Local Sections

Purpose
The Local Sections detail the management principles that are specific to each of the Local Sections of the Cornwall AONB. The Local Area Policies should always be read in conjunction with the policies set out in the strategic policies of the plan that address Cornwall wide AONB management matters.

Statements of Significance
The Local Sections contain a statement of significance which sets out the qualities and characteristics that makes that Section as a whole recognisable, distinctive and different from surrounding areas. The Statement of Significance will not necessarily refer to individual features but this does not mean that such features are not important or do not form a key component of the AONB landscape. The Statement of Significance is not a complete inventory, more a summary of the landscape character and scenic beauty of the protected landscape.

The Statement of Significance can be used as landscape character evidence base to judge impact (or harm) to the AONB from development or other activity and as a guide to help tailor positive activity to conserve and enhance the area.

Local Policies
Each Local Section includes ‘Local Policies’ which identify the specific management objectives that are applicable to the local section over the next 5 years.

The local policies are required to:
- Achieve the purposes of the AONB designation,
- Deliver the purposes of the AONB Management Plan,
- Reflect local level detail and management needs,
- Be realistic.

The local policies can be used for a range of purposes. For example they can provide guidance and inform the assessment of development proposals in or adjoining the Local Section or they can promote projects and funding applications that support the purposes of the AONB designation.
Each Local Section identifies a number of matters that are considered to be impacting upon the condition of the special features and attributes in that particular section of the Cornwall AONB and any of the known management groups, activities and/or strategies in place for the area. The Local Policies will seek to address poor condition and support good management, supported by the overall strategic policies.
03 Camel Estuary

Location
This AONB Section includes the Camel Estuary and runs west from Wadebridge to Padstow and the adjacent land. It is bounded by the A389 and A39 to the south and west, and the B3314 to the northeast and extends almost as far north as the edge of Rock, Splatt and Tredrizzick.

Extent
Covering an area of almost 2,500 hectares or 24.6 square kilometres it forms just over 2.5% of the Cornwall AONB.

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Landscape Character Assessment 2005-2007
Character Areas: CA19 Trevose Head and Coastal Plateau; CA33 Camel and Allen Valleys; 34 Camel Estuary;

Statement of Significance
This relatively small section of the Cornwall AONB is defined by its distinct landscape where the gentle undulating land slopes down into the broad Camel Valley. The Camel Estuary is approximately one kilometre wide between Padstow and Rock and stretches inland for around seven kilometres where it narrows significantly at Wadebridge but remains tidal for several kilometres beyond.

The slate bedrock is exposed in low cliffs along the shore of the estuary. At low tide, mud and sandbanks become clearly visible. Within the more sheltered side waters such as Little Pertherick and Pinkson Creeks and at the convergence of the Rivers Amble and Camel, the mud flats are colonised with reeds and salt marsh vegetation, providing a perfect habitat for a variety of wildlife and over-wintering wildfowl and waders. On the north side of the estuary, the distinctive landmark of Cant Hill is easily recognisable as the land rises sharply into a prominent rounded and steep sided hill, formed as a result of the underlying igneous rock.

Away from the tourist ‘hot spots’ the Camel Estuary forms a tranquil and intimate landscape with creeks and tributary valleys where many small woodlands colonise the gentle slopes. Common species found here include willow; poplar, oak and hawthorn intermixed with gorse. In contrast, the more open areas are exposed to the coastal winds so woodland and hedgerows become much less common. At its widest point, the Camel Estuary provides extensive views towards the sea and a feeling of expansiveness where, on clear days land and sky combine.

The Camel Estuary is primarily a mixed agricultural landscape and whilst there is a pattern of small irregular enclosures of medieval origin, larger fields tend to be found north of Cant Hill and at Trewornan on the River Amble. Cornish hedges enclose many of the fields, built of local slate and on exposed sections
the hedges reveal the characteristic herringbone pattern. The long history of human habitation is indicated by this area having one of the highest densities of recorded crop mark sites in Cornwall, many being Romano-British rounds (settlements). Overall, this is a sparsely populated landscape consisting of farmsteads and hamlets in typical medieval style where grey slate is the dominant building material.

On the south side of the estuary the disused railway has provided a perfect setting for the ‘Camel Trail’, a popular cycle trail which runs from Padstow to Wadebridge and inland following the valley through to Bodmin, much used and very popular with visitors and locals alike who can appreciate this scenic and tranquil landscape all year round.

