



Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre

Strategy 2025-30

• CONTENTS

SHROPSHIRE HILLS DISCOVERY CENTRE	1
STRATEGY 2025-30	1
FOREWORD	3
OUR MISSION	3
OUR VISION	4
OUR STRATEGIC AIMS	4
INTRODUCTION	5
BACKGROUND	6
MANAGEMENT	7
FACTS AND FIGURES	7
CURRENT POSITION	8
	11
THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT	12
WHO WILL WE FOCUS ON?	14
DELIVERY	15
HOW WILL WE DO THIS?	17
HOW WILL WE KNOW WE HAVE SUCCEEDED?	17
RISKS	18
WHO ARE WE?	19
APPENDIX 1- PEST ANALYSIS	20
APPENDIX 2A- SWOT ANALYSIS	21
APPENDIX 2B: FEEDBACK FROM GROW, COOK, LEARN AGM 2024	22
APPENDIX 3- STRATEGIC CONTEXT	23

Foreword

In 2024, Grow, Cook, Learn secured the freehold of the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre and a long lease on the 12 hectares of Onny Meadows. It was a watershed moment, which safeguarded this iconic, well-loved site for the local community and visitors.

We now have a unique opportunity to help regenerate the local area by developing the visitor offer, better conserving special habitats, and encourage the discovery and exploration of the Shropshire Hills landscape, heritage and culture in sustainable ways that look to a brighter future.

This strategy sets out our aspirations for the next five years, and you are invited to join us on the exciting journey.

Clare Featherstone, Chair of Grow, Cook, Learn



Our mission

The Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre is the gateway to the Shropshire Hills.

Our mission is to invite you on a journey of discovery into the special landscape of The Shropshire Hills, to experience its rich heritage, promote regeneration, develop the local economy, engage in its beauty and ensure its future for generations to come.

Our vision

In five years, the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre will be a thriving hub, connecting people to the rich heritage, landscapes, food, and wildlife of the Shropshire Hills.

It will inspire people of all backgrounds, abilities and generations to discover, learn about, and protect the area's natural and cultural heritage, while championing a more sustainable future.

By supporting local businesses and attracting visitors near and far, it will boost the local economy, promote regeneration and foster pride in this unique and special place.

Our strategic aims

Several strategic aims have emerged as instrumental to the successful development of the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre. Their implementation will be phased over the next five years.

- Increase learning and understanding of natural and cultural heritage for all
- Encourage involvement in climate adaptation and nature recovery
- Transform the visitor offer
- Foster community pride
- Operate as a vibrant, viable and welcoming organisation.



Introduction

The Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre is a gateway to the rich natural and cultural heritage of the Shropshire Hills. Set in 12 hectares of the Onny Meadows, the Centre provides a space for learning, exploration, and connection to nature.

Through its interactive exhibition, 'Shropshire Hills Through Time', visitors can journey through the area's fascinating geology, wildlife, and history - including the famous Shropshire Mammoth. The Onny meadows - home to rich hay meadows, ponds, coppice woodland, hedgerows, and a heritage orchard - are managed to balance public access with nature recovery. The Discovery Centre also hosts community gardens, tended by local residents, providing a valued green space that promotes wellbeing, learning, and social connection.

The Discovery Centre is open to all, with free access to the meadows and a welcoming café, shop, and events programme. A growing membership scheme, with over 450 members, engenders a sense of community within regular visitors.

Over the next five years, the Discovery Centre will continue to inspire people of all ages to engage with the landscape, wildlife, and heritage of the Shropshire Hills. It will expand opportunities for learning, strengthen its role as a hub for community activity, and support nature recovery in the meadows. The Centre's impact will be felt through:

- **Bringing people closer to nature** – enhancing access to the Onny Meadows and wider National Landscape, providing new opportunities for walking, cycling, and wildlife discovery.
- **Education and training** – delivering engaging programmes for schools, volunteers, and local interest groups to deepen understanding of the natural world, sustainable living, and heritage.
- **Climate adaptation and nature recovery** – acting as a demonstrator site for habitat restoration, sustainable land management and biodiversity recovery.
- **Fostering community pride** – strengthening partnerships with local groups, hosting events, and celebrating the culture and identity of the area.



- **Transforming the visitor experience** – improving facilities, interpretation, and engagement to ensure the Centre remains a high-quality, welcoming space for all.

The Discovery Centre is managed by the charity Grow Cook Learn, which ensures its long-term sustainability. While operational costs are covered through visitor spending, the charity seeks external funding to enhance its facilities and deliver impactful projects, such as the recently developed Squelch Wetlands.

With a renewed vision for the next five years, the Discovery Centre will continue to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and inspiring space that connects people to the Shropshire Hills and the wider natural world.

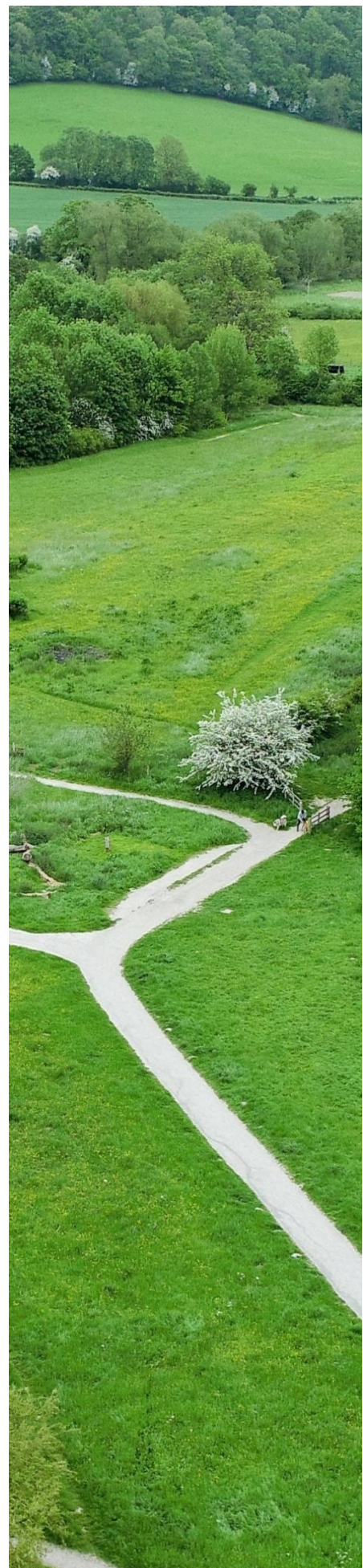
This strategy has been developed by the Board of trustees and staff, following discussions with key partners, members of the Discovery Centre and others.

