

# **Draft National Policy Statement for National Networks**

## **Response of the Cotswolds Conservation Board**

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

The Board has two statutory purposes<sup>1</sup>:

- 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.

The Board is a statutory consultee with respect to National Policy Statements<sup>2</sup> and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP).

The Board particularly welcomes the statement of government policy in paragraph 3.7:

“Outside the nationally significant infrastructure project regime, Government policy is to bring forward targeted works to address existing environmental problems on the strategic road network and improve the performance of the network. This includes reconnecting habitats and ecosystems, enhancing the settings of historic and cultural heritage features, respecting and enhancing landscape quality, improving water quality and reducing flood risk, reducing excessive noise and addressing areas of poor air quality.”

The Board also welcomes the emphasis placed on the Environmental Impact Assessment process within Section 4 of the Statement.

The Board acknowledges the helpful guidance on matters to be considered under landscape and visual impact assessment in Section 5 of the statement This includes the need to consider the impact of projects outside a protected landscape on the special qualities of that landscape itself set out in paragraph 5.139.

The Board notes that paragraph 5.137 includes reference to the need to consider alternatives in protected landscapes in accordance with paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). However, the Board suggests that this point could be given greater clarity by including suitable wording within paragraph 4.25. This paragraph of the draft NN NPS gives examples of when alternatives are required under both statutory and specific policy requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 87, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

<sup>2</sup> The Infrastructure Planning (National Policy Statement Consultation) Regulations 2009