
Interim
Management
Plan Review
(2023/25) -
Habitats
Regulations
Assessment
Screening
Report

The Cotswolds
National
Landscape

Paul Tiplady
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CRAGGATAK
Consulting



THE CRAGG, SATTERTHWAITHE
Nr ULVERSTON, CUMBRIA
LA12 8LW
01229 860269
enquiries@craggatak.co.uk
www.craggatak.co.uk

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Map 1: The Cotswolds National Landscape



1. Background

- 1.1. This Screening Report has been prepared as part of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Cotswolds Interim Management Plan Review. The Cotswolds National Landscape Management plan is already subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)¹. SEA and HRA are separate assessments. However, the two are complimentary and contribute to the management plan process, with all three exercises proceeding jointly and in an iterative way. Unlike SEA and National Landscape management plans, there is no requirement to submit the HRA to public consultation. It is for scrutiny by Natural England, as the statutory consultee for Habitats Regulation Assessment.

The European Habitats Directive

- 1.2. The UK national site network of European sites provides ecological infrastructure for the protection of sites that are of exceptional importance in respect of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species. Habitat Regulations Assessment is a statutory requirement² to ensure that the protection of the integrity of these sites is a part of the planning process at a regional and local level. Under the Regulations, there is a requirement for the Cotswolds National Landscape Board to undertake a HRA of the draft Management Plan to determine whether its policies and actions are likely to have a significant adverse effect on any internationally recognised sites of nature conservation interest (the National Site networks). These sites include Special Protection Areas (SPAs), designated under the Birds Directive³; and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), designated under the Habitats Directive⁴. Natural England guidance specifies the inclusion of sites designated under the Ramsar wetlands convention in HRAs⁵. If there are significant adverse effects then there is an examination of alternative policies or avoidance and mitigation measures. The intent is to prevent the plan from detrimentally influencing any National Site network conservation objectives.
- 1.3. Article 2 of the Habitats Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of habitats and species of European Community interest, at a favourable conservation status. Articles 3 - 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest. Article 6 (3) of the Directive states:
- 1.4. “Any plan or project not directly connected with, or necessary to, the management of the [European] site, but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”. Transposed into law by Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the “SEA Regulations”).

² Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21st May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. Transposed into law by the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994 (Habitats Regulation) as amended in 1997 and in 2000 (in England only) as amended in 2017 (SI 1012).

³ Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (the codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended).

⁴ Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora

⁵ Natural England 2009. Final Draft Guidance: The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Development Documents.

combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives”.

Habitats Regulations Assessment Stages

1.5. It is the accepted practice to adopt a stage-by-stage approach for an Article 6 Assessment. There are four stages:

- **Stage One: Screening** - To identify the likely impacts on a National Site network of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and consider whether these impacts are likely to be significant;
- **Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment** (where there are likely to be significant impacts) - To consider the impact on the integrity of the National Site network of the project or plan, either alone or 'in combination' with other projects or plans, with respect to the structure, function and conservation objectives of the site. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, to assess the potential mitigation of those impacts;
- **Stage Three: Assessment of alternative solutions** - To examine alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the National Site network;
- **Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist** (where adverse impacts remain) - To assess compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest, it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

Each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. If, for example, the conclusions at the end of Stage One are that there will be no significant impacts on any National Site network, there is no requirement to proceed further.

Cotswolds National Landscape

- 1.6. The Cotswolds National Landscape was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1966, and extended in area in 1990. Although AONB is still the legal name of the designation, it was rebranded as a 'National Landscape' for most purposes in June 2020. At 2038 square kilometres, it is the largest AONB – and the third largest protected landscape, including National Parks – in England. The National Landscape stretches from Bath and Wiltshire in the south, through Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire to Warwickshire and Worcestershire in the north (**Figure 1**). It cuts across 15 local authority areas.
- 1.7. AONBs are landscapes whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them⁶. Each AONB has been designated by reason of its 'special qualities'. These include the flora, fauna, historical and cultural associations as well as landscape and scenic views.

Management Plan review

- 1.8. Section 82 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 establishes the primary purpose of AONB designation as the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. Section 85 of the CRoW Act places a duty on all public bodies to 'have regard' to the 'purpose of

⁶ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) (2015) *Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Landscape Protection and Enhancement Support Scheme (England) 2015 – 17. Application to European Commission*.

conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty'. Under Section 89, the relevant local authorities must prepare and publish a Management Plan for each AONB; and keep it under review. The Management Plan is a statutory document. It provides a policy framework that brings together partners to help them design, resource and implement the priorities set out specifically for the AONB designation. It guides and informs all other plans and activities that may affect the AONB so that they can contribute to the continued conservation and enhancement of the AONB designation.

1.9. For this AONB, there is one relevant authority, the Cotswolds National Landscape Board. Established as the Cotswolds Conservation Board by Parliament in 2004, it has two statutory purposes⁷:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape.
- To increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

In fulfilling these roles, the Board has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of people living in the National Landscape. In circumstances where these purposes and duties are irreconcilable, the Board must give priority to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape⁸.

1.10. The Board consists of 37 members, of whom local authorities nominate 15, the parish councils nominate eight, and government appoint 14. The Board's work programme is delivered by a small team of staff, supported by volunteers including the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens who deliver a programme of practical projects and guided walks across the National Landscape

1.11. The current Management Plan is for the 2018-23 period. CRoW requires a formal review of each Management Plan at intervals of not more than five years. Due to possible pressures and changes soon, the Board has decided that an interim review is appropriate. The Board is now preparing an interim Management Plan for the period 2023-25. Following consultation with local communities, public bodies and agencies with an interest in the area, the interim plan will present the special qualities and features of the National Landscape, and set out the outcomes and policies needed to ensure their conservation and enhancement.

2. HRA programme and methodology

Introduction

2.1. The approach for carrying out the HRA of the National Landscape Management Plan Review is based on good practice and the following guidance:

- European Commission (2001). Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites
- European Commission (2002). Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/ECC
- Department for Communities and Local Government (2006). Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment. Guidance for Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents.

⁷ Section 87, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, as amended by the NERC Act 2006.

⁸ This prioritisation of conserving and enhancing is known as the 'Sandford Principle', after Lord Sandford, who chaired the National Parks Policy Review Committee between 1971 and 1974.

- European Commission (2007). Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/ECC
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations as amended

2.2. A summary of the approach and method applied to the Management Plan is set out in **Table 1** below:

Table 1: The four stages of assessment

Stages / Tasks		Description	Habitats Directive
1	Likely Significant Effects or 'Screening'	i Analyse the National Site network(s) and the reasons for designation, and the underlying trends affecting it (them)	
		ii Assess whether the policies and associated actions either alone or in combination with other plans are able to have a significant impact on the site(s).	
Where a significant impact is likely:			<i>Article 6(3)</i>
2	Appropriate Assessment	i Analyse the policy, including key components and how the actions would be implemented in practice	
		ii Analyse other plans and projects that could contribute to 'in combination' effects	
		iii Analyse how the policies and actions in combination with other plans and projects will 'interact' with implementation	
		iv Where applicable, propose and assess mitigation measures for addressing adverse effects	
		v Prepare an Appropriate Assessment Report for consultation with NE and key stakeholders	
3	Assessment of Alternative Solutions	- Reassess alternatives if effective mitigation proves impossible and develop / select a different alternative that does not harm site integrity.	
4	Assessment where no alternative solutions remain and where adverse impacts remain	i At this stage actions which, even with mitigation, still have an adverse effect on the site(s) integrity should be dropped.	<i>Article 6(4)</i>
		ii Assess whether an action can be passed justified by 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest'. Permitted on the grounds of human health, public safety or primary beneficial consequences for the environment.	

Step one – Pre-Screening

2.3. Gather information on the location of the National Landscape and the scope and intent of its draft Management Plan. This includes the location, conservation objectives and qualifying feature(s) for each National Site network complete with the key factors influencing that condition; and the objectives of other plans and schemes in the area that may work in combination with the Management Plan to affect a National Site network.

Step two – Screening for a likely significant effect

- 2.4. Categorise each element of the plan as to its likely effects on each interest feature of each National Site network identified as subject to assessment in the evidence base. This includes all the reasons for the designation / classification or listing of the site (in the case of SAC, including primary and non-primary reasons for designation). There are four categories of potential effects as follows:

- Category A:** elements of the plan that would have no negative effect⁹ on a National Site network at all;
- Category B:** elements of the plan that could have an effect but the likelihood is there would be no significant negative effect on a National Site network either alone or in combination with other elements of the same plan, or other plans or projects;
- Category C:** elements of the plan that could or would be likely to have a significant effect alone and will require the plan to be subject to an appropriate assessment before the plan may be adopted;
- Category D:** elements of the plan that would be likely to have a significant effect in combination with other elements of the same plan, or other plans or projects and will require the plan to be subject to an appropriate assessment before the plan may be adopted;

After Tyldesley, D. CCW 2012

- 2.5. There are three tasks in Step Two:

Task 1 – Compile a schedule listing all the policies and actions of the Management Plan. Check each element for the likelihood of it leading to a significant effect on a National Site network.

All elements placed in Category A are set aside, as they could have no ecological impact on any National Site network.

Those elements identified as having a potential negative impact upon any National Site network were re-checked 'in combination' with other elements of the Management Plan. Where other elements clearly mitigated any potential negative impacts, they are set aside.

Task 2 – Assess the remaining elements of the plan for each National Site network (both alone and in combination) to identify any elements that could have an effect but would not be likely to have a significant (negative) effect on a National Site network because the effects are trivial or 'de minimis', even if combined with other effects (Category B). The identification of such elements follows the precautionary principle. If there is any doubt about an ecological impact then the element remains in the assessment process.

All elements placed in Category B are set aside, as they could have no ecological impact on any National Site network.

⁹ 'Negative' effects in the context of this and all the following lists are effects that would be likely to undermine the conservation objectives of a European site. (Tyldesley, D., 2012 'Final Draft Guidance for Plan Making Authorities in Wales: The Appraisal of Plans under the Habitats Regulations' by David Tyldesley and Associates for Countryside Council for Wales, September 2012. footnote 24)

Task 3 - Any remaining elements are likely to have a significant effect alone (Category C) or in combination (Category D).

Move to Step Three

Step Three – Appropriate Assessment

Once identified as Category C or D, the recommendation is to remove the policy or action from the plan, or otherwise modify the plan, to avoid the likelihood of significant effects (all modifications pass through the assessment steps).

Where modification is not possible, the plan must be the subject of a full appropriate assessment.

Consultation and re-appraisal

- 2.6. The draft Management Plan and Habitats Regulations Screening Report (together with the Strategic Environmental Assessment) are the subject of consultation with the statutory agencies and principal stakeholders. As well as the formal consultation with the statutory agencies, there is regular informal support from Natural England throughout the process.
- 2.7. Amendments to the Management Plan may occur in the light of the Screening Report and Strategic Environmental Assessment findings and / or the advice received from the statutory agencies. The plan making authority should remove potentially harmful policies and proposals and explicitly include measures to ensure that no development flowing from the plan will have an adverse effect on the integrity of a National Site network. The plan making authority must consult and reach agreement with Natural England before concluding that a plan would have no adverse effect on the integrity of a National Site network. If the plan making authority amends the Management Plan, then there is a reappraisal of the impacts upon the integrity of any National Site networks under the Habitat Regulations using the methodology set out above.

3. National Site network potentially affected

List of relevant National Sites

- 3.1. The National Site network provides ecological infrastructure for the protection of sites that are of exceptional importance in respect of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species within the Europe. These sites consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). It is common practice to treat RAMSAR sites (Internationally Important Wetlands) as if they were national sites. The guidance recommends taking into consideration sites within the plan area and within 15km of its boundary. Through an analysis using MAGIC Map¹⁰ it was determined that there are 5 National Sites in the National Landscape and 15 within 15km of its boundary. The relevant National Site networks for the Cotswolds National Landscape are set out in **Table 2**; **Map 2** shows the location and spatial relationship of the National Sites to the Cotswolds National Landscape.

¹⁰ The Government's open-access mapping service at <http://magic.gov.uk/>

Map 2: Location of National Sites

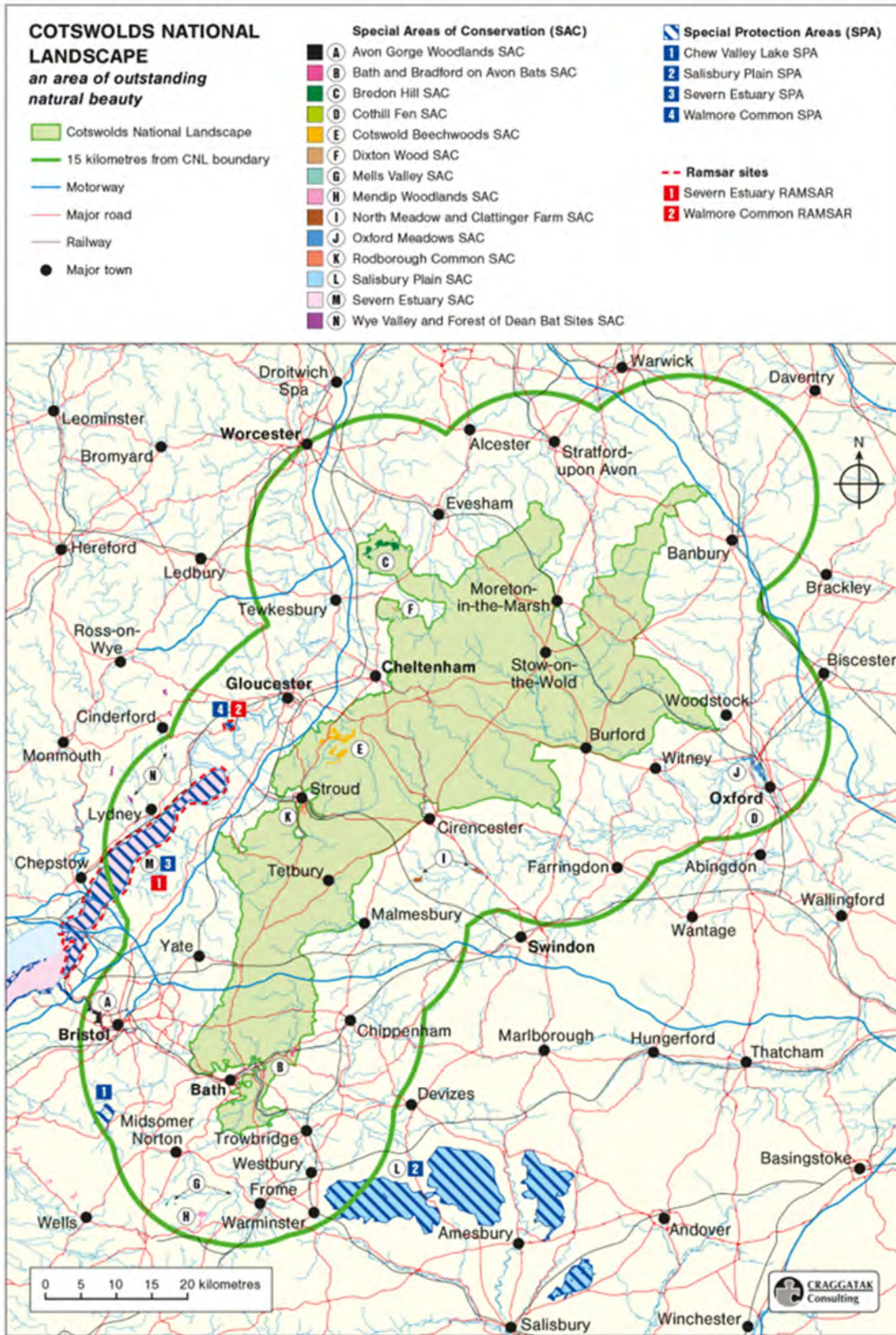


Table 2: National Sites

National Sites in the National Landscape boundary

Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC
Bredon Hill SAC
Cotswold Beechwoods SAC
Dixton Wood SAC
Rodborough Common SAC

National Sites within 15km of the National Landscape boundary

Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC
Cothill Fen SAC
Mells Valley SAC
Mendip Woodlands SAC **
North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC
Oxford Meadows SAC
Salisbury Plain SAC*
Severn Estuary SAC
Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC

Chew Valley Lake SPA*
Salisbury Plain SPA*
Severn Estuary RAMSAR
Severn Estuary SPA
Walmore Common RAMSAR*
Walmore Common SPA*

Though not subject to HRA, other sites to note

96 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) covering 41.20 km² (2.02%) of the Cotswolds National Landscape (these include 81 geological SSSI unit features and 2 National Nature Reserves).

- 3.2. Descriptions of each National Site are set out in **Appendix 1**. The qualifying features and conservation objectives for each site are set out in a schedule, as stated by Natural England.

4. Potential adverse effects of the Management Plan

AONB Management Plan

- 4.1. The Management Plan sets out a framework that gives guidance and direction towards achieving the long-term Vision for the Cotswolds National Landscape. The Outcomes and policies are set out under three over-arching headings that reflect the National Landscape's purpose of designation (to conserve and enhance natural beauty) and the National Landscape Board's additional purpose (to increase understanding and enjoyment). The headings are:
- 1) **Cross Cutting Themes** - Tackling 21st century issues through progressive partnerships, addressed by 8 policies.
 - 2) **Conserving and Enhancing** - Influencing and delivering for landscape, nature and climate, addressed by 13 policies.

- 3) **Increasing Understanding and Enjoyment** - Ensuring access, learning and wellbeing opportunities are for everyone, addressed by 3 policies.

4.2. The policy framework is set out in **Appendix 3**.

Identifying potential adverse effects of Management Plan Policies

4.3. To understand whether the Management Plan may affect the national sites listed above it is necessary to identify those factors that will adversely affect the sites. Through Natural England, data is available for the national site network on the conservation objectives and descriptions of the designated features of interest complete with a statement on the current pressures and vulnerabilities that threaten their integrity¹¹. These pressures are set out in **Appendix 1** and are summarised in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Pressures on the integrity of European sites

Sites within the National Landscape

Air pollution, air-borne pollutants
 Changes in abiotic conditions
 Changes in biotic conditions
 Cultivation
 Forest and Plantation management & use
 Inter-specific floral relations
 Invasive non-native species
 Other ecosystem modifications
 Other urbanisation, industrial and similar activities
 Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities
 Problematic native species
 Unknown threat or pressure

Sites within 15km of the National Landscape boundary

All the above plus:

Cultivation
 Dredging
 Erosion
 Forest and Plantation management & use
 Grazing
 Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions
 Modification of cultivation practices
 Other human intrusions and disturbances
 Pollution to groundwater (point sources and diffuse sources)
 Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish)

¹¹ There are Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) for each national site in England, developed as part of the Improvement Programme for England's national site network. They are live documents capable of updating to reflect changes in evidence / knowledge and as actions get underway. Ranking in the table is from the SIP.

