

# COTSWOLDS CONSERVATION BOARD

## DRAFT POSITION STATEMENT

### TRANQUILLITY



#### POSITION STATEMENT

Tranquillity is one of the ‘special qualities’ of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In other words, it is one of the features of the Cotswolds that makes the area so outstanding that it is in the nation’s interest to safeguard it.

Tranquillity can be defined as a state of calm and quietude associated with peace, experienced in places with mainly natural features, free from man-made noise and other aural and visual disturbance. It is a valuable resource, which can add considerably to people’s quality of life.

The Cotswolds AONB has relatively high levels of tranquillity, especially when compared with the surrounding urban areas. However, the tranquillity of the AONB is declining as more and more development and infrastructure provision takes place within the AONB and its setting.

This issue is addressed in Policy CE4 (Tranquillity) of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023 (‘the Management Plan’), which makes the following recommendations:

1. Proposals that are likely to impact on the tranquillity of the Cotswolds AONB should have regard to this tranquillity, by seeking to (i) avoid and (ii) minimise noise pollution and other aural and visual disturbance.
2. Measures should be taken to enhance the tranquillity of the Cotswolds AONB by (i) removing and (ii) reducing existing sources of noise pollution and other aural and visual disturbance.

The long term aspiration, as set out in Outcome 6 of the Management Plan, is that:

- The tranquillity of the Cotswolds AONB will have been conserved and enhanced, with fewer areas being affected by noise pollution and other aural and visual disturbance.

The related issue of ‘dark skies’ is addressed in a separate Position Statement and in Policy CE5 of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023.

The supporting text for this Position Statement provides additional background information, guidance and recommendations on how the issue of tranquillity should be addressed in the Cotswolds AONB and its setting. These recommendations are outlined below

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

All relevant stakeholders should ensure that proposals that are likely to impact on the tranquillity of the Cotswolds AONB:

- (i) accord with Policy CE4 (Tranquillity) of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023;
- (ii) have regard to – and be compatible with – the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy & Guidelines,

particularly when undertaking Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments;

- (iii) include an assessment of anticipated traffic levels and traffic movements, including at relevant off-site locations in the AONB.

**Public bodies and other ‘relevant authorities’ (under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act) should:**

- have regard to tranquillity when fulfilling their statutory ‘duty of regard’ under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, with the expectation that adverse impacts on tranquillity will be: (i) avoided; and (ii) minimised through appropriate mitigation.

**Government should:**

- Implement and regularly monitor a nationally replicable framework for measuring tranquillity.

**Highways England should:**

- include further noise mitigation measures in its Noise Action Plans for major roads in the Cotswolds AONB and its setting in order to enhance the tranquillity of the AONB. In particular, Highways England should ensure that the noise impact of the upgraded A417 is substantially reduced.

**Local planning authorities should:**

- Provide tranquillity policies in their Local Plans, which equate to Policy CE4 of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023.
- Explicitly identify the whole of the Cotswolds AONB as a ‘tranquil area’ in their Local Plans, such that the AONB merits a higher level of protection, in relation to tranquillity, than areas outside the AONB.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### WHAT IS TRANQUILLITY?

The Oxford English dictionary definition of tranquillity is ‘*the quality or state of being tranquil, calm*’. The term tranquil is then defined as ‘*free from disturbance, calm*’.

The Cambridge Dictionary describes tranquillity as ‘*a peaceful, calm state without noise, violence, worry etc.*’

The term is also defined in the glossary of the third edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) as ‘*a state of calm and quietude associated with peace, considered to be a significant asset of landscape.*’<sup>1</sup>

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) defines tranquillity as ‘*the quality of calm experienced in places with mainly natural features and activities, free from disturbance from manmade ones*’<sup>2</sup>.

In Wales, the definition of tranquillity that has been adopted by both Welsh Government<sup>3</sup> and Natural Resources Wales<sup>4</sup> is: ‘*An untroubled state, which is peaceful, calm and free from unwanted disturbances. This can refer to a state of mind or a particular environment. Tranquillity can be measured in terms of the absence of unwanted intrusions or by balancing of positive and negative features. These include the presence of nature, feeling safe, visually pleasing surroundings and a relaxing atmosphere.*’

CPRE’s original tranquillity maps, published in 1995, define ‘Tranquil Areas’ as: ‘*places which are sufficiently far away from the visual or noise intrusion of development or traffic to be considered unspoilt by urban influences*’.<sup>5</sup>

Research commissioned by the Countryside Agency and CPRE in 2004<sup>6</sup> identified the following factors under the heading ‘What is tranquillity?’:

- **Perceived links to nature and natural features** - seeing, hearing and/or experiencing nature and natural feature.
- **Landscape** - experiencing (particularly in visual terms) the landscape or elements of it including wild landscapes and rolling countryside as well as characteristics such as fields, moors, woodlands, flora and fauna, natural colours and open views and the sound of water.
- **The importance of wildlife** - seeing wildlife behaving naturally, hearing birdsong.

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<sup>1</sup> Landscape Institute, Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (LI and IEMA) (2013) *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*. Third Edition.

<sup>2</sup> Campaign to Protect Rural England (2006) *Saving Tranquil Places: How to protect and promote a vital asset*.

<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government (2012) Tranquillity. On-line source:

<https://gweddill.gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/epg/noiseandnuisance/environmentalnoise/tranquillity/?lang=en> [Last accessed 14 May 2019]

<sup>4</sup> Natural Resources Wales. (2016). State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR): *Assessment of the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources*. Annex. Acronyms and Glossary of Terms. On-line source:

<https://cdn.naturalresources.wales/media/679406/annex-acronyms-abbreviations-glossary-final-for-publication.pdf> [Last accessed 14 May 2019]

<sup>5</sup> CPRE and the Countryside Commission (1995) *Tranquil Areas – England Map*.

