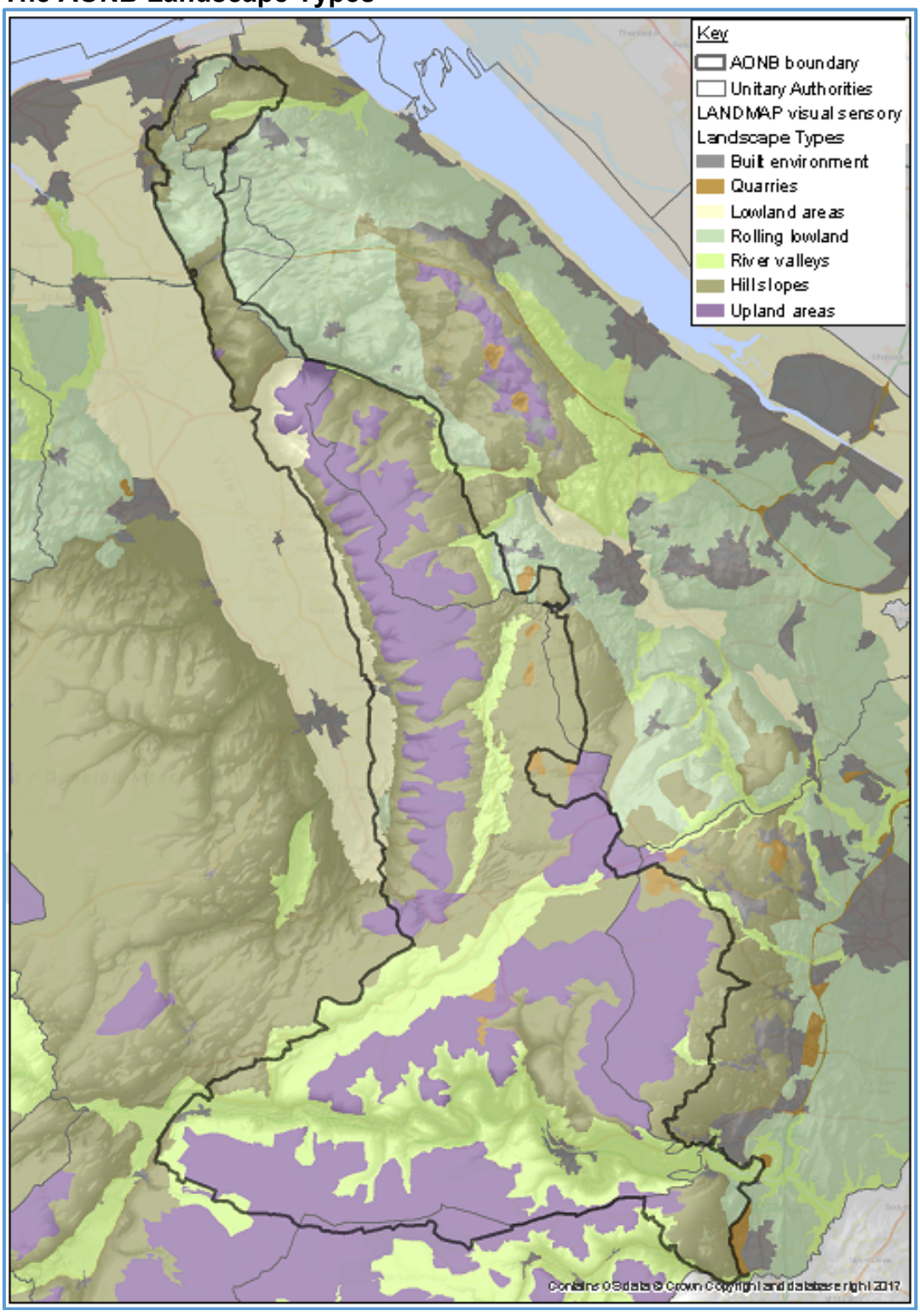
and enhance these features. In the case of “Built Environment”, the term is used more generically to include buildings and infrastructure.

The AONB Landscape Types



- In the case of the Vale of Llangollen, there are diverse historical influences within a visually scenic valley context - including farming, quarrying, lines of communication (river, road, rail and canal infrastructure) rural villages and town with urban villages to the east.
- The engineering solution to the topographical challenges and beauty of the valley have been addressed in the design of the Pontcysyllte and Chirk Aqueducts and Horseshoe falls. This has given rise to the area's recognition for its landscape and heritage value.
- Scenic qualities and visual interest also derive from a valley's 'lines of visual force' i.e. valley shape, skyline edges, descending ridges, crags/ outcrops and screes and sinuous line of river, to which the pattern of fields, woodland and trees complement the overall scene. An example for the hillslopes area would be how Castell Dinas Bran marks the top of its rounded hill with particular aesthetic effect.

