

COTSWOLDS CONSERVATION BOARD POSITION STATEMENT



Minerals and Waste Planning

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) have been designated by the Government for the purpose of ensuring that the special qualities of the finest landscapes in England and Wales are conserved and enhanced.

The Cotswolds Conservation Board (“the Board”) is the body statutorily responsible for coordinating the conservation and enhancement of the Cotswolds AONB.

The Board has adopted the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2013-18¹. This is a statutory plan, setting out the policies of the Board for the management of the AONB.

Minerals and waste issues are addressed in the Natural Resources and Services section of the Plan.

The objective of the Plan with respect to natural resources is:

“CEO3: By 2016 national and local agencies have put in place policies and guidance to implement the sustainable provision and use of natural resources in the Cotswolds AONB.”

MINERALS

The principle of conserving and using all natural resources within the Cotswolds AONB in the most sustainable way is fundamental to the future management of resources within the area.

The aim of the Plan with respect to minerals is to support the use of sustainable resources, involving a reducing demand within the Cotswolds AONB unless there is an overriding national need. (Aim SR4)

The policy in the Plan with respect to mineral resources is:

“NRP1: Natural resources are used sustainably so as to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB and support the local

¹ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.com/mp/index.html>.

economy, as well as developing their contribution and an understanding of their importance.”

The Board would therefore expect a Minerals and Waste Planning Authority to demonstrate that it has made very clear in negotiations regarding regional apportionment of minerals requirements that additional quarrying for crushed limestone has a considerable adverse impact on the designated landscape.

The Board will be expecting a Minerals and Waste Planning Authority to demonstrate very clearly that any extensions to existing or new quarries for crushed limestone in the AONB are only to be permitted if in the national interest. The Board will wish to see the use of secondary aggregates promoted in Minerals Core Strategies/Local Plans.

However a continuous supply of walling and building stone, including stone roofing slates, is required to conserve and enhance the distinctive built environment of the Cotswolds.

The character of stone varies considerably across the AONB, and local sources are required to maintain local distinctiveness. In 2003 the former Cotswolds AONB Partnership published a study “Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change”². This identified the reducing local supply of stone (other than crushed rock) as a threat to this locally distinct built environment. Supply of building stone is becoming more restricted to bigger quarries supplying larger areas. This is leading to a more uniform appearance of stone buildings than existed previously. The study suggests that a possible solution would be the formulation of mineral planning policies which encouraged small scale local quarries and discouraged the further expansion of the larger operations. A resurgence of the formerly widespread “delving” tradition, particularly for low grade walling stone, as part of land management is envisaged. An investigation of the potential for small scale mining for stone where this would be less harmful to the landscape is also suggested.

The Board would therefore wish to see this matter explored in the Minerals Core Strategy/Local Plan process.

WASTE

The Objective of the Plan with respect to waste management is to encourage the most sustainable, effective, and efficient use of all natural resources, including supporting waste reduction and recycling. (Objective CEO3).

The Policy in the Plan regarding waste management is:

² <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=distinctiveness>

“NRP3: Less waste is produced through waste minimisation and recycling of waste materials generated by residents and visitors, construction and redevelopment, agriculture and tourism providers. Such residual waste is disposed of locally only where there is no harm to the distinctive characteristics of the AONB.”

The purpose of this policy is to

- a) discourage the importation of waste from areas around the AONB into the designated landscape, and
- b) encourage small scale local recycling and disposal facilities subject to the caveats set out in the policy.

Therefore with regard to waste, the Board would not wish to see any expansion of existing or location of new facilities other than as set out in (b) above within the AONB. In addition to the adverse effect on the landscape, such facilities will also result in additional vehicle movements on rural roads resulting in an adverse effect on tranquillity. The Board would welcome in principle the opportunity to encourage waste reduction and recycling.

NOTES

The Cotswolds Conservation Board has the statutory duty to pursue the following two purposes:

- a) to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB; and
- b) to increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB.

In fulfilling these roles, the Board shall seek to foster the economic and social well-being of people living in the AONB.

The Board is comprised of members appointed by the local authorities, elected parish council representatives and individuals appointed by the Secretary of State. The Board, formed in December 2004, is the only organisation that looks after the AONB as a whole.

The Cotswolds AONB was designated in 1966 and extended in area in 1990. It is one of 38 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty across England and Wales. It is the largest AONB, covering 790 sq.miles (2038 sq.km). It is a landscape of equal importance to National Parks such as Snowdonia and the Lake District.

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