

RESTORING THE HERITAGE OF THE LOWER SEVERN VALE LEVELS

**Landscape Conservation Action Plan** 





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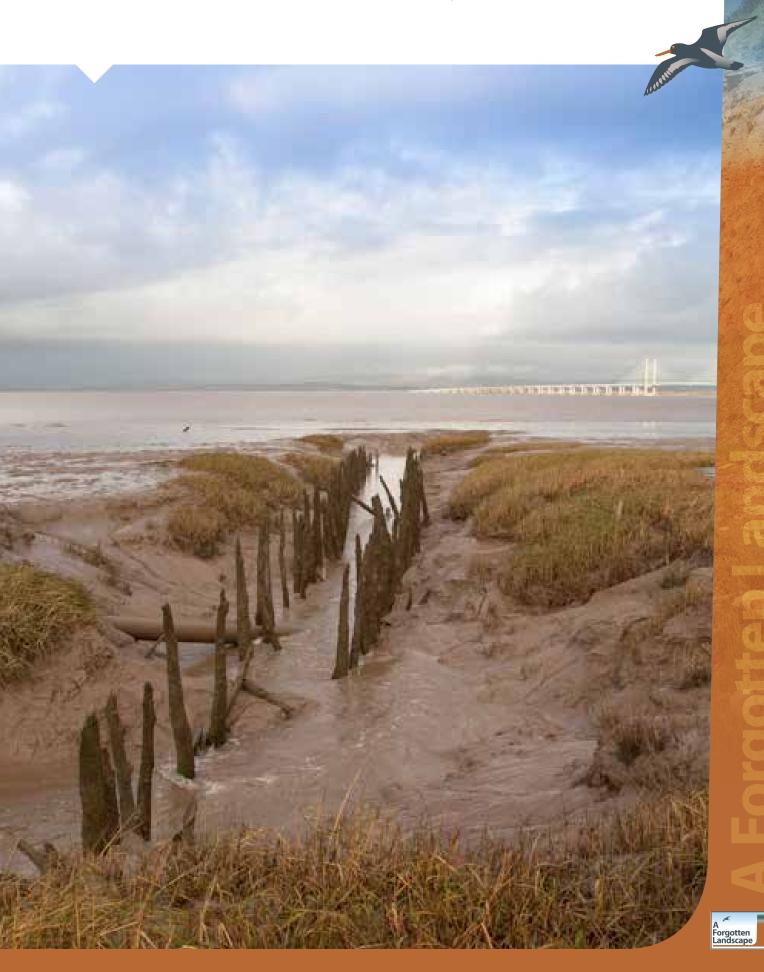


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# Executive Summary



## **Executive Summary**

Big skies; a sense of light and vast open space with two colossal white bridges spanning the silt-laden tides of the Severn Estuary: expanses of windy saltmarsh and mud grading into lush, flat pasture dotted with remote farmsteads, villages and narrow lanes apparently meandering nowhere – the area of A Forgotten Landscape Scheme is full of dynamic, dramatic beauty and panorama.

It is a landscape used by tens of thousands of migratory waterfowl which arrive from Northern Europe each winter, roosting and feeding on the Estuary's saltmarsh and mudflats and filling the coast's cold air with raucous babble.

It is a landscape full of geological clues to its past – the red cliffs at Aust rising out of the saltmarshes are rich with the fossils of the plesiosaurs and insects which populated the landscape when the area was transformed from a hot arid desert to a warm tropical sea approximately 200 million years ago.

Within this story of a landscape is another smaller-scale one: the story of man, his skills and ingenuity and how he adapted to and used the landscape for food and shelter – and how he crossed it.

The area is plentiful in archaeology, from footprints in the mud when Mesolithic man foraged across the forests of the Estuary before the sea came in, through to Roman sea defences to protect villas, property and farming.

The landscape provided a source of food, including salmon. All along the coast are the distinctive remains of the methods used to catch the shoals migrating up the Estuary.

Because of the river, docks built for trade were then enlarged and with it came industry. There are other stories - the land has a goddess, it has a murdered saint whose blood can still be seen at a spring. It has inspired poem and song and has its own gooseberry tart. It has local vocabulary – 'warths', 'pills' and 'rhines'.



A Forgotten Landscape





This special and distinctive landscape, however, with all its history, is under threat. A large part of its flat coastal plain is rapidly being developed out by two industrial and commercial business parks - key components in driving a buoyant local economy. There has been a slow but massively significant shift from traditional farming practices to more intensive agricultural regimes. Rising sea levels are threatening the roosts of the Estuary's waterfowl and causing the phenomena of 'coastal squeeze'. The land – once linked to and forming part of a larger area of wetlands - 'the Levels' - has become cut off and isolated from its better known sisters in Somerset by the city of Bristol and the industries and infrastructure around the mouth of the Avon. It has also become isolated from the rest of Bristol and South Gloucestershire, boxed in by a network of motorways. Although not 'forgotten' by the people who live there, it is little known and little visited by the wider communities outside. And as time passes and people pass on, so the memory of the area's heritage and history will pass away too.

A Forgotten Landscape Scheme aims to counter at least some of these threats.

Initially born out of local people's aspiration for a series of wetland reserves, through consultation with the Heritage Lottery Fund, communities and a variety of other organisations, a Landscape Partnership Scheme slowly emerged with a clear and varied suite of heritage projects as part of it. The project will restore or create areas of habitat which are characteristic of the area, such as wetlands, orchards, hay meadows and ponds. It will increase opportunities for people to get involved with their local environment; teaching old traditional skills associated with the area such as hedgelaying and pollarding as well as the social and cultural history of the recent and distant past. It will actively promote the area, using sustainable transport such as the community railway to bring families and sightseers into the area to boost the local economy; and to thereby enable people from farther afield to understand more about the area's unique and distinctive heritage. In doing so, it is hoped that more and more people come to cherish and value this singular and beautiful landscape - the bridges, flat lands, vast waters and big skies - and will help ensure that it is passed on in perpetuity for future generations to come.

# Introduction



A Forgotten Landscape

### Introduction

This document forms the Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) for A Forgotten Landscape – Restoring the Heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels Landscape Partnership Scheme.

The project area covers an expanse of coastal floodplain immediately alongside the Severn Estuary (including part of the Estuary itself) totalling approximately 173m² between Lawrence Weston and Avonmouth in Bristol and the boundary with Gloucestershire near Hill and Oldbury. It is covered by two unitary authorities, South Gloucestershire and Bristol, and whilst it is predominantly rural in nature, it also includes the significant and densely industrial landscape around Avonmouth.

#### Plan Authors

The plan has been written by Miriam Woolnough, Project Officer for the A Forgotten Landscape (AFL) Scheme. The Project Partnership Board for the development phase of the Scheme has also dedicated time and given advice over the 16 month development phase:

Dave Villis – South Gloucestershire Council (SGC)

Becky Coffin – Bristol City Council (BCC)
Janice Gardiner – Avon Wildlife Trust (AWT)
Mark Smith – Farming and Wildlife Advisory
Group (FWAG) SouthWest

Tim Corner – Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC)

Amanda Grundy – Natural England (NE)
Andy Reading – Environment Agency (EA)
Richard Archer – RSPB

In addition a number of individuals have provided support and advice which has been invaluable:

Paul Driscoll – SGC Archaeology and Historic Environment Record Officer

Richard Aston and Chris Giles – SGC
Streetcare Community Spaces Officers
Steve Poole – Professor of History University
of the West of England (UWE)

Following the work carried out in the development phase, Paul Driscoll and Steve Poole will join the Partnership Board for the delivery phase. There will also be two further members - the Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TCV); and a community representative.

#### Participation and Consultation

As indicated above, a wide range of organisations and individuals have participated in and have been consulted on, the development of the LCAP. In addition, further key officers, individuals, community groups, parish councils and special interest groups have been consulted to understand their priorities for the heritage of the area and also to gauge their enthusiasm for the proposed Scheme (see Section 4.3).

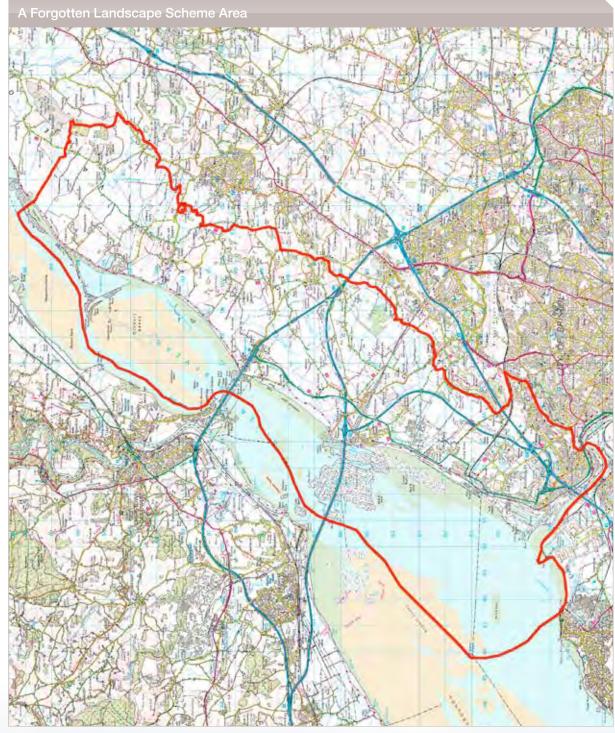
Three events were arranged specifically to allow people to become more involved with the development phases:

- South Gloucestershire Environment
   Forum attended by 27 people
- Consultation event in Thornbury attended by 26 people
- Consultation event in Lawrence Weston attended by 4 people



Consultation event at Thornbury - August 2013





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Even though the Lawrence Weston event had lower numbers, the participants contributed enthusiastically, sharing knowledge and giving feedback on projects and activities proposed for the delivery phase of the Scheme.

The Project Officer also took along an interactive stall to three major events over the summer - Bristol Festival of Nature, Thornbury Carnival and Shirehampton River Festival - and met and engaged with over 200 people who were of a wide age range and from a variety of backgrounds. Again all three events were hugely positive with a good deal of interest in the AFL Scheme and people keen to impart local knowledge and volunteer during the delivery phase.

Two targeted pieces of work were also carried out. Farmers and landowners were contacted and visited by the FWAG Adviser to gauge interest in taking up habitat creation and restoration opportunities offered by the project. Olveston Primary School took part in an event organised by Red Kite Environment – the consultants who compiled the Access, Interpretation and Learning Plan for the AFL Scheme (see below).

#### The AFL Scheme Vision

Through creating, developing and strengthening partnerships with organisations and local communities, the Lower Severn Vale Levels will become a distinctive, recognisable and appreciated landscape. Biodiversity will be improved and better connected and communities will discover their local heritage and unlock the secrets of the past. Local and nearby communities will also develop a greater awareness and understanding of the landscape by taking part in a wide range of participation and learning activities. The landscape will be more accessible and activities and traditions that have made the Levels what they are today will be celebrated and remembered.

In order to achieve the AFL Scheme vision a range of projects will be delivered. The individual projects are grouped under the following four themes:

A: Conserving and Restoring

B: Increasing Community Participation

C: Access and Learning

D: Skills and Training

#### Gaps and Limitations

The sheer scale of the AFL Scheme area and amount and diversity of the heritage within it means that it is impossible to address everything. However through the consultation work that has been carried out it is felt that the key priorities have been identified and the projects thus developed reflect these.

There are two key pieces of work that are protracted and long term in nature that will be addressed alongside but outside the AFL Scheme. They will not be a factor in the Scheme outcomes but the Partnership will be mindful of the effect that they will have on the AFL individual projects:

- Progressing the wetland habitat creation required under the Habitat Regulations 2010 to facilitate development on the land at Severnside and Avonmouth (historic planning permission). See Section 3.7
- Pursuing the retention and enhancement of the silt lagoon at the decommissioning Oldbury Nuclear Power Station

Due to complications of land and access ownership at Aust Ferry the immediate stabilisation work has been taken out of the LCAP. Work to remove vegetation using inkind labour from National Grid will still be pursued in 2014 as a discreet piece of work and the AFL Scheme will look to finding more long term solutions for the stabilisation of the site throughout the delivery phase.



It is recognised that LCAP is an exceedingly long document. However, it is anticipated that Section 5, which contains the comprehensive details of each of the individual projects, will be used as a 'stand alone' publication by the delivery phase project officers and the Partnership.

Back in 2009 when the AFL Scheme was first being planned the economic climate was very different to the current situation in 2014. Many of the organisations involved in the Scheme have seen cuts in terms of budget and staff. Therefore it is acknowledged that match funding and inkind time are less in abundance than they would have been five years ago. To make sure that the partnership remains strong and pulls together as a team a small amount of funding has been allocated for training and team building events (see Section 3.6).

#### State Aid

Defra has been consulted to make sure that all the projects within the Scheme do not contravene State Aid regulations. Defra advised that two projects, CR1 Salt Marsh Grazing Project and CR8 Orchard Restoration show a clear economic gain to the landowner and therefore should not be funded through the HLF grant. To address this it will be made clear that these projects will be funded through the match funding contribution from South Gloucestershire Council.

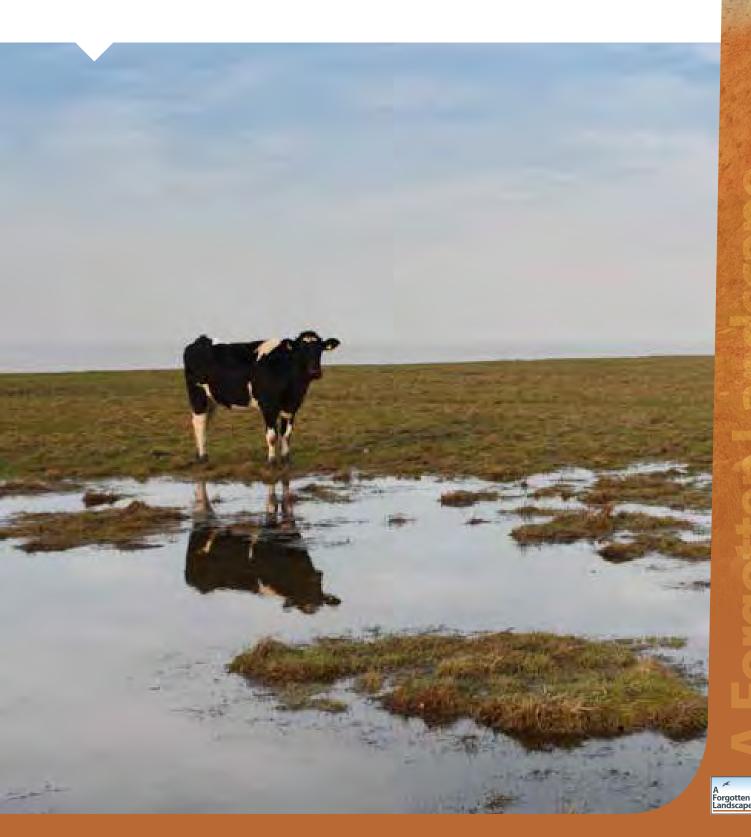
#### Documents to be read alongside LCAP

A Forgotten Landscape – Interpretation, Access and Learning Plan

Red Kite Environment 2013



# UnderstandingA Forgotten LandscapeScheme Area



# Understanding A Forgotten Landscape Scheme Area

#### 1.1 Landscape

#### Introduction

A Forgotten Landscape Scheme (AFL Scheme) area is made up of a section of the Lower Severn Vale Levels which consists of floodplain to the River Severn. Also included in the AFL Scheme area is a section of the River Severn itself. The majority of the area falls under the unitary authority of South Gloucestershire; however a smaller area in the south is within the boundaries of Bristol.

The landscape of the AFL Scheme comprises areas of flat low lying land interspersed by 'islands' of higher ground, bounded on the west by the River Severn and on the east by the central coalfield plateau of South Gloucestershire, which itself is bounded by the southern Cotswolds on its eastern boundary. The nearest major conurbation is Bristol.

The Lower Severn Vale Levels has a very particular character. Once part of the much wider Somerset and Avon Levels, but more recently cut off by industrial development in Avonmouth and the building of motorways, it is an area with a varied history, a rich diversity in its habitats and landscape and a sense of remoteness and tranquillity which belies its proximity to the urban spread of its immediate neighbour, Bristol.

The northern part of the area, from Shepperdine to Pilning, is influenced greatly by the pattern of rhines (the local term for ditches), the vegetation structure, the alignment of lanes, the slightly elevated land, the relative lack of landmarks and visual intrusions other than church spires, pylons and electricity wires, and the limited built development.

The hedgerows, orchards and small settlements add to this character and provide a distinctiveness that is a marked contrast to the Cotswolds to the east and the wooded hills and the Forest of Dean along the western side of the Severn.

The area to the south, from Pilning to Avonmouth, has a similar underlying character but with more contemporary development. This includes villages and townships, mainly constructed in brick, the Aust motorway services area, the motorways themselves, the two Severn bridges and the substantial developments of petro-chemical works with their block buildings, chimneys, towers and storage tanks and an extensive range of other industrial buildings.

#### **National Character Assessments (NCA)**

The Natural England National Character Areas pertinent to the AFL Scheme are

- Severn and Avon Vales (no.106)
- Bristol, Avon Valleys & Ridges (no.118)

and there is a visual interrelationship across the estuary with the Forest of Dean and Lower Wye (no.105)

## **South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessments (LCA)**

The South Gloucestershire LCA (2005 revised in 2013) breaks down the Lower Severn Vale Levels further into four characteristic zones:

- 1. Severn Ridges (Landscape Character Area 18)
- 2. Oldbury Levels (LCA 19)
- 3. Pilning Levels (LCA20)
- 4. Severn Shoreline & Estuary (LCA 21)









The section that falls under Bristol City Council is categorised as Avonmouth and broadly speaking has very similar characteristics as Pilning Levels.

#### Severn Ridges

#### (Landscape Character Area 18)

This LCA covers part of the project area's eastern boundary. The Severn Ridges LCA is an extensive, complex landform of abrupt scarps and gentle ridges, which rises from the lower Levels area.

#### **Key Characteristics**

- Distinctive large scale sloping landform rising from the Levels, with sections of steep scarp in the north and south and gentler slope profiles elsewhere. A large central area of low hills and radiating ridges extends westwards. A narrow linear area of dip slope, lies adjacent to the Bristol urban edge
- Area is greatly influenced by adjacent Levels and Severn Estuary. All combine to form an area of regionally prominent landform, distinct within and beyond South Gloucestershire
- Expansive and readily available views extend over the lowland Levels and Severn Estuary to the west
- Scarp and lower ridges form a prominent backdrop in views from the Levels, South Wales and the Forest of Dean

- Diverse vegetation cover, with visually prominent mature wooded scarps including areas of ancient woodland that make a significant contribution to landscape character and provide habitat for notable species including European Protected Species, occasionally with ornamental species within historic landscape parks.
- Numerous areas of calcareous, neutral or marshy grassland across the Severn Ridges that support a diverse range of flora including areas of species-rich grassland, areas of bankside vegetation along flowing water at Groves Gully and Roundhouse and Fishponds Woods, and arable farmland that provides nesting opportunities for ground-nesting birds and winter stubble that provides foraging opportunities for farmland birds, including Amber and Red Listed species
- Geological SSSI at Cattybrook Brickpit
- Clipped and overgrown hedgerows and intermittent trees divide small pasture fields and provide wildlife connectivity including between areas of woodland, with larger arable fields on more gentle slopes
- Orchards and limited common land are often associated with older settlements and farms, with a large new commercial orchard at Almondsbury



- Extensive distribution of settlements and minor roads, with older villages, hamlets and scattered farms of local stone, with stone boundary walls. All largely nestled within the landform and strong landscape structure. Churches form distinctive landmarks
- To the south, the Bristol urban edge, M4 and M5 are prominent within their local landscape. Sections of the motorways are also prominent within wider views, forming physical and visual barriers.
- Power lines frequently cross parts of the area, particularly to the north and vary in prominence
- Industrial/chemical works buildings, distribution sheds, Oldbury Power Station and Severn Bridges, within the adjacent Levels and Estuary, visually influence this character area

#### Location

The Severn Ridges Landscape Character Area extends from the northern to south western boundary of South Gloucestershire, running through its western side. The western boundary follows an often subtle transition in landform, land cover and drainage pattern between the low-lying Levels landscape and the rising ground of the ridges. The boundary generally follows the 10 metre contour line, although in some places the topographic change is imperceptible. The eastern boundary generally follows the scarp edge, the A38 and M5.



Severn Ridges LCA 18

#### Oldbury Levels

#### (Landscape Character Area 19)

The Oldbury Levels Landscape Character Area is a largely flat, open to semi-enclosed agricultural area with rhines, small orchards and relatively little, scattered settlement, strongly influenced by the adjacent Severn Estuary.

#### **Key Characteristics**

- Flat landscape of medium to small sized mainly pastoral fields, both regular and irregular in shape. Some ridge and furrow survives and pasture dominates
- Field pattern is frequently defined by the network of rhines and often associated hedges are a mixture of both closely clipped and overgrown. These provide important habitat and connectivity for wildlife
- Small scattered deciduous woodlands and copses, with often frequent hedgerow trees, occasional pollarded trees, some withy beds and small orchards associated with farms provide habitat for notable species including European Protected Species. Some areas have very little tree cover
- Pastoral farmland across this character area provides overwintering habitat for birds associated with the adjacent international designated Severn Estuary, and it supports a diverse range of flora.
   Neutral and marshy grassland across this character area support a diverse range of flora
- Intricate network of angular, enclosed lanes, often following the historic drainage pattern, connects a limited but regular distribution of settlement, comprising a small village and hamlets, largely built of stone, with some brick. Much of the Levels is largely unpopulated

- Lanes are occasionally flanked by broad grass verge common land and rhines.
   Unpaved trackways provide wider connections across the Levels
- Open to semi-enclosed rural landscape, with some extensive views of the Severn Ridge and Wye Valley / Forest of Dean Ridge, and a strong visual influence of the Estuary. The area provides a generally rural setting in views of the Severn Bridge. Localised enclosure is formed by mature trees, hedgerows, orchards and copses
- Oldbury Power Station and radiating powerlines are large scale elements and visually prominent

#### Location

The southern and eastern boundaries follow an often subtle transition in landform, land cover and drainage pattern between the Levels and the rising Severn Ridges, largely following the 10m contour, although in some places the topographic change is imperceptible.



Oldbury Levels LCA 19

The western boundary follows the sea defence wall, which marks a distinct change in land cover between the mainly enclosed fields of the Levels and the open intertidal area of rough grassland, warths (salt marshes) and mudflats to the west, where the open expanse of the Estuary is dominant. The boundary continues around and excludes the Oldbury Power Station complex, as this element and its siting specifically relates to the Estuary edge.





#### Pilning Levels

#### (Landscape Character Area 20)

The Pilning Levels is an area of contrasts, with a largely flat, semi-enclosed to open agricultural landscape, divided by rhines (ditches) and linear transport routes across the central and northern area, and extensive areas of industry and warehousing in the south.

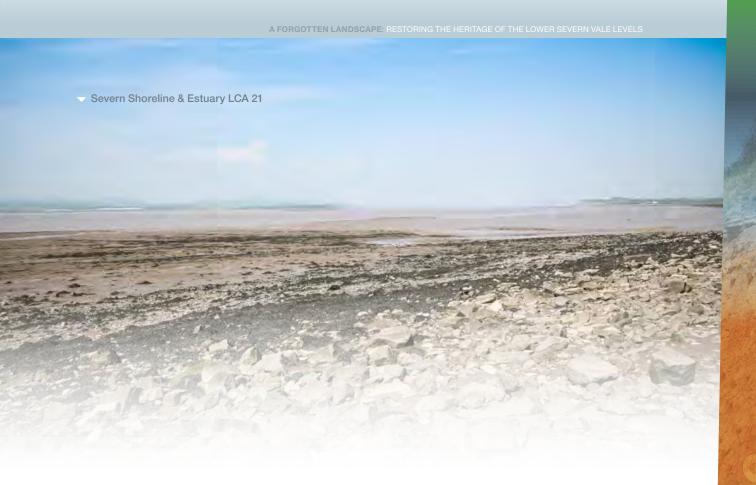
#### **Key Characteristics**

- Flat, simple landscape of medium to small, regular and irregular shaped fields, with a mix of pasture (some with ridge and furrow) and arable fields. Crisscrossed by rhines, clipped and some overgrown hedges, with occasional strong tree belts, withy beds, orchards, scattered mature trees and pollards
- Strong visual influence of the Estuary, and areas of the Levels that provide overwintering habitat for birds associated with the international and national designations on the Severn Estuary
- Neutral, calcareous and marshy grassland across the levels provide visual texture and support a diverse range of flora, while arable areas provide nesting. Winter stubble provides foraging opportunities for farmland birds including Amber and Red Listed species

- Outliers at Ingst and Aust form prominent low hills
- Scattered wooded areas contribute to greater enclosure of landscape in some areas as well as providing habitat for notable species including European Protected Species
- Semi-enclosed to open landscape, with occasional long distance views from slightly elevated vantages, west towards South Wales and Forest of Dean and east towards the Severn Ridge
- Numerous major roads, including the M4, M48, M49 and A403 and a railway line bisect the Levels landscape. Infrastructure, embankments and bridges form prominent features above natural ground level, however the associated cuttings and planting has over time achieved some absorption of these into the wider landscape framework
- Limited clustered settlements and scattered farms, some mainly on higher ground, with much of the area of the rural Levels landscape being relatively unpopulated
- An expanding and evolving complex of industrial, chemical works and distribution warehouses or sheds are prominent to the south.







The two Severn Bridges are prominent to the west beyond the area. Several powerlines and supporting towers crossing the area are also prominent

#### Location

The Pilning Levels Landscape Character Area is located on the south western edge of the South Gloucestershire area, to the north west of Bristol.

Its southern limits follow the South Gloucestershire Authority boundary, although the character of this area does continue southwards into the Bristol Council area towards Avonmouth. The eastern and north eastern boundaries follow an often subtle transition in landform, land cover and drainage pattern, between the flat Levels landscape and the rising ground of the Severn Ridges, largely following the 10m contour, although in some places the topographic change is imperceptible. To the west, the boundary follows the sea wall and rock outcrop at Aust. Here there is a clear transition between the fields of the Levels and the warth salt marsh and intertidal areas of mudflats, where the open expanses of the Estuary are dominant.

#### Severn Shoreline & Estuary

#### (Landscape Character Area 21)

The Severn Shoreline and Estuary
Landscape Character Area is a flat open
exposed linear landscape of warths (salt
marshes), tidal wetlands, mudflats and
rock. The large expanse of the Estuary and
changing tides is its most dominant feature.

#### **Key Characteristics**

- Open and exposed simple landscape of tidal Severn Estuary, with textured intertidal zone of bed rock, shingle and rivuletted mudflats/ sandflats, edged by a low mud cliff, with warths beyond, contained to the east by a sea wall
- The entire Severn Estuary and shoreline is internationally designated for a range of habitats and species, including significant numbers of over-wintering wildfowl that also roost and forage in the adjacent Oldbury and Pilning Levels character areas
- Aust Cliff, folded bed rock and fossil bed, forms a prominent landform and geological feature that is designated as a SSSI



- Constantly changing characteristics of shoreline, resulting from the high tidal range of the Severn Estuary (second greatest in the world)
- Warths are grazed in places. A linear woodland along the low outcrop of Aust Cliff is prominent
- Warths and mudflats are largely untouched by built features. Remnants of putcher ranks are an historical feature
- Only a few buildings sit on the edge of the warths, with settlement in the adjacent Levels occasionally prominent
- Tidal pills meander across the warths to the Estuary from sluice gates set within the sea wall
- Particular lack of formal boat access to the Estuary from the shore, other than via a slipway at Thornbury Sailing Club and at Severn Beach
- Expansive views include the Estuary and Bristol Channel dotted with islands, South Wales and the Wye Valley/Forest of Dean Ridges to the west and Severn Ridges to the east. Further to the south west the Exmoor coastline is sometimes evident

- The grade 1 listed original Severn Bridge forms a prominent landmark feature in many views, with the more recent Second Severn Crossing sometimes visible beyond
- Oldbury Power Station, lying within this area and large scale industry within the southern Levels, are prominent built features

#### Location

The Severn Shoreline and Estuary Landscape Character Area is located along the western edge of South Gloucestershire, extending from the chemical works and Avonmouth to the south, to beyond Oldbury Power Station to the north and extending westwards to include a large proportion of the Estuary. Its northern and southern limits follow the South Gloucestershire Council boundary, although the character of the shoreline and Estuary continues beyond the limits of the Council's area. The western limits also follow the South Gloucestershire Council boundary, which takes the approximate centreline of the Severn's navigable river channel.

The eastern boundary follows the defined sea wall, which runs along the length of the Estuary, marking a prominent change between the unenclosed warths, tidal shoreline and Estuary and the enclosed agricultural fields of the adjacent Levels. The sea wall merges centrally with Aust Cliff and outlier.







#### Avonmouth within Bristol City Council Area

Bristol City Council adopted its Core
Strategy in 2011 and as part of this, the
Strategy deletes land that was previously
allocated for 'regeneration' development
in the Avonmouth area from the Local Plan
Proposals Map. The broad approach is to
balance support for the area's economic
importance as the City's largest industrial
area with the protection of its environmental
assets.

#### **Key Characteristics**

The Avonmouth land within Bristol City
Council, is a continuation of the Pilning Levels
Landscape Character Area, as described
in 3. Pilning Levels (Landscape Character
Area 20), above and falls within Natural
England's Severn and Vales Character Area
106. The description of the area notes that
it includes a diverse range of flat and gently
undulating landscapes, united by a broad
river valley character. It also notes that in
the vicinity of the study area, the industrial
complexes of Avonmouth and the riverside
power stations dominate the landscape.

The area's landscape is also of historic significance. The central part of this area remains in agricultural use and comprises historic field boundaries, drainage channels and important hedgerows as well as the increasingly rare survival of ridge and furrow earthwork remains of Medieval cultivation.

#### Location

The area lies immediately south of the South Gloucestershire Council area at Avonmouth and shares many similar characteristics with the Pilning Levels Landscape Character Area.



**Avonmouth Docks** 



#### 1.2 The Heritage of the Area

#### Introduction

The AFL Scheme is rich in all aspects of heritage. From the significance of the River Severn which hosts a plethora of wildlife to the geologically important cliffs at Aust; from the pre-historic footprints in the river bed to the cultural history of crossing the river, there is a complex story to be unfolded which all contributes to why the area is how it is today.

