

## **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT POSITION STATEMENT**

**Summary:** This paper outlines the Board's draft Planning and Development Position Statement.

### **Recommendations:**

- 1. To note progress in drafting the Planning and Development Position Statement.**
- 2. To endorse the proposed principles, recommendations, format and content of the draft Planning and Development Position Statement.**
- 3. To endorse the proposed next steps (i.e. taking the draft Planning and Development Position Statement to the Board in March 2020, prior to consulting externally).**

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### **Introduction**

1. The Board was presented with a paper on 'planning guidance' in December 2019. Whilst the proposals in that paper were positively received, it was agreed that further work was required in developing the proposals.
2. Following on from the Board meeting, it was considered that the most appropriate way forward was to develop a 'Planning Guidance' document, alongside a new 'Housing Position Statement'. This approach was endorsed by the Board's Planning and Infrastructure Working Group at its meeting in January 2020.
3. Whilst drafting this proposed 'Planning Guidance' it has become apparent that it would be more appropriate to present this as a Position Statement, rather than just 'guidance'. For example, a Position Statement would have more weight in planning decisions.
4. This paper presents the draft 'Planning and Development Position Statement' (attached). A paper relating to the proposed 'Housing Position Statement' is presented as a separate agenda item.

### **Planning and Development Position Statement**

5. The main objective of the Planning and Development Position Statement is to advocate two key principles:
  - (i) a landscape-led approach to development in the Cotswolds AONB and its setting;
  - (ii) development within the AONB being based on robust evidence of local need arising within the AONB.
6. The Position Statement is intended to support local authorities, developers and other relevant stakeholders to help them fully address AONB issues and related planning considerations.

7. The Position Statement has a strong emphasis on the purpose of AONB designation (i.e. to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB), including the factors that contribute to natural beauty. This is because it is the purpose of designation to which 'relevant authorities' have a statutory 'duty of regard'. The purpose of designation is also a key consideration when assessing if a proposed developments in the AONB constitute major development.
8. The Position Statement does not explicitly address the Board's second purpose (i.e. to increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Cotswolds AONB). However, it is worth noting that the Position Statement, in itself, should be helpful to increase understanding of the AONB's special qualities.
9. The Position Statement is still a work in progress, particularly the table in Annex 4. In order to maximise the 'added value' of the planning guidance document, it is also the intention to produce a simplified checklist that local authorities could use when assessing site allocations or development proposals. However, it is hoped that this draft provides sufficient information to clearly indicate the anticipated content and format of the final version.

#### **Next steps**

10. Assuming that the Executive Committee is satisfied with progress on developing the Position Statement and with the proposed principles, recommendations, format and content, it is anticipated that the document will be edited and further refined before being presented to the Board in March 2020. The guidance would then be circulated externally (primarily to the local authorities) for a five week consultation period. The final version of the Position Statement will then be presented to the Board for adoption in June 2020.

#### **Supporting Paper(s):**

#### **Appendix 'A' – Draft Planning and Development Position Statement**

## **APPENDIX A. DRAFT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT POSITION STATEMENT**

See separate attachment.