Background

The Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre has been a gateway to the landscape, heritage, and wildlife of the Shropshire Hills for over two decades. Originally built as a £2.4 million Millennium project, it was funded by Advantage West Midlands, South Shropshire District Council, and Shropshire Council, opening its doors in 2001.

In 2014, the site was transferred to Shropshire Housing Group, with Grow Cook Learn - a charity dedicated to education, nature, and community engagement - taking on responsibility for running the Centre. In 2024, a major milestone was reached when Grow Cook Learn acquired the freehold, while Craven Arms Town Council took ownership of the Onny Meadows, leasing them to the charity for 99 years.

This transition marks a new chapter for the Discovery Centre. With secure tenure and strong community backing, the Discovery Centre is well-placed to build on its strengths and develop a bold vision for the next five years - enhancing learning opportunities, supporting nature recovery, and strengthening its role at the heart of the community.



Management

The Discovery Centre and Onny Meadows are owned and managed by the charity Grow, Cook, Learn (Charity number: 1158795).

The Charity's objects are: "The promotion for the public benefit of urban or rural regeneration in the area of benefit by all or any of the following means:

- The protection of conservation of the environment
- The advancements of education, training or retraining
- Providing unemployed people with work experience
- The creation of training and employment opportunities by the provision of workspace
- Offering buildings and/ or land for use on favourable terms
- The maintenance, improvement or provision of public amenities
- The provision of recreational facilities for the public".

The Board and staff team are shown in the 'Who are We?' section (page 19).

Facts and figures

Some current facts and figures about the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre.

Over 100,000 visits to the Discovery Centre café and shop, with many more visiting the Meadows. Visitors will have had the opportunity to better understand, experience and enjoy the Shropshire Hills

Over 3,000 schoolchildren have been educated and inspired about climate action, nature recovery, heritage, landscapes and food

474 members regularly visit and support the Discovery Centre

The Discovery Centre is only ranked **47th** in 'Things to do in Shropshire' on **TripAdvisor**, so this offers an opportunity for improvement



Current position

The Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre is an iconic building and a gateway to the nationally recognised Shropshire Hills National Landscape. It is financially self-sustaining, well-loved by the local community, and attracts over 100,000 visits to the Discovery Centre annually, with even more exploring the surrounding meadows. The Discovery Centre is welcoming, with a dedicated team of trustees, staff, and volunteers, a thriving café and shop, and accessible green space managed for both public enjoyment and nature recovery.

With long-term security through its lease and the opportunity to align with the new Shropshire Hills National Landscape Management Plan, the Discovery Centre is well-placed to enhance its role as a hub for learning, nature recovery, and community engagement. Improvements to indoor and outdoor facilities, including reconfiguring the car park and visitor spaces, will help maximise its potential. Strengthening links with local interest groups can further promote climate adaptation and biodiversity initiatives.

Financial resilience remains a priority, with a need to build reserves. Pressures such as extreme weather events, reduced household income, unexpected incidents, vandalism, increasing operating costs and staff salaries, IT or building failure and staff illness could threaten the viability of the charity.

There are many opportunities identified that could help address these pressures, which have been incorporated into this Strategy. These include enhanced visitor interpretation, climate adaptation projects, expanding training opportunities, upgrading facilities and boosting financial sustainability through new funding sources.

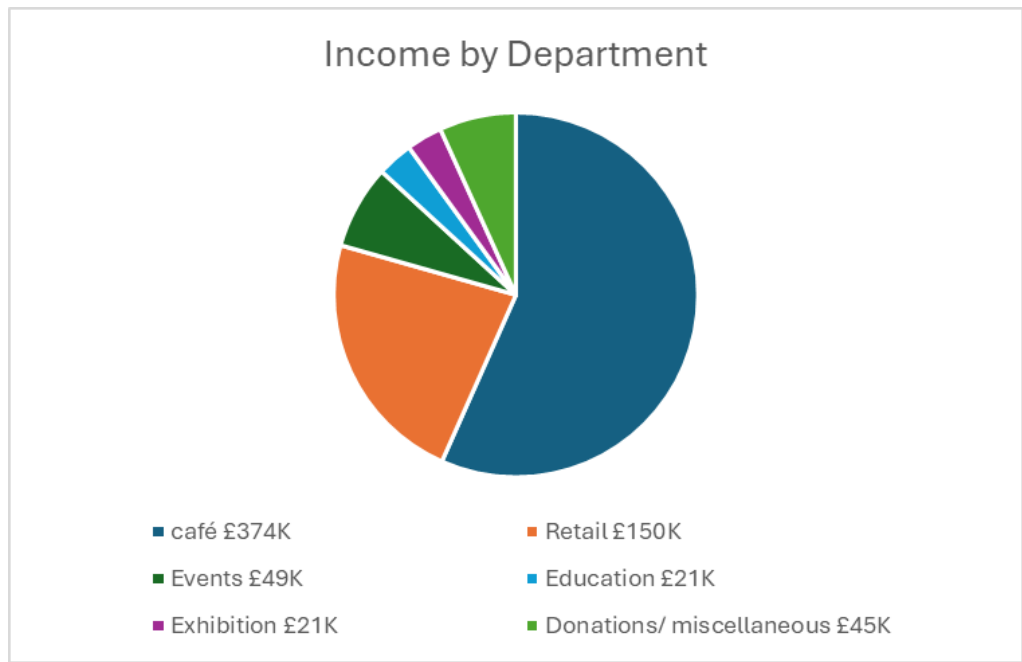
Finally, renaming the charity would better reflect its purpose and would support its future direction and wider recognition.

A review of the wider political, economic, social and environmental context is described in Appendix 1. The full SWOT analysis, including feedback from Members at the AGM, can be found in Appendix 2.