#### 1.2.1 Biodiversity



Great crested newt

The AFL Scheme area consists of part of the Severn Estuary, its shoreline of mud flats, saltmarsh and rocky 'beaches' as well as an expanse of low-lying coastal floodplain between the industrial estates of Avonmouth within Bristol to the south and the open, predominantly flat, farmland to the north of Oldbury and Shepperdine within South Gloucestershire. This combination of habitats means that the area supports a rich and diverse array of flora and fauna, as well as its own singular geology and geomorphology.

In recognition of this, the Severn Estuary is covered by a series of nationally and internationally important nature conservation designations. The Estuary boasts the second highest tidal range in the world (second only to the Bay of Fundy in Canada). The features include marine and intertidal habitat such as submerged sand banks, extensive areas of mudflats and sandflats as well as saltmarsh along the foreshore. The Estuary forms a crucial 'funnel' between the open sea and rivers for migratory fish stock, including salmon, sea trout, sea and river lamprey, allis and twaite shad and eel.





During the winter months, the mud flats, the warths (saltmarsh) and freshwater pills alongside the Estuary routinely support over 60,000 migratory wildfowl and waders (waterfowl) from Northern Europe, a vast assemblage including species such as gadwall, shelduck, dunlin, redshank and European white-fronted goose. Some of the freshwater bird species also move inland at high tide and use wet fields and other wetland habitat within the adjacent coastal floodplain in which to roost.

The river foreshore is important for raptors and there is a population of short-eared owls associated with the area around Aust Cliffs. Peregrine falcons breed on the Severn Crossing Bridge and over-wintering merlins use the warths at Aust and Northwick.

Aside from Bristol Port and the major industrial, commercial and distribution centres of Avonmouth and Severnside to the south, the majority of the Scheme area consists of flat, low-lying coastal

floodplain grazing marsh with occasional 'islands' of higher ground often covered by deciduous woodland. Whilst much of this is small to medium sized fields of arable or improved pasture, fragmented areas of unimproved species-rich neutral grassland – the traditional crested dogstail, common knapweed lowland hay meadows – still occur, its sward including common spotted orchid, pyramidal orchid, bee orchid and southern marsh orchid.

The field boundaries are demarcated either by hedgerows and rhines (ditches). In the south, fragmented populations of water vole are associated with some of the watercourses adjoining or within the industrial areas of Avonmouth and Severnside; and the less intensively managed hedges support a range of biodiversity, such as dormouse (a European protected species), and a rich array of farmland birds including song thrush, linnet, bullfinch and yellowhammer.



The flat agricultural land contains numerous field ponds and where these haven't been allowed to degrade they support a diversity of aquatic flora and fauna, including populations of great crested newt interlinked by the network of field hedges and rough grassland. Isolated pockets of reed bed occur along the coast and scarce species such as bearded tit have been recorded. In the northern half of the LP area, the landscape includes small scattered deciduous woodland and copse (typically oak-ash dominated); and is typified by small villages and hamlets connected by an intricate network of lanes. Where the verges are not intensively mown, the rank grassland and adjacent hedges support occasional populations of glow worm.

Throughout the Scheme area, remnants of old orchards are commonly found – a sign of a significant land use in the past. The orchards support species such as little owl, green woodpecker, mistletoe and a wide range of insects such as the lesser stag beetle.

#### 1.2.2 Geology

The Lower Severn Vale is one of the most geologically and scenically diverse areas in England, with rocks from the Precambrian through to the Jurassic represented across the area.

The wide fertile Severn Vale is floored by Triassic 'new red' sandstones and marls of the Mercian Mudstones group and Jurassic lias clays further east. The Triassic deposits were formed in a Sahara-like desert when the British Isles lay about 15 degrees north of the equator, whereas the clays represent deep-water sediments. The landscape of this Lower Severn Vale is flattish, with its main features being a rather weak low scarp, the Severn Ridge, which crosses the vale from south-west to north-east marking the Triassic / Jurassic border.

The cliff at Aust is famous for its Rhaetic fossil bone bed and is also the most productive locality in Britain for fossilised Triassic insects. The lower part of the cliff is a red mudstone, with bands of nodules of pinkish-white alabaster.

Above the red mudstone is green mudstone, followed by the Rhaetic bone bed at the base of a band of black shale. Above the shale are cream-coloured limestone beds.

The mudflats and shoreline, most notably along Northwick Warth, provide a vivid demonstration of coastal dynamics and the formation of new rocks, as well as the link between sedimentary processes and estuarine ecology.

#### 1.2.3 Archaeology

The archaeology of the Lower Severn Vales tells the local story of human interaction with the landscape. From prehistory to the modern period, the Scheme area contains a rich mixture of archaeological sites relating to this human activity. The earliest huntergatherers, tracking deer through ancient woodland in a landscape linking England to Wales by forest, literally left their footprints behind, whilst the earliest farmers began the long process of enclosure and the creation of boundaries. Throughout the Lower Severn Vales, Iron Age earthworks, Roman villas, floodplain management through to WWII defences all bear witness that humans have been an integral part of this landscape.

There are more than 1,600 archaeological sites within the Scheme area, ranging from palaeoenvironmentally important peat deposits to substantial earthwork enclosures and standing structures.



Severn Valley Ware cup

There are six scheduled monuments within the Scheme area representing prehistoric fortifications, Roman villas, Roman and Medieval flood defences, a Medieval manorial complex and WWII military defences.

Yet these only tell part of the story, for these are sites or deposits that have been identified and do not reflect the totality of archaeology within the area, much of which remains undiscovered.

#### 1.2.4 Built Heritage



Shepperdine Chapel

The built heritage, like the archaeological resource, was until fairly recently tied to the relationship between humans and the landscape and the character of the built heritage relates to the function of the land and river as a provider of resources and subsistence. There are few ornamental landscapes, structures or gardens within the Lower Severn Vales – instead the landscape is one of the exploitation of resources.

Throughout the area, the remains of cider, dairy and cheese production are to be found, some as surviving examples within historic houses, demonstrating the way that the Lower Severn Vales were used by people for many purposes.



There are over 200 listed buildings including the Grade I listed Severn Bridge at Aust and the complex of buildings and features at King Weston House and estate, which include Grade I and Grade II\* structures. But even structures that are not Grade I or Grade II\* listed are distinctive of the Scheme area. The ferry terminal at Aust defined the pre-Severn bridge boat travel, carrying commuters between England and Wales and whilst it may not have been the Roman crossing mentioned in the Trajectus, there is undoubtedly a long history of crossing from this location, surviving most clearly as the now dilapidated ferry terminal. Further north, Oldbury Power Station is one of the most recognisable structures within the Scheme area, not only for its size but also because of the way it relates to its immediate landscape, using the waters of the Severn and the intertidal zone within the power process.

#### 1.3 Landscape History

The Severn Estuary at the head of the Bristol Channel is the largest estuarine system on the British west coast. It lies between the high ground of the Cotswolds-Mendips to the south and southeast and the Monmouthshire hills and Forest of Dean to the northwest. Sediment enters from the seabed to the west and from the substantial catchment of the River Severn and its tributaries. Bordering cliffs and the other rivers that drain into the Estuary contribute in a minor way. The Estuary is well-stirred and highly dynamic, with an extreme tidal range of 14.8m and exposure to prevailing winds. Its waters are notoriously turbid, the amount of suspended mud varying with tidal and weather conditions.

The Lower Severn Vales has a rich and dynamic landscape history shaped by a changing environment and human interaction with their surroundings. As the last significant cold spell in Britain ended about 10,000 years ago, this ushered in the Holocene and enabled the re-colonisation of the land by hunter-gather communities.

At the end of the last ice age there was no River Severn and the landscape between England and Wales was joined. The Lower Severn Vale Levels would have been a woodland environment interspersed with rivers or streams that drained into lakes (now beneath the Severn) and onward to the coast south of Wales. This environment would have provided a significant set of resources for Mesolithic hunter-gatherers to exploit, including deer and game, freshwater animals and fish and, if necessary, the coastal resources of the sea, particularly during harsher winter periods.

As temperatures rose, the ice caps melted and sea levels began to rise. Initially this rise kept pace with the land so the effects of sea level change was not an instant flood, but hunter-gathers would have recognised that their world was changing. By 5,500 years ago the forest that had dominated since the end of the ice age in the area of the River Severn was submerged, although sea level rise continued for a further 2,000 years. Within the Scheme area, remains of this submerged forest are exposed at low tides as tree stumps become visible within the intertidal mud flats.

Yet, those people who looked upon the Lower Severn Vale as their territory were not simply passive, but instead engaged with their changing environment. At Willow Farm in Hallen and at Oldbury for example, there is evidence of the deliberate burning of peat by Mesolithic peoples, probably as an aid to hunting.

Ultimately the land connection between England and Wales was severed as the River Severn formed. But communities now had the option to exploit the newly developed river, intertidal, salt marsh and dry land zones. Fishing was one of the activities associated with this new environment, and evidence for prehistoric through to Medieval fishing, such as fish traps and putchers are known from the Scheme area and wider afield.

With the onset of the Neolithic and, more specifically, the Bronze Age there was a move towards a sedentary (settled in one place) existence, which resulted in the seasonal and opportunistic occupation of the Lower Severn Vale landscape. This transition marks a significant change in human relationship with the environment for land begins to become enclosed and bounded, a process that would define the landscape character of the Lower Severn Vales for the rest of its history. Whereas Mesolithic hunter-gatherers moved through the landscape, engaging with it on a subsistence level, the communities of the Bronze Age began to create boundaries, signalling a move towards ownership and division. Such boundaries are recognised in the many sub-rectangular enclosures that are found at Hallen, Pilning and Oldbury. Surviving sometimes only as crop marks visible on aerial photos, these enclosures are probably among the first movement towards boundaries that would ultimately lead to the hedgerows and field systems that are recognisable in the Scheme area today.

This resulted not only in dispersed settlement defined by sub-rectangular enclosures, but also animal husbandry. Cattle are nearly ever-present throughout prehistory, whilst sheep or goats appear to have been introduced by the Middle Bronze Age (c.1,500 BC). It is probable that these animals were grazing on the salt marsh, a characteristic that would define the later history of the area too. Throughout this period there would have been intermittent attempts at drainage and flood defences, but it would not be until the Roman and post-Roman periods that permanent marine features were created.

The Romano-British exploitation of the Scheme area heralds a turning point in the use of the landscape. Whereas during prehistory, occupation was probably seasonal, in the Roman period there was a dramatic transformation as the marshes were subjected to land-claim ('reclamation') through the construction of embankments,

drains and sluices that facilitated permanent settlement.

Roman and Medieval flood defences were barriers designed to prevent the inundation of land by salt or freshwater floods, and to assist in the reclamation and drainage of large areas of low lying land. They normally survive as a low elongated earth bank with a ditch on the landward side. The banks were made of local clay or turf and were sometimes strengthened by internal wooden frameworks, wattling or stone facing. Regular repair of flood defences meant they often had a long life span of many hundreds of years with some Medieval embankments still in use today. Unaltered examples, i.e. surviving Medieval defences not subsequently reused in the post-Medieval period, are comparatively rare and Roman examples rarer still. Flood defences are one of a small number of Roman and Medieval monuments to show the effects of man on water control. Their longevity and their influence on the layout and pattern of large areas of low lying land all contribute to their importance.

This permanent settlement can be identified at Oldbury, where a high status building, probably a villa, was located and at Long Cross where the remains of a minor Roman villa are situated. Such enclosed marshes, which can be cultivated and permanently settled, are much more valuable than their natural predecessors, but continuing sea level rise makes their defence against flooding increasingly costly. Yet where groups or societies invested in the labour to create such defences, they were rewarded by exceptional agricultural and grazing land.

What happens to the landscape in the centuries after Roman activity is not clear. Apart from some initial continuation of flood defences, the landscape appears to have been partly abandoned, although this may relate to a lack of research rather than reality. However, by the Medieval period, groups and communities were returning to the Lower Severn Vales.



Pre and post-conquest manors begin to emerge at Aust and Olveston. Deserted Medieval settlements throughout the Scheme area demonstrate the rise and contraction of populated area, but what does emerge clearly is the extensive network of ridge and furrow, representing some of the best preserved examples in the west country. Ridge and furrow, clearly identifiable within the Scheme area, are the remains of a shared practice of arable cultivation and reflect the labour Medieval populations invested into the land and the rewards this yielded.

Among one of the more intriguing historic events of the landscape history of the AFL Scheme area is the supposed tsunami of 1607. This event was supposed to have killed 2,000 people and destroyed livestock and farmland. Although the precise nature of the intensive flood (be it tsunami or storm surge) is debateable, archaeological deposits from places like Pilning do show evidence of a flood event.

#### 1.4 Context of the Area

#### Why was the area chosen?

The AFL Scheme area was chosen primarily because of the importance of the wetland habitats and threats they are facing from development, lack of management and the fragmentation of these habitats. There is huge pressure for development in the south section of the Scheme area and along the River Severn there are sections of SSSI that are in unfavourable or declining condition.

The Lower Severn Vale Levels were once part of a much larger area of wetland and would have been connected to the North Somerset Levels and the Somerset Levels. However they have become fragmented due to the expansion of Bristol and industrial growth around the mouth of the Avon. The area has also become cut off in a more social context with the perception of it being a purely industrial landscape criss-crossed with motorways preventing people from perceiving that it is a good place to visit and communities within the Scheme area suffering from an element of rural isolation.



The Scheme area is at the extremity of both the South Gloucestershire and Bristol unitary authorities and it is recognised that there is a lack of organised activities, events and projects compared to other areas within the unitary authorities' boundaries.

Nonetheless the Scheme area boasts the Estuary of the UK's largest river and wildlife habitats worthy of European protection. It is on the edge of Bristol which is the largest city in the south west (population 432,500) and the area of city that falls within the Scheme area contains a ward ranking within the 10% most deprived Super output Areas in England in the overall index of multiple deprivation. The other significant population is the market town of Thornbury (population 12,000) which sits just outside the Scheme area in the north. There is therefore huge potential for these communities to benefit from the increased opportunities that the momentum of a Landscape Partnership Scheme affords.

#### 1.5 Management Information

This section outlines the plans and strategies that exist for the AFL Scheme area. It looks only at those that are specific to the AFL Scheme itself. It should be taken as read that strategies such as the government white paper 'England Biodiversity Strategy' and the Lawton Review 'Making Space for Nature' will be relevant as they would be for any LSP Scheme.

#### **National**

Severn Estuary Coastal Management Plan Coastal Habitat Management Plans (ChAMPs) provide advice to inform strategic flood risk and inform coastal management decisions in order to prevent damage to their sites designated under the Ramsar Convention, Habitats and Birds Directive. ChAMPs have two primary functions; firstly to predict and then record losses and gains to habitat due to natural changes to the shoreline and secondly to inform the direction of habitat management to address theses losses.



The ChAMP will inform the subsequent development of Shore Management Plans (SMPs), strategies and schemes.

### Severn Estuary Shore Management Plan (2002, currently under review)

This non-statutory document was produced by the Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG) in 2002 and an updated version is currently under review (known as SMP2). It contains draft policies proposing how the shoreline should be managed over the next 100 years. The SECG is a partnership of the Environment Agency, conservation authorities, Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) and various local authorities around the Severn Estuary.

Key policies for Bristol / Severnside area and the Severn Crossings to Sharpness area are:

- 'Hold the Line' of current flood defences
- Recognise that habitat between the river and the flood defences will be lost due to climate change and that new habitat should be created on the land side of the defences.

#### Regional

### West of England Strategic Green Infrastructure Framework (2011)

This document has been produced by Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Bath & North East Somerset Council, Natural England, Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission and has the following purposes:

- To create a shared vision, objectives and principles for green infrastructure across the West of England
- To create green infrastructure of strategic importance, including green infrastructure areas and corridors, which may cross local authority boundaries

It complements and guides green infrastructure strategies that the individual unitary authorities may produce.

#### Local

### South Gloucestershire Core Strategy (adopted 2013)

The most relevant policy within the SGC Core Strategy relating to the AFL is Policy CS2 – Green Infrastructure:

The Council and its partners will ensure that existing and new Green Infrastructure (GI) is planned, delivered and managed as an integral part of creating sustainable communities and enhancing quality of life.

#### **Bristol Core Strategy (adopted 2011)**

The policy within the Bristol Core Strategy most relevant to the AFL Scheme is Policy BCS9 – Green Infrastructure:

The integrity and connectivity of the strategic green infrastructure network will be maintained, protected and enhanced.

#### **Bristol Biodiversity Action Plan**

The Bristol Biodiversity Action Plan provides the framework for habitat and species conservation in Bristol. It also recognises the benefits of wildlife to people and helps to identify ways to better promote, and engage people in, biodiversity conservation in the city.

It has been produced by the Bristol Biodiversity Partnership and is aimed at organisations, businesses, groups and individuals, which are either working to protect and enhance biodiversity in the city, or who may impact on it in some way.

The most relevant action plans are:

- Estuarine habitats
- Rivers and Rhines
- Species-rich Grassland
- Water Vole



#### South Gloucestershire Council Biodiversity Action Plan

The South Gloucestershire Biodiversity
Action Plan (BAP) has been drawn up
collaboratively with a range of partners,
including nature conservation organisations,
parish councils, local wildlife groups and
members of the public. Its main aim is
to contribute towards safeguarding and
benefiting the species and habitats making
up the Plan and to provide an identity
and focus for nature conservation work
throughout South Gloucestershire.

The most relevant action plans are:

- Arable
- Hedges and Field Margins
- Old Meadows and Pastures
- Orchards
- Ponds, Rhines, Rivers and Water Bodies
- Saltmarsh and Coastal Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Great Crested Newt
- Glow worm

### Oldbury Power Station Biodiversity Action Plan (Magnox)

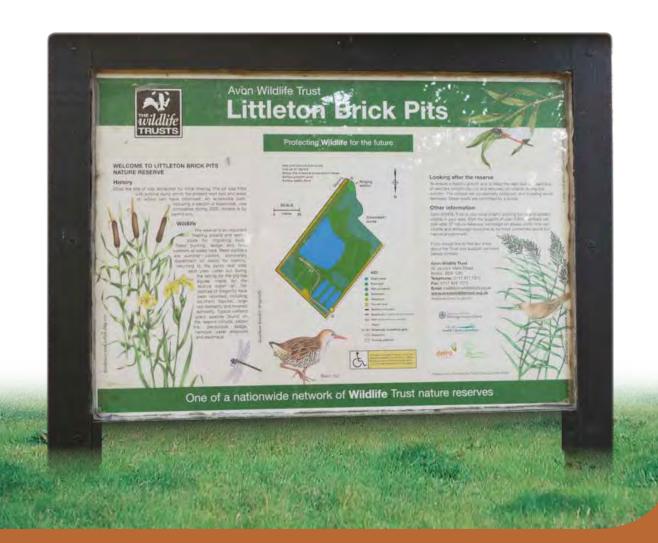
The Biodiversity Action Plan has been written by Magnox who manage Oldbury Power Station and the surrounding land. It lists the actions that will be taken to protect and enhance the biodiversity on the site for habitat including

- Orchard
- Wetland
- Grassland
- Woodland

The plan also recognises the enormous benefits that access to biodiversity brings to the station's staff and to the local community.

### Littleton Brickpits Management Plan (Avon Wildlife Trust)

The major habitat management on this site is reed cutting.





## 2 Statement of Significance



## 2 Statement of Significance

#### 2.1 Natural Heritage

#### 2.1.1 Biodiversity

The AFL Scheme area is hugely significant for an array of habitats and species of flora and fauna in a regional, national and international capacity. It includes one European Site of international importance; two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) of national importance; and a network of some 31 local wildlife sites (Sites of Nature Conservation Interest), predominantly located across the coastal floodplain of the Estuary and designated in recognition of their value for local biodiversity.

The AFL Scheme area includes part of the Severn Estuary which, because of its habitats and numerous species of migratory waterfowl and fish is covered by a suite of internationally significant nature conservation designations. It is situated on the south west coast of Britain at the mouth of four rivers – the Severn, Wye, Usk and Avon.

Its huge tidal range is the second highest in the world (after the Bay of Fundy in Canada) and this, along with its classic funnel shape, makes it both unique in Britain and extremely rare worldwide. The intertidal zone of mud flats, sand banks, rocky platforms and saltmarsh are amongst the largest and most important in Britain.

It is predominantly these areas of mudflats and saltmarsh, augmented by freshwater outlets or 'pills', which provide the rich invertebrate feeding and roost sites to support the vast assemblage of wildfowl and waders for which the Severn Estuary is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds ('the Birds Directive'). During the early winter months each year, huge numbers of migratory waterfowl arrive from northern Europe to augment those wetland birds and species resident year round across the Severn Estuary.



A Forgotten Landscape These include internationally important numbers of Bewick's swan, European white-fronted goose, gadwall, shelduck, redshank and dunlin, all species for which the Estuary qualifies as an SPA. These populations are joined by an array of species forming part of the qualifying assemblage of birds, including wigeon, teal, pintail, pochard, tufted duck, ringed plover, grey plover, dunlin, curlew, whimbrel and spotted redshank, as well as others such as lapwing, mallard and shoveler which have been added to the qualifying criteria since designation.

The numbers of individual species of waterfowl as well as the overall assemblage varies according to temperatures and climatic conditions, particularly those elsewhere in colder parts of Britain. At high tide along the Estuary, many waterfowl are 'flushed' in land and will utilise the low-lying wet fields and other freshwater wetland habitat within the coastal floodplain. Curlew, lapwing, shelduck and dunlin are routinely recorded and the provision and conservation of these inland coastal high tide roosts is a crucial element in the conservation of these species and their continued presence in significant numbers across the Estuary.

The bird calls and massed nebulous flocks of waterfowl dispersed across exposed mud flats, rock outcrops and saltmarsh at low tide, along with the open water and light, is an integral part of the magic of the area for both local residents and visitors.

Whilst the SPA waterfowl are distributed along most of the shoreline within the AFL Scheme area, the mudflats and saltmarsh along Northwick Warth and Chittening Warth, to the north and south of Severn Beach respectively, as well as the intertidal zone and coast around Oldbury Power Station, are particularly important. Chittening Warth comprises a narrow strip of saltmarsh pinched between mud banks and the railway line between Bristol and Severn Beach and is situated immediately to the west of the Enterprise Area covering Avonmouth and Severnside. The area is a major economic driver for the south west of Britain as well as the West of England region and, as well as including Bristol Port Company and Docks, predominantly consists of industrial and distribution businesses located within a series of commercial estates.

The Severn Estuary is also subject to a

Avonmouth Docks







series of additional over lapping nature conservation designations. The international significance of its wetlands and bird populations was recognised during the Ramsar Convention on the Conservation of Wetlands of Importance in Iran in 1971 ('Ramsar Site'). It also qualifies as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) the Habitats Directive 1992 in recognition of its size, shape and tidal range as an Estuary and a variety of associated habitats, such as sand banks, Atlantic salt meadows, sand flats and mud flats. It is also one of the most important sites in the UK for sea and river lamprey and the nationally rare twaite shad.

The biodiversity of the Estuary has also been nationally recognised and it is notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), in part for its saltmarsh, mud flat and eel-grass habitats and also for its large migratory fish stock including salmon, allis and twaite shad, sea trout, river and sea lamprey and eel, which move up through the Estuary between the open sea and the rivers. These stocks have historically provided a



Chittening Warth

food resource and commercial businesses for families and communities on both sides of the Estuary using a variety of techniques and traditional skills. Many of these are in decline or on the verge of disappearing from common knowledge altogether, such as the use of 'putchers' (funnel-shaped basket traps woven from willow and hazel arranged in ranks of between 50 and several thousand at any location). Part of the aim of the AFL Scheme is to ensure that an awareness of these local skills and ways of life and their direct link to the rich wildlife of the Estuary in maintained in the public consciousness.



The saltmarsh fringing the Estuary was also historically grazed by sheep and cattle although this has declined in recent years.

Inland, outside of the Avonmouth -Severnside Enterprise Area to the south, the majority of the AFL Scheme area consists of low-lying coastal floodplain, predominantly fields of arable or improved grazing pasture. These fields are bordered by a network of hedges and/or ditches and interspersed with occasional 'knolls' of higher ground, small blocks of deciduous woodland and orchards. Many of these hedges are species-rich – a type of habitat listed by the Government as being of principal importance for biological diversity under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006; their composition characteristically based around a mixture of hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple and hazel with standard ash or oak. The less intensively managed hedges support a range of biodiversity, such as song thrush, bullfinch, linnet and yellowhammer, all species listed on the RSPB Red and Amber List of Birds of Conservation Concern. Dormouse - a European protected species - potentially uses the same hedge network, particularly where close to deciduous woodland blocks and because of its arboreal and nocturnal nature, it is likely to be under-recorded in the area. A range of raptor species, including short-eared owl, hobby, barn owl and peregrine have been recorded, particularly along Northwick Warth between the Severn Bridge and Second Severn Crossing which offer perches/nesting sites. Bearded tit (Amber List) has also been recorded using reed beds on the historic rifle ranges (now a small wetland reserve) near Pilning, a location well outside their normal resident distribution in Britain.

Whilst the area is mostly farmed intensively, there are scattered, fragmented fields of more species-rich (neutral) grassland - the traditional unimproved or semi-improved lowland hay meadows. It is estimated that unimproved grassland has declined by 95% during the last century, with the most dramatic losses being post-war.



Water vole © Natural England - Paul Lacey

Consequently, it is a habitat listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and included on South Gloucestershire Council's own Biodiversity Action Plan. In certain areas, the ditches are used by fragmented populations of water vole, a protected species under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which have become isolated as ditches either dry up or fall into disrepair through a lack of management. The flat agricultural fields of the floodplain still contain numerous field ponds, although not anywhere near the number that historically would have been present. Where these haven't been allowed to degrade they support a diversity of aquatic flora and fauna, including small populations of great crested newt, a European protected species listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Great crested newt in the south west tend to exist in small colonies forming a meta-population inter-linked by the network of field hedges, woodland or the rough grassland heads of fields making them vulnerable to isolation and local extinctions by intensive farm management. Orchards are also found throughout the floodplain and whilst there are still local community cider-making businesses, the historic maps indicate just how many orchards have been lost over the last 50-100 years and how cider-making has declined with it.

#### 2.1.2 Geology

The shoreline of the Estuary also contains sites of considerable geological and geomorphological importance. Aust Cliff, a striking, striated exposure beneath the



Severn Bridge, is notified as a SSSI and is famous for the Rhaetic bone bed at the top of the section of cliff. The bed is regarded as the best site for marine reptiles in Britain and has been the source for hundreds of vertebrate material (bones) over the past 150 years, including ichthyosaur, four species of plesiosaur, dinosaurs, pterosaur and some previously unidentified forms. It is widely regarded as being internationally significant for reptile fossils as well as being the most productive location in Britain and nationally important for fossils of insects from the Triassic period. Several new species have been described from Aust with the specimens generally occurring concentrated in blocks of Rhaetic limestone from the top of the section, with a high proportion of complete bodies and some having their colour and patterning preserved. A thick Permo-Trias section lower down the cliffs also provides one of the most important Triassic exposures in the country, showing the transition from the red Mercia Mudstone Group (formerly 'Keuper Marl') through the 'Tea Green Marls' (Blue Anchor Formation) to the overlying Rhaetic Beds (Penarth Group). The red mudstones of the Mercia Group include massive nodular gypsum, and show a sharp transition to the overlying green mudstones and sandstones of the Blue Anchor Formation indicating a change from a desert to marine environment over 210 million years ago.

The mudflats and shoreline of Northwick Warth to the south of Aust Cliff is regarded as being regionally important for geomorphology in that it provides a vivid demonstration of coastal dynamics and how the shoreline of the Estuary has changed over the centuries as a result of tidal and sedimentary influences. It also demonstrates the on-going link between the Estuary's sedimentary processes, its ecology and the formation of new rock - the massive quantities of sediment draining out of mid-Wales and carried out by the estuarine tides only to be brought back in again and deposited as mud flats which in turn provide rich feeding habitat for tens of thousands of waterfowl over the winter months. Over millions of years, these sediments will continue to deposit, its own massive weight compressing itself down to form the new sedimentary rocks of the future.

Superficial deposits are widespread and floodplain alluvium accompanies the course of the Severn itself. A sheet of mainly Jurassic limestone fan gravel probably covered most of the Vale in the past but has since been eroded leaving isolated deposits. For this reason, building stone is scarce in the Severn Vale, and this resulted in brick construction for all but a few houses and other buildings. However, limestone is exposed in places such as Kingsweston and Old Down near Tockington.

Northwick Warth



A Forgotten Landscape

#### 2.2 Archaeology

The AFL Scheme area is one of the most important archaeological landscapes in Britain. It has been, and remains, a place of human activity since at least the end of the last ice age and almost certainly before this. Because of the exceptional preservation it is a landscape that affords us the opportunity to chart the impact of a changing environment, how this affected humans and how in turn they adapted the environment to suit themselves.

It is connected to the Severn, a body of water that has carried people, goods and ideas up and down and across it, joining communities rather than separating them and this land and seascape comprising the river, intertidal zone, salt marsh and dry land represents a unique environment for human exploitation and interaction.

One of the key factors in its importance is the level of preservation of archaeological remains that are often encountered, a result of the waterlogged conditions. Waterlogged conditions create an anaerobic (oxygen deficient) environment wherein the bacteria that would ordinarily attack archaeological remains, notably organic deposits such as textiles, wood and environment material such as pollen, are significantly reduced (although not entirely absent). The result is a much slower process of decay and the preservation of archaeology that would not ordinarily survive on dry land areas.

The relationship between water and land within the Scheme area is reflected in the Wentlooge formation, a sequence of alluvial deposits charting sea level change from the Pleistocene/Holocene transition through to the end of the prehistoric period, when Romans began to build significant flood defences. The Wentlooge formation is typically 10-15m thick and comprised largely of soft estuarine mineral sediments and peat, which may contain some of the most complete exposures of shallow-marine sediments post-dating the ice age in the British Isles.

Hillfort excavation





It is very broadly divided into three formations:

- Lower defined by cold climate estuarine sand deposition
- Middle defined by development from wetland carr woodland with alder and oak to reed swamp with evidence of Bronze Age and Iron Age activity on the upper peat surfaces and some activity on salt marsh clays
- Upper defined by unlaminated and poorly stratified silts representing changes resulting from Roman flood defence building

These formations contain material evidence suitable for radiocarbon dating, which has determined that the Lower Wentlooge corresponds broadly with the Mesolithic to Neolithic, the Middle Wentlooge from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age and the Upper Wentlooge to the Roman period and onward, although there is cessation of the Wentlooge formation at different times in the Roman period as flood defences were constructed.