Recreational/tourism disturbance (unspecified)

- 4.4. The Site Improvement Plans for network sites within the Cotswolds National landscape provide an overview of the issues (both current and predicted) affecting the condition of the SACs. They also outline the priority measures required to improve the condition of the features. They do not cover issues where remedial actions are already in place or ongoing site maintenance activities. **Appendix 2** sets out in detail the issues for the sites in Table 3.
- 4.5. The factors listed in the national site schedules frame the testing of policies within the National Landscape Management Plan when assessing their effect upon the sites.

Results of the preliminary screening appraisal

- 4.6. **Task 1** is to compile a schedule listing all the policies of the Management Plan and check each for the likelihood of it leading to a significant effect on the national site network (**Appendix 4**). The initial task was to identify those policies that have no negative effects (Category A see **Appendix 4a**).
- 4.7. The preliminary screening appraisal reduced the long list of policies presented in Appendix 3 to two that have the potential to have some of the impacts presented in Table 3, which are set out in **Table 4**. The Management Plan’s policies do not directly trigger development proposals, and neither do they provide a decision-making framework for development. However, the assessment applies the precautionary principle. An element is screened when it has the potential for one or more of the impacts, even if it falls under an element that does not have that impact. Where no potential ecological impacts have been identified, it has been assumed that the policy or action will not have an impact on the National Site network.

Table 4: Policies that may have an effect on a National Site network

POLICY UE1: Health and Well-being	<p>1 Opportunities for improving health and wellbeing in the Cotswolds National Landscape should be created, improved and promoted, including, where appropriate, the provision of: green spaces within easy reach of communities, walking, cycling and riding routes, including routes for the disabled; opportunities to access and interact with nature; and volunteering and personal development opportunities.</p> <p>2 Children and young people resident within and around the National Landscape should be provided with environmental education opportunities to experience the Cotswolds National Landscape through direct contact with the natural environment.</p> <p>3 The health sector should make greater use of the benefits that the National Landscape provides for the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors, for example, by prescribing exercise in the Cotswolds National Landscape countryside.</p>
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**POLICY UE2:
Access &
Recreation**

1 A safe, pleasant, accessible, clearly waymarked and well-connected Public Rights of Way network should be maintained, enhanced and promoted across the Cotswolds National Landscape.

2 Open Access Land and other land, including Country Parks, that is open to public access should be maintained, enhanced and promoted across the Cotswolds National Landscape. Where appropriate, more land should be made available for public access.

3 Sustainable funding for National Trails, including the Cotswold Way and Thames Path, should be secured.

4 Visitors, residents and local communities should be provided with opportunities to increase their understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

5 A priority for engagement in the National Landscape should be communities from the surrounding urban areas, in particular those from areas of high deprivation and those that are not traditional visitors to the Cotswolds. Individuals from within the National Landscape who are not currently enjoying or engaged with the benefits of the landscape should also be a priority.

6 Easily accessible online and downloadable and onsite resources for walking, cycling, horse riding, volunteering and educational activities should be provided in the National Landscape to help promote access to the area and understanding and appreciation of its special qualities.

7 Visitor facilities and routes that are accessible to those of all abilities should be provided through improvements to infrastructure.

8 Guided walks and activities for those who are not confident walking in the countryside should be provided to increase confidence and share knowledge of the national Landscape and its special qualities.

9 Arts and cultural experiences should be provided to encourage people to deepen their emotional connection to the landscape and support the engagement of new and existing audiences.

10 The Countryside code should be promoted to educate visitors and communities to act appropriately in the countryside and to improve understanding between visitors and those living and working in the area.

11 The provision of access and recreational opportunities should not have an adverse impact on the Cotswolds National Landscape. Where recreational use is having or is likely to have, an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these impacts. Such steps can include enhanced maintenance and wayfinding, onsite engagement, legal restrictions, and the provision and promotion of access and recreational opportunities in new alternative suitable locations.

4.8. Task two is to assess the two policies against each national network site (both alone and in combination) to identify any elements that could have an effect but would not be likely to have a significant (negative) effect on a National Site because the effects are trivial or 'de minimis', even if combined with other effects. Only parts of the two policies may have an impact on the National Site network. These relate to increasing public access to land.

4.9. As written, the paragraphs can only affect sites within the National Landscape; and only three National Sites show public access, disturbance or the direct impact from third parties as an issue (see Appendix 2). These are:

- Bath & Bradford SAC
- Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC
- Rodborough Common SAC

4.10. The analysis is presented in **Appendix 4b**.

- 4.11. The preliminary screening finds that no policies Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan are likely to have any **Likely Significant Effect** on the National Site network.

Outcome of consultation

- 4.12. Natural England agrees that the Interim Management Plan Review (2023/25) would not be likely to result in a significant effect on any of the UK national site network of European conservation sites, either alone or in combination and therefore no further assessment work would be required (**Appendix 6**).

5. Other relevant plans

Introduction

- 5.1. The Habitats Regulations state that when considering whether a specific plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the national site network, this should consider possible 'in-combination' effects with other plans or projects.
- 5.2. Part of the Management Plan screening process is to identify the plans, programmes and projects that could have 'in-combination' effects. There is no assessment of these plans, programmes and projects in any detail at this stage. In-combination effects will only be assessed where it is identified in Stage 2 of the HRA process that the Management Plan policies and actions are likely to have significant adverse effects. If the plan is not likely to have an impact on a site, there is no potential for any 'in-combination' effect. A series of other plans and projects have been identified to test for possible in-combination effects. These are outlined in **Appendix 5**.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1. Results of Screening:
- **That no policy areas would have a Likely Significant Effect on any National Sites.**
 - **There is no requirement to undertake an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitat Regulations.**

Appendices

Appendix 1: Location & description of the National Site networks

Sites within the AONB

Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC

The SAC comprises four component sites: Brown's Folly, Box Mine, Winsley Mines, and Combe Down and Bathampton Down Mines. These are distributed over a wide geographical area to the south and east of Bath and have different known bat usages, which over the whole of the SAC include breeding, hibernation, swarming and dispersal. The sites are all abandoned limestone mines and some include areas of supporting habitat: broadleaved woodland and species rich calcareous grassland. The surrounding landscape provides feeding and commuting opportunities between the component SSSIs, other SAC sites and other undesignated roosts which is vital in supporting the bats throughout their life cycle. Features of significance within the wider landscape are watercourses, woodland, grazed pasture, hay meadows, hedgerows, linear trees and scrub.

Site details

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol/Bath area
Centroid¹²	ST834688
Latitude	51.4175
Longitude	-2.238611111
SAC EU code	UK0012584
Status	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha)	106.45
General site character	
Heath, Scrub, Maquis and Garrigue, Phygrana (4%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (41%) Other land (including Towns, Villages, Roads, Waste places, Mines, Industrial sites) (55%)	
Conservation objectives	Issues¹³
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely The populations of qualifying species, and, The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Other ecosystem modifications Unknown threat or pressure Other urbanisation, industrial and similar activities
Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site	

¹² This is the approximate central point of the SAC. In the case of large, linear or composite sites, this may not represent the location where a feature occurs within the SAC.

¹³ Identified in the Natural England Site Improvement Plans

Bechstein's bat <i>Myotis bechsteinii</i> Greater horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>
Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection Lesser horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>

Bredon Hill SAC

Bredon Hill is an outlier of the Cotswold Hills composed of sedimentary rocks of Jurassic age. Throughout the historic period the hill was used for sheep pasture. A feature of the scarp slope is the large number of open-grown trees. These have been incorporated into pasture-woodlands and parklands, first established in 1275.

Bredon Hill has one of the best assemblages of invertebrates associated with ancient trees (known collectively as saproxylic invertebrates) in Britain. The saproxylic invertebrates are associated with ancient native trees, in particular ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. Pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, beech *Fagus sylvatica* and field maple *Acer campestre* are also important. There are concentrations of such trees in Elmley Castle Deer Park to the east and at Bredon's Norton to the west, but important individual and groups of trees are found all along the northern side of the hill. Nectar sources, such as hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* in hedgerows and scrub, and thistles *Cirsium* spp. in grasslands, are important feeding and mating sites for the adults of saproxylic insects. The violet click beetle *Limonicus violaceus* has been found at two separate sites on the hill.

Site details

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire
Centroid	SO965406
Latitude	52.0636
Longitude	-2.0506
SAC EU code	UK0012587
Status	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha)	360.46
General site character	
Heath, Scrub, Maquis and Garrigue, Phygrana (10%) Dry grassland, Steppes (10%) Non-forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including Orchards, groves, Vineyards, Dehesas) (80%)	
Conservation objectives	Issues
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely The populations of qualifying species, and, The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	Changes in abiotic conditions Inter-specific floral relations Unknown threat or pressure Air pollution, air-borne pollutants Forest and Plantation management & use

Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site

Violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus*

Cotswold Beechwoods SAC

The site consists of ancient beech woodland and unimproved grassland lying over Jurassic limestones at the western edge of the Cotswolds. The woodlands are amongst the most diverse and species-rich of their type while the grasslands typify the unimproved calcareous pastures for which the area is famous. The Cotswold Beechwoods represent the most westerly extensive blocks of *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests in the UK.

The woods are floristically richer than the Chilterns, and rare plants include red helleborine *Cephalanthera rubra*, stinking hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*, narrow-lipped helleborine *Epipactis leptochila* and wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus*. There is a rich mollusc fauna. The woods are structurally varied, including blocks of high forest and some areas of remnant beech coppice.

Site details

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol/Bath area
Centroid	SO898134
Latitude	51.81861111
Longitude	-2.147777778
SAC EU code	UK0013658
Status	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha)	590.2

General site character

Inland water bodies (Standing water, Running water) (1%)
 Dry grassland, Steppes (1.5%)
 Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (82%)
 Coniferous woodland (5%)
 Mixed woodland (10%)
 Other land (including Towns, Villages, Roads, Waste places, Mines, Industrial sites) (0.5%)

Conservation objectives	Issues
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely	Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Inter-specific floral relations Problematic native species Invasive non-native species

Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site

Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests. (Beech forests on neutral to rich soils)

Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site

Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*). (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone)

Dixton Wood SAC

Dixton Wood is a steep east facing woodland surrounded by permanent grassland, situated in the foothills of the Cotswold Scarp. The wood represents an atypical ash *Fraxinus excelsior*-field maple *Acer campestre*-dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* community, with a lush but impoverished ground flora and unusual structure derived from wood pasture management. The historic management of the site has resulted in a number of very large, low ash pollards with a range of deadwood types, from split ash boles, shattered tree limbs, old and active pollards and cut stumps. The moist clay soils, the aspect and ground and scrub cover sustain a humid microclimate which probably enhances the decay process. The deadwood beetle fauna of Dixton Wood is very rich and includes the violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus*. Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* hedges and flowering bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. provide important nectar sources for the deadwood fauna.

Site details

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol/Bath area
Centroid	SO979313
Latitude	51.97972222
Longitude	-2.030555556
SAC EU code	UK0030135
Status	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha)	13.02
General site character Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (100%)	
Conservation objectives	Issues
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely The populations of qualifying species, and, The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	Changes in biotic conditions Forest and Plantation management & use Inter-specific floral relations
Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site Violet click beetle <i>Limoniscus violaceus</i>	

Rodborough Common SAC

Rodborough Common is the most extensive area of semi-natural dry grassland surviving in the Cotswolds and represents upright brome – tor-grass (*Bromopsis erecta* – *Brachypodium pinnatum*) grassland, which is more or less confined to the Cotswolds. The site contains a wide range of structural types, ranging from short turf through to scrub margins, although short-turf vegetation is mainly confined to areas of shallower soils.

Site details

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol/Bath area
Centroid	SO849036
Latitude	51.73083333
Longitude	-2.218333333
SAC EU code	UK0012826
Status	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha)	109.27
General site character	
Heath, Scrub, Maquis and Garrigue, Phygrana (10%) Dry grassland, Steppes (70%) Improved grassland (10%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (10%)	
Conservation objectives	Issues
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely	Cultivation Air pollution, air-borne pollutants Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities
Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site	
Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>). (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone)	

Sites within 15 Km of the AONB boundary

Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC

The Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC is good example of *Tilio-Acerion* forests in south-west England. It is important because of the high concentration of Small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* and the presence of rare whitebeams *Sorbus spp.*, including at least two which are unique to the Avon Gorge (*S. bristoliensis* and *S. wilmottiana*), and other Nationally Scarce plants, such as Angular Solomon's-seal *Polygonatum odoratum*.

The associated species-rich transitions to scrub and herb-rich calcareous open limestone grassland often found on cliff ledges support a high number of Nationally Rare and Scarce species, such as Bristol rock-cress *Arabis scabra*, round-headed leek ('Bristol onion') *Allium sphaerocephalon* and honewort *Trinia glauca*. Part of the Leigh Woods side of the SAC is considered to be important remnant wood pasture habitat which was managed as a wood pasture for many hundreds of years. This is shown by the presence of large numbers of veteran pollards, which are also highly likely to be important for saproxylic invertebrates.

Site details

Country	England
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Unitary Authority	Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol/Bath area
Centroid	ST560741
Latitude	51.46388889
Longitude	-2.633611111
SAC EU code	UK0012734
Status	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha)	151.07
General site character	
Heath, Scrub, Maquis and Garrigue, Phygrana (4%) Dry grassland, Steppes (4%) Humid grassland, Mesophile grassland (2%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (70%) Coniferous woodland (5%) Mixed woodland (5%) Inland rocks, Scree, Sands, Permanent Snow and ice (10%)	
Conservation objectives	Issues
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely	Problematic native species Changes in biotic conditions Inter-specific floral relations Grazing Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities
Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site	
<i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, scree and ravines (mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes).	
Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site	
Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone) Important orchid site	

Chew Valley Lake SPA

Chew Valley Lake SPA is located south of Bristol and is the largest artificial freshwater lake in South West England. It is a large, shallow reservoir with peripheral areas of reedbeds, carr woodland and neutral grassland. The water conditions are eutrophic and open water plant communities are rather sparse. The open water of the reservoir and its margins are of high value for wintering waterbirds, specifically overwintering Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*.

Site details

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Centroid	ST569597
Latitude	51.33388889
Longitude	-2.618611111

SPA EU code	UK9010041
Status	Special Protection Area (SPA)
Area (ha)	575.73
General site character Bogs, Marshes, Water fringed vegetation, Fens 6% Broad-leaved deciduous woodland 4% Humid grassland, Mesophile grassland 7% Inland water bodies (Standing water, Running water) 83% Soil & Geology:neutral,sedimentary,basic Geomorphology and landscape:valley,lowland	
Conservation objectives	Issues
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring; The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely The population of each of the qualifying features, and, The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.	Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities
Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site Northern shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>	

Cothill Fen SAC

Cothill Fen is an exceptionally important site with an outstanding range of nationally rare habitats which support a large number of rare invertebrates and plants. The habitats consist of calcareous fen, calcareous grassland, woodland and scrub of varying degrees of wetness. The habitat supports over 330 species of vascular plant and over 120 nationally scarce or rare invertebrates, including the nationally rare Southern Damselfly (*Coenagrion mercuriale*).

Site details

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire
Centroid	SU463999
Latitude	51.69555556
Longitude	-1.329444444
SAC EU code	UK0012889
Status	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha)	43.39
General site character Inland water bodies (Standing water, Running water) (1%) Bogs, Marshes, Water fringed vegetation, Fens (25%) Dry grassland, Steppes (2%)	

Improved grassland (10%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (62%)	
Conservation objectives	Issues
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely	Pollution to groundwater (point sources and diffuse sources) Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions
Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site Alkaline fens. (Calcium-rich springwater-fed fens)	
Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>). (Alder woodland on floodplains) - Priority feature	

Mells Valley SAC

The Mells Valley SAC lies at the eastern end of the Mendip Hills in the County of Somerset. The site has three component sites: The Old Ironstone Works Mells, St. Dunstan's Well Catchment and Vallis Vale. The primary interest of the site is the maternity roost of Greater Horseshoe Bats *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* originally located in the Old Ironstone Works Mells site. Subsidiary interests are caves not open to the public located on the other two sites and an area of limestone grassland on the St Dunstan's Well Catchment site. The caves are used as a hibernacula by some of the bats from the maternity roost.

Site details

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Dorset and Somerset
Centroid	ST657476
Latitude	51.22583333
Longitude	-2.491666667
SAC EU code	UK0012658
Status	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha)	28.77
General site character Humid grassland, Mesophile grassland (5%) Improved grassland (60%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (10%) Other land (including Towns, Villages, Roads, Waste places, Mines, Industrial sites) (25%)	
Conservation objectives	Issues
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species	Unknown threat or pressure Other human intrusions and disturbances Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities

The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely The populations of qualifying species, and, The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	Grazing
Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site Caves not open to the public Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>). (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone)	
Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site Greater horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>	

Mendip Woodlands SAC

Mendip Woodlands contains extensive examples of mixed woodlands on limestone. They have developed on dolomitic conglomerate, lower limestone shales and Carboniferous limestone strata on the southern escarpment of the Mendip Hills. There are four individual woods all located on the southern slope of the Mendip Hills in the county of Somerset. Three of the woods, Cheddar Wood, Ebbor Gorge and Rodney Stoke lie in the west of Mendip while Asham Wood lies in the east. Asham Wood and Ebbor Gorge are both associated with limestone gorges while Cheddar Wood and Rodney Stoke lie on the steep southern slope of the hills. Only one of the woods, Asham, has permanent streams running through it. All four woods are dominated by ash while both Cheddar Wood and Rodney Stoke have a high population of small-leaved lime. Notable species present include Purple gromwell *Lithospermum purpureocaeruleum*, Lily of the valley *Convallaria majalis* and Wild daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*. All the woodlands were managed by coppicing and are gradually reverting to high forest.

