest of Dean” Countryside Character Area and Natural Area

Landscape Features

Vernacular architecture – building styles and materials

Industrial architecture and engineering – buildings, bridges, structures, routes etc.

| 2. FOREST FRINGES and SETTLEMENTS landscape character and quality | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Weaknesses/negative attributes | Strengths/positive attributes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented nature of settlements • Intrusive industrial buildings and structures • lack of visual unity • low levels of building maintenance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vernacular building style • use of local materials – Forest stone and brick • piecemeal/dispersed settlement pattern • forest/woodland context of settlements |
| Landscape evaluation | |
| <i>Landscape as resource</i> <i>Scenic quality</i> <i>Unspoilt character</i> <i>Intangible qualities/Sense of place</i> <i>Nature conservation interests</i> <i>Cultural heritage interests</i> <i>Recreational interests</i> <i>Consensus</i> | |

Discussion

With their typical pattern of small miner's cottages and small holdings, the Forest settlements have a distinctive character but their overall appearance lacks the unspoilt quality and visual unity demanded for current landscape designation, for example AONB. However, there is great potential for enhancement of local distinctiveness in terms of building design and layout and initiatives such as the FoDDC's Building Design Guidelines need to be reinforced in order to raise the standard of the urban landscape.

Character area 3 – Undulating Plateau

Planning status

Included in Hobhouse Conservation Area

Identified as of AONB equivalent quality in 1991 LUC landscape assessment

Currently designated as a Special Landscape Area

Partly lying in Wye Valley AONB

Within the “Wye Valley and Forest of Dean” Countryside Character Area and Natural Area

Landscape Features

Vernacular architecture – building styles and materials

Old Oak Pollards near Bream (edge of Lydney Park Estate ??)

Bream avenue

Limestone walls

St. Briavels Castle

Hewelsfield – church and village

Clearwell – castle and village

Clearwell Meend

Clearwell Caves

| 3. UNDULATING PLATEAU landscape character and quality | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Weaknesses/negative attributes | Strengths/positive attributes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arable intensification • fragmenting hedgerows • conifer plantations • quarrying activity • unattractive farm buildings • development pressure near Coleford | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long/penetrating views of Forest of Dean and Wye Valley • uniform landscape – regular field pattern, a few large woodland blocks • limestone walls • parkland remnants • landscape generally in good condition – well managed hedges etc. • attractive small settlements and isolated dwellings • locally distinctive building style and materials • attractive landscape features eg. Bream avenue, Clearwell Castle, Hewelsfield church • location between and proximity to Wye Valley and Forest of Dean |
| Landscape evaluation | |
| <i>Landscape as resource</i> <i>Scenic quality</i> <i>Unspoilt character</i> <i>Intangible qualities/Sense of place</i> <i>Nature conservation interests</i> <i>Cultural heritage interests</i> <i>Recreational interests</i> <i>Consensus</i> | |

Discussion

This character area is defined by the underlying carboniferous limestone, which has created a gently undulating landform with good agricultural soils. So significant are the fertile limestone soils that, in some places in the east, field boundaries actually follow the transition to sandstone that also marks the edge of the Forest. The resulting agricultural landscape is open with relatively little woodland (except at the edges) and characterised by large, regular fields with hedges and some dry-stone walls, and hamlets and isolated farmsteads.

This landscape character area, part of which lies in the Wye Valley AONB where views of the river penetrate the plateau, is of high quality. It was identified in the LUC 1991 report as being of equivalent AONB quality and our recent landscape appraisal confirms this,

although some minor erosion of landscape condition has occurred due to arable intensification.

Character area 6 – Severn Escarpment – upper wooded slopes

Planning status

Included in Hobhouse Conservation Area

Currently designated as a Special Landscape Area

Partly lying in Wye Valley AONB

Within the “Wye Valley and Forest of Dean” Countryside Character Area and Natural Area

Landscape Features

Lydney Park Estate

Lydney Park Iron Age Fort and Roman Temple

The Scowles – Devil’s Chapel and Devil’s Ditch

Dean Forest Railway

| 6. SEVERN ESCARPMENT – Upper Slopes landscape character and quality | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Weaknesses/negative attributes | Strengths/positive attributes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of uniformity and distinct character • variable quality • irregular settlements and scattered dwellings • agricultural intensification • development pressure, especially between Lydney, Whitecroft and Bream | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pockets of high landscape quality and striking features – eg. Lydney Park • very prominent landscape, especially from A48 • complex, varied landform of valleys and ridges • alternating open farmland and large woodland blocks • intimate valleys cutting into escarpment • long penetrating views from valleys and escarpment to the Severn and Cotswolds beyond • variety of landcover and landuse – mosaic of pasture, arable, orchard and woodland • areas of intricate field patterns & narrow lanes ie. Woolaston • proximity to the Forest of Dean |

| |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Landscape evaluation |
| <i>Landscape as resource</i> <i>Scenic quality</i> <i>Unspoilt character</i> <i>Intangible qualities/Sense of place</i> <i>Nature conservation interests</i> <i>Cultural heritage interests</i> <i>Recreational interests</i> <i>Consensus</i> |

Discussion

The character area incorporates an escarpment marking the SW limit of the Forest and made up of carboniferous limestone, sandstones and coal measures. The landcover is predominantly mixed woodland with some agriculture pasture and arable on the better soils (grade 2 between Lydney Park and Lydney itself). There are few settlements or buildings on the escarpment except at Woolaston and Ayilburton.

The escarpment is a very prominent landscape element of high quality. It is visible from a great distance, forming the skyline of the Dean when viewed from the east. Its predominantly wooded character presents a strong "semi-natural" element to the eye and marks the edge of the Forest proper. Although different in character to area 1 (Forest of Dean / statutory forest) in landscape terms it forms an high profile edge and important transitional zone, crucial to the integrity of the core forest.

Character area 9 – Ridges and Valleys

Planning status

Included in Hobhouse Conservation Area

Currently designated as a Special Landscape Area

Within the "Wye Valley and Forest of Dean" Countryside Character Area and Natural Area

Landscape Features

halls and churches

stone walls

Flaxley Estate

St Antony's Well

Littledean Hall

| 9. RIDGES AND VALLEYS landscape character and quality | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Weaknesses/negative attributes | Strengths/positive attributes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of uniformity and distinct character • variable quality • irregular settlements and scattered dwellings • agricultural intensification • development pressure, especially around Cinderford and Mitcheldean | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pockets of high landscape quality and striking features eg. Flaxley Estate • very prominent landscape, especially from A48 • complex, varied landform of valleys and ridges • tight, intricate valleys with penetrating views • long views, both of the Forest edge and the Severn • variety of landcover and landuse – mosaic of pasture, arable, orchard and woodland • large woodland blocks and interlocking farmland • areas of intricate field patterns and narrow lanes • proximity to the Forest of Dean |
| Landscape evaluation | |

Landscape as resource
Scenic quality
Unspoilt character
Intangible qualities/Sense of place
Nature conservation interests
Cultural heritage interests
Recreational interests
Consensus

Discussion

A dramatic landscape of steep, wooded slopes and open valleys with significant, long views of the Forest and the Severn. The area is characterised by large blocks of woodland interspersed by a strong field pattern of pasture, arable and some traditional orchards, delineated by hedges and woods. A geologically complex landscape comprising of bands of sandstone, limestone and some shale. To the north the landscape opens out becoming more expansive and less wooded and affording good panoramic views of the Forest, particularly from the A40 in the west. There are a number of settlements including Littledean, Longhope and Mitcheldean.

This character area is predominantly of high landscape quality with similar attributes to area 6 but differing in scale and configuration. It forms an highly visible, wooded edge to the Forest, offering views into the forest itself and forming a distinctive wooded skyline when viewed from the north. It is also an important transitional zone, crucial to the integrity of the Dean Forest.

Character area 10 – Limestone Hills

Planning status

Included in Hobhouse Conservation Area

Identified as of AONB equivalent quality in 1991 LUC landscape assessment

Currently designated as a Special Landscape Area

Partly lying in Wye Valley AONB

Within the "Wye Valley and Forest of Dean" Countryside Character Area and Natural Area

Landscape Features

Ruardean Church

| 10. LIMESTONE HILLS landscape character and quality | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Weaknesses/negative attributes | Strengths/positive attributes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arable intensification • fragmenting hedgerows • quarrying activity • unattractive farm buildings • irregular settlements and scattered dwellings • development pressure, especially around Drybrook | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undulating landform • long/penetrating views of Forest of Dean, Wye Valley, Herefordshire and the Black Mountains • uniform landscape – regular field pattern, a few large woodland blocks • limestone walls • landscape generally in good condition – well managed hedges etc. • locally distinctive building style and materials • proximity to the Forest of Dean |
| Landscape evaluation | |
| <p><i>Landscape as resource</i></p> <p><i>Scenic quality</i></p> <p><i>Unspoilt character</i></p> <p><i>Intangible qualities/Sense of place</i></p> <p><i>Nature conservation interests</i></p> <p><i>Cultural heritage interests</i></p> <p><i>Recreational interests</i></p> <p><i>Consensus</i></p> | |

Discussion

A domestic, rolling landscape similar to area 3 but distinguished by its more complex landform. The underlying geology is mainly carboniferous limestone with some coal measures and sandstone. The area is predominantly agricultural characterised by intricate fields with hedgerows and woodlands and a steep topography sloping down from the Forest towards the Wye. The landscape is intimate with views of both the Wye Valley and the Forest and is more settled to the north. The only major settlement is Ruardean.

This landscape character area, part of which lies in the Wye Valley AONB where views of the river penetrate the undulating plateau, is of high quality. It was identified in the LUC 1991 report as being of equivalent AONB quality and our recent landscape appraisal confirms this, although some minor erosion of landscape condition has occurred due to arable intensification and inappropriate new development.

APPENDIX III – NATIONAL PARK AND AONBS



FOREST OF DEAN - NATIONAL PARK AND AONB PROPOSALS – (extract provided by the Countryside Commission)

Origin

One of the proposals considered by the National Park Committee, established in 1929 by J Ramsay MacDonald's Government and chaired by the Rt Hon Christopher Addison MP, MD, was to convert the ancient Royal Forest of Dean into a National Park. The Report of the National Park Committee¹ (the Addison Report) was published in April 1931 by HMSO for the Treasury. Nothing happened as a result of the National Park Committee's proposals; no National Authority was set up to implement the various proposals.