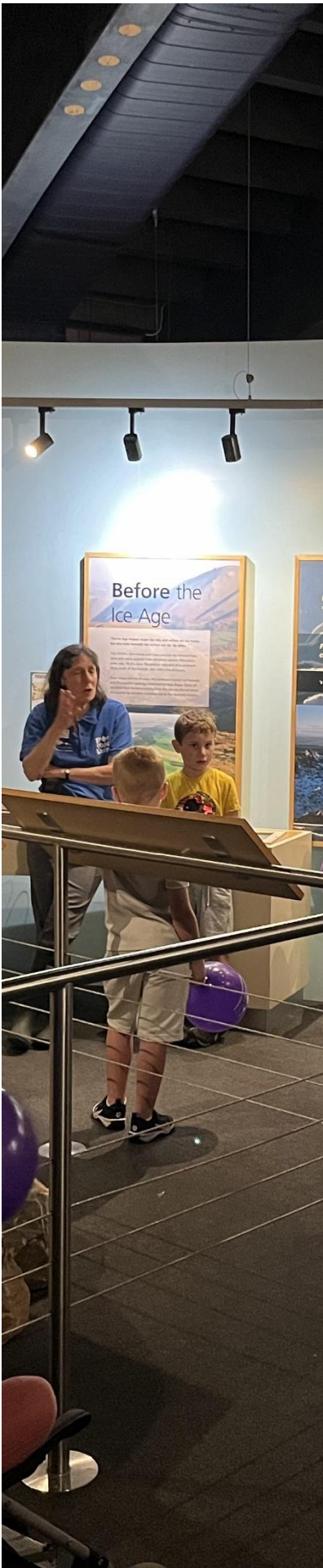
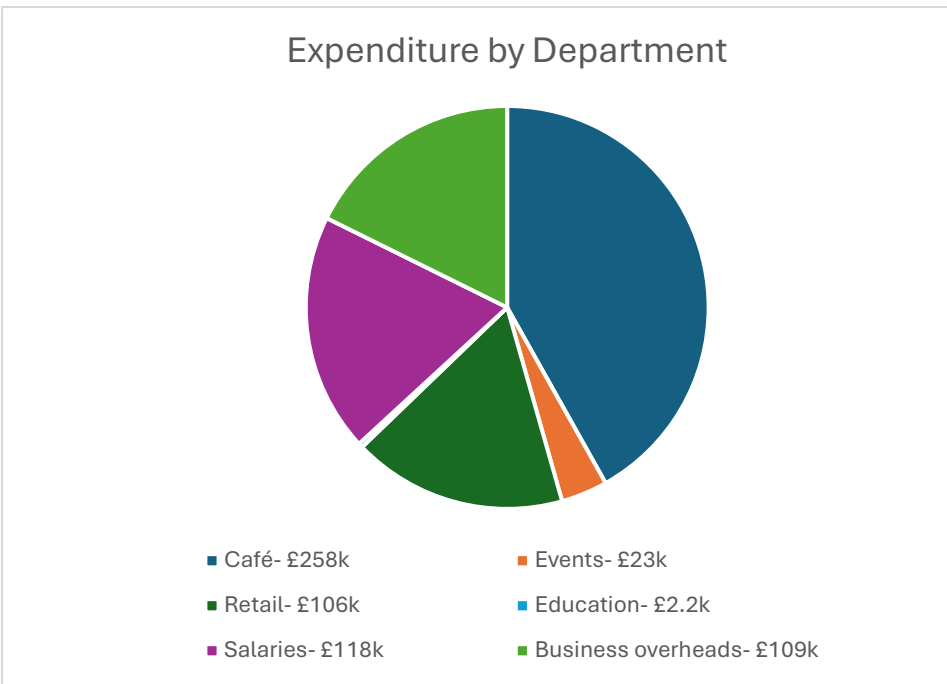


Financial position

The total operating income for the management of the Discovery Centre and Onny Meadows in 2023/24 is shown in the pie chart below.



Expenditure has been on staffing, event organisation, retail and catering, as shown below.



Local area

The Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre is located in Craven Arms, a rural area in south Shropshire. It is a beautiful, rural area but one of the most sparsely populated in England¹.



In 2021, the Craven Arms Parish Plan Area (PPA), which is shown in the map, had 6,542 residents and a population density of just 31.79 people/ km², compared to the England average of 433.10.

29.23% of the population were over 65 years-old, higher than the national average of 18.41%.

Craven Arms town has a significant Asian community (3.9% of the 2,565 people living in the town and immediate area).

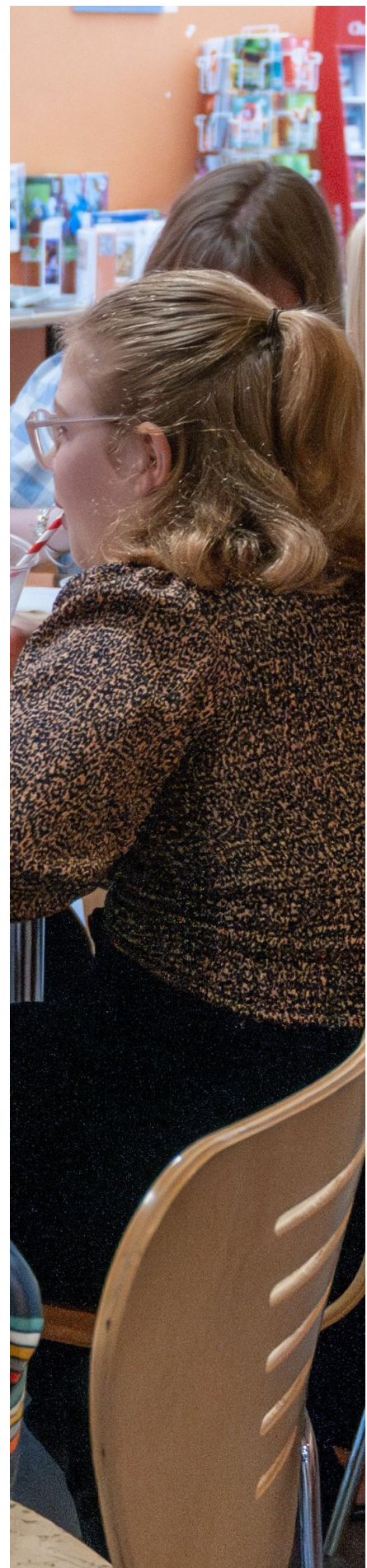
In 2011, Craven Arms PPA had an Index of Multiple Deprivation score of 22.47, which means it has higher levels of deprivation to Shropshire (17.15) and England (21.76). It also has higher levels of community need, as ranked by the Community Needs Index (CNI) in 2023. Craven Arms (PPA) has an overall CNI rank of 15,936, compared to Shropshire (16,033) and England (17,040).