Site details

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Dorset and Somerset
Centroid	ST706454
Latitude	51.20694444
Longitude	-2.421666667
SAC EU code	UK0030048
Status	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha)	251.39
General site character Dry grassland, Steppes (1.5%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (98.5%)	
Conservation objectives	Issues
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats	Other human intrusions and disturbances Air pollution, air-borne pollutants

The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely	Problematic native species Inter-specific floral relations
Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines. (Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes)	

North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC

This site in the Thames Valley represents an exceptional survival of the traditional pattern of management of lowland hay meadows. It consists of a series of traditionally managed unimproved grasslands within the floodplain of the Upper Thames which continue to be managed as pasture and as hay-meadow.

It contains a rich variety of species-rich grassland types including the rare MG4 community for which the SAC is designated as well as a number of notable plant species. These grasslands represent rare and scattered remnants of a much more widespread unimproved grassland habitat before agricultural intensification and extensive gravel quarrying locally were responsible for widespread losses of this habitat and its subsequent fragmentation.

Site details

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol/Bath area
Centroid	SU014934
Latitude	51.63888889
Longitude	-1.979166667
SAC EU code	UK0016372
Status	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha)	105.23
General site character Inland water bodies (Standing water, Running water) (2%) Dry grassland, Steppes (15%) Humid grassland, Mesophile grassland (71%) Improved grassland (12%)	
Conservation objectives	Issues
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely	Pollution to groundwater (point sources and diffuse sources) Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Grazing Other ecosystem modifications
Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>).	

Oxford Meadows SAC

Oxford Meadows is one of two SACs that represent lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*) in the Thames Valley. It includes vegetation communities that are perhaps unique in the world in reflecting the influence of long-term grazing and hay-cutting on lowland hay meadows. The site has benefited from the survival of traditional management, which has been undertaken for several centuries, and so exhibits good conservation of structure and function. The site is selected because Port Meadow is the larger of only two known sites in the UK for creeping marshwort *Apium repens*.

Site details

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire
Centroid	SP492090
Latitude	51.77694444
Longitude	-1.286666667
SAC EU code	UK0012845
Status	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha)	267.4
General site character Humid grassland, Mesophile grassland (87%) Improved grassland (13%)	
Conservation objectives	Issues
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely The populations of qualifying species, and, The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish) Invasive non-native species
Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>)	
Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site Creeping marshwort <i>Apium repens</i>	

Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA

Salisbury Plain SAC, which includes Porton Down and Parsonage Down, represents the largest surviving semi-natural dry grassland area within north–west Europe. It hosts the priority habitat type 'orchid-rich sites' and supports extensive areas of CG3 *Bromus erectus* grassland, which is the most

widespread and abundant calcareous grassland found in the UK. Other grassland types, like the rare CG7 *Festuca ovina* – *Hieracium pilosella* – *Thymus praecox* grassland, are present. In addition, the site features the best remaining example in the UK of lowland Juniper scrub on chalk and a cluster of large Marsh fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia*, sub-populations where the species breeds on dry calcareous grassland.

Porton Down SPA and Salisbury Plain SPA support important breeding populations of Stone-curlew *Burhinus oediconemus*, Quail *Coturnix coturnix*, Hobby *Falco subbuteo*, and over-wintering Hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*.

Site details

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol/Bath area, Hampshire and Isle of Wight
Centroid	SU077497
Latitude	51.24583333
Longitude	-1.889444444
SAC EU code	UK0012683
SPA EU code	UK9011102
Status	Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA)
Area (ha)	21465.94
<p>General site character</p> <p>Heath, Scrub, Maquis and Garrigue, Phygrana (1.9%)</p> <p>Dry grassland, Steppes (94.7%)</p> <p>Humid grassland, Mesophile grassland (0.9%)</p> <p>Improved grassland (0.9%)</p> <p>Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (0.4%)</p> <p>Coniferous woodland (0.4%)</p> <p>Mixed woodland (0.4%)</p> <p>Other land (including Towns, Villages, Roads, Waste places, Mines, Industrial sites) (0.4%)</p>	
Conservation objectives	Issues
<p>SAC</p> <p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <p>The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species</p> <p>The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats</p> <p>The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species</p> <p>The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely</p> <p>The populations of qualifying species, and,</p> <p>The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</p>	<p>Air pollution, air-borne pollutants</p> <p>Changes in biotic conditions</p> <p>Inter-specific floral relations</p> <p>Grazing</p>

SPA	
<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <p>The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features</p> <p>The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features</p> <p>The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely</p> <p>The population of each of the qualifying features, and,</p> <p>The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</p>	
<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <p><i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands. (Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands)</p> <p>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>). (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone)</p> <p>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (important orchid sites). (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone, including important orchid sites)*</p> <p>Stone curlew <i>Burhinus oedicevus</i></p> <p>Hen harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i></p>	
<p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <p>Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i></p> <p>Short-eared owl <i>Asio flammeus</i></p> <p>Montagu's harrier <i>Circus pygargus</i></p>	
<p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site</p> <p>Marsh fritillary butterfly <i>Euphydryas</i> (<i>Eurodryas</i>, <i>Hypodryas</i>) <i>aurinia</i></p> <p>Quail <i>Coturnix coturnix</i></p> <p>Hobby <i>Falco subbuteo</i></p>	

Severn Estuary SAC / SPA / RAMSAR

The Severn Estuary is located between Wales and England in south-west Britain. It is a large estuary with extensive intertidal mud-flats and sand-flats, rocky platforms and islands. Saltmarsh fringes the coast backed by grazing marsh with freshwater ditches and occasional brackish ditches. The subtidal seabed is rock and gravel with subtidal sandbanks. The site also supports reefs of the tube forming worm *Sabellaria alveolata*.

The estuary's classic funnel shape, unique in the UK, is a factor causing the Severn to have one of the highest tidal ranges in the world. A consequence of the large tidal range is an extensive intertidal zone, one of the largest in the UK. The tidal regime results in plant and animal communities typical of the extreme physical conditions of liquid mud and tide-swept sand and rock. The species-poor intertidal invertebrate community includes high densities of ragworms, lugworms and other invertebrates forming an important food source for passage and wintering waders and fish.

The site is of importance during the spring and autumn migration periods for waders, as well as in winter for large numbers of waterbirds, especially swans, ducks and waders. The fish fauna is very diverse with more than 110 species identified. The site is of particular importance for migratory fish.

Site details

Country	England/Wales
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Unitary Authority	Dorset and Somerset, East Wales, Extra-Regio, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol/Bath area
Centroid	ST321748
Latitude	51.46861111
Longitude	-2.978055556
SAC EU code	UK0013030
SPA EU code	UK9015022
Status	Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and RAMSAR
Area (ha)	73714.11
General site character	
Tidal rivers, Estuaries, Mud flats, Sand flats, Lagoons (including saltwork basins) (99%) Salt marshes, Salt pastures, Salt steppes (1%)	
Conservation objectives	Issues
SAC	Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;	Other urbanisation, industrial and similar activities
The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species	Modification of cultivation practices
The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats	Changes in abiotic conditions
The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species	Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions
The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely	Dredging
The populations of qualifying species, and,	Erosion
The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	Recreational/tourism disturbance (unspecified)
SPA	
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;	
The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features	
The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features	
The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely	
The population of each of the qualifying features, and,	
The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.	
Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site	
Estuaries	
Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide. (Intertidal mudflats and sandflats)	
Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)	
Bewick's swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>	

<p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time. (Subtidal sandbanks) Reefs</p>
<p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site Sea Lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) River Lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) Twaite Shad (<i>Alosa fallax</i>) Large wintering waterfowl flock</p>

Walmore Common SPA / RAMSAR

Walmore Common occupies a low-lying area in the Severn Vale which is subject to annual winter flooding. The site overlies the only significant area of peat in the county of Gloucestershire. The habitats represented include neutral grassland and open water ditches.

Site details

Country	England
Unitary Authority	Gloucestershire
Centroid	SO745150
Latitude	51.83277778
Longitude	-2.370555556
SPA EU code	UK9007051
Status	Special Protection Area (SPA) and RAMSAR
Area (ha)	52.85
<p>General site character Improved grassland 65% Humid grassland, Mesophile grassland 34% Terrestrial: Soil & Geology:clay,alluvium,peat,neutral2 Terrestrial: Geomorphology and landscape: floodplain, lowland</p>	
Conservation objectives	Issues
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring; The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely The population of each of the qualifying features, and, The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.	Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions Changes in biotic conditions Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Modification of cultivation practices
<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site Bewick swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i></p>	

Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC

This complex of sites on the border between England and Wales contains, at the time of listing, by far the greatest concentration of Lesser horseshoe bat in the UK, totalling about 26% of the national population. It features an exceptional breeding population. In addition, it supports a significant

population of Greater horseshoe bat in the northern part of its range. The site contains the main maternity roost and hibernacula for this species in this area.

Site details

Country	England/Wales
Unitary Authority	Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol/Bath area, West Wales and The Valleys
Centroid	SO605044
Latitude	51.7375
Longitude	-2.5725
SAC EU code	UK0014794
Status	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha)	144.82
General site character	
Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (26.2%) Other land (including Towns, Villages, Roads, Waste places, Mines, Industrial sites) (73.8%)	
Conservation objectives	Issues
Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely The populations of qualifying species, and The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	Other ecosystem modifications Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions
Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site	
Greater horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i> Lesser horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	

Appendix 2: Prioritised issues for the National Sites within the AONB

Prioritised issues for National sites ¹⁴			
Priority	Issue	Measure	
Bath & Bradford-on-Avon Bats			
1	Planning Permission: general	There is currently difficulty in determining cumulative impacts of development across such a wide area and across local authority boundaries, including operations carried out under an European Protected Species license. This applies to both the developments themselves and the surveys which are needed to inform the planning application process. There is currently no formal way of assessing the cumulative impacts of "high disturbance" level surveys (e.g. mist netting, harp trapping, radiotracking) being carried out outside the SAC boundary which may have cumulative impacts on the features of the SAC. Similarly, there is no formal way of assessing cumulative impacts on the SAC from permissions granted by the different competent authorities.	Produce and promote advice and guidance on development control and strategic planning
2	Change in land management	Land ownership is fragmented and management has lapsed, particularly around the urban fringe of Bath.	Provide information regarding appropriate management of habitat for bats
3	Direct impact from third party	One-off acts of vandalism or impacts of recreational pursuits could have a devastating effect if done in close proximity to roosting bats. There have been impacts at Brown's Folly, Box Mine and Bathampton Down Mines, specifically from third parties gaining access for inappropriate purposes.	Reduce vandalism and impacts of recreational activities
4	Feature location/ extent/ condition unknown	There is a lack of knowledge about the population of Bechstein's bat within the SAC and its relationship to roosts within the wider landscape. There is very little data to show which component sites are used by Bechstein's and in what way, and even less foraging / commuting data. This is a risk because it is difficult to determine the impacts of plans and projects on Bechstein's bat.	Investigate Bechstein's bat to improve knowledge of local population activity
5	Offsite habitat availability/ management	There is a lack of knowledge as to usage of the wider landscape by the SAC species. For example whether there are certain critical bat corridors which link the component sites, other bat SAC sites or non-designated roosts, or particularly important areas or routes used for feeding, 'swarming' or other activity between sites is	Investigate bat species use of surrounding habitat

¹⁴ After the Natural England Site Improvement Plans

		unknown. Lack of knowledge compromises the ability to respond appropriately to threats such as development pressure and opportunities such as the use of agri-environment schemes in locations that will most greatly benefit bats.	
6	Public Access/Disturbance	It is very difficult to close the sites to public access, potentially causing disturbance. This is a pressure in terms of continuous long-term disturbance by visitors, however the sites are managed in such a way that it does not present a significant pressure unless the volume and frequency of visitors were to increase. The threat to the sites come from one-off events such as: fire juggling near to the maternity colony; use of aerosol spray paints underground; use of fuel of any type underground, and bonfires at the mine entrances.	Review access arrangements and implement improved management of access
7	Change to site conditions	All component areas of the SAC have the potential risk of collapse as they are abandoned mines and their status with regards to stability is largely unknown. Mine instability is particularly relevant at entrances where a collapse could make it unusable by bats. A collapse is likely to alter the entrance dimensions thereby affecting ventilation, temperature and humidity within the mines, and/or may cause bats to be killed or become entrapped. Due to mine instability it is also difficult to monitor bats effectively.	Investigate the stability of mine and cave systems and feasibility for stabilisation
8	Inappropriate designation boundary	Several undesignated sites support important populations of SAC bats. Some of these are under threat, and others are located in areas/landscapes where they could be offered greater protection and enhanced management of surrounding habitats if they were known to be special sites. Consultation zones for planning have been agreed far beyond the bounds of the current component sites, and evaluating the importance of new sites relative to the currently designated ones will validate and improve the series.	Review series of SAC sites and consider new sites for notification
Bredon Hill			
1	Forestry and woodland management	The lack of succession in veteran tree cohorts is an issue, as current planting will only benefit the beetles after about 400 years and it is uncertain how long tree surgery will prolong the veterans' lives. The beetle depends on the production of humid wood mould within decaying trees and the amount of available wood mould in the SAC is unknown.	Formulate and implement a wood mould continuity strategy for the Violet click beetle population

2	Feature location/ extent/ condition unknown	There is a current lack of information on the distribution across the site of the rare and secretive Violet click beetle.	Survey of Violet click beetle, to identify site distribution
3	Disease	Ash die-back caused by the <i>Chalara fraxinea</i> fungus threatens the large number of current veteran ash trees and their replacements on which the Violet click beetle depends. Whilst the beetle is known to use other species elsewhere (eg Windsor), ash dominates the trees on Bredon Hill. The scale of this impact on the persistence and continuity of wood mould is uncertain and is likely to be beyond human control.	Monitor for the impact of Ash dieback, and investigate the effect of tree death on the wood mould persistence and continuity
4	Air Pollution: impact of Pressure atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Nitrogen deposition exceeds site relevant critical loads. This site is sensitive to nitrogen deposition.	Reduce the impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
5	Climate change	The likelihood of increased violent storm events and the viability of ash in a changed environment threatens the veteran ash trees on which the beetle depends.	Monitor and plan for the effect of increased losses due to storms and changed environment
Cotswold Beechwoods			
1	Invasive species	The dumping of garden waste and the consequent spread of invasive plants is an on-going threat but one that the land managers largely have under control. However, the spread of the non-native sycamore provides more of a challenge and has made particular use of canopy gaps created by storm damage. Although sycamore is considered an acceptable component of woodlands, including beechwoods, on the continent, in the Cotswolds it tends to dominate understorey and canopy to the detriment of other (native) tree species. Its control is costly and time consuming and often unpopular with woodland owners who find it useful to "deflect" squirrel damage from the beech trees. This together with the ever increasing risk to native tree species from plant disease and climate change makes the sycamore issue all the more acute.	Reduce invasive sycamore, especially in the canopy
2	Deer	Deer browsing of regenerating trees (and possibly ground flora) remains a major threat to favourable condition throughout the beechwoods. Whilst deer control does take place, this work needs to be monitored and coordinated to ensure deer populations are adequately managed.	Reduce deer browsing pressure
3	Invasive species	Grey squirrel numbers have increased sharply over the past decade or so and now cause significant damage to tree species, in particular beech. In places, this can lead to pole stage beech being systematically ring	Reduce squirrel damage to trees

		barked and killed. Control measures are widely applied but the numbers and associated damage persists. This also dissuades woodland owners from favouring the retention of beech.	
4	Disease	Although not known to be present in the Cotswolds as yet, <i>Chalara</i> (ash disease) is a major future threat to the beechwoods. Natural regeneration tends to favour ash although beech does also regenerate but at a slower rate. This has enabled an acceptable mix of beech/ash canopy with other minor species. However, the other main regeneration tree is the non-native sycamore. If ash starts to die out then the woodlands are likely to become dominated by sycamore, hence the need for a strategy to prepare for ash dieback.	Produce a strategy to deal with potential ash dieback
5	Public Access / Disturbance	Public use of the Beechwoods has grown considerably over recent years and damage is becoming more widespread. A particular increase has been the use of mountain bikes and horseriding which use the woods far beyond the limited network of bridleways. This has created numerous additional trackways and so increasing the erosion of the ground flora and potentially opportunities for water erosion. Although the routes away from bridleways are not usually permitted, much of the SAC woodland is NNR or has public access by foot. Hence efforts have been made to provide agreed permissive routes with local bike groups with the aim of minimising damage whilst still allowing some use. This is still experimental and much will depend on the scale of use and whether the users stick to the permissive routes. This approach could also be tried with horseriders. Additionally, dog walking has increased within the SAC especially at Coopers Hill where car parking is available. This has become a particular issue where professional dog walkers release large numbers of dogs (up to 12) to run uncontrolled through the woods. This causes disturbance to wildlife as well as local nitrification through dog faeces.	Minimise impact of recreational use, especially mountain biking, horse riding and dog walking
6	Changes in species distributions	There is a risk that global warming will increase the risk of drought to beech trees (which are shallow rooted). Whilst this risk should be acknowledged, it should be noted that no evidence of drought amongst beech trees has been noted in the Cotswolds as yet and the nature of the soils (limestone rather than chalk) and the (wetter) westerly location may help to prevent the risk.	Monitor the effects of drought on beech trees

7	Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Nitrogen deposition exceeds site relevant critical loads. High atmospheric nitrogen levels could affect the SAC features through: changes in ground vegetation and mycorrhiza; nutrient imbalance; changes to soil fauna; increase in tall grasses; decline in diversity; increased mineralization; N leaching; or surface acidification.	Control, reduce and ameliorate atmospheric nitrogen impacts
Dixton Wood			
1	Changes in species distributions	Because of its rarity and highly specialised ecology associated with decaying wood and leaf litter in tree cavities, specialist involvement is required for survey, monitoring and the provision of detailed habitat management advice. Without it, appropriate management advice is difficult to provide to the woodland owner.	Carry out survey and monitoring work to inform advice to landowner
2	Forestry and woodland management	The beetle depends on the production of humid wood mould where it lives for part of its life cycle within decaying trees; this is typically found in veteran trees where they show signs of rot. The amount of suitable and available wood mould in the SAC is unknown. The lack of succession in veteran cohorts is an issue and it make the need for extending the life of the existing veteran trees even more important. Although the woodland and the surrounding land is in HLS, it is unclear if the scheme (and indeed subsequent schemes) can adequately fund the required specialist tree climbing/surgery work which is very expensive on this challenging site.	Formulate and implement a wood mould continuity strategy for the Violet click beetle population
3	Disease	Ash dieback disease <i>Chalara fraxinea</i> is a potential threat to the site. The Violet click beetle population at Dixton Wood is thought only to use ash trees. The previous management advice has been to extend the life of the ash trees by pollarding suitable trees. The current advice on the control of the spread of the disease is not to coppice or pollard ash trees as this may make them more susceptible to disease. Although there is no current evidence that the disease is present, specialist advice is required to formulate a strategy regarding how to manage the woodland for the Violet click beetle whilst also considering the threat of <i>Chalara</i> disease.	Monitor for Chalara and take appropriate action
Rodborough Common			
1	Undergrazing	Undergrazing is an issue due to the reliance on the rights of commoners to turn out cattle. The number of stock have dropped over the years to the point that additional cattle now need to be electric fenced on to the most species-rich areas on the slopes.	Increase grazing pressure in key areas

