

# **COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023-2025**

Cotswolds National Landscape Board  
Fosse Way  
Northleach  
Gloucestershire GL54 3JH  
Tel: 01451 862000  
Website: [www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)

# A note on terminology

In June 2020 the Cotswolds National Landscape Board decided to replace the term Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) with National Landscape.

This plan uses the name Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) for the area designated as the Cotswolds AONB. At times it is abbreviated to National Landscape.

AONB is still the legal designation and is used within this plan when referring to AONB's outside of the Cotswolds and the designation nationally.

The name used for the organisation associated with the designation is the Cotswolds National Landscape Board. At times this is abbreviated to National Landscape Board or The Board.

The legal name of the organisation remains the Cotswolds Conservation Board but this name is no longer used in most circumstances.

*Further presentational revisions at the design stage:*

*Apply paragraph numbering as per the outcome 1 section.*

*Standardise footnotes with a format of: name of organisation, year of the publication in brackets and title of the publication in italics. Where relevant provide a hyper-link to the document (i.e. (link)).*

*The visual impact of footnotes is to be reviewed in the first designed draft. If & where their impact appears excessive consider moving them to the end of that section.*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023-2025

The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan is a statutory plan, which sets out the vision, outcomes and policies for the management of the Cotswolds National Landscape for the period 2023-2025. These are summarised in the table overleaf.

The vision sets the overall context for the plan and was adopted in 2022 following consultation with stakeholders. The vision was drawn up in the light of three interlinked key issues:

- **Key Issue 1, The Climate Emergency**
- **Key Issue 2, Nature's decline and the Ecological Crisis**
- **Key Issue 3, Health and societal changes**

The plan goes on to define the special qualities of the National Landscape. These are the aspects of the area's natural beauty which make it distinctive and which are considered valuable, especially at a national scale. It is the impact of these key issues amongst others, on the special qualities that has informed the development of the plan's outcomes and policies.

The outcomes express the desired state of the National Landscape. They are arranged under three over-arching headings which reflect the National Landscape's purpose of designation (to conserve and enhance natural beauty) and the National Landscape Board's additional purpose (to increase understanding and enjoyment). These headings are illustrated further with three broad aims:

1. Cross Cutting Themes; **Tackling 21st century issues through progressive partnerships.**
2. Conserving and Enhancing Natural Beauty; **Influencing and delivering for landscape, nature and climate.**
3. Increasing Understanding and Enjoyment; **Ensuring access, learning and wellbeing opportunities are for everyone.**

When viewed together the outcomes paint a powerful picture of what the Cotswolds would be like if this plan's vision became a reality:

**Outcome 1 - Climate Action:** The National Landscape is a place that is mitigating and adapting to climate change, and has a clearly defined pathway towards Net Zero emissions.

**Outcome 2 - Natural and Cultural Capital:** The natural and cultural capital assets of the National Landscape - and the services which they provide – are better understood, conserved and enhanced.

**Outcome 3 - Working Together:** Through collaborative partnerships and a shared understanding, the purposes of the National Landscape and its Board are applied consistently across the whole area.

**Outcome 4 - Landscape:** The evolving landscape and much-loved character of the Cotswolds is better understood and at the heart of all we do and the decisions we make.

**Outcome 5 - Local Distinctiveness:** In a world of constant and rapid change, the local distinctiveness of the National Landscape is valued, conserved and enhanced.

**Outcome 6 - Tranquillity:** Noise pollution and visual disturbance are minimised to maintain tranquillity across the National Landscape.

**Outcome 7 - Dark Skies:** Fewer areas of the National Landscape are affected by light pollution.

**Outcome 8 - Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage:** The historic environment and cultural heritage of the National Landscape is better understood, conserved and enhanced.

**Outcome 9 - Biodiversity and Nature Recovery:** There is concerted unified action for a widespread recovery of nature - conserving, restoring and enhancing a connected mosaic of distinctly Cotswolds habitats and species.

**Outcome 10 - Rural Land Management:** Land management conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the National Landscape whilst balancing the competing pressures of recovering nature, tackling climate change, food production, supporting livelihoods and public access.

**Outcome 11 - Development and Transport:** Development and transport schemes positively contribute to the purposes of protected landscape designation and also plays a key role in facilitating the economic and social well-being of local and rural communities.

**Outcome 12 - Health and Wellbeing:** The National Landscape plays a full part in improving the nation's health, benefitting the mental and physical wellbeing of those who experience it.

**Outcome 13 - Access and Recreation:** The Cotswolds is recognised as a welcoming place, where barriers to access are being removed and everyone feels connected to the landscape.

**Outcome 14 - Sustainable Tourism:** Businesses and visitors have a shared commitment to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the National Landscape.

The policies outline in detail how these outcomes can be achieved and are perhaps the most important – and most utilised part of the plan.

Although the National Landscape Board will play an important role in delivering the vision, outcomes and policies of the Management Plan, their successful delivery is also dependent on all individuals and organisations with an interest in the Cotswolds.

The Management Plan identifies key actions for specific stakeholders. This is a plan for the place not the body. The Management Plan also identifies key indicators for each policy which will be used to gauge progress in its delivery.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

A note on terminology .....	ii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
CHAIR’S FOREWORD .....	8
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....	9
MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTEXT.....	9
MANAGEMENT PLAN - PROCESS .....	11
MANAGEMENT PLAN STRUCTURE AND USE .....	12
CHAPTER 2 - VISION .....	14
CHAPTER 3. KEY ISSUES.....	15
CHAPTER 4. THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE .....	18
CHAPTER 5. OUTCOMES AND POLICIES .....	19
CROSS CUTTING THEMES.....	19
THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY .....	19
NATURAL AND CULTURAL CAPITAL .....	22
WORKING TOGETHER .....	25
CONSERVING AND ENHANCING .....	27
LANDSCAPE .....	27
LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS.....	29
TRANQUILLITY.....	31
DARK SKIES.....	32
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE.....	33
BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE RECOVERY .....	35
RURAL LAND MANAGEMENT.....	38
DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORT.....	41
INCREASING UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYMENT .....	51
HEALTH AND WELLBEING .....	51
ACCESS AND RECREATION .....	52
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM.....	55
CHAPTER 8. DELIVERY AND MONITORING.....	57
COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE BOARD DELIVERY.....	57
STAKEHOLDER DELIVERY.....	57
MONITORING.....	57
APPENDICES .....	58

APPENDIX 1. NATIONAL LANDSCAPE (AONB) DESIGNATION .....	58
APPENDIX 2. NATURAL BEAUTY.....	59
APPENDIX 3. COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE BOARD.....	60
APPENDIX 4. THE 'DUTY OF REGARD' .....	62
APPENDIX 5. STAKEHOLDER DELIVERY – PRIORITY ACTIONS .....	64
APPENDIX 6. MONITORING INDICATORS.....	68
APPENDIX 7. PRIORITY HABITATS AND SPECIES .....	71
APPENDIX 8. WHY BIODIVERSITY IS AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN THE COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE .....	72
APPENDIX 9. MAJOR DEVELOPMENT .....	76

Clicking on the lines in this table will take you to the relevant page.

# Contents at a Glance

CROSS CUTTING (PURPOSES 1 AND 2)  Tackling 21st century issues through progressive partnerships.			PURPOSE 1: TO CONSERVE AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE <sup>1</sup>  Influencing and delivering for landscape, nature and climate.								PURPOSE 2: TO INCREASE THE UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYMENT OF THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE  Ensuring access, learning and wellbeing opportunities are for everyone.		
OUTCOME 1: CLIMATE ACTION	OUTCOME 2: NATURAL & CULTURAL CAPITAL	OUTCOME 3: WORKING TOGETHER	OUTCOME 4: LANDSCAPE	OUTCOME 5: LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS	OUTCOME 6: TRANQUILLITY	OUTCOME 7: DARK SKIES	OUTCOME 8: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT & CULTURAL HERITAGE	OUTCOME 9: BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE RECOVERY	OUTCOME 10: RURAL LAND MANAGEMENT	OUTCOME 11: DEVELOPMENT & TRANSPORT	OUTCOME 12: HEALTH & WELL-BEING	OUTCOME 13: ACCESS & RECREATION	OUTCOME 14: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
POLICY CC1: Climate Change – Mitigation	POLICY CC3: Natural & Cultural Capital – Principles	POLICY CC6: Developing a consistent, coordinated and landscape-led approach	POLICY CE1: Landscape	POLICY CE3: Local Distinctiveness	POLICY CE4: Tranquillity	POLICY CE5: Dark Skies	POLICY CE6: Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage	POLICY CE7: Biodiversity and Nature Recovery	POLICY CE8: Rural Land Management	POLICY CE10: Development & Transport - Principles	POLICY UE1: Health and Well-being	POLICY UE2: Access & Recreation	POLICY UE3: Sustainable Tourism
POLICY CC2: Climate Change - Adaptation	POLICY CC4: Soils	POLICY CC7: Compliance with Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act	POLICY CE2: Geology						POLICY CE9: Problem Species, Pests and Diseases	POLICY CE11: Major Development			
	POLICY CC5: Water	POLICY CC8: Working together								POLICY CE12: Development Priorities & Evidence of Need			
										POLICY CE13: Waste Management and the Circular Economy			

Note – In the designed version all the outcomes and policies within this table will link to their corresponding page and a note to that effect will be added.

<sup>1</sup> In delivering purposes 1 and 2, the Board has a duty to foster the social and economic wellbeing of people living in the National Landscape. This duty is addressed through relevant policies under the two purposes.

# CHAIR'S FOREWORD

The Cotswolds National Landscape has previously produced a Management Plan every five years, with the current plan expiring in 2023. We've made the decision to undertake a limited interim review of this current plan to cover the period 2023-25, so that we can align with the timeline of the government's 25-year Environment Plan and accommodate any changes in policy resulting from the 2019 Landscapes Review.

Our plan continues to address the many issues currently facing the Cotswolds National Landscape. These include supporting the recovery of wildlife and helping nature to thrive, ensuring everyone has access to the landscape to help improve their health and wellbeing, helping to mitigate and adapt to climate change, producing food and other products, and ensuring businesses and livelihoods are maintained, and. All this, whilst still maintaining the special characteristics and elements of natural beauty which make it a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Many of these demands are increasing but our understanding of their consequences is improving all the time. In our Vision for the Cotswolds, we acknowledge the need to constantly find new win-win solutions that conserve and enhance the landscape and serve the people who live, work, and visit here. Working collaboratively, in partnership with others, will be essential to help identify and implement these solutions and this interim Plan will lay foundations upon which we can develop a new plan by 2025 that will inform how we work in the Cotswolds National Landscape to balance the needs of nature, people, climate – and how we transition into a future that will surely be very different from now.

Brendan McCarthy

Chair, Cotswolds National Landscape Board

October 2022



# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

## MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTEXT

### What is the Cotswolds National Landscape?

The Cotswolds National Landscape was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1966, and extended in area in 1990. Although AONB is still the legal name of the designation it was rebranded as a National Landscape for most purposes in June 2020. At 790 square miles, or 2038 square kilometres, it is the largest AONB – and the third largest protected landscape, including National Parks – in England. The National Landscape stretches from Bath and Wiltshire in the south, through Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire to Warwickshire and Worcestershire in the north. It cuts across 15 local authority areas.

AONBs are landscapes whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them<sup>2</sup>. The statutory purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance their natural beauty<sup>3</sup>.

Each AONB has been designated by reason of its 'special qualities'. These include the flora, fauna, historical and cultural associations as well as landscape and scenic views. Information on the 'special qualities' of the Cotswolds National Landscape is provided in Chapter 4.

Further information on National Landscape (AONB) designation is provided in Appendix 1 and information on 'natural beauty' is provided in Appendix 2.

### What is the Cotswolds National Landscape Board?

The Cotswolds National Landscape Board ('the Board') was established by Parliament in 2004 as the Cotswolds Conservation Board and has two statutory purposes<sup>4</sup>:

1. To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape.
2. To increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

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

In circumstances where these purposes and duties are irreconcilable, the Board must give priority to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape<sup>5</sup>.

The Board consists of 37 members, of whom 15 are nominated by local authorities, eight by parish councils and 14 are appointed by government. The Board's work programme is delivered by a small

---

<sup>2</sup> Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) (2015) *Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Landscape Protection and Enhancement Support Scheme (England) 2015 – 17. Application to European Commission*.

<sup>3</sup> Section 82, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

<sup>4</sup> Section 87, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, as amended by the NERC Act 2006.

<sup>5</sup> This prioritisation of conserving and enhancing is known as the 'Sandford Principle', after Lord Sandford, who chaired the National Parks Policy Review Committee between 1971 and 1974.

team of staff, supported by volunteers including the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens who deliver a programme of practical projects and guided walks across the National Landscape.

Further information about the Board can be found in Appendix 3 and on the Board's website: [www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)

### **What is the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan?**

The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan ('the Management Plan') is a statutory plan<sup>6</sup>, which sets out policies for the management of the National Landscape<sup>7</sup>. The National Landscape Board is the body responsible for preparing and publishing the Management Plan and for reviewing it at intervals of no more than five years. This is the fifth such document prepared by the Board.

Although the Board is the body responsible for preparing and publishing the Management Plan and will play an important role in its delivery, the Board doesn't actually own or directly manage any of the land in the National Landscape or its setting. As such, the policies of the Management Plan are also intended to guide the work of other stakeholders in delivering the Management Plan's vision and outcomes.

### **Why do we have a Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan?**

The Management Plan is a key mechanism for achieving the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of the National Landscape's special qualities. The Management Plan is the only plan to guide the management of the National Landscape as a whole.

### **Who will deliver the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan?**

This plan is ultimately about partnership working to make the vision a reality.

The National Landscape Board will play an important role in delivering the vision and outcomes of the Management Plan. However, their successful delivery is also dependent on other stakeholders, including local authorities and other public bodies, land owners and land managers, non-government organisations, developers, businesses and individuals. Many of these stakeholders already make a significant contribution to delivering the vision and outcomes of the Management Plan. This is a plan for the place and all the bodies and individuals engaged in it.

It is a legal requirement for 'relevant authorities', including all public bodies, to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape<sup>8</sup>. This legal requirement is known as the 'duty of regard'. So, for example, local planning authorities shall have regard to this purpose when developing their Local Plans and when making decisions on planning applications.

*The duty of regard is intended to ensure that the purpose for which an AONB has been designated (i.e. to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB) is recognised as an essential consideration in any decisions or activities that impact on the AONB, with the expectation that adverse impacts will be avoided or mitigated where possible<sup>9</sup>*

---

<sup>6</sup> Section 89 (1), Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as amended by the NERC Act 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Section 89, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

<sup>8</sup> Section 85, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Natural England (2010) England's statutory designated landscapes: a practical guide to your duty of regard.

More information about the ‘duty of regard’ is provided in Appendix 4.

### **How will the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan be delivered?**

How the Board will contribute to the delivery of the Management Plan itself, as well as encourage and support other stakeholders is set out in a three yearly Business Plan Framework which in turn is delivered through an annual work programme.

Every individual and organisation with an interest in the National Landscape can help make this plan’s vision and outcomes a reality by contributing to its delivery. The ‘Stakeholder Delivery’ table in Appendix 5 provides an indication of the key measures that the Board invites specific stakeholders to undertake in order to help deliver this plan.

### **How will the delivery of the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan be monitored?**

The Board will monitor and evaluate its contribution to the delivery of the Management Plan through the quarterly and annual review of its work programme. The ‘State of the Cotswolds Report’ – together with other local and national monitoring and surveys - will contribute to the provision of evidence, which is a crucial part of managing the National Landscape.

The Board will endeavour to monitor the key actions identified in the ‘Stakeholder Delivery’ table in Appendix 5. It will also endeavour to monitor compliance with the ‘duty of regard’ (see Appendix 4).

Appendix 6 shows the key indicators that will be used to monitor the delivery of the Management Plan. The monitoring indicators will demonstrate change over time. There are timed targets within supporting documents such as the Board’s key performance indicators and the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan. National targets for protected landscapes supported by an outcomes monitoring framework are currently being worked on.

## **MANAGEMENT PLAN - PROCESS**

In order to align with the timing of national and local policy development and guidance this plan is based on an interim review of the 2018 to 2023 plan and will run for two years from 2023 to 2025. A more thorough review will be undertaken to produce a fully revised plan in 2025. Two years is a very short period to achieve the vision and many of the outcomes within this plan so although it runs until 2025 it looks towards the desired state of the Cotswolds in 2030.

Much of the groundwork for the preparation of this plan was undertaken in 2021. A new vision was consulted on and adopted and we held a forward planning day to look at key issues and outcomes.

Throughout 2021 and 2022 research was commissioned taking a closer look at the natural capital and carbon footprint of the National Landscape and a Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan was developed and published.<sup>10</sup>

A consultation focussing on the wording of policies was undertaken internally and with our local authority partners over the summer of 2022 and a wider fuller consultation was undertaken in the

---

<sup>10</sup> The Natural Capital Evaluation can be examined via a dashboard on this webpage, where the Cotswolds Nature recovery Plan can also be downloaded: <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/looking-after/cotswolds-nature-recovery-plan/>

Autumn. Throughout both of these consultations 66 responses were received from 44 individuals representing 37 organisations. More individuals contributed as several responses were compiled from across teams.

## MANAGEMENT PLAN STRUCTURE AND USE

The core of the plan is made up of four components

- Vision
- Key Issues
- Special qualities
- Outcomes and policies

The vision sets the overall context for the plan and was adopted by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board in June 2021 following consultation with stakeholders. The vision was drawn up in the light of three identified key issues:

- **Key Issue 1, The Climate Emergency**
- **Key Issue 2, Nature's decline and the Ecological Crisis**
- **Key Issue 3, Health and societal changes**

The plan goes on to define the special qualities of the National Landscape. These are the aspects of the area's natural beauty which make the area distinctive and which are considered valuable, especially at a national scale. It is the impact of these key issues amongst others, on the special qualities that has informed the development of the plan's outcomes and policies.