In 2024, 44.62% of residents reported being in very good health, compared to 46.63% across Shropshire. In the Craven Arms town and immediate area, 9.81% of the working population were disabled, compared to Shropshire (7.53%) and England (7.33%).

19.84% of households do not have a car, compared to 13.81% across Shropshire.

This data helps to understand the importance of the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre to local people and the need to encourage visitors to ensure it remains viable.

Craven Arms is on the A49 trunk road between Shrewsbury and Ludlow, with a station on the Manchester to Cardiff railway line. There is therefore good public transport to the Centre by bus and train from urbanised areas, making it a good sustainable tourism destination. There are also many cycling and walking routes from the Centre that can be found on the [Shropshire's Great Outdoors](#) website.



¹ Data is available from Shropshire Council on request.



Shropshire Hills National Landscape

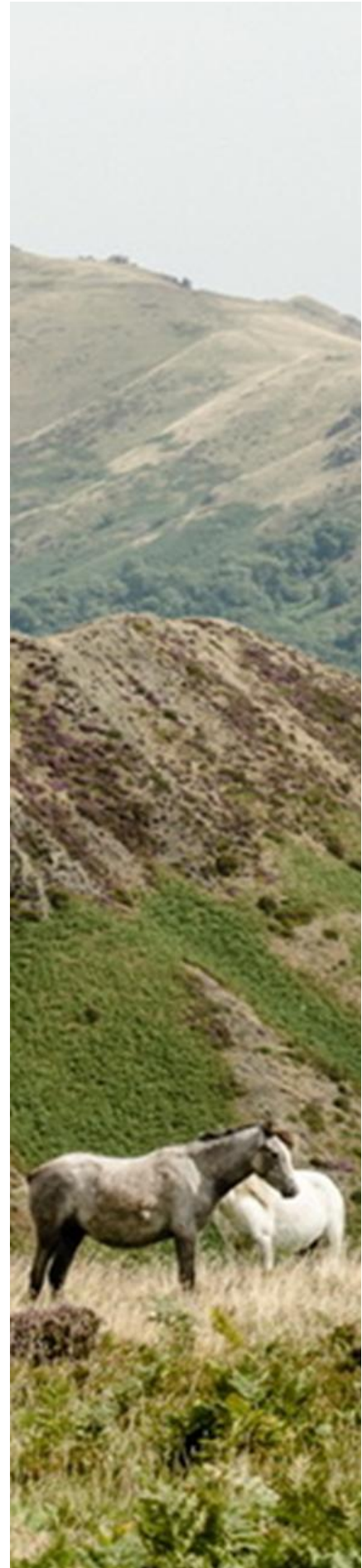
The [Shropshire Hills National Landscape](#) is one of 46 National Landscapes across the UK. These, along with National Parks, are Protected Landscapes, and are the most outstanding landscapes in the country.

‘National Landscape’ is the new name for areas designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; land protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act). The legal purpose of designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. These are places with national importance, protected for the nation's benefit: cherished by their communities and celebrated by the nation. They are national designations, managed locally by expert teams, funded by Defra and local authorities.

The [National Landscapes Association](#) mission is to lead and champion activity, working with National Landscapes, to protect and restore the UK's most outstanding landscapes and make sure everyone can enjoy them.

The Shropshire Hills National Landscape team works in partnership to protect and regenerate the National Landscape for everyone to enjoy.

Whilst the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre is not within the designated area, it is a gateway to it. Situated on the main trunk road through the National Landscape and served by a mainline railway and bus services, it is well placed to help deliver the new National Landscape Management Plan. We will do this by providing information, promoting the National Landscape, signposting to other organisations and businesses, focusing on climate change and nature recovery, and interpreting the special landscape, heritage, food and wildlife of the protected area and its surroundings.



The strategic context

The Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre and Onny Meadows is a strategically important site, which has the potential to deliver against several key local strategies. These include:

Thriving in Balance with Nature- Shropshire Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2025-30

A new Management Plan for the Shropshire Hills National Landscape is due in 2025. Its vision is that *nature is restored, climate is stabilised, and we are resilient, water is clean and supports life, land is nurtured so it can sustain us, people are healthy and thriving, and the Shropshire Hills are valued and cared for as a special place.*

We will adapt to better deliver the aims of the Management Plan to encourage access to nature, sustainable tourism, climate action and nature recovery, working with an audience that might not otherwise get involved.

Vibrant Shropshire- Cultural Strategy 2021-2031.

Vision: *“By 2031, Shropshire’s vibrant culture will be inspiring more people, both local communities and visitors alike, to explore, create, be active and enjoy themselves. It will enhance lives and nurture the environment for all our futures.”*

We will develop the Discovery Centre as a cultural hub to help people discover and explore the natural and cultural heritage of the Shropshire Hills and surrounding area.

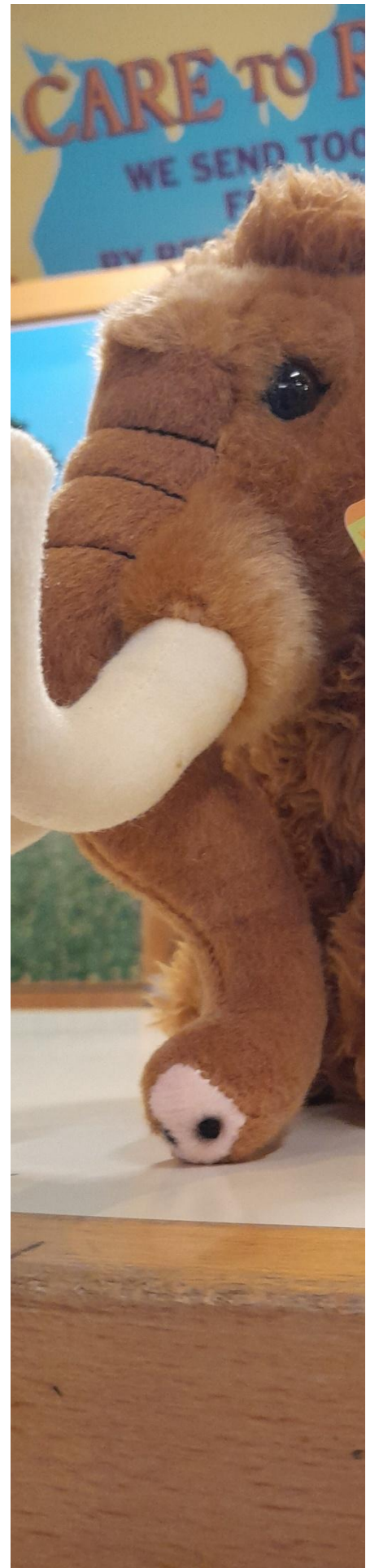
Shropshire’s Great Outdoors Strategy 2018-28

Vision: *“By the end of 2028, people will be happier, healthier and more prosperous as a result of being better connected to Shropshire’s Great Outdoors through safe and cherished publicly accessible outdoor assets.”*

We will continue to offer a special outdoor space, with enhanced interpretation of nature, biodiversity, heritage and landscape for the enjoyment of all.