The 1930's, however, did see one development with respect to the Forest of Dean - its inclusion in the group of Forest Parks established by the Forestry Commission "in the belief that where fine areas of mountain and other open country have been acquired in connection with the planting of extensive new forests, the whole (including areas used for grazing) should be open for public enjoyment". The Dean Forest and Wye Valley Forest Park, including the ancient Royal Forest of Dean, Tidenham Chase, other neighbouring woodlands and the Tintern Forest, was established in 1938 (Map 1), and meant that the whole of this area was open to the visitor during daylight hours, including the common grazings.

During the 2nd World War, John Dower was requested by Government to study the problems relating to the establishment of National Parks in England and Wales, and his Report² (May 1945) included the Forest of Dean and the Lower Wye in the list (Division C) of "Other Amenity Areas" not suggested as National Parks, but as areas of landscape beauty which merited some form of national protection in the future. Many of these "Other Amenity Areas" became the basis of the 52 conservation areas of high landscape quality, scientific interest and recreational value, listed in the July 1947 "Hobhouse" Report³ on National Parks. The Forest of Dean and Wye Valley were included in the list of conservation areas (and not in Hobhouse's List of National Parks) and the accompanying map showed a 232 square mile (601 sq. km) area covering much more than just the 1938 Forest Park area (Map 2).

The Hobhouse conservation area contained the undulating limestone and sandstone plateau of the Forest of Dean itself, all within Gloucestershire, with its mixture of extensive broadleaved woodlands and conifer plantation interspersed with open grazing land and much sporadic mining (nearly all derelict), industrial and residential development, and edged by larger dispersed settlements like Cinderford and Coleford. West of the Forest of Dean was the dramatic scenery of the incised meanderings of the Wye Valley in Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire, with its steep slopes covered in broadleaved woodland, but also including settlements like Redbrook and Llandgo as well as historic features like Tintern Abbey. West again of the Wye Valley the area also included the sandstone scarps and wooded landscapes of the Trelleck area of Monmouthshire, while to the north, in Herefordshire, the area included the fertile Wye Valley above the Symond's Yat and the sandstones, shales and limestones of the wooded hills and vales of the Woolhope Dome.

Designation History

After the completion of its National Park designation programme in 1957, the National Parks Commission (NPC) turned its attention to designation AONBs, using the Hobhouse conservation areas for its initial list of proposals. In October 1959⁴ the NPC started its consideration of a possible Forest of Dean and Wye Valley AONB, but it was not until 1968 that the NPC was able to inform the local authorities concerned that it was to initiate the formal process of designation as an AONB. Following this the local authorities prepared a preliminary map of the area which excluded the Forest of Dean as they believed that not only was the Forest a distinct entity separate from the Wye Valley, but that as it was already largely in the hands of Forestry Commission (FC) no AONB designation was necessary, as the FC would have wide powers for meeting amenity and recreation needs under the new Countryside Act, 1968. At its meeting in July 1968⁵ to consider the preliminary map, the NPC also discussed the exclusion of the Forest of Dean and concluded that its conservation should be left to the FC who had ample power to provide for recreation. In subsequent correspondence to consultees⁶ on the draft boundary shown on the preliminary map the Countryside Commission (which replaced the NPC in September 1968) also added the point (like the local authorities) that it believed that the Forest of Dean was a distinct entity.

It was not until February 1971, after due consideration of all formal representations (including a few raising the question of the inclusion of the Forest of Dean) that the Commission submitted the two sections (one in England and one in Wales) of the Wye Valley AONB Order to the Secretaries of State for the Environment, and for Wales (Map 3). Both Orders were confirmed by the Secretaries of State in December 1971. (A fuller account of the designation history of the Wye Valley AONB per se is given in a separate paper).

Since 1971 the Commission has dealt with correspondence about the possible addition of the Forest of Dean to the Wye Valley AONB or the creation of a separate Forest of Dean AONB. In all these cases the Commission has replied using the arguments first quoted by the local authorities in 1968 and then confirmed and adopted by the Commission.

In 1996 Gloucestershire County Council wrote to the Commission informing it that they were currently prepared a Minerals Local Plan for Gloucestershire and were looking at the potential for future mineral working of the Forest of Dean limestone resource area. As part of that process the County Council explored the feasibility of the Forest of Dean becoming a National Park. The Commission passed the Council similar information to that set out in this paper. The Draft Minerals Plan for Gloucestershire does (currently i.e. 1998) include parts of the Forest of Dean as potential mineral resource areas, and the Commission has over a number of months been approached by members of the public and the media concerning the likelihood of the area becoming an AONB or National Park.

References

- 11.13. The National Park Committee (Chairman The Rt Hon Sir Christopher Addison, MP, MD) "Report of the National Park Committee", The Treasury Cmd 3851, HMSO, London, 1931.
 - 11.14. John Dower, "National Parks in England and Wales", Cmd 6628, HMSO, London, May 1945.
 - 11.15. The National Parks Committee (Chairman Sir Arthur Hobhouse), "Report of the National Parks Committee (England and Wales)", Cmd 7121, HMSO, London, July 1947.
 - 11.16. National Parks Commission File (V/I) part A, Wye Valley AONB, now in Public Record Office as COU6/2.
 - 11.17. Minutes of the National Parks Commission, 4055, 30 July 1968.
 - 11.18. See National Parks Commission file V/IB, Wye Valley AONB, now in Public Record Office as COU6/3.
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**APPENDIX IV- PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE
NOTES**



Regional Planning Guidance for the South West RPG 10 July 1994

"The South West is a Region of outstanding environmental quality and diversity which is a national asset and should not be put at risk. Development plans should ensure that nationally and internationally designated areas and features are protected from damaging development and change. They should also recognise the importance of features which contribute to the Region's attractiveness for tourism and recreation - the undeveloped coast, historic cities and towns such as Bath, Salisbury and Cheltenham and some areas which adjoin those of national importance. These assets also need to be positively managed". (para 3.3)

"The environment of the South West is a national resource of outstanding quality and diversity. Development plans must play their part in ensuring that the Region's environment is sustained, protected and, where possible, enhanced. Development plans should take account of the implications for the wider environment of land use policies and proposals and should allow development decisions to be taken within an overall framework that reflects environmental priorities at the international, national and local levels." (para 4.1)

"Development plans should continue to pursue policies to protect from inappropriate development nationally important areas of landscape - the Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks and the twelve Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which are wholly or partly in the South West. The Countryside Commission is proposing to designate a further AONB in the Tamar Valley. A small part of the New Forest Heritage Area extends into south east Wiltshire. Development plans should ensure that land which bounds nationally important landscapes is suitably protected from insensitive changes that would detract from the designated areas" (para 4.9)

"Where appropriate, plans should take account of land instability. Unstable land in the Region includes that resulting from metal ore mining activities in Devon and Cornwall, coal mining in the Somerset coalfield and the Forest of Dean, and from the limestone mines of Bath and the Cotswolds. There are other areas of unstable ground associated with, for example, natural cavities (especially in the Carboniferous and Devonian limestones) and landslides (especially on the coast and along the Cotswolds escarpment)". (para 4.32)

"The highest rates of unemployment are found mainly in Cornwall and much of Devon, including Plymouth. High rates also occur in parts of Bristol, Bournemouth and some rural areas such as west Somerset and the Forest of Dean. Rates below the national average are found in most of the eastern half of the Region, together with other locations such as Exeter and Truro." (para 5.3)

Planning Policy Guidance Notes for National Parks

PPG7 (revised Feb 1997)

"The Government regards a National Park designation as conferring the highest status of protection as far as landscape and scenic beauty are concerned." (para 4.2)

"The statutory purpose of National Parks (as amended by the Environment Act 1995) are to conserve and enhance their natural beauty wildlife and cultural heritage, and to promote opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities. Where there appears to be a conflict between these purposes, greater weight shall attach to the first" (para 4.2)

"National Parks also have a statutory duty, in pursuing their primary purposes, to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of their local communities" (para 4.2)

"The Environment Act 1995 provides for the establishment of new, free-standing National Park Authorities to protect and manage the Parks. They take over their full functions from 1 April 1997. As the sole local planning authority for its area, a National Park Authority will be responsible for maintaining structure and local plan coverage, or, if the Secretary of State so orders, preparing a unitary development plan. It will also exercise development control functions for its area." (Para 4.3)

"Conservation of the natural beauty of the countries, and of its wildlife and cultural heritage, should be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions in the National Parks, the Broads and the New Forest Heritage Area. Due regards should also be had to the economic and social well being of local communities." (Para 4.5)

"Major development should not take place in the National Parks, the Broads and the New Forest Heritage Area save in exceptional circumstances. Because of the serious impact that major developments may have on these areas of natural beauty, applications for all such developments must be subject to the most rigorous examination. Major developments should be demonstrated to be in the public interest before being allowed to proceed. Consideration of such applications should therefore normally include an assessment of:

- 1 the need for the development, in terms of national considerations, and the impact of permitting it or refusing it upon the local economy;*
- 2 the cost of and scope for developing elsewhere outside the area or meeting the need for it in some other way;*
- 3 any detrimental effect on the environment and the landscape, and the extent to which that should be moderated.*

Any construction or restoration should be carried out to high environmental standards." (Para 4.5)

Planning Policy Guidance for AONBs

PPG7(revised Feb 1997)

"The primary objective of designation is conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. Local authorities should reflect this objective in their structure and local plans and development control" (para.4.7)

"AONBs differ in from National Parks in that the promotion of recreation is not an objective of their designation, though these areas should meet the demand for recreation so far as it is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses." (para 4.7)

"the Government endorses the practice of setting up joint advisory committees to bring together local authorities and amenity groups, farming and other interests to encourage a co-ordinated approach to their management" (para 4.7)

"In general, policies and development control decisions affecting AONBs should favour conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. In all cases the environmental effects of new proposals will be a major consideration, though it will also be appropriate to have regard to the economic and social well being of the areas." (para 4.8)

"It would normally be inconsistent with the aims of designation to permit the siting of major industrial or commercial development in these areas. Only proven national interest and lack of alternative sites can justify an exception" (para 4.8)

"Applications for new mineral workings, or extensions to existing works, in APONBs must be subject to the most rigorous examination. If permission is granted, it should be subject to appropriate standards of operation, restoration and aftercare" (para.4.9)

"Similar considerations (to mineral workings) apply to proposals for new road constructions. The methods of assessment used to appraise trunk road proposals already take account of their impact on the landscape, but schemes affecting AONBs should be examined with particular care to ensure that a new road is needed and that the route and design chosen do as little damage to the environment as practicable. Wherever possible, new trunk routes should be kept away from AONBs" (para 4.10)