The Wentlooge is also important because it contains palaeoenvironmental deposits, such as pollen and foraminifera, which permit reconstruction of landscape and landscape change. This identified that prior to the start of the Neolithic (c.4,000 BC) the landscape comprised a fen carr woodland on the edge of extensive reed-swamp fen with drier marshes and woodland comprised of oak, elm, lime, ash and hazel. As Neolithic communities begin to establish themselves, there is a reduction in woodland, but by the end of the Neolithic (c.2,900 BC) this woodland regenerates, a result of abandonment of the area by humans or a marine transgression. This is followed by a significant decline in woodland which occurred in the Middle to Late Bronze Age (c.1,500-800 BC), due to expansive human communities returning and their interaction with the environment. By the iron age, the Late Bronze Age settlements had been inundated by sediments relating to mudflat



**Oldbury Camp** 

or salt marsh environments, and therefore a general cessation of human activity, although clearly sites such as Oldbury Camp and Elberton reflect ongoing habitation and labour investment.

Therefore, the AFL Scheme area is of national archaeological significance because it offers the ability to chart these massive landscape changes and the different ways communities engaged with and exploited their environment. It is even more important when considering that the Scheme is a transition point between river, intertidal, salt marsh and dry land areas.

This pattern of human interaction with this unique landscape is represented at a number of key archaeological sites, which are clearly related to how humans engaged with their environment and which would influence the later development of the Forgotten Landscape.

Oldbury Camp, also known as 'The Toot', consists of a fort of probable Iron Age date (800-50 BC) with a double bank and ditch on its north and east sides and a single bank to the west. At their highest, the inner and outer ramparts stand to a height of 1.9m and 1.5m respectively. The site occupies a strategic but low-lying prominence overlooking the Oldbury Pill some 200m to the north. Traces of the inner rampart have been noted to the south of the monument although these do not appear on the OS map.



Instead the southern half of the site is fronted by a large earthwork platform c.150m x 75m in extent. This has been suggested as representing the remains of a wharf structure although it is more likely the result of later agricultural activity levelling the rampart in this area.

The site is one of a small and poorly understood group of hillforts peripheral to a major group situated in the Cotswolds. The site is important because of its unusual character, lowland setting and its excellent condition. It also has evidence for continued use into the Roman and Medieval periods, the plan of the Medieval village being largely determined by the plan and extent of the hillfort.

Conversely, Elberton Camp is an Iron Age defended settlement, situated on the summit of a spur with far reaching views across the low lying flood plain to the River Severn. The settlement survives as an irregularly-shaped enclosure which covers an area of approximately 1.6ha. It is defined to the north by steep natural slopes and to the remaining sides by a large rampart bank, outer ditch and counterscarp bank which survive differentially around the circuit but are best preserved to the east and south. Possible causewayed entrances have been noted at either end of the southern side.

During the Iron Age a variety of different types of settlement were constructed and occupied in south western England. At the top of the settlement hierarchy were hillforts built in prominent locations. In addition to these a group of smaller sites, known as defended settlements, were also constructed. Some of these were located on hilltops, others in less prominent positions. They are generally smaller than the hillforts, sometimes with an enclosed area of less than one hectare. The enclosing defences were of earthen construction.

Univallate sites have a single bank and ditch. multivallate sites more than one. At some sites these earthen ramparts represent a second phase of defence, the first having been a timber fence or palisade. Where excavated, evidence of stone or timberbuilt houses have been found within the enclosures, which, in contrast to the hillfort sites, would have been occupied by small communities, perhaps no more than a single family group. Defended settlements are a rare monument type. They were an important element of the settlement pattern, particularly in the upland areas of south western England, and are integral to any study of the developing use of fortified settlements during this period.

The Mere Bank and its flanking ditches exist as an identified Medieval flood defence which may have earlier, Roman, origins. It acted as a barrier to reclaim part of the wetlands of the Avon levels, a landscape which was subject to increased industrial development in the 19th century. The present Mere Bank has been provisionally dated to the 12th-13th century by partial excavation and documentary sources would appear to support this date. Part of its length survives as a recognisable feature within the landscape, which is rare

nationally and particularly within the Avon and North Somerset Levels.

It represents the period of permanent occupation of the AFL Scheme area, which requires a substantial investment of labour. But such labour investment brings rewards in terms of productive arable and pasture land. This process of drainage and flood alleviation would define the shape and nature of the landscape, for not only did it stop further marine inundation until the post-Roman period, but that very act will have affected habitat and environment in other parts of the Scheme area, resulting in permanent or semi-permanent change.





During the Medieval period, communities begin to reappear in greater numbers throughout the Scheme area, reflected by the establishment of manors and Medieval agricultural practices. Olveston Court is one of several examples in the Bristol area which were owned by nationally influential figures during the Medieval period. Its development as a major site between the 13th and 15th centuries reflects the growth to prominence of the nearby city and port. The existence of extensive and well-preserved earthworks indicates the high status of the moat and its potential for archaeological remains. It also reflects a move towards re-establishing permanent settlement and altering the landscape that would persist to the present.

Although most of the history of the Scheme area has focused on the close interaction between humans and the environment and how sites emerged in direct response to this, there were periods of history where structures were built for purposes beyond the function of the land itself. This is notable during WWII.

The heavy anti-aircraft battery at Avonmouth, 520m east of Holes Mouth is a clear example of this.

▼ The Bee Garden - Olveston Court

Despite some damage to the concrete structures, this heavy anti-aircraft battery survives well, and represents the range of structures originally present. It follows the classic layout of this type of site, and all the expected elements including the command post at the centre of the arc of four gun pits, with the magazine to one side, remain visible.

Apart from its intrinsic value, the site forms part of a group of heavy anti-aircraft emplacements defending Bristol and the Severn Estuary. These include five other sites in the Bristol area, namely Lodge Farm, Portishead/Portbury, Gordano, Cribbs and Purdown. This group of sites were constructed to safeguard crucial elements in the defence of Britain against the threat of invasion during World War II, and it is in this context that the true importance of this battery can be recognised.

The AFL Scheme area is then a place shaped by human action, both direct and indirect since the end of the last ice age. Only a fraction of what has occurred within the Scheme area is known about – why humans settled and abandoned the area and why particular archaeological sites exist within the landscape. The Scheme aims to explore some of these questions.



A Forgotten Landscape



#### 2.3 Sense of Place

The flat estuarine landscape, the mighty River Severn with its huge tidal ranges and constantly shifting sands, big skies and the mixture of rural and industrial areas amongst remote marshes have a mesmerizing effect on many that visit.

During the consultation that was carried out over summer 2013, people time and time again said that they value this landscape as something very distinct and special and used phrases such as 'remote' 'windswept' 'wild' and a good place for simply 'getting away from it all'. People who have discovered this landscape through the development phase of AFL Scheme have expressed surprise at the specialness of the area and have made return visits.

The River Severn has inspired its share of artists, musicians and poets, notably Alice Oswald 'A Sleepwalk on the Severn', Harri Webb 'Ode on the Severn Bridge',

Adge Cutler (of The Wurzel's fame) 'Aloha Severn Beach' and Bristol band The Blue Aeroplanes 'Severn Beach'.

There are currently several arts based projects which are connected to the Scheme area including an artist in residency which is a partnership between local artist Antony Lyons and the University of Gloucestershire. This is funded through a fellowship grant and will take place in 2014. There is also a project led by Dr Owain Jones from the Countryside and Community Research Institute at the University of Gloucestershire entitled Between the Tides. Since 2012 this arts and humanities project has looked at the lives of people living in floodplains and has used the Severn Estuary in a comparison study of tidal landscapes with the Wadden Sea in the Netherlands.

Through the community consultation other artists have been identified who are capturing the essence of the Estuary through the medium of photography, sound recording or drama.



#### 2.4 Transport

#### **River Crossings**

There has long been a history of river crossings in this area because to get to the other side of the river by road is a distance of over 40 miles.

The passage of the Severn between Aust and Beachley (now the location of the first Severn Crossing Bridge) was probably in use from antiquity and was long the primary route between south west England and Wales. There are references to it in both the 12th and 14th centuries.

The journey, a distance of over a mile at a point where the tides run swiftly, was a dangerous one, and its reputation, the roughness of the water, and the smallness of the boats deterred Daniel Defoe from making the crossing from the Aust side early in the 18th century. He referred to it as 'an ugly, dangerous, and very inconvenient ferry'. By that time, ferry crossings from New Passage, just a couple of miles south (and close to the site of the second Severn Crossing Bridge) rivalled the Aust passage, which consequently became known as the Old Passage.

In 1825 a new era opened with the formation of the Old Passage Ferry Association. The company built stone piers on both banks, and commissioned a steamboat which began to ply in 1827, with a second one five years later, although sailing boats also continued to be used. By virtue of these improvements the company achieved the transfer of most of the cross-Severn mail routes from the rival New Passage. However, the passage remained dangerous. The Beachley-Aust ferry was lost with all hands on 1 September 1839 and again on 12 March 1844.

In 1863, the railway reached the downstream New Passage and a railway pier and new hotel were built. The ferry then connected up with the railway on the Welsh side of the river, and this became the standard route.



Remains of jetty at Aust Ferry

The Old Passage, not connected to the railway, therefore lost much of its traffic.

In 1886, the railway Severn Tunnel opened, broadly following the line of the New Passage, and this removed the demand for all ferries until the late 1920s, when the increase in motor vehicles, which were not well catered for by the railway operator, led to new demand for a crossing.

#### **The Car Ferry**

Between 1931 and 1966, a ferry service was operated by Enoch Williams of the Old Passage Severn Ferry Company Ltd. Initially, this was only able to transport passengers with bicycles and motorbikes, but, by 1934, the Severn Queen was launched as a car ferry. It was able to carry just 17 cars. Each car had to turn sharply off the ramp onto the ferry, then be turned on a manually operated turntable before being parked. The process was reversed for unloading. The ferry timetable was notoriously affected by the huge tidal range on the Severn. It was unable to operate at low tide or at very high tides.

In May 1966, Bob Dylan took the car ferry from Aust Beachley on his way from Bristol to Newport on his infamous 'Judas' tour.



He was photographed by Barry Feinstein standing on the jetty close to the ticket office. The half built Severn Crossing can also be seen be in background. This image was used on the cover of the DVD of Martin Scorsese's epic 2005 documentary on Dylan, No Direction Home.

The last ferry crossing occurred on 8 September 1966, the day before the first Severn Bridge opened.

The ferry jetty and buildings have been disused ever since and over the passage of time the buildings have fallen into a ruinous state with only the toilet block and a very small section of the café surviving today. However the site is still visited with a large percentage of those arriving paying homage to Bob.

#### **The Bridges**

The Severn Bridge was opened by the Queen, in September 1966 to replace the ferry service crossing from Aust Cliff to Beachley Peninsula, eight miles upstream from Avonmouth.



Bob Dylan - No Direction Home

At this point the River Severn is almost exactly one mile wide at high water and the bridge creates a direct link for the M4 motorway into Wales. The suspension bridge was granted Grade I listing in 1999.

Usage of the bridge steadily grew and thus led to the need for a second river crossing. The Second Severn Crossing opened 30 years later in 1996 and is close to the location of the other ferry crossing at New Passage. This bridge is designed in such a way that it rarely needs to be closed in high winds and takes a higher proportion of traffic than the first Severn crossing.



The coming of the railway and seaside resorts – Avonmouth and Severn Beach

The railway was extended out to Avonmouth when the new docks were built there in the late 19th century. The line served both goods and passengers and allowed the people of Bristol a means for a daytrip to the seaside. Pleasure Gardens were built at Avonmouth for people to visit and many took advantage of an easy escape from the city for an afternoon. When the railway reached Severn Beach in 1922, which at the time was no more than a few farms and fishing grounds, the result was even more dramatic. Thanks to the entrepreneurial skills of Robert Stride, cafes, shops, houses and entertainments such as a music hall, a swimming pool and mini golf sprang up. Before long Severn Beach was known as 'Blackpool of the West' and people visited in their droves. The resort remained popular until the 1960s when the advent of cheap package holidays became available and its popularity diminished. Although Severn Beach still retains its railway today the attractions have long since gone and a smaller number of visitors spend time bird watching or just enjoying a walk by the foreshore.

#### 2.5 Changes in Landuse

#### **Farming**

The soil in the Lower Severn Vale Level is mainly heavy with clay and in the past favoured dairy and sheep farming rather than arable because the land was difficult to plough before the days of tractors. Prior to extensive drainage and flood defences the land would have been much marshier and maintaining the rhine system would have been essential. Some land would have only been available for use in the summer months of the years. Farms would have been more numerous but would have consisted of a smaller landholding. Orchards were a key feature of the area as fruit grows very well on the wide fertile floodplain. Some of this would have been grown commercially and some would have been for home consumption or as part payment for farm labourers. Hedgerows would have been maintained as stock boundaries and willows would have been pollarded to use the wood for a variety of things such as salmon putchers, poles for fencing or even to use the leaves as a fodder crop for livestock.

Examples of putchers





Although farming is still very prevalent in the area today the farms are less numerous and the land is often more intensively farmed. There has been a dramatic decline in orchards.

#### **Fishing**

Fishing is less relevant than it was in the past. Up until 30 or 40 years ago there would have been licenses to fish all along this section of the Estuary. Fishing was carried out in two main ways - either by putcher ranks which consisted of static traps known as putchers, placed on wooden jetties out into the river and emptied at low tide or by lave netting which is also carried out at low tide and involved the fisherman wading out into the river with large A-framed nets. Salmon was one of the main catches with eels also being relevant. Many farmers in the area would also own fishing rights and would earn their incomes from a mixture of farming and fishing. Fishing has declined mainly because the amount of fish in the river has declined and it is no longer commercially viable. Apart from a small number of recreational fishers the main sign of this industry is the occasional sighting of a wooden jetty quietly rotting away exposed at low tide where the putchers were once placed.

Severnside today

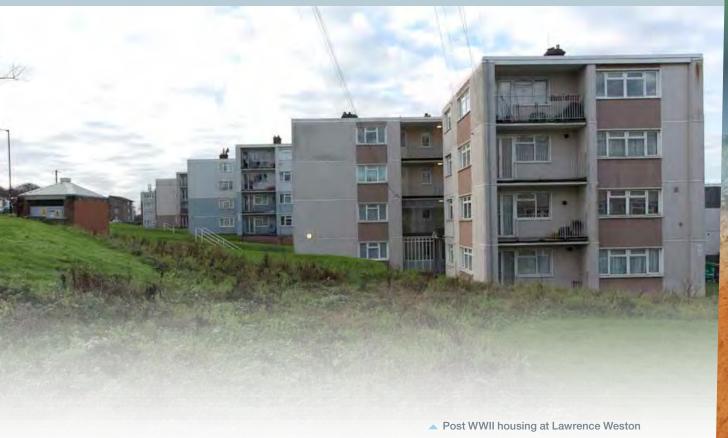
#### Industry

However, it is in the south of the project where the most dramatic land use change can be seen. Gone are the scattered remote farms and in their place are large industrial units. The change in the area begun with the development of the docks at Avonmouth in the 1870s to replace Bristol City Docks. These new docks could accommodate much larger ships and were soon expanded again with the creation of Royal Edward Dock in 1908. The small village of Avonmouth was built originally for the builders of the dock and the houses were then inhabited by dock workers after the port opened. Industry soon grew up around the dock and in the WWI, a munitions factory was built including a facility providing sulphuric acid to manufacture explosives and fertilizers. The zinc industry was prevalent up until the late 1990s but now much of the manufacturing industry has been replaced by distribution centres. Today the Avonmouth Severnside area has been identified as an Enterprise Zone by the Local Enterprise Partnership and is set for further development.

#### Housing

The hamlets of Lawrence Weston and Kings Weston, which were originally small rural settlements outside of the city of Bristol,





were developed and a large estate of council housing was built to ease housing shortages after WWII. The area currently suffers from a high level of deprivation, a high crime rate and poor educational achievement.

#### 2.6 Audience Development

A significant amount of consultation has been undertaken to identify what people value about the heritage of AFL, including workshops, stalls at local carnivals and events and work with a local school (see section 4.3). At a workshop with the South Gloucestershire Environment Forum, Thornbury Carnival and discussions and creative writing sessions with Olveston CEVC Primary School (see appendices G10 and G11 of Interpretation, Access and Learning Plan 2013), people were asked what they considered to be the seven wonders of the Severn. This work provided valuable information about what local people of all ages value about the heritage.

The Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) Survey carried out by Natural England has identified that the most important reasons for visiting green

spaces and the countryside is to exercise dogs, personal health and exercise, relaxing and unwinding, enjoying fresh air and pleasant weather and enjoying scenery. As people get older they are more likely to take visits for health and exercise, fresh air, to enjoy scenery and to enjoy wildlife. With this in mind, and the feedback from the consultation work the things that the audience value and enjoy most about the Lower Severn Vale Levels can be summarised as follows:

- The open views across the Severn Estuary and feeling of exposure
- The big skies, power of the river and tide
   the force of nature
- The peace and quiet and natural beauty of the countryside, sense of seclusion and green spaces
- The mudflats, bird life and wildlife
- The dramatic architecture of the bridges
- A sense of connection to the past historic landscape



#### 2.7 Other Projects

### Severnside/Avonmouth Wetland Habitat Project

The southernmost part of the project area includes the Enterprise Area of Avonmouth and Severnside whose development is of huge economic importance to the West of England region.

Avonmouth covers the village of Avonmouth and the historic docks and hosts a range of general industrial (B2) distribution and office uses with areas of heavy and specialist industries closely linked with the docks extending northwards beside the Estuary. Severnside - an area of coastal floodplain to the south of Severn Beach - is subject to a historic planning permission granted to ICI in 1957/58 for industrial, office warehouse (distribution) and other ancillary uses totalling 2,545 acres (called 'the '57/'58 Consent'). Following a legal challenge in 2003, the permission was deemed valid and extant by the Secretary of State and is currently being developed out. As a partially implemented consent, however, South Gloucestershire Council was legally obliged under Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations 2010 to review the permission and this formed part of a joint wetland habitat study (including Avonmouth as well) published in December 2011 by Natural England and South Gloucestershire and Bristol City Councils (known as 'The Cresswell Report').

The Cresswell Report concluded that developing out Severnside in full, in combination with Avonmouth, would be likely to have a significant effect on the species and assemblage for which the Severn Estuary was designated a SPA and Ramsar (European Site). To mitigate against this impact, some 133ha of new wetland habitat (combining pools, scrapes and marsh) would need to be created and the report identified six prospective sites. These were all outside the red line areas of Avonmouth and Severnside but within the coastal floodplain and the AFL Scheme area.

The process of funding the creation of these new areas of wetland habitat is presently being developed, but it is intended to be delivered through planning obligations and a specific scheme of 'biodiversity offsetting'. Subject to this being enacted, The Cresswell Report will enable the crucial continued economic development of Avonmouth/Severnside to be reconciled with the internationally important ecology of the European Site.

Whilst outside of the scope of the AFL Scheme, the location of this new wetland habitat and the proximity of the Enterprise Area presents an opportunity for use by the wider public and an interface with the Scheme (see Section 3, Risks and Opportunities).

#### **Oldbury Nuclear Power Station**

Oldbury Nuclear Power Station, covering some 71ha, is located in the coastal floodplain alongside the Estuary to the north-west of Thornbury in the northern part of the LP project area.

The power station was constructed between 1961 and 1967 and has commenced decommissioning following the cessation of electricity generation in 2012. It is presently run by Magnox Ltd under licence from the Nuclear Decommissioning Agency (NDA). Under the conditions of the licence, a silt lagoon – a huge settlement pond for the coolant water abstracted from the Estuary – situated to the south of the reactor is eventually intended to be returned to agricultural land (farmland) by infilling and



**Chittening Warth** 





capping as part of this decommissioning process (by end 2027). This in turn requires the importation of massive amounts of spoil/materials at considerable expense. The lagoon is overlooked by a hide and is used by the public/local birdwatchers being accessible via the Severn Way and an interlinking public right of way. The lagoon is used by a range of European species of wildfowl and waders - including lapwing, dunlin and shelduck - and between 1979 and 2005, 199 species of birds were recorded there. As well as providing an important high tide roost for estuarine waterfowl, the site is an important 'stepping stone' for bird populations between Chittening Warth and Northwick Warth in the south of the project area and the renowned wetlands at Slimbridge in Gloucestershire to the north.

Given its importance as a high tide roost, restoring the lagoon to farmland would be a considerable loss to a variety of species

of birds associated with the Severn Estuary SPA/Ramsar. Magnox is presently in discussion with the owners, NDA, Natural England, SGC and the Environment Agency to explore possibilities to amend the licence conditions to retain the lagoon in situ as a publicly accessible bird-watching facility.

Whilst the Cresswell wetland habitat creation and cooperative improvements to the Oldbury lagoon are outwith and proceeding separately and independently, both projects augment and interface with the AFL Scheme which in turn acts as a 'template' for a range of habitat creation and improvements across the wider coastal floodplain (see Section 3, Risks and Opportunities).



## 3 Risk and Opportunities



## 3 Risks and Opportunities

#### 3.1 Natural and Historic Heritage

# 3.1.1 Loss of wetland habitat due to changes in agriculture (including ponds, ditches and pools (high tide roosts for waterfowl)

Wetland habitat has declined by 90% in the UK since Roman times contributing to the extinction and decline of an array of flora and fauna. A similar, historical loss of wetland has also occurred within the project area over a relatively short space of time, brought about predominantly by the drainage of land for agriculture and an intensification of farming practices (loss of ditches and ponds). The building of flood defences to protect farmland, properties and more recently industry at Avonmouth/Severnside (see below) has further increased this loss. This in turn has lead to a loss of high tide roosts for a range of waterfowl associated with the Severn Estuary European Site.

#### **Opportunities**

- Work with farmers to create high tide roost sites (wetland scrapes) on the inland side of the flood defences
- Facilitate the creation of more wetland habitat on coastal floodplain farmland through the introduction of Environmental Stewardship schemes
- Protect use of wetland habitat by waterfowl from disturbance by engaging with landowners and recreational users of the Severn Way (birds displaced by uncontrolled dogs)
- Decommissioning of Oldbury Power Station presents the opportunity to work with Magnox, RSPB/WWT, Natural England and Environment Agency to retain an existing silt lagoon used by waterfowl as a public facility (due to be restored to agricultural land under licence)



A Forgotten Landscape

## 3.1.2 Loss of saltmarsh diversity due to lack of management or inappropriate management

Some stretches of saltmarsh – particularly in the southern part of the project area between Aust and Avonmouth - are now in a poor condition and declining in botanical interest. This is due to a number of factors, mostly associated with grazing. Some areas are no longer grazed when historically and for centuries they would have supported sheep or cattle, leaving the sward in a poor condition (loss of floral diversity). This has also resulted in the encroachment of scrub, particularly south of Severn Beach, without a regular management regime which would remove it. Other areas are periodically degraded by other influences, such as random use by travellers (pitched caravans and fly-grazing by horses).

#### **Opportunities**

- Work towards re-establishing grazing with appropriate livestock at optimal density in areas where this has been lost
- Work with FWAG SouthWest to increase in uptake of Environmental Stewardship schemes along foreshore
- Removal of areas of scrub to enable saltmarsh to re-establish (for example, by grant scheme or volunteer days)
  - Enable saltmarsh to re-establish in areas where degraded through misuse (recreational use, fly-grazing etc) by securing/better policing of foreshore

3.1.3 Loss of habitat due to changes in agriculture (including orchards, species-rich grassland, hedgerows and pollarded willows)

Changes in agriculture (particularly since the World War II) have led to an intensification of farming practices in the project area with a higher proportion of arable and silage production.

Common spotted orchid

Many orchards have been grubbed out or neglected; and hedgerows have been removed or left to develop into lines of trees as they are less important for constraining livestock. Ponds which would have previously been used for water for animals are no longer needed in fields that have been turned over to arable or have been replaced by modern water troughs. The use of fertilizers and changes from hay production to silage has also had an effect on the botanical diversity of fields and as a result there has been a huge decline in speciesrich (unimproved) grassland. There is also less enthusiasm for pollarding as there is not the demand for the arisings.

In recent years there has been an increase in the amount of 'horsiculture' in the Scheme area. Land previously in agriculture and which was formerly grazed by farm livestock is now being grazed by horses. This along with the associated infrastructure such as stable blocks and electric fencing has a visual impact and also reduces the amount of grazing available for farmers.

All of these risks not only pose threats to biodiversity but also to the landscape as well.

#### **Opportunities**

- Work with FWAG SouthWest to increase the uptake of Environmental Stewardship schemes which will benefit both biodiversity and archaeology
- Offer capital grants to manage hedgerows and re-pollard willows
- Create/restore species-rich meadows
- Create/restore orchards
- Raise awareness of the heritage of the area to farmers and local residents to ensure they learn to value their past

### **3.1.4 Loss of archaeological features** due to agriculture

Agriculture remains the single biggest threat to archaeology in the UK.



Ploughing is a particular concern, but unsympathetic planting of trees and permitted development for agricultural purposes also contributes to a loss of archaeological features. Ridge and furrow – a feature which forms a readily identifiable historic component of the AFL Scheme area – is particularly vulnerable and often ploughed away in preparing land for arable farming. The ridge and furrow within the project area is especially important as it provides some of the best preserved example in the entire country.

#### **Opportunities**

- Work with FWAG SouthWest to increase the uptake of Environmental Stewardship schemes which will benefit both biodiversity and archaeology
- Raise awareness of the heritage of the area to farmers and local residents to ensure they learn to value their past

#### 3.2 Lack of Knowledge

### 3.2.1 Loss of archaeological features due to lack of knowledge

Archaeological sites make an important contribution to the character of any landscape. This is particularly so within the Scheme area which has received considerably less attention in terms of fieldwork and surveys than other areas of the unitary authorities due primarily to the fact that development therein has been sporadic rather than consistent.

To understand the importance of a site it is first necessary to understand its significance and to address key questions that need to be answered. Whilst the waterlogged soils within a large section of the project area enables organic archaeological materials to be preserved in excellent condition, the distribution of these sites or locations or their extent is not known. Any ground works such as digging the wildfowl 'scrapes' could therefore either destroy previously unknown archaeological remains; or bring materials to light whose significance, unless subject to

a thorough and more extensive excavation, might not be realised.

In addition, there are gaps in knowledge of the history of existing sites. It is known, for example, that Oldbury Camp is an ancient monument probably built in the Iron Age. Whether it was occupied permanently or seasonally is not. Additionally, it is not known when it was built or the period in which it was abandoned: if it was re-used during the Roman period; whether there was Viking activity at the site; or its role or significance within the broader landscape.

This lack of understanding is endemic and applies to many other archaeological sites across the AFL Scheme area.

#### **Opportunities**

- To establish a stronger evidence base (through voluntary work)
- Improved knowledge of sites and their landscapes leading to improved conservation strategies
- Outreach to highlight the wealth of heritage and its accessibility
- Understanding of how heritage sites contribute (or contributed) to the development of place
- To have in place an archaeological watching brief during any ground excavations (scrapes) and provisions for re-locating the scrape should the site prove of archaeological significance

### 3.2.2 Loss of traditional skills such as hedge laying, cider-making

The intensification of farming practices across the project area has lead to larger farms with big machinery, less farm labour and fewer employees. The mechanisation of much farmland management has also meant that traditional farm skills such as hedgelaying and small-scale farmhouse cider production are gradually disappearing.





Hedge-laying

Instead of being 'laid', producing hedges with a dense stock-proof base and a structure offering nesting habitat and foraging for many farmland species of birds, many agricultural hedges are increasingly kept low and cut in a 'box' shape with a side arm flail, which eventually leaves them 'gappy' and offering little for wildlife. Historically, a huge number of orchards have been lost and subsumed back into farmland across the project area, particularly those stocked with the varieties of apples suitable for cider-making.

#### **Opportunities**

Training courses for people to learn these skills

# 3.2.3 Loss of recording and identification skills due to younger people not replacing the current generation of wildlife recorders

Many of the wildlife recorders in the project area are of an older age and there is concern that there are not the younger generations with sufficient knowledge or interest to eventually replace them.

#### **Opportunities**

 Run training courses for people to learn to record a variety of species associated with the project area including wetland birds, water voles and amphibians

#### 3.3 Forgetting the Past

### Losing the opportunity to capture the memories of the older generation

There have been huge amounts of change in the project area within recent living memory.

The Avonmouth Docks is one of the country's fastest growing ports and has expanded dramatically over the centuries, with permission having recently been granted for a Deep Sea Container Terminal. Once an expanse of coastal floodplain with small isolated farms, the areas of Avonmouth and Severnside are now being developed for a mixture of industrial, office and distribution uses. The village of Severn Beach was formerly a thriving coastal resort, but it has declined dramatically as a destination of choice for day-trippers and holiday-makers. In the last 50 years, the area has also seen the construction of two monumental and iconic bridges - the Severn Bridge at Aust; and the Second Severn Crossing at Severn Beach - and the loss of the last of the historic crossing points, the Aust car ferry. There have also been significant changes in agriculture and farming practices, particularly since the WWII, and with it changes in the way many people have led their lives.

Whilst there are still many people living in the Scheme area that can recall some or all of these dramatic changes, they are now elderly and, with the passing of the years, there is the risk that many of these firsthand recollections will disappear with them.

#### **Opportunities**

- Set up oral history projects to record memories
- Run old photo events to draw together photographic memories
- Run projects in the schools to teach the children about these histories



#### 3.4 Climate Change

### Habitat Loss through Coastal Squeeze (Climate Change)

The shoreline of the Severn Estuary within the project area is protected by a sea wall (flood defence). For most of its length this comprises a high, substantial grass bank although this is usurped at Severn Beach and Oldbury Power Station by a concrete structure. Whilst some sections of the foreshore between high tide mark and the sea wall are wide and capacious, most noticeably at Northwick and Aust, elsewhere the saltmarsh is narrow and 'pinched', leaving it vulnerable to changes in the climate.

Rises in sea level and increases in the frequency of inundation through tidal surges can both lead to a gradual incremental loss of saltmarsh: and as waterfowl are forced closer to the seas defences at high tide there is the increased risk of birds being disturbed and displaced by walkers and dogs on the Severn Way.