The outcomes and policies are arranged under three over-arching headings which reflect the National Landscape's purpose of designation (to conserve and enhance natural beauty) and the National Landscape Board's additional purpose (to increase understanding and enjoyment). These headings are illustrated further with three broad aims:

1. Cross Cutting Themes  
Tackling 21st century issues through progressive partnerships.
2. Conserving and Enhancing  
Influencing and delivering for landscape, nature and climate.
3. Increasing Understanding and Enjoyment  
Ensuring access, learning and wellbeing opportunities are for everyone.

The outcomes express the desired state of the National Landscape and the policies outline how this can be achieved.

The supporting text for each outcome outlines the underlying issues that the policies are aiming to address. The outcomes have been derived from the vision and were used to establish the policies. They form the link between the long-term vision and immediate action.

The policies are perhaps the most important – and most utilised - part of the Management Plan. They serve five main purposes:

1. They are principles for how the Cotswolds National Landscape should be managed in order to:
  - a. conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the National Landscape;
  - b. increase the understanding and enjoyment of the National Landscape's special qualities;
  - c. foster the social and economic well-being of local communities;
  - d. address issues that are having an adverse effect on the National Landscape;
  - e. achieve the vision and outcomes of the Management Plan.
2. They provide a framework for action by all stakeholders with a role to play in the management of the National Landscape including the National Landscape Board.
3. They represent the policies of the Board.
4. They are intended to guide, influence and be used by stakeholders in their own plans, policies, proposals, work programmes and decision making.
5. Together with other guidance produced by the Board, they are intended to facilitate a consistent and co-ordinated approach across the whole of the Cotswolds National Landscape<sup>11</sup>.

It is important that all of the policies should be considered in their entirety, particularly in relation to development and rural land management. For example, when a development is being proposed in the National Landscape, the developer and the local authority should have regard to all of the policies, not just to Policy CE10 (Development and Transport – Principles).

One of the areas which the Management Plan policies relate to is in the policy-making and decision-taking of local planning authorities (LPAs). For example, it is hoped that LPAs will have regard to the Management Plan policies when reviewing and developing their own policies, including those within their development plans. The Management Plan policies are aspirational and as such, they might go further than current policies in individual development plans. It is intended that these aspirational policies will aid in helping to develop and evidence new local plan policies.

The Management Plan should be a material consideration in planning decisions. However, it is recognised that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the LPA's development plan (unless material considerations indicate otherwise).

The policies are consistent in the use of the verbs 'must', 'will' and 'should', as outlined below:

- **'Must'** is used where the relevant stakeholder has a statutory requirement to implement the policy.
- **'Will'** is used where the Board is the stakeholder with primary responsibility for applying and / or delivering the policy.
- **'Should'** is used where a stakeholder other than the Board has primary responsibility for applying and / or delivering the policy (although the Board would still play an active role in many of these).

The plan goes on to consider how it can be delivered and monitored. Further detail and evidence are then provided in appendices.

---

<sup>11</sup> The Management Plan and guidance documents produced by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board are the only publications that guide the management of the Cotswolds National Landscape as a whole. This is why the Board's guidance documents are specifically mentioned in several policies. The variation in local conditions and the importance of other plans and guidance that relate to specific parts of the National Landscape (i.e. individual local authorities) is also recognised.

# CHAPTER 2 - VISION

## A COTSWOLDS VISION: A NATIONAL LANDSCAPE FOR EVERYONE

### A time of opportunity

The Cotswolds is good for us; we feel better when we are here and engaged with the natural beauty of the landscape around us. In recent years we have been reminded of the intrinsic relationship between ourselves and the natural world – and the condition it is in. We believe the Cotswolds National Landscape offers opportunities for optimism, regeneration, wellbeing, and inclusion.

### Challenges lie ahead

We are in the midst of a global climate emergency and an ecological crisis. Our awareness of ongoing social and economic inequalities is heightened. In the Cotswolds, these concerns are as real for us too, and we face significant challenges: climate change; threats to wildlife and habitat; changes to the farming landscape and agriculture; finding ways to deliver opportunities for younger people and provide for an ageing population; and achieving access to, and involvement in, the countryside for everyone – in ways which help benefit the countryside and encourage a diverse range of people to appreciate and care for the Cotswolds.

### What can we do, and how should we do it?

To address these issues and begin to make improvements, we need to challenge ourselves. We must avoid complacency, and not adhere doggedly to past beliefs – this will hold us back, and limit how much positive change we can introduce. Instead, we need to embrace new ways of thinking in order to find win-win solutions which both conserve and enhance natural beauty, and serve the people who are here. We will work hard, and in partnership – to find outcomes which offer the most positive benefits and the least negative impact. We will need to demonstrate collaboration and leadership. We will need to be energetic and proactive. We will need to be bold, brave, and confident. Above all, we will need to acknowledge that we can't do it all alone – we want to work with other organisations and individuals to achieve results which benefit all of us, and nature.

### The future should be bright

The treasured landscapes which make the Cotswolds nationally and internationally important are diverse in character, as are the people who live, work, and visit here. There is no 'one size fits all' for the future – but we have a greater opportunity than ever before to pull together as communities across the Cotswolds, and to work with each other to harness our dedication and expertise to forge the future of the Cotswolds. This place, the Cotswolds National Landscape, is for everyone, from all walks of life. In sharing it and looking after it, we will continue to create a place that is vibrant, unique, welcoming, and truly special – for people and for nature. We will work towards ensuring that the Cotswolds stays a working landscape, where agriculture thrives and supply chains are secure. Our communities should be connected and diverse, but self-sustaining. Visitors should feel welcome to enjoy being here, confident about access, and motivated to give something back to help look after the landscape. This should be a place where the landscape, nature, and people work in harmony with each other.

The Cotswolds will be a place that will inspire generations of people to look after it – now and in the years ahead.

# CHAPTER 3. KEY ISSUES

The Board has identified three key issues that it considers to be having a significant effect on this plan's outcomes and in achieving its two purposes of:

- conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape; and
- increasing the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Landscape.

These can be summarised as follows:

- **Key Issue 1, The Climate Emergency**

Mitigating and adapting to climate change whilst conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape.

Climate change is happening, and we are already experiencing the dangerous impacts of a rapidly heating climate. Many of the defining characteristics and special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape are threatened, however, a window of opportunity remains to prevent its worst impacts, and to help people and wildlife adapt.

The Cotswolds National Landscape Climate Change Strategy<sup>12</sup> (adopted by the National Landscape board in February 2022) summarises our current understanding of the climate change impacts on the Cotswolds and what stakeholders can do to both adapt to and mitigate these impacts.

Ambitious climate action is necessary to mitigate climate change and avoid its worst consequences for the Cotswolds, and the Cotswolds National Landscape is not exempt from playing a full part. Farming needs to change to improve soils to continue producing food, reduce soil loss, sequester carbon and help with improving water quality and flood management; tree cover needs to increase to capture carbon and support nature recovery, much more of our energy needs will have to be met through low carbon energy technologies. Buildings need to become energy efficient and infrastructure needs to be more resilient. All this has to be done in ways that conserve and enhance the Cotswolds for future generations.

The Landscapes Review<sup>13</sup> emphasised the importance of the role National Landscapes should play in mitigating and adapting to climate change:

*“National landscapes should take a leading role in the response to climate change through their Management Plans.”*

In November 2021 the National Landscape Board adopted a Climate Change Commitment<sup>14</sup> in which states that:

*“It is our commitment to identify a scenario which allows us to endorse a path to Net Zero emissions (or better) by 2050 (or sooner).”*

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CNL-Climate-Change-Strategy-Adopted-Feb-2022.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Landscapes Review, Julian Glover, September 2019

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/about-us/corporate-documents-reports/>

In line with all AONB's commitment in the Colchester Declaration<sup>15</sup>, this scenario will include clear, measurable targets to achieve Net Zero. This pathway will be in place in time for inclusion in the 2025 Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan.

Some climate change mitigation and adaptation measures have the potential to adversely affect the natural beauty of the National Landscape, but with careful design and implementation, many of these measures can not only conserve but also enhance natural beauty. The challenge is to develop a pathway to net zero which also conserves and enhances natural beauty.

- **Key Issue 2, Nature's decline and the Ecological Crisis**

Enabling wildlife to recover, flourish and adapt to climate change through a robust nature recovery network which additionally provides us with clean air and water and healthy soils.

The story of our loss of wildlife is well documented and understood. This plan is about how we can turn this around and most importantly turn it around now. Climate change is a well-recognised driver combining with habitat destruction to threaten the loss of our already diminished wildlife at an even greater scale and pace. The need for action is urgent if we are to avoid a mass extinction event. The Landscapes Review<sup>16</sup> found that this urgent need to do more for nature was a dominant theme:

*In our call for evidence, the message was clear: more than any other single thing, people and organisations agreed that our landscapes should do more for nature.*

We know what we have to do to allow our wildlife to flourish and adapt to climate change. We need to create a robust and resilient nature recovery network – a landscape rich in joined up and well managed habitats. Such a nature recovery network is not only good for wildlife, it provides a range of 'ecosystem services' such as clean water or food or a beautiful place to get away from it all and enjoy some peace surrounded by nature. These ecosystem services are critically important to the wellbeing and economy of people living in and around the Cotswolds.

The Landscapes Review proposed that:

*National Landscapes should form the backbone of Nature Recovery Networks – joining things up within and beyond their boundaries*

AONB's collectively responded to the challenge of the Landscapes Review with the Colchester Declaration<sup>17</sup> which contains commitments to produce nature recovery plans and restore habitats and populations of endangered species.

The Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan was adopted as Cotswolds National Landscape guidance in October 2021. It represents a detailed look at the species and habitats of the Cotswolds and what should be done to enable their recovery and adaptation to climate change.

---

<sup>15</sup> A commitment to tackle the climate emergency and ecological crisis signed by all AONBs at a national conference in Colchester in 2019. <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/projects/Colchester-declaration>

<sup>16</sup> Landscapes Review, Julian Glover, September 2019

<sup>17</sup> A commitment to tackle the climate emergency and ecological crisis signed by all AONBs at a national conference in Colchester in 2019. <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/projects/Colchester-declaration>



- **Key Issue 3, Health and societal changes**

Ensuring that livelihoods are maintained and that everyone within and around the National Landscape can realise the health and wellbeing benefits of accessing its natural beauty.

We face unprecedented environmental challenges in the form of the climate emergency and ecological crisis. We have to respond quickly and vigorously to address them and furthermore we have to do this in a way that supports livelihoods and communities. The solutions have to work in social and economic terms as well as environmental if they are to have a lasting impact.

The mental and physical health benefits of accessing natural beauty are becoming increasingly understood and appreciated. The Landscapes Review published by Julian Glover in 2019 challenged Protected Landscapes to do more to welcome people and crucially to do a lot more to ensure that people from currently underrepresented groups can enjoy the benefits of accessing them too. A Challenge that the Cotswolds National Landscape Board intends to address, building on current activity and continuing to work with stakeholders, old and new.

The impact of these key issues on the natural beauty of the National Landscape were considered during the development of the vision and the outcomes.

# CHAPTER 4. THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

The ‘special qualities’ of a National Landscape are those aspects of the area’s natural beauty which make the area distinctive and which are considered valuable, especially at a national scale. They are the key attributes on which the priorities for its conservation, enhancement and management are based. They bring out the essence of the National Landscape as an evocative description of the area rather than as a statistical account.

## THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cotswolds is a rich mosaic of historical, social, economic, cultural, geological, geomorphological<sup>18</sup> and ecological features. The special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape are:

- the unifying character of the limestone geology – its visible presence in the landscape and use as a building material;
- the Cotswold escarpment, including views from and to the National Landscape;
- the high wolds – a large open, elevated predominately arable landscape with commons, ‘big’ skies and long-distance views;
- river valleys, the majority forming the headwaters of the Thames, with high-quality water;
- distinctive dry stone walls;
- flower-rich grasslands particularly limestone grasslands;
- ancient broadleaved woodland particularly along the crest of the escarpment.
- variations in the colour of the stone from one part of the National Landscape to another which add a vital element of local distinctiveness;
- the tranquillity of the area, away from major sources of inappropriate noise, development, visual clutter and pollution;
- extensive dark sky areas;
- distinctive settlements, developed in the Cotswold vernacular with high architectural quality and integrity;
- an accessible landscape for quiet recreation for both rural and urban users, with numerous walking and riding routes, including the Cotswold Way National Trail;
- significant archaeological, prehistoric and historic associations dating back 6,000 years, including Neolithic stone monuments, ancient drove roads, Iron Age forts, Roman villas, ridge and furrow fields, medieval wool churches and country estates and parks;
- a vibrant heritage of cultural associations, including the Arts and Crafts movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, famous composers and authors and traditional events such as the Cotswolds Olympics, cheese rolling and woolsack races.

---

<sup>18</sup> Geomorphology is the physical features of an area, strongly influenced by geology.

# CHAPTER 5. OUTCOMES AND POLICIES

## CROSS CUTTING THEMES

Tackling 21st century issues through progressive partnerships

### THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

**OUTCOME 1 - CLIMATE ACTION:** The National Landscape is a place that is mitigating and adapting to climate change, and has a clearly defined pathway towards Net Zero emissions.

1.1. Our climate is rapidly changing, driven by greenhouse gas emissions from human activities. We are already experiencing the dangerous impacts of a rapidly heating climate and many of the defining characteristics and Special Qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape are threatened by climate change and potentially our responses to it. Even if we cut emissions to zero tomorrow, further warming is inevitable due to the legacy of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere that will take decades to decline to safe levels. However, a window of opportunity remains for ambitious climate action to prevent its worst impacts, and to help people and wildlife adapt.

1.2. The need for climate action is urgent, but it needs to be well thought out and carefully implemented. The Cotswolds National Landscape is not exempt from playing a full part, but all this can be and should be done in ways that conserve and enhance the Cotswolds for future generations. Improving carbon literacy and understanding of the Cotswold landscape will help ensure the Cotswolds National Landscape remains both beautiful and resilient into the future.

## **POLICY CC1: CLIMATE CHANGE – MITIGATION**

CC1.1. Greenhouse gas emissions should be minimised through a range of measures, including:

- Reducing energy demand in existing and new buildings and infrastructure:
  - Improving energy efficiency, for example, by retrofitting existing buildings. Where traditional buildings including listed buildings are retrofitted, this must be undertaken by historic building specialists and in a manner that is compatible with the purpose of National Landscape (AONB) designation;
  - Reducing embodied carbon through secondary and recycled material use within all construction unless demonstrably unachievable on technical and practical grounds;
  - Utilising passive measures, for example the orientation of buildings and the provision of high levels of insulation;
  - Sustainable construction methods and management plans to reduce and manage construction waste should be implemented;
  - Incentivising voluntary sustainability standards, for example BREEAM, Building with Nature, and One Planet Living principles.
- Reducing energy demand through transport and travel:
  - Reducing car use for example, through increasing green and active travel including public transport and Increasing shared mobility through car sharing schemes;
  - Reducing the need to travel for example by encouraging home working and affordable housing provision close to sources of employment, services and facilities;
  - Improving the sustainability of travel through for example; public transport hub promotion/ integration and information, and prioritising the provision of walking, cycling and public transport use, including adequate cycle parking
  - Providing sufficient infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles, scooters and bikes;
  - Promoting messages aimed at minimising air travel by Cotswolds residents.
- Generating energy from low carbon sources in a manner consistent with the purpose of National Landscape (AONB) designation;
  - All developments, should have a net zero operational carbon balance and 100% energy provided by low carbon sources. Alternatives to fossil fuel energy sources should be used.
- Purchasing locally produced food products and services and encouraging small-scale vegetable growing in gardens and allotments.

CC1.2. Climate change mitigation including the sequestration of carbon should be a key component of land management practices and Environmental Land Management, and rural development support mechanisms in the National Landscape.

CC1.3. Climate action should be undertaken in a way compatible with the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

## **POLICY CC2: CLIMATE CHANGE - ADAPTATION**

CC2.1. The risks posed by the consequences of climate change should be reduced through a range of adaptation measures, including those identified in relevant policies of this Management Plan<sup>19</sup>.

CC2.2. Climate change adaptation should be a significant driver in all new development, infrastructure and transport provision<sup>20</sup>.

CC2.3. Climate change adaptation should be a key component of land management practices and Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms, in the National Landscape.

CC2.4. Further research into the predicted impacts of climate change on the Cotswolds National Landscape should be undertaken. This research should be used to advise and inform sustained behavioural change to adapt to climate change and conserve and enhance the National Landscape and its special qualities.

1.3. Global and UK average temperatures have increased by around 1.2°C since the 1850 – 1900 period. The UK Met Office’s 2021 report<sup>21</sup> states that climate change trends projected for the 21st century show an increased chance of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers along with an increase in the frequency and intensity of extremes.

1.4. Between 2009-2018, UK winters have been on average 5% wetter than 1981-2010 and 12% wetter than 1961-1990, and that summers in the UK have also been 11% and 13% wetter, respectively” Total rainfall from extremely wet days increased by around 17% in the decade 2008-2017 for the UK as a whole and surface water flooding is projected to increase in frequency and severity in the future. In addition to increasing precipitation volumes, climate change has already made it 12-25% more likely that the UK will again experience a summer as hot as 2018, an extreme that is projected to become 50% more likely with future warming .

1.5. In November 2021 the Cotswolds National Landscape Board adopted a Climate Change Commitment<sup>22</sup> in which states that:

***“It is our commitment to identify a scenario which allows us to endorse a path to Net Zero emissions (or better) by 2050 (or sooner).”***

1.6. The National Landscape Board first published a ‘Climate Change Strategy for the Cotswolds National Landscape’ in 2012 and an updated version was adopted in February 2022<sup>23</sup>. Most of the measures proposed in the strategy to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, and

---

<sup>19</sup> Relevant policies (with the most relevant shown in **bold**) include: CC6, para 1; **CC4, para 2; CC5, para 1;** CE6, para 1; **CE7, para1;** CE8; **CE9, para 3;** CE10, paras 1 & 3; CE11, para 2; and UE3.

<sup>20</sup> Additional measures not explicitly addressed in the Management Plan include protecting transport infrastructure from extreme weather events and ensuring that all new and retrofit development recognises the need to compensate for hotter summers and extreme weather events.

<sup>21</sup> Met Office (2021), UK Climate Projections: Headline Findings, July 2021, version 3 p. 6-7.