Planning Policy Guidance on SSSIs

PPG 9 October 1994

The conservation of nature is important. Attractive environments, where attention is given to nature conservation, are essential to social and economic well-being. (para 3)

... protection of wildlife is not an objective which applies only to SSSIs; it depends on the wise use and management of the nations land resources as a whole. (para 4)

The key importance of SSSIs means that development proposals in or likely to affect them must be subject to special scrutiny. (para 29)

Applications (for mineral working) in or likely to affect SSSIs should be the subject of the most vigorous examination ... (para 40)

It is an offence to ill-treat any animal; to kill, injure or sell protected species (with certain exceptions); or intentionally to damage, destroy or obstruct their places of shelter". (para 45)

Historical and archaeological Sites

PPG 15 September 1995

The physical survivals of the past are to be valued and protected for their own sake, as a central part of our cultural heritage and our sense of national identity. ... Their presence adds to the quality of our lives, by enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness which is so important an aspect of the character and appearance of our towns, villages and countryside .
(para 1.1)

Conservation can itself play a key part in promoting economic posterity by ensuring that an area offers attractive living and working conditions which will encourage inward investment – environmental quality is increasingly a key factor in many commercial decisions. (para 1.5)

In defining planning policies for the countryside, authorities should take account of the historical dimension of the landscape as a whole rather than concentrate on selected areas. (para 2.26)

... our understanding of the historic environment now encompasses a much wider range of features (than historic buildings), and in particular stresses the relationship between individual buildings, and also the value of historic townscape and landscape as a whole. (para 6.1)

The whole of the landscape, to varying degrees and in different ways, is an archaeological and historic artefact, the product of complex historical processes and past land-use. (para 6.40)

Rural Development Areas and Objective 5(b) areas

PPG7 (revised Feb 1997)

“Development plan policies should take account of Rural Development Areas of Objective 5(b) status and strategies where relevant. The facts which led to designation should also be taken into account when considering the economic and social well being of those parts of National Parks and AONBs which are within RDAs or Objective 5(b) Areas” (Para 4.18)

RDAs are designated by the RDC , selection criteria includes persistent unemployment, narrow industrial and employment structure, lack of local services and disadvantage as a result of location.

**APPENDIX V – LEGISLATION PROTECTION
AONBS AND NATIONAL PARKS**



NATIONAL PARKS AND AONBs PLANNING PROTECTION

| NATIONAL PARKS | AONBs |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| STATUTES | |
| <p>Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 (1990 Act)</p> <p>The requirement for the local planning authorities to prepare development plans relates to the areas covered by both National Parks and AONBs, though as a local planning authority, the national park authority (1990 Act as amended by Environment Act, 1995) prepared development plans for just the area of the National Park.</p> | |
| <p>Section 54A (1990 Act) requires that planning authorities' decisions on development proposals in all areas (including both National Parks and AONBs) are taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p> | |
| <p>Section 87(1) (1990 Act) excludes both National Parks and AONBs from inclusion in Simplified Planning Zones.</p> | |
| <p>Section 6(4)(e) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (1949 Act) and Section 88(1)(a) of the 1949 Act (as amended by Schedule 10(7) of the Environment Act 1995)</p> <p>Gives the Countryside Commission the duty to advise central and local government on development plans and development proposals in both National Parks and AONBs.</p> | |
| <p>Section 9(1) 1949 Act, and Section 88(1)(b), 1949 Act (as amended by Schedule 10(7) of the Environment Act 1995)</p> <p>Requires local planning authorities to consult the Commission on preparing and amending development plans affecting National Parks and AONBs.</p> | |
| <p>Section 9(2) 1949 Act and Section 88(1)(b), 1949 Act (as amended by Schedule 10(7) of the Environment Act, 1995)</p> <p>Enables proceedings for making development plans and designating new National Parks and AONBs to run concurrently.</p> | |
| <p>Schedule 13, Para 2(4), Environment Act, 1995</p> <p>Requires all old mineral permissions within both National Parks and AONBs (and other designations) to be treated as Phase 1 (Priority) sites for review.</p> | |
| <p>SI 1995 No 418. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order, 1995 (the GPDO 1995) - Article 1(5) land</p> <p>Applies a more restrictive regime in both National Parks and AONBs for many classes of minor development via Part 2 of Article 1 of Schedule 1 - Article 1(5) land, which includes National Parks, AONBs, the Broads and Conservation Areas.</p> | |
| NATIONAL PARKS | AONBs |
| PLANNING POLICY ADVICE | |
| <p>Planning Policy Guidance PPG 7 (revised) The Countryside-Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development</p> <p>PPG 7 brings together the Government's planning policy guidance on National Parks and AONBs. Other PPGs and Minerals Planning Guidance (MPGs) refer to PPG 7, including cross-references to policies applying to National Parks and AONBs. With one exception, a sentence giving the "highest status of protection" to National Parks in para 4.3. PPG 7 reflects the equality between National Parks and AONBs, in term of protection and landscape status.</p> | |
| <p>contained in the statutes. Even the reference to "highest" does not indicate a priority between National Parks and AONBs. They could be equally of highest status, over other types of designation. And that</p> | |

| NATIONAL PARKS | AONBs |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <p>SI 1995 No 418, GPDO, 1995 - Article 1(6) land</p> <p>Applies a prior approval regime for National Parks (and a few adjoining areas) for a very limited range of minor agricultural developments (mainly alterations and extensions to farm buildings) via Part 3 of Article 1 of Schedule 1 - Article 1 (6) land.</p> | |
| <p>These prior approval Procedures also apply to parts of a few AONBs which adjoin National Parks.</p> | |
| <p>SI 1988 No 1199, The Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations, 1988</p> <p>The DOE Circular (DOE Circular 15/88) accompanying this SI lists the sensitive locations where particular Schedule 2 projects could require Environmental Assessments, and includes both National Parks and AONBs in this list.</p> | |
| <p>SI 1988 No 1241, Highways (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations, 1988</p> <p>Requires an Environmental Assessment where proposed roads or motorways affect National Parks.</p> | |
| <p>Not AONBs.</p> | |

| NATIONAL PARKS | AONBs |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Minerals Planning Guidance Notes (MPGs) | |
| MPGs 3, 6, 13 and 15 | |
| <p>The policies relating to National Parks and AONBs in these MPGs are the same, and in the case of MPG 3 (Coal Mining and Colliery Spoil Disposal), MPG 6 (Aggregates) and MPG 13 (Peat Provision) the assessment criteria (the "Waldegrave" test) used in the consideration of new applications are stated in full to cover both designations.</p> | |
| MPGs 2, 9, & 14 | |
| <p>In MPG 2 (Applications, Permissions and Conditions) there is reference to the Commission's duty under the 1949 Act to respond to consultations in both National</p> | |

sentence is not inconsistent with AONBs having joint highest protection.

Designation Status

Para 4.2 says that National Park designation confers the highest status of protections far as landscape and scenic beauty are concerned (this sentence is repeated in para 6 of DOE Circular 12/96 on National Parks). The Commission argue the advice in this sentence is not based on statute.

Para 4.7 says that the primary objective of AONBs is conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and adds the "AONBs differ from National Parks in that the promotion of recreation is not an objective of their designation". Significantly this para does not refer to any lower status for AONBs implied by para 4.2.

Policies on Major Developments

Paras 4.5 and 4.6

Paras 4.7 to 4.10

The policies and criteria used in considering applications for major developments in both National Parks and AONBs are broadly the same, though different words are used to say virtually the same thing. While the "Waldegrave" test is stated in full for National Parks in para 4.5 there is a cross-reference in 4.9 to MPGs which also state the test in full to cover both designations. The need for formal EA in National Parks is referred to in paragraphs 4.6, but not in the paragraphs on AONBs. Nevertheless paragraph 4.6 refers to paragraph 2.21 which mentions Circular 15/88, guidance which gives AONBs the same status as National Parks.

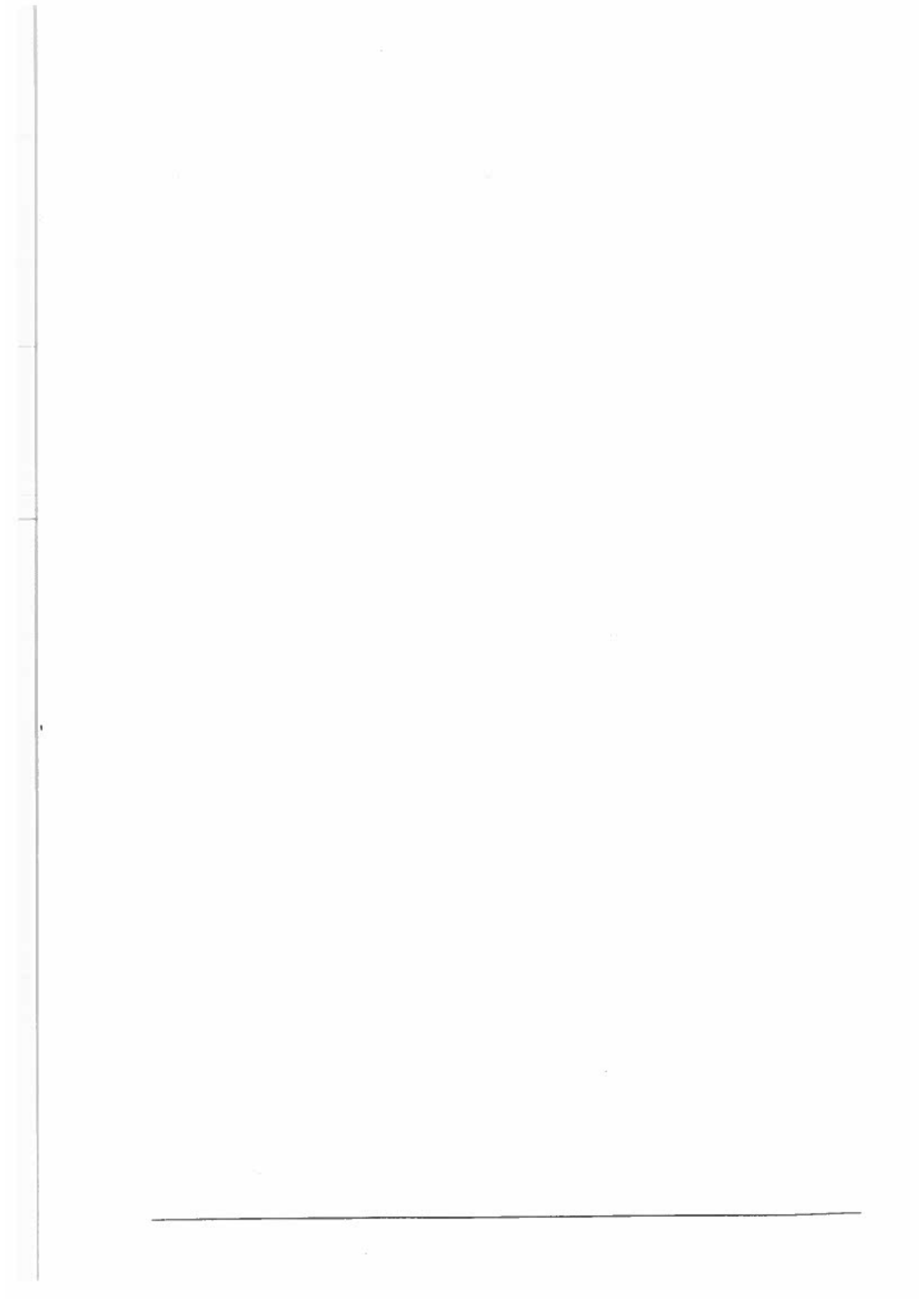
Other Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs)

PPG 3 (Housing), PPG 5 (SPZs), PPG 13 (Transport), PPG 17 (Sport & Recreation), PPG 19 (Outdoor Advertisement Control), PPG 24 (Noise)

In all of these PPGs special policy (and sometimes, statutory) considerations apply equally in National Parks and AONBs (and often in other designations like SSSIs).

