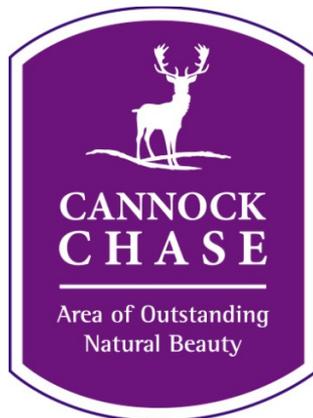


Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Draft Management Plan 2014-19

**Text only document for
consultation**

**Friday 20th December 2013 –
Friday 28th February 2014**



4 Draft text Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2014-19

Ministerial Foreword

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are some of our finest landscapes. They are cherished by residents and visitors alike and allow millions of people from all walks of life to understand and connect with nature.

I am pleased to see that this management plan demonstrates how AONB Partnerships can continue to protect these precious environments despite the significant challenges they face. With a changing climate, the increasing demands of a growing population and in difficult economic times, I believe AONBs represent just the sort of community driven, collaborative approach needed to ensure our natural environment is maintained for generations to come.

AONB Partnerships have been the architects of a landscape-scale approach to land management. This approach is a key feature of the Government's Natural Environment White Paper and emphasises the need to manage ecosystems in an integrated fashion, linking goals on wildlife, water, soil and landscape, and working at a scale that respects natural systems.

This management plan also makes the important connection between people and nature. I am pleased to hear that local communities have been central to the development of the plan, and will be at the heart of its delivery. From volunteers on nature conservation projects, to businesses working to promote sustainable tourism, it's great to hear of the enthusiasm and commitment of the local people who hold their AONBs so dear.

AONBs are, and will continue to be, landscapes of change. Management plans such as this are vital in ensuring these changes are for the better. I would like to thank all those who were involved in bringing this plan together and I wish you every success in bringing it to fruition.

Lord de Mauley
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for natural environment and science

Chairman's Foreword

The Minister has expressed very well our task for the next five years. Here in Cannock Chase AONB, our local community is crucial to supporting the Joint Committee in assessing our previous performance and the shaping of this Management Plan. They bring our work to account. Without their passionate ownership and dedicated involvement, the delivery of the Management Plan would not work.

We have some particular challenges to face here in Cannock Chase in the coming years. With the number of visitors increasing and our offer of high levels of access within the AONB, we will need to balance their enjoyment of the place with its conservation and enhancement very carefully. It will be challenging but with the support of all those who have helped form the Management Plan, I am sure we will succeed.

The period of this Management Plan will take in the 60th anniversary of the designation of our AONB. All around, times, finances and support are changing but the AONB's survival and enduring benefits to all are what makes the designation so important. The faces of the Joint Committee will change throughout this Plan's period but the commitments to delivery and success will not. The AONB will continue to thrive because people mix with this special landscape to create a very strong sense of place.

I look forward to seeing this Management Plan delivered to the highest levels of quality.

Cllr Frances Beatty MBE
Chairman of the Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

Introduction

The Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a legal designation under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW). It places responsibility upon public bodies to “have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty”. This task is undertaken by a legally established partnership, the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership, led by a Joint Committee of local authorities in whose area the AONB falls.

Cannock Chase is one of 46 designated AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Their collective qualities, alongside those of National Parks, make up the finest countryside nationally.

The Cannock Chase AONB Partnership is responsible for fulfilling the statutory duties under CROW. The Partnership has a duty to prepare and review a Management Plan at least every five years. Members of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership, local communities, local and national government organisations and other interested people have been involved in reviewing the progress of the previous Management Plans and the publication of this Management Plan (2014-19).

The Management Plan is the basis for the strategic direction of the conservation and enhancement of the AONB. It does not stand alone but relates to a range of national and local strategic documents such as Local Plans and the Forest Design Plan. Annual Action Plans are drawn from this plan for the implementation of projects.

As this Management Plan has been developed, the processes of Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment have been undertaken. Strategic Environmental Assessment is a requirement under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001 to ensure that any negative environmental effects of its implementation have been avoided or mitigated. Appropriate Assessment is required under the The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 where a plan impacts upon a European Site. As there is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) within the AONB, this assessment has been undertaken. The intent of this Management Plan is to bring about positive environmental effects.