[https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/research/ukcp/ukcp18\\_headline\\_findings\\_v3.pdf](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/research/ukcp/ukcp18_headline_findings_v3.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/about-us/corporate-documents-reports/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CNL-Climate-Change-Strategy-Adopted-Feb-2022.pdf>

much of the supporting information has been incorporated into the Management Plan to some degree.

1.7. Farming needs to change to improve soils to continue producing food, reduce soil loss, sequester carbon and help with improving water quality and flood management; tree and hedgerow cover needs to increase to capture carbon and support nature recovery. To achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions, much more of our energy needs will have to be met through low carbon energy technologies, buildings need to become energy efficient and infrastructure needs to be more resilient.

1.8. The percentage of households in the Cotswolds National Landscape having no car is 3%, and many people do not have access to a car during the day. This means they are heavily dependent on the frequency and quality of public and/or community transport to access local services. It also exacerbates issues of rural isolation. The introduction and use of technology to help address transport issues and offer increased alternatives such as car sharing and call-up public transport systems could provide viable options for residents and visitors alike whilst simultaneously helping to mitigate climate change. The provision of affordable housing within the National Landscape would help reduce the climate impact of travel to work journeys for those living and working in the area. Any consideration of the carbon footprint of Cotswold's residents must include the impact of flying which is estimated to be two and a half times higher than the UK average.<sup>24</sup>

1.9. Measuring embodied carbon shows that maintaining, refurbishing and retrofitting traditional buildings can reduce carbon emissions in the built environment by over 60%<sup>25</sup> by 2050 compared to new building. Done correctly this can conserve the buildings as a heritage asset, make them more liveable in a changing climate and help mitigate climate change. Passive energy conservation measures, for example the orientation of buildings and the provision of high levels of insulation, also help to minimise the risk of overheating.

1.10. The National Landscape Board has commissioned a "Carbon Footprint Assessment" which when finalised will help inform the development of a pathway to net zero. A review of the Climate Change Strategy will likely be required during the period of this management plan, following the completion of this assessment in 2023.

## NATURAL AND CULTURAL CAPITAL

**OUTCOME 2 - NATURAL AND CULTURAL CAPITAL:** The natural and cultural capital assets of the National Landscape - and the services which they provide – are better understood, conserved and enhanced.

---

<sup>24</sup> A Green House Gas Emissions Assessment and Target Recommendations for the Cotswolds National Landscape. 2023

<sup>25</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2019/hc2019-re-use-recycle-to-reduce-carbon/#:~:text=THERE'S%20NO%20PLACE%20LIKE%20OLD%20HOMES,-5&text=Heritage%20Counts%20is%20an%20annual,responsibilities%20for%20the%20nation's%20heritage.>

### **POLICY CC3: NATURAL AND CULTURAL CAPITAL - PRINCIPLES**

1. The natural and cultural capital of the Cotswolds National Landscape and the services they provide – should continue to be assessed and evaluated.
2. The use of natural and cultural capital accounting should be encouraged in order to fully understand the implications of investment, development and management decisions.
3. The financial and non-financial benefits of natural and cultural capital and the services they provide should be promoted.
4. Proposals affecting the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to – and seek to conserve and enhance – the natural and cultural capital of the National Landscape and the services they provide.
5. Natural and cultural capital and services they provide should be key components of Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape.

The Cotswolds National Landscape has a wealth of natural and cultural capital (the stock of natural and cultural heritage assets) that provide goods and services, often called ecosystem services, that benefit wider society as a whole.

Natural capital stock includes renewable and non-renewable natural resources e.g. geology, minerals, soils, water, air, plants, animals, habitats and ecosystems. The National Landscape's cultural heritage assets are equally rich, including the cultural-historical landscape, individual heritage assets, historic settlements and vibrant cultural activity.

Ecosystem services include; food and fuel provision, the regulation of climate and purification of water, and well-being benefits to people through recreation and appreciation of nature.

These assets - and the services that they provide - are of local, national and, for some services, international importance. However, they are not fully understood or valued.

The Cotswolds National Landscape Board published a Position Statement on 'Conserving and Celebrating Cultural Capital in the Cotswolds AONB' in 2019<sup>26</sup> and in 2021 the Board published 'A Natural Capital Evaluation of the Cotswolds National Landscape'<sup>27</sup> and a 'Cotswolds Natural Capital Atlas'<sup>28</sup>.

---

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Conserving-and-Celebrating-Cultural-Capital-in-the-Cotswolds-AONB-Adopted-March-2019.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> <https://envsys-ltd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=d434eb386d21442694eaa0186a82bb76>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Cotswolds-Natural-Capital-Atlas.pdf>

**POLICY CC4: SOILS<sup>29</sup>**

1. Soil degradation should be halted and reversed by managing soils in a way that: (i) increases organic content, water retention and carbon sequestration; and (ii) minimises erosion, water pollution and compaction.
2. Soil management should remain a key component of Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape.

Across the National Landscape there are many different soil types, which are subject to degradation from a variety of factors. Loss of soil organic matter results in soils being more prone to drought and less resilient, and requiring higher levels of input to support yields. This, in turn, leads to compaction of soils and the leaching of nitrate and pesticides to groundwater.

With a predicted 22% decrease in summer rainfall by 2080, the free draining Cotswold soils will become more prone to drought. Extreme weather events and a predicted 22% overall increase in winter rainfall could lead to flooding and poaching of soils<sup>30</sup>. These combined impacts would lead to soil damage, erosion and nutrient loss. Soil management practices will, therefore, become even more important.

**POLICY CC5: WATER<sup>31</sup>**

1. Water resources should be carefully managed and conserved to: improve water quality; ensure adequate aquifer recharge; ensure adequate river flows; and contribute to natural flood management systems.
2. Development (new and existing sites) should assess and minimise flood risk and implement sustainable drainage schemes, adopt high water efficiency standards in line with RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge targets, and water conservation measures, for example rainwater harvesting and/or water recycling and grey water systems.
3. Sewerage pollution from storm overflows should be minimised and be at least within legal and regulatory requirements.

The Cotswolds is home to a large aquifer which supplies water to homes and businesses both inside and outside the National Landscape. Groundwater sources also need to be carefully managed to ensure the water is safe to use and that abstraction does not impact negatively on river flows.

The rivers in the National Landscape are important for water supply, recreation and biodiversity. They provide a range of habitats which are reliant on particular water flow and levels. However, some stretches of Cotswold's rivers are already prone to low flows, resulting in damage to riverine habitat, concentration of pollutants and less water for abstraction. Over abstraction can have a detrimental impact on these factors. Summers are predicted to become drier, which would exacerbate this problem even further.

---

<sup>29</sup> Soils are addressed under Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services, rather than meriting their own section, because they are not key features of the special qualities of the National Landscape.

<sup>30</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Climate Change Strategy. February 2022.

<sup>31</sup> Water is addressed under Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services, rather than meriting its own section, because it is not a key feature of the special qualities of the National Landscape.



Around half of the area's groundwater is classed as being of poor quality, particularly in the north and west, due to pollutant inputs. The main sources of pollution are from wastewater treatment works followed by agricultural runoff. Water discharged from wastewater treatment works contains phosphate, nitrogen and ammonia and at times of peak flow raw sewerage is discharged directly into rivers. Flood management strategies should aim to avoid these occurrences. Agricultural runoff contains phosphates bound to silt and nitrogen.

The water in the National Landscape is mainly fed by flow from deep in the limestone aquifers. The Environment Agency has been establishing projects within the National Landscape to improve the ecological condition of the rivers. Catchment Management Plans (CMP) provide the actions needed to achieve good ecological condition. Water Framework Directive data for 2016 indicates that 35% of the monitored river lengths in the National Landscape are in good ecological condition. Since 2013 there has been a decrease in the length of river in poor ecological condition.<sup>32</sup> There are concerns with phosphate and sediment levels in some watercourses and groundwater supplies.

The Cotswolds National Landscape is not, at present, an area widely prone to flooding. However, in extreme rainfall events, such as that of July 2007, some towns and villages have been affected by flooding from rivers or as a result of limited drainage. Climate change is likely to increase the risk of flooding and the frequency of such extreme rainfall events.

The rivers that originate in the National Landscape flow downstream through larger towns and villages outside of the National Landscape which are more prone to flooding. As such, land management in the rivers valleys of the National Landscape can play a key role in helping to reduce flood risk downstream. Natural flood management works with natural processes to 'slow the flow' of flood waters. This helps to reduce the maximum water height of a flood (the 'flood peak') and / or delay the arrival of the flood peak downstream, increasing the time available to prepare for floods. Sustainable drainage systems, and ecological river restoration projects are important components of natural flood management.

With the anticipated drier summers and wetter winters, there is likely to be an increased demand for rainwater harvesting and storage.

## WORKING TOGETHER

**OUTCOME 3 - WORKING TOGETHER:** Through collaborative partnerships and a shared understanding, the purposes of the National Landscape and its Board are applied consistently across the whole area.

This Management Plan is a place-based plan for the Cotswolds National Landscape, not just the National Landscape Board - the Board is unable to deliver the plan by itself. The Plan helps inform the activity of a multitude of partners, stakeholders, landowners, communities and visitors in order to contribute to the purposes of the protected landscape designation.

---

<sup>32</sup> State of the Cotswolds 2017.

**POLICY CC6: DEVELOPING A CONSISTENT, COORDINATED AND LANDSCAPE-LED APPROACH**

1. Stakeholders across the Cotswolds National Landscape should take a consistent and co-ordinated approach to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape, including its special qualities and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities.

The Cotswolds National Landscape is an administratively complex area, extending across 15 local authorities and three geographical regions. This makes it very challenging to develop and deliver a consistent approach to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape including its special qualities and increasing the understanding and enjoyments of its special qualities. However, the potential benefits are huge, including better coordination of planning, development, Environmental Land Management schemes, nature recovery planning, tourism and recreation.

Taking a consistent approach, in this context, means being consistent in having regard to (and, ideally, being compatible with): the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape; national policy relating to AONBs; the policies of the Management Plan; and the guidance and position statements published by the Board. However, this does not necessarily mean that decisions made or actions taken will always be the same across the whole of the National Landscape, as these will vary depending on local social, economic and environmental circumstances.

Guidance on what is meant by 'landscape-led' is provided in the Board's Landscape-led Development Position Statement.

**POLICY CC7: COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 85 OF THE COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY ACT**

1. Relevant authorities, including public bodies, must comply with Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (the 'duty of regard') and should have regard to the supporting guidance published by Defra and Natural England.

The legal requirement for public bodies to have regard to the purpose of National Landscape (AONB) designation ('the duty of regard') provides an important mechanism for conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape. Further information on the 'duty of regard' is provided in Appendix 4.

## **POLICY CC8: WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP**

1. Stakeholders should work in partnership to support the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. Stakeholders should also cooperate in fostering the economic and social well-being of communities in and around the National Landscape.
2. Communities and businesses within and around the Cotswolds National Landscape should be encouraged to value and celebrate being part of a nationally recognised landscape and to contribute to the purpose of National Landscape (AONB) designation.
3. All relevant stakeholders should work together to ensure the successful implementation of the Landscapes Review proposals that Government identified as priority in its response to the review<sup>33</sup>.

The Landscapes Review<sup>34</sup> challenges Protected Landscapes to do a great deal more for both people and nature. It also recognises that this will require more resources and new ways of working. A proactive, multi-partnership approach is needed to enable the National Landscape to realise additional benefits through, for example, funding sources and increased participation across the National Landscape. This approach is also needed to help local communities and businesses recognise and celebrate the benefits of being part of a designated landscape.

Though there is generally a significant level of appreciation for the Cotswolds landscape amongst communities and businesses in and around the National Landscape, awareness and understanding of its status as a protected landscape and the implications of this are lacking. This reduces awareness of the need for protection and enhancement of the sense of place, its distinctive features and special qualities.

## **CONSERVING AND ENHANCING**

**Influencing and delivering for landscape, nature and climate.**

### **LANDSCAPE**

**OUTCOME 4 - LANDSCAPE:** The evolving landscape and much-loved character of the Cotswolds is better understood and at the heart of all we do and the decisions we make.

---

<sup>33</sup> Government Response to the Landscapes Review. Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs. January 2022.

<sup>34</sup> Julian Glover September 2019

## **POLICY CE1: LANDSCAPE**

1. Proposals that are likely to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape, should have regard to, be compatible with and reinforce the landscape character of the location, as described by the Cotswolds Conservation Board's Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy and Guidelines. There should be a presumption against the loss of key characteristics identified in the landscape character assessment.
2. Proposals that are likely to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape, should have regard to the scenic quality of the location and its setting and ensure that views - including those into and out of the National landscape – and visual amenity are conserved and enhanced.
3. Conserving and enhancing landscape character should be a key objective of Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape.
4. Rural skills training and the utilisation of those skills – such as dry stone walling, stonemasonry, traditional woodland management and hedgelaying – will be supported to ensure the long-term retention, creation and management of the key features of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

Landscape changes over time. Such change is often perceived as slow or non-existent, but when a view or place is compared to its earlier self, even over a comparatively short time span, the change can be dramatic. Since National Landscape (AONB) designation in 1966 much has changed in the Cotswolds, driven to a large extent by technological advances in agriculture, Environmental Land Management schemes and woodland grants, changes in the shooting and equestrian sectors, tree diseases, fluctuations in commodity prices, population growth and migration and changes in employment and communications, all of which can be influenced by Government policy and financial support. Continued change is inevitable and will have an impact on the landscape and the appearance of the Cotswolds in the future. Addressing the climate emergency, nature's decline and the ecological crisis will cause more change. This change needs to be managed and guided to ensure the Cotswolds retains its landscape character and special qualities.

It is important to consider the cumulative impact of changes on landscape character. This applies to both incremental building development and land use change particularly equestrian development and horticultural production under polytunnels.

The surroundings and setting of the National Landscape are important to its landscape and scenic beauty. For example, the impact of development and land management outside the National Landscape on views from - and to - the National Landscape is an important consideration, as is the retention of key views.

New support mechanisms for farming, forestry and other land management sectors could impact the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and special qualities of the National Landscape. It could also lead to legislative changes in environmental protection and management impacting on the conservation and enhancement of the National Landscape and its special qualities.

The loss of traditional skills is a significant issue for the future management of the landscape and the special qualities of the National Landscape.

In 2021 the National Landscape Board published a position statement on Landscape Led Development<sup>35</sup> supported by appendices.<sup>36</sup>

#### **POLICY CE2: GEOLOGY**

1. Proposals that are likely to impact on the geological features of the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to these features and seek to conserve and enhance them.
2. The geological features of the Cotswolds National Landscape should be conserved and enhanced through effective management.
3. Opportunities should be sought to promote awareness and understanding of the geological features of the Cotswolds National Landscape.
4. 4. Exploration and research into the geology of the Cotswolds National Landscape should be continued in order to improve understanding of the landscape, and of the geological resource and its importance to inform the conservation and management of geological and geomorphological sites.

The Cotswolds National Landscape is significant for its geology and geomorphology with some features unique to the area. The geology influences the landscape, soils and biodiversity and has played a significant role in the National Landscape's industry and heritage. Survey work has also identified the Cotswolds as significant for tufa streams and springs. It is vital that this geological resource is protected, conserved, enhanced, promoted and better understood.

#### **LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS**

**OUTCOME 5 - LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS:** In a world of constant and rapid change, the local distinctiveness of the National Landscape is valued, conserved and enhanced.

---

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Landscape-Led-Development-Position-Statement-FINAL-April-2021.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Landscape-Led-Development-Position-Statement-FINAL-April-2021-Appendices.pdf>

### **POLICY CE3: LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS**

1. Proposals that are likely to impact on the local distinctiveness of the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to, be compatible with and reinforce this local distinctiveness. This should include:
  - being compatible with the Cotswolds Conservation Board’s Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Strategy and Guidelines and Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change;
  - being designed and, where relevant, landscaped to respect local settlement patterns, building styles, scale and materials and in accordance with design guidance prepared by local planning authorities;
  - using an appropriate colour of limestone to reflect local distinctiveness.
2. Innovative designs, compatible with the conservation of natural beauty – which are informed by local distinctiveness, character and scale – should be welcomed.
3. The development of design guidance – which is supported by a robust evidence base and which reflects relevant guidance published by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board – will be encouraged.
4. Provision should be made for the quarrying of limestone, at an appropriate scale, in order to provide building materials that help maintain and enhance the local distinctiveness of the National Landscape. Any production of aggregate and agricultural lime should be secondary and necessary for local and necessary operational purposes. Any such mineral sites should be required to demonstrate that they do not have any significant adverse effects on the natural beauty of the National Landscape including its special qualities or the integrity of existing wildlife sites.

As outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, one of the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape is the unifying character of the limestone geology – its visible presence in the landscape and its use as a building material. Development pressures could potentially erode this local distinctiveness, for example, through the use of inappropriate building materials and inappropriate design. The publication and promotion of design guidance that reflects local distinctiveness is an essential tool for addressing this issue. It will also be important to maintain an adequate supply of locally sourced, appropriately coloured limestone.

Local distinctiveness includes natural elements including but not limited to: woodlands, grasslands, species, the shape and scale of fields, and the character of field boundaries such as hedges and walls. These elements should guide the design of new green and blue infrastructure.

## TRANQUILLITY

**OUTCOME 6 - TRANQUILLITY:** Noise pollution and visual disturbance are minimised to maintain tranquillity across the National Landscape.

### **POLICY CE4: TRANQUILLITY**

1. Proposals that are likely to impact on the tranquillity of the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to this tranquillity, by seeking to avoid and where avoiding is not possible, minimise noise pollution and other aural and visual disturbance.
2. Measures should be taken to remove and where removal is not possible minimise existing sources of noise pollution and other aural and visual disturbance in order to enhance the tranquillity of the Cotswolds National Landscape.
3. Proposals that are likely to impact on the tranquillity of the CNL should have regard to – and be compatible with – the National Landscapes Board’s Tranquillity Position Statement.<sup>37</sup>

Research undertaken by CPRE has identified a growing loss of tranquil areas in England, down from 75% of England in the 1960s to around 50% in 2007<sup>38</sup>. Although the Cotswolds National Landscape has a relatively high level of tranquillity, the National Landscape is being increasingly affected by unwanted, man-made noise and by activity arising from developments. For example, the increasing demand for air transport is leading to expansion of controlled air space over the National Landscape. Additionally, the use of drones, both commercially and privately, is likely to increase, further reducing levels of tranquillity.

