

Chipping Norton Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Response of the Cotswolds Conservation Board

The Cotswolds Conservation Board ('the Board') was established by Parliament in 2004.

The Board has two statutory purposes¹:

- 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 has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of people living in the AONB.

1. The Board notes that the site does not allocate any sites for major development and therefore a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan is not required.
2. The Board supports the Objectives of the Plan.

Natural environment and landscape protection policies

The Board considers that Policies M10 and M11 could benefit from amendment to differentiate more clearly the issue of protecting the landscape setting of the town, and the linked but separate issue of the protection of the AONB within the wider plan area.

3. Policy M11 could be amended to:

M11: Developments must *conserve* and where possible enhance the natural environment. This specifically includes *landscape character*, the network of existing habitats and the species that these support. Measures to improve *landscape, scenic beauty, and tranquility, reduce light pollution*, provide new habitat and *maintain* existing areas of habitat and species will be supported. *Development within and affecting the AONB should be in accordance with the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and associated guidance.*

The justification could include a new paragraph:

The AONB has the highest level of protection of landscape and scenic beauty. The statutory AONB Management Plan has been endorsed by WODC as guidance for development management purposes. The Management Plan policies are amplified by a Landscape Strategy and Guidelines, and Position Statements published by the Cotswolds Conservation Board.

The Management Plan can be downloaded at

<http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/planning-management-advice/management-plan/>

¹ Section 87, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, as amended by the NERC Act 2006.

4. The “Relevance to planning framework” of this section should include NPPF paragraphs **116, 123 and 125.**

Energy and water efficiency policies

5. The Board notes that whilst there is reference to the incorporation in Policy B10 of renewable energy technologies in new developments, the Plan is silent regarding stand alone renewable energy proposals such as solar farms and wind turbines. Whilst the Council may be content to be reliant on WODC policies with respect to such forms of development, this could be made explicit in the justification statement.

Apart from the detailed comments made above, the Board is supportive of the Neighbourhood Plan as drafted.