<sup>6</sup> MacFarlane, R., Hagggett, C., Fuller, D., Dunsford, H., & Carlisle, B. (2004). *Tranquillity Mapping: developing a robust methodology for planning support*. Report to the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Countryside Agency, North East Assembly, Northumberland Strategic Partnership, Northumberland National Park Authority and Durham County Council, Centre for Environmental & Spatial Analysis, Northumbria University.

- **Peace, quiet and calm** - the absence of noise and the feeling of ‘getting away from it all’, including a need for solitude.

The research report identifies the following factors under the heading ‘What is not tranquillity?’:

- Presence of humans/too many **people** - certain behaviour/activities undertaken by people which created unwanted **noise** and **disturbance**.
- Negative impacts of various forms of **transport** including vehicle **noise**.
- Negative impact of various forms of **development** including commercial and industrial development.

A similar list of contributors to – and detractors from - tranquillity is provided in Appendix 1 of Natural England’s ‘Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England’.<sup>7</sup>

A distinction should be made between absolute tranquillity and relative tranquillity (i.e. the tranquillity of one place compared to another). When we refer to tranquillity in the UK, it is almost always relative tranquillity that we are referring to as very few places have absolute tranquillity.

This Position Statement (and the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023) combines some of these definitions to provide the following definition:

- **A state of calm and quietude associated with peace, experienced in places with mainly natural features, free from man-made noise and other aural and visual disturbance.**

## WHY IS TRANQUILLITY IMPORTANT?

The reasons why tranquillity is important can be grouped under the following headings:

- Enjoyment
- Health and Wellbeing
- Economy

### Enjoyment

An opinion poll commissioned by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) in 2006<sup>8</sup> shows people value tranquillity most as a quality of the countryside.

- **Tranquillity**, tranquil, calm, solitude, peace and quiet, were valued by 72% of people;
- **Fresh air** was valued by 34%;
- **Scenery**, was valued by 20%;
- **Nature**, wildlife or flora and fauna, was valued by 19%.

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<sup>7</sup> Natural England (2011) *Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England*.

<sup>8</sup> YouGov poll, October 2006.

Similar research in the North East of England<sup>9</sup> asked people to select their three top reasons for visiting Northumberland National Park. Tranquillity was the most popular response.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

As outlined above, natural environments or landscapes – especially those that are rich in wildlife – are an essential component of tranquillity. Being in such environments allows people to relax, to escape from the stresses and strains of everyday life, to recover from mental fatigue and to ‘recharge their batteries’. For example, the most recent Natural England survey of the public’s engagement with the natural environment found that 88% of the people surveyed said that spending time in a natural environment made them feel calm and relaxed – and, for 86% of people, it made them feel refreshed and revitalised.<sup>10</sup>

Not surprisingly, research has demonstrated that that visiting and experiencing the natural environment provides a number of benefits for health and well-being. These include reduced levels of stress and anxiety and improvements in mood, self-esteem, psychological well-being, attention and concentration, cognitive restoration, social contact and physical health. Research has also shown that playing in a natural environment has a positive impact on children’s development.

A comprehensive review of literature relating to the benefits that natural environments rich in wildlife provide for health and well-being has been compiled, in 2015, by the University of Essex for the Wildlife Trusts.<sup>11</sup>

### **Economy**

As outlined above, tranquillity is the quality of the countryside that people value the most and it is one of the main reasons why people visit protected landscapes. It is also an asset that is drawn on in tourism marketing for the Cotswolds. As such, tranquillity is a key factor in attracting 23 million visitors a year to the Cotswolds AONB<sup>12</sup>.

This tourism industry is supported by 1,070 tourism businesses in the AONB (11.3% of the total number of businesses), which employ 6,720 people (12.3% of total employment in the AONB).<sup>13</sup> Tourism has been estimated to be worth over £1 billion to the Cotswolds.<sup>14</sup>

33% of tourism and tourism-related businesses in the Cotswolds AONB have identified that a deterioration in the quality of the Cotswolds AONB landscape would seriously affect their business performance. Applying these percentages to accommodation and food service businesses (the main industry group for tourism and tourism-related businesses) and the rest of the economy suggests that around £337 million of ‘gross value added’ (GVA) (13% of AONB total) and 9,720 jobs (14% of AONB total) are ‘critically dependent’ on the high quality environment and landscape of the AONB.

Maintaining the natural beauty of the Cotswolds AONB landscape, including its tranquillity, is therefore essential to the economy of the AONB.

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<sup>9</sup> Powe, N., and Shaw, T. (2003), *Landscape Assessment: Visitor Survey – Report to the Northumberland National Park Authority*, University of Newcastle: Centre for Research in Environmental Appraisal and Management, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape.

<sup>10</sup> Natural England (2018) *Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment. The national survey on people and the natural environment. Headline report 2018.* Figure 8.

<sup>11</sup> The Wildlife Trusts (2015) *Wellbeing benefits from natural environments rich in wildlife.* A literature review for the Wildlife Trusts by the University of Essex.

<sup>12</sup> South West Tourism (2005) *The value of tourism to the Cotswolds AONB.*

<sup>13</sup> Cumulus Consultants (2013) *Assessment of the economic value of the Cotswolds AONB.* Final report for Cotswolds Conservation Board.

<sup>14</sup> Cotswolds Tourism (2014) *Destination Management Plan for the Cotswolds 2014-2024.*

## WHY IS TRANQUILLITY PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR THE COTSWOLDS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY?