Shropshire’s Destination Management Plan 2023-25

Vision: *“Shropshire will be a sustainably managed destination that welcomes the curious and the adventurous to explore its outstandingly beautiful natural landscapes and internationally*



recognised built heritage in a way that safeguards these precious assets now and for future generations.”

Shropshire now has a Local Visitor Economy Partnership, and they are working on a new Destination Management Plan for 2025.

Working with a range of partners, we will continue to act as a Visitor Information Centre, offering information and advice on sustainable visitor activities, public transport and local products and services, with improved interpretation that helps people of all ages discover and explore the Shropshire Hills as part of the wider Shropshire visitor offer.

Zero Carbon Shropshire Plan

Vision: “Shropshire will become net zero carbon by 2030. Starting immediately, organisations, businesses and communities across Shropshire will participate in a collaborative approach to rapid decarbonisation; large-scale restoration of biodiversity and the natural environment; and the development of sustainable, resilient and inclusive communities and the enterprises required for a sustainable future.”

The Discovery Centre will become a Climate Action Hub, working with Shropshire Climate Action to offer information, advice, training and events that help people better understand what they can do to help mitigate climate change.

We will also be working with partners to ensure the Discovery Centre is as energy efficient as possible and encourage better use of public transport and low impact activities.

Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Nature Recovery Strategy

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is due to be launched in 2025. We will work with Shropshire Council and other partners to help implement this strategy, including through working with relevant community groups and interested people to develop skills and Citizen Science initiatives.

A full review of the opportunities presented by SHDC to help achieve these strategies is shown in Appendix 3.



Who will we focus on?

The Discovery Centre is a place for everyone, and we are committed to making it as welcoming and accessible as possible. While it is already popular with families and older visitors, we want to reach more people who may not yet see the Discovery Centre as a place for them. Over the next five years, we will focus on:

- **Young people and teenagers** – creating exciting activities and experiences that spark curiosity and adventure.
- **Diverse communities** – ensuring the Discovery Centre is inclusive, representative, and a space where everyone feels at home.
- **Local interest groups** – strengthening partnerships with community organisations that share our passion for nature, heritage, and sustainability.
- **Businesses, farmers, and artisans** – building stronger links with local producers and land managers to celebrate and support the region's rural economy.
- **Passers-by** – making the Discovery Centre more visible and inviting to those discovering it for the first time.

By broadening our reach, we will deepen connections between people and the Shropshire Hills, ensuring the Discovery Centre continues to be a thriving and inclusive hub for all.



Delivery

In delivery of the Strategy, there are a number of key priorities, which will be developed through working groups with partners, discussions with Members and users, and brought together by the Discovery Centre Manager and Board. These will be refined as the development process progresses.

Increase learning and understanding of natural and cultural heritage for all

This remains a key priority, working with all ages to increase learning and understanding of the Shropshire Hills and wider area in terms of climate action, nature recovery, heritage, landscapes and food.

We will:

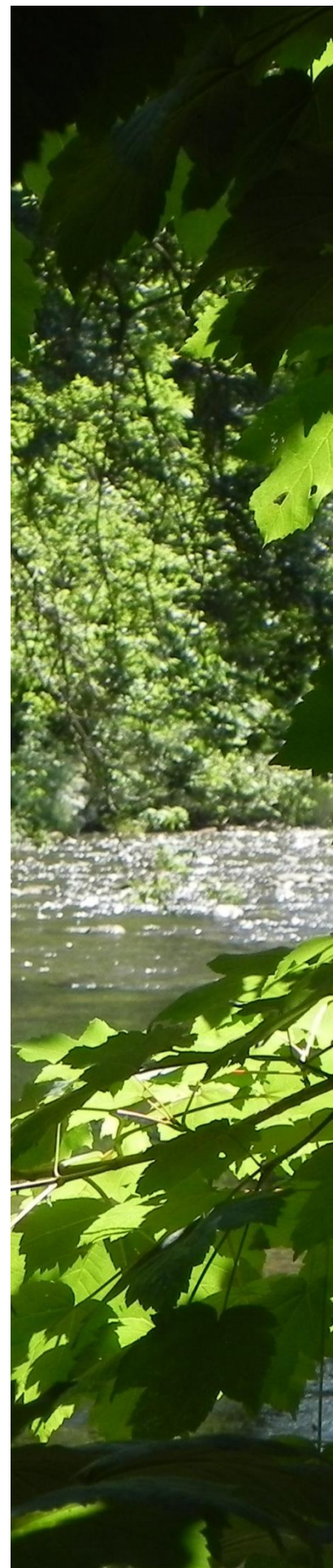
- Develop and build on the excellent programme for schools
- Develop new interpretation
- Review and revamp the Shropshire Hills exhibition
- Expand the range and type of volunteering opportunities
- Deliver an exciting range of talks, walks and events.

Encourage involvement in climate adaptation and nature recovery

With the climate crisis and a renewed national emphasis on nature recovery, we aim to use the Discovery Centre and Onny Meadows more to demonstrate how we can all help address these concerns, and to provide training for volunteers and others in climate change resilience and biodiversity recovery.

We will:

- Continue to improve habitats for wildlife on the Onny Meadows
- Develop a relevant, inclusive training programme, including Citizen Science
- Deliver demonstration projects on low carbon technology, nature recovery, sustainable growing and water management
- Work with local groups and professionals to better understand the biodiversity, soils and climate impacts in Onny Meadows
- Become a hub for local groups focused on climate adaptation and nature recovery
- Deliver a relevant programme of talks, visits and events.