Parks and AONBs, MPG 9 (IDOs) advises that particular attention should be given, in preparing schemes of conditions to both National Parks and AONBs (and other designated areas). MPG 14 (Old Mineral Planning Permissions) refers to the statutory need to treat all initial review sites within National Parks and AONBs (and other designations) as Phase 1 sites.

**APPENDIX VI – LIST OF CONSULTEES,
BRIEFING MEETING MINUTES AND
LIST OF INVITED AUDIENCE**



Forest of Dean - Review of Special Status

Meetings with the following bodies/individuals

First Briefing meeting

RSPB and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust

CPRE

Rural Development Commission

Gloucestershire Rural Community Council

Wye Valley AONB

Forest of Dean District Council

Forest of Dean DC Gloucestershire CC Officers

Meeting with councillors from Gloucestershire and Forest of Dean

Forest Enterprise

English Nature

English Heritage

Bruton Knowles - agent to Crown Estate

Dean Heritage Centre

Action against Quarrying

Gloucestershire County Council Minerals Team, Legal Services and Councillor

Commoners Association /Freeminers/Verders

Tarmac

ARC

County archaeologist

DETR

Small Mines Association

Verderers

40-50 attendees

Ivan Proctor

Bob Godfrey

Sarah Killingback

Gordon Biggart

Noel Sandiford

Ann Prufer

Sue Heard

Steve Wright

Andrew Blake

Brian Morgan

Nigel Gibbons

Andrew Gardener

Bart Vener

Roy Birch

Colin Ross

Rob Guest

Charlotte Pagenham

Andrew Davidson

Richard Atkinson

Peter Moore

Peter Chard

Andrew Goodenough

Ken Secret

John Watkins

Barry Rose

David Young

Liz Hall

Phil Saunders

David Ball

Amanda Vaughan

Keith Phillips

Sarah Pearse

David Gaylor

Ginnette Wilton

Tom Priest (CA)

Henry Mills (CA/FM)

Lynn Powell (CA)

Ray Wright (FM/V)

Donald Jones (FM)

David Bargh

Ivan Acktell

Alan Everard

Peter Lawless

Ian Southgate

Martin Crow

Jan Wills

Steve Hawes

Brian James

Deputy Gavellor

Dr Cyril Hart

Telephone Conversations

Malvern Hills AONB

Leicestershire County Council (Charnwood Forest)

Countryside Planning Research Unit (Cheltenham)

Danish Forest and Nature Agency

Countryside Commission

Cannock Chase AONB

Lydney Park Estate

David Hancock

Peter Williams

Michael Dower

Dr Helle Anker

Ray Woolmore

Mike Bowbridge

Mr Hutchison

**APPENDIX IV – BRIEFING MEETING MINUTES
AND LIST**

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SPECIAL STATUS FOR THE FOREST OF DEAN

Briefing Meeting - 26th November 1998

Present: 40 invited members of local organisations

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Stephen Wright | Gloucestershire RCC (Chairman) |
| Diana Organ | MP FoD |
| Lynn Kettles | CC |
| Peter Nelson | LUC |
| Maritta Boden | LUC |
| Gavin David | LUC |

The meeting was conducted in two parts. In part one LUC presented the methodology of the study. This was followed, in part two, by open discussion on a number of previously identified issues.

Part I

I. The Role of the Study

The Chairman welcomed everyone to what he hoped would be a constructive exchange of views. He explained that the Countryside Commission (CoCo) has begun a review of the case for the Forest of Dean being awarded special status following commitments made by Frank Dobson as Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment in April 1997. Land Use Consultants (LUC) had been appointed to undertake technical studies and to make recommendations to the Commission. Following consideration of the consultants' report the Countryside Commission would consult widely before making its own recommendations to Government. The Chairman stressed very strongly that this was just the start of the process. It would give everyone present the chance to see how the Consultants saw the project. The meeting would provide a good opportunity for a frank exchange of views but the Chairman urged people present to write to the consultants with their opinions in the next 6 weeks as there would only be time for brief individual comments during the meeting. There would, however, be a second meeting in January/February after the information had been received.

Diana Organ (MP) gave a short address, saying that it was vital to get everything right at the beginning of the project and this was an ideal opportunity for wider consultation with all the interested parties.

2. The need for a Study and Consultants' Terms of Reference (CoCo)

Lynn Kettles, standing in for Katherine Hope who was on maternity leave, thanked everyone for attending and welcomed their inputs. LUC and the CoCo were working together on the study and once the facts had been collected then the options could be considered. Nobody knew at this stage what was going to come out of the work and

there were no fixed ideas of what the final recommendations would cover but it was hoped to take on as many of the views of the interested parties as possible.

3. Approach to the Study (Land Use Consultants)

Peter Nelson explained the Consultants' methodology. The study depended very much on listening to the views of local interest groups and organisations in order to present an objective view of how the Forest of Dean was going to be managed and maintained. The purpose of the meeting was to allow everyone to state their views and discuss whether the principle of a new designation was appropriate or not. He repeated Lynn Kettles' comment that no-one knew the end result but it was hoped that the study would produce tangible and workable proposals.

Peter spoke about the areas' environmental social and economic characteristics. He noted that the area is highly distinctive culturally and is of very high landscape value but it is also in need of economic assistance.

The first stage of the study would consist of four basic tasks:

Objective analysis of landscape character,

Reviewing the level of protection afforded by existing policies and plans,

Review the Hobhouse report and decision,

Investigate key issues through consultation.

In the second stage LUC would analyse the findings and propose a number of options for dealing with key issues. The third and final stage of the study would entail writing a report and setting out recommendations.

The study would take place over 4 months starting with a Desk Study. The consultants are due to give an interim presentation to Forest of Dean District Council (FoD DC) and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) in February/March and to report to the CoCo in April.

4. Questions/Statements on Part I

Bart Venner (Councillor) stated that the Forest of Dean had only become separated from the Wye Valley AONB because the administrative boundaries of the Forestry Commission had been changed to distinguish between the Welsh and English land holdings. At the time of the Hobhouse report the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean had been an autonomous area under the "care" of the Forestry Commission. In reviewing the area it would be important to address its geology, its character and its contiguity when considering the boundary of a Special Status area.

Peter Chard (Action Against Quarrying) drew attention to the press release from 'Frank Dobson on 1st April 1997 which confirmed that a Labour government would give special status to the Forest of Dean. In his view the case for special status was already established. He was talking on behalf of 10 environmental groups and they hoped to be included in the list of consultees in this vital early stage of the project. This meeting

involved an invited audience and he hoped there would be wider consultation before LUC's report went to the Minister.

Peter Nelson repeated that LUC was keen to talk to as many interests as possible and to take the whole picture into account. There were however, budgetary and time constraints and it was important that all groups were dealt with even handedly. In consequence LUC would not be able to meet every group independently. It was agreed, however, that since Action against Quarrying was itself an umbrella organisation a meeting would be appropriate.

Andrew Gardener (Councillor) was unsure of the boundaries shown on the projected overhead slides. There were some areas in the FoD to the north which had not been included within the boundary. He asked for clarification of the extent of study area and its boundaries, in particular he wished to know whether the whole hundred of St Briavels was included; and the 999 year lease hold of Forestry Commission land to the north? Peter Nelson confirmed that one of the study tasks was to explore the extent of any potential designation, although further detailed survey would be needed to justify precise boundaries once the principles had been established. This more detailed work was not included in the present study.

Peter Moore (Dean Heritage Museum) asked for copies of the John Dower report, and the Hobhouse report and map to be circulated to all participants as they were all germane to the discussion on boundaries.

The Chairman said the information should be made available in the public libraries as soon as possible and Mike Taylor (Countryside Commission) agreed to photocopy the information if there were insufficient copies to go round.

Ralph Anstis appreciated that not everyone could be invited to take part in the next meeting but asked for the Parish Councils to be included.

Ivan Proctor (RSPB) commented that there were no Verderers present and stated that they wished to be consulted.

Bob Freshwater (Friends of the Earth) wanted to establish that there would be further consultations as he had been advised earlier by LUC that the arrangements on consultation process had not been decided. PN replied that he had discussed BF's request with CC the previous week and it was on the strength of BF's comments that the decision had been taken to hold the follow-up meeting in January.

Lynn Kettles reiterated that before full consultation could take place the CC needed to establish the facts and to receive their consultants' recommendations. Until this had been done there would be nothing to comment on.

Part Two - Discussion on Topic Areas

5. Approach to Designations

Peter Nelson opened the discussion with the question - "what do you want the status of the Forest of Dean to be?" - should it be - a National Park, AONB, a new designation or no designation at all?

Several general points were made and these are summarised as follows:

AONB status would not restrict some developments e.g. quarrying. If a special protection status was sought this could take about 7 years to achieve. The main concern would be what would happen to Forest of Dean in the meantime. A short term solution should be considered as well as a long term one.

The difference between AONB and National Park status is a hair's breadth - possibly the gap should be filled by a special status.

A compromise would have to be achieved in order to protect the area without restricting the production of jobs.

The following specific comments were made:

Gordon Biggart (CPRE/Lower Wye Valley Preservation Society) stated that most of the designation measures seemed to be short-term and people wanted long-term results.