Tranquillity relates to issues of visual impact and light pollution as well as noise and other disturbance. However, given that Policy CE1 addresses visual impacts and Policy CE5 addresses light pollution, Policy CE4 has an emphasis on noise. This incorporates issues such as significant increases in traffic in the towns, villages and smaller settlements of the National Landscape, including increased traffic arising from developments outside of the National Landscape.

The National Landscape Board published a position statement on tranquillity in 2019.

It is important to note that this policy is not intended to prevent the noise arising from normal working countryside operations such as operating power tools or farm machinery or non-mechanised quiet recreation.

---

<sup>37</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2019) Tranquillity Position Statement ([link](#)).

<sup>38</sup> CPRE (2007) Developing an Intrusion Map of England ([link](#)).

## DARK SKIES

**OUTCOME 7 - DARK SKIES:** Fewer areas of the National Landscape are affected by light pollution.

### **POLICY CE5: DARK SKIES**

1. Proposals that are likely to impact on the dark skies of the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to these dark skies, by seeking to avoid and where avoiding is not possible, minimise light pollution.
2. Proposals that are likely to impact on the dark skies of the CNL should have regard to recognised standards and guidance, in particular, that published by the Institution of Lighting Professionals and the Commission for Dark Skies.
3. Measures should be taken to increase the area of dark skies in the Cotswolds National Landscape by removing and where removal is not possible minimising existing sources of light pollution.
4. Consideration will be given to seeking a formal dark sky designation for those parts of the Cotswolds National Landscape that are least affected by light pollution.

‘Light pollution’ of the night sky is an intrusion into the countryside at night, which can have harmful effects on the health of people and wildlife. Although the Cotswolds National Landscape has relatively dark skies at night, compared to other parts of England (being ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in terms of the darkest skies in England), light pollution from the surrounding urban areas and the market towns does adversely affect the darks skies of the National Landscape in those locations. With ever-increasing levels of new housing in the National Landscape, light pollution is likely to get worse unless action is taken to address this issue.

The National Landscape Board adopted and published a Cotswolds Dark Skies & Artificial Light Position Statement <sup>39</sup> in 2019. It is supported by two appendices:

[Appendix A Cotswolds night lights map](#)<sup>40</sup>

[Appendix B1 Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance Notes For the reduction of Obtrusive Light](#)<sup>41</sup>

[Appendix B2 Commission for Dark Skies Good Lighting Guide](#)<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Cotswolds-Dark-Skies-Artificial-Light-Position-Statement.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Dark-Skies-Artificial-Light-Appendix-A-Night-lights.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Dark-Skies-Artificial-Light-Appendix-B-ILP-Guidance-Notes-For-the-reduction-of-Obtrusive-Light.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Dark-Skies-Artificial-Light-Appendix-B-CfDS-Good-Lighting-Guide.pdf>



## HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

**OUTCOME 8 - HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE:** The historic environment and cultural heritage of the National Landscape is better understood, conserved and enhanced.

### **POLICY CE6: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE**

1. Proposals that are likely to impact on the historic environment and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds National Landscape should have regard to heritage assets and their setting, and seek opportunities to conserve and enhance them. This should include respecting the historical elements of landscape character including features such as; buildings, sites, layout and context, including the relationship between the existing feature or settlement and the landscape.
2. Heritage and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments should be used when considering any change to a heritage asset and to influence decisions regarding the management of the historic environment and cultural heritage assets.
3. The historic environment and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds National Landscape, both designated and non-designated<sup>43</sup>, should be conserved and enhanced through effective management.
4. Designated historic environment sites, such as scheduled monuments and listed buildings, and non-designated heritage assets of equivalent significance, should be protected, in line with national policy and guidance.
5. Historic environment and cultural heritage should be a key component of Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape.
6. Opportunities should be sought to promote the awareness, understanding and use of Historic Environment Records, Conservation Area Appraisals, Historic Landscape Characterisation and Heritage Strategies and Action Plans. These should be used to influence decisions regarding the management of the National Landscape's historic environment and cultural heritage.
7. The cultural heritage of the Cotswolds should be better understood and celebrated in arts, cultural, and social activities across the National Landscape.

Our historic environment and cultural heritage is the result of a complex history of interaction between people and the natural environment. The historic landscape and natural environment form the foundations of our regional identity and local distinctiveness, contributing to the character and natural beauty of the area.'

Cultural heritage in the Cotswolds runs deeper than associations made with established examples such as the Arts and Crafts Movement or the music of Vaughan Williams. It is more than how the landscape inspires people. It is intrinsically linked to our understanding of the landscape, the changing seasons, farming, and the natural world. Cultural heritage includes oral history, folklore,

---

<sup>43</sup> 'Non-designated' covers the full spectrum of undesignated assets related to the historic environment, for example, ranging from archaeological sites to sites associated with the Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

superstition, tradition and ritual. Without understanding and celebrating this rich cultural heritage, there is a risk it will be lost, and with it will go a key part of the local identity.

The historic environment is irreplaceable and is continuing to decline and be lost due to development, changes in land management and a lack of understanding and management particularly with regard to the wider historic landscape and the less visible and non-designated sites which have little or no protection. The historic environment also includes historic and cultural features of the wider landscape including but not limited to: field (enclosure) patterns and road and path networks.

If historic buildings go out of use, they become at high risk of dereliction and potentially full loss. It is important to keep historic buildings in use, or adapt them appropriately for re-use wherever possible to prolong their lives and character.

Not all heritage assets have currently been identified and it is likely that heritage assets of equal significance to designated sites such as listed buildings or scheduled monuments may survive within the Cotswolds.

The need to understand and promote the connectivity of historic sites and their settings as part of the wider landscape character is vital in order to effectively conserve and manage the historic environment and Historic Landscape Character<sup>44</sup>. Historic Environment Records (HER) of non-designated assets of local significance and Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), produced by local authorities need to be better promoted and used by all stakeholders. Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is a method of identification and interpretation of the varying historic character within an area that looks beyond individual heritage assets as it brings together understanding of the whole landscape and townscape into repeating HLC Types. It can be used to help secure good quality, well designed and sustainable places

Land management, farming practices, wildlife conservation and public access all impact upon the historic environment. Current agri-environment/ELM (Environmental Land Management) schemes have contributed to the management and conservation of historic features such as archaeological remains, registered Historic Parks and Gardens, barns, dew ponds and walls in the wider landscape. It is essential that new support mechanisms will play a significant role in encouraging investment in the National Landscape which conserves and manages the historic environment.

New developments, by virtue of their scale and design, surrounding the historic cores of settlements can cause separation of historic cores from the wider landscape and have a detrimental effect on their distinctive character. The conversion or extension of historic buildings and farmsteads, the introduction of domestic clutter, lighting and landscaping resulting from development can harm the historic character of buildings and their setting, and their relationship to the wider landscape.

Climate change is likely to increase the extremes of wetting and drying, leading to accelerated decay of stonework and an increased risk of subsidence. Increased flooding and erosion may cause damage to buildings and to archaeological sites. Policy CE6 should help to reduce the potential impacts of climate change on the historic environment. Additional measures relating to climate change are provided in Policies CC1 and CC2.

---

<sup>44</sup> More information on Historic Landscape Characterisation at <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/methods/characterisation-2/>

## **BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE RECOVERY**

**OUTCOME 9 - BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE RECOVERY:** There is concerted unified action for a widespread recovery of nature - conserving, restoring and enhancing a connected mosaic of distinctly Cotswolds habitats and species.

## **POLICY CE7: BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE RECOVERY**

1. Biodiversity (including the abundance of wildlife) in the Cotswolds National Landscape should be conserved and enhanced by establishing a coherent and resilient nature recovery network across the Cotswolds National Landscape and in its setting. This should be achieved in accordance with the outcomes, priorities, targets and measures within the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan<sup>45</sup> and focus on the priority species and habitats listed in Appendix 7.
2. Policy and strategic documents that are likely to impact on the biodiversity of the National Landscape should have regard to the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan. This would include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - i. Local Plans.
  - ii. Neighbourhood Development Plans.
  - iii. Green Infrastructure Strategies.
  - iv. Tree and Woodland Strategies.
  - v. Ecological Emergency and Climate Change Strategies.
  - vi. Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
3. Proposals that are likely to impact on the biodiversity of the National Landscape should have regard to – and be consistent with – the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan. This would include, but is not limited to, the following delivery mechanisms:
  - i. Environmental Land Management and other grant schemes and rural development support mechanisms;
  - ii. Biodiversity Net Gain;
  - iii. Payment for Ecosystem Services including but not limited to carbon sequestration and storage, flood management, water supply and water quality improvements.
4. A mitigation hierarchy should be applied to development proposals whereby adverse impacts on biodiversity are: (i) avoided; (ii) mitigated; and (iii) compensated for. Development proposals should provide a net-gain in biodiversity of at least 20% particularly with regard to the species and habitats listed in Appendix 7.
5. Damage or loss of irreplaceable habitat should be avoided. Irreplaceable habitat includes but is not limited to:
  - I. Ancient and veteran trees
  - II. Ancient woodland (continually wooded since 1600);
  - III. Ancient unimproved grassland (surviving since 1945);
  - IV. Ancient hedgerows (present since before the Enclosure Acts, passed mainly between 1720 and 1840)
6. Measures to conserve and restore biodiversity including the outcomes, priorities, targets and measures within the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan should be delivered in a way that is compatible with conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

The story of our loss of wildlife is well documented and understood. This plan is about how we can turn this around and most importantly turn it around now. Climate change is a well-recognised driver combining with habitat destruction to threaten the loss of our already diminished wildlife at

---

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Cotswolds-Nature-Recovery-Plan-Full-Version-1.pdf>

an even greater scale and pace. The need for action is urgent if we are to avoid a mass extinction event.

We know what we have to do to allow our wildlife to flourish and adapt to climate change. We need to create a robust and resilient nature recovery network – a landscape rich in joined up and well managed habitats. The Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan<sup>46</sup> was adopted as Cotswolds National Landscape guidance in October 2021. It represents a detailed look at the species and habitats of the Cotswolds and what should be done to enable their recovery and adaptation to climate change.

The current extent of wildlife rich habitats within the Cotswolds is 48,000 Ha which is 23% of the area of the National Landscape. The extent of these habitats needed to form a robust nature recovery network that will enable wildlife to flourish and adapt to climate change is 82,000 Ha, 40% of the area. The rationale for these figures is outlined in the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan and summarised in Appendix 8.

In the wider countryside agri-environmental programmes are the most important single mechanism for developing a nature recovery network and Environmental Land Management Schemes will play a critically important role. It is essential that they include the measures recommended in the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan.

Additional funding mechanisms are starting to play an increasingly significant role in supporting the recovery of nature particularly Biodiversity Net Gain as mitigation from development and Payments for Ecosystem Services. Water and carbon collection and storage are becoming increasingly valued as ecosystem services and their importance will continue to grow.

Although the national statutory requirement for net gain in biodiversity arising from development proposals will be 10%, this plan states that it should be 20% within the Cotswolds National Landscape. The justification for this enhanced net gain in biodiversity is outlined in appendix 8. This justification includes:

- The Landscapes Review stating that National Landscapes should form the backbone of Nature Recovery Networks
- The Governments response to the Landscapes Review:
  - Linking improvements to the way these areas are protected and managed for nature recovery to the commitment to protect 30% of UK land for nature by 2030.
  - Stating that they; “will put our protected landscapes at the heart of delivering our nature recovery”.

The inclusion of species within the biodiversity net gain policy is aspirational and would take place outside of the formal development plan related biodiversity net gain process.

This priority habitats and species list in Appendix 7 is adapted from Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, which lists the habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The habitats and species in appendix 7 are considered to be: (i) characteristic of the Cotswolds; and / or (ii) those for which the Cotswolds National Landscape is considered to a stronghold. There are other priority habitats and species within the National Landscape, which merit an appropriate level of protection, but which do not meet the two criteria outlined above. Habitats and species not on the NERC Act list but which have been identified, by the National Landscape Board and relevant stakeholders, as priorities for the Cotswolds National Landscape are also included.

---

<sup>46</sup> Adopted by the National landscape Board in October 2021. <https://www.cotswoldsaoib.org.uk/looking-after/cotswolds-nature-recovery-plan/>

The Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan defines ancient and veteran trees (based on a list of characteristics), ancient woodland (continually wooded since 1600) and ancient grasslands (“unimproved” and predating modern agricultural practices) as irreplaceable habitat. A wildflower grassland present in 1945 at the end of the second world war is likely to be ancient. This should be taken into account when considering proposals that are likely to impact on them.

Ancient hedgerows (present since before the Enclosure Acts, passed mainly between 1720 and 1840) are included as irreplaceable habitat and this should be taken into account when considering proposals that are likely to impact on them because:

- Hedgerows are a priority habitat.
- Hedgerows are a key characteristic / feature of many of the landscape character types within the National Landscapes’s Landscape Character Assessment.
- Ancient hedgerows are an important component of the historic environment and the cultural heritage of the area.

Although Policy CE7 focusses on the National Landscape and its setting, consideration will also need to be given to ecological networks in the wider environment, for example, river corridor ecological networks where the rivers start in the National Landscape but extend well beyond its boundaries.

One of the ways wildlife adapts to climate change is to move northwards to a new ‘climate space’. This means that we need to think about the Cotswold’s future wildlife in addition to that currently present, particularly that currently found to the south of the Cotswolds. Big Chalk is a partnership programme aiming to improve ecological connectivity across and between the calcareous landscapes of southern England from the south coast to the midlands.

## **RURAL LAND MANAGEMENT**

**OUTCOME 10 - RURAL LAND MANAGEMENT:** Land management conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the National Landscape whilst balancing the competing pressures of recovering nature, tackling climate change, food production, supporting livelihoods and public access.

## **POLICY CE8: RURAL LAND MANAGEMENT**

1. Rural land management in the Cotswolds National Landscape and in the setting of the National Landscape should have regard to – and help deliver – the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape including its special qualities. It should also help increase the understanding and enjoyment of the National Landscape’s special qualities.
2. Rural land management in the Cotswolds National Landscape and in the setting of the National Landscape should have regard to – and, ideally, help to deliver – the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan. It should also be compatible with guidance produced by the Cotswolds Conservation Board, including the:
  - i. Cotswolds National Landscape - Landscape Strategy and Guidelines;
  - ii. Cotswolds National Landscape – Landscape Character Assessment;
  - iii. Cotswolds National Landscape Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change;
  - iv. Cotswolds National Landscape Board Position Statements.
  - v. Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan.
  - vi. Cotswolds National Landscape Climate Change Strategy
3. (Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape should be designed specifically for the National Landscape. These mechanisms should:
  - i. address paragraphs 1 and 2, above;
  - ii. be managed locally to ensure effective local delivery;
  - iii. deliver public goods and services.

The two main aspects of rural land management are farming and woodland management.

The Cotswolds National Landscape is a farmed landscape and its landscape largely a product of farming. 87% of land in the CNL is agricultural land, 49% of which is arable and 43% grassland<sup>47</sup>. Farming is worth around £800 million annually to the National Landscapes economy and in turn provides the landscape which supports the Cotswolds tourism industry annually worth around £1 billion.

Farming has an essential role to play in nature recovery as many of the distinctive Cotswold habitats are a result of farming activity and farming operations such as grazing are necessary to manage and restore them.

Sustainable and regenerative farming practices have an important role to play in delivering multiple environmental objectives whilst simultaneously producing food.

Changes in farming practices, linked to changes in farming policy and the economy of particular crops and livestock, can potentially lead to changes in the landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape and affect its natural beauty and special qualities, including farmland biodiversity. Changing farming economics, demographics, practices and rural business diversification result in the decline of small mixed farming units and create clusters of land uses which have a detrimental impact upon the landscape such as horse paddocks and ‘gentrification’.

---

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/farming-forestry-and-the-equine-sector-in-the-cotswolds-aonb-november-2015.pdf>

Bringing woodlands back into management is a priority. Lack of management is due to many factors, but especially due to the loss of appropriate markets for woodland products. Woodland planting should consider its impacts on the landscape setting and, in particular, its effects on the open views that people enjoy from viewpoints, roads and Public Rights of Way. Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason principles should be applied when planting trees. For example, the planting of ‘privacy belts’ around property is having a detrimental impact on landscape character and views, particularly from roads. Often inappropriate, fast-growing species are selected and strategies to encourage more appropriate species should be found. In some instances, tree planting that is implemented to mitigate the visual impact of new development can also adversely affect landscape character. Issues relating to landscape character are addressed under Policy CE1 (Landscape). Also, the creation of new woodland should occur where it best meets the objectives of the Nature Recovery Network and it should be appropriately managed. Opportunities for natural regeneration should be looked for in concert with opportunities for planting to assist this process.

Farming, woodland management and other rural land management practices that make a positive contribution to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape have been largely reliant on payments from agri-environment schemes. It is critical that Environmental Land Management Schemes maintain and build on what has been achieved to date. In addition, payments for carbon sequestration, nature recovery and ecosystem services are areas that will grow.

Climate change is likely to result in an increase in crop and grass yields, but with a greater variability in quantity and quality, including crop failure. New management methods and new varieties are likely to be adopted in response to warmer, drier conditions. The area of energy crops and novel crops is likely to increase. The overall area of grassland is not expected to change significantly, but management may become more extensive. With regards to forestry, increased timber and biomass production can be expected, but with a reduction in quality. Some species, such as oak, are expected to fare better than others such as beech. Land management practices, together with Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms, will need to encompass and deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation measures appropriate to the National Landscape. Relevant measures to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, in relation to rural land management, are outlined elsewhere in this Management Plan, notably in policies CC1 and CC2.

