

SECTION 6: NATURAL RESOURCES WALES STATEMENT ON NATURAL BEAUTY

What is Natural Beauty?

6.1 The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, (as amended) does not contain a definition of 'natural beauty', though reference to conservation of natural beauty includes conservation of flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features. NRW have however developed a statement on natural beauty. The statement includes the range of landscape attributes which contribute to an understanding of natural beauty. Their presence within coherent areas of landscape, expression of landscapes of national value and desirability to designate, underpin the UK approach to the designation of National Parks and AONBs to ensure they afforded a national level of planning protection:

- *Scenic quality, in terms of the aesthetic aspects of landscape (those which give pleasure to the senses), its perceptual dimensions and the spiritual or emotional impact that both have on people. There should be a consensus of opinion about the beauty of the landscape, among both experts and the public;*
- *Sense of place, in terms of unity and distinctiveness of landscape character;*
- *Landscape quality, in terms of the intactness of the landscape and its condition, in so far as this helps to deliver distinctiveness of landscape character in a particular locality;*
- *Integrity, in terms of intact rural character and general lack of large-scale, visually intrusive or otherwise inharmonious development;*
- *Perceptual qualities which make a particular contribution to sense of place, including wildness and tranquillity;*
- *Important associations of the landscape with people, places or events relevant to a particular place;*
- *Evidence of importance through expressions or descriptions of the landscape in art, literature, music and other art forms, through language and folklore, and through modern media;*
- *Rarity or representativeness, either of the landscape as a whole, or of individual elements and features within it;*
- *Conservation interest, through the presence of features of particular wildlife, earth science or archaeological, historical and cultural interest which add value to the landscape as well as having conservation value in their own right.*
- *When considering the feasibility of a development in a given location it is important to note the Special Qualities set out in the Statutory Management Plan and supplement this with a local analysis and understanding of the presence of Natural Beauty and how this is experienced within available views.*

6.2 Places within designated landscapes which display high scenic quality, have a strong sense of place, distinctiveness, high integrity and perceptual qualities are likely to be of particular high susceptibility to change in character;

6.3 Adjacent landscapes contribute to the designated area's setting. Perceptual qualities of tranquillity, remoteness, wildness and freedom can be affected by development outside of the designated area.

- 6.4 Designation of the National Park establishes the landscape is of High Value. The need to conserve and enhance these areas is therefore of high policy importance.
- 6.5 Change from development of a nature and character which is in contrast with the existing landscape, would be more difficult to accommodate in these locations.
- 6.6 Landscape and visual Impact assessments submitted to demonstrate the acceptability of proposed development will need to assess the effects upon local perceptions of Natural Beauty.