Mark Robbs (National Farmers Union) stated that the NFU could not support the National Park option.

Mary Newton (Dean Environmental Alliance) commented that not enough emphasis had been placed on the issue of boundaries to which Diana Organ agreed. She pointed out that landscape perception is evolving and argued that AONB status would not be strong enough to protect the Forest of Dean. Primary legislation/special status would take too long to implement; (between 5 to 7 years) and therefore an "off-the-shelf" designation would be preferable.

David Gaylor (Councillor) pointed out that an "off-the-shelf" designation would not address the unique problems of the Dean and would therefore be only a short-term solution.

6. Recreation and Nature Conservation Issues

Andrew Gardener (Councillor) stressed that the Forest of Dean is a working environment and proposed recreational development should integrate into the existing environment. There should be a mix of industry and tourism/recreation. Andrew stated that there is a large local catchment area of potential countryside users, for example Bristol and Cardiff.

Ivan Proctor (RSPB) stressed that the need for nature conservation should be recognised for itself as well as a recreational/tourism asset. Nature conservation is of central importance to Forest of Dean and one of the main reasons why tourists visit the Forest. It was agreed that nature conservation was one of the key issues driving the project.

Peter Chard (Action Against Quarrying) pointed out that the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean are internationally important tourist destinations.

Mary Newton (Dean Environmental Alliance) stated that enjoyment of the wildlife aspect of recreation, underlined in the Forestry Commission guidelines should be encouraged. Industrial regeneration should not be inhibited - there should be an emphasis on sustainable development and the promotion of small operations/businesses.

Peter Moore (Dean Heritage Museum) stressed the importance of learning from history, analysing past and current trends in employment and land management; in particular the legacy of industrial exploitation of the Forest and the implications of future change in employment.

He pointed out that employment in industry within the Dean has altered, traditional industries such as mining were labour intensive, now they are capital intensive employing relatively few. Recreation on the other hand is labour intensive and offers good opportunities of equitable employment and a sustainable local economy.

7. Access and Land Ownership

Peter Chard (Action Against Quarrying) stressed that free miners are of local to the area and historical important. The miners are concerned about changes to the status of the forest; their rights and responsibilities need to be considered.

Mark Robbs (National Farmers Union) pointed out that agriculture was an issue notable for its absence in the discussion and more consideration is required on this issue.

Andrew Gardener (Councillor) indicated that public access in the forest is a privilege. It is imperative that permissive rights are retained if the status of the forest is going to change.

Bob Freshwater (Friends of the Earth) commented that the Forestry Commission were not always good at consultation.

Bart Venner (Councillor) pointed out that the Forest is a public asset. Forest Enterprise manage the forest on behalf of the nation.

Ivan Proctor (RSPB) expressed the view that organisation of the Forest of Dean was much easier as a public body. If it was all private land it would be much harder to organise.

Bob Freshwater (Friends of the Earth) raised the issue of sheep grazing and the need for formalisation of the activity. There needs to be a more responsible attitude from both sides: sheep owners and land owners/managers.

Mary Newton (Dean Environmental Alliance) asked if it might be constructive to have a short presentation from those who work in a similar area such as the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The Chairman asked if the District Council would be able to organise this. Forest of Dean District Council confirmed that it would be possible and stated that they would try and organise a meeting for mid January. It was agreed that this would not just be a presentation by the organisers but include people who lived and worked within the area and who would be able to discuss how a designation has affected their lives.

8. Minerals Issue

Peter Nelson stated that there is very detailed guidance on mineral production needs of the country. He highlighted that this was an important issue and possibly what had sparked off the need for the study.

Steven Lamb (Tarmac) called for a balanced debate, there needs to be a recognition of the historical importance of the area and the need to provide industry and employment for the future.

Peter Chard (Action Against Quarrying) stressed that the critical issue is one of scale. Previous mining activity was on small scale, either open cast or underground nature. Several of the older sites have naturally regenerated to create intimate landscapes and habitats, this is not the case for current large operations like Stowefield which have permanently damage the landscape and offer few opportunities for after-use. Fifty to a hundred years of extraction at a large scale would drastically change the landscape of the area.

Peter Moore (Dean Heritage Museum) pointed out that, in contrast to traditional mining, modern mineral extraction is capital intensive. Large companies take a great deal away from the Forest in terms of resources and profits but put very little back into the community and environment. The Forest of Dean Special Status would strengthen the District Councils powers both to restrict development and to extract a better deal for the Dean from the mineral companies.

Steven Lamb (Tarmac) agreed that Stowefield is the largest quarry in Gloucestershire but it is also the largest employer. The quarry contributes £3 million into the local economy and lots of people in the Forest depend on the income of minerals. Several families depend on quarrying for their livelihood and in relation to local employment recent transport research was quoted that eighty percent of hard rock travels less than thirty mile radius of the Dean. Examples of excellent restoration could be produced. He enquired whether the consultants would be visiting any quarries and invited them to Stowefield Quarry.

David Gaylor (Councillor) expressed the need to clarify the interface between the study and the Mineral Plan Enquiry. He stated that the exact location of carboniferous limestone was difficult to determine.

Gordon Biggart (CPRE/Lower Wye Valley Preservation Society) responded to Steve Lamb's earlier comment quoting comparative employment figures for the Forest. Quarrying employs a total of 150 people whilst recreation employs a total of 2000

Mike Taylor (Countryside Commission) stressed the distinction between the need for consultation for the minerals planning enquiry and that required for the review of special status for the Forest of Dean. These were separate processes.

Mark Robbs (National Farmers Union) asked whether present controls give adequate protection and confirmed that quarry restoration can create jobs.

Andrew Gardener (Councillor) expressed concern over rolling extensions to existing quarries. Existing planning permissions and compensation to mineral companies are major issues which may need to be addressed.

Steve Lamb (Tarmac) pointed out that 1995 Environment Act updates current permissions.

9. Cultural Issues

As the meeting was short of time the Chairman asked for written comments on individual sites/features, as it was an important issue.

Andrew Gardener (Councillor) stated that the Forest of Dean is steeped in history and culture for example Romano-British remains; Medieval furnaces etc.. He pointed out there are still many unrecorded historic sites in the area, for example Neolithic settlements in the Wye Valley.

Diana Organ MP stressed the importance of the strong breadth and depth of arts and crafts in the Dean.

Brian Morgan (Forest of Dean) pointed out that the distinctive settlement pattern of the Dean is an expression local history and culture.

Ralph Antis noted the invisible legacy of the Forest, much of the Forest's cultural heritage is hidden and not "open" to public for example the Roman road at Blackpool bridge and Darkhill furnace.

Mary Newton (Dean Environmental Alliance) stated that some historic elements of the forest are unique and internationally important. According to Oliver Rackham, one ancient woodland site in the Forest/Wye Valley is the second most important example in Europe of lime woodland in combination with a Neolithic settlement.

10. Nature Conservation

Peter Chard (Action Against Quarrying) noted that the Forest shelters 25 % of Lesser horseshoe bat breeding population.

Mary Newton (Dean Environmental Alliance) emphasised the importance of water quality in the forest and its two main rivers, the Wye and Severn.

Ivan Proctor (RSPB) stressed that Forest Enterprise are good current guardians of the Forest but considering the recent past i.e. mass felling of native woodland and the planting of conifers this century, we need to be wary of future changes in policy.

11 Social and Economic Issues

Chris Hawkins (Forest of Dean Management Group) stated that there is no substitute for job prospects. Tourism jobs are usually poorly paid and seasonal. More effort is needed to stimulate small businesses and the rural economy. Special Status should not prejudice local employment, economic growth and/or investment opportunities; a compromise of interest should be achieved.

Diana Organ (MP) pointed out there is a dependence on manufacturing in the Dean (a total of 38% of the workforce). She emphasised that there is a problem with lack of suitable business development land, especially for expanding local businesses. She stated that within the Forest of Dean small businesses form a large proportion of the area's employment. Companies have made it clear that if they can't get the industrial sites they require, they will relocate elsewhere.

Mary Newton (Dean Environmental Alliance) called for clear and accurate statistics of land readily available for industry in order to match need to with availability.

David Gaylor (Gloucestershire County Council) stressed that tourism employs 1 in 10 people in the Forest and could make a real contribution to the local economy. He conceded that there are inherent problems which must be recognised.

Sue Heard (Rural Development Commission) agreed that it was a similar story throughout many rural areas, a lack of suitable development land/property to accommodate business growth.

Brian Morgan (Forest of Dean District Council) pointed out that there are many rural brownfield sites in the Forest.

12. Summary of Comments and Closing Remarks

Peter Nelson said LUC was pleased to hear from everyone and looked forward to the meeting in February to discuss the various points which will have arisen.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending, he emphasised that study was the beginning of the process and again asked for people to back up their comments and send them to LUC.