#### **POLICY CE9: PROBLEM SPECIES<sup>48</sup>, PESTS AND DISEASES**

1. The population of grey squirrel and deer in the Cotswolds National Landscape should continue to be controlled and managed. This should be undertaken and coordinated at a landscape scale.
2. National guidance - and guidance produced by the Board - on Ash Dieback should be followed to ensure any measures implemented will conserve and enhance the qualities of the landscape.
3. National and local guidance - including guidance from Government Agencies and the Non Native Species Secretariat - on invasive non-native species, pests and diseases should be followed and appropriate biosecurity measures promoted.

---

<sup>48</sup> These species are not addressed in the Biodiversity section as they are not species that we are that we are aiming to conserve and enhance (see Annex 8).



Increasing deer and grey squirrel populations and lack of co-ordinated management is having an adverse impact on the landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape and on the quality of woodland, woodland biodiversity and timber. There is a need for more deer management groups.

There is an increasing prevalence of tree pests and diseases resulting from climate change, increased global trade, travel and the importation of diseased material. In particular, Ash Dieback will have an increasing impact on woodland and trees in the landscape during the life of the Management Plan.

There are a number of invasive non-native species present in the National Landscape that are having a harmful impact, particularly on biodiversity. These include Himalayan Balsam and New Zealand Pygmy Weed in rivers and ponds, and Holm oak and Cotoneaster on species rich grassland. Driven by climate change and globalisation, there is an increasing risk of further plant and animal pests and disease becoming established in the National Landscape and having a harmful impact on landscape, biodiversity and the economy.

## **DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORT**

**OUTCOME 11 - DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORT** : Development and transport schemes positively contribute to the purposes of protected landscape designation and also plays a key role in facilitating the economic and social well-being of local and rural communities.

## **POLICY CE10. DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORT - PRINCIPLES**

1. Development and transport proposals in the CNL and its setting should have regard to – and help to deliver – the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL. In doing so, they should have regard to – and be compatible with the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan and guidance produced by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board, including the:
  - (i) Cotswolds National Landscape - Landscape Strategy and Guidelines;
  - (ii) Cotswolds National Landscape - Landscape Character Assessment;
  - (iii) Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan;
  - (iv) Cotswolds National Landscape Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change;
  - (v) Cotswolds National Landscape Board's Position Statements.
2. Development and transport proposals in the CNL should, have regard to – and help deliver – the purpose of increasing the understanding and enjoyment of the CNL's special qualities. They should also contribute to the economic and social well-being of CNL communities, in a way that is compatible with conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL.
3. Development and transport proposals in the Cotswolds National Landscape and its setting should comply with relevant national planning policy and guidance, particularly with regards to those paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that explicitly relate to AONBs.
4. The purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of the National Landscape's special qualities should be identified as strategic priorities in Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans, Local Transport Plans and other relevant plans and strategies. These plans and strategies should explicitly identify the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan as a material consideration.
5. The cumulative impacts of development proposals on the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape should be fully assessed.
6. A landscape-led approach should be applied to development and transport proposals in the CNL and its setting, proportionate to the type and scale of development being proposed, whereby proposals:
  - a) address the natural beauty of the CNL as primary consideration at all stages of the development process (including design), from initial conception through to implementation;
  - b) address all of the factors that contribute to the natural beauty of the area;
  - c) address access to natural beauty including the character of the public rights of way network and its role within wider green infrastructure.
  - d) reflect and enhance the character of the local area;
  - e) avoid adverse effects where possible and, if adverse effects can't be avoided, minimise them; and
  - f) deliver substantially more beneficial effects than adverse effects for the natural beauty of the CNL.<sup>49</sup>

This landscape-led approach is particularly important for major development<sup>50</sup>.

This policy provides principles relating specifically to development and transport. However, it is important to note that development and transport proposals should have regard to the Management Plan policies as a whole. For example, Policy CE7 (Biodiversity and Nature Recovery, paragraph 4, relating to biodiversity net gain, would be a key consideration in development proposals.

Policy CE10 refers to relevant sections of the National Planning Policy (NPPF) for context, as this national policy underpins much of what Policy CE10 is seeking to achieve. However, Policy CE10 expands on this national policy by referencing relevant case law and best practice.

Planning legislation and policy affords the highest level of protection to AONBs (National Landscapes) in relation to landscape and scenic beauty – the same level of protection as for National Parks. Although some level of development may be required to meet local (National Landscape) housing needs and to ensure that the vitality of National Landscape settlements is maintained and enhanced, development should not be at such scale that either individually or cumulatively, it erodes the special qualities of the National Landscape. This would undermine the reason for the Cotswolds being designated as an AONB (National Landscape) in the first place.

With regards to cumulative impacts, a particularly important consideration is where multiple, separate developments have been implemented or proposed in the same locality. Individually, they might not be particularly significant. However, collectively, their impacts could be significant.

In planning decisions, AONB considerations will need to be weighted in the overall planning balance alongside other relevant considerations. In line with national planning policy, great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape. It is worth noting that case law has clarified that this great weight should also be applied in relation to the impact of development outside an AONBs on views from the AONB. (i.e. development in the setting of the AONB). More information on this issue is provided in the Board’s position statement on Development in the Setting of the Cotswolds AONB.<sup>51</sup>

The factors that contribute to natural beauty include landscape quality / beauty, scenic quality / beauty, relative tranquillity (including dark skies), relative wildness, natural heritage (including biodiversity) and cultural heritage (including historic environment). These factors derive from Natural England’s ‘Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England’<sup>52</sup>. The ‘special qualities’ of the National Landscape are a key component of natural beauty.

Increasing traffic volume and vehicle sizes on the National Landscape’s roads can lead to congestion, noise and air pollution, damage to roadside verges (with consequent drainage and soil erosion issues), reduced safety for non-motorised road users and traffic ‘rat-running’ along minor roads and through villages. Measures to address these issues should be integral considerations in new developments and can include lowering speed limits, the provision of suitably designed speed reduction schemes, the provision of off-road routes for non-motorised users and the provision of appropriate signage. In line with the recommendations in the Board’s Tranquillity Position

---

<sup>49</sup> This was a design principle for the A417 Missing Link Scheme – see Case Study 3 in Appendix 1 of the Board’s Landscape-led Development Position Statement for further details ([link 1](#) – main document; [link 2](#) – appendices).

<sup>50</sup> ‘Major development’, in this context, equates to the definition provided in Footnote 60 of the NPPF ([link](#)). See also Policy CE11.

<sup>51</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2017) *Development in the Setting of the Cotswolds AONB* ([link](#)).

<sup>52</sup> Natural England (2011) *Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England* ([link](#) – see Table 3 and Appendix 1).

Statement, if a development proposal would increase in traffic movements (or HGV movements) by 10% or more, this should, as a ‘rule of thumb’, be considered significant in terms of impact on tranquillity.<sup>53</sup>

The distinctive character of minor roads reflects and contributes to the character of the wider National Landscape and these roads are an important means for people to experience the National Landscape. Insensitive, over-engineered road schemes and excessive lighting can have a detrimental impact. Impacts on landscape character are addressed in Policy CE1 (Landscape).

Further information on what is meant by a landscape-led approach to development is provided in the Board’s ‘Landscape-led Development Position Statement’.<sup>54</sup> Appendix 3 of the Position Statement specifically addresses landscape-led principles for major development.

#### **POLICY CE11: MAJOR DEVELOPMENT**

1. In line with national planning policy, permission should be refused for major development within the CNL, in the context of paragraph 177 of the NPPF, other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.<sup>55</sup>
2. Relevant stakeholders should fully assess relevant site allocations and development proposals to see if they constitute major development. In considering or deciding whether a proposed development constitutes major development, relevant stakeholders should have regard to the major development checklist in Appendix 5 of the Board’s Landscape-led Development Position Statement.<sup>56</sup>
3. Local authorities and other relevant stakeholders should explicitly state whether they consider relevant allocations and development proposals<sup>57</sup> to be major development.
4. The mandatory major development ‘tests’ specified in paragraph 177 of the NPPF should be rigorously applied and documented for all allocations and development proposals that are deemed to be major development.
5. When relevant stakeholders are considering or applying the major development ‘tests’ specified in paragraph 177 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), it should be recognised that:
  - ‘exceptional need’ does not necessarily equate to ‘exceptional circumstances’;<sup>58</sup>
  - no permission should be given for major development save to the extent the development was needed in the public interest, met a need that could not be

<sup>53</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2019) *Tranquillity Position Statement* ([link](#) – see Section 4.5).

<sup>54</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2021) *Landscape-led Development Position Statement* ([link 1](#) – main document; [link 2](#) – appendices).

<sup>55</sup> Paragraph 177 of the NPPF ([link](#)).

<sup>56</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2021) *Landscape-led Development Position Statement* ([link 1](#) – main document; [link 2](#) – appendices).

<sup>57</sup> There are examples of case law where planning permissions have been quashed because the local authority (specifically, the planning committee) did not explicitly address the issue of major development and the related issue of ‘exceptional circumstances’ (e.g. *R (Mevagissey Parish Council) v Cornwall Council* [2013] EHCW3684 (Admin)).

<sup>58</sup> This principle is recognised in relevant case law (*R (Mevagissey Parish Council) v Cornwall Council* [2013] EHCW 3684 (Admin) ([link](#)), paragraph 52): ‘Even if there were an exceptional need ... that would not necessarily equate to exceptional circumstances for a particular development, because there may be alternative sites that are more suitable because development there would result in less harm to the AONB landscape.’

addressed elsewhere or in some other way and met that need in a way that to the extent possible, moderated detrimental effect on the environment, landscape and recreational opportunities.<sup>59</sup>

6. When making decisions on major development proposals, local authorities (and / or other relevant decision makers) should not simply weigh all material considerations in a balance, but should refuse an application unless they meet the exceptional circumstances and public interest criteria.<sup>60</sup>

As with Policy CE10, Policy CE11 refers to relevant sections of the National Planning Policy (NPPF) for context, as this national policy underpins much of what Policy CE11 is seeking to achieve. However, Policy CE11 expands on this national policy by referencing relevant case law and best practice.

Paragraph 177 of the NPPF states that ‘when considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest’. Footnote 60 of the NPPF explains that ‘whether a proposal is ‘major development’ is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined’ (footnote 60). This definition of major development differs from the definition in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015<sup>61</sup> (or ‘DMP’ for short), albeit that DMP definition is still a relevant consideration in relation to footnote 60 of the NPPF.

Paragraph 172 of the NPPF specifically addresses the issue of major development in the context of planning permissions (i.e., as part of the development management process). However, legal opinion has stated that ‘it would arguably amount to an error of law to fail to consider [paragraph 177] at the site allocations stage of plan making ... The consequence of doing so would be to risk allocating land for major development that was undeliverable because it was incapable of meeting the major development test in the NPPF’<sup>62</sup>. As such, it is appropriate to address the issue of major development at the plan-making stage as well as at the development management stage.

The ‘Assessment of Site Allocations Against Major Development Considerations’ undertaken by the South Downs National Park Authority in 2015<sup>63</sup> and 2017<sup>64</sup> as part of their Local Plan process is an excellent case study in this regard.

The major development checklist in the Board’s Landscape-led Development Position Statement is not intended to set rigid criteria. Instead, they are intended to help guide the decision maker (and other stakeholders) through the process of assessing if a proposed development constitutes major development.

---

<sup>59</sup> R (Advearse) v Dorset Council v Hallam Land Management Ltd [2020] EWHC 807 (link). Direct quote from paragraph 35.

<sup>60</sup> R (Mevagissey Parish Council) v Cornwall Council [2013] EHC 3684 (Admin) (link), paragraph 51: ‘The planning committee are required, not simply to weigh all material considerations in a balance, but to refuse an application unless they are satisfied that...’

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/595/contents/made>

<sup>62</sup> Landmark Chambers (2017) *In the matter of the South Downs National Park and in the matter of paragraph 116 of the NPPF* (link – see paragraph 5).

<sup>63</sup> South Downs National Park Authority (2015) *South Downs Local Plan Preferred Options: Assessment of Site Allocations Against Major Development Considerations – Technical Report* (link).

<sup>64</sup> South Downs National Park Authority (2015) *South Downs Local Plan Pre-Submission: Assessment of Site Allocations Against Major Development Considerations – Technical Report* (link).

Due to their scale, major infrastructure and development projects, such as roads or energy developments, are likely to have a more significant impact on the natural beauty of the National Landscape than smaller-scale developments. There is an even stronger need for these projects to be exemplars for how they have regard to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the National Landscape including its special qualities. For example, the construction phases of the A417 Missing Link scheme.

Further guidance regarding major development is provided in Appendix 9 of the Management Plan and in Section 7.3, Appendix 3 and Appendix 5 of the Board's Landscape-led Development Position Statement.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2021) *Landscape-led Development Position Statement* ([link 1](#) – main document; [link 2](#) – appendices)

## **POLICY CE12: DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND EVIDENCE OF NEED**

1. Housing delivery in the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be focussed on meeting affordable housing requirements, particularly housing that is affordable in perpetuity such as social rented housing.<sup>66</sup>
2. When local planning authorities are reviewing their Local Plans, they should give consideration to setting policies for affordable housing provision in the CNL that require:
  - at least 50% affordable housing in market housing developments;
  - 100% affordable housing on Rural Exception Sites, with a lower percentage only being permitted in exceptional circumstances and the absolute minimum being 75%;
  - on-site affordable housing provision for housing developments of five units or fewer.
3. Priority should be given to maintaining and enhancing local community amenities and services and improving access to these amenities and services. Priority should also be given to supporting local employment opportunities<sup>67</sup>.
4. It should be recognised that:
  - (a) The housing need figure derived from the Government's 'standard method' for calculating housing need is an unconstrained assessment of housing need<sup>68</sup> and does not present a target for housing provision<sup>69</sup>.
  - (b) The decision on how many homes should be planned for (i.e., the 'housing requirement' figure in Local Plans) should only be made after consideration of the constraints that the local authority faces, including the AONB designation, and consideration of the land that is actually available for development.<sup>70</sup> As such, when these constraints are factored in, the 'housing requirement' could potentially be smaller than the standard method's 'housing need' figure.
  - (c) The application of national planning policies relating to AONBs may mean that it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs (OAN) in full in local authority areas that overlap with the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL).<sup>71</sup>
  - (d) The CNL is unlikely to be a suitable area for accommodating unmet needs from adjoining, non-designated areas.<sup>72</sup> In the context of the CNL, this includes unmet needs relating to adjacent urban areas and unmet needs arising in local authority areas that do not overlap with the CNL.
  - (e) Meeting housing need is never a reason to cause unacceptable harm to the CNL.<sup>73</sup>
  - (f) The scale and extent of development in the CNL should be limited.<sup>74</sup>
5. Consideration should be given to whether the constraints relating to the AONB designation merit 'exceptional circumstances' which may justify using an alternative approach to the standard method for assessing housing need.<sup>75</sup>
6. When the allocation of sites is being considered in the Local Plan process, regard should be given to the evidence of need specific to: (i) the settlement / parish where the allocation is being proposed; and (ii) the CNL 'sub-area' within which the allocation is being proposed.
7. Within the CNL, windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining, or outside of, built up area boundaries (or equivalent) should only be supported where there is robust evidence of

a specific local housing need such as needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement.

8. Where choice-based lettings systems, such as Homeseeker Plus, are used as part of the evidence base for affordable housing need:<sup>76</sup>

- the 'local connection' component of the choice-based lettings system should be applied consistently; and

data from the choice-based lettings systems should not be used explicitly as a measure of affordable housing need unless the data has been verified and there is a clear local connection to – and preference for – the settlement in question.

9. When local authorities are reviewing their Local Plans, they should give consideration to setting policies that ensure that new market housing is used as a principal residence rather than as a second home or holiday home.

The Cotswolds National Landscape is a living and working landscape in which the social and economic wellbeing of local communities is an important consideration. Maintaining vibrant and thriving local communities is essential to the long-term future of the National Landscape. The provision of housing and services that meets local needs plays an important role in achieving these aspirations. However, these aspirations should be delivered in a way that is compatible with the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

With regards to paragraphs 1 to 3 of Policy CE12, Government guidance recognises that National Parks are not suitable locations for unrestricted housing. Instead, *'the expectation is that new housing will be focussed on meeting affordable housing requirements, supporting local employment opportunities and key services'*. The same guidance requires National Park Authorities to work to *'ensure that ... affordable housing remains so in the longer term'*.<sup>77</sup> AONBs have the same level of

<sup>66</sup> Sections 5.4 and 5.5 of the Board's Housing Position Statement ([link 1](#) – main document; [link 2](#) – appendices) provide additional context on this issue.

<sup>67</sup> Sections 5.4 and 5.5 of the Board's Housing Position Statement ([link 1](#) – main document; [link 2](#) – appendices) provide additional context on this issue.

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>. Paragraph 001.

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-current-planning-system/outcome/government-response-to-the-local-housing-need-proposals-in-changes-to-the-current-planning-system#proposed-changes-to-the-standard-method-for-assessing-local-housing-need..>

<sup>70</sup> See previous footnote. The issue of how constraints should be addressed is also covered in the Government's guidance on Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment ([link](#)). Key extracts from this guidance are provided in Appendix 1 of the Board's Housing Position Statement ([link 1](#) – main document; [link 2](#) – appendices).

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment#landscape>. Paragraph 041.

<sup>72</sup> See previous footnote. Section 5.3 of the Board's Housing Position Statement ([link 1](#) – main document; [link 2](#) – appendices) provides additional context on this issue.

<sup>73</sup> See footnote 2, above.

<sup>74</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) ([link](#)). Paragraph 176.

<sup>75</sup> Paragraph 61 of the NPPF ([link](#)) recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances that justify an alternative approach to the 'standard method', albeit that this alternative approach would still have to reflect current and future demographic trends and market signals.

<sup>76</sup> Sections 5.6 and 5.10 of the Board's Housing Position Statement ([link 1](#) – main document; [link 2](#) – appendices) provide additional context on this issue.

<sup>77</sup> Defra (2010) *English National Parks and the Broads – UK Government Vision and Circular 2010* ([link](#)). Paragraphs 78 and 79.



protection as National Parks, with regards to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty, and the scale and extent of development in both designations should be limited.<sup>78</sup> As such, it is logical to apply the same principles, outlined above for National Parks, in AONBs as well.

