

RE: Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015-2031

The Cotswolds Conservation Board wish to make the following representations in respect of the above Local Transport Plan consultation for Oxfordshire.

The Board supports references to the recognition of the AONBs in Volume .1. at paragraphs 24, 25,158 (including reference to Management Plans) and Policy 25 (in accordance with Section 85 of the CRoW Act). The Board also supports recognition of landscape as a matter for consideration as part of the SEA process as included in paragraph 153.

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

- The proposed housing growth of Oxfordshire (100,000 new homes by 2031) and other growth generally is stated but the implications of this growth, particularly the cumulative impact, on the nationally protected Cotswolds, Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs has not been fully investigated. Full consideration should be given within the Plan as to the impact of traffic growth, pollution, road building, and new development generally on the special qualities of the AONBs. Is it possible to achieve this level of growth in or near the AONBs within the restrictions of Section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000 and in accordance with paragraphs 115 and 116 of the NPPF?
- There are specific issues that relate to AONBs and reducing the impact of roads on the nationally protected landscape. These include particular care over road signage clutter (see Policy 26); care over street lighting design to protect the dark night skies of the AONB and their heritage assets; 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. It is recommended that specific reference to these issues are included within the Plan for the AONBs.
- The strategic role of National Trials and National Cycle Routes is not clear from the Plan.
- There is no clear link between the benefits of good rural transport and tourism. Economic growth should include reference to tourism and the success of future tourism in the Cotswolds is dependent on having a landscape and settlements that people still want to visit for their special qualities.
- 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.

- Although the LTP recognises walking is “free” (paragraph.123) 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 to supporting the existing network of rights of way.
- In respect of CIL, funding should support the wider green infrastructure, including rights of way and not just road improvements.
- Reference should be made to supporting existing/new community transport schemes, particularly for rural areas.
- 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).