LIST OF INVITED AUDIENCE

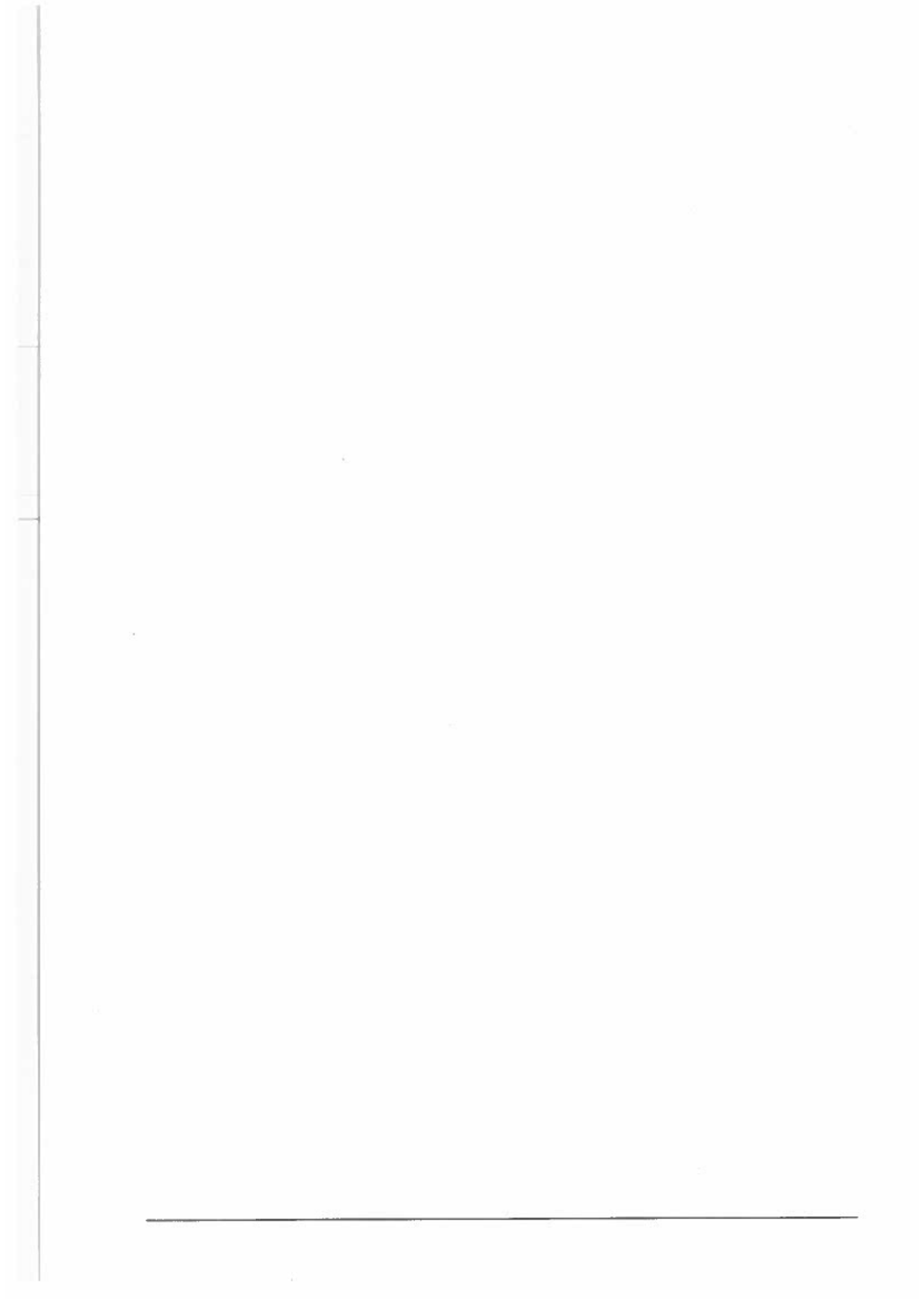
| Name | Company |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mr R Adams | Littledean Parish Council |
| Mr L Allan | Tidenham Parish Council |
| Mrs B Allsopp | Newham Parish Council |
| Mr R Anstis | |
| Mr M Baber | Churcham Parish Council |
| Mr J Bartle | Lydney Chamber of Trade & Commerce |
| Mrs M Beech | Drybrook Parish Council |
| Mr G Biggart | Lower Wye Valley Preservation Society |
| Ms K Biggs | Dean Heritage Museum |
| Mr C Bird | Drybrook |
| Mr A Blake | Wye Valley AONB Office |
| Mr R Blakemore | Huntley Parish Council |
| Mrs B Britton | English Bicknor Parish Council |
| Mr D Burren | Longhope Parish Council |
| Mrs G Camp & DC | Coleford Town Council |
| Mr S Chaplin | Staunton Parish Council |
| Mr P Chard | Action Against Quarrying |
| Mr A Davidson | English Heritage |
| Mr L Davis | Tibberton Parish Council |
| Ms A Desmond | Forest of Dean District Council |
| Mr A Everard | Tarmac |
| Mr Fishpool | Kempley Parish Council |
| Ms B Freshwater | West Dean Parish Council |
| Coun D Gaylor | Gloucestershire County Council |
| Coun A Gardner | Drybrook |
| Mr D Gardner | Cinderford Chamber of Trade |
| Mr M Gardner | Westbury on Severn Parish Council |
| Mr B Godfrey | Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust |
| Miss S Killingback | Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust |
| Mr J Gregory | Drymock Parish Council |
| Mr R Guest | Forest Enterprise |
| Mr J Hak | Camps Hill Village Trust |
| Mrs M Harris | Hewelsfield & Brockweir |
| Mr Harris | Woolaston Parish Council |
| Dr C Hart | Senior Verderer |
| Mr J Haton | Drybrook |
| Mr Hawes | DETR |
| Mr C Hawkins | Gloucestershire Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FOD Management Group) |
| Ms S Heard | Rural Development Commission |
| Mr E Higgs | Woolaston Parish Council |
| Mrs V Hobman | Lydney Town Council |
| Mrs D Hogan | Lydbrook Parish Council |
| Mr N Hogg | Blaisdon Parish Council |
| Mr N Holliday | Countryside Commission |

Mr T Holton
Mr P Horsley
Mr B James
Mr D Johns
Mr K Jones
Mike Jones
Roy Kernon
Col R Ker
Ms L Kettles
Mr S Lamb
Mr P Lawless
Mr A Legg
Mr J Luard
Mr A Maliphant
S McDonagh
Mrs M McGhee
Ms V Meek
Ms L Meyers Bennet
Mr J Mills
Mrs K M Biggs
H A Moore
Mr P Moore
Mr P Moore
Mr B Morgan
Mrs J Morrot
Mr C Netley
Ms M Newton
Mr W Offord
Mrs D Organ
Ms C Pagenham
Mr C Parry
John Pearson
Mr A Pickthall
Mr S Price
Mr F Priday
Mr I Proctor
Mr J Pugh
Mrs Read
Mr W Reed
Mr M Robson
Mr N Sandiford
Mr R Smith
Mr E Solesbury
Mr J Stewart
Mr P Strait
Mr A Thomas
Mrs K Trotman
Mr K Underwood

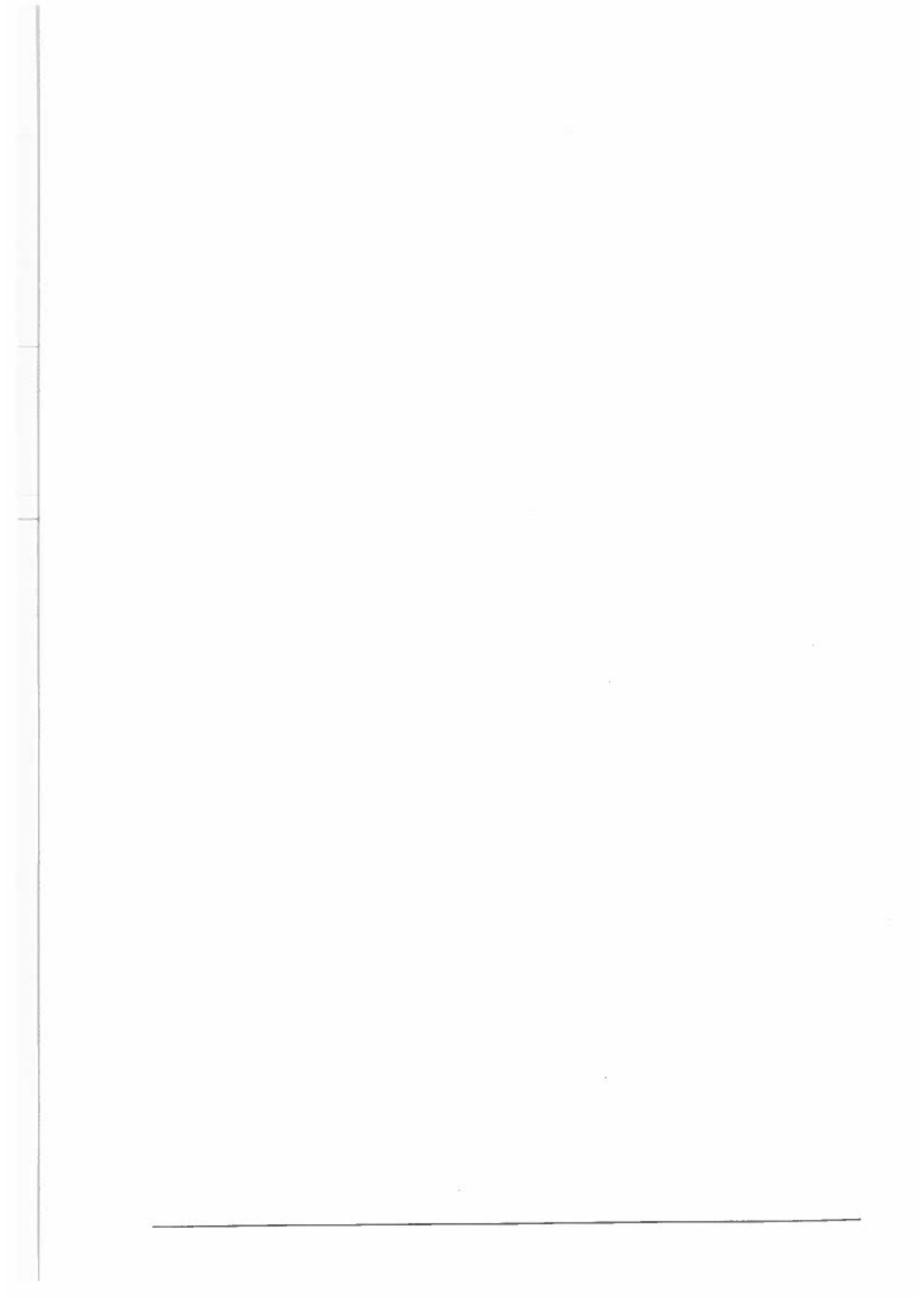
Gloucestershire County Council
Westbury-on-Severn Parish Council
Forest of Dean Small Mines Assoc.
Commoners Association
Redmarley Parish Council
Redbrook
CLA Gloucestershire
Taynton Parish Council
Countryside Commission
Tarmac
Hanson Aggregates
Awre Parish Council
Staunton Parish Council
Cinderford Regeneration Partnership
Forest of Dean District Council
Hartpury Parish Council
Ruardean Parish Council
FAVF
Aylburton Parish Council
Dean Heritage Museum
Drybrook
Dean Heritage Museum
Drybrook
Forest of Dean District Council
Coleford & District Chamber of Commerce
Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council
Dean Environmental Alliance
Newent Town Council
House of Commons
English Nature
Gloucestershire County Council
Redbrook
Mitcheldean Parish Council
Oxenhall Parish Council
Corse Parish Council
RSPB
Rudford & Highleadon Parish Council
Bromsberrow Parish Council
Cinderford Town Council
NFU
Gloucestershire CPRE
Alvington Parish Council
Pauntley Parish Council
Forest of Dean District Council

St Briavels Parish Council
Newland Parish Council
Tidenham Historical Association