Transform the visitor offer

The Discovery Centre is an iconic visitor destination. We will build on this and help encourage visitors from near and far to discover the Shropshire Hills, support local producers and ensure this is a 'must see' attraction. We will:

- Continue to provide a wide range of information, including books and maps, to help visitors discover the Shropshire Hills National Landscape and surrounding areas
- Develop innovative, new experiences, including using new technology and a sustainable play area to delight visitors
- Promote local visitor attractions, accommodation and activity providers
- Sell more locally produced arts, crafts, food and drink
- Upgrade facilities such as the toilets, car park and shop.

Foster community pride

We are prioritising the local community and will make sure that the Centre continues to be a warm, welcoming space for all, and deliver engaging activities and events for local people.

We will:

- Continue to provide free access to the outdoor space, walks and activities, and a warm, safe space where everyone is welcome
- Promote longer circular walks and cycling from the centre
- Provide low-cost activities and events
- Continue to provide affordable food and drink
- Improve physical and intellectual accessibility
- Continue to operate the community gardens.

Operate as a vibrant, viable and welcoming organisation

To deliver this strategy, it is essential that the organisation remains financially viable. This relies on motivated staff and trustees working together with the local community and ensuring that it is well managed and safe for everyone.

We will:

- Ensure the Discovery Centre is a great place to work
- Audit and update policies and procedures
- Maximise income generation
- Bring in new sources of funding through donations, sponsorship, legacies, membership and grants
- Ensure relevant, fit for purpose governance arrangements are in place.



How will we do this?

The delivery of these priorities will depend on partnership working and sourcing new funding. This will be done through:

- Trustee-led discussions with key partners for each of the strategic aims
- Development of actions plans for each of the priorities that specify who is responsible, when it will be delivered and the funding, skills and resource required to do so
- Agreement of a revised business plan for the next 5 years based on the above
- Identification of new income streams, such as corporate partnerships and grant funding, which align with our strategic aims.

How will we know we have succeeded?

Monitoring and evaluation will be built into the culture of the SHDC work, to ensure we understand our impact, embed learning and celebrate success. Quantitative and qualitative measures will be collated to work out the impact we are having for each of the key priorities. For key projects, a monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed. Measures could include:

- Visitor numbers and feedback
- Membership numbers
- Volunteer numbers, hours and feedback
- School attendance and feedback from children and young people
- Event attendance and feedback
- Case studies
- Income generated
- Relevant website rankings
- Online usage

Current data has been summarised in the ‘facts and figures’ section above, and this will be used as a benchmark to measure future trends, whilst measures not currently recorded will be introduced.

Sector data from, for example, the Shropshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, will be utilised to help inform future decision making.

Any new projects will include a monitoring and evaluation framework to record progress and enable learning.



Risks

The risks associated with the delivery of this strategy are summarised below:

Risk	Likelihood	Severity	Score	Mitigation
Lack of success in securing grant funding	2	3	6	Consider other fundraising opportunities such as corporate sponsorship, donations etc. Ensure the Discovery Centre is managed within budget.
Pressure on key staff leads to burn-out and/or resignations	2	3	6	Ensure adequate management team cover, with better support from trustees
Failure of the structure of the building or major repair	2	3	6	Secure additional reserves for repairs and renewal
Environmental or public health issue	2	3	6	Review and develop operational risk policies, and incorporate in manager's annual review
Cost of living crisis impacts spending	2	2	4	Continue to deliver value for money. Maintain high quality marketing
Breakdown of relations with key partners	1	3	3	Ensure active communication and relationship building by trustees and manager
Lack of skill base in trustees	2	1	2	Actively recruit to trustee roles if a member of the board steps down

NB- Likelihood and severity scored on scale of 0-3 (low to high), with the score indicating overall level of risk.

Whilst the operational costs of running the Discovery Centre and Onny Meadows are covered by trading income, the most significant risk is a lack of investment in the facilities and in new projects and experiences that continue to engage customers and drive footfall.

Who are we?

Board of Trustees

- Clare Featherstone, Chair
- Richard Coleman, Vice-Chair
- David Warren
- Helen Fairweather
- Isabel Carter
- Laura Perratt
- Lauren Hough
- Pete Carty
- Steve Kelby



Staff team

- Centre Manager- Grant Wilson
- Catering Manager- Asia Nicholson
- Education Manager- Stephanie Beddows
- Marketing and Business Development Manager- Jade Meredith
- Meadows Ranger- Ian Cheeseborough
- Retail Manager- Jane Vandoesburg
- Catering Supervisors- Lyn Hallewell and Jesika Rocke
- Visitor Welcome Officers- Tammy Shurmer, Liz Skidmore, Michele Gannon and Chris Evans
- Catering Assistants- Sharon Green, Jenny Bowen, Edna Bibby, Finn Foxall, Jimmy Nicholson, Chrissy Manley, Jade Green and Slava Struk
- Cleaners-Saba Rehan and Annabelle Millichip



Key partners

- Craven Arms Community Garden Group
- Craven Arms Town Council
- Marches Meadows Group
- Shropshire Climate Action
- Shropshire Hills National Landscape Partnership
- Shropshire Hills Tourism Association
- Visit Shropshire

Appendix 1- PEST Analysis

Political	Economic
Budgets impacting local services, resulting in uncertainty around local needs, sustainable transport options etc. Reliance on the Town Council as owners of Onny Meadows Defra funding changes may impact National Landscape budgets Planning law changes Introduction of Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill 2024 New Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Recovery Strategy New Shropshire Hills National Landscape Management Plan Rise of citizen science- localism agenda	Minimum wage increases Change to Employers NI Cost of living challenges resulting in changes in visitor numbers in the Shropshire Hills area More wealthy and skilled retired people moving here Inflation Increased competition for funding
Social/ Health	Technological
Mental and physical health crisis Need to engage with nature ever more pressing due to urban disconnect Scarcity mindset Young people and climate anxiety EDI/ diversity a big focus Change in demographics. Craven Arms seen as the ‘poor relation’ Active community of groups with similar aims Interfaith groups Don’t lose connection- people talking to people Local, friendly, relaxed, warm Stay connected to the town	Artificial Intelligence Apps dominate Social media developments Interpretation opportunities Access to tech to improve accessibility- electric tramper, hearing loop Increased expectation from visitors regarding technology
Environmental	
Climate breakdown and extreme weather events- experience and lessons learnt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Species extinction, including tree diseases ➤ Flooding or drought ➤ Storm damage ➤ Ecological crisis 	