Q20. Do you agree with the **Statement of Significance for Camel Estuary** on pages 64-65? (please check/tick a box below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Do you have any suggestions for improvement? Please give your reasons

**Management**

- St Minver, St Kew and Padstow Parish Plans together with Wadebridge Town Plan have been prepared.
- A Neighbourhood Development Plan is currently being prepared for the St Minver Lowlands and Highlands.
- The 18-mile long multi-use Camel Trail is managed and maintained by Cornwall Council.
- The aims of the Cornwall Biodiversity Initiative include: ‘Coast to Coast’ to link river and valley habitats including native broadleaved woodlands and wetlands from the Camel to the Fowey Estuary via river valleys around Bodmin Moor in order to reinforce wildlife corridors. The local aims are to extend and enhance the Amble Marshes.
- The Amble Marshes SSSI, Water Level Management Plan (WLMP) is being implemented in a partnership between landowners, the Environment Agency and Natural England via agri-environment schemes and in consultation with the local community. The objective is to restore and enhance habitat conditions for wading birds during winter and the breeding season.
- Whilst the Camel River and Valley outside the AONB is designated a Special Area of Conservation, the Estuary does not have such protection.
- The Camel Estuary Initiative, established in 1994, aims to enhance and maintain the natural quality of the Camel by co-ordinating effort and promoting wise use of the resource.
The Camel Estuary Management Plan was published by the Padstow Harbour Commissioners on behalf of the users of the estuary.

A Camel Valley Estuary Advisory Group has been established with representative from bodies with a legal responsibility for the estuary.

**Condition**

- The Council for the Protection of Rural England’s tranquillity, intrusion and night blight mapping shows the most ‘disturbed’ (least tranquil) section of the AONB is the Camel Estuary. This is due to the proximity of major roads including the A389, B3314 and the A39 (Atlantic Highway), which lies partially within the AONB along with the more urban settlements of Padstow, Rock and Wadebridge.
- Some historic Cornish hedges have been replaced by wire fencing although some of this is from the division of former downland.
- Many of the broadleaved woodlands are unmanaged and there has been a significant loss of hedgerow elm trees due to disease, which in turn has impacted on habitat connectivity and landscape character.
- Development pressure from Padstow, Rock and Splatt has the potential to impact upon the AONB and it’s setting.

**Camel Estuary Local Policies**

**CE3.01** Seek reduction of impacts on landscape character and tranquillity from major roads such as the A39, A389 and B3314 by for example reduction in street lighting, reduction in signage, less intensive management of roadside vegetation, non-intrusive methods of traffic calming and local hedging styles and materials in highway works.

**CE3.02** Seek retention of the quiet rural character of small lanes such as those leading from settlement edges and off major roads to the edge of the estuary.

**CE3.03** Promote the co-ordinated management of the activities taking place on the Camel Trail to ensure that they do not detract from tranquillity or visual amenity, to the benefit of all users.

**CE3.04** Support the continued reversion to marshland in the upper reaches of the Camel Estuary, for example at Amble Marshes, where drainage and agricultural improvement has taken place in order to restore to favourable condition this locally characteristic and significant habitat in the context of a landscape scale approach to the enhancement of locally significant Biodiversity Action Plan habitats.

**CE3.05** Support proposals to enhance the protection for important habitats and species around the estuary.
CE3.06 Seek commitment to protect mature trees surrounding settlements for example at Padstow, Rock, Splatt and Wadebridge in order to conserve their contribution to local landscape character.

CE3.07 Encourage the active consideration of the landscape and visual impacts around the Camel Estuary of increasing or changing patterns of water based access, leisure and commercial activity and related infrastructure.

CE3.08 Support sustainable water based travel around the estuary, for example the continuation of the existing ferry link between Padstow and Rock

CE3.09 Support settlement growth to Rock, Splatt and Padstow that addresses local need, enhances the settlement edge and conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the Camel Estuary and does not adversely impact upon the AONB or its setting.

Q21. Do you agree with the management policies as set out in Camel Estuary Local Policies CE3.01 – CE3.09 on pages 66-67?

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly agree

Do you have any suggested changes/additions? Please give your reasons