		Of key importance is the lack of cattle grids on minor roads which means that Commoners are less inclined to push the cattle on to the lower slopes where they may escape onto busy surrounding roads. It is these lower slopes that are the most species-rich and are suffering from a lack of grazing. A better evidence base (NVC survey, see action 2A) relating to the state of the site's grasslands is desirable to support the case for improved grazing.	
2	Public Access / Disturbance	The common is very close to Stroud and recreational use has greatly increased over the past few decades. This has created many new paths and parking areas which cause soil compaction to the detriment of the surrounding sward. Dog faeces is a particular issue which also damages the sward but also poses a real disease risk to the cattle which are vital to the management of the Common. New and proposed housing continues to add to the problem.	Reduce impact of recreational use
3	Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Nitrogen deposition exceeds the site-relevant critical load for ecosystem protection and hence there is a risk of harmful effects, but the sensitive features are currently considered to be in favourable condition on the site. This requires further investigation.	Further investigate potential atmospheric nitrogen impacts

Appendix 3: Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan policy framework

Vision	
<p>A COTSWOLDS VISION: A NATIONAL LANDSCAPE FOR EVERYONE</p> <p>A time of opportunity</p> <p>The Cotswolds lifts our hearts and spirits; we feel better when we are here and engaged with the natural beauty of the landscape around us.</p> <p>As we begin to slowly recover from the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, there has never been a time when we are so aware of the condition of our natural world, and its relationship to us and our own wellbeing. We believe the Cotswolds National Landscape offers opportunities for optimism, recovery, wellbeing, and inclusion.</p> <p>The picture is not perfect...</p> <p>Yet, all is not right: we are in the midst of a global climate emergency and an ecological crisis. Events in 2020 also highlighted ongoing social and economic inequalities. Here in the Cotswolds, these concerns are just as real for us too, and we face significant challenges: climate change; threats to wildlife and habitat; changes to the farming landscape and agriculture; finding ways to deliver opportunities for younger people and provide for an ageing population; and achieving access to, and involvement in, the countryside for everyone – and in ways which help benefit the countryside and encourages a diverse range of people to appreciate and care for the Cotswolds.</p> <p>What can we do, and how should we do it?</p> <p>To address these issues and begin to make improvements, we need to challenge ourselves – of that, there is no doubt. We mustn't fall into the trap of complacency, or afford ourselves the luxury of adhering rigidly to past beliefs – this will only hold us back, and limit how much positive change we can introduce.</p> <p>Instead, we need to embrace new ways of thinking in order to find win-win solutions which both conserve and enhance the landscape, and serve the people who are here. We will work hard, and in partnership – to find outcomes which offer the most positive benefits and the least negative impact. We will need to demonstrate collaboration and leadership. We will need to be energetic and proactive. We will need to be bold, brave, and confident. Above all, we will need to acknowledge that we can't do it all alone – we want to work with other organisations and individuals to achieve results which benefit all of us, and nature.</p> <p>The future should be bright</p> <p>The treasured landscapes which make the Cotswolds nationally and internationally important are diverse in character, as are the people who live, work, and visit here. There is no one size fits all, nor a crystal ball, for the future – but we have a greater opportunity than ever before to pull together as communities across the Cotswolds, and to work with each other to harness our dedication and expertise to forge the future of the Cotswolds.</p> <p>This place, the Cotswolds National Landscape, is for everyone, from all walks of life. In sharing it and looking after it, we will continue to create a place that is vibrant, unique, welcoming, and truly special – for people and for nature. We will work towards ensuring that the Cotswolds stays a working landscape, where agriculture thrives and supply chains are secure. Our communities should be connected and diverse, but self-sustaining. Visitors should feel welcome to enjoy being here, confident about access, and motivated to give something back to help look after this landscape. This should be a place where the landscape, nature, and people work in harmony with each other. The Cotswolds will be a place that will inspire generations of people to look after it – now and in the years ahead.</p>	
Aims & Policies	
CROSS CUTTING AIM: Tackling 21st century issues through progressive partnerships.	
<p>POLICY CC1: Climate Change – Mitigation</p>	<p>1. Greenhouse gas emissions should be minimised through a range of measures, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing energy consumption and generating energy from renewable sources in a manner consistent with the purpose of National Landscape (AONB) designation; • improving energy efficiency, including building energy-efficient new building and retrofitting existing buildings. Traditional buildings including listed buildings must be responsibly retrofitted by historic

	<p>building specialists; using small-scale forms of renewable energy that are compatible with the purpose of National Landscape designation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing car use and increasing green and active travel including public transport; • increasing shared mobility through car sharing schemes; • purchasing locally produced food products and services • minimising air travel by Cotswolds residents; • encouraging small-scale vegetable growing in gardens and allotments.. <p>2. Climate change mitigation should be a significant driver in all new development, infrastructure and transport provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • designing the fabric of development to standards of ultra-low energy demand • In all developments, a net zero operational carbon balance is required to have 100% energy provided by low carbon sources. Alternatives to fossil fuel energy sources are used including no gas boilers. • passive measures, for example the orientation of buildings and high insulation, prioritised over more energy intensive alternatives, and the risk of overheating minimised • promote green and active travel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ minimise travel through encouraging home working and affordable housing provision ○ prioritise walking, cycling and public transport use, including adequate cycle parking; and improve connections to existing facilities ○ provide sufficient infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles, scooters and bikes. • increased shared mobility by supporting car sharing schemes. • requiring sustainable construction methods and management plans to reduce and manage construction waste; • reducing embodied carbon through secondary and recycled material use within all construction unless demonstrably unachievable on technical and practical grounds • incentivise voluntary sustainability standards, for example BREEAM, Building with Nature, and One Planet Living principles. <p>3. Climate change mitigation including the sequestration of carbon should be a key component of land management practices and future agri-environment/ELM (Environmental Land Management), land management and rural development support mechanisms in the National Landscape.</p> <p>4. Action to mitigate climate change should be undertaken in a way compatible with the statutory purposes of the National Landscapes (AONB) designation.</p>
<p>POLICY CC2: Climate Change - Adaptation</p>	<p>1. The risks posed by the consequences of climate change should be reduced through a range of adaptation measures, including those identified in relevant policies of this Management Plan.</p> <p>2. Climate change adaption should be a significant driver in all new development, infrastructure and transport provision.</p> <p>3. Climate change adaptation should be a key component of land management practices and future agri-environment/ELM</p>

	<p>(Environmental Land Management) schemes. Land management and rural development support mechanisms in the National Landscape.</p> <p>4. Further research into the predicted impacts of climate change on the Cotswolds National Landscape should be undertaken. This research should be used to advise and inform sustained behavioural change to adapt to climate change and conserve and enhance the National Landscape and its special qualities.</p>
POLICY CC3: Natural & Cultural Capital – Principles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The natural and cultural capital of the Cotswolds National Landscape and the services they provide – should continue to be assessed and evaluated. 2. The use of natural and cultural capital accounting should be encouraged in order to fully understand the implications of investment, development and management decisions. 3. The financial and non-financial benefits of natural and cultural capital and the services they provide should be promoted. 4. Proposals affecting the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to – and seek to conserve and enhance – the natural and cultural capital of the National Landscape and the services they provide. 5. Natural and cultural capital and services they provide should be key components of future agri-environment/ELM (Environmental Land Management), land management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape.
POLICY CC4: Soils	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Soil degradation should be halted and reversed by managing soils in a way that: (i) increases organic content, water retention and carbon sequestration; and (ii) minimises erosion, water pollution and compaction. 2. Soil management should remain a key component of future agri-environment/ELM (Environmental Land Management), land management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape.
POLICY CC5: Water	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water resources should be carefully managed and conserved to: improve water quality; ensure adequate aquifer recharge; ensure adequate river flows; and contribute to natural flood management systems. 2. Development (new and existing sites) should assess and minimise flood risk and implement Sustainable drainage schemes, adopt high water efficiency standards in line with RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge targets, and water conservation measures, for example rainwater harvesting and/or water recycling and grey water systems. 3. Sewerage pollution from storm overflows should be minimised and be within legal and regulatory requirements.
POLICY CC6: Developing a consistent, coordinated and landscape-led approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stakeholders across the Cotswolds National Landscape should take a consistent and co-ordinated approach to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape, including its special qualities and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities, in line with the statutory Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan – including the policies therein - and other guidance produced by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board.
POLICY CC7: Compliance with Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relevant authorities, including public bodies, must comply with Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (the 'duty of regard') and should have regard to the supporting guidance published by Defra and Natural England. 2. Relevant authorities including public bodies should document how they have complied with the 'duty of regard'.

	3. Compliance with the 'duty of regard' will be monitored.
POLICY CC8: Working together	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stakeholders should work in partnership to support the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. Stakeholders should also cooperate in fostering the economic and social well-being of communities in and around the National Landscape. 2. Communities and businesses within and around the Cotswolds National Landscape should be encouraged to value and celebrate being part of a nationally recognised landscape and to contribute to the purpose of National Landscape (AONB) designation. 3. All relevant stakeholders should work together to ensure the successful implementation of the Landscapes Review proposals that the Government decides to take forward.
CONSERVE & ENHANCE AIM: Influencing and delivering for landscape, nature and climate.	
POLICY CE1: Landscape	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proposals that are likely to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape, should have regard to, be compatible with and reinforce the landscape character of the location, as described by the Cotswolds Conservation Board's Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy and Guidelines. There should be a presumption against the loss of key characteristics identified in the landscape character assessment. 2. Proposals that are likely to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the Cotswolds AONB, should have regard to the scenic quality of the location and its setting and ensure that views - including those into and out of the AONB – and visual amenity are conserved and enhanced. 3. Conserving and enhancing landscape character should be a key objective of future agri-environment/ELM (Environmental Land Management) schemes, land management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape. 4. Rural skills training and the utilisation of those skills – such as dry stone walling, stone masonry, traditional woodland management and hedgelaying – will be supported, to ensure the long-term retention, creation and management of the key features of the Cotswolds National Landscape.
POLICY CE2: Geology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proposals that are likely to impact on the geological features of the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to these features and seek to conserve and enhance them. 2. The geological features of the Cotswolds National Landscape should be conserved and enhanced through effective management. 3. Opportunities should be sought to promote awareness and understanding of the geological features of the Cotswolds National Landscape. 4. Exploration and research into the geology of the Cotswolds National Landscape should be continued in order to improve understanding of the landscape, and of the geological resource and its importance to inform the conservation and management of geological and geomorphological sites.
POLICY CE3: Local Distinctiveness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proposals that are likely to impact on the local distinctiveness of the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to, be compatible with and reinforce this local distinctiveness. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being compatible with the Cotswolds Conservation Board's Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Strategy and Guidelines and Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being designed and, where relevant, landscaped to respect local settlement patterns, building styles, scale and materials and in accordance with design guidance prepared by local planning authorities; • using an appropriate colour of limestone to reflect local distinctiveness. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Innovative designs, compatible with the conservation of natural beauty – which are informed by local distinctiveness, character and scale – should be welcomed. 3. The development of design guidance – which is supported by a robust evidence base and which reflects relevant guidance published by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board – will be encouraged. 4. Provision should be made for the quarrying of limestone, at an appropriate scale, in order to provide building materials that help maintain and enhance the local distinctiveness of the National Landscape. Any production of aggregate and agricultural lime should be secondary and necessary for local and necessary operational purposes. Any such mineral sites should be required to demonstrate that they do not have any significant adverse effects on the natural beauty of the National Landscape including its special qualities or the integrity of existing wildlife sites.
POLICY CE4: Tranquillity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proposals that are likely to impact on the tranquillity of the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to this tranquillity, by seeking to (i) avoid and (ii) minimise noise pollution and other aural and visual disturbance. 2. Measures should be taken to enhance the tranquillity of the Cotswolds National Landscape by (i) removing and (ii) reducing existing sources of noise pollution and other aural and visual disturbance. 3. Proposals that are likely to impact on the tranquillity of the CNL should have regard to – and be compatible with – the National Landscapes Board’s Tranquillity Position Statement.
POLICY CE5: Dark Skies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proposals that are likely to impact on the dark skies of the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to these dark skies, by seeking to (i) avoid and (ii) minimise light pollution. 2. Proposals that are likely to impact on the dark skies of the CNL should apply – and comply with – recognised standards and guidance, in particular, that published by the Institution of Lighting Professionals and the Commission for Dark Skies. 3. Measures should be taken to increase the area of dark skies in the Cotswolds National Landscape by (i) removing and (ii) reducing existing sources of light pollution. 4. Consideration will be given to seeking a formal dark sky designation for those parts of the Cotswolds National Landscape that are least affected by light pollution.
POLICY CE6: Historic Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proposals that are likely to impact on the historic and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to heritage assets and their setting and seek opportunities to conserve and enhance them. This should include respecting historical features, buildings, sites, layout and context, including the relationship between the existing feature or settlement and the landscape. 2. Heritage Impact Assessments should be used when considering any change to a heritage asset and to influence decisions regarding the management of the historic environment.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The historic environment and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds National Landscape, both designated and undesignated, should be conserved and enhanced through effective management. 4. Designated historic environment sites, such as scheduled monuments and listed buildings, and non-designated heritage assets of equivalent significance, should be protected, in line with national policy and guidance. 5. Historic environment and cultural heritage should be a key component of future agri-environment/ELM (Environmental Land Management) schemes, land management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape. 6. Opportunities should be sought to promote the awareness, understanding and use of Historic Environment Records, Conservation Area Appraisals, Historic Landscape Characterisation and Heritage Strategies and Action Plans. These should be used to influence decisions regarding the management of the National Landscape's historic environment and cultural heritage.
<p>POLICY CE7: Biodiversity and Nature Recovery</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biodiversity (including the abundance of wildlife) in the Cotswolds National Landscape should be conserved and enhanced by establishing a coherent and resilient nature recovery network across the Cotswolds National Landscape and in its setting. This should be achieved in accordance with the outcomes, priorities, targets and measures within the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan and focus on the priority species and habitats listed in Appendix 7. 2. Policy and strategic documents that are likely to impact on the biodiversity of the National Landscape should have regard to – and be consistent with – the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan. This would include, but is not limited to, the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Local Plans. ii. Neighbourhood Development Plans. iii. Green Infrastructure Strategies. iv. Tree and Woodland Strategies. v. Ecological Emergency and Climate Change Strategies. vi. Local Nature Recovery Strategies. 3. Proposals that are likely to impact on the biodiversity of the National Landscape should have regard to – and be consistent with – the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan. This would include, but is not limited to, the following delivery mechanisms: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Environmental Land Management Schemes and other grant schemes and rural development support mechanisms; ii. Biodiversity Net Gain; iii. Payment for Ecosystem Services including but not limited to carbon sequestration and storage, flood management, water supply and water quality improvements. 4. Development proposals that are likely to have an unavoidable impact on the biodiversity of the Cotswolds National Landscape should provide a minimum net-gain in biodiversity of 20%, particularly with regard to the species and habitats listed in Appendix 8. 5. Damage or loss of irreplaceable habitat should be avoided. Irreplaceable habitat includes but is not limited to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Ancient and veteran trees 2 Ancient woodland (continually wooded since 1600); 3 Ancient grassland (surviving since 1945)

<p>POLICY CE8: Rural Land Management</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rural land management in the Cotswolds National Landscape and in the setting of the National Landscape should have regard to – and help deliver – the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape including its special qualities. It should also increase the understanding and enjoyment of the National Landscape’s special qualities. 2. Rural land management in the Cotswolds National Landscape and in the setting of the National Landscape should have regard to – and, ideally, help to deliver – the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan. It should also be compatible with guidance produced by the Cotswolds Conservation Board, including the: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Cotswolds National Landscape Strategy and Guidelines; ii. Cotswolds National Landscape Character Assessment; iii. Cotswolds National Landscape Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change; iv. Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statements. v. Cotswolds Nature recovery Plan vi. Cotswolds National Landscape Climate Change Strategy 3. Future agri-environment/ELM (Environmental Land Management) schemes, land management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape should be designed specifically for the National Landscape. These mechanisms should: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. address paragraphs 1 and 2, above; ii. be managed locally to ensure effective local delivery; iii. deliver public goods and services.
<p>POLICY CE9: Problem Species, Pests and Diseases</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The population of grey squirrel and deer in the Cotswolds National Landscape should continue to be controlled and managed. This should be undertaken rigorously and coordinated at a landscape scale. 2. National guidance - and guidance produced by the Board - on Ash Dieback should be followed to ensure any measures implemented will conserve and enhance the qualities of the landscape. 3. National and local guidance - including guidance from Government Agencies and the Non Native Species Secretariat - on invasive non-native species, pests and diseases should be followed and appropriate biosecurity measures promoted.
<p>POLICY CE10: Development & Transport - Principles</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development and transport proposals in the CNL and its setting should have regard to – and help to deliver - the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL. In doing so, they should have regard to – and help to deliver – the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and be compatible with guidance produced by the Cotswolds Conservation Board, including the: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines; (ii) Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment; (iii) Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan; (iv) Cotswolds AONB Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change; (v) Cotswolds National Landscape Board's Position Statements. 2. Development and transport proposals in the CNL should, where appropriate, have regard to – and help deliver – the purpose of increasing the understanding and enjoyment of the CNL’s special qualities. They should also contribute to the economic and social well-being of CNL communities, in a way that is compatible with conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Development and transport proposals in the CNL and its setting should comply with relevant national planning policy and guidance, particularly with regards to paragraphs 11, 174, 176, 177, 179 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). 4. The purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds AONB and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of the AONB's special qualities should be identified as strategic priorities in Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans, Local Transport Plans and other relevant plans and strategies. These plans and strategies should explicitly identify the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan as a material consideration. 5. A landscape-led approach should be applied to development and transport proposals in the CNL and its setting, proportionate to the type and scale of development being proposed, whereby proposals: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) address the natural beauty of the CNL as primary consideration at all stages of the development process (including design), from initial conception through to implementation; b) addresses all of the factors that contribute to the natural beauty of the area; c) address access to natural beauty including the character of the public rights of way network and its role within wider green infrastructure; d) reflect the character of the local area; e) avoid adverse effects where possible and, if adverse effects can't be avoided, minimise them; and f) deliver substantially more beneficial effects than adverse effects for the natural beauty of the CNL. <p>This landscape-led approach is particularly important for major development. Appendix 3 of the Board's Landscape-led Development Position Statement provides additional advice on implementing a landscape-led approach in this context.</p>
<p>POLICY CE11: Major Development</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In line with national planning policy, permission should be refused for major development within the CNL other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. 2. Relevant stakeholders should fully assess relevant site allocations and development proposals to see if they constitute major development. In considering or deciding whether a proposed development constitutes major development, relevant stakeholders should have regard to the major development checklist in Appendix 5 of the Board's Landscape-led Development Position Statement. 3. Local authorities and other relevant stakeholders should explicitly state whether they consider relevant allocations and development proposals to be major development, in the context of paragraph 177 of the NPPF. 4. The mandatory major development 'tests' specified in paragraph 177 of the NPPF should be rigorously applied and documented for all allocations and development proposals that are deemed to be major development. 5. When relevant stakeholders are considering or applying the major development 'tests' specified in paragraph 177 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), it should be recognised that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'exceptional need' does not necessarily equate to 'exceptional circumstances'; • no permission should be given for major development save to the extent the development was needed in the public interest, met a need that could not be addressed elsewhere or in some