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| Mr N Weaver | Business Link |
| Ms P Williams | Ramblers Association |
| Mr E Wood | Upleadon Parish Council |
| Mr R Woolmore | Countryside Commission |
| Mr R Wright | Free Miners Association |
| Mr S Wright | Gloucestershire Rural Community Council |



APPENDIX VII –WRITTEN COMMENTS



Summary of Comments

| | Contact | Organisation/ Individual | View on Special Status | Summary of Main Concerns | Queries raised to LUC |
|---|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Sally Secrett | Individual | Does not think a straight AONB/ National Park designation is right. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No large scale (new) quarrying No large scale housing Development around present towns No major road improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wishes to encourage tourist industry |
| 2 | Ken Secrett | Individual | Supports Special Status | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not feel that AONB status is effective protection from large scale quarrying Issue of Special Status far wider than mineral planning The Wye Valley AONB status has not protected it from substantial quarrying in the past, and doubts whether it will be protected by the Minerals Local Plan | Will there be provision for written/oral submissions from all parties/general public etc? |
| 3 | John Hine | Individual | | | Requested and received, details on Special Status study. Sent newsletter |
| 4 | Gordon Flight | Individual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB status of the Wye Valley has protected it from 'predatory development' AONB plus special considerations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At present F o D attracts many visitors by its' tranquillity Puzzle Wood – Roman surface mine workings, recently reprieved from threat of quarry development. Industrial development should be sensitively encouraged in existing areas adjacent to towns 'Definite NO to development in the heart of the Forest' No grandiose scheme for leisure parks. All visitors require is a safe place to park their car. Make forest tracks cycle proof. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will Special Status protect against such threats as that to Puzzle Wood? |
| 5 | FJ Mason | Individual | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lives on the edge of Stowfield Quarry where the approved rate of extraction has grown from 300,000 to 800,000 tonnes p.a. with proposals to increase | |

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| | | | | <p>this to 1.2m t.p.a.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural wealth of the area better exploited by tourism where benefits remain in the forest. Both the economic and environmental benefits are better with Tourism than Mineral Extraction. | |
| 6 | Virginia Shirley | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeply concerned by the threat of quarrying in an area that is an AONB. • Suggests that the roads in the Forest are not suitable for quarry vehicles; the dust would not be helpful to the growing tourist industry or to the local residents. • Government should find its aggregate from other areas which do not offer the natural beauty and attractions of the F o D. • Develop the assets already within the F o D see below. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> establish a Dept. of Forestry if Gloucester becomes a university town, as well as a link with the F.o.D 6th Form College. Establish forestry Summer Schools, and a Museum of wood and wood products. 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage wood furniture manufacture and revive boat building at one of the Wye docks 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacture of toy and playground equipment. 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Wood related house design and manufacture. 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Develop market for organic and specially reared produce. 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Development of activity centre to cater | |

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| | | | | <p>for both indoor and outdoor activities.</p> <p>7□ Set up small TV/Film studio within the forest.</p> <p>Develop centres for business firms who wish to function through the Internet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlarge Forestry Commission holdings • It would be of great benefit to the area if the tolls on the River Severn bridges were reduced or removed. | |
| 7 | Brian James | Forest of Dean Small Mines Association. Trenchard Collieries Limited | | <p>27.11.98</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal invitation to visit one of the Small Coal Mines in the Forest <p>10.12.98</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges the special position of the F o D • Mining has taken place since Roman times and would like to see the small scale underground mines allowed to continue in accordance with current legislation and in an environmentally acceptable manner. • 'Summary of mining in the Forest of Dean in the Hundred of St Briavels' enclosed. <p>10.12.98</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggests that Trenchard Collieries may be able to assist with infrastructure improvements and employment, in a partnership with the District Council, Forest Enterprise and the community. • Attached is a copy of a presentation given to Cinderford Town Council, as well as letters between themselves and the Countryside Commission. | <p>Recommend wide consultation with the Deputy Gaveler and the statutory agencies.</p> <p>Consultation to date has been limited to a small minority of people who have particular interests.</p> |

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| | | | | <p>19.2.99</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern that LUC response was tactical Explained again the role of the Association <p>2S.2.99</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressed concern over the terminology of freeminers in the briefing notes on quarrying detailed the corrections necessary <p>12.3.99</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enclosed notes of the objectives of the small mines association and meeting notes | |
| 8 | Dr C E Hart OBE | Verderer's Court. | | Requires confirmation that comments submitted in late January will be in time to be considered. | |
| 9 | D Eldridge | Individual (Forester) | Forest of Dean certainly warrants AONB designation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to preserve the natural beauty of the F o D. More light to medium labour-intensive industry should be encouraged to create sufficient jobs for the unemployed of the area, with a Grant Scheme to enable competition with South Wales industries. Expand tourist industry based on the Forest's industrial history; retain existing free picnic site, monitor use of cycles to counter soil erosion. Increase in quarry traffic would adversely affect tourism Provision of new housing for local communities only. Rate of house building to keep pace with the provision of new jobs. Protection of the underground forest is of major importance. Concerns have been expressed about the hydrology of the forest and its honeycomb of flooded | |

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| | | | | <p>mine workings. Where building/quarrying are proposed full liaison must be carried out to establish the condition of the ground/workings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large-scale excavations and dumping could have long term consequences, and until there is full knowledge of the behaviour of the water table, any large-scale development around the periphery of the Dean should be treated critically. | |
| 10 | S R Chaffe | Bowman Planton Associates | | Request to be on the Countryside Commission's list of consultees for stage 2 of the formal review. | |
| 11 | Mary Gorwyn and Michael King | Individuals | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'bowl' of landform where the authors live creates a particular effect in reducing air movement. They are concerned that any industry located there abouts would create dust that would not easily be dispersed by natural air movement, and would settle within the 'bowl'. • Sound is also amplified within the 'bowl' and industrial sound might echo around rather than diminish with distance. • Not against development as a whole. The infrastructure of the F o D does not lend itself to heavy road transport. Some rail transport is still possible and possibilities of making greater use of the facilities on the River Severn may attract suitable inward investment. • Encourage the development of small rural workshops/ smallholdings/ nurseries on fallow land. • Opportunities to attract businesses involved with telecommunications etc, | |

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| | | | | with a clear passage up the Severn. | |
| 12 | Mrs Trotman | Chairman, Newland Parish Council. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The whole of Newland Parish and part of Clearwell are a conservation area and Redbrook is part of the Wye Valley AONB All Saints Church, Newland is known as the 'Cathedral of the Forest' The ancient iron mines of Clearwell Caves are a big tourist attraction. | Sent enclosures on Special Status for the Forest of Dean |
| 13 | John Verity | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing facilities excellent for holiday makers, and surprised that it is not more popular as a tourist destination. Thinks that the local authorities are nervous to encourage any kind of commercialism, and those who wish to encourage holiday makers are viewed with suspicion and receive no encouragement. Plea for more leisure development, to include designated horse and cycle tracks. Easier access to the Forest tracks, whilst not allowing motor cycle access. Would like to see Forest based activities co-ordinated by a more commercially based organisation. Expresses view that smaller farms within the area will not survive unless they develop some kind of leisure interest. | |
| 14 | John Hale | Individual (Bream Methodist Church) Hon Secretary, Christian Guild | Believes there to be real difficulties in incorporating the Forest of Dean with another area into one whole AONB | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Forest is in need of successful schemes of regeneration Reference planning applications for Christian Guild Holidays, The Fence at St. Briavels and The Lindors Hotel | |
| 15 | Dave Gayler | Gloucester County Council | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for a formally documented and tested vision for the Forest of Dean. | • |

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| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To overturn planning approval through appeal can be an expensive and time consuming. The depth, quality and quantity of underlying mineral rich rock is unknown. We need to be able to find out with a finer degree of accuracy where minerals exist. | |
| 16 | Ralph Anstis | Individual | | <p>30.11.98</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many historical archaeological sites within the Forest of Dean, ie. Darkhill Furnace Site, the Roman Road at Blackpool Bridge and the two Mushet coal level entrances in Bixlade. Author feels that Forest Enterprise neglects these such sites on its' land and are not interested in preserving the Dean's archaeological heritage. Also that FE seem to deliberately want to prevent people from visiting theses sites Author feels that FE does not effectively consult. <p>17.12.98</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Dean Parish Council not included on list of parish councils contacted subsequent to the meeting of 26.11.98. | |
| 17 | Paul Stait | Individual | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principle interest is in improving the economy of the Forest of Dean Major improvements to the economy can only be achieved by inward investment. This means establishing good quality factories and offices in pleasant surroundings ie. speculative development and a substantial injection of Government/EU funding. Unsure whether there is scope to develop the existing tourist amenities in | |

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| | | | | <p>the Forest without an 'Alton Towers-type facility'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Forest could absorb significant business growth without harming the environment. | |
| 18 | Pat Williams | The Ramblers | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some form of environmental protection should be given to the area between the Rivers Severn and Wye from Chepstow north to about Newent. • The landscape, plant and animal life in this area is diverse because of the variations in the geology. • There are many sites of historic interest, which are visited by tourists and locals alike. • Environmental interests must be balanced against the economic and social needs of the are. | |
| 19 | Cathy Griffiths | Individual | Supports the Forest of Dean being awarded AONB Status or similar special status | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges the need for certain areas to be sympathetically developed, in particular Cinderford and Coleford. • Consultation with local people to be continued and acted upon. • Welcomes involvement of CC and LUC – does not trust either the Dean or Gloucester CC to act impartially (ref. Sedbury development). • The Governments projected 'housing need' figures need to be vigorously tested and questioned • The Forest of Dean is unique in its own beauty and its relatively unspoilt nature. | |
| 20 | John Powell | GAG Glos & Gwent against the Sedbury | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Forest of Dean has ill defined boundaries. GAG believes that the Forest of Dean Constituency boundary should form the extent of the Special | |

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| | | Development. | | <p>Status Area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Forest of Dean is bounded on the eastern side by the River Severn which is classified a RAMSAR Site and listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, and designated Special Protection Areas. There are 4 SACs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Wye Valley Woodlands 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Severn Estuary 4 <input type="checkbox"/> River Wye There are 2 Sites of National Importance – National Nature Reserves <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Highbury Wood 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Lady Park Wood There are 40 SSSI's, 199 Sites of Regional/Local importance and 37 notified Regionally important Geological Sites (RIGS). There are 2 RSPB reserves at <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Nagshead and Barnhill Plantations 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Highnam Woods There are 47 Scheduled Monuments including Offa's Dyke National Monument. GAG believe that the Forest of Dean should be designated as a National Park. When special status is granted the policy must ensure that the guidelines for regeneration demands sustainable forms of development. | |
| 21 | Mrs V Gardner and grandson | Individuals (District Councillor Andrew | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Along time ago there was a lovely wood but now there l a horrid mess" | |