The targets in paragraph 2 of the Policy CE12 are based on what the Board would consider to be best practice within other protected landscapes. The Board acknowledges that these aspirations might exceed current policy in Local Plans. However, we consider that they are appropriate targets to aim for in a protected landscape, where the main focus for housing provision should be the provision of affordable housing. We acknowledge that these targets would be subject to viability assessments.

Paragraph 35 of the NPPF states that, in order to be sound, Local Plans should ‘as a minimum, seek to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs’ (OAN). However, Government guidance also states that the application of policies in the NPPF relating to the protection of AONBs ‘*may mean that it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs in full through the plan-making process*’.<sup>79</sup> As such, it should be recognised that, in some circumstances, it might be appropriate for the housing requirement figure identified in development plans (that overlap with AONBs) to be less than the OAN figure.

With regards to paragraph 6 of Policy CE12, the lack of a specific housing need figure, or housing requirement figure, for the AONB ‘sub-area’ within which an allocation is being considered could potentially make the allocation (and the Plan) unsound. This was the case in West Oxfordshire, where the Local Plan inspector concluded that ‘*in the absence of a housing need figure for the Burford – Charlbury sub-area ... the allocation in the plan of housing sites, and the reliance on additional windfall housing development, in the Burford – Charlbury area, over and above existing completions and commitments, would not be sound*’<sup>80</sup>.

The wording of paragraph 7 of Policy CE12 is based on paragraph 5.39 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, which states that: ‘Within the Cotswolds AONB, windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining built up areas ... will only be supported where there is convincing evidence of a specific local housing need such as needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement, for example through a rural exception site’<sup>81</sup>.

There is concern that second home ownership, retirement homes and buy to let have removed housing from the market that could otherwise be made available to first home owners. This results in increased demand within a reduced pool of housing stock, which inflates house prices and makes housing less affordable. The Board is particularly concerned that those who care for the landscape of the National Landscape and other key workers have an opportunity to live within it.

All of these issues. Including relevant case studies, are addressed in more detail in the Board’s Housing Position Statement. The recommendations in the Housing Position Statement are based on government guidance and on best practice in the Cotswolds and other protected landscapes. Many of these recommendations have now been incorporated into Policy CE12, although the Position Statement provides additional, useful context.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) *National Planning Policy Framework* ([link](#)). Paragraph 176.

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment#landscape>. Paragraph 041.

<sup>80</sup> Planning Inspectorate (2018) *Report on the Examination of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031* ([link](#)). Paragraph 219.

<sup>81</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2018) *West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031* ([link](#)).

<sup>82</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2021) *Housing Position Statement* ([link 1](#) – main document; [link 2](#) – appendices)

## **POLICY CE13. WASTE MANAGEMENT AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

1. Waste management should align with the following hierarchy, as set out in the Government's Waste Management Plan 2021:
  - a. Prevention
  - b. Prepare for reuse
  - c. Recycling
  - d. Other recovery
  - e. Disposal
2. Measures that help to deliver a circular, or closed-loop, economy, in which waste generation is avoided, should be encouraged.
3. Proposals for new landfill sites and strategic waste facilities should not normally be permitted in the Cotswolds National Landscape, especially where they involve importing significant amounts of waste into the National landscape (for example, waste generated in neighbouring urban areas).
4. Any waste management facilities that are permitted in the National Landscape should: (i) be sited in such a way that adverse environmental impacts are minimised, in line with relevant permitting regimes; and (ii) be primarily to receive waste that arises within the National Landscape. (Within close proximity to the proposed facility).
5. The management or use of waste by way of depositing it to land as an inert 'recovery' operation, land raising and bunding or for further restoration of previous landfill operations, should only be allowed: (i) in very limited circumstances within environmental limits; (ii) where it can demonstrate a significant net-benefit for the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the National Landscape; and (iii) where it complies with the policies of the relevant Waste Local Plan and relevant environmental regulations.

Communities and businesses within the Cotswolds produce a significant amount of waste which needs to be disposed of in an appropriate and safe manner. In future, efforts must concentrate on minimising waste and dealing with it in close proximity to where it is produced. The reduction of waste should be promoted by supporting policies and plans which result in re-use, reduction and recycling of waste materials and the efficient and effective collection of waste in a manner that will support its management as high up the waste hierarchy as is practicably possible

Proposed activities including development, should proactively support the transition to a circular economy throughout the Cotswold National Landscape. They should apply waste avoidance and reduction practices and adopt procurement strategies that favour the purchase of goods and services, which contribute to closing energy and material loops within supply chains

The significant number of urban areas close to the National Landscape has the potential to create pressure to import waste into the National Landscape, particularly to former quarry locations. This can generate additional lorry traffic within the National Landscape, with associated negative impacts on communities, the rural road network and roadside verges. There are also implications for the groundwater resource due to the permeable nature of limestone.

Infilling with inert waste is sometimes proposed for quarries within the Cotswolds National Landscape. The need for infilling should be minimised by ensuring that a sufficient quantity of by-

product is retained during the quarry operation to enable an appropriate restoration scheme to be achieved. Retrospective infilling may require a considerable number of HGV movements which can adversely affect the tranquillity of the National Landscape and result in unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions. As such, the potential benefits of restoring a former quarry to a more natural landform will need to be weighed in the balance against these potential adverse effects.

## INCREASING UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYMENT

Ensuring access, learning and wellbeing opportunities are for everyone.

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**OUTCOME 12 - HEALTH AND WELLBEING:** The National Landscape plays a full part in improving the nation's health, benefitting the mental and physical wellbeing of those who experience it.

#### **POLICY UE1: HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

1. Opportunities for improving health and wellbeing in the Cotswolds National Landscape should be created, improved and promoted, including, where appropriate, the provision of: green spaces or water within easy reach of communities, walking, cycling and riding routes, including routes for disabled people; opportunities to access and interact with nature; and volunteering and personal development opportunities.
2. Children and young people resident within and around the National Landscape should be provided with environmental education opportunities to experience the Cotswolds National Landscape through direct contact with the natural environment.
3. The health sector should make greater use of the benefits that the National Landscape provides for the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors, for example, by prescribing exercise in the Cotswolds National Landscape countryside.

A lack of physical activity can lead to a variety of chronic diseases and conditions such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease which, combined with an ageing population, is leading to a public health crisis. A lack of access to scenic, wildlife-rich greenspace and other open spaces can also adversely affect mental health. Many people, particularly children and young people, do not readily have opportunities to learn about the environment or to develop an understanding and appreciation of the Cotswolds countryside.

The health and wellbeing benefits of volunteering in the countryside cannot be underestimated. Volunteering helps to improve physical health, and working and walking in the outdoors can also help with a variety of mental health challenges such as social isolation, bereavement and low confidence and self-esteem. The variety of opportunities available across the National Landscape and wider partnership of organisations needs to be more clearly signposted.

There is a need to implement and develop a variety of approaches to address these issues, including the provision of outdoor activities and experiences. There is also a need to promote the link between physical and mental health and enjoying and understanding the special qualities of the National Landscape. This should include encouraging more partnership working between health professionals and other stakeholders to implement measures such as 'green' prescriptions (for

example, prescribing walks in the Cotswolds National Landscape). Where appropriate, links should be developed between these health and wellbeing aspirations and the enhancement of ecological networks and the provision of green infrastructure.

## **ACCESS AND RECREATION**

**OUTCOME 13 - ACCESS AND RECREATION:** The Cotswolds is recognised as a welcoming place, where barriers to access are being removed and everyone feels connected to the landscape.

## **POLICY UE2: ACCESS AND RECREATION**

1. A safe, pleasant, accessible, clearly waymarked and well-connected Public Rights of Way network should be maintained, enhanced and promoted across the Cotswolds National Landscape.
2. Improvements to rights of way must be undertaken in a way that minimises any adverse effects on the natural beauty of the National Landscape and on its special qualities. Innovative ways of providing named routes without introducing additional signage should be explored.
3. Open Access Land and other land including Country Parks, that is open to public access<sup>83</sup> should be maintained, enhanced and promoted across the Cotswolds National Landscape. Where appropriate, more land should be made available for public access.
4. Sustainable funding for National Trails, including the Cotswold Way and Thames Path, should be secured.
5. Visitors, residents and local communities should be provided with opportunities to increase their understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape.
6. A priority for engagement in the National Landscape should be individuals who are not currently enjoying or engaged with the benefits of the landscape. Particularly those from within the National Landscape and from the surrounding urban areas, especially those from areas of high deprivation and those that are not traditional visitors to the Cotswolds.
7. Easily accessible online, downloadable and onsite resources for walking, cycling, horse riding, volunteering and educational activities should be provided in the National Landscape to help promote access to the area and understanding and appreciation of its special qualities.
8. Visitor facilities and routes that are accessible to those of all abilities should be provided.
9. Guided walks and activities for those who are not confident walking in the countryside should be provided to increase confidence and share knowledge of the National Landscape and its special qualities.
10. Arts and cultural experiences should be provided to encourage people to deepen their emotional connection to the landscape and support the engagement of new and existing audiences.
11. The Countryside Code should be promoted to educate visitors and communities to act appropriately in the countryside and to improve understanding between visitors and those living and working in the area.
12. The provision of new, and level of use of existing access and recreational opportunities should not have a significant adverse impact on the Cotswolds National Landscape. Where recreational use is having or is likely to have, an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these impacts. Such steps can include enhanced maintenance and wayfinding, onsite engagement, legal restrictions, and the provision and promotion of access and recreational opportunities in new alternative suitable locations.

13. Where irreconcilable conflicts exist between conservation and public enjoyment in the Cotswolds National Landscape, then conservation interest should take priority.

The use of the term “everyone” within the wording of this outcome is deliberate and is intended to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

The extensive 3000 miles of public rights of way network provides a huge opportunity to enhance public enjoyment and appreciation of the CNL. For some people, due to financial, health or cultural reasons there are barriers to accessing and enjoying this network. These barriers should be broken down and access provision should be adapted and extended where possible to reach the widest demographic and people of all abilities both inside the National Landscape and in the surrounding urban areas. The access offer needs to have a wide geographical spread and offer opportunities for people walking, cycling, horse riding and users of off-road mobility scooters, wheelchairs and pushchairs where appropriate and legal access allows.

The Landscapes Review published by Julian Glover in 2019 challenged Protected Landscapes to do more to welcome people, and to do a lot more to ensure that people from currently underrepresented groups can enjoy the benefits of accessing them too.

Partners including the National Landscape Board, Highway Authorities, Parishes and landowners should work together to improve rights of way furniture, surfacing and facilities for the benefit of everyone.

Digital platforms such as websites and social media should be used, alongside targeted communications in more difficult to reach communities to promote the extensive guided walks and guided walks programme that will appeal to a variety of audiences.

Offering high quality arts and cultural experiences which encourage people to deepen their emotional connection to the landscape will be an important part of how new and existing audiences are engaged in the future. Weaving thought-provoking and inspiring arts and culture activity into access and recreation work has the potential to connect people with nature and the landscape. The Arts in the Landscape strategy, led by the National Association of AONBs, and adopted by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board in 2021 will support this work.

Lack of long-term funding from Natural England for National Trails makes long-term planning, maintenance and promotion more challenging. On-going partnership working with the Cotswold Way Association (CWA) and new National Trails Charity (NTUK) will be key to the long term sustainability of the Trails.

The recreational use of the National Landscape should not be allowed to adversely affect the National Landscape’s special qualities. For example, measures will need to be put in place to minimise and mitigate recreational pressure arising from new developments both inside and outside the National Landscape, especially where these developments are located close to sensitive locations, such as designated nature conservation sites.

The prioritisation of ‘conserving’ over ‘public enjoyment’ is known as the ‘Sandford Principle’, after Lord Sandford, who chaired the National Parks Policy Review Committee between 1974 and 1974.

---

<sup>83</sup> This includes access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (which includes commons) and where public access is permitted on land managed by landowners, non-government organisations and charities such as the National Trust, the Wildlife Trusts and the Woodland Trust.

This principle is embedded in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, in relation to Conservation Boards.<sup>84</sup>

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

**OUTCOME 14 - SUSTAINABLE TOURISM:** Businesses and visitors have a shared commitment to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the National Landscape.

### **POLICY UE3: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

1. Tourism within the Cotswolds National Landscape is delivered and managed in a way that minimises adverse effects on the natural beauty of the National Landscape and the emission of greenhouse gases.
2. Visitors, residents, local businesses and communities should be provided with opportunities to directly contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape and improve access to the area through local individual, community and employee volunteering opportunities.
3. The 'Caring for the Cotswolds' visitor giving scheme will raise awareness of the National Landscape and generate funds from visitors to directly help look after it by supporting projects which conserve habitats and species, look after heritage and landscape, improve access, and help provide education resources encouraging people to understand the landscape and nature better.
4. Visitors should be provided with a variety of accommodation options over a range of prices. The siting and design of visitor accommodation should be compatible with conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape including its special qualities.
5. Air travel arising from the Cotswolds as a destination should be minimised.
6. Existing sustainable and integrated transport initiatives should be supported and new initiatives developed to help facilitate the car free visitor experience.

The natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape is the foundation on which the tourism industry in the Cotswolds is based. This natural beauty is an asset which needs to be managed and maintained. The tourism sector should, therefore, contribute to the conservation and enhancement of this natural beauty. New tourism products that increase the sustainable tourism offer should be encouraged. Further research and evidence are needed to better understand the impacts and patterns of tourism in the National Landscape to ensure it remains sustainable. Updated visitor and tourism survey data would help to underpin Policies UE2 and UE3.

A recent carbon footprint assessment of the National landscape<sup>85</sup> has calculated that each year visitors are responsible for 308,806 tCO<sub>2</sub> whilst in the National Landscape, and 1,134,848 tCO<sub>2</sub> when travelling to and from it. 48% of the second figure is caused by flights. The tourism sector locally

---

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/section/87>

<sup>85</sup> Small World Consulting. A Carbon Footprint Assessment of the Cotswolds National Landscape. 2022 (unpublished)

(accommodation, attractions, food and drink etc) should be moving towards becoming net zero through both how it operates within the National Landscape and by targeting closer audiences.

Though there is generally a significant level of appreciation for the Cotswolds landscape amongst visitors, awareness and understanding of its status as a protected landscape and the implications of this are lacking. This reduces awareness of the need for protection and enhancement of the sense of place and its distinctive features and special qualities.

Limited availability of low-cost accommodation, including camping, can exclude families and those on low incomes from staying in the area, reducing the diversity of visitors. Provision of such accommodation should be compatible with the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

The limited provision of public transport - and limited integration of this provision - restricts the scope for visitors (and residents) without a car to explore the Cotswolds resulting in a heavy reliance on car usage. Transport providers should be supported to increase and promote integrated travel initiatives in order to encourage a car-free visitor experience.

Most of the local authorities across the National Landscape, together with the Board, have joined together to form Cotswolds Tourism, the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for the Cotswolds. However, further collaboration is needed to ensure the entire National Landscape is covered by a proactive and joined-up DMO which works proactively with neighbouring DMOs.



# CHAPTER 8. DELIVERY AND MONITORING

## COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE BOARD DELIVERY

The Board will play an important role in delivering the vision, outcomes and policies of the Management Plan. How the Board will contribute to the delivery of the Management Plan is set out in a three yearly Business Plan Framework which in turn is delivered through an annual work programme. Together these show how the vision, outcomes and policies of the Management Plan are translated into measurable actions for the Board.

### STAKEHOLDER DELIVERY

Although the Board is the body responsible for preparing and publishing the Management Plan and will play an important role in its delivery, the Board doesn't actually own or directly manage any of the land in the National Landscape or its setting. As such, the policies of the Management Plan are also intended to guide the work of other stakeholders in helping to deliver the Management Plan's vision and outcomes.

The detail of how other stakeholders contribute to the delivery of the Management Plan is too complex to cover in this Management Plan, particularly given that the National Landscape cuts across 15 local authority areas. However, the 'Stakeholder Delivery' table in Appendix 5 outlines the key actions that the Board invites specific stakeholders to undertake in order to help deliver the Management Plan. The actions and policies listed in the table are not intended to be exhaustive.

In essence, stakeholders are asked to:

- have regard to the Management Plan, including its vision, outcomes and, perhaps most importantly, its policies;
- incorporate the Management Plan's vision, outcomes and policies into their own plans, policies, proposals, work programmes and decisions, where appropriate.

### MONITORING

The National Landscape Board will monitor and evaluate its contribution to the delivery of the Management Plan through the quarterly and annual review of its work programme. The 'State of the Cotswolds Report' – together with other local and national monitoring and surveys - will contribute to the provision of evidence, which is a crucial part of managing the National Landscape.

Where practicable the Board will monitor the key actions identified in the 'Stakeholder Delivery' table in Appendix 5 and compliance with the 'duty of regard' (see Appendix 4).

The delivery of the Management Plan will be monitored through a suite of monitoring indicators which have been developed for each policy. These are listed in Appendix 6.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1. NATIONAL LANDSCAPE (AONB) DESIGNATION

The Cotswolds National Landscape was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1966 and extended in area in 1990. At 790 square miles, or 2038 square kilometres, it is the largest AONB and the third largest protected landscape in England.

Although AONB remains the legal names of the designation the Board of the Cotswolds Conservation Board decided in June 2020 to use the name National Landscape for the area designated as an AONB and the name Cotswolds National Landscape Board for the Cotswolds Conservation Board.

This plan uses the term National Landscape for the designated area and National Landscape Board for the organisation. It still refers to AONBs when referring to the use of the designation nationally or areas outside of the Cotswolds.

AONBs are landscapes whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them<sup>86</sup>. They have the same landscape status as National Parks.

The statutory purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance their natural beauty<sup>87</sup>. AONBs are designated in law following a prescribed process which includes an objective appraisal of landscape quality, statutory assessments by the national conservation agencies and wide consultation with stakeholders including local landowners, residents and businesses<sup>88</sup>.

Each AONB has been designated by reason of its 'special qualities'. These include the flora, fauna, historical and cultural associations as well as landscape and scenic views, as outlined in Chapter 2 of the Management Plan.