	<p>other way and met that need in a way that to the extent possible, moderated detrimental effect on the environment, landscape and recreational opportunities.</p> <p>6. When making decisions on major development proposals, local authorities (and / or other relevant decision makers) should not simply weigh all material considerations in a balance, but should refuse an application unless they meet the exceptional circumstances and public interest criteria.</p>
<p>POLICY CE12: Development Priorities & Evidence of Need</p>	<p>1. Housing delivery in the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be focussed on meeting affordable housing requirements, particularly housing that is affordable in perpetuity such as social rented housing.</p> <p>2. When local planning authorities are reviewing their Local Plans, they should give consideration to setting policies for affordable housing provision in the CNL that require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 50% affordable housing in market housing developments; • 100% affordable housing on Rural Exception Sites, with a lower percentage only being permitted in exceptional circumstances and the absolute minimum being 75%; • on-site affordable housing provision for housing developments of five units or fewer. <p>3. Priority should be given to maintaining and enhancing local community amenities and services and improving access to these amenities and services. Priority should also be given to supporting local employment opportunities.</p> <p>4. It should be recognised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The housing need figure derived from the Government's 'standard method' for calculating housing need is an unconstrained assessment of housing need and does not present a target for housing provision. (b) The decision on how many homes should be planned for (i.e., the 'housing requirement' figure in Local Plans) should only be made after consideration of the constraints that the local authority faces, including the AONB designation, and consideration of the land that is actually available for development. As such, when these constraints are factored in, the 'housing requirement' could potentially be smaller than the standard method's 'housing need' figure. (c) The application of national planning policies relating to AONBs may mean that it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs (OAN) in full in local authority areas that overlap with the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL). (d) The CNL is unlikely to be a suitable area for accommodating unmet needs from adjoining, non-designated areas. In the context of the CNL, this includes unmet needs relating to adjacent urban areas and unmet needs arising in local authority areas that do not overlap with the CNL. (e) Meeting housing need is never a reason to cause unacceptable harm to the CNL. (f) The scale and extent of development in the CNL should be limited. <p>5. Consideration should be given to whether the constraints relating to the AONB designation merit 'exceptional circumstances' which may justify using an alternative approach to the standard method for assessing housing need.</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. When the allocation of sites is being considered in the Local Plan process, regard should be given to the evidence of need specific to: (i) the settlement / parish where the allocation is being proposed; and (ii) the CNL 'sub-area' within which the allocation is being proposed. 7. Within the CNL, windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining, or outside of, built up area boundaries (or equivalent) should only be supported where there is robust evidence of a specific local housing need such as needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement. 8. Where choice-based lettings systems, such as Homeseeker Plus, are used as part of the evidence base for affordable housing need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the 'local connection' component of the choice-based lettings system should be applied consistently; and • data from the choice-based lettings systems should not be used explicitly as a measure of affordable housing need unless the data has been verified and there is a clear local connection to – and preference for – the settlement in question.
<p>POLICY CE13: Waste Management and the Circular Economy</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waste management should align with the following hierarchy, as set out in the Government's Waste Management Plan 2021: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prevention b. Prepare for reuse c. Recycling d. Other recovery e. Disposal 2. Measures that help to deliver a circular, or closed-loop, economy, in which waste generation is avoided, should be encouraged. 3. Proposals for new landfill sites and strategic waste facilities should not normally be permitted in the Cotswolds National Landscape, especially where they involve importing significant amounts of waste into the National landscape (for example, waste generated in neighbouring urban areas). 4. Any waste management facilities that are permitted in the National Landscape should: (i) be sited in such a way that adverse environmental impacts are minimised, in line with relevant permitting regimes; and (ii) primarily to waste that arises within the National Landscape. (Within close proximity to the proposed facility). 5. The management of waste by way of: - depositing it to land as either an inert recovery operation or inert landfill; the use of waste for the desirable further restoration of previous landfill operations; and the spreading of waste on land to improve soil quality should only be allowed in very limited circumstances within environmental limits and where it can demonstrate a positive contribution to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the National Landscape.
<p>UNDERSTANDING & ENJOYMENT AIM: Ensuring access, learning and wellbeing opportunities are for everyone.</p>	
<p>POLICY UE1: Health and Well-being</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opportunities for improving health and wellbeing in the Cotswolds National Landscape should be created, improved and promoted, including, where appropriate, the provision of: green spaces within easy reach of communities, walking, cycling and riding routes, including routes for the disabled; opportunities to access and interact with nature; and volunteering and personal development opportunities. 2. Children and young people resident within and around the National Landscape should be provided with environmental education

	<p>opportunities to experience the Cotswolds National Landscape through direct contact with the natural environment.</p> <p>3. The health sector should make greater use of the benefits that the National Landscape provides for the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors, for example, by prescribing exercise in the Cotswolds National Landscape countryside.</p>
<p>POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A safe, pleasant, accessible, clearly waymarked and well-connected Public Rights of Way network should be maintained, enhanced and promoted across the Cotswolds National Landscape. 2. Open Access Land and other land, including Country Parks, that is open to public access should be maintained, enhanced and promoted across the Cotswolds National Landscape. Where appropriate, more land should be made available for public access. 3. Sustainable funding for National Trails, including the Cotswold Way and Thames Path, should be secured. 4. Visitors, residents and local communities should be provided with opportunities to increase their understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape. 5. A priority for engagement in the National Landscape should be communities from the surrounding urban areas, in particular those from areas of high deprivation and those that are not traditional visitors to the Cotswolds. Individuals from within the National Landscape who are not currently enjoying or engaged with the benefits of the landscape should also be a priority. 6. Easily accessible online and downloadable and onsite resources for walking, cycling, horse riding, volunteering and educational activities should be provided in the National Landscape to help promote access to the area and understanding and appreciation of its special qualities. 7. Visitor facilities and routes that are accessible to those of all abilities should be provided through improvements to infrastructure. 8. Guided walks and activities for those who are not confident walking in the countryside should be provided to increase confidence and share knowledge of the national Landscape and its special qualities. 9. Arts and cultural experiences should be provided to encourage people to deepen their emotional connection to the landscape and support the engagement of new and existing audiences. 10. The Countryside code should be promoted to educate visitors and communities to act appropriately in the countryside and to improve understanding between visitors and those living and working in the area. 11. The provision of access and recreational opportunities should not have an adverse impact on the Cotswolds National Landscape. Where recreational use is having or is likely to have, an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these impacts. Such steps can include enhanced maintenance and wayfinding, onsite engagement, legal restrictions, and the provision and promotion of access and recreational opportunities in new alternative suitable locations.
<p>POLICY UE3: Sustainable Tourism</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tourism within the Cotswolds National Landscape is delivered and managed in a way that minimises adverse effects on the natural beauty of the National Landscape and the emission of greenhouse gases. 2. Visitors, residents, local businesses and communities should be provided with opportunities to directly contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape and

	<p>improve access to the area through local individual, community and employee volunteering opportunities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. The 'Caring for the Cotswolds' visitor giving scheme will raise awareness of the AONB and generate funds from visitors to directly help look after the Cotswolds National Landscape: by supporting projects which conserve habitats and species, look after heritage and landscape, improve access, and help provide education resources encouraging people to understand the landscape and nature better.4. Visitors should be provided with a variety of accommodation options over a range of prices. The siting and design of visitor accommodation should be compatible with conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape including its special qualities.5. Air travel arising from the Cotswolds as a destination should be minimised.6. Existing sustainable and integrated transport initiatives should be supported and new initiatives developed to help facilitate the car free visitor experience.
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Appendix 4: Screening for any likely significant effects

Appendix 4a: Test for no negative effects

Guidance on Habitats Regulations Appraisal of plans – Classifying No Negative Effect					
A1	Options / policies that will not themselves lead to development e.g., because they relate to design or other qualitative criteria for development, or they are not a land use planning policy.				
A2	Options / policies intended to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity				
A3	Options / policies intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures will not be likely to have any negative effect on a Natura 2000 Site				
A4	Options / policies that positively steer development away from Natura 2000 Sites and associated sensitive areas				
A5	General policy statements or policies that only express general intentions or political aspirations.				
Draft Policies		Category A?	Type	Next stage?	Comment
POLICY CC1: Climate Change – Mitigation	<p>1 Greenhouse gas emissions should be minimised through a range of measures, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing energy consumption and generating energy from renewable sources in a manner consistent with the purpose of National Landscape (AONB) designation; improving energy efficiency, including building energy-efficient new building and retrofitting existing buildings. Traditional buildings including listed buildings must be responsibly retrofitted by historic building specialists; using small-scale forms of renewable energy that are compatible with the purpose of National Landscape designation; reducing car use and increasing green and active travel including public transport; increasing shared mobility through car sharing schemes; 	YES	A2	NO	A general policy statement that will protect National Network sites from air pollution and air-borne pollutants

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purchasing locally produced food products and services • minimising air travel by Cotswolds residents; • encouraging small-scale vegetable growing in gardens and allotments. 				
	<p>2 Climate change mitigation should be a significant driver in all new development, infrastructure and transport provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • designing the fabric of development to standards of ultra-low energy demand • In all developments, a net zero operational carbon balance is required to have 100% energy provided by low carbon sources. • Alternatives to fossil fuel energy sources are used including no gas boilers. • passive measures, for example the orientation of buildings and high insulation, prioritised over more energy intensive alternatives, and the risk of overheating minimised • promote green and active travel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ minimise travel through encouraging home working and affordable housing provision ○ prioritise walking, cycling and public transport use, including adequate cycle parking; and improve connections to existing facilities ○ provide sufficient infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles, scooters and bikes. • increased shared mobility by supporting car sharing schemes. • requiring sustainable construction methods and management plans to reduce and manage construction waste; 	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reducing embodied carbon through secondary and recycled material use within all construction unless demonstrably unachievable on technical and practical grounds incentivise voluntary sustainability standards, for example BREEAM, Building with Nature, and One Planet Living principles. 				
	3 Climate change mitigation including the sequestration of carbon should be a key component of land management practices and future agri-environment/ELM (Environmental Land Management), land management and rural development support mechanisms in the National Landscape.	YES	A2	NO	A general policy statement that will protect National Network sites by controlling the modification of ecosystems
	4 Action to mitigate climate change should be undertaken in a way compatible with the statutory purposes of the National Landscapes (AONB) designation.	YES	A1	NO	Not a land use policy
POLICY CC2: Climate Change - Adaptation	1 The risks posed by the consequences of climate change should be reduced through a range of adaptation measures, including those identified in relevant policies of this Management Plan.	YES	A5	NO	An aspiration
	2 Climate change adaption should be a significant driver in all new development, infrastructure and transport provision.	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement
	3 Climate change adaptation should be a key component of land management practices and future agri-environment/ELM (Environmental Land Management) schemes. Land management and rural development support mechanisms in the National Landscape.	YES	A2	NO	A general policy statement that will protect National Network sites by controlling the modification of ecosystems
	4 Further research into the predicted impacts of climate change on the Cotswolds	YES	A1	NO	Not a land use policy

	National Landscape should be undertaken. This research should be used to advise and inform sustained behavioural change to adapt to climate change and conserve and enhance the National Landscape and its special qualities.				
POLICY CC3: Natural & Cultural Capital – Principles	1 The natural and cultural capital of the Cotswolds National Landscape and the services they provide – should continue to be assessed and evaluated.	YES	A3	NO	A general intent that supports the conservation of National Network sites
	2 The use of natural and cultural capital accounting should be encouraged in order to fully understand the implications of investment, development and management decisions.	YES	A3	NO	A general intent that supports the conservation of National Network sites
	3 The financial and non-financial benefits of natural and cultural capital and the services they provide should be promoted.	YES	A5	NO	A general intent
	4 Proposals affecting the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to – and seek to conserve and enhance – the natural and cultural capital of the National Landscape and the services they provide.	YES	A3	NO	A general intent that supports the conservation of National Network sites
	5 Natural and cultural capital and services they provide should be key components of future agri-environment/ELM (Environmental Land Management), land management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape.	YES	A3	NO	A general policy statement that will support the conservation of National Network sites by maintaining the integrity of ecosystems
POLICY CC4: Soils	1 Soil degradation should be halted and reversed by managing soils in a way that: (i) increases organic content, water retention and carbon sequestration; and (ii) minimises erosion, water pollution and compaction.	YES	A2	NO	A general policy statement that will protect National Network sites where issues of cultivation or changes in conditions are a concern
	2 Soil management should remain a key component of	YES	A2	NO	A general policy statement that

	future agri-environment/ELM (Environmental Land Management), land management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape.				protects National Network sites by controlling the modification of ecosystems
POLICY CC5: Water	1 Water resources should be carefully managed and conserved to: improve water quality; ensure adequate aquifer recharge; ensure adequate river flows; and contribute to natural flood management systems.	YES	A3	NO	An aspiration that supports the conservation of National Network sites
	2 Development (new and existing sites) should assess and minimise flood risk and implement Sustainable drainage schemes, adopt high water efficiency standards in line with RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge targets, and water conservation measures, for example rainwater harvesting and/or water recycling and grey water systems.	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement
	3 Sewerage pollution from storm overflows should be minimised and be within legal and regulatory requirements.	YES	A5	NO	An aspiration
POLICY CC6: Developing a consistent, coordinated and landscape-led approach	1 Stakeholders across the Cotswolds National Landscape should take a consistent and co-ordinated approach to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape, including its special qualities and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities, in line with the statutory Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan – including the policies therein - and other guidance produced by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board.	YES	A5	NO	An aspiration
POLICY CC7: Compliance with Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act	1 Relevant authorities, including public bodies, must comply with Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (the 'duty of regard') and should have regard to the supporting guidance published by Defra and Natural England.	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement
	2 Relevant authorities including public bodies should	YES	A5	NO	An aspiration

	document how they have complied with the 'duty of regard'.				
	3 Compliance with the 'duty of regard' will be monitored.	YES	A1	NO	A general intent
POLICY CC8: Working together	1 Stakeholders should work in partnership to support the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. Stakeholders should also cooperate in fostering the economic and social well-being of communities in and around the National Landscape.	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement
	2 Communities and businesses within and around the Cotswolds National Landscape should be encouraged to value and celebrate being part of a nationally recognised landscape and to contribute to the purpose of National Landscape (AONB) designation.	YES	A5	NO	An aspiration
	3 All relevant stakeholders should work together to ensure the successful implementation of the Landscapes Review proposals that the Government decides to take forward.	YES	A5	NO	A general intent
POLICY CE1: Landscape	1 Proposals that are likely to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape, should have regard to, be compatible with and reinforce the landscape character of the location, as described by the Cotswolds Conservation Board's Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy and Guidelines. There should be a presumption against the loss of key characteristics identified in the landscape character assessment.	YES	A1	NO	Policy that will not lead to development
	2 Proposals that are likely to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the Cotswolds AONB, should have regard to the scenic quality of the location and its	YES	A1	NO	Not a land use policy

	setting and ensure that views - including those into and out of the AONB – and visual amenity are conserved and enhanced.				
	3 Conserving and enhancing landscape character should be a key objective of future agri-environment/ELM (Environmental Land Management) schemes, land management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape.	YES	A3	NO	A general intent
	4 Rural skills training and the utilisation of those skills – such as dry stone walling, stone-masonry, traditional woodland management and hedgelaying – will be supported, to ensure the long-term retention, creation and management of the key features of the Cotswolds National Landscape.	YES	A1	NO	Not a land use policy
POLICY CE2: Geology	1 Proposals that are likely to impact on the geological features of the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to these features and seek to conserve and enhance them.	YES	A3	NO	A general policy statement that supports the conservation of National Network sites
	2 The geological features of the Cotswolds National Landscape should be conserved and enhanced through effective management.	YES	A2	NO	An aspiration
	3 Opportunities should be sought to promote awareness and understanding of the geological features of the Cotswolds National Landscape.	YES	A5	NO	A general intent
	4 Exploration and research into the geology of the Cotswolds National Landscape should be continued in order to improve understanding of the landscape, and of the geological resource and its importance to inform the conservation and management of geological and geomorphological sites.	YES	A1	NO	Not a land use policy
POLICY CE3: Local Distinctiveness	1 Proposals that are likely to impact on the local distinctiveness of the Cotswolds National Landscape	YES	A1	NO	A general intent

