

DRAFT TRANQUILLITY POSITION STATEMENT

Summary: To present a draft Tranquillity Position Statement for adoption by the Board.

Recommendation: To adopt the Board's draft Tranquillity Position Statement.

Officer Ref: John Mills, Planning and Landscape Officer (01451 862004)

Introduction

1. The Board currently has an adopted position statement on Tranquillity and Dark Skies.¹ That position statement pre-dates the new Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018 - 2023, which has a much stronger policy and supporting text on tranquillity (and on dark skies) than its predecessor. Also, the Board has recently (March 2019) adopted a new position statement on Dark Skies and Artificial Light. As such, it is necessary to develop and publish a new position statement on tranquillity.

Format of the draft Tranquillity Position Statement

2. The draft Tranquillity Position Statement broadly follows the format of the new Dark Skies and Artificial Light Position Statement. For example, the Board's position is outlined in a shaded text box at the start of the document, focussing on Policy CE4 (Tranquillity) of the new Management Plan. This is followed by supporting text grouped under logical headings. However, unlike the Dark Skies and Artificial Light Position Statement, a number of over-arching recommendations have also been included in the shaded text box.

Consultation

3. An earlier draft of the new Tranquillity Position Statement was presented to the Executive Committee on 28th May. The Position Statement was then circulated to the 15 local authorities, Natural England, Highways England, CPRE, and the Board's Planning and Infrastructure Working Group on 29th May for consultation. The consultation ended on 11th June. The Board received consultation responses from eight of the local authorities, Natural England, Highways England and two Board members. The consultation responses were very positive, overall, and included a number of suggested amendments and additions.

Key differences from the previous Position Statement

4. The version of the Position Statement presented to the Executive Committee included:
 - A stronger emphasis on tranquillity being one of the AONB's special qualities and, therefore, one of the features of the AONB that makes the area so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it.

¹ <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/our-landscape/position-statements-2/>

- Reference to more up-to-date (i.e. post-2010) policies, guidance, research and literature.
 - More extensive reference, in Appendix 1, to the various definitions of 'tranquillity' and 'tranquil areas' but with a specific definition for the purpose of the position statement.
 - New sections on the duty of regard, visual impact and traffic and vehicle movements.
 - More maps in the Appendices, including CPRE's 'Intrusion Maps', showing how the AONB's tranquillity has changed over time.
5. In addition, post-consultation (taking on board consultation feedback), the Position Statement now also includes:
- A recommendation that *'the Government should implement and regularly monitor a nationally consistent and replicable framework for measuring and mapping tranquillity, which can be applied and regularly updated at the AONB level' and that 'if a nationally consistent approach isn't forthcoming, the Board will investigate the potential for developing a framework for measuring and mapping tranquillity in the Cotswolds AONB'.*
 - Tranquillity issues relating to:
 - Visitor numbers
 - Historic environment
 - Parking
 - Drones
 - Aviation
 - Motorised vehicles using 'byways for all traffic'
 - Licencing
 - Reflection of sunlight (e.g. from cars windows, solar farms, barns, etc)

Next steps

6. Assuming that the Board adopts the Position Statement, it will be added to the Board's website (and the current Position Statement removed) and circulated to key stakeholders.

Supporting Paper(s):

Appendix 'A' - Draft Tranquillity Position Statement