



**SUMMARY  
SHEET 1**

# Landscape



The Malvern Hills at sunset

This document provides a summary of key points from the landscape chapter of the AONB Management Plan (2009-2014). It is intended to provide a quick and easy reference guide for users with a specific interest in this subject. Those intending to quote from the management plan and those who require a more detailed understanding should consult the document in full, available at [www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk).

## Special features

- The prominent steeply sloping principal ridge contrasting with the flat land to the east and south and gently undulating hills to the west and north.
- Extensive areas of acid grassland and heath on the hill tops, with rough grazing.
- Mixed broadleaved woodland often of ancient origin on the lower hills and valleys in the north and west.
- Fields of pasture, bordered by hedgerows and often containing hedgerow trees.
- Formalised, enclosed commons in the east with regular hedgerow boundaries.
- Unenclosed commons to the south east with a strong sense of wildness.
- Arable fields to the south with regular hedged boundaries and straight roads.
- Scattered settlements and small wayside cottages, particularly by the commons.
- Far-reaching views from and to the AONB.

## Key issues

### Changes in agriculture and forestry (LP1, LP2, L01, L02, L03, L05)

- A reduction in sheep and cattle grazing on the high hills and the common leading to increased scrub, bracken and secondary woodland cover.
- A deterioration in the strong regular enclosure pattern and the loss or replacement of hedgerow and hedgerow trees.
- An increase in the use of polythene for intensive production of certain crops.
- Global market changes leading to an increase in arable production at the expense of pasture.
- A growth in the number of paddocks and associated equine infrastructure leading to the loss of small pastures and the degradation/loss of key landscape elements.
- Woodland clearance and the gradual loss of trees along hedgerows and stream sides damaging visual links between areas. **(L02, L03)**
- Changing agricultural practices and hotter drier summers may lead to an increase in demand for surface water storage and supporting infrastructure.



Polythene within the AONB

*Continued overleaf*

## Development Pressures

A gradual increase in the number of small farms can result in the enlargement of extant properties and/or an increase in the demand for buildings and a loss in linear habitats such as hedgerows. Diversification of farm buildings into non-agricultural businesses may lead to an increase in built development, a loss of local vernacular design and distinctiveness and 'higher' standards of highway management and road signing that can be out of character with the area.

**(LP1, LP2, L03, L05, DP1, DP2)**

## Climate Change

The local effects of climate change may lead to increased erosion. Changes in vegetation patterns and agricultural land use may also impact on the visual appearance and character of the AONB. **(L04)**

## Views

The special landscapes of the AONB and the countryside beyond are highly visible. Similarly, the hills themselves provide a very visible and prominent focus, especially when viewed from the north and east. **(LP1, LP2, L02, L03, L06, D03)**

## Guiding principles

- LP1** Change is inevitable in the landscape – it has been changing for thousands of years. However, change should be managed in a way that maintains and enhances the core elements of landscape character.
- LP2** Landscape Character Assessments and Historic Landscape Characterisation should be used to improve understanding of the landscape and the processes of change within the landscape, and to inform decision-making and strategic planning.

## Strategic objectives

- L01** Conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape elements and features identified in the Landscape Character Assessments and Historic Landscape Characterisations, particularly those that are most sensitive or have little capacity for change.
- L02** Restore distinctive landscapes and landscape features that have been significantly degraded.
- L03** Identify and promote opportunities for positive landscape change to landowners, managers, government and all those with an influence over land.
- L04** Undertake survey and research to better understand and monitor the condition, and rate of change, of landscape character within the framework of the Landscape Character Assessments and Historic Landscape Characterisation.
- L05** Seek resources to promote landscape management and improvements.
- L06** Promote greater awareness and appreciation of the landscape attributes and character of the AONB among residents and visitors, providing opportunities for them to be involved in identifying and conserving locally distinctive features, views and landscapes.



Looking East from the Malvern Hills across the Severn Vale



Looking West from the Malvern Hills