Appendix 2a - SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Gateway to the Shropshire Hills NL- national designation</p> <p>Financially viable</p> <p>Iconic building</p> <p>Welcome vibe, with great café, well-stocked shop, books, information and maps</p> <p>Access to outdoors but with facilities</p> <p>Lots of biodiversity- improving management for nature</p> <p>Location next to the main road, station and bus routes and National Cycle Network</p> <p>Staff are committed, engaging, stable, love the centre.</p> <p>Growing volunteer team</p> <p>Manager is hands on and engaged with volunteers</p> <p>Inter-generational audience.</p> <p>Education activities- new and exciting ideas</p> <p>Good introduction to the wider area, including the exhibition</p> <p>Board, staff and volunteer skills</p> <p>New website</p> <p>Community engagement, centred in the community</p> <p>SW80K festival</p> <p>Managed succession</p>	<p>Clarity on purpose</p> <p>Clear links to SHROPSHIRE HILLS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE</p> <p>Low tech</p> <p>Insufficient resources</p> <p>Facility improvements needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Picnic bench area ➤ Space needs reconfiguring ➤ Lack of capacity in café ➤ Poor play area ➤ Insufficient parking spaces ➤ No outside covered area ➤ Accessibility- toilets/ outdoors ➤ Outdated exhibition ➤ Signage needs updating <p>Maintenance of building</p> <p>No provision for dog owners in the centre</p> <p>Dog poo problem</p> <p>Vegetation maintenance</p> <p>Flooding</p> <p>Financial position is vulnerable</p> <p>Energy efficiency</p> <p>Meeting room not currently used by many local groups</p> <p>Not sufficiently visible from the trunk road</p> <p>Parking space restricting income</p> <p>Charity name no longer relevant</p>	<p>Refresh and expand the exhibition, including vision of the future</p> <p>Funding Opportunities</p> <p>Partnerships with likeminded organisations</p> <p>Improved signposting and story telling</p> <p>An exemplar for green technology</p> <p>A hub for local groups</p> <p>Café- more variety and hatch</p> <p>Better play areas</p> <p>More staff to allow evening opening- café and music</p> <p>Art and craft venue- courses and inspiration</p> <p>Improved link with Shropshire Hills National Landscape</p> <p>Reconfigure space to maximise use</p> <p>Increasing regional visitor numbers</p> <p>Increase adult education/ training/ conference</p> <p>Increase memberships/ donations/ legacy funding/ grants/ sponsorship/ crowd funding</p> <p>Corporate offer- volunteering</p> <p>Increase money from car parking</p> <p>Link with slow food and farming/ partnerships</p> <p>Improving messaging</p>	<p>Climate Change- Flooding, drought</p> <p>Lack of funding</p> <p>Vandals</p> <p>Relationship with Town Council</p> <p>Losing key staff</p> <p>Café closed for some reason</p> <p>Tree disease</p> <p>Pollution of river- Onny pipeline</p> <p>Cost of living crisis- lack of spending power</p> <p>Species extinction</p> <p>Regulatory change</p> <p>Loss of mammoth</p> <p>Building repair/ replacement</p> <p>Something happens to damage reputation e.g. website hack, food poisoning, accidents</p> <p>Fire</p> <p>Unexpected closure e.g. Covid</p> <p>Bad crash from A49- e.g. petrol tanker</p> <p>Terrorism- new legislation</p> <p>Financial decline</p>

Appendix 2b: Feedback from Grow, Cook, Learn AGM 2024

What do you love about the Discovery Centre?	What would you like to see improved?	What changes would you like to see in 10 years?
X12 Café and Food - inside and outside space. Relaxed unhurried café. Quality quantity and prices of food - impeccable	X3 AV presentation at AGM and use of microphone. better display for presentations (ceiling projector?)	X5 More cultural diversity and teenage involvement (halal food?)
X8 Warm welcoming space. Community feel. The people.	X3 More parking	X2 Ongoing improvements in meadows. Deal with Himalayan Balsam
X6 Selection of goods and books in shop	X3 Playground and soft play area	X2 A thriving centre
X3 Walking round the meadows and the views	X2 Better energy efficiency	X2 More wildlife courses open to non-experts including older and disabled people
X2 Combines benefits of outdoor activity/volunteering/learning with a sense of contributing to the aims of the community	X2 Return of the Sunday papers - they were great	X2 Focus on sustainable living. Demonstrating low carbon and net zero options
X2 Wildlife walks - eg Dragonfly walk/talks	X2 Accessibility	Better use of community orchard - expand, explain, label trees, attract people to use the products
X2 Car boot sales. Contributes to the sense of community	X2 Better vegan and gluten free options in cafe	Better use of what we grow - coppiced hazel, willow, local crafts and skills
X2 No dogs allowed inside	X2 Queuing to order food	Accessible boardwalk by the river
Accessibility of the Centre	X2 Love the idea of outside serving hatch	Completely embedded in the community
Woodland management is improving	Extra food choices - monthly special	Carry on the good work
Tusker Times	Price labels on cakes	Outside shelter for people with dogs
Exhibition	Coffee quality	Garden produce for café up and running
Visual presentation on entry is excellent	Numbers on the tables in the café	Don't lose the friendly atmosphere
Improved café furniture	More live feeds	More wildlife study areas
Impressive poster designs	Improved signage around grounds	Open a restaurant in the evenings - let the café to a local aspiring chef
Good for group visits and taking visitors	Open allotments sometimes for walks	Fully accessible site but still feeling natural
	Review EV charging points	
	Improve advertising of centre in local towns	
	Can't order food if you have a dog with you	
	Improved focus on sustainability/adaptability to climate change	
	Increased cultural diversity	
	Don't like the loud fireworks - the rest are lovely	
	More education and activities aimed at older people	
	Is the scrape deep enough. Will frogs get out before it dries out?	
	Exhibition	
	Drains better beside footpaths	