	<p>should have regard to, be compatible with and reinforce this local distinctiveness. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being compatible with the Cotswolds Conservation Board's Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Strategy and Guidelines and Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change; • being designed and, where relevant, landscaped to respect local settlement patterns, building styles, scale and materials and in accordance with design guidance prepared by local planning authorities; • using an appropriate colour of limestone to reflect local distinctiveness. 				
	<p>2 Innovative designs, compatible with the conservation of natural beauty – which are informed by local distinctiveness, character and scale – should be welcomed.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>A5</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>A general policy statement</p>
	<p>3 The development of design guidance – which is supported by a robust evidence base and which reflects relevant guidance published by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board – will be encouraged.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>A1</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Not a land use policy</p>
	<p>4 Provision should be made for the quarrying of limestone, at an appropriate scale, in order to provide building materials that help maintain and enhance the local distinctiveness of the National Landscape. Any production of aggregate and agricultural lime should be secondary and necessary for local and necessary operational purposes. Any such mineral sites should be required to demonstrate that they do not have any significant adverse effects on the natural beauty of the National Landscape including its special qualities or the integrity of existing wildlife sites</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>A2</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>An aspiration - quarrying can affect the National Network sites through extraction of limestone, disturbance, dust in the air and changes to groundwater and water flow. This policy will protect the National Network sites. Hydraulic effects are limited. Most identified sites are separated from the NL by the Rivers Severn and</p>

					Thames, and so cannot be affected.
POLICY CE4: Tranquillity	1 Proposals that are likely to impact on the tranquillity of the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to this tranquillity, by seeking to (i) avoid and (ii) minimise noise pollution and other aural and visual disturbance.	YES	A2	NO	A general intent that will protect National Network sites by reducing noise disturbance
	2 Measures should be taken to enhance the tranquillity of the Cotswolds National Landscape by (i) removing and (ii) reducing existing sources of noise pollution and other aural and visual disturbance.	YES	A2	NO	An aspiration that will protect National Network sites by reducing noise disturbance
	3 Proposals that are likely to impact on the tranquillity of the CNL should have regard to – and be compatible with – the National Landscapes Board’s Tranquillity Position Statement.	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement
POLICY CE5: Dark Skies	1 Proposals that are likely to impact on the dark skies of the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to these dark skies, by seeking to (i) avoid and (ii) minimise light pollution.	YES	A2	NO	A general intent that will protect National Network sites by reducing urbanisation
	2 Proposals that are likely to impact on the dark skies of the CNL should apply – and comply with – recognised standards and guidance, in particular, that published by the Institution of Lighting Professionals and the Commission for Dark Skies.	YES	A5	NO	An aspiration
	3 Measures should be taken to increase the area of dark skies in the Cotswolds National Landscape by (i) removing and (ii) reducing existing sources of light pollution.	YES	A2	NO	An aspiration that will protect National Network sites by reducing urbanisation
	4 Consideration will be given to seeking a formal dark sky designation for those parts of the Cotswolds National Landscape that are least affected by light pollution.	YES	A5	NO	A general intent
POLICY CE6: Historic Environment	1 Proposals that are likely to impact on the historic and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to heritage assets and their setting and seek opportunities to conserve and enhance them. This	YES	A3	NO	A general intent that will support the conservation of National Network sites

	should include respecting historical features, buildings, sites, layout and context, including the relationship between the existing feature or settlement and the landscape.				
	2 Heritage Impact Assessments should be used when considering any change to a heritage asset and to influence decisions regarding the management of the historic environment.	YES	A3	NO	An aspiration
	3 The historic environment and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds National Landscape, both designated and non-designated, should be conserved and enhanced through effective management.	YES	A3	NO	An aspiration
	4 Designated historic environment sites, such as scheduled monuments and listed buildings, and non-designated heritage assets of equivalent significance, should be protected, in line with national policy and guidance.	YES	A3	NO	A general intent that will support the conservation of National Network sites
	5 Historic environment and cultural heritage should be a key component of future agri-environment/ELM (Environmental Land Management) schemes, land management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape.	YES	A3	NO	A general intent that will support the conservation of National Network sites through traditional management
	6 Opportunities should be sought to promote the awareness, understanding and use of Historic Environment Records, Conservation Area Appraisals, Historic Landscape Characterisation and Heritage Strategies and Action Plans. These should be used to influence decisions regarding the management of the National Landscape's historic environment and cultural heritage.	YES	A1	NO	Not a land use policy
POLICY CE7: Biodiversity and Nature Recovery	1 Biodiversity (including the abundance of wildlife) in the Cotswolds National Landscape should be conserved and enhanced by establishing a coherent and resilient nature recovery network across the	YES	A2	NO	A general intent to protect National Network sites by maintaining the integrity of ecosystems

	<p>Cotswolds National Landscape and in its setting. This should be achieved in accordance with the outcomes, priorities, targets and measures within the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan and focus on the priority species and habitats listed in Appendix 7.</p>				
	<p>2 Policy and strategic documents that are likely to impact on the biodiversity of the National Landscape should have regard to – and be consistent with – the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan. This would include, but is not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Local Plans. ii. Neighbourhood Development Plans. iii. Green Infrastructure Strategies. iv. Tree and Woodland Strategies. v. Ecological Emergency and Climate Change Strategies. vi. Local Nature Recovery Strategies. 	<p>YES</p>	<p>A5</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>A general policy statement</p>
	<p>3 Proposals that are likely to impact on the biodiversity of the National Landscape should have regard to – and be consistent with – the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan. This would include, but is not limited to, the following delivery mechanisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Environmental Land Management Schemes and other grant schemes and rural development support mechanisms; ii. Biodiversity Net Gain; iii. Payment for Ecosystem Services including but not limited to carbon sequestration and storage, flood management, water supply and water quality improvements. 	<p>YES</p>	<p>A1</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Not a land use policy</p>
	<p>4 Development proposals that are likely to have an unavoidable impact on the biodiversity of the Cotswolds National Landscape should provide a minimum net-gain in biodiversity of 20%,</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>A1</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Not a land use policy</p>

	particularly with regard to the species and habitats listed in Appendix 8.				
	5 Damage or loss of irreplaceable habitat should be avoided. Irreplaceable habitat includes but is not limited to: 1 Ancient and veteran trees 2 Ancient woodland (continually wooded since 1600); 3 Ancient grassland (surviving since 1945)	YES	A5	NO	An aspiration
POLICY CE8: Rural Land Management	1 Rural land management in the Cotswolds National Landscape and in the setting of the National Landscape should have regard to – and help deliver – the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape including its special qualities. It should also increase the understanding and enjoyment of the National Landscape’s special qualities.	YES	A5	NO	An aspiration
	2 Rural land management in the Cotswolds National Landscape and in the setting of the National Landscape should have regard to – and, ideally, help to deliver – the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan. It should also be compatible with guidance produced by the Cotswolds Conservation Board, including the: i. Cotswolds National Landscape Strategy and Guidelines; ii. Cotswolds National Landscape Character Assessment; iii. Cotswolds National Landscape Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change; iv. Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statements. v. Cotswolds Nature recovery Plan vi. Cotswolds National Landscape Climate Change Strategy	YES	A1	NO	Not a land use policy
	3 Future agri-environment/ELM	YES	A2	NO	A general intent that will protect

	<p>(Environmental Land Management) schemes, land management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape should be designed specifically for the National Landscape. These mechanisms should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. address paragraphs 1 and 2, above; ii. be managed locally to ensure effective local delivery; iii. deliver public goods and services. 				National Network sites by maintaining the integrity of ecosystems
POLICY CE9: Problem Species, Pests and Diseases	1 The population of grey squirrel and deer in the Cotswolds National Landscape should continue to be controlled and managed. This should be undertaken rigorously and coordinated at a landscape scale.	YES	A2	NO	A general policy statement to protect National Network sites (as identified in the Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC SIP)
	2 National guidance - and guidance produced by the Board - on Ash Dieback should be followed to ensure any measures implemented will conserve and enhance the qualities of the landscape.	YES	A2	NO	A general policy statement to protect National Network sites – identified in three SIPs for sites within the AONB
	3 National and local guidance - including guidance from Government Agencies and the Non Native Species Secretariat - on invasive non-native species, pests and diseases should be followed and appropriate biosecurity measures promoted.	YES	A2	NO	A general policy statement to protect National Network sites (as identified in the Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC SIP)
POLICY CE10: Development & Transport - Principles	<p>1 Development and transport proposals in the CNL and its setting should have regard to – and help to deliver - the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL. In doing so, they should have regard to – and help to deliver – the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and be compatible with guidance produced by the Cotswolds Conservation Board, including the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines; (ii) Cotswolds AONB Landscape 	YES	A1	NO	Not a land use policy

	<p>Character Assessment;</p> <p>(iii) Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan;</p> <p>(iv) Cotswolds AONB Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change;</p> <p>(v) Cotswolds National Landscape Board's Position Statements.</p>				
	<p>2 Development and transport proposals in the CNL should, where appropriate, have regard to – and help deliver – the purpose of increasing the understanding and enjoyment of the CNL's special qualities. They should also contribute to the economic and social well-being of CNL communities, in a way that is compatible with conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>A5</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>A general policy statement</p>
	<p>3 Development and transport proposals in the CNL and its setting should comply with relevant national planning policy and guidance, particularly with regards to paragraphs 11, 174, 176, 177, 179 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>A5</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>A general policy statement</p>
	<p>4 The purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds AONB and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of the AONB's special qualities should be identified as strategic priorities in Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans, Local Transport Plans and other relevant plans and strategies. These plans and strategies should explicitly identify the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan as a material consideration.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>A5</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>A general policy statement</p>
	<p>5 A landscape-led approach should be applied to development and transport proposals in the CNL and its setting, proportionate to the type and scale of development being proposed, whereby proposals:</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>A5</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>A general policy statement</p>

	<p>a) address the natural beauty of the CNL as primary consideration at all stages of the development process (including design), from initial conception through to implementation;</p> <p>b) addresses all of the factors that contribute to the natural beauty of the area;</p> <p>c) address access to natural beauty including the character of the public rights of way network and its role within wider green infrastructure;</p> <p>d) reflect the character of the local area;</p> <p>e) avoid adverse effects where possible and, if adverse effects can't be avoided, minimise them; and</p> <p>f) deliver substantially more beneficial effects than adverse effects for the natural beauty of the CNL.</p> <p>This landscape-led approach is particularly important for major development. Appendix 3 of the Board's Landscape-led Development Position Statement provides additional advice on implementing a landscape-led approach in this context.</p>				
<p>POLICY CE11: Major Development</p>	<p>1 In line with national planning policy, permission should be refused for major development within the CNL other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>A1</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>A general intent</p>
	<p>2 Relevant stakeholders should fully assess relevant site allocations and development proposals to see if they constitute major development. In considering or deciding whether a proposed development constitutes major development, relevant stakeholders should have regard to the major development checklist in Appendix 5 of the Board's</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>A1</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Not a land use policy</p>

	Landscape-led Development Position Statement.				
	3 Local authorities and other relevant stakeholders should explicitly state whether they consider relevant allocations and development proposals to be major development, in the context of paragraph 177 of the NPPF.	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement
	4 The mandatory major development 'tests' specified in paragraph 177 of the NPPF should be rigorously applied and documented for all allocations and development proposals that are deemed to be major development.	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement
	5 When relevant stakeholders are considering or applying the major development 'tests' specified in paragraph 177 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), it should be recognised that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'exceptional need' does not necessarily equate to 'exceptional circumstances'; • no permission should be given for major development save to the extent the development was needed in the public interest, met a need that could not be addressed elsewhere or in some other way and met that need in a way that to the extent possible, moderated detrimental effect on the environment, landscape and recreational opportunities. 	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement
	6 When making decisions on major development proposals, local authorities (and / or other relevant decision makers) should not simply weigh all material considerations in a balance, but should refuse an application unless they meet the exceptional circumstances and public interest criteria.	YES	A5	NO	An aspiration
POLICY CE12: Development Priorities &	1 Housing delivery in the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be focussed on meeting affordable housing requirements, particularly	YES	A1	NO	Not a land use policy

Evidence of Need	housing that is affordable in perpetuity such as social rented housing.				
	<p>2 When local planning authorities are reviewing their Local Plans, they should give consideration to setting policies for affordable housing provision in the CNL that require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 50% affordable housing in market housing developments; • 100% affordable housing on Rural Exception Sites, with a lower percentage only being permitted in exceptional circumstances and the absolute minimum being 75%; • on-site affordable housing provision for housing developments of five units or fewer. 	YES	A5	NO	An aspiration
	<p>3 Priority should be given to maintaining and enhancing local community amenities and services and improving access to these amenities and services. Priority should also be given to supporting local employment opportunities.</p>	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement
	<p>4 It should be recognised that:</p> <p>a) The housing need figure derived from the Government’s ‘standard method’ for calculating housing need is an unconstrained assessment of housing need and does not present a target for housing provision.</p> <p>b) The decision on how many homes should be planned for (i.e., the ‘housing requirement’ figure in Local Plans) should only be made after consideration of the constraints that the local authority faces, including the AONB designation, and consideration of the land that is actually available for development. As such, when these constraints</p>	YES	A1	NO	An aspiration

	<p>are factored in, the 'housing requirement' could potentially be smaller than the standard method's 'housing need' figure.</p> <p>c) The application of national planning policies relating to AONBs may mean that it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs (OAN) in full in local authority areas that overlap with the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL).</p> <p>d) The CNL is unlikely to be a suitable area for accommodating unmet needs from adjoining, non-designated areas. In the context of the CNL, this includes unmet needs relating to adjacent urban areas and unmet needs arising in local authority areas that do not overlap with the CNL.</p> <p>e) Meeting housing need is never a reason to cause unacceptable harm to the CNL.</p> <p>f) The scale and extent of development in the CNL should be limited.</p>				
	<p>5 Consideration should be given to whether the constraints relating to the AONB designation merit 'exceptional circumstances' which may justify using an alternative approach to the standard method for assessing housing need.</p>	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement
	<p>6 When the allocation of sites is being considered in the Local Plan process, regard should be given to the evidence of need specific to: (i) the settlement / parish where the allocation is being proposed; and (ii) the CNL 'sub-area' within which the allocation is being proposed.</p>	YES	A1	NO	Policy that will not lead to development
	<p>7 Within the CNL, windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining, or outside of, built up area boundaries (or equivalent)</p>	YES	A1	NO	Policy that will not lead to development

	<p>should only be supported where there is robust evidence of a specific local housing need such as needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement.</p>				
	<p>8 Where choice-based lettings systems, such as Homeseeker Plus, are used as part of the evidence base for affordable housing need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the 'local connection' component of the choice-based lettings system should be applied consistently; and • data from the choice-based lettings systems should not be used explicitly as a measure of affordable housing need unless the data has been verified and there is a clear local connection to – and preference for – the settlement in question. 	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement
POLICY CE13: Waste Management and the Circular Economy	<p>1 Waste management should align with the following hierarchy, as set out in the Government's Waste Management Plan 2021:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prevention b. Prepare for reuse c. Recycling d. Other recovery e. Disposal 	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement
	<p>2 Measures that help to deliver a circular, or closed-loop, economy, in which waste generation is avoided, should be encouraged.</p>	YES	A5	NO	A general intent
	<p>3 Proposals for new landfill sites and strategic waste facilities should not normally be permitted in the Cotswolds National Landscape, especially where they involve importing significant amounts of waste into the National landscape (for example, waste generated in neighbouring urban areas).</p>	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement

	<p>4 Any waste management facilities that are permitted in the National Landscape should: (i) be sited in such a way that adverse environmental impacts are minimised, in line with relevant permitting regimes; and (ii) primarily to waste that arises within the National Landscape. (Within close proximity to the proposed facility).</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>A5</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>A general policy statement</p>
	<p>5 The management of waste by way of: depositing it to land as either an inert recovery operation or inert landfill; the use of waste for the desirable further restoration of previous landfill operations; and the spreading of waste on land to improve soil quality should only be allowed in very limited circumstances within environmental limits and where it can demonstrate a positive contribution to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the National Landscape.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>A3</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>A general policy statement</p>
<p>POLICY UE1: Health and Well-being</p>	<p>1 for improving health and wellbeing in the Cotswolds National Landscape should be created, improved and promoted, including, where appropriate, the provision of: green spaces within easy reach of communities, walking, cycling and riding routes, including routes for the disabled; opportunities to access and interact with nature; and volunteering and personal development opportunities.</p>	<p>UNCERTAIN</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>NEXT STAGE (Appendix 4b) Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities are an issue identified in the SIPs but this impact can only apply to National Network sites that lie within the National Landscape. Only 3 of these sites identify recreation & access as an issue.</p>
	<p>2 Children and young people resident within and around the National Landscape should be provided with environmental education opportunities to experience the Cotswolds National Landscape through direct contact with the natural environment.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>A5</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>An aspiration</p>

	3 The health sector should make greater use of the benefits that the National Landscape provides for the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors, for example, by prescribing exercise in the Cotswolds National Landscape countryside.	YES	A5	NO	An aspiration
POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation	1 A safe, pleasant, accessible, clearly waymarked and well-connected Public Rights of Way network should be maintained, enhanced and promoted across the Cotswolds National Landscape.	YES	A2	NO	A general policy statement that protects National Network sites by reducing inadvertent trespass off rights of way
	2 Open Access Land and other land, including Country Parks, that is open to public access should be maintained, enhanced and promoted across the Cotswolds National Landscape. Where appropriate, more land should be made available for public access.	UNCERTAIN	n/a	YES	NEXT STAGE (Appendix 4b) Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities are an issue identified in the SIPs but this impact can only apply to National Network sites that lie within the National Landscape. Only 3 of these sites identify recreation & access as an issue. Paragraph 11 of this policy offers very strong protection to National Network sites.
	3 Sustainable funding for National Trails, including the Cotswold Way and Thames Path, should be secured.	YES	A5	NO	An aspiration
	4 Visitors, residents and local communities should be provided with opportunities to increase their understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape.	YES	A5	NO	A general intent
	5 A priority for engagement in the National Landscape should be communities from the surrounding urban areas, in particular those from areas of high deprivation and those that	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement

	are not traditional visitors to the Cotswolds. Individuals from within the National Landscape who are not currently enjoying or engaged with the benefits of the landscape should also be a priority.				
	6 Easily accessible online and downloadable and onsite resources for walking, cycling, horse riding, volunteering and educational activities should be provided in the National Landscape to help promote access to the area and understanding and appreciation of its special qualities.	YES	A1	NO	Not a land use policy
	7 Visitor facilities and routes that are accessible to those of all abilities should be provided through improvements to infrastructure.	UNCERTAIN	n/a	NO	NEXT STAGE (Appendix 4b) Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities are an issue identified in the SIPs but this impact can only apply to National Network sites that lie within the National Landscape. Only 3 of these sites identify recreation & access as an issue. Paragraph 11 of this policy offers very strong protection to National Network sites.
	8 Guided walks and activities for those who are not confident walking in the countryside should be provided to increase confidence and share knowledge of the national Landscape and its special qualities.	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement
	9 Arts and cultural experiences should be provided to encourage people to deepen their emotional connection to the landscape and support the engagement of new and existing audiences.	YES	A5	NO	A general intent