#### **Opportunities**

- Monitoring and recording of waterfowl numbers and distribution through project's bird warden programme to increase records held which can be used to identify any changes in response to climate change
- Identify most vulnerable 'pinch' points and where new high tide roost sites (wetland scrapes) can be best located to support European bird populations

- Input into identifying prospective areas for future habitat creation (managed realignment) outside project remit
- Educate public and especially recreational users of the Severn Way to modify behaviour in most sensitive areas where waterfowl are closest to the sea wall at high tide – i.e. reducing noise, controlling dogs etc

#### 3.5 Anti-social behaviour

### 3.5.1 Fly grazing on saltmarsh and other land around Severnside

Fly grazing (the practice of grazing animals, usually horses, on land without permission) is endemic in the Avonmouth / Severnside area. At any time there can be hundreds of horses illegally grazing land along the foreshore and land in and amongst the industrial area.

Fly grazing also occurs in other parts of the project area although not in such great numbers. It can have a dramatic impact on biodiversity, most notably through poaching of the soil, particularly in wet weather, or where the density of animals is too great and the grazing is too heavy. It can also dissuade landowners from taking on legitimate grazing of the land as they are afraid of the fly grazers cutting through fences to put their own animals on and thus compromising the safety of the legitimate grazing animals (this is one of the main barriers to re-establishing grazing on Chittening Warth).

▼ Fly grazing at Chittening Warth





Fly grazing also constitutes a social risk as unsecured animals can wander onto roads and railways. Animals in very poor condition will also cause distress to both residents and visitors to the area.

#### **Opportunities**

- Work with the police and local authorities to find ways to curb this practice
- If legitimate grazing is re-established at Chittening Warth establish a community watch scheme to report problems as they happen

### 3.5.2 Vandalism (to new panels, benches and other infrastructure)

New installations, signs or panels are vulnerable to vandalism, particularly in remote locations.

#### **Opportunities**

- Work with community (including local schools, parish councils residents and businesses) to design new infrastructure thus engendering a sense of community ownership
- Replace any vandalised infrastructure asap using budget from the contingency pot

#### 3.6 Risks to the Partnership

#### 3.6.1 Partners not fulfilling their roles

It was recognised during the development phase that the Partnership needs to work together to bond as a group; and to understand that the success of the Scheme relies on the Partnership as a whole and not just the lead partner and the project officers.

#### **Opportunities**

- Organise training for the Partnership
   Board on what makes a good partnership
- Arrange regular site visits (led by the relevant partner) in addition to board meetings so that the Partnership can see first hand the work that is being carried out

### **3.6.2 Partners leaving the project through redundancy etc**

It is recognised that, in the current economic climate, there is a chance that partners might be forced to leave the Board if cuts in public sector funding continue to be made or if representatives are made redundant by their employer.

#### **Opportunities**

- Partners to sign up their organisations to the Partnership agreement (not individual officers)
- Partnership agreement to have a clause stating the ability of new partners to be voted onto the Board throughout the Delivery Phase

### 3.6.3 Communities not engaging as predicted

A proportion of the match funding for the Scheme is reliant on volunteer hours. If insufficient people become engaged in the project then this contribution will be jeopardised.

#### **Opportunities**

- Ensure that the promotion and marketing of volunteer events is carried out to a high standard
- Ensure that professionals contracted to carry out training are personable and enthusiastic and have good interpersonal skills as well as knowing their subject

### 3.6.4 Project officers leaving before end of the project

It is not unusual for project officers to leave the project in the final months to seek alternative employment. It can subsequently be difficult to recruit new project officers – the remaining limited time period is unattractive; and any new personnel require a period of time to settle in and which is not necessarily available.



#### **Opportunities**

- Work with HR officers from all the partner organisations to explore opportunities for future employment past the end of the project
- Consider introducing the incentive of a bonus for project officers who stay with the project through to its conclusion

### 3.7 Avonmouth/Severnside Enterprise Area

Whilst outside the scope of the project, the new wetland habitat to be created following the review of the historic '57/'58 ICI planning permission ('The Cresswell Report', see Section 2), as well as the businesses and substantial workforce within the Enterprise Area of Avonmouth and Severnside, presents the project with a series of opportunities.

#### **Opportunities**

- Marry in the access infrastructure and interpretive materials provided by the project and promote the new ('Cresswell') wetland habitat for bird-watching vantage points for local residents and Enterprise Area employees
- Promotion of the Bristol to Severn
   Beach railway line to a large commuting workforce
- A large array of businesses which might utilise a variety of voluntary conservation activities as 'team-building' days
- A substantial working population to whom the project can promote its varied projects and activities
- An array of multi-national businesses who might wish to become a 'partner' within the project or contribute financially to elements of it





# 4 Aims and Objectives



A Forgotten Landscape

# 4 Aims and Objectives

This section sets out the vision, aims and objectives for the Lower Severn Vale Levels. These are based on a thorough understanding of the heritage and an assessment of its significance as set out in previous sections. They are also based on an assessment of the risks to the heritage, opportunities for improving it and consultation work that has been carried out to determine how people can participate in its management and conservation, and understand more.



Cowhill

This section also describes how the work that will be undertaken to deliver the objectives will help to achieve the four Landscape Partnership Programme outcomes.

#### 4.1 A Forgotten Landscape - Vision

Through creating, developing and strengthening partnerships with organisations and local communities the Lower Severn Vale Levels will become a distinctive, recognisable and appreciated landscape. Biodiversity will be improved and better connected and communities will discover their local heritage and unlock the secrets of the past. Local and nearby communities will also develop a greater awareness and understanding of the landscape by taking part in a wide range of participation and learning activities. The landscape will be more accessible and activities and traditions that have made the Levels what they are today will be celebrated and remembered.



A Forgotten Landscape

#### 4.2 Aims and Objectives

The vision will be implemented by achieving the 12 objectives set out below. To aid clarity the objectives are grouped under the four programme outcomes of the Landscape Partnership Scheme which form the broad aims of the AFL Lower Severn Vale Levels LCAP.

Programme A: Conserve and restore the built and natural features that create the historic landscape character of the Lower Severn Vale Levels

- Conserve and improve the natural environment of the Levels by restoring, reintroducing or creating new areas of wetland and other semi-natural habitat; and conserve and reconnect fragmented populations of a range of notable wildlife species characteristic of the landscape.
- Pursue the conservation of the remains of the historic car ferry terminal at Aust and which forms a singular part of the built heritage and local history.

Programme B: Increase community participation in the heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels

- Increase the commitment of the existing audience to safeguard the heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels and attract new and wider audiences to engage with it through a programme of targeted activities.
- 4. Create a framework for the ongoing conservation and future management of the Levels by bringing together a range of stakeholders including developers, landowners, farmers, local residents, friends groups etc to establish and maintain a community network as a legacy.
- Establish a network of volunteer wildlife wardens to carry on recording and monitoring populations and distribution

of species along the Estuary to contribute towards a better understanding of national and local climate change.

Programme C: Increasing access to and learning about the landscape and heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels

- 6. Provide new, and enhance existing, learning and skills opportunities and improve interactive, intellectual, physical and non-physical access to the Lower Severn Vale Levels for the enjoyment of all.
- 7. Improve understanding of, and participation in, the historic environment through archaeological investigation and research in order to document and explain the way humans have engaged with and shaped the local landscape and environment over time, including use of the River Severn as a mode of transport.
- 8. Promote and establish the Lower
  Severn Vale Levels in the public mind
  as both a historic part of the wider west
  country wetlands; and as a distinctive,
  recognisable and appreciated landscape
  in its own right.
- Provide mechanisms to bring communities and businesses together to integrate, teach, record and communicate.

Programme D: Increase training opportunities in local heritage skills

- 10. Revive and teach traditional local skills and practices including salt-marsh grazing, coppicing, hedge-laying, and cider making which in the past were part of the character and fabric of life of the area.
- 11. Improve schools and public wildlife ID skills, including the wildfowl/waders associated with the Severn Estuary, through a range of teaching means, including classroom workshops, field days and website tools.



#### 4.0.4.....

Drawing on information gathered throughout the development phase an audience development plan has been created which sets out the target audiences. This information is crucial to developing the individual projects that make up the AFL Scheme.

# **4.3.1 Existing audiences and community involvement in the heritage**

Until recently there has been little data to develop an audience profile for the Lower Severn Vale Levels. However, during the development phase work has been undertaken to improve understanding of the audience. This has included:

- Discussions with local authority officers and partners who know the area well
- Discussions with staff at visitor facilities such as pubs, cafes, farm shops and Severn Beach Railway
- Discussions with elected members, parish councils, community groups and special interest groups

 Discussions and consultations undertaken by Red Kite Consultants to develop the Interpretation, Access and Learning Plan

Stall at the Bristol Festival of Nature - June 2013

- Two consultation workshops held at Thornbury and Lawrence Weston Farm
- Consultation stall at Thornbury carnival
- Consultation undertaken at Bristol
   Festival of Nature over two days with stall in the 'Wild Waters' tent
- Consultation undertaken at River Festival event - Lamplighters Marsh
- Consultation event with the South Gloucestershire Environment Forum
- Feedback generated by an article in Avon Wildlife Trust magazine
- Articles and feedback from parish magazines
- Meeting with schools cluster group (add in name)



Consultation with the University of West of England

The information from these discussions and consultation events and the professional knowledge of officers, partners and stakeholders has been used to develop an audience profile.

## **4.3.2** Who is involved with the heritage now?

- Natural England, English Heritage, local authorities (SGC and Bristol City), Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board responsibilities related to PROW, SSSI and local wildlife designations, drainage, heritage designations and Environmental Stewardship
- Special interest groups local history and archaeology groups, Kings Weston Action Group, U3A, Impatient Vagrants, Severnside Ramblers, British Horse Society, Women's Institutes, Olveston Countryside Group, Pilning and Severn Beach History Society, Mojo Active
- Parish councils
- Avon Wildlife Trust
- Thornbury and District Museum
- Lawrence Weston Community Farm
- General public including walkers, cyclists and horse riders
- Bird watchers
- People fishing the Severn
- Farmers and landowners responsible for management of the land
- Severn Estuary Partnership
- FWAG SouthWest
- Trustees of the Severn Bridge
- Severnside Community Rail Partnership

# **4.3.3** How many are involved with the heritage now?

There are no reliable figures on how many people are involved with the heritage now. However, the Lower Severn Vale Levels are close to, and abut the large conurbation of Greater Bristol and market towns such as Thornbury and Berkeley. Discussions and consultations have revealed that the

area is a popular destination for visitors from these areas who wish to spend time in attractive surroundings, whether visiting rural pubs, walking or undertaking other leisure activities. Popular footpaths and the Sustrans cycle routes are known to be well used and Severn Beach is a popular destination accessible from Bristol by rail.

The total population of the Lower Severn Vale Levels is around 45,500 and many of these local residents will already be engaging with the heritage at some level. The catchment area for the Lower Severn Vale Levels includes the City of Bristol which has a population of 432,500 and consultation has revealed that residents from the wider region are already engaging in the heritage of the area through leisure activities such as pub visits, walking, cycling, fishing and bird watching.

# **4.3.4 Audience Development – aim and objectives?**

The title of the Landscape Partnership Project is 'A Forgotten Landscape'. This title has been chosen to reflect the fact that many people in the local area and wider region are not fully aware of the tremendous heritage, landscape and wildlife values of the area. The consultation work undertaken during the development phase has confirmed that this is the case with many people commenting that they perceived the Lower Severn Vale Levels to be industrial and unappealing and that they were more likely to visit sections of the Severn Estuary corridor in Somerset and Gloucestershire. As a result the focus of the audience development work will be to engage more effectively with the existing residents and visitors and at the same time develop and encourage new audiences. The consultation work also identified a need to encourage and support a next generation of amateur enthusiasts to learn about, monitor and research the natural and cultural heritage.

The aim and objectives of the audience development strategy is therefore as follows:

Aim: To increase the commitment of the existing audience to safeguard the heritage and attract new and wider audiences to engage with it.

#### **Objectives**

- To engage more of the existing audience (local residents and visitors) with the heritage so that they develop a better appreciation and understanding of its value, interest and features and the importance of conserving it
- To engage new and wider audiences with the heritage so that they develop a better appreciation and understanding of its value, interest and features and the importance of conserving it
- To encourage people from existing and new audiences to become more actively involved in helping to safeguard the heritage
- To support the tradition of amateur naturalists, geologists and archaeologists monitoring the natural and cultural environment and ensure that their skills and knowledge are transferred to new generations

## 4.3.5 Who is the Audience? How can they be grouped?

Discussions and consultations described in 4.3.1 of this report have provided valuable information about the existing audience. During the consultation, questionnaires were distributed at Thornbury Carnival, Bristol Festival of Nature and the River Festival at Lamplighters Marsh. They were also made available online, however, unfortunately there were not sufficient returns to draw meaningful conclusions about the audience.

As a result the comprehensive national research from the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE)
Survey (NECR122 edition 1 - Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment:
Annual Report from 2012 – 2013 survey)
has been used to provide information about the audience where local data is missing.
Knowledge of the area and the consultations and discussions that have been undertaken supplement this information and it is not believed that there is anything in the local area that would skew, or invalidate these findings in a local context.

▼ Bird-watchers © Natural England - Paul Glendell





The key points are as follows:

#### Age of the audience

Analysis of local demographic data reveals that one fifth of the population of the Lower Severn Vale Levels is less than five years old, whilst 17 % are over 65. The proportion of people over 65 is comparable with the rest of South Gloucestershire, but considerably higher than Bristol (13%). This indicates that there is a need to engage with families with young children and older people.

#### How often do they visit?

There is no local data on how often people visit the Lower Severn Vale Levels however the MENE Survey 2012 - 2013 data revealed that 41% of adults had visited the natural environment within the previous seven days and the average annual visits per adult was 67. By region, levels of visits were highest in the south west of England (where the Lower Severn Vale Levels are located) where almost half the population had visited in the previous seven days.

Levels of participation in visits is higher amongst the 25 to 64 age groups, those in employment, those living in rural areas and those in AB socio-economic groups. Significant parts of the Lower Severn Vale Levels are rural with a pattern of affluent villages and the prosperous market towns of Thornbury and Berkeley to the north. The number of visits from people living in these areas will be relatively high due to more people in AB socio-economic groups, the proximity of the natural environment and higher levels of car ownership.

Overall levels of participation were significantly lower amongst those aged over 65, the Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) population, those living in urban areas and members of DE socio-economic groups. In the Lower Severn Vales the number of visits is likely to be lowest in Lawrence Weston which is the most deprived community in the area. There will also be a low number of visits in Avonmouth which primarily consists of industrial and economic units where the

audience are mostly workers, rather than residents.

The number of visits is also low from BAME groups, which make up 6.9% of the Lower Severn Vale Levels population (16% in Bristol). In BAME groups 82% of visits were taken to green spaces within towns and cities, as were 66% of visits by those living in the most deprived areas – this compares to 43% in total. An implication for the project is that engaging BAME and more deprived communities in green spaces closer to home is likely to be more successful. This is reinforced by the fact that 66% of visits are taken within two miles of home.

#### Where do people come from?

The consultation work undertaken during the development stage has revealed that people come from:-

- The villages in the area
- The market towns of Thornbury and Berkeley
- The urban fringe communities that abut the Lower Severn Vale Levels
- Greater Bristol
- The wider region including Chepstow and Newport in South Wales
- Workers commuting to the industries and economic units of Avonmouth (from wider region)

#### How long do they stay?

There is no detailed local information on how long people stay when they visit, however MENE data shows that the average visit to the natural environment is just over two hours. A quarter of visits last less than one hour, 52% between one hour and one hour 59 minutes, and 22% lasting three hours or more.

#### What do people do when they arrive?

The consultation work and MENE research data has made it possible to identify the main activities that people do when they arrive. In descending order of popularity these are as follows:-

- Walking with dogs
- Walking without dogs
- Playing with children
- Eating or drinking out
- Running
- Sight seeing / picnic /drive
- Visitors to Severn Beach / coastal experience
- Wildlife / bird-watching
- Cycling
- Horse riding
- Fishing
- Fossil hunting

The Lower Severn Vale Levels is an internationally renowned area for birds and has a well developed cycle network, so the importance of bird watching and cycling may be higher than comparable national figures for these activities.

# How can the existing audience for the heritage be categorised?

The audience is varied; spread across all age ranges and socio-economic groups and includes local people, visitors from Greater Bristol and the wider region and workers commuting to Avonmouth. Local people tend to visit more regularly and stay for shorter periods of time, visitors from further away stay longer. The audience can be segmented as follows:

- Local people (including those living in villages and market towns and more deprived communities on the urban fringe)
- Walkers local people visiting regularly including dog walkers and runners
- Walkers people from Bristol and the wider region that go on longer walks and rambles and stay for longer periods of time

- People visiting Severn Beach and villages to eat or drink, and explore the wider area
- Farmers and landowners who manage the land
- On-road and off-road cyclists
- Horse riders
- People fishing
- Special interest user groups and individuals, for example bird-watchers, fossil hunters, amateur naturalists, local archaeological and history societies
- Schools and learning: School pupils, tertiary students, academics and life-long learners
- Organised youth and community groups: Brownies, Guides, Cubs, Scouts and Woodcraft Folk as well as local history, wildlife, photography, art and craft, faith groups and civic societies
- Outdoor groups with specialist interest in the natural environment for walking (including Walking for Health groups), running and orienteering, cycling etc
- Family groups, especially those with young children, including those that are resident in the area and those that are visiting
- Workers and commuters to Avonmouth
- Those with physical, intellectual or social impairments
- Young people
- Older / retired people the proportion of the population over 65 is higher than it is for Bristol



The key to achieving the audience development aims and objectives is to effectively engage with this diverse audience through a programme of targeted activities that meet the needs and interests of the various audience sectors and promote greater understanding and participation in the heritage.

# 4.3.6 What do the audience value about the heritage?

A significant amount of consultation has been undertaken to identify what the audience value about the heritage, including workshops, stalls at local carnivals and events and work with a local school. At a workshop with the South Gloucestershire Environment Forum and three discussions and creative writing sessions with Olveston CE VC Primary School (see appendices G10 and G11 of the Interpretation, Access and Learning Plan 2013) people were asked what they considered to be the seven wonders of the Severn. This work provided valuable information about what local people of all ages value about the heritage.

MENE research has identified that the most important reasons for visiting green

spaces and the countryside is to exercise dogs, personal health and exercise, relaxing and unwinding, enjoying fresh air and pleasant weather and enjoying scenery. As people get older they are more likely to take visits for health and exercise, fresh air, to enjoy scenery and to enjoy wildlife. With this in mind, and the feedback from the consultation work the things that the audience value and enjoy most about the Lower Severn Vale Levels can be summarised as follows:

- The open views across the Severn Estuary and feeling of exposure
- The big skies, power of the river and tide
   the force of nature
- The peace and quiet and natural beauty of the countryside, sense of seclusion and green spaces
- The mudflats, bird life and wildlife
- The dramatic architecture of the bridges
- A sense of connection to the past historic landscape

South Gloucestershire Environment Forum - July 2013



This is what visitors and local people are expecting, this is what they value about the area and this is why they visit.

## 4.3.7 What do present audiences already know about the heritage?

The consultation work at local carnivals, workshop with the South Gloucestershire Environment Forum and sessions with pupils at Olveston CE VC Primary School revealed that the present audience already know some information about the heritage. People were asked what they knew about the Severn and its valley and what they considered to be the seven wonders of the Severn. The feedback revealed that the present audience know the following about the heritage:

- The river Britain's longest, separates
   England and Wales, large tidal range and mudflats, the Severn bore
- Wildlife it has amazing wildlife, birds and fish
- Transport bridges across the Severn, railway tunnel, there used to be a ferry
- A whale was washed up a long time ago
- Aust cliffs geologically important
- Unspoilt historic landscape villages, churches
- Perception amongst some that the area is industrial and unappealing, river is muddy and brown and polluted

#### 4.3.8 Barriers to participation

Consultations and discussions have identified a number of barriers to the participation of the existing audience with the heritage. These are as follows:

#### **Physical**

Access to the area is primarily by car.

There is a good and well-used rail route to
Severn Beach however there is a limited
timetable on Sundays and trains can only

accommodate a small number of bikes. Public transport to the more rural areas is poor. During the winter and wet weather many of the footpaths, bridleways and drovers roads can be muddy and restrict access for some people. There is a well developed network of cycle routes. There are only a small number of easy access routes in the Lower Seven Vale Levels and inadequate access opportunities for people with limited mobility.

#### **Financial**

Young people are at a particular financial disadvantage when it comes to accessing and appreciating the heritage. It is important that activities focused on young people allow for transport costs. This is also the case for communities in deprived areas where levels of participation are low.

#### Intellectual

Consultation work identified a lack of information and interpretation as a key barrier for many people to enjoy and participate in the heritage. This was particularly so for schools and organised youth groups.

# 4.3.9 Who is the audience that is special to the Scheme and who should be targeted?

The audience that are special to the Scheme, because of the qualities and character of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area, are groups and individuals who are amateur naturalists, geologists, historians and archaeologists. The rich bird and wildlife, geology and archaeology of the Lower Severn Vale Levels have attracted these groups for many decades. It became clear during the consultation work that there is a pressing need to enthuse and pass on skills to the next generation of amateur enthusiasts to prevent the current knowledge base from being diluted or lost. An audience that is special that should be targeted is therefore:



- Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife
- Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology

There is also a further audience who are attracted to the area because of the generally flat topography

 Walkers and cyclists wishing to explore and enjoy the scenery and open spaces

It is important that these groups should be targeted as part of the activities programme as they are more likely to become involved in participation projects to safeguard the heritage.

### 4.3.10 Who does not take part and why?

MENE research has identified the following groups that are currently not taking part in the heritage:

- BAME groups
- Residents of urban deprived areas
- Members of socio-economic groups DE

- People over 65
- People with long-term illness or disability

Consultation work undertaken during the development stage confirms that these groups engage with the heritage less. In addition workers and commuters to Avonmouth do not currently engage with the heritage.

The reasons given by these groups for not engaging with the heritage are poor weather, being busy at work and/or home life, poor health, too expensive or lack of access to a car.

Although the resident BAME population (6.9%) is slightly higher than the South Gloucestershire figure (5%) there is not a particular reason identified during the consultation to target this group with specific activities. There is however, a need to engage more deprived communities who have lower levels of engagement, including any BAME groups that live in these areas. There is also a need to engage workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside in the heritage.





During the consultation work it was discovered that there are limited opportunities for young people to engage with the heritage, both through formal learning settings and organised youth groups. These groups did not engage due to a lack of information and support.

#### 4.3.11 Developing new audiences

The new audiences that the project will target are as follows:

- Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston
- Schools and organised youth groups providing activities and information
- Students in further and higher education
- Workers and commuters in Avonmouth
- People with mobility needs by improving access
- People over 65 due to larger proportion in this age group

# **4.3.12 Existing and new audiences that will be targeted**

The existing and new audiences that the project will target are:

- Local people
- Walkers and cyclists wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside
- People visiting the area to eat or drink
- People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience
- Bird watchers and people interested in the wildlife
- Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology

- Farmers and landowners
- Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston
- Young people, schools and organised youth groups
- Students in further and higher education
- Families with young children
- Families with older children
- Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside
- People with mobility needs
- People over 65

# 4.3.13 How have the activities been designed to engage with different sectors of the audience?

The programme of learning, access and interpretation projects that has been included in Section 5 of the LCAP has been designed to target the existing and new audiences that have been identified through the audience development work, taking into account the needs of different audience segments and the barriers to participation that they face. Section 5 includes summaries of the 57 project proformas that the AFL Scheme will deliver each clearly identifies the audience that it is seeking to target along with the benefits for people, outputs and outcomes. In this way it has been possible to develop projects that appeal directly to particular target audiences as well as those that will have a broader appeal to all. It has therefore been possible to create a well balanced programme of activities that meets the needs of the audience for the heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels.



4.4 Programme A: Conserve and restore the built and natural features that create the historic landscape character of the Lower Severn Vale Levels

The following table illustrates the activities developed to deliver the outcome for programme A and the objectives that they will help to achieve.

**Table 4.1** Delivery of programme A activities

Activity	Objectives delivered
	delivered
CR1: Salt Marsh Grazing Project	1, 3, 4, 9, 10
CR2: Creation of Wetland Habitat	1, 3
CR3: Water Vole Habitat Restoration	1, 4
CR4: Creation / Restoration Of Ponds For Great Crested Newts	1, 3, 5
CR5: Hedgerow Restoration	1, 3
CR6: Grant Scheme – Willow Pollarding	1, 3
CR7: Restoring Orchards	1, 3, 6
CR8: Restore Species Rich Meadows	1, 3, 4
CR9: Archaeological Survey of Wetlands	7
CR10: Rhine (ditch) Clearance	1, 3, 6
CR11: Vegetation Clearance at Aust Ferry Terminal	2
CR12: Habitat Management Advisory Function to Nuclear Industry	1, 4

#### 4.4.1 Natural Heritage

The project area consists of a rich variety of semi-natural habitats, ranging from the saltmarsh, mudflats and the marine environment of the Severn Estuary to the fields, hedges, ditches and orchards of the coastal floodplain and includes a diverse array of flora and fauna.

In reflection of this, Programme A is multistranded and comprises a series of projects to maintain, restore and enhance differing types of habitat, increasing their distribution and prevalence and thereby reinforcing the character of the landscape. This work will be delivered by partner organisations using both contractors and volunteers as well as by Environmental Stewardship and grant aid schemes.

The various schemes of habitat restoration and creation will benefit a range of species of fauna and flora, including European waterfowl, water vole and great crested newt, both by increasing their distribution and through better connectivity of habitat, which in turn improves dispersal and through it the ability of colonies to react and adapt to climate change.

The heritage skills taught through the training programme (D), including the traditional management of ponds, hedges and orchards, will contribute towards maintaining these habitats in optimal condition in perpetuity for the wildlife associated with them, as well as enabling these skills to be passed on and disseminated throughout the wider community.





#### 4.4.2 Built and archaeological heritage

Aspects of the built heritage will be explored through a number of AFL Scheme strands, notably ICP1 (Volunteer Archaeological Surveys and Research) and ICP14 (Remote Sensing the Forgotten Landscape). The skills gained by volunteers as part of their training sessions (TS14 Archaeological Training Weekends) are the same for earthworks as for buildings, and volunteers will be able to take these skills and apply them to the built heritage. Furthermore, the skills gained from the Remote Sensing project will enable volunteers to explore the rich heritage of the area, including the built heritage, which forms an important part of the landscape. This will involve understanding how buildings existed within their contemporary landscapes and potentially identifying previously unknown building remains. With such widespread research into the historic environment understanding of the significance of heritage (archaeological and built) will be improved and this information can be used to inform conservation strategies. But also, improved knowledge leads to improved recognition and care about the built heritage, informing people about the value that this heritage has and hopefully ensuring its future care and protection.

# 4.4.3 Resolving conflicts between different types of heritage

The historically waterlogged soils of the coastal floodplain preserve organic material in an extremely good condition meaning that the project area is potentially extremely important for archaeology. Because of this, there is the possibility of archaeological material or remains being damaged or disturbed during ground works to create the wetland habitat (scrapes) under Programme A and it is therefore important that, in selecting the sites for the scrapes, the locations are informed by a desktop study of historic and archaeological records. Even then, as the distribution of archaeological remains within the project area is largely unknown, a watching or monitoring brief will be adopted during ground works by a suitably qualified and experienced person to record any material or remains of interest. If this indicates that the location might be of archaeological significance, it may be that ground works will need to be delayed in order to fully assess and record any artefacts found; or that the location for the scrape needs to be re-assessed. Given the potential importance of the project area for archaeology, it would be prudent to identify several additional sites for scrapes as alternatives in case it subsequently transpires that any of the first choice locations are of archaeological significance.



People interested in different heritage fields often work within their own specialist environment. Accordingly, the Partnership structure has a key role to play in communication and ensuring good, cooperative working relationships to avoid any conflict between the different types of heritage.

#### **4.4.4 Meeting conservation standards**

The Partnership and project delivery team will, in consultation with any relevant bodies or specialists, be responsible for ensuring that the individual projects are carried out to the highest standards. Work on the ground will be carried out by specialist contractors with the requisite skills and experience overseen by a project officer.

The project team will also ensure that trainers contracted to run traditional skills days will have a proven history of a high quality standard of work.

The specification and construction of the wetland habitat under Programme A will be in accordance with the Wet Grassland Manual: Breeding Waders (June 2005) published by the RSPB.

The two new bird hides will be to a proven design and robust specification and the contractors for their construction will be expected to have a demonstrable track record in having erected such buildings elsewhere to a high standard.

Where applicable, the project team will ensure that any necessary licences or consents - including planning permission; or consents or derogations (European protected species licences) from Natural England under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) or Habitat Regulations 2010 – are sought and/or are held or in place prior to works commencing.

Archaeology consultants and contractors will be expected as a minimum to conform to the Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidance and will work to briefs accepted by the council and to the IFA Standard and guidance for excavation (revised 2008).

#### 4.4.5 Management and maintenance

Much of the habitat creation and restoration work will be carried out on privately owned land; therefore before work commences a management plan will be agreed with landowners. This plan will be drawn up by the FWAG adviser with input from the AFL



project officers. Where applicable a 10 year management agreement will be required; this is in relation to habitat creation projects such as the re-stocking or creation of new orchards, or the installing of infrastructure such as fencing to enable grazing.

Volunteers will be trained up in different aspects of habitat management and it is envisaged that they will be able to offer help with either advice or manpower to land-owners where required. While the AFL Scheme is up and running there will be support from FWAG and the project staff for these volunteers and the goal is that they will be able and confident to carry on with the work they are doing after the AFL Scheme finishes. Some of the habitat improvements will be brought about through Environmental Stewardship schemes and this will require the landowner to carry out the necessary maintenance.

Where visitors are being actively encouraged to use a landscape it will be marketed in such a way that attracts appropriate numbers. For instance a location that has public transport and access to the foreshore that is not as impacting for wildlife such as the promenade at Severn Beach will be marketed to a wider audience than, for example, a walk at Sheppardine that has limited access, less parking and a more fragile habitat.

Through information available in leaflet form, on the website and discussed at events, visitors will be made more aware of the harm that can inadvertently happen through their visit such as disturbance of high tide roosts by dogs off leads and people not sticking to designated footpaths.

In order to ensure that heritage is managed to a high standard the staff employed by the partnership will need to demonstrate they have the necessary skills and experience to manage these projects. The role profiles for these staff have already been agreed by the HR department of the lead partner. Contractors will also have to demonstrate that

they have the necessary skills and references will be sought. The procurement policy of the lead partner will be followed at all times. Volunteers will be trained to a high standard and will have the support of the project officers and members of the project board.

