

MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025 - 30

Summary: To seek the views of the Executive Committee on the 2025 – 2030 Management Plan

Recommendations: That the Executive Committee comments on version 3.0 of the plan.

Report by: Simon Smith – Nature Recovery Lead

INTRODUCTION

1. The Board approved the production schedule for the 2025 – 2030 Management Plan in February 2024. In accordance with this schedule the development of the plan has undergone three rounds of consultation each round engaging with a wider group of stakeholders than the preceding one. The Executive Committee and Board considered new drafts of the plan prior to each external round.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

2. The first round was internal with team members making revisions to the 2023 – 2025 plan in order to create a first working draft of the 2025 – 2030 plan. 12 sets of comments were received from mid-April to early July 2024.
3. The second round was targeted at public sector stakeholders. A draft went to 84 contacts including all the local authorities, DEFRA, Natural England, Historic England, the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency. There was also a workshop attended by 35 people on the 11th July 2024 where relevant CNL subject leads were available. 15 sets of comments were received mainly throughout August 2024 which were compiled into a single document. This was shared with the subject leads and their responses were added. This document ran to 60 pages
4. The third round was targeted at a wide range of stakeholders including those involved in earlier rounds. A draft went to 502 contacts including all the Parish Councils and appropriate non-governmental organisations. 31 sets of comments were received throughout November and December 2024 which were compiled into a single document. This was shared with CNL subject leads and their responses along with any further changes are being added. This document currently runs to 75 pages although it is still growing as officer responses are still being added.
5. In total 58 sets of comments have been received and they have resulted in over 135 pages of detailed dialogue that sit behind the revisions in the draft plan.

Many of the comments received were compiled from across multiple individuals or teams within an organisation or partnership.

6. A new version of the plan with initial changes resulting from the third consultation highlighted is attached (Appendix A). The comments were compiled & considered & this new draft plan produced over the Christmas & new year's break. This left little time before the deadline for this committee's papers for the subject leads to fully review them. Although they all managed to make initial responses, this draft should be regarded as a work in progress. The Committees views on the details in this draft are sought.

RECENT POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

7. There have been significant policy announcements since the Executive Committee and Board last considered a draft of the plan.
 - The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised on 12th December 2024 and this sits within the context of wider messaging from government concerning development. The Planning Officer has introduced initial Management Plan revisions in the light of the revised NPPF.
 - Defra published "*Guidance for relevant authorities on seeking to further the purposes of Protected Landscapes*" on 16th December 2024. The National Landscapes Association published a briefing; "*Applying the CRow Act section 85 duty to 'seek to further the purpose' in National Landscapes (AONBs)*" in November 2024. The Planning officer is reviewing the Management Plan in the light of these.
 - Guidance on apportioning three national targets within the National Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework was published in December 2024. One of these is the target for woodland and tree canopy cover. The consultants creating the woodland, tree and hedgerow opportunity map for the CNL Board have undertaken to create targets based on their work by the beginning of February 2024.

SEA HRA

8. The Environment Report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been completed and the statutory consultees consulted. It concluded that; "*There is nothing in the management plan that will undermine the special qualities of the Cotswolds. Implementation of the proposed Management Plan will have environmental and sustainability benefits for the National Landscape.*"
9. The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report has been completed and Natural England are currently being consulted. It concludes;
 - *That no policy areas would have a Likely Significant Effect on any National Sites.*
 - *There is no requirement to undertake an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitat Regulations*

NEXT STEPS

10. Following consideration by the Executive Committee the subject leads will complete any final revisions in time for the plan to be adopted by the Board in February 2025. This date is in accordance with the Board's approved production schedule and is coincident with the expiration of the current plan.

SUPPORTING PAPERS

- Appendix A - Management Plan 2025 - 2030 V3

January 2025