	10 The Countryside code should be promoted to educate visitors and communities to act appropriately in the countryside and to improve understanding between visitors and those living and working in the area.	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement
	11 The provision of access and recreational opportunities should not have an adverse impact on the Cotswolds National Landscape. Where recreational pressure is having an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these impacts. Such steps can include enhanced maintenance and wayfinding, onsite engagement, legal restrictions, and the provision and promotion of access and recreational opportunities in new alternative suitable locations.	YES	A4	NO	A general intent that will modify any negative interactions arising from recreation and access. Will move activities away from sensitive National Network sites.
POLICY UE3: Sustainable Tourism	1 Tourism within the Cotswolds National Landscape is delivered and managed in a way that minimises adverse effects on the natural beauty of the National Landscape and the emission of greenhouse gases.	YES	A5	NO	An aspiration
	2 Visitors, residents, local businesses and communities should be provided with opportunities to directly contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape and improve access to the area through local individual, community and employee volunteering opportunities.	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement
	3 The 'Caring for the Cotswolds' visitor giving scheme will raise awareness of the AONB and generate funds from visitors to directly help look after the Cotswolds National Landscape: by supporting projects which conserve habitats and species, look after heritage and	YES	A5	NO	A general policy statement

	landscape, improve access, and help provide education resources encouraging people to understand the landscape and nature better.				
	4 Visitors should be provided with a variety of accommodation options over a range of prices. The siting and design of visitor accommodation should be compatible with conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape including its special qualities.	YES	A5	NO	An aspiration
	5 Air travel arising from the Cotswolds as a destination should be minimised.	YES	A5	NO	An aspiration
	6 Existing sustainable and integrated transport initiatives should be supported and new initiatives developed to help facilitate the car free visitor experience.	YES	A2	NO	A general policy statement that will protect National Network sites by reducing air pollution

Appendix 4b: Test for any likely significant effects

As a part of two policies, three paragraphs may have an impact on the National Site network. Each paragraph relates to increasing public access to land. As written, the paragraphs can only affect sites within the National Landscape; and only three National Sites in the National Landscape show public access, disturbance or the direct impact from third parties as an issue (see Appendix 2). These are:

- Bath & Bradford SAC
- Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC
- Rodborough Common SAC

AONB Policy		POLICY UE1: Health and Well-being				
<p>Paragraph 1: Opportunities for improving health and wellbeing in the Cotswolds National Landscape should be created, improved and promoted, including, where appropriate, the provision of: green spaces within easy reach of communities, walking, cycling and riding routes, including routes for the disabled; opportunities to access and interact with nature; and volunteering and personal development opportunities.</p>						
National site name	Qualifying feature	Issues ¹⁵ [& remedial measures]	Likely effects	Likely significant effects	Comments	Need for an appropriate assessment
Bath & Bradford SAC	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	1 Planning Permission: general There is currently difficulty in determining cumulative impacts of development across such a wide area and across local authority boundaries, including operations carried out under an European Protected Species license. This applies to both the developments themselves and the surveys which are needed to inform the planning application process. There is currently no formal way of assessing the cumulative impacts of "high disturbance" level surveys (e.g. mist netting, harp trapping, radiotracking) being carried out outside the SAC boundary which may have	None	None		NO

¹⁵ Identified in the 2015 Natural England Site Improvement Plans; numbered in priority order

		<p>cumulative impacts on the features of the SAC. Similarly, there is no formal way of assessing cumulative impacts on the SAC from permissions granted by the different competent authorities. Need to produce and promote advice and guidance on development control and strategic planning.</p>				
		<p>2 Change in land management Land ownership is fragmented and management has lapsed, particularly around the urban fringe of Bath. Need to provide information regarding appropriate management of habitat for bats.</p>	None	None		NO
		<p>3 Direct impact from third party One-off acts of vandalism or impacts of recreational pursuits could have a devastating effect if done in close proximity to roosting bats. There have been impacts at Brown's Folly, Box Mine and Bathampton Down Mines, specifically from third parties gaining access for inappropriate purposes. Need to reduce vandalism and impacts of recreational activities.</p>	More people may be encouraged to enter land	None	<p>The development of new areas for access may reduce pressure on the SAC. Paragraph 10 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation promotes the Countryside code to educate visitors and communities to act appropriately in the countryside. This may reduce third party impacts and moderate the effects of this paragraph. Paragraph 11 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation includes the statement "Where recreational pressure is having an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these</p>	NO

					impacts.” This moderates the effects of this paragraph.	
	S1323 Bechstein`s bat	4 Feature location/ extent/ condition unknown There is a lack of knowledge about the population of Bechstein's bat within the SAC and its relationship to roosts within the wider landscape. There is very little data to show which component sites are used by Bechstein's and in what way, and even less foraging/commuting data. This is a risk because it is difficult to determine the impacts of plans and projects on Bechstein's bat. Need to investigate Bechstein's bat to improve knowledge of local population activity.	None	None		NO
	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	5 Offsite habitat availability/ management There is a lack of knowledge as to usage of the wider landscape by the SAC species. For example whether there are certain critical bat corridors which link the component sites, other bat SAC sites or non-designated roosts, or particularly important areas or routes used for feeding, 'swarming' or other activity between sites is unknown. Lack of knowledge compromises the ability to respond appropriately to threats such as development pressure and opportunities such as the use of agri-environment schemes in locations that will most greatly benefit bats. Need to investigate bat species use of surrounding habitat.	None	None		NO

		<p>6 Public Access/Disturbance It is very difficult to close the sites to public access, potentially causing disturbance. This is a pressure in terms of continuous long-term disturbance by visitors, however the sites are managed in such a way that it does not present a significant pressure unless the volume and frequency of visitors were to increase. The threat to the sites come from one-off events such as: fire juggling near to the maternity colony; use of aerosol spray paints underground; use of fuel of any type underground, and bonfires at the mine entrances. Need to review access arrangements and implement improved management of access.</p>	<p>More people may be encouraged to enter land</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>The development of new areas for access may reduce pressure on the SAC. Paragraph 10 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation promotes the Countryside code to educate visitors and communities to act appropriately in the countryside. This may reduce third party impacts and moderate the effects of this paragraph. Paragraph 11 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation includes the statement "Where recreational pressure is having an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these impacts." This moderates the effects of this paragraph.</p>	<p>NO</p>
		<p>7 Change to site conditions All component areas of the SAC have the potential risk of collapse as they are abandoned mines and their status with regards to stability is largely unknown. Mine instability is particularly relevant at entrances where a collapse could make it unusable by bats. A collapse is likely to alter the entrance dimensions thereby affecting ventilation, temperature and humidity within the mines, and/or may cause bats to be killed or become entrapped. Due to mine instability it is also difficult to</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>		<p>NO</p>

		<p>monitor bats effectively. Need to investigate the stability of mine and cave systems and feasibility for stabilisation.</p>				
		<p>8 Inappropriate designation boundary</p> <p>Several undesignated sites support important populations of SAC bats. Some of these are under threat, and others are located in areas/landscapes where they could be offered greater protection and enhanced management of surrounding habitats if they were known to be special sites. Consultation zones for planning have been agreed far beyond the bounds of the current component sites, and evaluating the importance of new sites relative to the currently designated ones will validate and improve the series. Need to review series of SAC sites and consider new sites for notification.</p>	None	None		NO
Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC	H9130 Beech forests on neutral to rich soils	<p>1 Invasive species</p> <p>The dumping of garden waste and the consequent spread of invasive plants is an on-going threat but one that the land managers largely have under control. However, the spread of the non-native sycamore provides more of a challenge and has made particular use of canopy gaps created by storm damage. Although sycamore is considered an acceptable component of woodlands, including beechwoods, on the continent, in the Cotswolds it tends to dominate understorey and</p>	None	None		NO

	canopy to the detriment of other (native) tree species. Its control is costly and time consuming and often unpopular with woodland owners who find it useful to "deflect" squirrel damage from the beech trees. This together with the ever increasing risk to native tree species from plant disease and climate change makes the sycamore issue all the more acute. Need to reduce invasive sycamore, especially in the canopy.				
	2 Deer Deer browsing of regenerating trees (and possibly ground flora) remains a major threat to favourable condition throughout the beechwoods. Whilst deer control does take place, this work needs to be monitored and coordinated to ensure deer populations are adequately managed. Need to reduce deer browsing pressure.	None	None		NO
	3 Invasive species Grey squirrel numbers have increased sharply over the past decade or so and now cause significant damage to tree species, in particular beech. In places, this can lead to pole stage beech being systematically ring barked and killed. Control measures are widely applied but the numbers and associated damage persists. This also dissuades woodland owners from favouring the retention of beech. Need to reduce squirrel damage to trees.	None	None		NO
	4 Disease	None	None		NO

		<p>Although not known to be present in the Cotswolds as yet, Chalara (ash disease) is a major future threat to the beechwoods. Natural regeneration tends to favour ash although beech does also regenerate but at a slower rate. This has enabled an acceptable mix of beech/ash canopy with other minor species. However, the other main regeneration tree is the non-native sycamore. If ash starts to die out then the woodlands are likely to become dominated by sycamore, hence the need for a strategy to prepare for ash dieback. Need to produce a strategy to deal with potential ash dieback.</p>				
		<p>5 Public Access/Disturbance Public use of the Beechwoods has grown considerably over recent years and damage is becoming more widespread. A particular increase has been the use of mountain bikes and horseriding which use the woods far beyond the limited network of bridleways. This has created numerous additional trackways and so increasing the erosion of the ground flora and potentially opportunities for water erosion. Although the routes away from bridleways are not usually permitted, much of the SAC woodland is NNR or has public access by foot. Hence efforts have been made to provide agreed permissive routes with local bike groups with the aim of minimising damage whilst still allowing some use. This is still</p>	<p>More people may be encouraged to enter land</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>The development of new areas for access may reduce pressure on the Beechwoods. Paragraph 10 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation promotes the Countryside code to educate visitors and communities to act appropriately in the countryside. This may reduce third party impacts and moderate the effects of this paragraph. Paragraph 11 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation includes the statement “Where recreational pressure is having an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate,</p>	<p>NO</p>

		<p>experimental and much will depend on the scale of use and whether the users stick to the permissive routes. This approach could also be tried with horseriders. Additionally, dog walking has increased within the SAC especially at Coopers Hill where car parking is available. This has become a particular issue where professional dog walkers release large numbers of dogs (up to 12) to run uncontrolled through the woods. This causes disturbance to wildlife as well as local nutrification through dog faeces. Need to minimise impact of recreational use, especially mountain biking, horse riding and dog walking.</p>			<p>prevent or mitigate these impacts.” This moderates the effects of this paragraph.</p>	
		<p>6 Changes in species distributions There is a risk that global warming will increase the risk of drought to beech trees (which are shallow rooted). Whilst this risk should be acknowledged, it should be noted that no evidence of drought amongst beech trees has been noted in the Cotswolds as yet and the nature of the soils (limestone rather than chalk) and the (wetter) westerly location may help to prevent the risk. Need to monitor the effects of drought on beech trees.</p>	None	None		NO
	<p>H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites), H9130 Beech forests on</p>	<p>7 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition Nitrogen deposition exceeds site relevant critical loads. High atmospheric nitrogen levels could affect the SAC features through: changes in ground vegetation and mycorrhiza; nutrient imbalance; changes to soil fauna; increase in tall</p>	None	None		NO

	neutral to rich soils	grasses; decline in diversity; increased mineralization; N leaching; or surface acidification. Need to control, reduce and ameliorate atmospheric nitrogen impacts.				
Rodborough Common SAC	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	<p>1 Under grazing</p> <p>Under grazing is an issue due to the reliance on the rights of commoners to turn out cattle. The number of stock have dropped over the years to the point that additional cattle now need to be electric fenced on to the most species-rich areas on the slopes. Of key importance is the lack of cattle grids on minor roads which means that Commoners are less inclined to push the cattle on to the lower slopes where they may escape onto busy surrounding roads. It is these lower slopes that are the most species-rich and are suffering from a lack of grazing. A better evidence base (NVC survey, see action 2A) relating to the state of the site's grasslands is desirable to support the case for improved grazing. Need to increase grazing pressure in key areas.</p>	None	None		NO
		<p>2 Public Access/Disturbance</p> <p>The common is very close to Stroud and recreational use has greatly increased over the past few decades. This has created many new paths and parking areas which cause soil compaction to the detriment of the surrounding sward. Dog faeces is a particular issue which also damages the sward but also poses a real disease risk to the cattle which are vital to the</p>	More people may be encouraged to enter land	None	The development of new areas for access may reduce pressure on the common. Paragraph 10 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation promotes the Countryside code to educate visitors and communities to act appropriately in the countryside. This may reduce third party impacts and	NO

		management of the Common. New and proposed housing continues to add to the problem. Need to reduce the impact of recreational use.			moderate the effects of this paragraph. Paragraph 11 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation includes the statement "Where recreational pressure is having an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these impacts." This moderates the effects of this paragraph.	
		3 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition Nitrogen deposition exceeds the site-relevant critical load for ecosystem protection and hence there is a risk of harmful effects, but the sensitive features are currently considered to be in favourable condition on the site. This requires further investigation. Need to further investigate potential atmospheric nitrogen impacts.	None	None		NO
AONB Policy	POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation					
Paragraph 2: Open Access Land and other land, including Country Parks, that is open to public access should be maintained, enhanced and promoted across the Cotswolds National Landscape. Where appropriate, more land should be made available for public access.						
National site name	Qualifying feature	Issues¹⁶ [& remedial measures]	Likely effects	Likely significant effects	Comments	Need for an appropriate assessment
		1 Planning Permission: general	None	None		NO

¹⁶ Identified in the Natural England Site Improvement Plan 2014; numbered in priority order

Bath & Bradford SAC	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	There is currently difficulty in determining cumulative impacts of development across such a wide area and across local authority boundaries, including operations carried out under an European Protected Species license. This applies to both the developments themselves and the surveys which are needed to inform the planning application process. There is currently no formal way of assessing the cumulative impacts of "high disturbance" level surveys (e.g. mist netting, harp trapping, radiotracking) being carried out outside the SAC boundary which may have cumulative impacts on the features of the SAC. Similarly, there is no formal way of assessing cumulative impacts on the SAC from permissions granted by the different competent authorities. Need to produce and promote advice and guidance on development control and strategic planning.				
	2 Change in land management Land ownership is fragmented and management has lapsed, particularly around the urban fringe of Bath. Need to provide information regarding appropriate management of habitat for bats.	None	None			NO
	3 Direct impact from third party One-off acts of vandalism or impacts of recreational pursuits could have a devastating effect if done in close proximity to roosting bats. There have been impacts at Brown's Folly, Box Mine and Bathampton Down	More people may be encouraged to enter land	None	Paragraph 10 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation promotes the Countryside code to educate visitors and communities to act appropriately in the countryside. This may reduce		NO

		Mines, specifically from third parties gaining access for inappropriate purposes. Need to reduce vandalism and impacts of recreational activities.			third party impacts and moderate the effects of this paragraph. Paragraph 11 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation includes the statement "Where recreational pressure is having an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these impacts." This moderates the effects of this paragraph.	
	S1323 Bechstein's bat	4 Feature location/ extent/ condition unknown There is a lack of knowledge about the population of Bechstein's bat within the SAC and its relationship to roosts within the wider landscape. There is very little data to show which component sites are used by Bechstein's and in what way, and even less foraging/commuting data. This is a risk because it is difficult to determine the impacts of plans and projects on Bechstein's bat. Need to investigate Bechstein's bat to improve knowledge of local population activity.	None	None		NO
	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1323 Bechstein's bat	5 Offsite habitat availability/ management There is a lack of knowledge as to usage of the wider landscape by the SAC species. For example whether there are certain critical bat corridors which link the component sites, other bat SAC sites or non-designated	None	None		NO

		<p>roosts, or particularly important areas or routes used for feeding, 'swarming' or other activity between sites is unknown. Lack of knowledge compromises the ability to respond appropriately to threats such as development pressure and opportunities such as the use of agri-environment schemes in locations that will most greatly benefit bats. Need to investigate bat species use of surrounding habitat.</p>				
		<p>6 Public Access/Disturbance It is very difficult to close the sites to public access, potentially causing disturbance. This is a pressure in terms of continuous long-term disturbance by visitors, however the sites are managed in such a way that it does not present a significant pressure unless the volume and frequency of visitors were to increase. The threat to the sites come from one-off events such as: fire juggling near to the maternity colony; use of aerosol spray paints underground; use of fuel of any type underground, and bonfires at the mine entrances. Need to review access arrangements and implement improved management of access.</p>	<p>More land may be opened up to people</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>The SIP identifies specific threats that are not the intent of this paragraph. In any case, paragraph 11 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation includes the statement "Where recreational pressure is having an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these impacts." This moderates the effects of this paragraph.</p>	<p>NO</p>
		<p>7 Change to site conditions All component areas of the SAC have the potential risk of collapse as they are abandoned mines and their status with regards to stability is largely unknown. Mine instability is particularly relevant at entrances where a collapse could make it unusable by bats. A collapse is likely</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>		<p>NO</p>

		to alter the entrance dimensions thereby affecting ventilation, temperature and humidity within the mines, and/or may cause bats to be killed or become entrapped. Due to mine instability it is also difficult to monitor bats effectively. Need to investigate the stability of mine and cave systems and feasibility for stabilisation.				
		<p>8 Inappropriate designation boundary</p> <p>Several undesignated sites support important populations of SAC bats. Some of these are under threat, and others are located in areas/landscapes where they could be offered greater protection and enhanced management of surrounding habitats if they were known to be special sites. Consultation zones for planning have been agreed far beyond the bounds of the current component sites, and evaluating the importance of new sites relative to the currently designated ones will validate and improve the series. Need to review series of SAC sites and consider new sites for notification.</p>	None	None		NO
Cotswolds Beechwoods	H9130 Beech forests on neutral to rich soils	<p>1 Invasive species</p> <p>The dumping of garden waste and the consequent spread of invasive plants is an on-going threat but one that the land managers largely have under control. However, the spread of the non-native sycamore provides more of a challenge and has made particular use of canopy gaps created by storm damage. Although</p>	None	None		NO