Tranquillity is one of the ‘special qualities’ of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).<sup>15</sup> In other words, it is one of the features of the Cotswolds that makes the area so outstanding that it is in the nation’s interest to safeguard it.

Natural England has identified relative tranquillity as one of six factors that contribute to the natural beauty of AONBs. As such, it is one of the factors that Natural England assesses when assessing landscapes for designation as a National Park or AONB in England.<sup>16</sup>

CPRE’s tranquillity mapping (see Annex 1), shows that the Cotswolds AONB has a relatively high level of tranquillity, especially when compared to the surrounding urban areas of Bath / Bristol, Gloucester / Cheltenham, Worcester / Evesham / Stratford, Banbury / Bicester / Oxford, Swindon and Trowbridge. The AONB therefore fulfils an important function for the populations of these areas as a ‘breathing space’ where they can ‘get away from it all’.

The relative tranquillity of the AONB is one of the reasons why the area is prized for its recreational and amenity value. This aspect contributes to the economic benefits of tranquillity, outlined above.

However, as shown in the intrusion maps in Appendix 1, the tranquillity of the Cotswolds AONB is declining as more and more development and infrastructure provision takes place within the AONB and its setting. This reflects the decline in tranquillity at a national level.

This issue is addressed in Policy CE4 (Tranquillity) of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023 (‘the Management Plan’), which makes the following recommendations:

1. Proposals that are likely to impact on the tranquillity of the Cotswolds AONB should have regard to this tranquillity, by seeking to (i) avoid and (ii) minimise noise pollution and other aural and visual disturbance.
2. Measures should be taken to enhance the tranquillity of the Cotswolds AONB by (i) removing and (ii) reducing existing sources of noise pollution and other aural and visual disturbance.

The long term aspiration, as set out in Outcome 6 of the Management Plan, is that:

- The tranquillity of the Cotswolds AONB will have been conserved and enhanced, with fewer areas being affected by noise pollution and other aural and visual disturbance.

Tranquillity (or, more specifically, ‘% of AONB recorded as ‘most tranquil’) is one of the Monitoring Indicators listed in Appendix 6 of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023. It is also an in ‘The State of the Cotswolds’ report which the Board produces at least once every five years. The measure of ‘most tranquil’ is based on CPRE’s tranquillity mapping, outlined below.

***The Board recommends that proposals that are likely to impact on the tranquillity of the Cotswolds AONB should accord with Policy CE4 of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023.***

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<sup>15</sup> The list of special qualities of the Cotswolds AONB in Chapter 2 of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan includes ‘*the tranquillity of the area, away from major sources of inappropriate noise, development, visual clutter and pollution*’.

<sup>16</sup> Natural England (2011) *Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England*.

**The Board recommends that local planning authorities should:**

- ***Provide tranquillity policies in their Local Plans, which equate to Policy CE4 of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023.***
- ***Explicitly identify the Cotswolds AONB as a ‘tranquil area’ in their Local Plans, such that the AONB merits a higher level of protection, in relation to tranquillity, than areas outside the AONB.***

## **HOW IS TRANQUILLITY ADDRESSED IN LEGISLATION AND IN LEGISLATION AND IN GOVERNMENT POLICY AND GUIDANCE?**

### **LEGISLATION**

#### **Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000**

Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 states that:

- *In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.*

This statutory duty is commonly referred to as the ‘duty of regard’. The expectation of the duty of regard is that adverse impacts will be avoided or mitigated where possible.

The relative tranquillity of the Cotswolds AONB is one of the factors that contributes to the area’s natural beauty, including its ‘special qualities’. As such, relevant authorities, including public bodies, should have regard to the tranquillity of the AONB when exercising or performing any functions in relation to it.

Local planning authorities play a key role in fulfilling the duty of regard in relation to development proposals. Also, Section 84 of the CRoW Act states that:

- *A local planning authority whose area consists of or includes the whole or any part of an areas of outstanding natural beauty has power ... to take all such actions as appears to them expedient for the accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty or so much of it as is included in their area.*

***The Board recommends that public bodies and other ‘relevant authorities’ should have regard to tranquillity when fulfilling their statutory ‘duty of regard’ under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, with the expectation that adverse impacts on tranquillity will be: (i) avoided; and (ii) minimised through appropriate mitigation.***

#### **Environmental Protection Act 1990**

The Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990 addresses, inter alia, the issue of noise (i.e. unwanted sound) as a statutory nuisance. For noise to count as a statutory nuisance it must do one of the following:

- unreasonably and substantially interfere with the use or enjoyment of a home or other premises
- Injure health or be likely to injure health.



Local authorities must look into complaints about such noise and, if they agree that a statutory nuisance is happening, they must serve an abatement notice, requiring whoever is responsible to stop or restrict the noise.

Further guidance on this issue is provided on the GOV.UK website under the heading of 'Noise nuisances: how councils deal with complaints'.<sup>17</sup>

Additional legislation which can be used by local authorities to deal with unreasonable noise arising from a wide range of sources includes the Control of Pollution Act 1974, The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, the Noise Act 1996, and the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999.

### **Environmental Noise Regulations**

The Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006, as amended in 2018, implement the requirements of the European Noise Directive (END) (Directive 2002/49/EC).

The Regulations require, inter alia, that Noise Action Plans are prepared for major roads, major railways and major airports as well as 'agglomerations' (i.e. areas with a population in excess of 250,000 and a population density equal to or greater than 500 people per square kilometre).

Noise mapping has been carried out by calculating the level of noise arising from each noise source and these form the basis for recommendations in each of the respective Noise Action Plans, including monitoring, consultations, restrictions and improvements where required.