For many of the projects not only will the necessary practical skills and knowledge be important but also interpersonal skills as there will be considerable interaction with the public, plus often multiple project partners to work with. Therefore these skills will be taken into account at interview / training stage. Where volunteers have large amounts of interaction with the public they will be trained and then assessed for their suitability for such a role. Support will be available from the project officers and the partnership.

Training for volunteers will be carried out by professionals who will be selected for their people skills and ability to enthuse and inspire along with their qualifications for the subject.

# **4.4.6 Managing information about the heritage**

Decisions for habitat creation / restoration and its subsequent management will be based on a number of sources of information:

- An up-to-date Landscape Character Assessment (updated 2013)
- An up-to-date Phase 1 survey (2013 & 2003)
- Current records held at Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC) and on the Historic Environment Record (HER)
- Information carried out by volunteer surveys throughout the early stages of the delivery phase of the AFL Scheme
- Information provided by partnership board members



The information that is currently available is held by BRERC in the case of the phase 1 survey and other ecological records. Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council hold their respective HER and information on landscape character assessments. New data collected through the project will either be held by BRERC which is a project partner or by the HER depending on whether it is an ecological or historic record.

Records that are collected through the lifetime of the project will appear in a summarised format on the website. Individual records will be available for partners and also to the public if requested. Records can be submitted at any time and will be continually processed. Updates will appear on the website on a six monthly basis.

Information about habitat creation / restoration and its subsequent management to be made available to the public by a number of ways:

- Information on the website and on leaflets
- Information given verbally during events
- Temporary notices erected at the location of the habitat work
- Information on permanent structures such as interpretive panels
- Information disseminated by the partnership board
- Information on social media

## **4.4.7 Climate change and effects on environment**

Programme A will increase the extent of a range of semi-natural habitats and its connectivity across the project area, thereby helping to mitigate the effects of climate change on species by increasing the size of populations and improving the opportunities for dispersal and interaction between colonies. Establishing new ponds and creating new hedgerows or orchards will also help absorb water as years of increased rainfall become more frequent.

Whilst supporting internationally important species of wildfowl and waders, the saltmarsh in places along the Estuary shore is narrow and 'pinched' between the sea defences and high tide mark. As sea levels rise and tidal surges become more frequent, more and more of this vulnerable habitat will gradually be lost and consequently the creation of 'high tide roosts' (scrapes) under Programme A to counter this will be an invaluable contribution towards enabling the populations of waterfowl within the Estuary to adapt to climate change.

Encouraging the use of sustainable forms of transport with which to travel into and around the AFL Scheme area is also a key element to the project. This includes promoting the Severn Beach Railway - which runs along the line from Bristol Temple Meads to Avonmouth and Severn Beach as a low carbon and family-friendly mode of transport: and championing the use of public rights of way and defined cycle routes as the best and most pleasurable way of visiting the attractions of the project area. Clear, concise guidance on low carbon forms of transport will be made available through promotional material and the website and, as the project unfolds, the Partnership Board members will continue to be innovative in seeking cost effective ways to make sure its meetings, projects and activities are low carbon and energy efficient. This includes factoring in transportation, work methods, carbon footprint and environmental credentials when selecting contractors.



# 4.5 Programme B: Increase community participation in the heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels

The following table illustrates the activities developed to deliver the outcome for programme B and the objectives that they will help to achieve.

**Table 4.2** Delivery of programme B activities

Activity	Objectives delivered
IPC1: Volunteer Archaeological Surveys & Research	3, 6, 7
IPC2: Community Archaeological Dig	3, 6, 7
IPC3: Lower Severn Vale Festival	3, 6, 8
IPC4: Tales of the Vale	3, 6, 7, 8
IPC5: Tales of the Vale Oral History	3, 6, 9
IPC6: Fruits of the Vale	3, 6, 8
IPC7: Water Vole Monitoring	3, 5, 6, 11
IPC8: Ponds & Great Crested Newts	3, 5, 6, 11
IPC9: Wildfowl & Wader Monitoring	3, 5, 6, 11
IPC10: Volunteer Ditch & Rhine Survey	3, 5, 6, 11
IPC11: Traditional Cider- Making	9,10
IPC12: Posters, Cards, Calendars	3, 6, 8
IPC13: Volunteers Thank You & Celebration Event	3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9
IPC14: Remote Sensing the Forgotten Landscape – Archaeology through LiDAR	3, 6, 7,8

#### 4.5.1 Target audiences

The audience development plan has defined the existing and new audiences that the AFL Scheme will target (see section 4.3)

# 4.5.2 How more people can get involved in conserving, managing and maintaining the heritage and the opportunities for volunteering

In order to attract as many people as possible the opportunities on offer need to span a range of topics and also be available in different parts of the AFL Scheme area. It will be recognised that some potential volunteers will want to be doing something active and be outside whereas others may be more limited in their accessibility or may simply prefer to do something from a desk rather than a field. Some volunteers prefer to work alone or with a friend where for others the motivation might be the social aspect of the task and the prospect of meeting new people. The communities within the AFL Scheme area are very different - in the south the communities are more urban and less affluent compared to the north where communities are predominantly very rural.

Community monitoring project



A Forgotten Landscape As well as residential communities there is also a large industrial business community at Avonmouth / Severnside. Therefore training for volunteers will take place in different locations and within different communities rather than using the same venue each time. Existing local organisations and networks will be targeted to help with promoting volunteer opportunities.

Work will also take place with local schools, colleges and the University of the West of England to ensure that young people also have a chance to become involved.

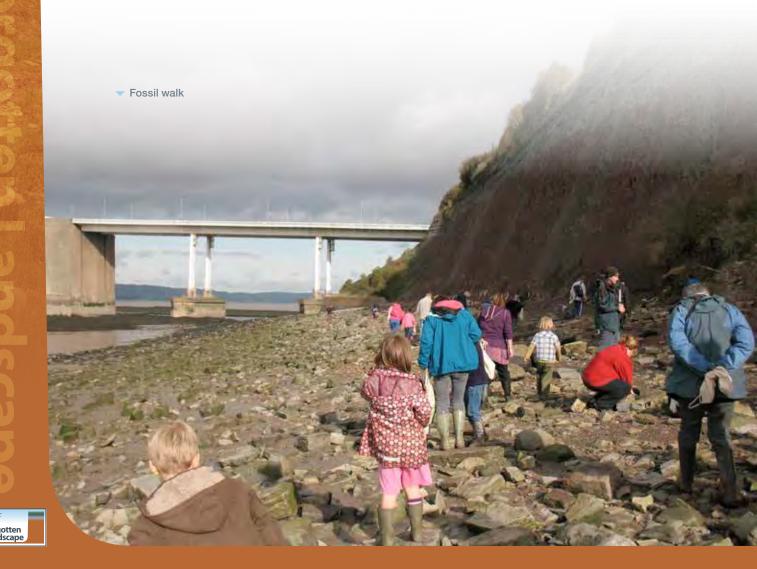
## 4.5.3 How people can be involved in making decisions about the heritage

People have already been involved with decision-making at the development stage of the AFL Scheme through the many consultation events that took place. However opportunities will still exist in the delivery phase. All the ecological data that

is collected by volunteers will be used to help inform habitat restoration / creation. The proposed public art project will involve volunteers right from the very start who will dictate what form the final product takes. The volunteers taking part in the archaeological dig will uncover information that will influence archaeology in the Scheme area.

#### **4.5.4 Management and maintenance**

The training that volunteers receive will be geared up to making that volunteer as self-sufficient as possible. During the life of the AFL Scheme the support for volunteers will be aimed at increasing their confidence and providing advice so that volunteers can carry on more autonomously once the Scheme has finished if they choose to do so. It is hoped that a 'volunteer network' can be established providing self support and also a way of enabling new volunteers to get involved in the future.



# 4.6 Programme C: Increasing access to and learning about the landscape and heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels

The following table illustrates the activities developed to deliver the outcome for programme C and the objectives that they will help to achieve.

**Table 4.3** Delivery of programme C activities

Activity	Objectives delivered
AL1: Landscape online: A Forgotten Landscape project website	3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11
AL2: Severnside Primary Schools Learning Project	3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11
AL3: Discovering the Lower Severn Vale	3, 4, 6, 8, 9
AL4: Love the Landscape Eat the View	3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10
AL5: Severn Beach Railway I-Spy Spotter Guide	3, 6, 8
AL6: Bristol To Severn Beach Film	3, 6, 8
AL7: Interpretation Panels	3, 6, 8
AL8: Interpretive Benches and Seats	3, 6, 8
AL9: Interpretive Toposcopes	3, 6, 8
AL10: Arts and Sensory Experiences	3, 6, 8
AL11: Access the Vale	3, 6, 8
AL12: Explore the Vale	
AL13: Easy Access Routes	3, 6, 8
AL14: Area and Local Hubs	3, 4, 6, 8, 9
AL15: Littleton Brick Pits Reserve Access Project	3, 6, 8

Activity	Objectives delivered
AL16: Oldbury Power Station: New Bird Watching Hide and Access Improvements project	3, 6, 8
AL17: A Forgotten Landscape Promotional Film	3, 6, 8
AL18: ALF Networking E-Newsletter	3, 4, 6, 8, 9

# **4.6.1 Improving access without damaging heritage**

The access improvements are focusing on upgrading and promoting existing rights of way as it is recognised that the existing network is extensive but not necessarily very usable or well promoted. Therefore this negates the need to open up new access in areas where conflict would be caused such as along the foreshore which would conflict with conservation objectives such as protecting the high tide roosts (scrapes).

Waymarking existing paths that are currently poorly signed will help ensure that users stay on the designated path and don't wander across other areas.

The information produced to promote access routes will include sections on how users can help protect the heritage and the landscape by sticking to areas where access is permitted and keeping dogs on leads in areas sensitive for wildlife.

Creating open access instead of permit only access at Littleton Brickpits will not damage the heritage as a new hide will be built to minimise disturbance to birds from increased visitor numbers.



# 4.6.2 How physical access improvements will be designed to ensure they are appropriate

The access improvements have been tailored to ensure that they will provide a wider variety of people with better access for bird-watching in the two locations selected whilst not being intrusive or resulting in a disturbance to wildlife.

The current bird-watching facilities at the Littleton Brick Pits Reserve consist of an old viewing platform which is in a poor state of repair. The present arrangement means that birdwatchers are clearly exposed and likely to scare off any species of birds using the reed bed. Additionally, access into the reserve is presently from the opposite end from the platform and any visitors/ birdwatchers have to walk round two sides of the reserve fully visible to birds before they reach the platform. Replacing the platform with an elevated hide will provide cover and obscure visitors from the birds: and the rearranged access from behind the hide is far less obtrusive and less likely to displace the wildlife, improving the birdwatching experience for all.

The access improvements (new surfaced path) to the hide at Oldbury Power Station follows a grass verge beside an existing level maintenance track between the main road and the silt lagoon. The route has been selected to ensure that, whilst wheelchair users can reach the hide, the new path will not compromise the ability of Magnox contractors to take vehicles down to the lagoon for routine maintenance.

Additional access improvement will be made through the creation of five 'easy access' routes which will make access to countryside and green spaces 'easier' for a wider range of people. It should be noted that 'easy access' routes are not the same as 'access for all' routes, where accessibility standards are very specific and required to meet relevant BT 'Access for All' standards. This project will create five easy access routes and certain routes and sections of

routes will be accessible to wheelchair, mobility buggy, and pushchair users and people with other mobility difficulties. The key to promoting the routes is to provide sufficient information for people to be able to decide for themselves if the route is suitable for them.

# **4.6.3** Improving access to different aspects of the heritage

In addition to the access improvements at the Brick Pits at Littleton and the Oldbury Power Station silt lagoon outlined above, the project will create and promote a series of circular walks designed to bring the public into contact with a range of heritage features. Some of these will be easy access routes for people with mobility issues or for parents with children in buggies.

The project also includes a dedicated website resource for the project. In addition to providing physical access information - such as maps of public rights of way, bridleways and cycle routes and links to public transport timetables – the website will be fully interactive and enable any user to have access to stories, images and information relating to a wide variety of important natural and built heritage features within the project area. This 'heritage' also includes transportation and the website will facilitate access to the history behind the two Severn bridges and their construction, the car ferry and the Severn Beach Railway.

# **4.6.4 Opportunities to learn about and understand the heritage**

An extensive programme has been developed for primary schools and following on from work carried out in the development stage there are two schools in the area keen to take part. The programme will cover many aspects of heritage from ecology to archaeology, local history to arts and drama. The schools taking part will be encouraged to share their new knowledge with other schools in the area via the school 'cluster groups'.



The design project for iconic images for posters and calendars will engage older children at sixth form or further education stage. This will create opportunities for those involved not only to learn about the landscape but also to learn new graphic design skills.

There are opportunities for university students to become volunteers for projects for both ecology and archaeology. A member of academic staff from the history department of UWE will be sitting on the partnership board and will therefore be in an ideal position to spot further opportunities for students to become involved with the AFL Scheme.

An extensive list of events has been drawn up to run over the life of the AFL Scheme which will feature such things as guided walks to look at wildlife, geology and archaeology. These will be aimed at all the target audiences and provide a 'bite-sized chunk' of learning in a fun and informal atmosphere.

Away from organised activities the AFL Scheme will also produce a range of interpretive material which people will be able to digest in their own time. The AFL Scheme website will also provide a plethora of information, online games and webcams for a remote learning experience.

#### 4.6.5 Management and maintenance

Access infrastructure will be maintained by a mixture of manpower from the council's Public Rights of Way Team and rights of way volunteers. New infrastructure such as benches, interpretation panels and toposcopes will be maintained by volunteers. The maintenance of the website also creates an opportunity for a volunteer to get involved and regularly update the website.

# 4.7 Programme D: Increase training opportunities in local heritage skills

The following table illustrates the activities developed to deliver the outcome for programme D and the objectives that they will help to achieve.

**Table 4.4** Delivery of programme D activities

Activity	Objectives
	delivered
TS1: Wildlife Identification and Recording Skills: Water Vole Training Day	3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11
TS2: Wildlife Identification and Recording Skills: Pond Survey Skills	3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11
TS3: Wildlife Identification and Recording Skills: Great Crested Newts	3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11
TS4: Wildlife Identification and Recording Skills: Bird Identification	3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11
TS5: Wildlife Identification and Recording Skills: Orchard Surveying & Management	3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11
TS6: Wildlife Identification and Recording Skills: Hedgerow Restoration and Management Skills	3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11
TS7: Farmer Liaison Days	3, 4, 9
TS8: Tales of the Vale: Historic Research Training	3, 4, 6, 7, 8
TS9: Tales of the Vale: Oral History Training	3, 4, 6, 7, 8
TS10: Traditional Cider- Making	3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10
TS11: Grazing Stock Lookering Training	1, 3, 4, 9
TS12: Event Management Training	3, 4, 6, 8 9







Activity	Objectives delivered
TS13: Sharing Good Practice	3, 4, 6, 8, 9
TS14: Archaeology Surveys: Training Weekends	3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9
TS15: Remote Sensing a Forgotten Landscape LiDAR Training	3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9

#### 4.7.1 What training in skills and traditional techniques will be provided to help maintain the character of the **Lower Severn Vale Levels?**

All of the training will benefit the character of the Lower Severn Vale Levels either directly or indirectly. The training on hedgerow restoration, orchard management and cidermaking will have direct impact by boosting numbers of people able to carry out these traditional skills.

The training that is focused on species identification and survey work will enable volunteers to produce survey records that will then be used to inform habitat restoration / creation in the latter stages of the AFL Scheme.

#### 4.7.2 Who will benefit from the heritage skills and who will be targeted?

The training is targeted at a wide range of user groups including local people, specific interest groups, farmers and landowners, local businesses and students. There is also training offered that will enable people to organise and carry out events for their local community and training to allow farmers to network and visit other farms where successful habitat creation / restoration has taken place. Training days will be offered to other Landscape Partnership Schemes to share good practice and provide an opportunity to learn from each other.



# Scheme Plan and Costs



# **5** Scheme Plan and Costs

Section 5 provides a summary for each of the projects proposed by the AFL Scheme. It has the following structure:

Section 5.1 provides a summary of Scheme costs and a comparison against costs provided at round 1.

Section 5.2 provides a description of Scheme income and match funding.

Section 5.3 gives a breakdown of all financial information including full Scheme costs by programme heading, additional supporting information and overall cost summary. This information is available as a supporting document.

Section 5.4 sets out a series of 'summary of projects' tables for each of the delivery programmes (A to E). The tables describe each project, audiences targeted, benefits for people, outputs, outcomes and methods of evaluation.

**Table 5.1:** Programme costs compared with round 1

Programme	First round	Second round	
A: Conserving and Restoring	190,495	203,330	
B: Increasing Community Participation	272,500	335,790	
C: Access and Learning	469,600	422,849	
D: Training and Skills	50,300	24,950	
E: Overheads	380,487	445,563	
2.5% contingency on actual project spend only	0	20,574	
Total Scheme Value	1,363,382	1,453,056	
Hlf Grant	1,007,200	1,017,200	



A Forgotten Landscape

# 5.1 Summary of Scheme Costs and Comparison to round 1

This LCAP includes proposals for 59 individual projects compared to 63 projects submitted in the round 1 submission. The detailed development work and consultation undertaken during the development phase has led to many of the projects being refined or altered. A number of projects have been dropped altogether and there are proposals for a small number of new projects.

The table 5.1 above provides a comparison of the round 2 programme costs compared against those submitted with the round 1 application.

Overall the total value of the AFL Scheme has risen by £89,674 at round 2. Differences between our round 1 and round 2 budgets are described below.

Programme A has a small increase in capital costs (£10,385) and in the value of volunteer time (£3,950). The programme has remained largely the same as set out in round 1; however it was necessary to increase some project budgets, for the creation / restoration of ponds for great crested newts and water vole habitat restoration works.

Programme B costs reflect a considerable increase in both capital costs and the value of volunteer time (an overall increase of £63,290). This rise can be attributed to rises in project costs and volunteer time calculations for volunteer archaeological survey works, the community archaeological dig, the volunteer LiDAR landscape study and the suite of ecological site survey works (rhine and ditch surveys, wildfowl and wader monitoring, great crested newt and water vole surveys).

Programme C has an overall cost reduction of £46,926 from round 1. The major saving derives from a reduction in website development costs compared to the costs identified at round 1. In addition, the overall number of projects included under

programme C has been increased to reflect concerns that the round 1 bid did not include sufficient learning and access outcomes.

Programme D costs have been reduced by approximately 50%, however this does not reflect a reduction in the Scheme's commitment to training and skills provision. The round 1 figure of £50,300 included the value of volunteer time for participants undertaking training; this has now been removed following HLF advice. The value of volunteer time has now been allocated to the delivery of the actual projects, which the training programmes support.

Programme D now includes a more balanced and wide-ranging suite of training and skills programmes to support the activities set out in programmes A, B and C.

Programme E overhead costs have increased by £65,076. During the development phase it became clear that two full time project officers were required to deliver the Scheme (costs for 1.5 FTE were included at round 1). The full Scheme cost tables, including estimates of officer time to deliver each individual project are available as an electronic supporting document. These demonstrate that two full time posts are required.

Other costs that were not included at round 1 was the allowance of a 2.5% contingency against capital costs for Programmes A – D. This is now included as an additional scheme cost. For Programme E, contingency costs are not included against staff salary costs as the salaries allow for a 1% pay increase per year. A 2.5% contingency is however included for all other Programme E costs including staff redundancy payments, general running costs, purchase of equipment, Partnership support and evaluation.



#### 5.2 Scheme Income / Match Funding

Table 5.2 provides a summary of all Scheme income and match funding at round 2.

**Table 5.2:** Scheme Income & Match Funding

Summary of total scheme income / match		
funding at roun	1 2	
Income	Value	% Budget
Cash (South Gloucestershire Council)	85,000	5.8%
Cash (Natural England)	5,000	0.3%
Volunteer Time	331,150	22.8%
In-Kind contributions	14,706	1.1%
HLF delivery grant request	1,017,200	70%
Total delivery stage income	£1,453,056.00	100%

All match funding contributions are secured for round 2.

Following discussions during the development phase HLF has agreed a £10,000 increase in their contribution to £1,017,200. The £10,000 is a transfer from the development phase budget to the round 2 delivery phase budget to support the commissioning and development of the AFL website. This transfer will also help to cover the slight increase in capital costs for programme outputs.

The HLF contribution is now 70% (74% at round 1) with volunteer time accounting for 22.8% of total project value (18% at round 1). The increase in the value of volunteer time is a reflection of the detailed scoping and planning work undertaken during the development phase.

An additional 0.3% contribution of £5,000 match funding has been secured from Natural England.

# 5.3 Round 2 Detailed Project CostsSummary and Timetable

A full breakdown of all financial information is available as an electronic supporting document:

For each Programme A to E:

- A project description
- A timetable columns showing which year's projects will be delivered
- Projects costs what year's costs will be incurred and combined total cost
- Volunteer time value and number of volunteer days valued at £50 (unskilled) and £150 (skilled)
- Value of in-kind contributions
- Estimate of Project Officer time to deliver projects by year
- Additional information on how costs and volunteer time has been calculated

Also included is a set of tables which summarise the round 2 programme costs, income, overhead costs and officer time. Round 1 costs and income are also shown for comparison.

#### 5.4 Summary of Projects

This section sets out a series of 'Summary of Projects' tables for each of the delivery programme headings (A to E). The tables describe each project, audiences targeted, benefits for people, outputs, outcomes, methods of evaluation and project costs. Please note that information from these tables will be used to inform the development of a detailed evaluation plan at the start of the second round delivery phase (see Section 7 for further details).



# LP-11-07107: A FORGOTTEN LANDSCAPE PROJECT PLAN

# **PROGRAMME A:** CONSERVING AND RESTORING

Method(s) of Evaluation	Area of land (ha) where saltmarsh grazing has been reintroduced Number of volunteer participants who take part Number of volunteer hours / value of volunteer time worked
	A priority BAP habitat/ SSSI/ SAC/ SPA that is under suitable management Increase in grazing available to local farmers / graziers A safer environment for animals to graze / greater confidence for the farmer / grazier that their animals will be safe Local people more engaged with the heritage
Outputs and measures of success	Conditions created that are suitable to establish grazing New fencing and water supply installed A team of locals established who can help to check the livestock
Benefits for People	Coastal habitats provide a natural defence against storm threats through wave energy dissipation Salt marsh grazing can be used for a range of informal activities including blird watching Reinstatement of grazing will provide a large new area available to graze stock in an area that is rapidly being developed Grazing can deter illegal fly-grazing
Audience(s)	Local people Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside
Project description	SALT MARSH GRAZING PROJECT: Reintroduction of salt marsh grazing, a historic practice within the Lower Severn Vale Levels, to a target site within the Project Area. Includes native breed livestock, access to machinery, training and infrastructure. Year 1 will continue working to overcome the barriers to grazing that were identified within the development stage. Budget for years 2 & 3 for infrastructure such as fencing and water troughs and training for a lookering scheme
Ref no.	CR1



Method(s) of Evaluation	Number of high tide roost maps printed / downloaded Total number of wetland scrapes created (target is 5)
Outcomes	A greater understanding of the way that wading birds and waterfowl are using the estuary A greater understanding of the threats to wading birds and waterfowl New habitat for wading birds and wading birds and understanding from the general public about importance of high tide roosts and problems caused by disturbance
Outputs and measures of success	High tide roost map created 5 x new wetland scrapes created 1 x simple leaflet created regarding the impact of accidental disturbance of roost sites
Benefits for People	The Severn Estuary is an exceptionally popular location for bird watching. Protecting high tide roosts will help to ensure that the bird population remains stable providing the spectacle for many people to see and enjoy.
Audience(s)	Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife Farmers and landowners Walkers and cyclists wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside. Young people, schools and organised youth groups Families with young children Families with older children Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside People over 65 People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience
Project description	HABITAT IMPROVEMENT WORKS: CREATION OF WETLAND HABITAT: Creation of wetland habitat features within the project area, including opportunities for wetland scrapes and ponds to be used as potential high tide roosts to encourage waterfowt. Long list of potential sites identified
Ref no.	CR2



Method(s) of Evaluation	Number of mink trapped on a yearly basis  Total number of ditches managed well for water voles/ length (metres) of scrub removed from Barracks Lane rhine during life of project  Area of scrub removal from St Andrews Road during life of project  Andrews Road during life of project  Count number of rhines that are managed well / still suitable for water vole habitat area (ha) that is more suitable for water voles  Feedback cards  Count habitat on their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage
Outcomes	An environment free of mink (mink are the biggest threat to the viability of the water vole population) More connectivity between the IDB and conservation organisations Less fragmented habitat / prevention of fragmentation of habitat wore extensive / better managed network of rhines for water voles to use
Outputs and measures of success	Mink trapped on a yearly basis (target to be agreed) Ditches under IDB management that are managed correctly for water voles Approx 800 metres of scrub removed from Barracks Lane Rhine Approx 500m of scrub removed from scrub removed from other / smaller rhines Habitat that is more suitable for water voles
Benefits for People	Safeguarding the water vole population will allow people to observe this rare mammal – in particular at Lawrence Weston Community Farm Participants will improve their understanding and awareness of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area
Audience(s)	Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife  Farmers and landowners  Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston.  Young people, schools and organised youth groups  Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside
Project description	HABITAT IMPROVEMENT WORKS: WATER VOLE HABITAT RESTORATION: Project to focus on habitat improvements / develop links between existing habitats for water voles. This project will link to a community survey and monitoring project. Sites for habitat restoration works have been identified
Ref no.	CR3

Method(s) of Evaluation	Total number of new ponds created Total number of ponds restored Count number of volunteers participating Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage
Outcomes	Project audience will put into practice GCN surveying techniques and skills Participants will share and pass on both an enthusiasm for the species and a greater understanding of its distribution locally Landowners will have a greater understanding of the distribution of the species and the appropriate regime of management of both its aquatic and terrestrial habitat
Outputs and measures of success	Number of records of great crested newts provided to BRERC and more accurate mapping of the species distribution locally Up to 4 new ponds created or 8 existing ponds restored or (most likely) a mixture of the two.  Number of volunteer surveyors participating
Benefits for People	Project will provide opportunities for trained surveyors to further develop GCN survey techniques in the field It will connect new wildlife recorders and provide them with the experience/mentors to enable them to apply for their own European licence It will develop a greater appreciation of the heritage It will enable people to pass on knowledge of and enthusiasm for the species The project will benefit local landowners in re-establishing ponds and contribute towards the drainage of farmland
Audience(s)	Local people Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology  Farmers and landowners Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage — particularly Lawrence Weston.  Young people, schools and organised youth groups Students in further and higher education  Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside  People over 65
Ref no. Project description	HABITAT IMPROVEMENT WORKS: CREATION / RESTORATION OF PONDS FOR GREAT CRESTED NEWTS: Project to include opportunities for both the restoration and creation of ponds / wet areas for great crested newts. Project will include links to a community survey project. Minimum of four ponds to be created or 8 ponds to be restored
Ref no.	CR4



Method(s) of Evaluation	Total length of hedgerow restored through laying, coppicing or gapping up  Total number of grants made to landowners
Outcomes	2,000m of maintained hedgerows with benefits for biodiversity A traditional rural craft will be kept alive The landscape character will be preserved
Outputs and measures of success	2,000m hedgerow restored through laying, coppicing or gapping up
Benefits for People	Economic benefit to skilled contractors undertaking the hedge-laying  Benefits to people by helping to maintain the character of their local landscape for future generations to enjoy  Benefit local landswhers in management and restoration of hedgerows
Audience(s)	Farmers and landowners
Project description	GRANT SCHEME: HEDGEROW RESTORATION: Establish new grant scheme to run over the life of the project to be available to landowners for hedgerow restoration. A farm site visit by FWAG will be a condition of the grant
Ref no.	CR5



Method(s) of Evaluation	Total number of willow trees pollarded Total number of grants made to landowners
Outcomes	281 willow trees pollarded with benefits for landscape and biodiversity A traditional form of tree management will be kept alive The landscape character will be preserved
Outputs and measures of success	Promotion of grants to farmers and landowners to carry out willow pollarding 281 willow trees repollarded
Benefits for People	Economic benefit to skilled contractors undertaking the pollarding work Benefits to people by helping to maintain the character of their local landscape for future generations to enjoy  Benefit local landswhers in management and pollarding of willow trees The arisings from the pollards could potentially provide wood fuel and materials for traditional crafts including replica salmon puchers
Audience(s)	Farmers and landowners
Project description	GRANT SCHEME: WILLOW POLLARDING: Establish new grant scheme to run over the life of the project to be available to landowners for the pollarding of willows. A farm site visit by FWAG will be a condition of the grant
Ref no.	CR6



Method(s) of Evaluation	Total number of orchards restored and/or brought into management Total number of new orchards created Total number of volunteer days by trained volunteers Feedback from participants on their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage
Outcomes	Increased habitat for wildlife Volunteers will report that they have improved their understanding of orchard management Local people and landowners will be more engaged with the heritage
Outputs and measures of success	5 orchards restored or newly created, including restorative pruning of existing trees and replanting up areas of old orchards 75 days of trained volunteer time devoted to orchard management
Benefits for People	The project will contribute to the visual amenity of the landscape for all Traditional orchards will provide a learning opportunity / resource for local communities and visitors  The project will equip people with the skills, knowledge and confidence necessary to manage their own traditional orchards
Audience(s)	Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology Farmers and landowners Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage—particularly Lawrence Weston.  Young people, schools and organised youth groups Families with older children Families with older children
Project description	HABITAT IMPROVEMENT WORKS: ORCHARD RESTORATION: Restoration work to target those orchards slagged up by the orchard survey as having potential to restore. Target: 5 orchards to be restored. Project will link into restorative pruning volunteer time (see increasing community participation project proposals): Formative and restorative pruning of historic / existing orchards within the project area, to link in with wider orchard survey works completed under community participation projects
Ref no.	CR7