	<p>sycamore is considered an acceptable component of woodlands, including beechwoods, on the continent, in the Cotswolds it tends to dominate understorey and canopy to the detriment of other (native) tree species. Its control is costly and time consuming and often unpopular with woodland owners who find it useful to "deflect" squirrel damage from the beech trees. This together with the ever increasing risk to native tree species from plant disease and climate change makes the sycamore issue all the more acute. Need to reduce invasive sycamore, especially in the canopy.</p>				
	<p>2 Deer Deer browsing of regenerating trees (and possibly ground flora) remains a major threat to favourable condition throughout the beechwoods. Whilst deer control does take place, this work needs to be monitored and coordinated to ensure deer populations are adequately managed. Need to reduce deer browsing pressure.</p>	None	None		NO
	<p>3 Invasive species Grey squirrel numbers have increased sharply over the past decade or so and now cause significant damage to tree species, in particular beech. In places, this can lead to pole stage beech being systematically ring barked and killed. Control measures are widely applied but the numbers and associated damage persists. This also dissuades woodland owners from</p>	None	None		NO

		<p>favouring the retention of beech. Need to reduce squirrel damage to trees.</p>				
		<p>4 Disease Although not known to be present in the Cotswolds as yet, Chalara (ash disease) is a major future threat to the beechwoods. Natural regeneration tends to favour ash although beech does also regenerate but at a slower rate. This has enabled an acceptable mix of beech/ash canopy with other minor species. However, the other main regeneration tree is the non-native sycamore. If ash starts to die out then the woodlands are likely to become dominated by sycamore, hence the need for a strategy to prepare for ash dieback. Need to produce a strategy to deal with potential ash dieback.</p>	None	None		NO
		<p>5 Public Access/Disturbance Public use of the Beechwoods has grown considerably over recent years and damage is becoming more widespread. A particular increase has been the use of mountain bikes and horseriding which use the woods far beyond the limited network of bridleways. This has created numerous additional trackways and so increasing the erosion of the ground flora and potentially opportunities for water erosion. Although the routes away from bridleways are not usually permitted, much of the SAC woodland is NNR or has public access by foot. Hence efforts have been made to provide</p>	More land may be opened up to people	None	<p>The development of new areas for access may reduce pressure on the Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC.</p> <p>Paragraph 10 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation promotes the Countryside code to educate visitors and communities to act appropriately in the countryside. This may reduce third party impacts and moderate the effects of this paragraph.</p> <p>Paragraph 11 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation includes the statement "Where</p>	NO

		<p>agreed permissive routes with local bike groups with the aim of minimising damage whilst still allowing some use. This is still experimental and much will depend on the scale of use and whether the users stick to the permissive routes. This approach could also be tried with horseriders. Additionally, dog walking has increased within the SAC especially at Coopers Hill where car parking is available. This has become a particular issue where professional dog walkers release large numbers of dogs (up to 12) to run uncontrolled through the woods. This causes disturbance to wildlife as well as local nitrification through dog faeces. Need to minimise impact of recreational use, especially mountain biking, horse riding and dog walking.</p>			<p>recreational pressure is having an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these impacts.” This moderates the effects of this paragraph.</p>	
		<p>6 Changes in species distributions There is a risk that global warming will increase the risk of drought to beech trees (which are shallow rooted). Whilst this risk should be acknowledged, it should be noted that no evidence of drought amongst beech trees has been noted in the Cotswolds as yet and the nature of the soils (limestone rather than chalk) and the (wetter) westerly location may help to prevent the risk. Need to monitor the effects of drought on beech trees.</p>	None	None		NO
	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone	<p>7 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition Nitrogen deposition exceeds site relevant critical loads. High atmospheric nitrogen levels could</p>	None	None		NO

	(important orchid sites), H9130 Beech forests on neutral to rich soils	affect the SAC features through: changes in ground vegetation and mycorrhiza; nutrient imbalance; changes to soil fauna; increase in tall grasses; decline in diversity; increased mineralization; N leaching; or surface acidification. Need to control, reduce and ameliorate atmospheric nitrogen impacts.				
Rodborough Common SAC	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	1 Under grazing Under grazing is an issue due to the reliance on the rights of commoners to turn out cattle. The number of stock have dropped over the years to the point that additional cattle now need to be electric fenced on to the most species-rich areas on the slopes. Of key importance is the lack of cattle grids on minor roads which means that Commoners are less inclined to push the cattle on to the lower slopes where they may escape onto busy surrounding roads. It is these lower slopes that are the most species-rich and are suffering from a lack of grazing. A better evidence base (NVC survey, see action 2A) relating to the state of the site's grasslands is desirable to support the case for improved grazing. Need to increase grazing pressure in key areas.	None	None		NO
		2 Public Access/Disturbance The common is very close to Stroud and recreational use has greatly increased over the past few decades. This has created many new paths and parking areas which cause soil compaction to the detriment of the surrounding sward.	More people may be encouraged to enter land	None	The development of new areas for access may reduce pressure on the common. Paragraph 10 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation promotes the Countryside code to educate visitors and communities to act	NO

		Dog faeces is a particular issue which also damages the sward but also poses a real disease risk to the cattle which are vital to the management of the Common. New and proposed housing continues to add to the problem. Need to reduce the impact of recreational use.			appropriately in the countryside. This may reduce third party impacts and moderate the effects of this paragraph. Paragraph 11 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation includes the statement "Where recreational pressure is having an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these impacts." This moderates the effects of this paragraph.	
		3 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition Nitrogen deposition exceeds the site-relevant critical load for ecosystem protection and hence there is a risk of harmful effects, but the sensitive features are currently considered to be in favourable condition on the site. This requires further investigation. Need to further investigate potential atmospheric nitrogen impacts.	None	None		NO
AONB Policy	POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation					
Paragraph 7: Visitor facilities and routes that are accessible to those of all abilities should be provided through improvements to infrastructure.						
National site name	Qualifying feature	Issues¹⁷ [& remedial measures]	Likely effects	Likely significant effects	Comments	Need for an appropriate assessment

¹⁷ Identified in the Natural England Site Improvement Plan 2014; numbered in priority order

Bath & Bradford SAC	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	1 Planning Permission: general There is currently difficulty in determining cumulative impacts of development across such a wide area and across local authority boundaries, including operations carried out under an European Protected Species license. This applies to both the developments themselves and the surveys which are needed to inform the planning application process. There is currently no formal way of assessing the cumulative impacts of "high disturbance" level surveys (e.g. mist netting, harp trapping, radiotracking) being carried out outside the SAC boundary which may have cumulative impacts on the features of the SAC. Similarly, there is no formal way of assessing cumulative impacts on the SAC from permissions granted by the different competent authorities. Need to produce and promote advice and guidance on development control and strategic planning.	None	None		NO
		2 Change in land management Land ownership is fragmented and management has lapsed, particularly around the urban fringe of Bath. Need to provide information regarding appropriate management of habitat for bats.	None	None		NO
		3 Direct impact from third party One-off acts of vandalism or impacts of recreational pursuits could have a devastating effect if done in close proximity to roosting bats. There	More people may be encouraged to enter land	None	Paragraph 10 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation promotes the Countryside code to educate visitors and communities to act	NO

		have been impacts at Brown's Folly, Box Mine and Bathampton Down Mines, specifically from third parties gaining access for inappropriate purposes. Need to reduce vandalism and impacts of recreational activities.			appropriately in the countryside. This may reduce third party impacts and moderate the effects of this paragraph. Paragraph 11 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation includes the statement "Where recreational pressure is having an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these impacts." This moderates the effects of this paragraph.	
	S1323 Bechstein`s bat	4 Feature location/ extent/ condition unknown There is a lack of knowledge about the population of Bechstein's bat within the SAC and its relationship to roosts within the wider landscape. There is very little data to show which component sites are used by Bechstein's and in what way, and even less foraging/commuting data. This is a risk because it is difficult to determine the impacts of plans and projects on Bechstein's bat. Need to investigate Bechstein's bat to improve knowledge of local population activity.	None	None		NO
	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	5 Offsite habitat availability/ management There is a lack of knowledge as to usage of the wider landscape by the SAC species. For example whether there are certain critical bat corridors	None	None		NO

		<p>which link the component sites, other bat SAC sites or non-designated roosts, or particularly important areas or routes used for feeding, 'swarming' or other activity between sites is unknown. Lack of knowledge compromises the ability to respond appropriately to threats such as development pressure and opportunities such as the use of agri-environment schemes in locations that will most greatly benefit bats. Need to investigate bat species use of surrounding habitat.</p>				
		<p>6 Public Access/Disturbance It is very difficult to close the sites to public access, potentially causing disturbance. This is a pressure in terms of continuous long-term disturbance by visitors, however the sites are managed in such a way that it does not present a significant pressure unless the volume and frequency of visitors were to increase. The threat to the sites come from one-off events such as: fire juggling near to the maternity colony; use of aerosol spray paints underground; use of fuel of any type underground, and bonfires at the mine entrances. Need to review access arrangements and implement improved management of access.</p>	<p>More people may be encouraged to enter land</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>The development of new areas for access may reduce pressure on the SAC. Paragraph 10 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation promotes the Countryside code to educate visitors and communities to act appropriately in the countryside. This may reduce third party impacts and moderate the effects of this paragraph. Paragraph 11 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation includes the statement "Where recreational pressure is having an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these impacts." This moderates the effects of this paragraph.</p>	<p>NO</p>

		<p>7 Change to site conditions</p> <p>All component areas of the SAC have the potential risk of collapse as they are abandoned mines and their status with regards to stability is largely unknown. Mine instability is particularly relevant at entrances where a collapse could make it unusable by bats. A collapse is likely to alter the entrance dimensions thereby affecting ventilation, temperature and humidity within the mines, and/or may cause bats to be killed or become entrapped. Due to mine instability it is also difficult to monitor bats effectively. Need to investigate the stability of mine and cave systems and feasibility for stabilisation.</p>	None	None		NO
		<p>8 Inappropriate designation boundary</p> <p>Several undesignated sites support important populations of SAC bats. Some of these are under threat, and others are located in areas/landscapes where they could be offered greater protection and enhanced management of surrounding habitats if they were known to be special sites. Consultation zones for planning have been agreed far beyond the bounds of the current component sites, and evaluating the importance of new sites relative to the currently designated ones will validate and improve the series. Need to review series of SAC sites and consider new sites for notification.</p>	None	None		NO

Cotswolds Beechwoods	H9130 Beech forests on neutral to rich soils	<p>1 Invasive species</p> <p>The dumping of garden waste and the consequent spread of invasive plants is an on-going threat but one that the land managers largely have under control. However, the spread of the non-native sycamore provides more of a challenge and has made particular use of canopy gaps created by storm damage. Although sycamore is considered an acceptable component of woodlands, including beechwoods, on the continent, in the Cotswolds it tends to dominate understorey and canopy to the detriment of other (native) tree species. Its control is costly and time consuming and often unpopular with woodland owners who find it useful to "deflect" squirrel damage from the beech trees. This together with the ever increasing risk to native tree species from plant disease and climate change makes the sycamore issue all the more acute. Need to reduce invasive sycamore, especially in the canopy.</p>	None	None		NO
		<p>2 Deer</p> <p>Deer browsing of regenerating trees (and possibly ground flora) remains a major threat to favourable condition throughout the beechwoods. Whilst deer control does take place, this work needs to be monitored and coordinated to ensure deer populations are adequately managed. Need to reduce deer browsing pressure.</p>	None	None		NO
		<p>3 Invasive species</p>	None	None		NO

	<p>Grey squirrel numbers have increased sharply over the past decade or so and now cause significant damage to tree species, in particular beech. In places, this can lead to pole stage beech being systematically ring barked and killed. Control measures are widely applied but the numbers and associated damage persists. This also dissuades woodland owners from favouring the retention of beech. Need to reduce squirrel damage to trees.</p>				
	<p>4 Disease Although not known to be present in the Cotswolds as yet, Chalara (ash disease) is a major future threat to the beechwoods. Natural regeneration tends to favour ash although beech does also regenerate but at a slower rate. This has enabled an acceptable mix of beech/ash canopy with other minor species. However, the other main regeneration tree is the non-native sycamore. If ash starts to die out then the woodlands are likely to become dominated by sycamore, hence the need for a strategy to prepare for ash dieback. Need to produce a strategy to deal with potential ash dieback.</p>	None	None		NO
	<p>5 Public Access/Disturbance Public use of the Beechwoods has grown considerably over recent years and damage is becoming more widespread. A particular increase has been the use of mountain bikes and horseriding which use the woods</p>	More people may be encouraged to enter land	None	The development of new areas for access may reduce pressure on the Beechwoods. Paragraph 10 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation promotes the Countryside code to educate visitors and	NO

		<p>far beyond the limited network of bridleways. This has created numerous additional trackways and so increasing the erosion of the ground flora and potentially opportunities for water erosion. Although the routes away from bridleways are not usually permitted, much of the SAC woodland is NNR or has public access by foot. Hence efforts have been made to provide agreed permissive routes with local bike groups with the aim of minimising damage whilst still allowing some use. This is still experimental and much will depend on the scale of use and whether the users stick to the permissive routes. This approach could also be tried with horseriders. Additionally, dog walking has increased within the SAC especially at Coopers Hill where car parking is available. This has become a particular issue where professional dog walkers release large numbers of dogs (up to 12) to run uncontrolled through the woods. This causes disturbance to wildlife as well as local nutrification through dog faeces. Need to minimise impact of recreational use, especially mountain biking, horse riding and dog walking.</p>			<p>communities to act appropriately in the countryside. This may reduce third party impacts and moderate the effects of this paragraph.</p> <p>Paragraph 11 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation includes the statement “Where recreational pressure is having an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these impacts.” This moderates the effects of this paragraph.</p>	
		<p>6 Changes in species distributions There is a risk that global warming will increase the risk of drought to beech trees (which are shallow rooted). Whilst this risk should be acknowledged, it should be noted that no evidence of drought amongst beech trees has been noted in the</p>	None	None		NO

		Cotswolds as yet and the nature of the soils (limestone rather than chalk) and the (wetter) westerly location may help to prevent the risk. Need to monitor the effects of drought on beech trees.				
	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites), H9130 Beech forests on neutral to rich soils	7 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition Nitrogen deposition exceeds site relevant critical loads. High atmospheric nitrogen levels could affect the SAC features through: changes in ground vegetation and mycorrhiza; nutrient imbalance; changes to soil fauna; increase in tall grasses; decline in diversity; increased mineralization; N leaching; or surface acidification. Need to control, reduce and ameliorate atmospheric nitrogen impacts.	None	None		NO
Rodborough Common SAC	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	1 Under grazing Under grazing is an issue due to the reliance on the rights of commoners to turn out cattle. The number of stock have dropped over the years to the point that additional cattle now need to be electric fenced on to the most species-rich areas on the slopes. Of key importance is the lack of cattle grids on minor roads which means that Commoners are less inclined to push the cattle on to the lower slopes where they may escape onto busy surrounding roads. It is these lower slopes that are the most species-rich and are suffering from a lack of grazing. A better evidence base (NVC survey, see action 2A) relating to the state of the site's grasslands is desirable to support	None	None		NO

		the case for improved grazing. Need to increase grazing pressure in key areas.				
		<p>2 Public Access/Disturbance</p> <p>The common is very close to Stroud and recreational use has greatly increased over the past few decades. This has created many new paths and parking areas which cause soil compaction to the detriment of the surrounding sward. Dog faeces is a particular issue which also damages the sward but also poses a real disease risk to the cattle which are vital to the management of the Common. New and proposed housing continues to add to the problem. Need to reduce the impact of recreational use.</p>	More people may be encouraged to enter land	None	<p>The development of new areas for access may reduce pressure on the common.</p> <p>Paragraph 10 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation promotes the Countryside code to educate visitors and communities to act appropriately in the countryside. This may reduce third party impacts and moderate the effects of this paragraph.</p> <p>Paragraph 11 of POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation includes the statement “Where recreational pressure is having an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these impacts.” This moderates the effects of this paragraph.</p>	NO
		<p>3 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition</p> <p>Nitrogen deposition exceeds the site-relevant critical load for ecosystem protection and hence there is a risk of harmful effects, but the sensitive features are currently considered to be in favourable condition on the site. This requires further investigation. Need to further</p>	None	None		NO

		investigate potential atmospheric nitrogen impacts.				
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Appendix 5: List of relevant plans & policies

INTERNATIONAL

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International importance, especially waterfowl habitat (1971)
www.ramsar.org

Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979) (came into force on 1 June 1982)

www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/nature/bern/default_en.asp

Paris Agreement United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2015)

http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php

EUROPEAN

The Birds Directive (Directive on Conservation of Wild Birds) (79/409/EEC) (Adopted 1979)

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/birdsdirective/index_en.htm

The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada Convention) Council of Europe (121) 1985

<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=121&CM=1&CL=ENG>

European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised 1985)

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Appendix 6: Précis of consultation response

Natural England

21 March 2023

Dear Paul Tiplady

Subject: Interim Management Plan Review (2023/25) - Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report- The Cotswolds National Landscape.

Thank you for your consultation dated and received by Natural England on 07 February 2023.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Natural England notes that a Habitats Regulation Assessment has been carried out under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations and has screened the plan to check for the likelihood of significant effects. Natural England agrees with the report's conclusions that the Interim Management Plan Review (2023/25) would not be likely to result in a significant effect on any European Site, either alone or in combination and therefore no further assessment work would be required.

Ms Gillian Driver

Lead Adviser

Land use planning – West Midlands Area Team