Development management considerations

- Topography (enclosing hillslopes, narrow valley sections) and floodplains form natural constraints to development within the valley and place pressure open more open and elevated locations where development could be more intrusive.
- Strategic development of a scale to be potentially visible in the landscape should work with 'visual lines of force' and areas with a strong integrating pattern of vegetation (i.e. intact tall hedgerows, lines of hedgerow trees, copses and woodland)
- New proposals within the Vale of Llangollen need to assimilate and complement land-scape character and heritage values to support both the AONB and World Heritage Site.

Hill slopes



Special Qualities Landscape Character and Quality (tranquillity, wild, remote) Historic Environment.

Key Characteristics

- Hill Slopes include steep rising landform, escarpments below the uplands and lower hills of the AONB.
- Land cover and settlement characteristics are strongly rural and where development is minor or absent perceptions of tranquillity, remoteness and wildness can be particularly strong.

- These areas all form prominent scenic backdrops to adjacent settled lower areas of the north-east Wales coastal plain, Vale of Clwyd, Deeside, Vale of Llangollen and Welsh Maelor and as such provide a strong sense of place.
- Geomorphology and landform has brought about some notable natural and wild areas. For example - outcropping rock, native woodland, and scrub and grassland mosaics of the limestone escarpments above Prestatyn, Dyserth, Bryn Alyn and the Eglwyseg valley.
- Irregular field patterns and woodland edges, scattered farms along winding narrow lanes and tracks occupy more gentle hillslopes, shallow cwms and side valleys of the area. Some large areas of forestry lie within this area.
- Reservoirs are found in some of the shallower eastern facing valleys.
- Scattered farming and worker cottages associated with historical mining and pro-cessing industries lie this area, with occasional villages at lower elevations. Older settlement is distinctive displaying use of stone, vernacular, rural traditions and integration with the landscape.

Development management considerations

- Slope angle has greatly influenced ease of access to this area and much of the pattern of development hasn't altered or evolved much (with the exception of forestry), which in part gives the landscape a strong rural and traditional character.
- The area's visibility and contribution to scenic quality and sense of place to the more populated adjacent areas, makes the area sensitive to change from development. Available views, development scale, character and integration is therefore important to consider.
- Development within or encroaching upon the more natural and wild escarpments can have particular contrast and appear at odds with the AONB special qualities.

Upland areas



Special Qualities Landscape Character and Quality (tranquillity, remote, wild), Habitats and Wildlife, Access, Recreation and Tourism, Historic Environment.

Key Characteristics

- The uplands comprise elevated rolling ridges, hilltops and plateau of pasture fields and open moorland. The highest points include Moel Famau (554m) within the Clwydian Hills, Moel y Gamelin (577m) on the Llantysilio Mountain

ridgeline, Ruabon Mountain (502m) on the Esclusham/Ruabon escarpment and Moel Fferna (628m) on the north Berwyn ridge.

- Notable scenic qualities of the area include its natural upland skylines – as the chain of hills that define the horizon and backdrop to north-east Wales; there are some particularly distinctive skyline silhouettes - for example Moel Y Parc from the north, Moel Arthur, Moel Famau (its pyramidal form and the highest point marked by the jubilee tower); the bedding plains and outcrops of the limestone escarpments across the area; and the areas of open moorland heather that create strong colour contrasts with the enclosed lower hillslopes such as at Ruabon and Llantysilio Mountain,
- Development is absent except for some remotely located transmitter infrastructure, quarrying and occasional crossings by electricity infrastructure, roads, lanes and tracks.
- Many areas are open moorland unenclosed by field patterns. Where present post and wire fencing is used, with some dry-stone walling along the Clwydian Hills. Forestry extends into some areas from the adjacent hillslopes.
- The northern Berwyn ridgeline differs, in its access by lanes and pattern of improved pasture fields, occasional forestry and pockets of moorland.
- Historic, cultural marks in this area are visually iconic - in the case of the Jubilee Tower, Castell Dinas Bran and many of the Iron Age hillforts. Other earthworks, cairns and field systems are more subtle, add to the local character but remain of historical importance.
- These areas have wide ranging expansive views of landscape and settled lower areas. The sense of removal from towns and villages below, lack of development and visual foci, openness and exposure contribute to the area's special qualities of space and freedom, remoteness, tranquillity and wildness.

Development management considerations

- This is a very visible area of the AONB where natural skylines make an important contribution to the area's special qualities, making it very sensitive to change from development.
- Accessibility along roads and lanes brings potential for activity, movement and noise that can erode the tranquillity of this area. The high passes are popular destinations for visitors and recreation with notable destinations at Bwlch Pen Bara and the Horseshoe Pass. The management of people, parking and character of development have evolved and been treated differently in these locations, with varying success. These are sensitive open locations where careful attention to visual integration is important to support the areas' special qualities.
- Vertical structures on skylines have considerable contrast against the sky and horizontal form of the landscape. The eye-catching nature of such development makes it very difficult to successfully integrate in designated landscapes.

7. Factors for Landscape Change

7.1 The landscape we see today has largely been shaped by the influence of man. This process continues, although with the progression of climate