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count the number of new species-rich meadows managed / sown / created Measure the area (ha) of species-rich meadows managed / sown / created Count the number of landowners participating at demonstration events  Count the number of events to promote the importance of wildflower meadows, aimed to attract a wide range of people Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage
Outcomes	Improved areas for biodiversity including flora, invertebrates, wading birds and various mammals Improved awareness about the heritage, specifically the increasing rarity of species-rich meadows and their importance for biodiversity  More landowners creating species-rich meadows on their land
Outputs and measures of success	Four new species-rich meadows managed / sown / created Three demonstration events to promote the importance of wildflower meadows, aimed to attract a wide range of people
Benefits for People	Species-rich wildflower meadows have a huge intrinsic value and can promote health and wellbeing for all.  The project will contribute to the visual amenity of the landscape for all wildflower meadows will provide a learning opportunity / resource for local communities and visitors.  The project will provide a learning opportunity for farmers and land managers.  The project will equip people with the skills, knowledge and confidence necessary to take on their own species-rich meadow projects
Audience(s)	Examers and landowners  Local people  Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife  Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology
Project description	HABITAT IMPROVEMENT WORKS: RESTORE SPECIES-RICH MEADOWS: Restore species-rich hay meadows. Works to include scarification of land, hire of machinery, training, sourcing green hay crop/seed mix . Aim to target 4 sites, and include management demonstration days for landowners
Ref no.	CB8



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Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of results / watching brief reports submitted to the HER Count / record archaeological material processed and prepared for museum deposition Expert analysis completed of material recovered
Outcomes	Where archaeology is identified this will help to characterise the landscape, showing areas of denser or lesser activity and survival Improved understanding of the environment and the ways that humans engaged with the landscape throughout prehistory and history
Outputs and measures of success	Watching brief/monitoring of ground disturbance throughout the project area and recording of archaeological features encountered. Sufficient post-excavation assessment and analysis to ensure that the archaeology is properly understood. Results of watching briefs / reports submitted to the Historic Environment Record. Archaeological material processed and prepared for museum deposition. Expert analysis of material recovered.
Benefits for People	Improved understanding of the Lower Severn Vale Levels landscape Information on the type of archaeology that may be encountered and the quality of its survival
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology</li> <li>Local people</li> <li>Students in higher and further education</li> </ul>
Project description	HABITAT IMPROVEMENT WORKS: SPECIALIST ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF WETLANDS: Specialist archaeological services are needed to monitor ground works / excavation relating to habitat improvement, notably scrapes and ponds, by way of a watching brief. Because archaeology in the Levels can be shallow even scrapes have the potential to damage the archaeology and therefore these activities need to be monitored by professional archaeologists, who can record any deposits / features encountered and organise any post-excavation
Ref no.	CR9



Method(s) of Evaluation	Total length of rhine managed / cleared of scrub per year Record number of people / volunteers engaged with the heritage  Number of volunteer hours / value of volunteer time worked Feedback from participants on their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage
Outcomes	Improved habitat for water voles and other aquatic species Volunteers will report that they have improved their understanding of rhine management Volunteers will report that their physical and mental well-being has improved Local people and landowners will be more engaged with the heritage
Outputs and measures of success	Removal of scrub from rhines by volunteers using hand tools 300m of rhine cleared of scrub per year Minimum 5 volunteer work sessions per project year Local people more engaged with the heritage
Benefits for People	The work will create volunteering opportunities for a wide range of people with the associated health and social benefits Volunteering to undertake physical tasks can improve physical and mental well-being arising from the physical activity undertaken and generate a 'feel good' factor associated with doing something positive for the local environment
Audience(s)	Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife Farmers and landowners Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston.  Young people, schools and organised youth groups Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside
Project description	RHINE AND DITCH CLEARANCE PROJECT: To use volunteers to clear scrub from ditches (known locally as rhines) primarily in the Avonmouth / Lawrence Weston area to benefit water voles and other aquatic life
Ref no.	CR10

Method(s) of Evaluation	Vegetation cleared yes/no	Method(s) of Evaluation	Record of number of meetings / specialist advice provided Area of improved management of existing habitat recorded
Outcomes	Vegetation cleared from structures by National Grid		Specialist advice informing the management of habitats at the Oldbury Power Station site Improved management of existing habitats Opportunities for new habitat creation fully explored with companies
Outputs and measures of success	Vegetation will be cleared from the remains of the ferry terminal at Aust		To liaise with Magnox and provide advice on habitat creation/management Specialist advice informing the management of existing habitats and creation of new habitats in vicinity of Oldbury Power Station site
Benefits for People	Maintain the remains of the ferry terminal as a landmark feature for local people Improve a location that is popular with bird-watchers and walkers  The project will provide learning opportunities for schoolchildren, young people and visitors in developing a better understanding of past ways of life and modes of transportation		Magnox allows public access to this popular spot with bird-watchers and walkers Provides a fantastic resource for the local and wider community and maintaining and improving the habitat will enable people to continue to enjoy it
Audience(s)	Schools, schoolchildren and teachers  Young people and organised youth groups  Families with young children  Local communities and people visiting the area  Specialist groups interested in the heritage  Project Partners		■ Farmers and landowners
Project description	VEGETATION CLEARANCE AT AUST FERRY TERMINAL: Clearance of vegetation from roof and buildings at Aust Ferry from National Grid		HABITAT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY FUNCTION TO NUCLEAR INDUSTRY: To provide specialist habitat management advice to the nuclear industry in the Lower Severn Vale Levels and maximise opportunities on their land to improve and create new habitats
Ref no.	CR11		CR12



**PROGRAMME B: INCREASING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION** 

Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of volunteers taking part Count number of volunteer hours Count number of survey sessions completed Count number of records submitted to HER Feedback cards / interviews to record how participants have improved their archaeological investigations skills Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Improved knowledge of the history of Oldbury Volunteers will report that they have improved their understanding of the archaeology of Oldbury Participants will report that they have improved their understanding of the archaeology of Oldbury Participants will report that they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the Lower Severn Vale Levels wills on other areas of the Lower Severn Vale Levels skills on other areas of the Lower Severn Vale Levels and submit records to the South Gloucestershire
	Surveys of Oldbury completed Drawn and digital archive of the survey results completed Inclusion of the results on the South Glos HER Formal publication of the results either as an independent monograph, or as an article within an archaeological journal such as the Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Volunteers will use their archaeological investigative skills on other areas of the Lower Severn Vale Levels and submit records to the South Gloucestershire HER
Benefits for People	People will benefit by improving their archaeological investigations skills and knowledge of Oldbury and greater understanding of the heritage
Audience(s)	Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology  Local people Students in higher and further education
Project description	ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYS AND RESEARCH: To undertake a systematic geophysical survey of Oldbury along with a drawn and digital survey of the earthworks. To use Oldbury as a location to train volunteers in the above skills. To enable and encourage volunteers to carry out further surveys in other parts of the Lower Severn Vale Levels and submit their records to the Historic Environment Record (HER)
Ref no.	ICP1

Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of volunteers participating taking part Count number of volunteer hours Count number of survey sessions Feedback cards / interviews to record how participants have improved their archaeological investigations skills Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Improved knowledge of the archaeological site Volunteers will report that they have improved their understanding of the archaeology Volunteers will report that they have improved their archaeological investigation skills Participants will report that they have widened their appreciation of the Lower Severn Vale Levels will use their archaeological skills on other areas of the Lower Severn Vale Levels their archaeological skills on other areas of the Lower Severn Vale Levels their archaeological skills on other areas of the Lower Severn Vale Levels and submit records to the South Glos HER
Outputs and measures of success	Up to 48 volunteers taking part in the excavation over the 4 week period Partial excavation of the site completed Drawn and digital archive of the results Inclusion of the results on the South Glos Historic Environment Record Publication of the results on the South Glos Historic Environment Record Publication of the results either as an independent monograph or as an article in an archaeological journal such as the Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society
Benefits for People	People will benefit by improving their archaeological investigations skills and knowledge of and greater understanding of the heritage
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology</li> <li>Local people</li> <li>Students in higher and further education</li> </ul>
Project description	COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG 2016: One high profile Community Archaeological dig to take place in 2016. Event to include training in archaeological excavation techniques. To include the provision of professional archaeologists, toilet hire, welfare unit hire and specialist services as necessary. Volunteers will excavate over a period of 4 weeks, with a max of 12 volunteers per week
Ref no.	ICP2



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of festivals held Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage Count volunteer num bers participating / volunteer hours
Outcomes	Participants at the festival will report that they have a better awareness and understanding of the Lower Severn Vale Levels landscape and the heritage
Outputs and measures of success	Three annual Lower Severn Vale Levels Festivals delivered over the life of the project. Target 500 participants to attend each festival
Benefits for People	People will engage the widest possible audience in interesting and fun activities People will learn more about the heritage and participate in the heritage by developing some of the content of the festival events and activities themselves Local producers will benefit from increased public appreciation of traditional local foods and understand the link between the traditional and modern farming practices and the Severnside landscape
	<ul> <li>Local communities across the project area/all users/visitors</li> <li>Volunteers participating in specific A Forgotten Landscape projects</li> <li>Recreational user groups volunteers – walkers, cyclists and horse riders</li> <li>People visiting the area/visiting for the coastal experience</li> <li>Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife</li> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology</li> <li>Young people, schools and organised youth groups and specialist interest groups</li> <li>Families with young children</li> <li>Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside</li> <li>People with mobility needs by improving access</li> <li>Older people over 65</li> </ul>
Project description	LOWER SEVERN VALE LEVELS FESTIVAL: To organise an annual festival promoting the Lower Severn Vale Levels landscape. Project to target young people / local schools / residents / levels communities and visitors. Based on a long weekend of events / activities for all audiences
Ref no.	ICP3



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of volunteers taking part Count number of volunteer hours Count number of booklets produced / people viewing the project exhibition Feedback cards collected from participants / viewers of the booklet and exhibition to record what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Volunteers participating in the project will report that they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels Readers of the booklet and viewers of the exhibition will report that they have widened their understanding and appreciation of the heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	A project scoping report will inform / set out the project format Up to 10 volunteers will carry out primary research Research will be archived so it can be used as the basis for future academic research e.g., the Victoria County History or other regional projects and comparative studies Material created will be used for interpretative media such as panels, leaflets and digital media 500 copies of a project booklet will be produced that will be free and will be available at different outlets throughout the project area A project exhibition will be produced that tours libraries, village halls, and is available for events
Benefits for People	People will engage in interesting and fun activities about the heritage. The project will benefit participating participating people reading the booklet or exhibition by enabling them to engage and learn about the heritage and deepen their understanding and appreciation of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area
Audience(s)	Local people  Walkers and cyclists wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside  People visiting the area to eat or drink  People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience  Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife  Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology  Farmers and landowners  Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston.  Young people, schools and organised youth groups  Students in further and higher education  Families with young children  Families with older children  Families with mobility needs  People with mobility needs
Project description	TALES OF THE VALE: Historic research of the Lower Severn Vale Levels through cartographic, aerial photographic, artistic and archaeological archives. Will include primary research of each of the parishes within the project area. Project budget will allow for production of a book / exhibition and include support costs (editing and collating materials)
Ref no.	ICP4

Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of volunteers taking part Count number of volunteer hours Count number of interviews completed / number of interviews transcribed Feedback cards collected from users of the booklet to record what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Volunteer participants will report that they have widened their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels People listening to the oral history record will report that they have widened their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels A valuable and interesting historical record will be available for local history archives and the wider community
Outputs and measures of success	The project will engage volunteers to work with communities to record oral histories across the Lower Severn Vale Levels project area At least 30 oral history interviews will be recorded Clips of interviews will be transcribed and uploaded onto website(s) A booklet documenting the main stories will be published
Benefits for People	The project will enable participants to engage and learn about the heritage in interesting ways and deepen their understanding and appreciation of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area  The project also offers opportunities for inter-generational working
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Local people who live in the area</li> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology</li> <li>Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston.</li> <li>Young people, schools and organised youth groups</li> <li>Students in further and higher education</li> <li>Families with young children</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>Families with Severnside</li> <li>People over 65</li> </ul>
Project description	TALES OF THE VALE: ORAL HISTORY PROJECT: Gathering histories of people who have lived and worked across the Lower Severn Vale Levels area and who travelled the Severn Estuary (now or in the past). The memories / stories collected will be used to promote a greater understanding and appreciation of the heritage. Work to be completed by local project volunteers with budget allowing for the purchase or hire of specialist recording equipment
Ref no.	IOP5



	er
Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of trained volunteers participating in survey of traditional orchards Count number of volunteer hours Count number of volunteer hours Completed Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage Count number of orchards surveyed
Outcomes	All traditional orchards in the project area plotted and surveyed Survey information base used to prioritise future management of orchards skills base in surveying of traditional orchards Volunteers will report that they have improved their understanding and skills in orchard surveying management.  Participants will report that they have widened and skills in orchard surveying understanding and skills in understanding and shared their understanding and shared their understanding and appreciation of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Volunteer survey of orchards - Number of trained volunteers who can carry out orchard surveys Increased data collected on the number of and condition of orchards Number of orchards surveyed
Benefits for People	People will increase their knowledge and skills in identifying wildlife associated with orchards and their understanding of the importance of this habitat and links to the wider heritage Volunteers will benefit from opportunities to meet and work with other like minded people to learn about the heritage
Audience(s)	Residents of the local community Families with older children Local landowners The local communities across the project area Young people, schools and organised youth groups and specialist interest groups
Project description	FRUITS OF THE VALE: Historic orchards survey to target surveying and recording all historic / existing orchards in the project area. Results to link to the PTES national orchard survey and wider South Gloucestershire orchard survey. Results to inform / target the formative and restorative pruning of orchards as set out in the Conserving and Restoring project schedule
Ref no.	OP6



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of trained volunteers participating in survey of water voles Count number of volunteer hours completed Feedback cards completed from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage Count number of ditches / rhines managed for water voles as a result of monitoring works
Outcomes	Data collected through this scheme will be used to inform future management work of the ditches and rhines. Survey information base used to prioritise future surveying for water voles. Increase in local skills base in surveying water voles. Volunteers will report that they have improved their understanding and skills in water vole surveying. Participants will report that they have improved their understanding and skills in water vole surveying. Participants will report that they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the Lower Severn Vale Levels.
Outputs and measures of success	Volunteer monitoring of water voles - number of trained volunteers participating who can carry out habitat surveys Increased data collected on the number of and condition of water vole populations  Number of new records for water voles
Benefits for People	The project will increase the knowledge and skills of people in surveying water courses / recording water vole numbers. The project will increase understanding of the importance of the matural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels  Participants will learn / use new skills and meet new people
Audience(s)	Local people Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology Farmers and landowners Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston Students in further and higher education Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside People over 65
Project description	WATER VOLE MONITORING: Ongoing monitoring of the natural environment of the project area including water voles in order to understand the impact of climate change and other environmental changes. Will include different categories of monitoring
Ref no.	IOP7



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of trained volunteers participating in survey of GCNs Count number of volunteer hours completed Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage Count number of records provided for BRERC as a result of survey works
	Volunteer survey for GCNs - number of trained volunteers participating who can carry out habitat surveys Increased data collected on the number of and condition of GCN populations / sites where recorded New records for GCNs sent to BRERC Landowners will have a greater understanding of the distribution of the distribution of the appropriate regime of management of habitat
Outputs and measures of success	Volunteer survey for GCNs - number of trained volunteers participating who can carry out habitat surveys Increased data collected on the number of and condition of GCN populations / sites where recorded  Number of new records for GCNs sent to BRERC Landowners will have a greater understanding of the distribution of the species and the appropriate regime of management of habitat
Benefits for People	The project will increase the knowledge and skills of people in surveying for GCNs. The project will enable the volunteers to refine GCN survey techniques in the field, creating a new network of wildlife recorders and enabling them to pass on a knowledge of and enthusiasm for the species to friends and the next generation. The project will help to pinpoint the locations of GCN colonies in the Lower Severn Vale Levels and thereby are conserved and safeguarded in the future.  People will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels.  Participants will learn / use new skills and meet new people
Audience(s)	Young people, schools and organised youth groups Families with young children Families with older children Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology Farmers and landowners
Project description	PONDS AND GREAT CRESTED NEWTS: Volunteers to use the skills and surveying techniques learnt in projects TS3 and CR4 to survey selected ponds across the Lower Severn Vale Levels for great created newts and to establish an on-going scheme for the annual monitoring of these colonies in perpetuity
	ICP8



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of trained volunteers participating in survey of wildfowl and waders Count number of volunteer hours completed Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage Count number of wildfowl and wader records supplied to BRERC
Outcomes	Increased number of records of wildfowl and waders provided to BRERC Data used to inform dissertation or report on the distribution of birds and climate change Participants / project audience will increase their knowledge and skills of identification regarding estuarine wildfowl and waders Participants / project audience will increase their understanding of the importance of the Estuary and the conservation needs of its waterfowl The project will develop the network of existing / new amateur ornithologists and the networks between them
Outputs and measures of success	Increase the number of records of wildfowl and waders provided to BRERC Data used to inform dissertation or report on the distribution of birds and climate change
Benefits for People	The project will increase the knowledge and skills of people in identifying a wide range of species of wildfowl and waders.  The project will increase understanding of the relationship between the wintering birds and habitats along the Estuary.  People will increase their awareness of the Lower Severn Vale Levels It will bring together a new community of bird-watchers, connecting people and sharing their enthusiasm, knowledge and skills  Participants will learn / use new skills and meet new
Audience(s)	Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife  Farmers and landowners  Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston  Young people, schools and organised youth groups  Families with young children  Families with older children  Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside  Students in further and higher education
Project description	WILDFOWL AND WADER MONITORING: On-going monitoring of the natural environment of the Project Area. Will centre on monitoring waterfowl numbers and movements to gather data / co-ordinate the work of groups in order to understand the impact of climate change and other environmental changes upon bird numbers. Monitoring work to be co-ordinated by project officers who will design survey forms / support volunteers undertaking survey work and co-ordinate the supply of survey data to the Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC)
Ref no.	6 O



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of trained volunteers participating in survey of ditches and rhines Count number of volunteer hours completed Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage Count the length of ditches and rhines surveyed / records supplied to BRERC
Outcomes	Data collected will be used to help inform future management work of the ditches and rhines Survey information base used to prioritise future specialist surveys or management proposals Increase in local skills base in local skills base in local skills base in understanding and rhines Volunteers will report that they have improved their understanding and skills in ditch and rhine surveying Participants will report that they have widened and shared their understanding and skills in ditch and rhine surveying Participants will report that they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Trained volunteers participating in survey of ditches and rhines Target 250km of ditches and rhines to be surveyed per year Number of new records / information collected for ditches and rhines
Benefits for People	This project provides an opportunity for volunteers to improve their understanding of the importance of ditches and rhines for biodiversity People will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels Participants will learn / use new skills and meet new people
Audience(s)	Local people Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology Farmers and landowners Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston Students in further and higher education Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside
Project description	VOLUNTEER TIME: DITCH AND RHINE SURVEY: Survey and condition assessment of rhines to establish a clear understanding of which rhines still hold water and are functioning. The data collected will provide the baseline for future surveys and management work which will benefit a range of aquatic species including water voles and great crested newts
Ref no.	ICP10

Method(s) of Evaluation	Count numbers participating in the project Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage Count volume of traditional cider
Outcomes	Keeping alive a local tradition of cider production Increase in local skills base in cider production Participants will report that they have a better awareness and understanding of the Lower Severn Vale Levels landscape and the heritage
Benefits for People Outputs and measures of success	Community cider-making day held Local cider product created
Benefits for People	The project will enable people to put into practice the skills learnt from the cidermaking training course  The project will recreate a local tradition of people coming together to make gather the apples and make the cider
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Residents of the local community</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>Local landowners</li> <li>The local communities across the project area / all users / visitors</li> <li>Local landowners</li> <li>Volunteers participating in specific A Forgotten Landscape projects</li> </ul>
Project description	TRADITIONAL CIDER-MAKING: Cider-making – provide opportunity for project audiences to learn about the traditional art of cider-making working with existing local cider producers. Providing opportunities for local people to make their own cider with support from Littleton Lifesaver local cider co-operative including collection and processing of fruit, brewing and bottling
Ref no.	ICP11



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of local schools and college pupils taking part in the development of bespoke designs and iconic illustrations.  Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage Count number of bespoke designs and illustrations produced that interpret the heritage Count number of post cards printed and distributed and distributed Count number of post cards printed and distributed and distributed count number of post cards printed and distributed and distributed and distributed and distributed and distributed and erected in the project area and adjacent locations
Outcomes	Participants / residents / visitors will report that they have widened their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Consultant to work with local schools and colleges to develop bespoke designs and iconic illustrations Series of bespoke designs and illustrations produced that interpret the heritage 2000 post cards printed and distributed and distributed and distributed and distributed and distributed and erected in the project area and adjacent locations
Benefits for People	People will be able to identify the bespoke designs and iconic images with the project and broaden their understanding of the heritage
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Walkers and cyclists wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside</li> <li>People visiting the area to eat or drink</li> <li>People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience</li> <li>Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife</li> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology</li> <li>Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement</li> <li>Young people, schools and organised youth groups</li> <li>Families with young children</li> <li>Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside</li> <li>People over 65</li> </ul>
Project description	POSTERS, POST CARDS AND CALENDARS: Work with a sixth form college / city college to run a competition to design bespoke posters and postcards to market the project. To work with local colleges / schools to work up designs / ideas
Ref no.	ICP12



Method(s) of Evaluation	Record that one Volunteers Thank You and Celebration event was held Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage Count volunteer numbers participating Count number of volunteer hours
	People attending the event will report that they have a better awareness and understanding of the Lower Severn Vale Levels landscape and heritage Participants will report that they are aware of the continuing volunteering opportunities over and beyond the life of the AFL scheme
	Deliver one Volunteers Thank You and Celebration event at the end of the project Target of 750 to attend the Thank You and Celebration event
	People will benefit by engaging in interesting and fun activities and by learning about the heritage.  The event will be targeted at volunteers and participants who have taken part in projects  The event will also seek to engage the widest possible audience to make people aware of how volunteers can help sustain the project in the future. The event will encourage the project in the future project in the future project in the future. The event will encourage the participation of local producers who have benefited / taken part in the project.  People will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Levels
	Walkers and cyclists wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside  People visiting the area to eat or drink  People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience  Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife  Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology  Farmers and landowners  Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage— particularly Lawrence Weston  Young people, schools and organised youth groups  Families with young children  Families with older children  Families with mobility needs  People with mobility needs
	VOLUNTEERS THANK YOU AND CELEBRATION EVENT. Celebration event to mark the end of the AFL Scheme providing a summary of achievements, information including on-going sustainability and support, and the opportunity to thank all project volunteers, to thank all project volunteers, to thank all those who have made in-kind contributions, and to thank all of the communities across the project area. Format of celebration to be agreed with project partners
	IOP13



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of volunteers participating Count number of volunteer hours Count number of digital records of newly identified sites or reinterpretation of old ones collected Count number of records of newly identified sites or reinterpretation of old ones added to the HER Feedback cards / interviews to record how participants have improved their archaeological investigations skills Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	New understanding of the landscape of the AFL Scheme area, its character, environmental history and archaeology Better understanding of the survival of earthwork and other features which can be used for future conservation initiatives Landscape wide understanding of the relationship between different types of archaeology which may not be visible on the surface, which can be tied into the ongoing works set out in ICP1 and ICP2
Outputs and measures of success	10 volunteers will undertake the research analysing LiDAR data 20 (estimated) digital records of newly identified sites or reinterpretation of old ones with these will be added to the HER New records for the HER will be recorded
Benefits for People	This project will provide volunteers with skills in identifying and understanding archaeological landscapes using LiDAR  The project will benefit people by improving our understanding of the archaeological landscape of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology</li> <li>Students in further and higher education</li> <li>Local people</li> </ul>
Project description	SENSING THE FORGOTTEN LANDSCAPE - ARCHAEOLOGY THROUGH LIDAR: Volunteers will undertake a study of part of the AFL Scheme area making use of LIDAR to identify and interpret archaeological sites. LIDAR is already held by the council, but LIDAR data is free for research purposes as is the software. Volunteers will be able to undertake this in the comfort of their own home provided they have a computer and internet access and have taken part in the training
Ref no.	ICP14



Method(s) of Evaluation	Record number of website hits Web site visitors reporting that they have learnt about the heritage and project through messages / website forum Determine awareness and use of the AFL Scheme website as part of project participant feedback card questions Total project cost: £53,000 Web design and set up £44,000 Volunteer in-kind costs: £9,000
Outcomes	Users of the web site will report that they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels Users of the website will report that they have been able to obtain information that has enabled them to access the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels One trained volunteer participating will report that they have widened their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels On volunteer will report that they have widened their and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels On volunteer will report that they have improved their IT and web
Outputs and measures of success	One web design consultant appointed to oversee procurement of web design contract. One website created Target 100,000 website hits per year over life of project. One trained volunteer to work half day per week / 24 days per year.
Benefits for People	One point of information for the heritage and project themes. Details of activities and events, and how to volunteer Opportunities for learning, participation and training Information on access to / travelling through the project area Access to maps and downloadable information and learning resources It will benefit the general public who will be able to widen their understanding of the special qualities and stories of the area Provide an opportunity for people with an interest in the heritage to get in contact and celebrate the heritage
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Local people</li> <li>Walkers and cyclists wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside</li> <li>People visiting the area to eat or drink</li> <li>People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience</li> <li>Bird-watchers &amp; people interested in the wildlife</li> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology &amp; archaeology</li> <li>Farmers and landowners</li> <li>Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence</li> <li>Weston</li> <li>Young people, schools and organised youth groups</li> <li>Students in further and higher education</li> <li>Families with young children</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>Families with moder children</li> <li>Families with mobility needs</li> <li>People over 65</li> </ul>
Project description	LANDSCAPE ONLINE: A FORGOTTEN LANDSCAPE PROJECT WEBSITE: A dedicated website for the A Forgotten Landscape Scheme developed to provide a fully interpretive resource about the Levels area. The website will include interactive elements to encourage user participation, with mapping facilities, data entry, dedicated learning resource, games, quizzes, apps and webcams. Links to project facebook, twitter and flickr pages. Consultant to work with partners and co-ordinate the brief and oversee the procurement of the website contract. To include a series of webcasts developed by university students on a range of subjects including wildlife, archaeology and heritage
Ref no.	AL1

Method(s) of Evaluation	Feedback cards collected from children / teachers / parents / participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt about the heritage and whether they have learnt new skills Participants will report that they have understood the heritage themes for the activity Record numbers participating Count volunteer hours Count numbers / volunteer hours down loaded / produced and distributed
Outcomes	Users of the educational resource will report that they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels Local landscape used as a resource for learning
Outputs and measures of success	2 primary schools involved in the development and production of the educational resource Primary schools from across the wider AFL project area using the education resource Schools from Severnside cluster group using educational resource Number of schools from wider project area / adjacent urban areas using educational resource  2 primary schools participating in extended learning resource activities
Benefits for People	Schools will benefit from a sustainable learning resource that increases understanding about the Lower Severn Vale Levels landscape and its heritage  Pupils and teachers will improve their understanding of the wide-ranging heritage of their local area  Pupils, teachers and the families of the pupils involved will also be encouraged to take an active role  The project will provide an educational resource that uses the local landscape with a particular emphasis on learning outside the classroom
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Local primary school children, staff and parents</li> <li>Families with young children</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>Organised youth groups</li> <li>Local people</li> <li>People visiting the area / visiting for the coastal experience</li> <li>Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife</li> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology / other community participants</li> </ul>
Project description	SEVERNSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOLS LEARNING PROJECT: Target the direct involvement of 2 schools over three years. Working in partnership with schools, the project will create schools learning resources /lesson plans / learning aids to develop awareness and understanding of the Lower Severn Levels that can be used by other schools in the area. The learning resource will draw on the learning proposals set out in A Forgotten Landscape - Interpretation & Learning Plan (2013) and will include:  Creation of a primary schools learning resource tool kit, including topics such as the River Severn, trade, commerce and industry, crossing the river, local area studies, living things, and geology; willage trails; learning forum; learning / downloadable resources; field studies guide; school exchange programme; silver screen; seven severn characters; scripting the severn; activities for informal young learners and families
Ref no.	AL2



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants attending / taking part Count number of volunteers / volunteer hours Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt about the heritage and whether they have learnt new skills
Outcomes	720 (target of 15 per event) participants will report that they have widened their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels Volunteers helping to deliver events will report that they have widened their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels and developed skills to support
Outputs and measures of success	Minimum of 48 events / activities to be delivered over the life of the project via annual programmes 21 volunteers will have received training to support and deliver events and activities
Benefits for People	The project will enable people to engage with the heritage in fun and interesting ways. The project will deepen their understanding and appreciation of the heritage.
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Walkers and cyclists wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside</li> <li>People visiting the area to eat or drink</li> <li>People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience</li> <li>Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife</li> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology</li> <li>Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston</li> <li>Young people, schools and organised youth groups</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside</li> <li>People with mobility needs</li> <li>People over 65</li> </ul>
Project description	DISCOVERING THE LOWER SEVERN VALE: Programme of learning and community participation events to include old photo days, local food evenings, researching historic food produced on the levels, Severn wildlife, historic environment walks and talks, arts based events (photography, music and performance). To be delivered as an annual programme of events, including a budget allowance for full and wide marketing of all project participation events and venue hire
Ref no.	AL3



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of local businesses taking part Count number of people attending local food events Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage
Outcomes	Participants will report that they have widened their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels Local businesses will report that they have widened their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels and developed their skills in providing / marketing local foods to the public
Outputs and measures of success	Minimum of 5 local food events delivered by local business per year
Benefits for People	The project will enable people to enjoy and appreciate traditional local foods and understand the link between the traditional and modern farming practices and the landscape  The local economy and businesses will benefit by supporting local producers and food outlets to market their products through the local foods programme
Audience(s)	People visiting the area to eat or drink     Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston     Young people, schools and organised youth groups     Families with young children     Families with older children     People over 65
Project description	LOVE THE LANDSCAPE EAT THE VIEW: Annual programme of local food events supporting local producers, local food outlets and businesses across the project area. Will include information on foods people traditionally ate / grew, greater awareness of local food production, products and where to buy them, combined with local food menus in pubs / restaurants / businesses
Ref no.	AL4



Method(s) of Evaluation	Feedback cards collected from children / teachers and parents on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt about the heritage and whether they have learnt new skills Feedback cards / project web site will enable users of the spotter guide to report that they have understood / learnt about the heritage Count number of I-Spy Spotters Guide downloaded / produced and distributed
	12 teacher support / parent volunteer participants will take part and report that they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels Spotters Guide will report that they have a better understanding of Severn Beach railway line, local landmarks and features in the Lower Severn Vale Lower Severn Vale Levels
	I-Spy Spotters Guide printed media pack for the Severn Beach railway line produced
	The project will provide information on features of interest along the Severn Beach railway line and its importance in providing sustainable access for communities along its route The project will raise awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the wider Lower Severn Vale Levels Pupils, teachers and parents from Severn Beach Primary School participating will improve their understanding of the features and landmarks of their local area and access opportunities provided by the railway line Families of the pupils involved will be encouraged to take an active role
	School children and teachers  Young people Families with young children Local people People visiting the area to eat or drink People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology
Ref no. Project description	SEVERN BEACH RAILWAY I-SPY SPOTTER GUIDE: Develop an I-Spy Spotters Guide for the Severn Beach railway line highlighting the key features that can be seen along the route. Features of interest could include the River Avon, the motorway bridge, Avonmouth and Severnside wildlife. Project to work with Severn Beach Primary School to research content
Ref no.	AL5