Appendix 3 - Strategic context

Strategy	Relevant priority	Current contribution of SHDC	Potential contribution of SHDC
<i>Shropshire Hills National Landscape Management Plan 2025-30</i>	Still in development.	The Discovery Centre is in a unique position as the gateway to the Shropshire Hills National Landscape. It offers information and interpretation of this special landscape.	We can adapt to better deliver the aims of the Management Plan to encourage access to nature, sustainable tourism, climate action and nature recovery, working with an audience that might not otherwise get involved.
<i>Vibrant Shropshire-Cultural Strategy 2021-2031</i>	Enjoy - using culture to support people to be active, happy, healthy and connected	Volunteering in nature Natural play and exploration Promoting physical activity Marketing of wider activities	Enhanced natural play Encouraging local action on climate change
	Create - culture better supports the growth of the local economy and creates more opportunities to earn a living	Support local arts and crafts producers through the café and shop and promote workshops in local crafts.	Provide training opportunities on sustainable practice for local businesses Encouraging climate change mitigation for businesses
	Explore - delighting and surprising visitors and residents with independent, authentic experiences	Cultural destination for visitors Promote artisan producers of local food and drink, arts and crafts	Encouraging more sustainable approach to tourism Development of more outdoor adventures and experiences Joint promotion of local cultural activities
	Live - harnessing 'ownership' and pride in local places for the benefit of all	Encourage cultural diversity by providing opportunities for all Provide low-cost activities for local people Promote sustainable transport options	Improve accessibility Develop as a community cultural hub Ensure venue is energy efficient and environmentally sustainable

Nurture - Shropshire's high-quality natural landscapes are valued and enhanced for future generations	Foster active local of nature that helps people engage with the environment in a sustainable way Engage schools and young people with and learns from the natural environment Develop nature recovery projects	Develop and promote sustainability and nature Help ensure the Shropshire Hills National Landscape is recognised for its high-quality environment Develop habitat conservation and enhancement projects
Innovate - driving innovation, including digital development, to enhance cultural experiences, improve physical and intellectual access and tackle social isolation	Newly designed website has made it easier for people to engage with the Discovery Centre, including being able to sign up for memberships online.	Work with creative tech companies to develop new cultural experiences Develop digital capacity through events and training programmes Present culture in a way that is relevant and exciting for new audiences Develop a young-creatives group to consider new approaches
Connect - forge strong partnerships to drive forward our shared cultural ambition	Working with many partners, as listed in the strategy.	Join Vibrant Shropshire- Cultural Compact and other relevant county and regional partnerships Develop partner relationships to deliver aims
Happy - Encourage enjoyment of Shropshire's Great Outdoors by more people, of all ages and abilities.	The Discovery Centre is an important gateway to the Shropshire Hills National Landscape and surrounding area. It acts as a visitor information centre, providing information about outdoor activities, walks, cycling and riding routes across the area.	We aim to improve the visitor offer to upgrade facilities and inspire more people to get involved in the Great Outdoors.
Healthy - Benefit the health of residents and visitors through increased physical activity and improved mental wellbeing in the Great Outdoors.	Onny Meadows provides an important outside space for local people and visitors from further afield, where they can experience the Great Outdoors and take physical exercise. There are several	We will ensure the outdoor space continues to be available for all, and aim to provide new outdoor experiences that appeal to different age groups.

	all-access paths that ensure access to nature for all.	
Prosperous - Promote opportunities to improve the local economy by sympathetic commercial use and development of the outdoor assets.	The Onny Meadows are integral to the visitor offer at the Discovery Centre, which uses and promotes local products and offers local employment.	Promote a broader product range, focusing on local artisan producers. Work with partners to raise the profile of the Discovery Centre for local produce.
Connected - Bring people together within their communities to appreciate the potential of their outdoor assets, to make decisions locally about these, and to participate actively in their maintenance and improvement.	The Discovery Centre and Onny Meadows provide a focal point for people to meet and engage with others. We provide a range of talks, walks and events, which encourage interaction. There is an active volunteer group helping to maintain Onny Meadows, who also help look after local Rights of Way. Members meet annually with Trustees and staff to contribute to the development of the outdoor space.	Develop the Discovery Centre as a community hub, where relevant local groups can meet and network with others.
Cherished - Conserve and enhance special places that are important for nature, heritage and people.	The Onny Meadows are conserved and enhanced through a management plan, with a dedicated member of staff and active volunteer group.	Continue to engage volunteers, working with a more diverse group where possible, and encouraging more young people to get involved.
Safe - Ensure Shropshire's outdoor assets are safe and well maintained to meet statutory obligations and new opportunities, now and in the future, within current financial restrictions.	The staff team ensure the spaces are safe for the public, staff and volunteers, with appropriate safeguards in place to meet statutory requirements.	An audit of process and procedures is planned by Trustees to ensure they are up to date and effective.

<i>Shropshire's Destination Management Plan 2023-25</i>	Develop a strong evidence base to support future decision making		Work with the Shropshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership to better understand the evidence and use this to target future activities.
	Improve digital infrastructure for tourism businesses	Our website has been revamped and offers an excellent introduction to the Discovery Centre and the broader area.	Link with others, where appropriate to become more central to the overall county visitor offer.
	Increase the appeal of the county for visiting families	The Discovery Centre is popular with families and offers a range of family friendly events and activities.	Develop the offer further for families, including outdoor activities.
	Become an exemplar destination for sustainable tourism practice	We promote sustainable travel and visitor experiences, with an increasingly local carbon footprint for the visitor centre.	Ensure the Discovery Centre is as energy efficient as possible and interpret this. Promote low impact outdoor activities. Source local produce and reduce food miles.
	Increase Shropshire's reputation for quality experiences by developing the product	The Discovery Centre is a hub for walking, cycling and other outdoor activities and promotes local produce.	Develop the reputation of the Discovery Centre as a core visitor destination for the county.
	Still in development.	Onny Meadows offers people an introduction to a range of habitats including wildflower meadows, riparian banks, orchards and wetland.	Work with community groups and professionals to better understand the biodiversity of the Meadows through surveying. Offering Citizen Science training and volunteer experience in habitat management. Developing as a hub for relevant community groups to meet and network.
<i>Zero Carbon Shropshire Plan</i>	Energy, through its generation and use	The Discovery Centre is working towards a lower carbon footprint, including LED lighting and solar PV.	We aspire to fit a ground-source heat pump to heat the Discovery Centre in the future. Develop the Discovery Centre as a Climate Action Hub, offering support

		and training to help climate change adaptation and recovery
Buildings		Make the Discovery Centre as efficient as possible and interpret this.
Transport	Promote public transport and low impact outdoor activities.	Work with transport providers to better promote public transport and encourage people to not use private vehicles. Install electric vehicle charging in the car park.
Stuff we buy and use... then throw away	Reducing single use packaging/ cups/ retail sales	Continue to ensure minimum use of non-recyclable/ non-biodegradable products
Land use and biodiversity	Conservation management of Onny Meadows	Focus on nature recovery in Onny Meadows, with talks, walks, events and training to help people better understand the issues, including Citizen Science training.