The data from the noise mapping that relates to the Cotswolds AONB is outlined under 'How can tranquillity be measured?'

## **POLICY**

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

Paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that (underlining added for emphasis):

- Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:
  - a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;
  - b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and
  - c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

As indicated above, tranquillity is one of the special qualities of the Cotswolds AONB and is one of the criteria used for designating AONBs. The relative tranquillity of the Cotswolds AONB is also one of the reasons why the area is prized for its recreational and amenity value.

Tranquillity is also addressed in paragraph 100 of the NPPF, in relation to Local Green Space designations. Paragraph 100 states (underlining added for emphasis):

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/noise-nuisances-how-councils-deal-with-complaints>



- The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
  - a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  - b) demonstrably special a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example, because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
  - c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

***The Board recommends that local planning authorities should explicitly identify the whole of the Cotswolds AONB as a ‘tranquil area’ in their Local Plans, such that the AONB merits a higher level of protection, in relation to tranquillity, than areas outside the AONB.***

## **Noise Policy Statement for England**

Footnote 60 of the NPPF refers to the aims of the Government’s *Noise Policy Statement for England* relating to the effective management and control of environmental, neighbour and neighbourhood noise. These aims are:

1. avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life;
2. mitigate and minimise adverse impacts on health and quality of life; and
3. where possible, contribute to the improvement of health and quality of life.

Policy CE4 (Tranquillity) of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023 closely reflects these aims.

## **GUIDANCE**

### **GOV.UK guidance on tranquillity**

The Government’s Planning Practice Guidance<sup>18</sup> expands on paragraph 108(b) of the NPPF (outlined above). For example, it states that *‘for an area to be protected for its tranquillity ... such areas are likely to be already valued for their tranquillity, including the ability to perceive and enjoy the natural soundscape, and are quite likely to be seen as special for other reasons including their landscape’*.

### **GOV.UK guidance on noise**

The GOV.UK website provides comprehensive guidance relating to noise, including guidance on how the planning system can manage potential noise impact in new developments. This includes guidance on how the adverse impacts of noise can be mitigated.<sup>19</sup>

The GOV.UK website also provides advice on how councils deals with complaints relating to noise nuisance.<sup>20</sup>

## **HOW CAN TRANQUILLITY BE MEASURED?**

As indicated by the various definitions outlined above, there are as number of components to tranquillity, some of which are harder to measure than others. For example, the components of tranquillity relating to the ‘state’ of the ‘recipient’ are not readily measurable, whereas

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/noise--2> (Paragraph 012)

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/noise--2>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/noise-nuisances-how-councils-deal-with-complaints>

other components, such as noise levels, are. This makes tranquillity a particularly difficult factor to assess and measure.

For the purposes of this Position Statement, the most relevant measures of tranquillity are considered to be:

- the CPRE and University of Winchester / Dorset AONB methodologies for calculating tranquillity;
- noise mapping – particularly the Government’s assessment of noise associated with traffic on major roads;
- visual impact, as measured in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments; and
- traffic levels and movement.

### **CPRE methodology**

CPRE has undertaken a considerable amount of work to define and map tranquillity across England, producing ‘tranquillity maps’ in 1995 and 2006<sup>21</sup>.

The 1995 maps were based on defining tranquil areas as ‘*places which are sufficiently far away from the visual or noise intrusion of development or traffic to be considered unspoilt by urban influences*’. Areas were identified as being tranquil areas when they were a certain distance away from features such as roads, towns, airports and fire stations.

The 1995 mapping exercise was completed as a comparative study which demonstrated the reduction in tranquil areas over the 30 year period from 1960 to 1990. The 2006 mapping exercise further contributed to this comparative study, showing a further reduction in tranquil areas. This reduction in tranquillity is shown in the Intrusion Maps in Appendix 1.

The 2006 mapping exercise also used a ‘Participatory Appraisal’ (PA) approach, involving extensive public and stakeholder consultation, which helped to define the factors that contribute to and detract from tranquillity. These factors were weighted in proportion to peoples’ perceptions of their relative impact on tranquillity. These weighted factors were then combined with relevant Geographical Information System (GIS) data-sets to produce the tranquillity map. A version of this map, showing the Cotswolds AONB, is shown in Appendix 2.

The 2006 maps currently remain (as of May 2019) the most up-to-date tranquillity maps using the CPRE methodology.

CPRE’s maps shows that the ‘shadow of development’ extends much further than the development itself, with half the country being affected, or ‘intruded upon’, by the sight or sound of roads, aircraft, railways, urban areas, mines and power stations and power lines.

### **University of Winchester / Dorset AONB Methodology**

A similar approach, combining participatory appraisal with GIS data, was taken in the more recent (2013-2015) ‘Broadly Engaging with Tranquillity’ (BET) project, led by the University of Winchester with the Dorset AONB Partnership and Dorset County Council.

This project was intended to be compatible with, but further refine, the CPRE methodology. For example, unlike previous studies (such as the CPRE methodology), the BET project also engaged with local residents, specifically those classed as ‘hard-to-reach’ members of the local community. The research concluded that the distinctive views of these local resident stakeholders has important implications for who should be involved in determining local

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<sup>21</sup> Details of the CPRE methodology maps for England (2007) can be viewed at <http://www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/landscape/tranquillity/national-and-regional-tranquillity-maps>

characteristics of tranquillity and for how protected area managers might include non-expert views in their understanding and conservation of tranquillity.

In 2017, funding was secured for a follow-up project, Broadly Engaging with Tranquillity, Easy and Refined (BETER). BETER is intended to broaden out the research across both a wider area and a wider range of environments, as well as considerably speed up the survey process.

