

DRAFT TRANQUILLITY POSITION STATEMENT

Summary: To present a draft Tranquillity Position Statement for endorsement.

Recommendations: To endorse the draft Tranquillity Position Statement for adoption by the Board on 25th June 2019, subject to further internal and external consultation.

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, various recommendations arising from the supporting text have also been summarised in the shaded text box.
3. Perhaps the most significant recommendation is that local planning authorities should explicitly identify the Cotswolds AONB as a 'tranquil area'² in their Local Plans.

Key differences from the previous position statement

4. In addition to the changes to format, outlined above, other key differences from the previous position statement include:
 - 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.
 - Reference to more up-to-date (i.e. post-2010) policies, guidance, research and literature.

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

² Paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that '*planning policies and decisions should ... identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason*'.

- More extensive reference 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 intrusion’ and ‘traffic movements’.
 - More maps in the Appendices, including CPRE’s ‘Intrusion Maps’, showing how the AONB’s tranquillity has changed over time (N.B. The final version of the position statement will have higher quality versions of some of these maps).
5. The section on ‘traffic movements’ has been added in because this has been a key issue in several of the Board’s recent planning consultation responses. For example, the Board has recently objected to a proposed development of 500 dwellings approximately 3km outside the AONB boundary. The main reason for the Board’s objection is the potential increase in traffic through the AONB resulting from the proposed development. This increase in traffic could have a significant adverse impact on the tranquillity of the AONB. There have also been a number of proposals relating to quarries in the AONB which would result in an increase in lorry movements to and from the quarries in question.
6. The section on ‘visual intrusion’ has been added because: (i) tranquillity is a fundamental component of landscape character; and (ii) visually intrusive development is one of the key factors that detracts from the tranquillity of an area. Therefore, if a proposed development is likely to have an adverse impact on landscape character and / or have adverse visual impacts, then it is also likely to have adverse impacts on tranquillity.

Next steps

7. This initial draft of the Tranquillity Position Statement has not yet been circulated for consultation with Board officers / members or with external stakeholders, such as the local planning authorities. However, it is being presented to the Executive Committee now, rather than at a later stage, in order for it to be adopted by the Board in June 2019 rather than in December 2019.
8. It is anticipated that, following the Executive Committee meeting on 28th May, the draft position statement will be circulated to Board officers / members and key external stakeholders for comment by 12th June. The position statement – and a Board paper - will then be finalised by 14th June, ready for adoption by the Board on 25th June.

Supporting Paper(s):

Appendix ‘A’ - Draft Tranquillity Position Statement