

RE: Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan. March 2015.

The Cotswolds Conservation Board wish to make the following representations in respect of Questions 4.c. and 4.d. in relation to the North Cotswolds/South Cotswolds areas.

The Board supports references to the recognition of the AONB in both North Cotswolds and South Cotswolds categories (in accordance with Section 85 of the CRoW Act).

However, it is recommended that additional reference is made to the following key issues within these sections:

- The commitment to the construction of the “missing link” section of the A417 is well understood, reference should however made to the fact that the link passes through the AONB and so any solution has to also meet with the existing national policy and law that seeks the conservation and enhancement of the AONB.
- The Government has also recently committed to improving the design of new roads and reducing environmental impact.
- There are specific issues that relate to AONBs and reducing the impact of roads on the nationally protected landscape. This includes particular car over road signage clutter (with road sign audits); care over street lighting design to protect the dark night skies of the AONB; issues over tranquillity and transport noise; road verge management; litter associated with roads and allowing Parish Council’s the ability to manage and clean up road verges in the AONB; good design and materials appropriate to the character of the Cotswolds; issues over the protection of narrow lanes from rat running and erosion of verges from HGVs and high volumes of traffic; consideration of the creation of “quiet lanes” or rural lanes where walkers/cyclists/riders have more priority/greater safety.
- The Cotswold Way is referred to but it would be positive to refer to the strategic role of National Trails and National Cycle Routes generally.
- There is no clear link between the benefits of good rural transport and tourism. For example “key trip attractors” at paragraph 3.5 should include reference to tourism in villages/Stroud and walkers on the Cotswold Way and similarly for other settlements eg Tewkesbury area – Winchcombe is another very popular tourist site with access to the Cotswold Way.
- There is a recognition of the health agenda but there are additional links to be drawn between the AONB and the ability to gain access to the countryside/health/leisure/ and green infrastructure generally.
- Accordingly although the LTP recognises walking is a “free and healthy mode of transport” (para.2.4.1.) PROW, paths, National Trails etc all require long term investment, support from volunteers (which has to be managed and paid for) and constant maintenance. Therefore, new development in particular should make appropriate contributions through CIL.

- In respect of CIL reference is made to developer contributions generally, but there is no mention that funding should support the wider green infrastructure, including rights of way and not just road improvements.
- We recommend reference to the **Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2013-2018** and its related **Position Statements** (which include guidance on Verges, Tranquility and Dark Night Skies and Housing & Development).