AONBs exist within a legal framework which has been progressively strengthened since the first AONBs came into existence after the Second World War. The primary, or enabling, legislation for the designation of AONBs was the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 subsumed and strengthened the AONB provisions of the 1949 Act. It confirmed the purpose and significance of AONBs, clarified the procedure for their designation, and created a firm legislative basis for their designation, protection and management. The Act also provided for the establishment of Conservation Boards to manage AONBs -see Appendix 3.

Areas of Outstanding National Beauty are part of a family of protected areas recognised and classified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) throughout the world. IUCN recognises AONBs and National Parks in England and Wales as Category V Protected Landscapes – a protected area whose special qualities are the result of the interaction between people and nature. They are managed mainly for landscape protection and recreation.

---

<sup>86</sup> Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) (2015) *Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Landscape Protection and Enhancement Support Scheme (England) 2015 – 17. Application to European Commission*.

<sup>87</sup> Section 82, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

<sup>88</sup> National Association of AONBs (2018) *AONB Management Plan Revision. Specimen text: policy and legal framework*.

## APPENDIX 2. NATURAL BEAUTY

The concept of natural beauty is one of the cornerstones of legislation to protect landscapes in the UK. It has been the basis for the designation of AONBs and National Parks since the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act.

Natural beauty goes well beyond scenic or aesthetic value. It encompasses everything that makes an area distinctive: geology, climate, soil, plants, animals, communities, archaeology, buildings, the people who live in it, past and present, and the perceptions of those who visit it<sup>89</sup>. It is widely accepted that natural beauty is, in part, due to human intervention, such as agriculture<sup>90</sup>.

Natural England has developed a list of natural beauty criteria<sup>91</sup> to be used when assessing landscapes for designation as AONBs or National Parks, as outlined in the table below. It is Natural England's view that the practical application of the natural beauty criteria is identical for National Park and AONB designations, despite there being differences in the degree to which the criterion is clarified in the legislation<sup>92</sup>. So, for example, the extent to which wildlife and cultural heritage are factored into natural beauty assessments by Natural England is the same for both AONBs and National Parks. It is also the Government's formal position that the natural beauty required of an AONB and a National Park are the same<sup>93</sup>.

**Table of factors related to natural beauty<sup>94</sup>**

<b>Landscape quality</b> This is a measure of the physical state or condition of the landscape.
<b>Scenic quality</b> The extent to which the landscape appeals to the senses (primarily, but not only, the visual senses).
<b>Relative wildness</b> The degree to which relatively wild character can be perceived in the landscape makes a particular contribution to sense of place.
<b>Relative tranquillity</b> The degree to which relative tranquillity can be perceived in the landscape.
<b>Natural heritage features</b> The influence of natural heritage on the perception of the natural beauty of the area. Natural heritage includes flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features.
<b>Cultural heritage</b> The influence of cultural heritage on the perception of natural beauty of the area and the degree to which associations with particular people, artists, writers or events in history contribute to such perception.

The list is not intended to be exhaustive and other factors may be relevant in some circumstances. Not all factors will be relevant in every case.

<sup>89</sup> Countryside Agency (2001) *Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans. A guide*. Countryside Agency Publications. West Yorkshire.

<sup>90</sup> Natural England (2011) *Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England*.

<sup>91</sup> See Footnote 36.

<sup>92</sup> See Footnote 36.

<sup>93</sup> See Lords Hansard 20 Mar 2006 (Col 51) and Commons Hansard 13 June 2000 (Col 556W).

<sup>94</sup> Table extracted from the Natural England guidance – see footnote 43.

## APPENDIX 3. COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE BOARD

The Cotswolds Conservation Board ('the Board') was established by Parliamentary Order<sup>95</sup> in 2004. It was renamed as the Cotswolds National Landscape Board for most purposes in June 2020 (although the legal name remains unchanged). It has two statutory purposes<sup>96</sup>:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape.
- To increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

In fulfilling these purposes, the Board has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Landscape<sup>97</sup>.

These purposes and duties are modelled on those of the National Park Authorities. In circumstances where the two purposes are irreconcilable, the Board must give priority to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape<sup>98</sup>.

The Board consists of 37 members, of whom 15 are nominated by local authorities, eight by parish councils and 14 are appointed by government. The Board's work programme is administered by a small team of staff, supported by a network of Cotswold Voluntary Wardens who deliver a programme of practical projects and guided walks across the National Landscape. It is one of only two Conservation Boards in England, the other being the Chilterns Conservation Board.

The Board has a statutory responsibility, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000, to draft and publish the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan and to review it at least every five years. The Board's work programme for how it will contribute to the delivery of the Management Plan is set out in the Board's separate, rolling, three-year Business Plan.

The Board has a series of functions or powers that it shares with the Local Authorities, as specified in the Board's Establishment Order.

As the only organisation with responsibilities for the Cotswolds National Landscape as a whole, the Board produces a variety of publications and guidance. This is to facilitate a consistent and coordinated approach across the whole of the National Landscape, which puts the purpose of National Landscape designation at the heart of plans, proposals, decisions and work programmes affecting the National Landscape.

Board publications that are of particular relevance to the Management Plan – and which are referred to in some of the Management Plan policies and or supporting text - are outlined below:

- **Cotswolds National Landscape - Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)**<sup>99</sup>: The LCA provides an assessment of the character, distinctiveness and qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape. It also identifies and describes the National Landscape's component

---

<sup>95</sup> The Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Establishment of Conservation Board) Order 2004

<sup>96</sup> Section 87, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, as amended by the NERC Act 2006.

<sup>97</sup> Section 87 of the CROW Act specifies that, '*a conservation board ... shall for that purpose [i.e. fostering social and economic well-being] co-operate with local authorities and public bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic or social development within the area of outstanding natural beauty*'.

<sup>98</sup> This prioritisation of conserving and enhancing is known as the 'Sandford Principle', after Lord Sandford, who chaired the National Parks Policy Review Committee between 1971 and 1974.

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/our-landscape/landscape-character-assessment/>

landscape character types (LCTs). It identifies 19 different LCTs in the Cotswolds National Landscape.

- **Cotswolds National Landscape - Landscape Strategy and Guidelines<sup>100</sup>**: The Landscape Strategy and Guidelines provides an overview of the forces for change that are influencing the landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape and outlines a series of landscape and land management strategies to help guide change in a positive and sustainable way. It is intended to help developers, local planning authorities, land managers and other decision makers to make informed decisions about the suitability of proposed development - or other changes - within each of the LCTs.
- **Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan<sup>101</sup>**. The Nature Recovery Plan represents a detailed look at the species and habitats of the Cotswolds and what should be done to enable their recovery and adaptation to climate change. It sets priorities and targets for nature's recovery and describes the measures that can achieve it.
- **Positions Statements<sup>102</sup>**: The Board issues a number of Position Statements, which 'amplify' specific policies in, or add new policies to, the Management Plan. They contain further background information and recommended good practice. They are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- **Cotswolds National landscape Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change<sup>103</sup>**: This document aims to assist a wide range of stakeholders to broaden their understanding of what makes the Cotswolds National Landscape special and different from other parts of the country.
- **The Cotswolds National Landscape Climate Change Strategy<sup>104</sup>** (adopted by the National Landscape Board in February 2022). This summarises our current understanding of the climate change impacts on the Cotswolds and what stakeholders can do to both adapt to and mitigate these impacts.

---

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/our-landscape/landscape-strategy-guidelines/>

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/looking-after/cotswolds-nature-recovery-plan/>

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/our-landscape/position-statements-2/>

<sup>103</sup> Cotswolds Conservation Board (2003) *Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change*. Produced by Latham Architects for the Cotswolds AONB Partnership.

<sup>104</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CNL-Climate-Change-Strategy-Adopted-Feb-2022.pdf>

## APPENDIX 4. THE ‘DUTY OF REGARD’

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 duty is known as the ‘duty of regard’ (or the ‘duty to have regard’). It is the equivalent of Section 96 of the Environment Act 1995, which provides for a duty of regard in National Parks.

In this context, ‘relevant authority’ includes any:

- Minister of the Crown;
- public body;
- statutory undertaker;
- person holding public office.

Guidance on the duty of regard, published by Defra in 2005, provides an indicative - but not exhaustive - list of relevant authorities<sup>105</sup>.

The duty of regard is intended to ensure that the purpose for which an AONB has been designated (i.e. to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB) is recognised as an essential consideration in any decisions or activities that impact on the AONB, with the expectation that adverse impacts will be avoided or mitigated where possible<sup>106</sup>. Relevant authorities will also be expected to have regard to this purpose where activities outside the boundaries of an AONB may have an impact within the AONB<sup>107</sup>.

The use of the word ‘duty’ in the legislation means that having regard to AONB purposes is something all ‘relevant authorities’ must do: it is not discretionary. This point is reinforced by use of the word ‘shall’ rather than, for example, ‘may’<sup>108</sup>.

Relevant authorities are expected to be able to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the duty of regard. Where their decisions may affect AONBs, they should be able to clearly show how they have considered the purpose of AONB designation in their decision making. The Defra guidance, together with guidance published by Natural England<sup>109</sup>, considers it to be good practice for the relevant authority to:

- **consider the duty of regard at several points** in any decision-making process or activities, including during initial thinking, at more detailed planning stages, and at implementation;
- **provide written evidence** that they have had regard and considered whether it is, or is not, relevant;
- **undertake and make publicly available an assessment** of any policy, plan, programme or project which is likely to affect land within these areas;

---

<sup>105</sup> Defra (2005) *Duties on relevant authorities to have regard to the purposes of National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads*. Defra Publications. London

<sup>106</sup> Natural England (2010) *England’s statutory designated landscapes: a practical guide to your duty of regard*.

<sup>107</sup> See Footnote 48.

<sup>108</sup> See Footnote 48.

<sup>109</sup> See Footnote 48.

- ensure that decisions affecting these areas are **properly considered and recorded** in high level policy documents and public statements;
- **set out the actions they have taken to comply** and any examples of good practice;
- **make reference to the duty of regard** in their annual reports and/or other appropriate monitoring documents.

Relevant authorities are encouraged to follow this best practice guidance when seeking to fulfil their statutory duty of regard.

In line with the Defra and Natural England guidance on the duty of regard, the Board will monitor compliance with the duty of regard. For example, with regards to planning, we will monitor whether planning decisions have addressed relevant considerations. Where appropriate, we will liaise with relevant local planning authorities to help resolve any issues.

On a related point, it is worth noting that 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 area of outstanding natural beauty has power ... to take all such action 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.*

There are many opportunities for relevant authorities and other organisations to take a proactive approach to supporting the purpose of AONB designation and management of the AONB. As stated in the Defra guidance, the duty of regard provides an *'opportunity for all relevant authorities to show their commitment to conserving and enhancing our finest landscapes, to which end clear public expressions of this commitment would be helpful to all'*.

## APPENDIX 5. STAKEHOLDER DELIVERY – PRIORITY ACTIONS

### National Landscape Board Delivery

How the National Landscape Board will contribute to the delivery of the Management Plan is set out in a three yearly Business Plan Framework which in turn is delivered through an annual work programme.

### Recommended Stakeholder Actions

Every individual and organisation with an interest in the National Landscape can help make this plan’s vision and outcomes a reality by contributing its delivery. Many of these stakeholders already make a significant contribution to delivery. This ‘Stakeholder Delivery’ table provides an indication of the key measures that the Board invites specific stakeholders to undertake in order to help deliver this plan.

Stakeholder	Key measure (i.e. ‘if you do nothing else to support the implementation of the Management Plan, please do this’)	Most relevant policies
<b>All stakeholders</b>	Have regard to the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan and other National Landscape guidance. This should include helping to deliver the vision, outcomes and policies of the National Landscape Management Plan by: (i) addressing them – and, where appropriate, adopting them - in relevant plans, policies, proposals, work programmes, decisions and actions; and (ii) recognising them as priorities for investment.	CC3, CE1, CE3, CE8, CE10
<b>All ‘relevant authorities’<sup>110</sup></b>	Comply with Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (the ‘duty of regard’) and have regard to the supporting guidance published by Defra and Natural England.	CC7
<b>Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)</b>	Ensure that the Government’s response to the Landscapes Review published in 2019, enhances the level of protection afforded to AONBs and champions their value to the nation.	CC6, CE10
	Following the Government’s review of protected landscapes, publish new guidance on protected landscapes <sup>111</sup> , reinforcing the role and purpose of our protected landscape family.	CC6, CE1, CE8, CE10
	Review the Government’s guidance on ‘the duty of regard’ to make the duty more robust.	CC7
	Ensure that Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms contain measures appropriate for the Cotswolds National Landscape.	CE8
<b>Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities</b>	Publish new guidance, to accompany the National Planning Policy Framework, which clarifies and explains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the meaning of ‘highest status of protection’;</li> <li>• that development in AONBs should be limited;</li> <li>• what the development priorities should be for AONBs (i.e. affordable housing and improvement of services);</li> </ul>	CC6, CE10, CE11, CE12

<sup>110</sup> As defined in Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which is explained in Appendix 4. Includes all public bodies and statutory undertakers.

<sup>111</sup> For example, an updated version of ‘*English National Parks and the Broads. UK Government Vision and Circular 2010*’ (Defra, 2010), but which would also address NATIONAL LANDSCAPES.



Stakeholder	Key measure (i.e. 'if you do nothing else to support the implementation of the Management Plan, please do this')	Most relevant policies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances' and 'in the public interest', in the context of major development.</li> </ul>	
<b>Natural England</b>	Support the establishment and delivery of Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms specifically for the Cotswolds National Landscape.	CE8
	Provide funding for National Trails through three-year rolling funding streams, and provide cohesive national co-ordination for the long term.	UE2
	Ensure that Natura 2000 sites, National Nature Reserves and SSSIs are brought into good condition.	CE7
<b>Forestry Commission</b>	Develop and support land management and rural development support mechanisms appropriate for the Cotswolds National Landscape.	CE8, CE7
	Ensure that publicly funded woodland creation schemes reflect Cotswolds National Landscape Board guidance including the Landscape Strategy and Guidelines and the Nature Recovery Plan.	CE1, CE7
<b>Environment Agency</b>	Support the delivery of the Cotswold Nature Recovery Plan and the River Valleys Nature Improvement Area, for example, through appropriate policies and actions in River Basin and Catchment Management Plans.	CE7
	Lead on the delivery of actions to implement the Water Framework Directive.	CC5
<b>Historic England</b>	Facilitate greater access to the Cotswolds National Landscape Historic Landscape Character Assessment and Historic Environment Records.	CE6
	Work with other stakeholders to enhance the interpretation of core properties and scheduled ancient monuments.	CE6
	Support measures to ensure that scheduled ancient monuments are brought into good condition.	CE6
<b>Health and Wellbeing Boards</b>	Commission health walks and conservation activity as an adjunct or alternative to normal prescription treatment.	UE1
	Invest in programmes to help deprived communities, within the Cotswolds National Landscape and surrounding areas, overcome barriers preventing them from realising the mental and physical health benefits of enjoying the National Landscape.	UE2
<b>Local Enterprise Partnerships</b>	Support the development of funding mechanisms that leverage private finance to provide for payments for ecosystem services.	CE8, CE10, CE1, UE3
<b>Local Authorities</b>	Endorse the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan.	
	Recognise the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan as a material consideration in Local Plans and in planning decisions.	CE10
	Include a policy specifically about the Cotswolds National Landscape in Local Plans, which specifies how the purpose of National Landscape designation will be achieved in the Local Plan area.	CE10

Stakeholder	Key measure (i.e. 'if you do nothing else to support the implementation of the Management Plan, please do this')	Most relevant policies
	Ensure that Local Nature Recovery Strategies take account of the outcomes, priorities and measures of the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan.	CE7
	Prioritise the provision of affordable housing to meet identified local needs arising from within the National Landscape.	CE12
	Maintain and enhance public access, roads, public transport and countryside management, in line with the policies of the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan.	UE2, CE10, UE3, CE1, CE6, CE7, CE8
<b>Town and Parish Councils and Parish Meetings</b>	Use the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan and Landscape Strategy and Guidelines to inform Neighbourhood Plans, Parish Plans and Village Design Statements and when considering planning applications.	CC6, CC7, CE10, CE12
	Celebrate and promote the fact that the town or parish lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• utilising National Landscape boundary markers;</li> <li>• incorporating 'within the Cotswolds National Landscape' text in village or town entry signs;</li> <li>• providing information about the Cotswolds National Landscape on information panels and displays in the town or parish.</li> </ul>	UE2
<b>Conservation organisations</b>	Help to halt and reverse declines in priority habitats and species.	CE7
	Help to establish and manage coherent and resilient nature recovery networks that join up across the National Landscape as outlined in the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan.	CE7
<b>Historic environment and cultural heritage organisations</b>	Support the conservation, enhancement, promotion and monitoring of the historical environment and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds National Landscape.	CE6
<b>Farmers, landowners, land managers and related organisations</b>	Use the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan and guidance published by the Cotswolds Conservation Board, including the Landscape Strategy and Guidelines and Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan, to inform investment, development, and land management decisions and actions.	All
	Ensure that environmental land management and rural development support mechanisms support the Cotswolds National Landscape's policies and guidance.	CE8
<b>Tourism organisations and tourism providers</b>	Support the development of and contribute to the Caring for the Cotswolds visitor giving scheme.	UE3
	Support a coordinated approach to tourism across the whole of the Cotswolds, including the implementation of the Cotswolds Destination Management Plan (published in 2014).	CC6, UE2, UE3
<b>Geology Trusts</b>	Support the conservation and enhancement of geological and geomorphological features in the Cotswolds National Landscape.	CE2
	Support the increased understanding and awareness of geological and geomorphological features in the Cotswolds National Landscape.	CE2

Stakeholder	Key measure (i.e. 'if you do nothing else to support the implementation of the Management Plan, please do this')	Most relevant policies
<b>Developers and infrastructure providers (including utilities, rail and highways)</b>	Avoid adverse impacts on the Cotswolds National Landscape resulting from development and infrastructure provision. Mitigate unavoidable impacts and, as a last resort, compensate for impacts that cannot be mitigated on site, for example, by enhancing visual amenity.	CE1, CE10
	Ensure that any major infrastructure projects that are permitted in the Cotswolds National Landscape are 'landscape-led' <sup>112</sup> .	CE11

---

<sup>112</sup> See Policy CE11, paragraph 2, for more details on what 'landscape-led' means in this context.