The BETER project is intended to provide a replicable framework for determining and mapping tranquillity. A similar approach has been applied in projects in some other AONBs, including the Kent Downs and Howardian Hills AONBs, but, to-date, this approach has not been replicated in the Cotswolds AONB or at a national level.

***The Board recommends that the Government should implement and regularly monitor a nationally replicable framework for measuring tranquillity.***

### **Noise maps**

Noise maps have been produced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to meet the requirements of the Environmental Noise Directive (END), referred to above, and are intended to inform the production of noise action plans, which are to be developed on a five year rolling programme.<sup>22</sup>

The noise maps provide an overview of the ambient noise climate in cities and major transportation sources in England. Ambient or environmental noise is unwanted or harmful outdoor sound created by human activities. This includes noise created by transportation, such as road, rail and air traffic, and from industrial activity. The maps indicate the number of people affected by different levels of ambient noise, the source of that noise (i.e. road, rail, air or industry) and the locations of the people affected.

Noise maps for major road noise for the area that covers the Cotswolds AONB are shown in Appendix 3, with the first map showing data from 2012 and the second map showing data from 2006.<sup>23</sup> Both maps clearly show the noise impact across the AONB along the M4 and the A417 Cirencester to Gloucester road, on the western edge of the AONB along the M5 and more localised impacts on other main roads in the AONB. A comparison of the 2012 and 2006 maps shows a significant increase in the number and length of major roads affected by high noise levels within that time period.

Appendix 4 shows a close up of the noise map for the A417 Air Balloon junction. The Cotswold Way National Trail and Gloucestershire Way have been super-imposed to show the extent to which these routes are affected by noise pollution in this location. The proposed upgrading of this road provides an opportunity to reduce noise levels along this section of the A417.

Appendix 5 shows the major road locations in the vicinity of the Cotswolds AONB that have been classed as 'Important Areas' (IAs). These are the areas where the 1% of the population (nationally) that are affected by the highest noise levels from major roads are located. Several IAs are located in the AONB, primarily in close proximity to the urban areas adjacent to the AONB boundary.

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<sup>22</sup> Further information regarding noise maps can be viewed at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/noise/mapping/index.htm>

<sup>23</sup> The 2012 map is extracted from <http://extrium.co.uk/noiseviewer.html>. The 2006 map is taken from the Board's previous Position Statement relating to tranquillity. Both maps show 24 hour average noise levels in decibels (above 55 decibels) with weightings applied for the evening and night periods (Lden (day – evening – night)).

More localised noise intrusion can occur due to the provision of traffic calming and safety measures such as road humps and special surfaces. Whilst these measures can assist in reducing traffic speeds and therefore noise, care needs to be taken with their location to avoid noise intrusion.

Noise maps have also been produced for major railways. However, in the context of the Cotswolds AONB, this noise is very localised, with the maps just showing noise above 50dB for between Bath to Bradford-on-Avon, Haresfield and Standish and Eckington and Bredon's Norton.

***The Board recommends that Highways England should include further noise mitigation measures in its Noise Action Plans for major roads in the Cotswolds AONB and its setting in order to enhance the tranquillity of the AONB. In particular, Highways England should ensure that the noise impact of the upgraded A417 is substantially reduced.***

### **Visual Intrusion**

As outlined above, definitions of tranquillity and tranquil areas relate to the absence of visual disturbance from – and overt signs of - development and man-made features. As such, the extent to which development encroaches – and visually intrudes - into the AONB landscape is clearly a factor that influences the tranquillity of the area.

This link between tranquillity and landscape is recognised by the Landscape Institute (LI) in its 'technical information note' on tranquillity.<sup>24</sup> The LI's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment also identifies tranquillity as one of the factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes.<sup>25</sup>

Tranquillity is, itself, an intrinsic component of landscape character. For example, the Field Survey Forms used for the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) had a section for identifying the tranquillity of a location based on whether it was inaccessible, remote, vacant, peaceful or busy. CPRE's mapping of Tranquil Areas was also a core data set used in the LCA.

The LCA identifies 19 different Landscape Character Types (LCTs) for the Cotswolds AONB. For each of these LCTs, the Board's Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines (LSG) identifies, inter alia, 'local forces for change' and the 'potential landscape implications' of these forces. For example, these local forces for change include:

- visual intrusions introduced to the landscape;
- proliferation of suburban building styles, housing estate layout and materials ... that cumulatively can lead to the erosion of peaceful rural landscape character;
- road upgrading and improvements, especially of minor roads, and introduction of suburbanising features such as mini roundabouts, highway fencing;
- excessive traffic and / or speed on minor local roads and lanes and increase in size of vehicles using lanes, resulting in loss of tranquillity;
- proliferation of stables and other visual clutter.

The LSG provide a range of recommendations to address these forces – and their potential implications - in each of the LCTs. If proposals in the AONB and its setting are not consistent with the LSG, they are likely to have adverse landscape and visual effects and – by extension – adverse effects on tranquillity.

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<sup>24</sup> Landscape Institute (2017) *Tranquillity – an overview*. Technical Information Note 01/2017 (Revised)

<sup>25</sup> Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*. Third edition. Box 5.1, page 84.

The standard way to assess the visual impacts and impacts on landscape character of a proposed development is to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). As such, LVIA's also play a key role in identifying potential impacts on tranquillity.