This Management Plan focuses on the aims, policies and actions for the 2014-19 period. It builds upon everything stated in our previous Management Plans and does not therefore repeat some of those data. Further information in support of the rationale for the Management Plan can also be obtained from the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership.

The rest of this Management Plan sets out:

- 1 our vision
- 2 the AONB's landscape character and its special qualities
- 3 addressing AONB management
- 4 delivering AONB management.

Note:

In this document, the reference system is set out as follows.

KI = Key Issue

HLO = High Level Objective

L = Landscape

P = People

E = Economy

R = Recreation

S = Support

The Policies, Actions and Monitoring then follow their themes e.g.

Landscape Policy 1 = LP1

Economy Action 3 = EA3

Recreation Monitoring 9 = RM9

A Vision for the Future of Cannock Chase AONB

Vision Statement

By 2034, Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be an enhanced area of national and international importance in terms of landscape beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, centred on its heaths and woods. Improved management of the whole area will connect the AONB to its surrounding landscapes, biodiversity and people. Conservation and enhancement programmes will bring about a better quality of life for local communities and visitors. Habitats; biodiversity; geodiversity; public access for quiet enjoyment; understanding of the area's fragility and importance; and positive visitor behaviours will continue to thrive under a plan for a balanced and sustainable AONB landscape.

Management Plan High Level Objectives

In striving to achieve this vision, the Management Plan will aspire to meet the following high level objectives (HLOs). This is "*what we want*".

- HLO1 Develop Cannock Chase AONB as a special, peaceful and tranquil place for everyone who lives in, works within or visits the area.

- HLO2 Conserve and enhance the distinctive and nationally important landscape of Cannock Chase AONB and the locally, nationally and internationally important biodiversity it supports, ensuring links between habitats within the AONB and surrounding landscape.

- HLO3 Develop a place valued and understood by everyone who comes into contact with Cannock Chase AONB, so that they can contribute positively to the shaping of its future.

- HLO4 Ensure a safe, clean and tranquil environment that can contribute to a high and sustainable quality of life.

- HLO5 Support a balance between a working landscape where prosperity and opportunity increase, biodiversity flourishes and pressure upon natural resources is diminished.

- HLO6 Create a place of enjoyment for everyone, providing opportunities for quiet recreation and maintaining ecosystems that contribute positively to physical and mental well-being.

- HLO7 Maintain and develop a successful partnership, working together to manage Cannock Chase AONB effectively.

In Section 2, the landscape character of the AONB, its special qualities and how people interact with it are set out. Linked to these are a series of key issues (KIs). The KIs also link directly to the High Level Objectives. They set out "*what we have*" and "*factors affecting us getting what we want*".

Section 3 addresses AONB management and breaks the task into five themed areas of work. It sets out the Management Plan Policies. This is "*how we must work to get what we want*". It is also a formal statement of the Partnership's strategic position for delivery.

Section 4 addresses the delivery of AONB management. It sets out the Actions we must take and how they will be monitored. This is "*what we must do*" and "*how we will measure the impact of our actions*".

Landscape Character and People in the AONB

This section sets out the landscape character areas within the AONB and factors affecting them. These factors are identified as Key Issues. The Key Issues fall into two categories and show "*there is a problem with.....*" and "*there is an opportunity to....*".

The basis of AONB designation is the special nature of the landscape and a description of this is provided by Landscape Character Assessment. This identifies the features giving a locality its sense of place and provides a framework for describing an area. It involves a desk study and field survey and then a description and mapping of the landscape to divide it into areas of common character. It enables different interest groups to make better judgements by knowing what is present and what is distinctive, so any change can respect local character. A number of specifically local landscape character assessments cover Cannock Chase AONB. These have formed the baseline of the last two Management Plans.

At the time of preparing this Management Plan, landscape character assessments are being up-dated for Staffordshire. During the delivery of this Plan the baseline landscape character assessments will therefore be reviewed against the new information.

During the 2009-14 Management Plan period National Character Area profiles were developed by Natural England. National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. Their boundaries follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision making framework for the natural environment. 67 – Cannock Chase and Cank Wood applies to this AONB.

The NCA identifies three principal environmental opportunities, all of which are relevant to this Management Plan but particularly SEO 3:

SEO 1: Expand lowland heathland to increase habitat connectivity, improve resilience to climate change and improve water quality.