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| | Samuel Coopey | Gardiner's wife and grandson) | | | |
| 22 | Thomas Coopey | See above. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From Plump Hill where a beautiful view once was seen, but we can now see that in a few years there is blank hole, where the red stone quarry is at Mitcheldean. I can imagine this lovely wooded hillside covered with its shades of autumn leaves. This is the way I would like it to stay for the future. | |
| 23 | JN Lunn | Individual | A National park designation implies stronger protection to the author than AONB and would urge that this was recommended. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority must be to preserve natural wildlife habitats. AONB's are frequently threatened and sometimes breached by local planning authorities. | |
| 24 | RC Blakemore | Huntley Parish Council Clerk of the Parish | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received letter of 7.12.98 | |
| 25 | R Bullen | | Any move to protect the Forest Area should involve the whole of the area including a large tract of land excluded on the 1968 map. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The protection of the forest should not result in the remaining area being given over to mindless development The area is not well supplied with amenities or transport systems. Development of industry should be appropriate to the area Excessive tolls on the Severn Bridge hampers commercial transport to/from the forest. Many of the towns/communities are run down in appearance. Tourist attractions are overshadowed by poorly maintained industrial sites. The Bleachley Peninsula is being ruined by tipping of material on the Wye Bank, and the venting on Methane gas. | |

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| 26 | Robert Freshwater | Friends of the Earth | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Astonished to see that at the initial meeting or the Review of the Special Status for the Forest of Dean that LUC has not decided upon the type of consultation process to use. • Suggests reviewing the process of consultation. • The author suggests that as LUC exhorted the expertise of the Forestry Commission, then the whole consultation is prejudiced. |
| 27 | David Rooke | Individual | Emphatic support for special planning status for the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is essential to preserve areas of particular value • The Forest of Dean and Wye Valley is a blend of all three aspects which make it so important – wildlife, amenity and historical perspective. • The F o D is under pressure as a commuter area and from extractive industries such as quarrying and open cast mining. • A Cohesive plan is needed with stronger regulatory powers than at present. The national parks provide a good model for this. • Welcomes the use of the Forest and Wye Valley as a recreational resource. | |
| 28 | C Hawkins | Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce and Industry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agrees with the concept of Special Status in principle. • However concerned about blanket planning restrictions associated with AONB's and National Parks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of locally available employment prospects would alleviate the social deprivation. This can only be achieved by inward investment and expanding existing businesses. • Many forest resident commute 30 miles on a limited transport infrastructure. It would be beneficial to the area if jobs | |

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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any status should be of a bespoke nature. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> were locally available. The Forest should retain its essential character while also protecting the potential for economic growth. The proper use of land which is already of limited ecological/aesthetic value could ensure the balance between conservation and economy. | |
| 29 | Margaret Hunt | Monmouth shire CPRW Hon Secretary. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for the Gloucestershire bodies that are calling for a special protective status. No current view upon the form that this should take. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wishes to register interest. The CPRW branch has been involved in the special status issue since 1997. Stronger environmental controls in the Forest of Dean is seen to be integral to the protection of the AONB on the Welsh side of the river. | |
| 30 | Peter Chard | Action against Quarrying. Chairman | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refers to meeting 26.12.98 and Labour party press release that the Government is planning to offer the FoD a new custom built special status. Includes copy of report from AAQ, prepared for CC to provide a factual context. | |
| 31 | Ray Wright | Clearwell Caves. The Royal Forest of Dean's Mining Museum. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mention to date on the primary function of trees. Due consideration must be given to the balanced ecology. Instead of clearing our trees for commercial quarrying interests, the CC, FC Luc etc should look to the future. Visitors come to the Forest because it is as it is..seeking wilderness etc. We must | |

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| | | | | <p>preserve the Forest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forget any plans for re-development. • Instead increase the size of woodland, progress is best achieved by leaving well alone. | |
| 32 | A S Goodenough | Action Against Quarrying | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Special Protection Area Status promised by Frank Dobson, is regarded as laudable and generally acceptable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any development should be carried out in a fairly slow, and very careful manner. • Development should be in keeping and scale with the area. • The Forest of Dean wishes to foster tourism, however accepts that some industrial development in selected areas cannot be excluded. • Careful attention should be paid to F o D road situation. • No new greenfield site quarries, and quarry extensions should be carefully controlled. • Except for local needs there is no real need for much quarrying in the F o D. Supplies could be obtained from Glensander or similar quarries instead. • Existing and draft policies seem to offer a degree of protection, however policy MLP A4 allow Gloc. CC to do what they like anyway. • Policies should aim to protect but not preserve. • "Human scale" projects should be encouraged, massive scale projects are unsuitable • Special Protection Area Status would protect the F o D from the worst ravages of uncontrolled development. • Local understanding of the Special Status is that it would protect the area against large new quarries, whilst allowing the | |

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| | | | | <p>existing quarries to continue working until the end of their natural lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any designation awarded to the area must permit and encourage small-scale appropriate development, whilst completely rejecting inappropriate large-scale development. • The area is worth preserving, commensurate with a measure of sensible and sensitive development. | |
| 33 | George Peterken | Individual. Ecologist – 20 years NCC woodland specialist. Consultant to FC and the Wye Valley AONB. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider distinguishing between the core and the fringe of the Forest (Dean core and Dean Fringe). The core does not seem to merit AONB status as it is managed well by the FC. • The Dean fringes are far more rich ecologically and come up well to AONB standard. • An expanded Wye-Dean AONB should be eligible for ESA and Countryside Stewardship incentives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The landscape character is very distinctive, of winding lanes, small irregular fields, high density of field boundaries (walls, hedges and trees), housing scattered, unimproved grassland , Species rich woodland etc. • The particular needs of this landscape are to control residential development, encourage retention of field boundaries and unimproved grassland. | |
| 34 | Sylvia Mills | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes we would like to be an AONB before it is too late. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The character of the Forest has been ruined by the impact of “huge lorries”, since the tolls on the Severn bridge have been made so expensive. | |

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| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roads have become very dangerous, many people commute out of the Forest to work. Money needs to be spent on the roads. • The roads, lorries and verges are very unattractive to tourists. • Facilities in the Forest are poor, public transport is poor and expensive, few parking facilities in towns and the tourist information is difficult to find. • We should adopt such policies as restricted speeds in National Parks, and not allowing lorries in unsuitable places. • Planning policy is lax. Poorly planned, unsightly housing developments in the wrong places spoil views. Industrial estates in the big towns must be fully used and made to look good. Possible retail warehouse with associated park and ride may help prosperity. • Enough thing to do – museums, caves etc but the swimming pool needs to be more visible and the Linear park is not attractive. • Improve horse riding and cycle facilities and rights of way. • Standard of shopfronts is deplorable. • Drybrook Quarry proposals are a tragedy, and then may be used for landfill. | |
| 35 | GBC Hopton | Country Landowners Association | • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passes our letter onto Mr Roy Vernon who is a member of the Gloc. Branch Committee. He will be representing the CLA at future meetings. <p>R D Vernon Lodges and Valley Farm Newland Coleford.</p> | |

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| | | | | Glos. GL16 8NQ Tel 01594 833902 | |
| 36 | Brian Cave | CPRE member now based in France | • | • E-Mail 13/11/98 | |
| 37 | Claire J Mead | Assistant planning officer Quarry Products Association | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any change in the status of the F o D should not be based on the impacts of quarrying alone, it should be based on all activities in the area. • Any reassessment of the status of the Forest of Dean should be done as part of a strategic national review of all AONBs • The review of only one area with a view to a new AONB designation in isolation may set a precedent for a piecemeal approach to reviewing all AONBs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QPA represents the aggregate quarrying industry , members producing 95% of UK output, as well as ready mix concrete etc. • Concerned that the review is solely driven by the perception that quarrying is a threat to the countryside. • Quarrying accounts for only a very small part of the landuse of the countryside/ Forest, 0.35% of England and Wales. • The quarrying industry within the F o D is of significant cultural and economic significance. It is a traditional activity which has shaped the areas cultural character. • Quarrying within the area meets local needs for construction materials, most of the Forest's products are sold within Gloucestershire. • They are not aware of any evidence that quarrying deters visitors from the Forest of Dean • The quarrying, industry maintains and enhances the countryside through good restoration. • There is already a strong presumption against inappropriate development in the Forest, within existing development plans. | |

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| 37 | Hewiesfield and Brockweir | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish is in support of creating a special status | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Forest needs special protection against the growth on invasive economic activity which may be detrimental to the landscape in particular major tourist industry Vital area is protected from large scale new quarrying Given area strong argument for tiered status and an enhanced AONB essentially for the Lower Wye Valley | |
| 38 | Dr and Mrs Lloyd | Individuals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forest of Dean should have special status | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area is unique beauty, history, woodlands of oaks, rights of local foresters Freedom of access Expressed concern over the abuse of land relating to quarrying, open cast mining and general industry Concern over land being allocated for housing Concern old mines being used as a dumping ground for waste People moving into area, rehoused from other areas and from prison there are no good areas | |
| 39 | Mr and Mrs Jones | Individuals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't need a special status because we already have it and we know how to look after it | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressed concern that so few foresters were invited to the briefing meeting States his position as a forester and a freeminer At the largest areas of open cast mining have already been completed It is difficult to assess the scale/extent of where areas have been worked out and what remains estimates 10% of workable reserves remain With regard to quarrying he does not believe that special status is the right approach It is the way the quarrying is undertaken | |

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| | | | | <p>at such a large scale and the demand by the increased road building programme causing problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New guidelines and powers on the protection of drinking water should curtail quarrying and open cast activities • Supports the campaign against large scale housing • Consider that FE are doing an excellent job, main criticism is that there have been too many Deputy Gravelors in recent years | |
| 40 | Verderers Court – Dr Hart | Organisation | • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various corrections with regard to noted handed out at briefing meeting | |
| 41 | CTC | Colin Palmer | • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests to be able to comment on the study | |
| 42 | Hanson Aggregates | Organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Object to the inclusion of custom built status without proper consideration of planning applications for mineral extraction and quarrying | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • states that a recommendations to include or exclude the area should be based on a comprehensive objective analysis of landscape and environmental qualities • quarrying has had an instrumental part in shaping the character of the landscape • The threat from quarrying is more perceived than real | |
| 43 | Tarmac | Organisation | • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enclosed a detailed report of work undertaken at Stowfield | |





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