

## **A Cotswolds National Park**

### **The Cotswolds**

- The quintessential English rural landscape, stunningly beautiful and accessible.
- Best known section of oolitic limestone from the Channel coast to the North Sea.
- High quality landscape combined with high quality village and town architecture.
- Large areas are sparsely populated and remote in feel.
- Strong historic cultural associations, such as the Hwicce tribe area.
- Home to the Arts and Crafts Movement.

### **The basic case for a Cotswolds National Park**

- The landscape: AONBs & National Parks have the same landscape status
- Designation criteria: The area meets National Park designation criteria
- The governance model: Conservation Board is modelled on a Park Authority
- Parks have evolved from AONBs: South Downs National Park, established in 2010 evolved from the Sussex Downs and East Hampshire AONBs
- Public understanding and engagement: The public more readily understand and appreciate the title National Park
- A Park for the South Midlands & West of England: The nearest National Park for Birmingham and Bristol, with significant and diverse urban populations on the doorstep – a geographical gap in the national provision of Parks
- Consistent planning policy formulation based on the needs of the Cotswolds and implemented for the area as a whole
- Management of the landscape as a whole, resulting in improved enhancement of the landscape and a reduction in the erosion of landscape quality
- Consistent sustainable tourism, recreation, countryside access and quite enjoyment policy development and implementation across the whole area.

### **Meeting the criteria for a National Park**

- The Cotswolds meets Natural England's criteria: it is an extensive tract of country in England which by reason of its natural beauty and the opportunities it affords for open-air recreation, having regard to both its character and its position in relation to centres of population; it is especially desirable that it is designated for National Park purposes.
- The landscape meets the natural beauty purpose of a National Park; it is designated an AONB, with Parks and AONBs having the same landscape status.
- The area meets the open air recreational purpose of a National Park; offering significant opportunities and having large visitor numbers, recognised in the Conservation Board's second "understanding and enjoying" purpose, modelled on that of a Park.

### **Pressures facing the Cotswolds**

- Planning pressures: CPREs review of housing in England's AONBs signals the Cotswolds as one of the most pressurised protected landscapes.
- Infrastructure schemes: Highways England's A417 Missing Link and Network Rail's Great Western line electrification.
- Population and visitors: 150,000 residents and 23 million day visits a year.
- Fragmentation of policy: 15 local authority areas; 8 district councils, 4 county councils, 3 unitary councils; parts of 283 parishes and straddling 3 regions, (South West, South East & Midlands).

### **What could a Cotswolds National Park achieve?**

- A single Local Plan leading consistent planning policy formulation based on the needs of the Cotswolds and implemented for the area as a whole.
- A more effective and influential Management Plan for the Park linked to the single Local Plan, managing the landscape and Natural and Cultural Capital as a whole.
- Enhanced and consistent sustainable tourism, recreation and quite enjoyment policy development and implementation across the Cotswolds.
- Enable and lead more effective networks for collaboration, co-ordination and delivery with landowners, farmers, businesses and communities across the National Park.