# APPENDIX 6. MONITORING INDICATORS

## MANAGEMENT PLAN OUTCOMES AND POLICIES

### CROSS CUTTING

#### Climate Action (Outcome 1)

##### Policy CC1 – Climate Change Mitigation

- Indicator 1: Total output from new renewable energy schemes permitted in the Cotswolds National Landscape.
- Indicator 2: Endorsement by the National Landscape Board and adoption by partners of a path to Net Zero emissions for the National Landscape (or better) by 2050 (or sooner), including clear, measurable targets.
- Indicator 3: Extent of tree canopy and woodland cover (Ha)

##### Policy CC2 - Climate Change Adaptation

- Indicator 4: Research into the predicted impacts of climate change on the Cotswolds National Landscape.

#### Natural and Cultural Capital (Outcome 2)

##### Policy CC3 – Natural and Cultural Capital Principles

- Indicator 5: Extent to which the natural and cultural capital of the Cotswolds National Landscape has been assessed and evaluated.

##### Policy CC4 – Soils

- Indicator 6: Area of land under agri-environment/Environmental Land Management schemes for soil management.

##### Policy CC5 - Water

- Indicator 7: % of water bodies achieving 'good' ecological status.

#### Working Together (Outcome 3)

##### Policy CC6 - Developing a Consistent Coordinated and Landscape-led Approach

- Indicator 8: % of respondents 'highly valuing' the Cotswold National Landscape in residents & visitor surveys.

##### Policy CC7 – Compliance with Section 85 of the CRoW Act

- Indicator 9: % of planning decisions that demonstrably have regard to the purpose of National Landscape designation.
- Indicator 10: % of planning decisions that are made in line with CNL Board recommendations.

##### Policy CC8 - Working Together (see Indicator 8)

## **CONSERVING AND ENHANCING**

### **Landscape (Outcome 4)**

#### Policy CE1 – Landscape

- Indicator 11: Changes to landscape character identified through fixed-point photography.

#### Policy CE2 – Geology

- Indicator 12: Condition of designated geological sites.

### **Local Distinctiveness (Outcome 5)**

#### Policy CE3 – Local Distinctiveness

- Indicator 13: Publication of development design guidance.

### **Tranquillity (Outcome 6)**

#### Policy CE4 – Tranquillity

- Indicator 14: % of National Landscape recorded as 'most tranquil'.

### **Dark Skies (Outcome 7)**

#### Policy CE5 – Dark Skies

- Indicator 15: % of National Landscape affected by light pollution.

### **Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage (Outcome 8)**

#### Policy CE6 – Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage

- Indicator 16: Area of land under agri-environment/Environmental Land Management schemes for the management and protection of archaeological features.
- Indicator 17: Number of sites identified as Heritage at Risk.

### **Biodiversity and Nature Recovery (Outcome 9)**

#### Policy CE7 – Biodiversity and Nature Recovery

- Indicator 18: SSSI condition.
- Indicator 19: % of area of priority habitats managed under agri-environment/Environmental Land Management schemes.
- Indicator 20: Extent of wildlife rich habitat (Ha) created or restored outside of protected sites.
- Indicator 20: Extent of habitats (Ha) within a nature recovery network

### **Rural Land Management (Outcome 10)**

#### Policy CE8 – Rural Land Management

- Indicator 21: % of land (including woodland) managed under agri-environment/Environmental Land Management schemes.
- Indicator 22: Establishment of a Cotswolds-specific package of Environmental Land Management and rural support payments.

#### Policy CE9 – Problem Species, Pests and Diseases

- Indicator 23: Extent of tree pests and diseases.

### **Development and Transport (Outcome 11)**

#### Policy CE10 – Development and Transport Principles

- Indicator 24: Number of adopted Local Plans with policy-level reference to the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan.

#### Policy CE11 – Major Development

- Indicator 25: Number of major developments permitted by local planning authorities.

#### Policy CE12 – Development Priorities and Evidence of Need

- Indicator 26: Number of new housing units permitted.

#### Policy CE13 – Waste Management and the Circular Economy

- Indicator 27: Number of landfill and strategic waste management sites permitted.

## **UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYMENT**

### **Health and Well-being (Outcome 12)**

#### Policy UE1 – Health and Wellbeing

- Indicator 28: Number of educational projects run by the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens.

### **Access and Recreation (Outcome 13)**

#### Policy UE2 – Access and Recreation (see also Indicator 8):

- Indicator 29: Number of improvements made to the Public Rights of Way network by the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens.
- Indicator 30: Downloads of walking and exploring resources from the Cotswolds National Landscape Board website.

### **Sustainable Tourism (Outcome 14)**

#### Policy UE3– Sustainable Tourism

- Indicator 31: Number of businesses that are signed up to the Caring for the Cotswolds visitor giving scheme.
- Indicator 32: Income generated through the Caring for the Cotswolds visitor giving scheme.

## APPENDIX 7. PRIORITY HABITATS AND SPECIES

This list of priority habitats and species for the Cotswolds National Landscape is adapted from Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, which lists the habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The habitats and species listed below are considered to be: (i) characteristic of the Cotswolds; and / or (ii) those for which the Cotswolds National Landscape is considered to be a stronghold of those particular habitats or species. There are other priority habitats and species within the National Landscape, which merit an appropriate level of protection, but which do not meet the two criteria outlined above. Habitats and species with an asterisk (\*) are not on the NERC Act list but have been identified, by the National Landscape Board and relevant stakeholders, as priorities for the Cotswolds National Landscape.

### HABITATS

Lowland mixed deciduous woodland  
Lowland beech and yew woodland  
Wood pasture, parkland, veteran trees and large areas of tree, scrub and grassland mosaic.  
Lowland wildflower rich calcareous and neutral grasslands  
Flushes, streams and rivers  
Arable field margins important for birds and plant species  
Hedgerows  
Common box woodland  
Areas important for bats ('batscapes') \*  
H7720 petrifying springs with tufa formation (Crataneurion)\*

### SPECIES

Farmland birds, such as skylark, lapwing and corn bunting  
Pasqueflower  
Pearl-bordered fritillary  
Arable plants  
Juniper  
Cotswold pennycress  
Bats  
Dormouse  
Water vole  
Brown hare  
Limestone grassland butterflies  
Marsh fritillary  
Violet click beetle  
White clawed crayfish  
Native brown trout  
Bath asparagus\*  
Common box\*  
Rockrose pot beetle  
Rugged oil beetle  
Ancient woodland ground flora, such as helleborines and angular Solomon seal.  
Ancient grassland flora such as musk and fly orchid.

# APPENDIX 8. WHY BIODIVERSITY IS AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN THE COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

## Introduction

This appendix sets out why biodiversity is an important consideration in the Cotswolds National Landscape (including why a higher biodiversity net gain requirement would be appropriate in the Cotswolds National Landscape, compared to neighbouring, non-designated areas).

## Statutory purposes, duties and powers

The Cotswolds National Landscape is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The statutory purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of these areas.<sup>113</sup> Local authorities and other ‘relevant authorities’ have a statutory duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of AONBs.<sup>114</sup> Local authorities also have the statutory power to take action to accomplish this purpose.<sup>115</sup>

## Link between natural beauty and biodiversity

Natural heritage (including biodiversity) is one of the factors that contributes to the natural beauty of AONBs.<sup>116</sup> As such, the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is an important consideration when having regard to the purpose of AONB designation.

Paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that ‘*the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in [AONBs]*’.<sup>117</sup>

## Landscapes Review, Government response and ‘30 by 30’

The Government-commissioned Landscapes Review Final Report<sup>118</sup> proposes that:

- national landscapes<sup>119</sup> should form the backbone of Nature Recovery Networks - joining things up within and beyond their boundaries;<sup>120</sup>
- national landscapes should have a renewed mission to recover and enhance nature;<sup>121</sup>
- there should be stronger purposes in law for our national landscapes, including ‘recover, conserve and enhance ... biodiversity’;
- strengthened [AONB] Management Plans should set clear priorities and actions for nature recovery.<sup>122</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> Section 82 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 ([link](#)).

<sup>114</sup> Section 85 of the CROW Act 2000 ([link](#)). Further information on the ‘duty of regard’ is provided in Appendix 4 of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023 ([link](#)) and in guidance published by Defra ([link](#)) and Natural England ([link](#)).

<sup>115</sup> Section 84 of the CROW Act 2000 ([link](#)).

<sup>116</sup> Natural England (2011) *Guidance for assessing landscapes for designations as National Park or AONB in England* ([link](#)). Table 3, page 13, and Appendix 1, page 25.

<sup>117</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) *National Planning Policy Framework* ([link](#)). Paragraph 176, page 50.

<sup>118</sup> Defra (2019) *Landscapes Review Final Report* ([link](#)).

<sup>119</sup> The phrase ‘national landscapes’ relates to AONBs and national parks.

<sup>120</sup> Proposal 4, page 52.

<sup>121</sup> Proposal 1, page 36.

<sup>122</sup> Proposal 3, page 43.



The Government's response<sup>123</sup> to the Landscapes Review Final Report states that:

- Working with ... AONBs in the coming years, we will ensure our protected landscapes boost biodiversity.<sup>124</sup>
- Our vision for protected landscapes is a coherent national network of ... nature-rich spaces ... Protected landscapes will drive forward nature recovery.<sup>125</sup>
- The Prime Minister has committed to protect 30% of UK land for nature by 2030 (30 by 30)<sup>126</sup> ... Achieving 30 by 30 will rely on improvements in how these areas are protected and managed for nature recovery.<sup>127</sup>
- We will put our protected landscapes at the heart of delivering our nature recovery ... policies.<sup>128</sup>
- Given their spatial scale, and track records in planning and delivering landscape-scale restoration projects, protected landscapes could play a particularly important role in the delivery of the Nature Recovery Network.<sup>129</sup>
- We will explore ways for protected landscapes to support responsible authorities in preparing [Local Nature Recovery Strategies].<sup>130</sup>
- By strengthening the first purpose [of protected landscape designation] for nature ... we will ensure these areas can contribute to this ambitious commitment for biodiversity and our wider nature recovery ambitions.<sup>131</sup>
- We will strengthen this purpose [to 'conserve and enhance'], making it clear that we need to actively recover nature in these areas, rather than simply conserve what remains.<sup>132</sup>
- A core function of protected landscapes should be to drive nature recovery.<sup>133</sup>

The British Ecological Society (BES)<sup>134</sup> and Wildlife and Countryside Link (WCL)<sup>135</sup> has both published reports on the Government's '30 by 30' aspiration. Both reports recognise the important role that protected landscapes should play in achieving this. However, they state that, until significant reform is delivered, protected landscapes should not automatically be included in the 30 by 30 target. Both reports make similar recommendations to the Landscape Review in this regard.

The executive summary of the BES report<sup>136</sup> sets out the following criteria that should be used to determine and inform what a site (or protected landscape) must achieve to be counted towards 30 by 30:

---

<sup>123</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response>

<sup>124</sup> Landscapes review: government response ([link](#)). Foreword.

<sup>125</sup> Landscapes review: government response ([link](#)). Introduction.

<sup>126</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-commits-to-protect-30-of-uk-land-in-boost-for-biodiversity>.

This press release implies that the 30% figure includes the entirety of AONBs: '*Existing National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other protected areas already comprise approximately 26% of land in England. An additional 4% ... will be protected to support the recovery of nature*'. However, the Government's response to the Landscapes Review states that '*at present, under their current statutory purposes, level of protection and management, protected landscapes cannot be said to contribute towards 30 by 30 in their entirety*'.

<sup>127</sup> Landscapes review: government response ([link](#)). Since the publication of the review - nature and climate.

<sup>128</sup> Landscapes review: government response ([link](#)). Chapter 2: Nature and climate.

<sup>129</sup> Landscapes review: government response ([link](#)). The Nature Recovery Network and 30 by 30.

<sup>130</sup> Landscapes review: government response ([link](#)). The Nature Recovery Network and 30 by 30.

<sup>131</sup> Landscapes review: government response ([link](#)). The Nature Recovery Network and 30 by 30.

<sup>132</sup> Landscapes review: government response ([link](#)). A stronger mission for nature recovery.

<sup>133</sup> Landscapes review: government response ([link](#)). A stronger mission for nature recovery.

<sup>134</sup> British Ecological Society (2022) *Protected Landscapes and Nature Recovery*. ([Link](#)).

<sup>135</sup> Wildlife & Countryside Link (2021) *Achieving 30x30 in England on land and at sea*. ([Link](#)).

<sup>136</sup> British Ecological Society (2022). *Protected Landscapes and Nature Recovery – Executive Summary*. ([Link](#)).

1. Long term biodiversity protection against internal and external pressures.
2. Improves ecological resilience.
3. Effective management and monitoring.
4. Effective governance and engagement of local communities.

### **Colchester Declaration**

The ‘Colchester Declaration’ is a formal commitment by the family of AONBs, under the umbrella of the National Association of AONBs (NAAONB), to redress declines in species and habitats within the context of a wider response to climate change.

The commitments include that, by 2030:

- At least 200,000ha of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in AONBs will be in favourable condition.
- At least 100,000ha of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites will have been created / restored in AONBs.
- At least 36,000ha of new woodland will have been planted or allowed to regenerate in AONBs following the principle of the right tree in the right place.

### **Considerations specific to the Cotswolds National Landscape**

Two of the ‘special qualities’ of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL)<sup>137</sup> are the:

- Flower-rich grasslands particularly limestone grasslands;
- Ancient broadleaved woodland particularly along the crest of the escarpment.

The special qualities of the CNL are those aspects of the area’s natural beauty which make the area distinctive and which are valuable, especially at a national scale. They are the key attributes on which the priorities for the area’s conservation, enhancement and management should be based.

In the 1930s, 40% of the CNL was covered in wildflower-rich grasslands. Sadly, agricultural intensification and changing land management practices have led to the loss of almost all of this wildflower grassland ... less than 1.5% remains.<sup>138</sup>

In 2019, the CNL Board published the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan (CNRP)<sup>139</sup> which identifies that in order to form a robust nature recovery network, the extent of wildlife rich habitats within the CNL needs to expand from 48,000ha (23% of the CNL area) to 82,000ha<sup>140</sup> (40% of the CNL area), with the target being to achieve this by 2050. This is consistent with the current scientific evidence<sup>141</sup>

The highest priority habitats in the CNRP are:

- veteran trees;
- ancient woodland;

---

<sup>137</sup> Chapter 2 of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023 provides a full list of the area’s special qualities.

<sup>138</sup> <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/looking-after/our-grasslands-projects/glorious-cotswolds-grasslands/#:~:text=Sadly%2C%20agricultural%20intensification%20and%20changing,be%20managed%20to%20be%20maintained.>

<sup>139</sup> Cotswolds Conservation Board (2021) *Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan* ([link](#)).

<sup>140</sup> The figure rises to over 103,000ha if arable fields containing environmental measures are included.

<sup>141</sup> Defining and delivering resilient ecological networks: Nature Conservation in England. Isaac. N.J. et al 2017. *Journal of Applied Ecology*

- ancient, unimproved, limestone grassland.

The CNRP states that achieving this target will require a farmer and land manager led approach to nature recovery, for example, through Environmental Land Management Schemes and Payment for Ecosystems. Biodiversity Net Gain mechanisms will also play an important role. It is also intended that the CNRP will feed into the forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

## APPENDIX 9. MAJOR DEVELOPMENT

Footnote 55 of the NPPF clarifies that:

- *‘For the purposes of paragraphs 172 [relating to protected landscapes, including AONBs] and 173 [relating to Heritage Coasts], whether a development is ‘major development’ is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined’.*

As such, it is not possible or appropriate to apply a blanket definition for what should be treated as major development in the Cotswolds National Landscape. Nevertheless, there are some key factors that help to define if a development is major, as outlined below.

The purpose for which the Cotswolds AONB has been designated is to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. Therefore, the judgement as to whether or not a development is major development depends, to a large degree, on whether or not the development could have a significant adverse impact on the natural beauty of the National Landscape. As outlined in Appendix 2, natural beauty incorporates a number of criteria, including landscape quality, scenic quality, tranquillity, natural heritage and cultural heritage. Within the context of the Cotswolds National Landscape, those aspects of the National Landscape’s natural beauty which make the area distinctive and which are particularly valuable – the National Landscape’s ‘special qualities’ - are listed in Chapter 2.

On this basis, a development should be considered ‘major’ if, by reason of its nature, scale and / or setting, it could have a significant adverse impact on any of the above criteria, including the National Landscape’s ‘special qualities’. As well as potential impacts within the National Landscape, consideration should also be given to impacts on these criteria within the setting of the National Landscape, particularly in the context of visual impact (i.e. views into and out of the National Landscape) and impacts on tranquillity.

As outlined in paragraph 172 of the NPPF, applications for such development should include an assessment of:

- a. *‘the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy’;*

The Board would expect any such development proposal be accompanied by a statement of need in the context of national considerations and, ideally, in the context of needs arising from within the National Landscape. The impacts of permitting or refusing the development should be clearly identified, including the social, economic and environmental impacts, with specific reference to the impacts upon the natural beauty, special qualities of the National Landscape, and the economic and social needs (including housing needs) of the local communities affected. Such a statement should be based upon objective assessment and clear evidence.

- b. *‘the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way’;*

The Board would encourage any such development proposal to be accompanied by a report setting out a sequential approach to site selection. This should evidence the extent to which alternative sites have been assessed before the selection of sites within the National Landscape, and clearly identify why sites outside of the designated area could not be developed. The report should also identify and

evidence why the need for the development could not be met in some other way. The report should include relevant evidence of the cost of developing outside of the National Landscape.

*c. 'any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated'.*

The Board would expect any such development proposal to be accompanied by a report identifying any detrimental effects upon the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities. Such a report should relate directly to the special qualities of the National Landscape as a whole as well as those specific to the development site.

Any mitigation identified to moderate these impacts should be:

- clearly detailed, in line with the duty to conserve and enhance the National Landscape,
- be compatible with the objectives of the National Landscape Management Plan, and
- be capable of realisation through robust planning conditions or obligation.