***The Board recommends that proposals that are likely to impact on the tranquillity of the Cotswolds AONB should have regard to – and be compatible with – the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment and the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines, particularly when undertaking Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments.***

### **Traffic movements**

Development in the Cotswolds AONB, such as housing or quarrying, is likely to lead to additional road traffic within the AONB. Development outside the AONB can also lead to increased traffic levels within the AONB, for example, as a result of commuting, business travel, school drop-offs or leisure trips. Such development is classed as being 'in the setting' of the AONB.

This increase in traffic levels has the potential to have a significant adverse impact on the tranquillity of the AONB, for example, as a result of noise and visual disturbance. Therefore, assessing the likely traffic levels and movements resulting from a proposed development is a key component of assessing potential impacts on tranquillity.

As well as assessing traffic movements into and out of the proposed development site, an assessment should also be made of likely traffic movements at relevant, off-site locations within the AONB, based on the predicted direction of travel. Cumulative impacts should also be taken into consideration in such assessments (i.e. the impact of the proposed development combined with other existing or proposed developments).

***The Board recommends that development proposals should include an assessment of anticipated traffic levels and traffic movements, including at relevant, off-site locations in the AONB.***

## NOTES

The Cotswolds Conservation Board has the statutory duty to pursue the following two purposes:

- a) to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB; and
- b) to increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB.

In fulfilling these roles, the Board has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of people living in the AONB.

This is one of a series of position statements published by the Board which help to expand on the Board's policies within the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan or explain the Board's approach to new and emerging issues such as renewable energy, affordable housing, tranquillity, and management of roadside verges. All position statements can be found on the Board's website at: <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/our-landscape/position-statements-2/>

The Board is comprised of members appointed by the local authorities, elected parish council representatives and individuals appointed by the Secretary of State. The Board, formed in December 2004, is the only organisation that looks after the AONB as a whole.

The Cotswolds AONB was designated in 1966 and extended in area in 1990. It is one of 38 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty across England and Wales. It is the largest AONB, covering 790 sq.miles (2038 sq.km). It is a landscape of equal importance to National Parks such as Snowdonia and the Lake District.

### **For further information contact:**

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Cotswolds Conservation Board

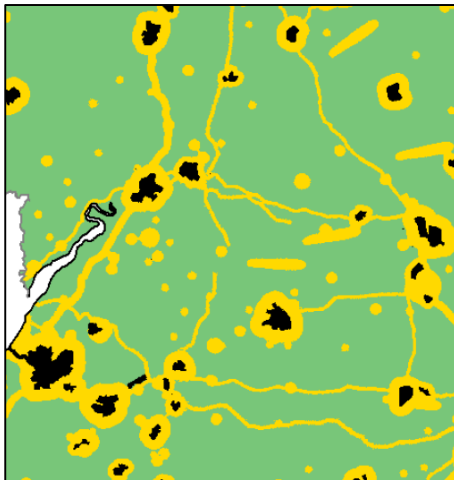
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Website: [www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)

**APPENDIX 1. CPRE INTRUSION MAPS FOCUSING ON THE COTSWOLDS AONB AREA**

**Intrusion Map, 1960**

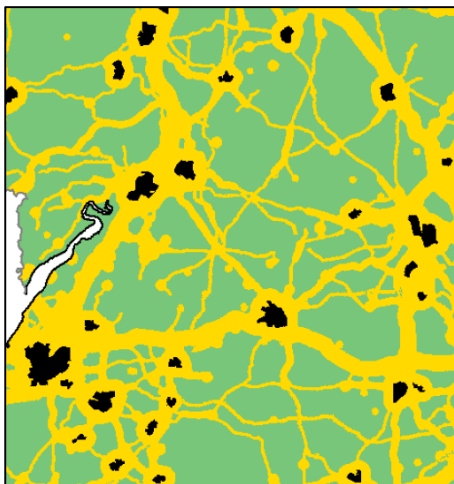


**Key**

-  Areas disturbed by noise & visual intrusion\*
-  Undisturbed areas
-  Urban areas

\* Areas disturbed by urban development, major infrastructure projects and other noise and visual intrusion.

