**The Proposal**

* Establish a growing body of research over the next 25 years focussed on the landscape, environment and communities of the Cotswolds.
* Establish a repository of knowledge around the natural capital of the Cotswolds area and its ecosystem services and assimilate findings in a regular report on the state of the area’s natural capital.
* Develop a unique collaboration across an internationally renowned landscape, city, university and their partner industries.
* Pursue new funding opportunities that arise as a consequence of the applied and collaborative partnerships and programme.

**The Opportunities**

Multi Disciplinary:
biodiversity, aquifers, flood management, tourism, agriculture, soils, geology, AI, modelling, natural capital, ecosystem services, forestry, climate change, planning, heritage, designated landscape policy and much more.

Local and Relevant:
opportunity for long term study programmes, logistically accessible, test bed for pure research in applied context, personal professional development, knowledge and data generated delivers real social, environmental and economic value and impact,

Access to Additional Grants and Funding:
opportunities for joint funding applications for Grand Challenge bids and collaboration across disciplines and research bodies, DEFRA, LIS, Thames Water, NERC, EPSRC, private sector, corporate and trusts.

**A Programme operating at many research levels**

* Undergraduate and MSc dissertations
* Short to medium term internships, 1 – 3 – 6 months duration
* Longer term independent DPhil research
* Departmental / research team programmes
* Cross departmental / institution grand challenge programmes
* Impacting at local, regional, national and international levels

**Collaboration**

Shared proximity and academic interest in the landscape and other features of the area could enable new or enhanced partnerships between teams at different research bodies, creating exciting knowledge sharing and potentially enabling access to additional funding opportunities otherwise not available

**Recognition**

Opportunity to test pure theory, concepts and models with accessible and relevant resources and/or demonstrate the application potential of their research; potentially leading to further research funding or interest in an approach or tool for adoption or application on a wider scale.

**Impact**

The Cotswolds provides exciting opportunities for research to be genuinely strategic in its impact.  The knowledge, tools and evidence bases arising will be used to inform decision making and stewardship of the Cotswolds locally and nationally, and the social and economic impact of this work would be both quantifiable and demonstrable.

**Meeting the Challenge**

Opportunity for students who are expected to intern on real world projects as part of their studies; potential added value for future employment and/or funding.

**Unique**

Despite being on the doorstep, the complex administrative structures across the area have resulted in a lack of base data and understanding, providing completely new research opportunities.

**Potential research areas**

* The quantum of the extensive water aquifer underlying the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
* How land management actions upstream impact on an aquifer and may not be fully realised until several years later downstream.
* Carbon sequestration in Cotswold grasslands and woodlands.
* The Natural Capital of the Cotswolds and developing a set of Natural Capital Accounts to inform the management of the landscape.
* Whether the equal landscape status of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty is applied equally in planning policy.
* The impact of the South Downs National Park status on meeting local housing needs, supporting agriculture and conserving biodiversity.
* How satellites and Artificial Intelligence can inform and improve our understanding of options and decision making in land and resource management.

**The Research Area**

Geographically interconnected e.g. geology, ecosystems, hydrology, with upland and lowland variation. An area subject to significant human and development pressures, accessible to wide range of research and student populations.

The Cotswolds represents the best known section of oolitic limestone stretching from the Channel coast to the North Sea.

The area was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1966 and extended in area in 1990. At 790 sq. miles or 2,038 sq. kms it is the largest of AONBs and third largest Protected Landscape in England,