**DRAFT POSITION STATEMENT ON CONSERVING AND CELEBRATING CULTURAL CAPITAL IN THE COTSWOLDS AONB**

AGENDA ITEM 11

**Summary:** To present a draft position statement on Conserving and Celebrating Cultural Capital in the Cotswolds AONB

**Recommendations:**

**(a) That, subject to any agreed amendments, the draft Position Statement on Conserving and Celebrating Cultural Capital in the Cotswolds AONB is recommended to be adopted by the Board for external consultation and discussion;**

**(b) that further steps are taken to explore the potential of a cultural capital approach to services and benefits that the AONB provides.**

**Officer Ref:** George Lambrick, Board Member and Mark Connelly, Land Management Officer (01451 862006)

**Background**

1. There is increasing understanding and usage of the concept of Natural Capital; the stock of natural resources that produce value or benefits to people such as woodland, rivers, land, minerals and oceans. Although some argue that this includes cultural capital, none of the definitions make this explicit. Natural Capital very much focuses on the natural stock (woodlands, rivers etc), only acknowledging that cultural influences have been important, not specifically recognising the intrinsic services and benefits that they deliver in their own right.

2 The services and benefits provided by Cultural Capital should be seen as an intrinsic part of a wider vision of landscape and the environment which acknowledges the additional, equally important ways that cultural assets and activities contribute to social and economic well-being. Currently this more holistic vision is in danger of being overshadowed by Natural Capital and potentially even downgraded as being of secondary importance as Natural Capital becomes more central to government policy and legislation[[1]](#footnote-1) without cultural aspects being given comparable recognition.

3. The Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018 – 2023 ensures equal billing within

*Outcome 2 (Natural and Cultural Capital and ecosystem services): The natural and cultural capital assets of the Cotswolds AONB – and the ecosystem services which they provide – will have been conserved, enhanced and better understood.*

4. To raise the profile and highlight the importance of Cultural Capital, Board Member George Lambrick developed the first drafts of a position statement. The final draft is attached as **Appendix ‘A’.** Discussion on Cultural Capital and its importance need to continue. The Business Plan Quarter 2 Review considered by the Executive on 8th November 2018 flagged up that discussions about cultural capital with colleagues in the Historic Environment sector, and the idea for a wider conference to explore the concept and its relationship to natural capital.

**Next Steps**

Position Statement Consultation

4. The Cultural Capital draft is different to most Board position statements as it explores what Cultural Capital is and makes a recommendation to the Board to develop the subject further. Following discussion by the Executive Committee, it is proposed that the position statement will remain a draft, but open to external comments and discussions. This should include circulation to contacts principally in the heritage, museums, arts, culture, landscape conservation, access and recreation, health and tourism sectors, including local authorities, statutory agencies, key local and national NGOs and universities. There is also the scope to test the reaction of LEPs and local business groups especially those involved with crafts and food products that have a specific Cotswolds identity.

Cultural Capital Conference/ Seminar

5. Noting that the idea of cultural capital is already gaining traction with other bodies, there is a growing need for a conference to explore and define the concept and the potential for developing cultural capital approaches to complement natural capital. Pending approval of the draft position statement, this will need some seed corn resources. The University of Oxford’s TORCH Scheme[[2]](#footnote-2) has been identified as potentially being a likely source of funding (grants being awarded 3 times per year) to support a conference/seminar, and possibly longer term research and development. Preliminary contact has been made to establish eligibility issues related to making a proposal.

Internal Cultural Capital Review

6. Many aspects of the Board’s work already fits within a Cultural Capital framework. It is desirable to explore the extent and scope of this and identify what opportunities may exist to enhance these activities (eg through identifying cross-cutting benefits that may not have been fully recognised).

**Supporting Paper(s):**

**Appendix ‘A’ - Draft Position Statement on Conserving and Celebrating Cultural Capital in the Cotswolds AONB.**

1. See DEFRA’s Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-environment-principles-and-governance-bill-2018>) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. TORCH is a relatively new initiative internal to the University but outward looking. Its purpose is intended to a) identify innovatory cross-disciplinary research and networking in the humanities and potentially into sciences; b) promote Oxford University’s outreach into communities/ civil society from within humanities faculties not just Continuing Education; c) provide seed corn to explore potential to develop innovative areas of research; d) facilitate networking and collaboration both within the University and with external partners. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)