**Intrusion Map, early 1990s**



Campaign to Protect Rural England



Produced on behalf of CPRE by Land Use Consultants

Original copyright CPRE and Countryside Commission, 1995

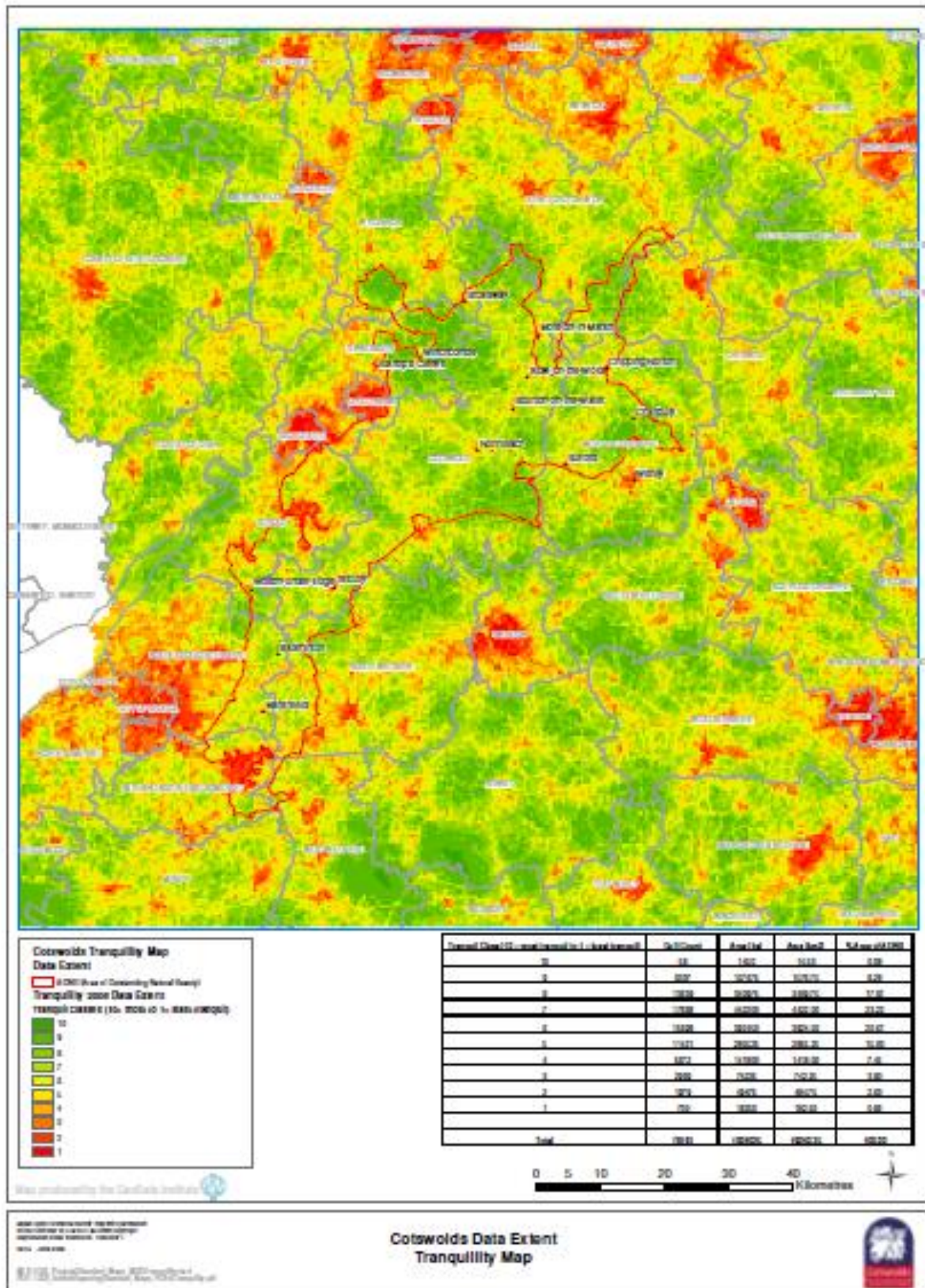
**Intrusion Map, 2007**



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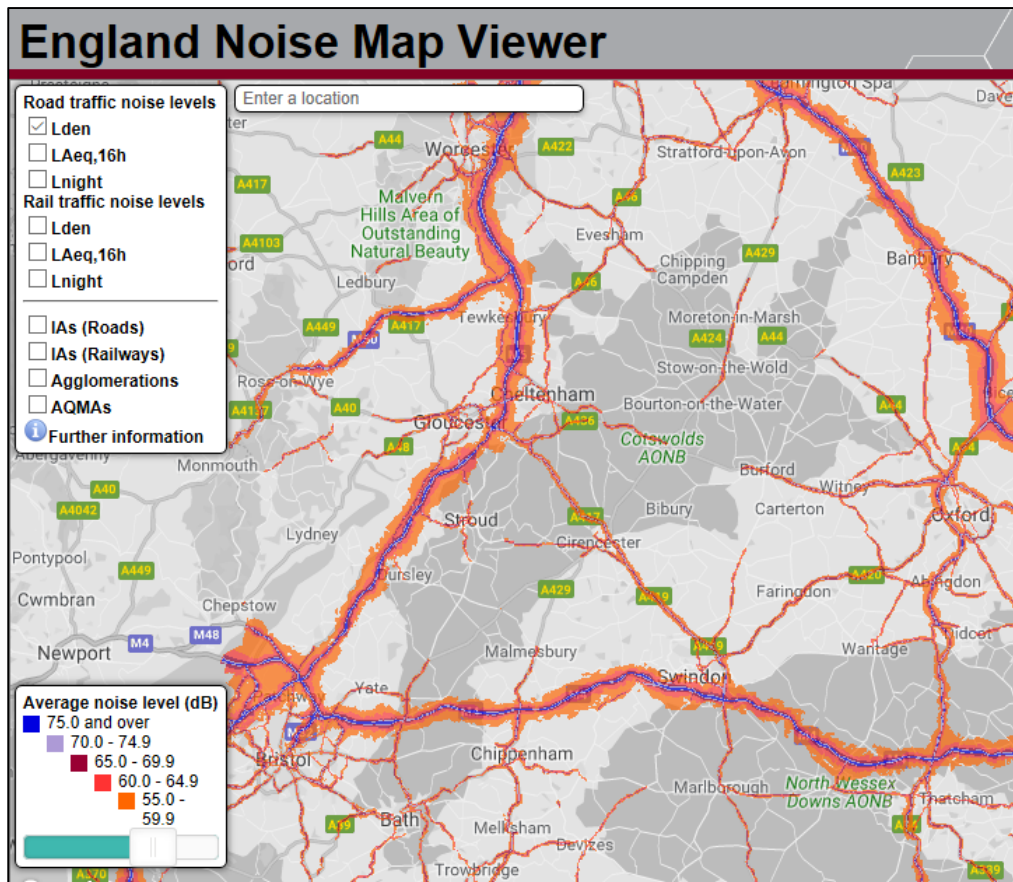