Method(s) of Evaluation	Feedback cards collected from young people / participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt about the heritage and whether they have learnt new skills Feedback cards / website will enable views of the film to report that they have understood / learnt about the heritage Count number of times the film is viewed on the website
Outcomes	10 volunteer participants from target groups will report that they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels Viewers of the film will report that they have a better understanding of Severn Beach railway line, local features and the heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Short film of Severn Beach railway line produced
Benefits for People	The project will provide information on features of interest along the Severn Beach railway line and its importance in providing sustainable access for communities along its route. The project will raise awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the wider Lower Severn Vale Levels  Young people participating will improve their understanding of the features and landmarks of their local area and access opportunities provided by the railway line Participants will learn video / film making skills Families of the young people involved will also be encouraged to take an active role
Audience(s)	Young people, schools and organised youth groups     Families with young children     Families with older children     People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience     Local people     People visiting the area to eat or drink
Project description	BRISTOL TO SEVERN BEACH FILM: Digital media project to create a short video of the journey on the Severn Beach Railway Line. This would be a speeded up version of the journey taking perhaps 2-3 minutes and suitable for YouTube and the website. To be collaborative project involving youth groups along the route
Ref no.	AL6

Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants form target groups who took part. Count number of volunteer time worked Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage
Outcomes	from target groups will report that they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels Readers of the panels will report that they have widened their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels Participants in the celebration event will report that they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels participants in the celebration of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Installation of 12 panels 60 participants engaged in researching and producing panels 1 celebration event with a local school to mark the installation of the boards 12 volunteers recruited to maintain and clean panels
Benefits for People	The project will enable the local community to engage with the heritage through learning and research work to interpret the themes and stories of the Lower Severn Vale It will benefit the general public who will be able to widen their understanding of the special qualities and stories of the area
Audience(s)	Corganised youth groups     Local people     People visiting the area to eat or drink     People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience     Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife     Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology / other community participants     Young people, schools and special interest groups (helping to research and produce panels)     People with mobility needs     People over 65
Project description	INTERPRETATION PANELS: Install a series of 12 interpretive panels at key locations to explain the stories of the project area and the sites to be interpreted. AFL Project Officer(s) to work with target audience / user groups to research, develop artwork and text
Ref no.	AL7



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants form target groups who took part. Count number of volunteer hours / value of volunteer time worked Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage People with limited mobility and the elderly will report on their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the learnt about the heritage
Outcomes	25 participants from target groups will report they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels Users of the seats / benches will report that they have improved their awareness of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	8 seats and benches designed and installed
Benefits for People	The project will providing resting points at 5 key locations in the Lower Severn Vale Levels benefiting people with limited mobility, the elderly and visitors and groups who are exploring the area People will be involved in the development of authorsk and target audiences in the design of benches and seats which will help to improve and widen their understanding of the heritage
Audience(s)	Local community and visitors     Walkers wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside     Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife     People with mobility needs by improving access     People over 65     Schools and youth groups     Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology
Project description	INTERPRETIVE BENCHES AND SEATS: Design and install 8 benches and seats using designs agreed through the arts and sensory experiences project. Design to fit more harmoniously in the landscape, with a dual function. Benches can also include carved designs
Ref no.	AL8



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants from target groups who took part. Count number of volunteer hours / value of volunteer time worked Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage Project web site will allow users of the toposcopes to report on their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage
Outcomes	15 participants from target groups will report they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels  Viewers of the toposcopes will report that they have a better understanding of local landmarks and features in the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Three toposcopes installed
Benefits for People	Provide information about local landmarks and features. Generate interest in the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels Participants will benefit by improving their understanding of the features and landmarks of their local area and the function of toposcopes
Audience(s)	Local community and visitors  Walkers and cyclists wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside  People visiting the area to eat or drink  Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology  Young people, schools and organised youth groups  Families with young children  Families with older children
Project description	INTERPRETIVE  TOPOSCOPES: Toposcopes are fascinating for many visitors, where a view over flat land can reveal well-known locations and features and distant hills. The project will install toposcopes / toposcopic panels at key vantage points around the project area. Examples could include St Arilda's church or on the Severn Way just north of Aust Service Station, and Wood well Meadows. Content and design of the toposcopes and siting to be agreed as part of project development with target audiences
Ref no.	AL9



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants from target groups who took part. Count number of volunteer hours / value of volunteer time worked Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt about the heritage and whether they have learnt new skills
Outcomes	Participants in the project will report that they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels  Local people and visitors will report that they have learnt about the heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Complete a programme of creative engagement with local communities. Complete a design guide for interpretation projects, including benches and interpretation signs. Complete and install a permanent artwork/ artworks at Severn Beach or other agreed location.
Benefits for People	The project will support the local community to engage with the heritage through learning, research work, design and bringing people together.  The project will directly engage local residents, schools and visitors, ensuring that their ideas are incorporated into final works and interpretation. It will benefit the general public who will be able to widen their understanding of the heritage.
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Walkers and cyclists wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside</li> <li>People visiting the area to eat or drink</li> <li>People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience</li> <li>Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife</li> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology</li> <li>Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston</li> <li>Young people, schools and organised youth groups</li> <li>Families with young children</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>People with mobility needs</li> <li>People over 65</li> </ul>
Project description	ARTS AND SENSORY EXPERIENCES: To appoint a lead artist to deliver a programme of creative engagement with communities, develop designs for interpretive project elements across the AFL Scheme, and create and install public art in the Severn Beach promenade area to help celebrate and interpret the heritage of the lower Severn Vale Levels
Ref no.	AL10



Method(s) of Evaluation	Number of volunteer participants who take part  Number of volunteer thours / value of volunteer time worked  Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt about the heritage, and whether physical and mental well-being has improved Feedback cards / website response forms will allow audiences using improved paths to report their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage
Outcomes	Local people and visitors will report that they have better access opportunities to explore the Lower Severn Vale Levels Local people and visitors will report that they have learnt about the heritage of the Levels Volunteers taking part in work parties will report that they have used or improved their practical skills to improve PROW and what they have learnt about the heritage of the Lower Severn Vale
Outputs and measures of success	10 circular walking routes with improved, furniture, surfacing, signing and waymarking 10 volunteer work parties led by Avon Ramblers to implement improvements 13 one day sessions led by TCV to implement improvement with a target of 10 trained volunteers per work party
Benefits for People	People will be able to access a network of circular walking routes to enjoy and experience the rich heritage and landscapes of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Audience(s)	Walkers wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside  People visiting the area to eat or drink  People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience  Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife  Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology  Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston.  Families with young children  Families with older children  Families with older children
Project description	ACCESS THE VALE: Access improvements to 10 routes that will be promoted to allow people to explore and discover the Lower Severn Vale. Utilising the assessment of Public Rights of Way completed at the project development phase, and working in partnership with SGC PROW team / Avon Ramblers and local communities, to identify and agree a schedule of Public Rights of Way improvements for the benefit of walkers. Survey detail / proposed routes outlined in the A Forgotten Landscape - Interpretation & Learning Plan (2013) will inform the selection of routes to be promoted and improvements made
Ref no.	AL11



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of volunteer participants / hours worked who took part Count number of sustainable access packs produced and distributed Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage
Outcomes	Users of the map and booklet will report that they have widened their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels Users of the map and booklet will report that they have been able to access the heritage and landscapes of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	3,000 copies of map and booklet printed Electronic copies and pdf downloads accessible from project website
Benefits for People	People will be able to access information on the existing and new walking routes, easy access routes and cycle routes and cycle routes and enjoy and experience the rich heritage and landscapes of the Lower Severn Vale Levels  People will improve their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Local residents and visitors</li> <li>Walkers and cyclists wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside</li> <li>People visiting the area to eat or drink</li> <li>People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience</li> <li>Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife</li> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology</li> <li>Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside</li> <li>People with mobility needs by improving access</li> <li>Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>Young people</li> <li>People over 65</li> </ul>
Project description	EXPLORE THE VALE: To develop a new Severnside map and comprehensive booklet guide for cyclists and walkers using the project area based on route audit works completed at the project development stage, complementing existing SGC sustainable transport promotion policies and all Sustrans routes. Information will include access points from surrounding communities and roads. Will use local hubs to promote the routes. Project forms part of access improvement proposals identified in the A Forgotten Landscape - Interpretation & Learning Plan (2013)
Ref no.	AL12



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants from target groups who took part. Count number of volunteer hours / value of volunteer time worked Feedback cards collected from project participants on their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage Feedback cards collected from easy access path users on their level of satisfaction and what they learnt about the heritage
Outcomes	Local people and visitors will report that they have better access to explore the Lower Severn Velunteers taking part in work parties will report that they have used or improved their practical skills to improve PROW
Outputs and measures of success	5 easy access trails with improved surfacing, furniture, signing and waymarking 10 volunteer work parties led by Avon Ramblers to help implement improvements with target of 5 people attending per session
Benefits for People	People will be able to access 5 easy access trails to enjoy and experience the rich heritage and landscapes of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>People with mobility needs</li> <li>Families with young children</li> <li>People over 65</li> <li>Walkers wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside</li> <li>People visiting the area to eat or drink</li> <li>People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience</li> <li>Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife</li> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology</li> <li>Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence</li> <li>Weston</li> </ul>
Project description	EASY ACCESS ROUTES: To create 5 easy access routes that will allow all people, including those with mobility issues and people pushing baby buggies, to gain access to the Lower Severn Vale Levels, to understand where they can walk and feel confident in accessing the area in order to enjoy the landscape, its communities and learn about the heritage
Ref no.	AL13



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of volunteer hours / value of volunteer time worked Count number of people visiting / using area and local hubs Feedback cards collected from people visiting hubs to record their levels of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage
Outcomes	Local people and visitors will report that they were able to access information and resources at area and local hubs Users of hubs will report that they have widened their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Establish a minimum of 8 area and local hubs acting as an information resource across the Lower Severn Vale Levels area
Benefits for People	Local people and visitors will be able to access information and interpretative information at a series of outlets in the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Walkers and cyclists wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside</li> <li>People visiting the area to eat or drink</li> <li>People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience</li> <li>Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife</li> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology</li> <li>Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage—particularly Lawrence Weston</li> <li>Young people, schools and organised youth groups</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>Families with nobility needs</li> <li>People with mobility needs</li> </ul>
Project description	AREA AND LOCAL HUBS: Establish a series of area and local hubs where local people and visitors can obtain information and interpretation on the Lower Severn Vale Levels. The hubs will be stocked with a variety of information such as the interpretative map and booklet, I-Spy Spotter Guide, information on events and activities, training and skills opportunities, the results of surveys, monitoring and investigations, Tales of the Vale booklet and other information. The area hubs and some of the local hubs will also be venues for the Tales of the Vale exhibition
Ref no.	AL14



Method(s) of Evaluation	Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt about the heritage, and whether physical and mental well-being has improved Feedback cards / website response forms will allow users of the hide to report their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage
Outcomes	Users of the bird hide will report that they have enjoyed and improved their understanding of birds and wildlife, and their wider appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	1 new bird hide constructed and in place with associated decking, steps and access path
Benefits for People	Local people and visitors will be able to watch and enjoy birds and wildlife sheltered from the weather and improve their understanding of natural heritage
Audience(s)	Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife  Local residents  Walkers wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside  Young people, schools and organised youth groups  Families with young children  Families with older children  People over 65
Project description	LITTLETON BRICK PITS RESERVE ACCESS PROJECT: One of a chain of reed beds close to the Severn Estuary, this reserve is an important feeding and resting place for migrating birds. The project will provide a new bird hide and new improved public access into the site, either directly off the Severn Way or otherwise through improvements to the existing site access infrastructure (paths, steps, ramps etc). The project forms part of access improvement proposals identified in the A Forgotten Landscape - Interpretation & Learning Plan (2013)
Ref no.	AL15



Method(s) of Evaluation	Number of volunteer participants who take part  Number of volunteer hours / value of volunteer time worked  Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt about the heritage, and whether physical and mental well-being has improved Feedback cards / web site response forms will allow users of the hide to report their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt about the heritage
Outcomes	Users of the bird hide will report that they have enjoyed and improved their understanding of birds and wildlife, and their wider appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	One new bird hide constructed and in place with associated decking, steps and access path
Benefits for People	Local people and visitors will be able to watch and enjoy birds and wildlife sheltered from the weather and improve their understanding of natural heritage
Audience(s)	Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife  Local residents  Walkers wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside  Young people, schools and organised youth groups  Families with young children  Families with older children  People over 65
Project description	OLDBURY POWER STATION: NEW BIRD WATCHING HIDE AND ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT: Replacement / upgrade of bird watching hide at Oldbury Power Station where overlooking the silt lagoon. Project to include access improvements to the hide and viewports only over the lagoon / lower pond. The path to the hide also needs upgrading to allow for improved access. Project forms part of access improvement proposals identified in the A Forgotten Landscape - Interpretation & Learning Plan (2013)
Ref no.	AL16



s) of	Feedback collected from people viewing the film on what they have learnt about the heritage from people viewing the film on what they have learnt about the AFL Scheme Count number of times the film is viewed on the website
Method(s) of Evaluation	Feedback collection people a viewing the film on what they has learnt about the heritage. Feedback collection people viewing the film on what they has learnt about the AFL Scheme. Count number of times the film is viewed on the website.
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Outcomes	Viewers of the film will report that they have a better understanding of the Levels and its heritage Viewers of the film will report that they have a better understanding of the aims and objectives of the AFL Scheme
Out	View will they they they they und they will they will they will they und of the object
easures	
Outputs and measures of success	One A Forgotten Landscape short film produced
Outputs an of success	One A For Landscap produced
r People	for the for the hes sand hes ctivities and uteer es and and and cources ources ources out the he get und he
Benefits for People	A point of information for the AFL Scheme A point of information for the heritage and project themes Details of activities and events, and how to volunteer Opportunities for learning, participation and training Links to access maps and downloadable information and learning resources available on the website Provide an opportunity for people with an interest in the heritage to get in contact and celebrate the heritage
Δ	b
	Local people Walkers and cyclists wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside People visiting the area to eat or drink People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology Farmers and landowners Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage— particularly Lawrence Weston Young people, schools and organised youth groups Families with young children Families with older children Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside People with mobility needs
(S)	Local people Walkers and cyclists wish to enjoy the scenery, gree spaces and countryside People visiting the area to eat or drink People visiting Severn Be for the coastal experience Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife Special interest groups interested in the rich histogeology and archaeology Farmers and landowners Communities in more deprived areas where the are low levels of engagen with the heritage—particularly Lawrence Weston Young people, schools ar organised youth groups Families with young childr Families with older childre Workers and commuters Avonmouth / Severnside People with mobility need
Audience(s)	Local people  Walkers and cyclists wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside  People visiting the area to eat or drink  People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience  Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife  Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology  Farmers and landowners  Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston  Young people, schools and organised youth groups  Families with young children  Families with older children  Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside  People over 65
tion	A FORGOTTEN LANDSCAPE PROMOTIONAL FILM: Digital media project to create a short video to summarise the importance of the Lower Severn Levels, the aims and objectives of the A Forgotten Landscape Scheme, the landscape partnership, and examples of project works taking place over the life of the project
Project description	A FORGOTTEN LANDSC PROMOTIONAL FILM: Di media project to create a short video to summarise the importance of the Lo Severn Levels, the aims a objectives of the A Forgo Landscape partnership, a examples of project work taking place over the life the project
Project	A FORGOT PROMOTIC media proj short video the importa Severn Lev objectives Landscape landscape examples o taking plac the project
Ref no.	AL17



Method(s) of Evaluation	Record number of copies of newsletter produced / accessed on-line Record number of enquiries as result of newsletter collected from people reading the newsletter on what they have learnt about the heritage Feedback collected from people reading the newsletter on what they have learnt about the AFL Scheme
	Target audiences will report they have widened their understanding of the project and that they have a better understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels People from target audiences will read about projects and volunteer to take part in the AFL Scheme
Outputs and measures of success	Electronic / pdf networking newsletter produced at least 3 times a year through the life of the project
Benefits for People	A point of information for the AFL Scheme A point of information for the heritage and project themes Details of activities and events, and how to volunteer Opportunities for learning, participation and training Links to access maps and downloadable information and learning resources available on the website Provide an opportunity for people with an interest in the heritage to get in contact and celebrate the heritage
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Local people</li> <li>Walkers and cyclists wishing to enjoy the scenery, green spaces and countryside</li> <li>People visiting the area to eat or drink</li> <li>People visiting Severn Beach for the coastal experience</li> <li>Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife</li> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich history, geology and archaeology</li> <li>Farmers and landowners</li> <li>Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence</li> <li>Weston</li> <li>Young people, schools and organised youth groups</li> <li>Families with young children</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside</li> <li>People with mobility needs</li> <li>People over 65</li> </ul>
Project description	ALF NETWORKING E NEWSLETTER: Production of regular e.newsletter for the AFL project
	AL18



## **PROGRAMME D: TRAINING AND SKILLS**

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Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants trained in survey/monitoring techniques for water voles Count the number of water vole monitoring training sessions completed Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Participants will have learnt new skills in water vole monitoring A pool of volunteers will be created who are able to participate in ICP7 (water vole Monitoring) Participants in the training will report that they have a greater understanding of the decline in numbers of water voles and the issues involved Participants will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
	Deliver 1 training session per year for 3 years 12 volunteers to attend each training session The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for water voles
Benefits for People	The project will increase the knowledge and skills of people in surveying water courses / recording water vole numbers. The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for water voles. People will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels. Participants will learn / use new skills and meet new people
Audience(s)	Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology  Farmers and landowners  Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston  Young people, schools and organised youth groups  Students in further and higher education  Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside
Ref no. Project description	WILDLIFE IDENTIFICATION & RECORDING SKILLS: WATER VOLE TRAINING DAY: To train volunteers to be proficient in surveying watercourses for the signs of water voles and encourage those undertaking this training to take part in ICP7 water vole Monitoring
Ref no.	TS1

Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants trained in pond survey/monitoring techniques Count the number of pond survey training sessions completed Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Participants will have learnt new skills regarding surveying a range of aquatic flora and fauna, providing a better understanding of distribution of species in AFL Scheme area Participants will share their knowledge and enthusiasm with local communities in pond survey techniques A pool of volunteers will be created who are able to participate in ICP8 (Ponds and Great Crested Newts) and CR4 (Creation of ponds for Great Crested Newts) Barticipants will report that they have a greater understanding of the importance of ponds as habitat for biodiversity Participants will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Deliver 1 training session per year for 3 years 36 volunteers to receive training The project will increase understanding of the importance of ponds for wildlife across the Lower Severn Vale Levels area Increased number of records of a variety of aquatic (and part-aquatic) flora and fauna provided to BRERC providing increased records of the species distribution
Benefits for People	The project will benefit people by increasing the participants' skills in identifying a variety of aquatic (and part-aquatic) flora and fauna and gaining a better understanding and appreciation of the complex ecology of ponds  Participants will be able to take their skills back to local communities and record the flora and fauna associated with ponds  The project will result in new public records in BRERC People will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial haritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels  Participants will learn / use new skills and meet new people
Audience(s)	Young people, schools and organised youth groups  Families with older children  Local people  Farmers and landowners  Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife
Project description	WILDLIFE IDENTIFICATION & RECORDING SKILLS: POND SURVEY SKILLS: To run one identification and monitoring session per year of the project
Ref no.	LS2



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants trained and licensed in great crested newt survey/monitoring techniques Count the number of training sessions completed Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Participants will report that they have increased their knowledge and skills regarding great crested newts Participants will share their knowledge and enthusiasm with local communities A pool of licensed volunteers will be created who are able to participate in ICP8 (Ponds and Great Crested Newts) and CR4 (Creation of ponds for Great Crested Newts) There will be a better understanding of the distribution of the species in project area Participants will increase their awareness of the natural heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Deliver 1 introduction classroom session, 6 field training sessions and required follow-up sessions in years 2 and 3 for volunteer trainees 10 volunteers to receive training to be licensed surveyors to survey ponds for great crested newts in the project area and provide increased records of the species distribution.  The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for great crested newts
Benefits for People	The project will benefit people by increasing their knowledge/ understanding of the ecology, habitat and conservation needs of great crested newts An increase in licensed surveyors will mean a better likelihood that newt colonies will be conserved for future generations Will result in new public records in BRERC People will increase their awareness of the natural heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels Participants will learn / use new skills and meet new people
Audience(s)	Young people, schools and organised youth groups     Eamilies with older children     Local people     Farmers and landowners     People interested in the wildlife including specialist herpetofauna (amphibians and reptiles) group
Project description	WILDLIFE IDENTIFICATION & RECORDING SKILLS; GREAT CRESTED NEWTS: To provide specialist training for volunteers to complete formal training and be licensed to survey for great crested newts. Training sessions to be followed by site monitoring sessions across the project area. Training to include one identification and monitoring session per year of the project.
Ref no.	TS3



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants trained and licensed in the identification of wildfowl and waders Count the number of training sessions completed Count the number of new records of birds submitted to BRERC Participants will record how they have passed on their knowledge and skills to a new generation of bird-watchers in the locality Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Participants will report they have increased their knowledge and skills in the identification of wildfowl and waders Participants will report their understanding of the importance of the Estuary and the conservation needs of its waterfowl Participants will report that they have begun to pass on their knowledge and skills to a new generation of bird- watchers in the locality New records of birds will be created and submitted to BRERC A pool of trained volunteers will be created who are able to participate in ICP9 (Wildfowl and Wader Monitoring) Participants will increase their awareness of the natural heritage of the Lower Severn
Outputs and measures of success	Deliver maximum of 7 training sessions for participants 42 volunteers to receive training in surveying and monitoring techniques for over-wintering wildfowl and waders The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for over-wintering wildfowl and waders
Benefits for People	The project will benefit and bring pleasure to people by increasing their understanding of the relationship between the wintering birds and the differing types of habitat along the Estuary  The project will bring together a new community of bird-watchers, connecting people, and provide a new generation to whom the present generation of birders can pass on their knowledge and skills  Will result in new public records in BRERC  People will increase their awareness of the natural heritage of the Lover Severn Vale Levels  Participants will learn / use new skills and meet new people
Audience(s)	Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife  Farmers and landowners  Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston  Young people, schools and organised youth groups  Families with older children  Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside
Project description	WILDLIFE IDENTIFICATION & RECORDING SKILLS: BIRD IDENTIFICATION: To provide residents and young people from local communities with the appropriate skills to identify the various species of waterfowl (wildfowl and wader) associated with the Severn Estuary using both indoor classes and fieldwork. These skills will be used to establish a network of volunteer bird wardens to monitor the distribution of species, their numbers and the movement of birds along the coastline
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Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants trained in orchard surveying and management Count the number of training sessions completed Count the number of new orchard records submitted to BRERC Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Participants will have learnt new skills in orchard surveying Orchards within the project area will be surveyed and recorded Orchards in the project area will be better managed New orchard records will be created and submitted to BRERC  A pool of trained volunteers will be able to participate in ICP6 (Fruits of the Vale) and CR7 (Orchard Restoration)  Project participants will report that they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Deliver 2 x 1 day training sessions per year for participants 18 volunteers to receive training in surveying orchards 18 volunteers trained to carry out practical orchard management. The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for the heritage.
Benefits for People	The project will benefit and bring pleasure to people by increasing their knowledge and skills in identifying wildlife associated with orchards People will increase their understanding of the importance of orchard also for holdiversity and also for the valuable contribution orchards provide to the landscape heritage Will result in new public records in BRERC Participants will learn / use new skills and bring social benefits with opportunities to meet and work with other volunteers People will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale
Audience(s)	Local people Families with older children Farmers and landowners Young people, schools and organised youth groups People interested in the wildlife Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology Students in further and higher education
Project description	WILDLIFE IDENTIFICATION & RECORDING SKILLS: ORCHARD SURVEYING AND MANAGEMENT: To run 2 workshops per year for volunteers to train in orchard surveying and management techniques
tef no.	SS 22

Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants trained in hedgerow restoration and management skills Count the number of training sessions completed Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Participants will have learnt new hedgerow restoration and management skills Hedgerows in the project area will be better managed A pool of trained volunteers in the local area that can carry out these traditional management techniques Project participants will report that they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Deliver 4 weekend training sessions for participants over life of project 40 volunteers to receive training in hedgerow restoration and management The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for the heritage
Benefits for People	The project will benefit people by increasing their knowledge and skills in managing a habitat that is important to wildlife and landscape People will be able to learn a traditional skill that has been carried out for generations Participants will learn / use new skills and bring social benefits with opportunities to meet and work with other volunteers
Audience(s)	Local people Families with older children Farmers and landowners Young people, schools and organised youth groups People interested in the wildlife Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology Students in further and higher education
Project description	WILDLIFE IDENTIFICATION & RECORDING SKILLS: HEDGEROW RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS. To run 1 weekend workshop for volunteers each year to provide training in hedgerow restoration and management skills
Ref no.	981

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Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants attending farmer liaison days Count the number of agri-environment / funding applications submitted as a result of farmer liaison days Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction and what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Method(s) Evaluation	Count numboof participan attending far liaison days Count the nu of agri-envirc/funding applications submitted as result of farm liaison days Feedback ca collected fro participants their level of satisfaction a what they ha learnt / unde about the he
Outcomes	Greater uptake of agri-environment and other funding schemes Greater uptake of AFL Scheme Hedgerow Grants (CR5) and Willow Pollarding Grants (CR6) Participants will report that they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels, including the importance of the AFL Scheme area for a variety of wildlife
	aison life of attend in day crease the Lower s area
	Deliver 1 farmer liaison day per year over life of the AFL Scheme 45 participants to attend each farmer liaison day The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for the heritage
	Deliver 1 farmer day per year ov the AFL Schem. 45 participants each farmer liais. The project will understanding climportance of the Severn Vale Lev for the heritage.
eople	vill that that that that that that solut mtial mes will ial an rn for ng
	Participants will learn about new opportunities that may be available for landowners including information about different potential funding schemes Liaison days will provide a social occasion for an industry known for solitary working
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	where s
	nd landowners
	Farmers and
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	DAYS: 1 er year to the AFL r visit to . To targe
	JAISON I gevent program ir earm ir earm and/o oject site id landow
	FARMER LIAISON DAYS: 1 networking event per year to be held on a farm in the AFL Scheme area and/or visit to specific project site. To target farmers and landowners
ef no.	





Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants trained in historic research methodologies Count the number of training sessions completed Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Participants will have learnt new skills in historic research methodologies Quality historic research produced that can be used in a number of different ways by AFL Scheme projects and wider Lower Severn Levels communities A pool of volunteers will be created who are able to participate in ICP4 (Tale of the Vale Historic Research project) Participants will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Recruit 10 key volunteers to be trained to a high standard in historic research methodologies Deliver 6 historic training sessions for 10 key volunteers to build up the necessary skill set Recruit 10 additional casual volunteers trained in historic research to a more generic level  The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for the heritage
Benefits for People	The project will benefit people by increasing their skills and knowledge of historic research techniques, enabling them to be trained in using record offices, archives and aerial photos to carry out high quality historic research  This will enable participants to develop a greater appreciation and awareness of the natural, built and cultural heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels  Participants will learn / use new skills and bring social benefits with opportunities to meet and work with other volunteers across the levels area
Audience(s)	Local people Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston Students in further and higher education People over 65
Project description	TALES OF THE VALE: HISTORIC RESEARCH TRAINING – To train volunteers to be competent in using record offices and other archives so they can undertake historic research to contribute towards a booklet and exhibition
Ref no.	128 8

Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants trained in oral history recording techniques Count the number of training sessions completed Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Participants will have learnt new skills in oral history recording techniques Quality oral history recordings that can be used in a number of different ways by AFL Scheme projects and wider Lower Severn Levels communities A pool of volunteers will be created who are able to participate in ICPS (Tales of the Vale Oral History project) Participants will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Recruit 10 volunteers to be trained in oral history recording techniques. Deliver 4 oral history recording training sessions for volunteers to build up the necessary skill set. The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for the heritage.
Benefits for People	The project will benefit and bring pleasure to people by providing opportunities for participants to engage and learn about the heritage in interesting ways. This project will offer people opportunities to participate in inter-generational working.  Participants will learn / use new skills and bring social benefits with opportunities to meet and work with opportunities to meet and work with opportunities to meet and work with other volunteers. People will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Levels
Audience(s)	Local people who live in the area  Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology  Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston  Young people, schools and organised youth groups  Students  Families with young children  Families with older children  Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside  People over 65
Project description	TALES OF THE VALE: ORAL HISTORY TRAINING To train volunteers to be competent in oral history recording techniques so they can undertake historic research to contribute towards a booklet and exhibition
Ref no.	6SL



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants trained in traditional cidermaking techniques Count the number of training sessions completed Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Participants will have learnt new skills in traditional cider-making techniques A pool of volunteers will be created who are able to participate in ICP11 (Traditional cider-making project) Participants will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Recruit 30 volunteers to be trained in the skill of traditional cider-making techniques Deliver one traditional cider-making session per year for volunteers to build up the necessary skill set The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for the heritage
Benefits for People	The project will benefit and bring pleasure to people by providing opportunities for participants to engage and learn about the heritage in interesting ways Participants will learn / use a traditional skill of cider-making with opportunities to meet and work with opportunities to their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Audience(s)	Local people Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology Farmers and landowners Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston Students in further and higher education People over 65
Project description	TRADITIONAL CIDER-MAKING TRAINING: To provide 2 training sessions per year open to all to learn about the traditional techniques for making cider. Full instruction by specialist trainer provided
Ref no.	TS10



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants trained in traditional lookering techniques Count the number of training sessions completed Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Participants will have learnt new skills in lookering A pool of trained local people will be created who can be the 'eyes and ears' for livestock grazing locally thus increasing the chances of successfully re-establishing grazing on Chittening Warth A pool of volunteers will be created who are able to participate in CR1 (Salt Marsh Grazing project) Participants will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Recruit 10 volunteers to be trained in lookering skills  Deliver 1 lookering training session per year over 2 years for volunteers to build up the necessary skill set. The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for the heritage.
Benefits for People	The project will benefit and bring pleasure to people by developing a connection to the landscape and greater understanding of the importance of salt marsh as a habitat Participants will learn new skills with opportunities to meet and work with other volunteers People will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Audience(s)	Local people Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology Farmers and landowners Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside People over 65
Project description	GRAZING STOCK LOOKERING TRAINING: Project to train volunteers to support CR1 Salt Marsh Grazing Project Grazing Project
Ref no.	53



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants trained in event management skills Count the number of training sessions completed Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Participants will have learnt new event management skills A pool of volunteers will be created who are able to participate in ICP3 (Lower Severn Vale Levels Festival) and ICPI3 (Volunteers Thank you and Celebration Event), and other AFL Scheme projects Participants will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Recruit 30 volunteers to be trained in event management skills over the life of the AFL Scheme Deliver 1 event management skills training session per year (three in total) to build up the necessary skill set The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for the heritage
Benefits for People	Participants will learn new skills, many of which will be transferrable and could benefit the volunteer in various aspects of life.  Organising and running events in their local community will bring with it a social element People will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Local people</li> <li>Bird-watchers and people interested in the wildlife</li> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology</li> <li>Farmers and landowners</li> <li>Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence</li> <li>Woston</li> <li>Young people, schools and organised youth groups</li> <li>Students in further and higher education</li> <li>Families with young children</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>Families with older children</li> <li>Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside</li> <li>People over 65</li> </ul>
Project description	EVENT MANAGEMENT TRAINING: Training to develop skills to manage / lead events, including guided walks, event management, talks etc
Ref no.	TS12



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants attending Sharing Good Practice networking events Count the number of Sharing Good Practice networking events held Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about good practice
Outcomes	Improved communication between Landscape Partnership Schemes leading to improved networking, sharing of knowledge and resources
Benefits for People Outputs and measures of success	30 participants to attend each Sharing Good Practice networking events per year of the AFL scheme. Complete 3 x 1 day Sharing Good Practice networking events per year (three in total) Sharing Good Practice events will provide networking opportunities for LPS schemes
Benefits for People	The project will provide opportunities to network with other officers and discuss LPS issues and problems and share good practice, experiences and advice
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Other Landscape Partnership Schemes (LPS) or organisations aspiring to create a LPS</li> </ul>
Ref no. Project description	SHARING GOOD PRACTICE: Specific learning opportunity / networking days for other LPS projects. Sessions to be based on specific topics / sites, including habitat restoration, project management and community participation - applicable to LPS projects at delivery and development stage
Ref no.	TS13

Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants attending archaeological survey techniques (non- intrusive) training sessions to train volunteers in archaeological survey techniques (non-intrusive) Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Participants will have learnt new skills in archaeological survey techniques (non-intrusive) A pool of volunteers trained in archaeological survey techniques (non-intrusive) will be able to participate in ICP1 (Volunteer Archaeological Surveys and Research) and ICP2 (Community Archaeological Dig) Participants will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Outputs and measures of success	Up to 70 participants to attend training sessions in archaeological survey techniques (non-intrusive) Deliver 7 weekend training sessions to train volunteers in archaeological survey techniques (non-intrusive) The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for the heritage
Benefits for People	The project will increase the knowledge and skills of people to use and interpret LiDAR so that they can undertake scheme wide deskbased assessment and identify new archaeological sites. Participants will learn new skills, meet new people and will discover the importance and relevance of these historical sites. Volunteers will learn new skills and will discover the importance and relevance of these historical sites. Volunteers will learn new skills and will discover the importance and relevance of these historical sites. People will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Levels
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology</li> <li>Local people</li> <li>Students in higher and further education</li> </ul>
Project description	ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY TRAINING WEEKENDS: Deliver programme of Archaeological Survey Training Weekends (7 weekends) over 3 years. To include provision of specialist trainer(s) to train volunteers in unobtrusive archaeological techniques. Records to go on Historic Environment Record. Volunteers will be taught how to undertake earthwork survey and geophysics. These skills are repeatable and non-destructive and following training, volunteers will be able to undertake surveys on sites with only minimal supervision
Ref no.	TS17

Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants attending QGIS and LiDAR processing and interpretation training sessions Count the number of sessions to train volunteers in QGIS and LiDAR processing and interpretation training sessions Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Participants will have learnt new skills in QGIS and LiDAR processing and interpretation Volunteers will report that they are competent in using GIS software and LiDAR and can then put this to use as part of ICP14 (Remote Sensing the Forgotten Landscape) Participants will report that they have widened and shared their understanding and appreciation of the Lower Severn Vale Lewels
Outputs and measures of success	10 volunteers trained in QGIS and LiDAR processing and interpretation Deliver 3 x 1 day training sessions to train volunteers in QGIS and LiDAR processing and interpretation The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for the heritage
Benefits for People	Volunteers will learn new skills and will discover the importance and relevance of archaeological sites throughout the area, helping to identify new ones People will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels
Audience(s)	<ul> <li>Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology</li> <li>Local people</li> <li>Students in higher and further education</li> </ul>
Project description	REMOTE SENSING A FORGOTTEN LANDSCAPE LIDAR TRAINING: Volunteers will be taught how to use and interpret LIDAR so that they can undertake scheme wide desk-based assessment and identify new archaeological sites. To include provision of specialist trainer to train volunteers in GIS and LIDAR. Records to go on Historic Environment Record. These skills are repeatable and non-destructive and following training, volunteers will be able to undertake surveys across the area with only minimal supervision
Ref no.	TS15



# **PROGRAMME E:** PROJECT OVERHEADS

measures Outcomes Method(s) of Evaluation	farm agri- Increased area of new farm agri- schemes more favourably hrough through including for biodiversity schemes invertebrates, wading birds and various mammals of hedgerow farming from participating from participating from a farm visit will report that they benefiting from a farm visit will and support have importance for the importance for biodiversity and landowners and support provision of advice the importance for provision of advice and support provision of advice and shared their level of satisfaction and understanding and appreciation of the learnt / understood industrial heritage
Benefits for People Outputs and measures of success	The service will beliver 5 new farm agribenefit farmers and landowners not only with free advice but also with help in completing environmental Stewardship applications and Plans – something an applicant would normally have to pay for pay for a greed)  Advice and support on agri-environment Schemes to farmers and land owners Administration of AFL scheme grants CR5 (Hedgerow management) Advice and support on agri-environment Scheme grants CR5 (Hedgerow management) Advice and support on agri-environment Scheme grants CR5 (Hedgerow management) & CR6 (Willow Pollarding) The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for the heritage
	Farmers and landowners
	FARMING & WILDLIFE ADVISORY GROUP: Commissioning of FWAG to undertake proactive encouragement of farmers into stewardship schemes. FWAG overseeing grant schemes / salt marsh grazing projects. Allows for FWAG to undertake landowner liaison, prepare input into content for literature to promote the AFL Scheme to farmers and landowners, provide advice and guidance on stewardship applications, the administration of project grants scheme including associated farm visits, preparation of farm plans, and input into habitat restoration projects - wetlands, meadows, orchards
	PO7



Method(s) of Evaluation	Count number of participants trained to input ecological survey data Count the number reports produced by BRERC Count number of volunteer hours completed Feedback cards collected from participants on their level of satisfaction, what they have learnt / understood about the heritage
Outcomes	Participants will have learnt new skills in the input of ecological data in an environmental records office.  A pool of volunteers will input of ecological data collected from across all the AFL Scheme projects, resulting in increased ecological data for the AFL Scheme area.  BRERC interim / final project data monitoring reports will improve accessibility to data for the AFL Scheme area.  Participants will improve accessibility to data for the AFL Scheme area.  Participants will increase their awareness of the natural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels.
Outputs and measures of success	BRERC to complete training of volunteers with skills to input data in an environmental records office.  Total 45 BRERC days for management of wildlife & habitat data over 3.5 year life of project BRERC to produce 2 interim project data monitoring reports BRERC to produce 1 final report of all data submitted  Total 120 volunteer inkind days for entry of habitat & wildlife data completed by BRERC trained volunteers  The project will increase understanding of the importance of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for water voles
Benefits for People	Volunteers will be trained in data entry and will gain experience from working in an environmental records office.  The project will increase the knowledge and skills of people in data collection and data collection and the importance of the importance of the importance of the matural, cultural and industrial heritage of the Levels
Audience(s)	Local people Special interest groups interested in the rich wildlife, history, geology and archaeology Farmers and landowners Communities in more deprived areas where there are low levels of engagement with the heritage – particularly Lawrence Weston Students in further and higher education Workers and commuters in Avonmouth / Severnside People over 65
Project description	HABITAT AND WILDLIFE DATA MANAGEMENT: Data entry and mapping of wildlife and habitat data generated from the project through the Bristol Regional Environmental Record Centre (BRERC)
Ref no.	8 O



# Sustainability



# Sustainability

#### 6.1 Introduction

If the AFL Scheme is to have a long-lasting and secure legacy, it is important to view the funding provided by HLF as the start of a long journey to achieve the Partnership's vision for the Lower Severn Vale Levels landscape (Section 4.1 above) and the communities within it. This journey will not end when the HLF funding ceases in 2018. An important legacy of the AFL Scheme will be to leave in place a robust mechanism to sustain the landscape distinctiveness of the area in the long term.

#### 6.2 Mid-Term Legacy strategy

In February 2013 the HLF circulated a report entitled Legacy Planning for Landscape Partnerships. This sets out a number of recommendations for Landscape Partnerships to consider when thinking about how they might best secure a legacy from their activities after their Scheme has completed delivery. The report emphasises the importance of taking an ambitious view of the legacy and that a formal mid-scheme review is the best time to firm up legacy ambitions and arrangements for beyond the life of a project. The Partnership will therefore commit to undertake this review at the same time as the mid-term evaluation review detailed in Section 7.6.2. This will allow the Partnership to consider its legacy ambitions at the same time as reviewing how well the Scheme's wider level outcomes are being achieved. The Partnership will produce a mid-term AFL legacy strategy that identifies the actions that need to be taken before the end of the Scheme in 2018.

The AFL legacy strategy will also be reviewed and updated in response to the final Scheme evaluation. It will set out the long-term vision for sustaining the Scheme and will be used as a tool to secure resources and put in place the appropriate

mechanisms or structure required for the AFL Partnership to continue into the future.

In addition to the legacy strategy, three elements have been built into the AFL Scheme which will help support the Partnership to clearly identify its legacy ambitions. These are:

- Sharing Good Practice: A budget of £300 has been included to support learning and networking days with other LPS projects. One of these sessions will be designed to focus on legacy and share and learn from the experiences and best practice of others
- A Forgotten Landscape Partnership Support: A budget of £3,000 has been included to enable AFL Partnership members to work closely together and take collective ownership for delivering the AFL Scheme vision and outcomes. The funding will support training, site visits, and facilitator costs for partnership meetings and networking sessions. A part of this support will be directed to help the Partnership agree and co-ordinate its legacy strategy at the mid-term review
- Evaluation And Monitoring: A budget of £22,000 has been set aside for external consultants to carry out the evaluation and monitoring work. This budget will specifically cover the costs of work required for the Partnership to produce a mid-term legacy strategy

The sustainability of the AFL Scheme has been carefully considered during the development phase to identify the best ways of continuing its benefits and key activities after HLF funding has ceased. Sustainability issues are considered for each of the main programmes area below.



## 6.3 Programme A:Conserve and Restore

New significant infrastructure capital projects undertaken in this programme (eg. CR2 Wetland Management and CR8 Species Rich Meadow Restoration) will be protected by agreements to ensure the benefits are maintained for a minimum 10 year period. Management plans will also be put in place prior to the creation or restoration of features such as species-rich meadows, scrapes and ponds to ensure that landowners sustain the future management of these habitat features.

All landowners receiving hedgerow or willow pollarding grants will receive a farm visit from FWAG SouthWest and farm plans will be drawn up. Farmers and landowners will be encouraged to enter agri-environment schemes that will last five or 10 years depending on the type of scheme entered into. There is good evidence to show that farmers / landowners will re-apply once their scheme expires.

In the Salt Marsh Grazing Project (CR1), management agreements with graziers and the land owner will be set up to agree who is responsible for fence repair and other essential infrastructure. The local community will be involved in sustaining and securing the future of saltmarsh grazing through a lookering scheme which will to continue after the life of the funding.

The AFL Scheme will establish good working relationships with landowners to ensure that rhines cleared of scrub are kept clear in the future, either with the landowners carrying out the work themselves or through the involvement of volunteers. Work will be undertaken with the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) to look at ways of extending and supporting the programme of rhine scrub clearance and sustaining this in the future.

Traditional habitat management skills such as hedgelaying will be taught via annual training courses, ensuring that these skills are sustained in the local community over the longer term.

Rhine



Orchard restoration works will require an assessment to be carried out and a minimanagement plan will be produced. The Scheme will ensure that there will be a number of trained volunteers in the area that will be able to sustain this advice and support in the future.

There will be numerous programmes to train and enhance the skills of volunteers and enable them to play an active role in monitoring and enhancing the heritage.

Where physical works (ponds, scrapes) disturb the ground, archaeological watching briefs will be required to ensure that the archaeology of A Forgotten Landscape is properly recorded.

The AFL Scheme will also act as a habitat advisory function, offering advice and building close relationships with the nuclear and other industries / companies in the area. This will help to sustain their continued support and co-operation after the AFL Scheme finishes.

## 6.4 Programme B:Community Participation

The AFL Scheme will equip volunteers with long-term sustainable, and importantly, repeatable skills, to continue monitoring, conservation and learning activities in the future beyond the life of the Scheme.

Volunteers will be trained in archaeological survey and research skills that will enable them to study other sites within the AFL Scheme area and use transferable skills on other future digs and surveys. The results of surveys and digs will also be published and made available on the South Gloucestershire HER ensuring that they can be easily accessed after the project has finished.

Volunteers will receive event management training and play an active role in running events, organising annual festivals and an end-of-scheme volunteer celebration.



Working with established organisations – such as Lawrence Weston Community Farm

These skills can be used to continue to support events and activities that promote learning about the heritage in future years without the need for significant funding.

Volunteers will be trained and supported to carry out surveys and monitoring of a range of habitats and species, including orchards, rhines, ponds, water voles, great crested newts, wildfowl and waders. The aim is to have a long-term and self-sustaining monitoring network of volunteers. All records arising from the project will be administered and maintained by BRERC and will contribute to the central Government tenet of sustainable development (NPPF). New local wildlife recorders will have an ease of contact with BRERC and be put on their newsletter mailing list.

Trained volunteers will gain sufficient skills so that they can offer advice to landowners on pond and orchard management and continue to offer this advice after the Scheme has finished.

The AFL Scheme will also create a new generation of bird-watchers on the Estuary who will be self-sustaining and who can in turn pass on the same knowledge and skills to the following generation in turn. A new network of volunteer birders will also help contribute towards reducing activities which disturb the birds for which the Severn Estuary has been designated a European Site.

The traditional cider-making project (ICP11) will equip volunteers with the necessary skills to continue on with cider making beyond the life of the AFL Scheme with the support of Littleton Lifesaver cider co-operative.



#### 6.5 Programme C: Access and Learning

An important part of sustaining the legacy of the AFL Scheme will be to ensure its achievements, records and outputs continue to be shared and are accessible to partners, volunteers, participants, other LP Schemes and the general public. To this end, the lead partner, South Gloucestershire Council will aim to continue to maintain the AFL website after the Scheme finishes, unless a successor structure identified in the legacy strategy takes on this role. Content for the website will continue to be managed by both partners and volunteers to ensure it remains up to date, accurate, and makes the most of social media to communicate its messages to the widest possible audience. It will continue to provide detailed information on the legacy of the AFL Scheme including on-going opportunities for volunteering, training courses and events across the area. The website will contain many of the outputs from the AFL Scheme including oral history recordings, schools learning resources, iconic images and artwork, schools learning

resources, the I-Spy Spotters Railway Guide, the Bristol to Severn Beach film, maps and route guides, copies of e-newsletters and the AFL promotional film.

A network of volunteers will be recruited to monitor and maintain interpretative infrastructure, such as interpretation panels, benches and seats, toposcopes and community artwork. A maintenance plan for these features will be created as part of the legacy strategy.

The outputs from the Primary Schools Learning Project (AL2) will be publicly available on the AFL website for schools to use / download. The two target schools participating in the development of the resource will continue to work on the development of this extended learning resource. Their direct involvement will make the overall learning resource familiar to teachers and schools and give them the confidence to continue to deliver the resource on their own once the wider AFL project has ended.



It is hoped that local food events (AL4) will be popular, well-attended and profitable for local businesses and that a lead business owner can be recruited to coordinate future events once the project has ended. Developing links to the wider South Gloucestershire 'Discover' festival should enable local producers to continue to raise awareness and interest in their products into the future.

Projects to improve access to the Lower Severn Vales Levels (AL11 and AL12) will use the existing Severnside Ramblers volunteer group to help improve access to a number of routes. Once the projects have finished the PROW team and volunteer ramblers will continue to survey and maintain the routes in the future and material to promote the routes will continue to be made available to the public. Access to the routes by public transport will be promoted and volunteers will continue to stock

The bird hide and boardwalks at Littleton Brick Pits will be maintained in perpetuity by AWT as part of their on-going management of the reserve whilst the Oldbury hide will be managed by the landowner, Magnox in the short to medium term.

#### 6.6 Programme D: Training and Skills

Programme D has been designed to equip volunteers and partners with the skills necessary to monitor and care for the heritage in the long term. Training will ensure volunteers can continue to run events and activities after the Scheme finishes. There are a number of ways in which this training will support the Scheme's legacy and ensure that work by partners and volunteers continues:



Training local people in the skills they need to run their own events will decrease dependence on external projects and organisations to make events and activities happen.

People will be given the skills and confidence to carry out specialist wildlife surveys and allow the groups of volunteer recorders to connect, establish contact and maintain skills in perpetuity. In this way, the project will aim to create groups of new recorders providing data for the local records centre.

Other volunteers will be equipped with the skills to carry out historical research and oral history recording, and discover new ways of relating and sharing these stories and findings with others. Training in archaeological investigation and survey techniques will provide volunteers in the local community with the skills to discover new information about the heritage.

#### 6.7 Programme E: Overheads

The employment of a Project Manager and Project Officer will bring new skills to the Partnership, raise its profile across the Scheme area and help form new relationships with local communities and other organisations and groups.

The Scheme will be delivered over a three and a half year period with the bulk of delivery occurring between years two to four. The Project Manager and Project Officer will be responsible with the wider Partnership for building and putting in place the Scheme's legacy and ensuring the sustainability of the Scheme once the delivery phase is complete. This will involve maintaining a high profile for the Scheme and making it an essential component of local and regional strategies and plans for the delivery of sustainable landscape management, heritage conservation and community engagement and participation.

It is anticipated that the Scheme's legacy strategy will equip the Partnership with the tools to sustain the distinctiveness of the Lower Severn Vale Levels area for the long term.

#### 6.8 Delivering the Legacy

During the second half of the AFL Scheme delivery phase it will be important for the Partnership to put in place the recommendations of the mid-term legacy strategy. One of the challenges that it will have to address is that there is not one single organisation with a remit for landscape conservation and learning in the Lower Severn Vale Levels. The legacy strategy will identify how the vision of the partnership can continue to be delivered and how the various statutory and non statutory organisations, volunteers and local community will work together to support and achieve the Scheme's objectives.

The legacy strategy will specifically identify how the Partnership can maintain and build momentum developed though the life of the Scheme to ensure the long term commitment to the heritage of the area is maintained. Partners will seek to learn lessons from the most successful Landscape Partnership Schemes across the country and apply successful legacy lessons.

Whilst the current programme of financial austerity presents real and difficult challenges for all Scheme partners, opportunities to develop effective partnership working and networking with elected council members, managers, local businesses, and volunteers will be taken to ensure a lasting momentum for the AFL Scheme.

The Partnership will therefore explore best practice and models that have worked elsewhere and ensure that there is a structure in place to continue the legacy of the Scheme.



# Evaluation



## **7** Evaluation

#### 7.1 Monitoring & Evaluation Approach

Evaluation is about collecting quantitative and qualitative information that allows the AFL Scheme story to be told, in a narrative form, so that people can make a connection between the 'before' and 'after' in terms of how the activities of the Scheme have produced immediate and lasting change. By being able to tell the story of the Scheme it becomes possible to understand which activities are producing the best results in terms of bringing about the desired changes, the difference the project is making to the heritage and difference it is making to people, either directly or indirectly. As described in Evaluating your HLF project, April 2008, the evaluation has two purposes, one is about proving - demonstrating that change is taking place, the other is about improving – a continual process of learning and growth. The evaluation will contribute to both of these purposes.

The monitoring and evaluation approach that will be adopted by the AFL Scheme is as follows:

- Develop a detailed evaluation plan at the start of the delivery phase (first four months) and appoint evaluation consultants
- On-going process of data and information collection as individual projects are delivered
- Quarterly reviews of progress to be carried out by the Partnership Management Board to consider evaluation feedback and how project management and delivery can be improved
- A mid-term delivery review (after 21 months) and the development of a legacy strategy (see LCAP Section 6 Sustainability)



- An end of Scheme evaluation
- Review and amend final legacy strategy in response to final scheme evaluation
- Complete HLF evaluation questionnaire (within one year of completion of the project)

#### 7.2 Draft Evaluation Framework

During the development phase careful consideration has been given to the outputs and outcomes that individual projects are seeking to achieve, and how these relate to Scheme vision, aims and objectives. In section 5.4 of this LCAP (Summary of Projects tables, p. 92) individual projects are listed under each of the Scheme's four aims. Each project describes the audiences to be targeted, benefits for people and outputs. In addition, expected outcomes for each project to produce and ideas on the methods that can be used to evaluate whether that change has taken place are outlined. This information forms a draft evaluation framework for the Scheme and provides a solid foundation for its future evaluation.

## 7.3 Development of the Detailed Evaluation Plan

The outputs, outcomes and methods of evaluation that form the draft evaluation framework (Section 5.4 of this LCAP, p. 92) will be further refined and expanded into a detailed evaluation plan which will be developed in the first four months of the Scheme. This will include the full involvement of project beneficiaries and partners in determining the key questions to evaluate, how they will be investigated, how the findings will be used to improve project delivery, and how the findings will be shared with others. The detailed evaluation plan will set indicators, methods and tools for gathering evaluation data and also consider baseline information and where there are gaps.

Indicator levels (e.g. number of volunteers participating in particular activities or percentage of participants reporting that their understanding of the heritage has improved) will also be refined and agreed.

It is worth noting that 'outputs' are a measure of what the Scheme hopes to deliver and can more often be measured quantitatively whilst 'outcomes' are the difference the Scheme will make to people who live, work in or visit the area – some outcomes can be easily measured or will be the sum of multiple project outputs, however others are less tangible and more difficult to evaluate.

The evaluation plan will be developed in partnership with beneficiaries and project partners and the Council's Corporate Research and Consultation Team (CRCT) and it will follow the advice and guidance set out in Evaluating your HLF project April 2008. The CRCT are a separate team within South Gloucestershire Council which has significant expertise in project evaluation, including the development and management of evaluation plans. The role of the team is to provide specialist and technical support to service areas, helping them to develop their understanding of service users and stakeholders as well as the impact of projects. This is achieved through undertaking specific research, consultation and evaluation tailored to the project and its objectives.

In addition to the advice and support provided by the CRCT, independent external consultants will also be appointed to coordinate the evaluation. Their role will be to:

- Review the detailed evaluation plan and advise on any changes
- Support the collection and monitoring of evaluation data over the life of the Scheme
- Undertake the mid-term delivery review
- Work with the Partnership to produce a legacy strategy (see Section 6)



 Carry out the end of project evaluation and report

The AFL Scheme is more than the sum of the individual projects that it will deliver and it will be important to demonstrate the change and impact that it has made as a whole across the Scheme area. To do this it will be important to have a good baseline against which change can be measured and evaluated, particularly in terms of whether the vision, aims and objectives have been achieved. For example, the title of the Scheme is A Forgotten Landscape which is reflected in the vision (and objectives) that the Lower Severn Vale Levels will become a 'distinctive, recognisable and appreciated landscape' in its own right.

To evaluate whether this wider outcome has been achieved it will be necessary to know how the public view the landscape at the start of the Scheme, and whether this changes over time. The detailed evaluation plan will set out how such wider baseline information can be collected and what the indicators of change are. Examples of baseline data that can be collected through surveys include:

- What people already know about the Lower Severn Vale Levels and its landscape
- What percentage of people think it is distinctive and recognisable
- How many already engage with the heritage

Towards the end of the project it will be necessary to carry out a repeat survey to evaluate the various indicators, assess what change has been generated and how successfully the outcomes have been achieved.

The evaluation will involve collecting a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data. It is relatively straight forward to count such things as metres of rhine cleared of scrub or number of people attending an event however the evaluation will also need to assess more subjective and less tangible things such as whether people have widened their understanding and appreciation of the heritage or improved their skills in different ways.





A range of information will therefore need to be monitored and evaluated including:-

- Comments and anecdotal evidence from participants on their experiences
- Other indicators of change identified by project beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders

Seasonality and peaks and troughs of visitor use will also be considered when designing and timing surveys and data collection.

#### 7.4 Evidence Gathering and Involving Project Beneficiaries and Partners

Project beneficiaries and stakeholders will be involved at all stages of the evaluation including thinking about and agreeing what baseline data is required, appropriate monitoring techniques, gathering data and evaluating the results so that the quality and impact of project delivery is improved. The lessons learnt will be shared with beneficiaries, stakeholders and partners at all stages of the evaluation process including at Partnership board meetings, and midterm and end of project evaluations.

The data and evidence to monitor the project and carry out the evaluation will be determined in the detailed evaluation plan and build upon the work done to develop the draft evaluation framework. The plan will also set out what information needs to be collected regarding project beneficiaries including age, gender, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic status etc. It will also take account of the information that will be required for the HLF evaluation questionnaire (that is submitted within one year of Scheme completion).

A variety of methods are likely to be used to collect information, including the following:

- A focus group of volunteers, project beneficiaries and local people
- Creative approaches to evaluation that make it easy for young people and people with different needs to contribute fully to the evaluation. Such approaches may include the use of photography, art and other techniques
- Targeted questionnaires will be developed in consultation and piloted with the focus group. Questionnaires will be kept short and focused and an intermediary will help to complete questionnaires where appropriate
- Telephone surveys to target groups / individuals who are not responsive to questionnaires
- Simple feedback cards for participants to complete at the end of project activities
- Meetings and ongoing liaison with project beneficiary groups – for example ramblers groups, bird-watching groups, local history societies, farmers and landowners, local schools and youth organisations, communities around Lawrence Weston, disabled action groups and various community organisations.

All forms of evaluation will include a briefing summarising the purpose of the evaluation and meaningful feedback on how the thoughts and experiences of participants have contributed. Data and child protection guidelines and requirements will be adhered to in relation to the collection, storage, use and dissemination of monitoring and evaluation material collected – including image permission for use of photographs where appropriate.

#### 7.5 Learning from the Evaluation

The evaluation will explore the extent to which (and how, why and when) the Scheme outcomes have been achieved. It will look at the quality of project delivery using the Scheme outcome indicators to evaluate the value and significance of the Scheme to the beneficiaries. The evaluation will need to be flexible and adaptive so that it can identify any additional and unanticipated outcomes of the project. The lessons learnt will be discussed with the focus group and partners and be used to improve service delivery and quality. Qualitative feedback comments will also be invited, recorded and fed into the evaluation process.

# 7.6 Evaluation Outputs and Communicating / Acting upon the

The evaluation results will be disseminated at AFL Partnership Board meetings and through the mid-term and end of project evaluation reports which will include recommendations to develop and improve project delivery. The recommendations will be discussed with project beneficiaries to identify the most effective ways of acting upon them and disseminated to all stakeholders and partners so that they can fully benefit from lessons learnt.

#### 7.6.1 Partnership Board Meetings

Quarterly Partnership Management Board meetings will receive reports and monitor project delivery, outputs and outcomes, problems, challenges and solutions so that there is a continual process of monitoring, evaluation and improvement.

#### 7.6.2 Mid-Term Review

A mid-term review will be carried out in the 21st month of the Scheme to check progress, project management structures and the quality of delivery. The review will assess whether the Scheme's wider level outcomes are being achieved in addition to that of the individual projects. The evaluation will be carried out by independent consultants and will identify what has been achieved to date, the difficulties and challenges and extent to which HLF and Scheme outcomes / objectives are being met. It will also assess whether the scheme is meeting the aspirations of partners and project beneficiaries and look at how effectively the Partnership is working. It will make recommendations for changes and delivery improvements for the second half of the Scheme.

As part of the mid-term review the consultants will also work with the Partnership to develop a legacy strategy, as described in Section 6.2.



During the last three months of the project the delivery team staff and consultants will produce a final project evaluation report (following HLF suggested format) which will be shared with HLF and all beneficiary groups, partners, funders and stakeholders. This report will tell the story of the Scheme, examine the extent to which outputs and outcomes were met, identify weaknesses and shortcomings and review how effectively the Scheme was governed and managed. It will also make an assessment of the longer term impacts of the Scheme, the legacy that it has left and how the Partnership's legacy strategy will be implemented.

The final end of Scheme evaluation report will also inform a review of the Scheme legacy strategy. The legacy strategy will be amended and/or updated in response to final Scheme evaluation and will set out the long-term vision for sustaining the Scheme.

#### 7.7 Evaluation Budget

A budget of £22,000 has been allocated for external consultants to support the evaluation process and produce mid-term and end of Scheme evaluations. This funding will also be used for the external consultants to develop the mid-term legacy strategy. The CRCT will also support the evaluation process by helping to develop the detailed evaluation plan and survey questionnaires.



# 8 Adoption and Review



# 3 Adoption and Review

The Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) was adopted by the Partnership Board at the beginning of March 2014, just prior to submission to the HLF. It will be reviewed annually – with particular regard to Section 5 Scheme Plans and Costs – by the Partnership Board and the Scheme Project Manager.

The LCAP will be used as a guide and a working manual for the implementation of the Scheme. The Project Manager along with the Partnership Board will be responsible for making sure that the LCAP is followed by all partners including local communities.

Electronic copies of the LCAP will be held by all members of the Partnership Board. An edited copy without the costings will be accessible to the public and this will be available as a pdf on the Scheme website and on demand from the Project Manager.