## APPENDIX 2. CPRE TRANQUILLITY MAP, 2006

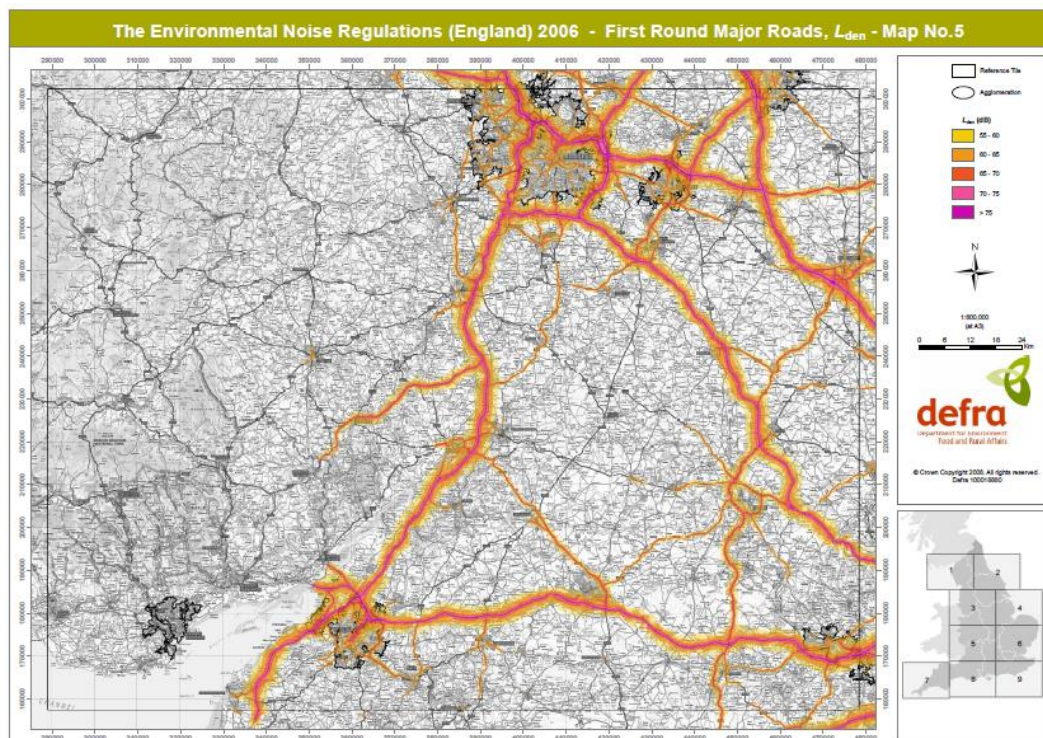


# APPENDIX 3. NOISE MAP

2012

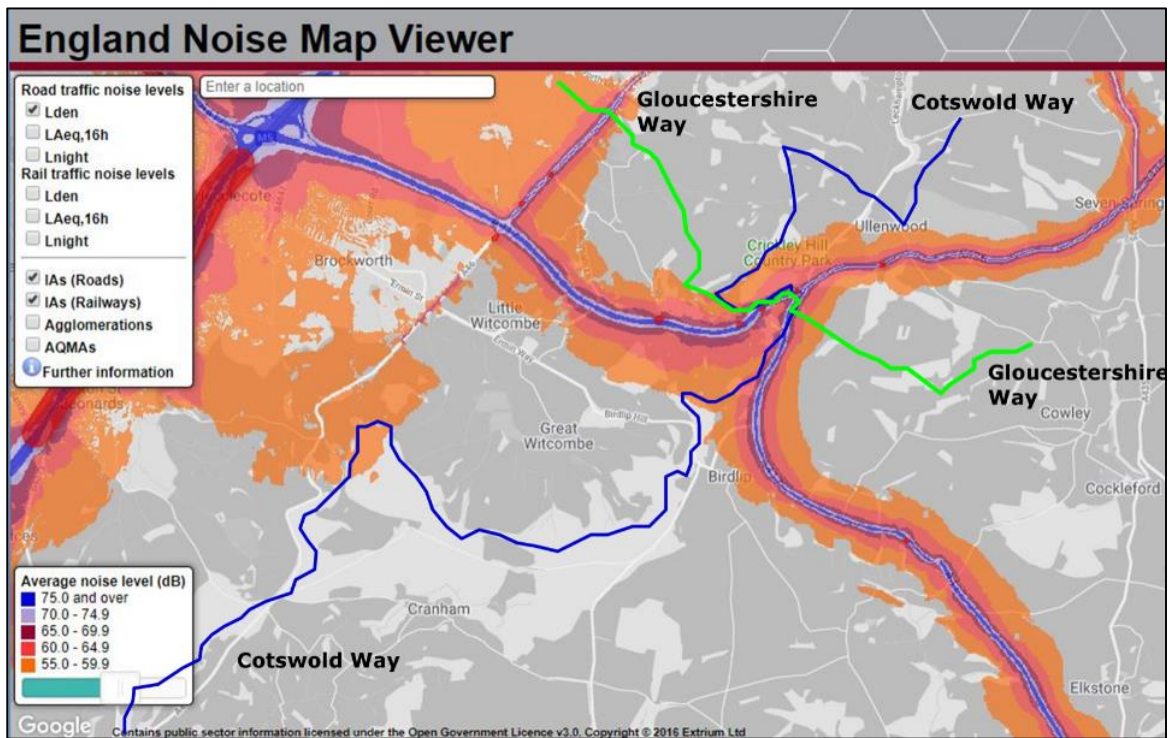


2006





**APPENDIX 4. NOISE MAP FOR ROAD TRAFFIC IN 2012 FOCUSING ON A417 AIR BALLOON JUNCTION**



APPENDIX 5. NOISE MAP FOR ROAD TRAFFIC IN 2012 - IMPORTANT AREAS