SEO 2: Manage, enhance and expand the network of green infrastructure, such as woodlands, restored mining sites, parklands and canal routes, to increase biodiversity, access and recreational use and increase understanding of the area's rich industrial heritage, particularly geodiversity.

SEO 3: Conserve and enhance the essential character of this varied landscape, which includes the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Forest of Mercia and the urban conurbation of the Black Country, to maintain food and

timber production where possible; enhance landscape, sense of place and tranquillity; and increase resilience to climate change.

Also developed during the last Management Plan period are historic environment character assessments.

Whilst the landscape character assessments that form the baseline for previous Management Plans remain valid, it will be necessary to ensure that all the assessments are brought together and the most up to date information used. This exercise is therefore identified as a key action for delivery in this Management Plan.

For ease of delivery, the Partnership has split its work into five themes. Each of the five themes relates back to the High Level Objectives in Section 1 and an aspect of the AONB's ecosystems. Much of the content could be classified in a number of the themes but each only appears once within the Management Plan.

The themes are:

LANDSCAPE Everything relating to the visual and physical aspects of the area and its biodiversity.

PEOPLE Everything relating to people's understanding and awareness of the area, including how their behaviour can impact the AONB.

ECONOMY All financial factors and links affecting the work of this Management Plan.

RECREATION Everything relating to those who come to enjoy activities within the area and those who provide services to support those activities.

SUPPORT Infrastructure and external factors that we must respond to for Management Plan delivery.

It should be noted that all references to objectives, policies and actions relate to the Cannock Chase AONB area. This wording has therefore not been repeated throughout the Management Plan but is assumed.

Overview of Cannock Chase AONB

In England and Wales, those landscapes considered most valuable are protected as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These landscapes are protected and managed by law to maintain their special character for now and the future. AONBs are designated by Natural England. The purpose of designation as an AONB is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty (which includes wildlife and cultural heritage, as well as scenery) of the area. AONBs are human-influenced, cultural, living and working landscapes. Their special characteristics often depend on enlightened and sensitive human management and policy making, as do their habitats, with the associated flora and fauna, which characterise and give local distinctiveness to the AONB.

Designation

Cannock Chase AONB was designated for its high landscape quality, scientific interest and recreational value as one of 47 areas listed in the Report of the National Parks Committee in 1947. It consists mainly of extensive heathland and coniferous plantation on an elevated plateau of Triassic sandstones and pebble beds, surrounded by large villages, collieries and historic parkland. Much of the heathland area presents an unspoilt almost semi-wilderness character, standing in contrast to the surrounding developments. The Minister confirmed the Designation Order on 16 September 1958.

Locally

Cannock Chase AONB was designated in 1958 under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. It is the smallest mainland AONB at 68 km² (26 square miles). Its 13 parish and town councils fall into four districts and one county local authority. The area includes three Local Nature Reserves, as well as two working quarries.

Cannock Chase, Malvern Hills, Shropshire Hills, the Cotswolds and Wye Valley AONBs and the Peak District National Park are the nearest neighbouring protected landscapes. Cannock Chase is relatively geographically isolated as an accessible area of high environmental quality and surrounded by many urban areas.

Nationally

Cannock Chase AONB is part of a family of 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) is an independent organisation which acts on behalf of AONBs. The area includes five Sites of Special Scientific Interest and six Scheduled Monuments.

Internationally

Cannock Chase AONB also has an international dimension and importance. The World Conservation Union (the IUCN) confirmed Cannock Chase AONB as meeting its Category V Protected Landscapes status in July 2013. These are areas that have “a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values”. A commitment to maintain an appropriate Management Plan and the protection of biodiversity has been made by the AONB Partnership to retain this status.

Cannock Chase AONB's heathland resource is internationally important, reflected in 1237 ha of the SSSI being designated a Special Area for Conservation, under the European Habitats Directive. For this reason, activity affecting that area must undergo Appropriate Assessment as part of the implementation of the Directive to ensure no negative impact to it.

Landscape

[Show landscape character descriptions as in current Management Plan].

Landscape Key Issues

KI1 Heathland habitats form the core of the AONB designation and need to be maintained in favourable condition over the long term.

KI2 Woodland habitats are an important large scale integral landscape element within the AONB, linking to the heathland areas and need to be managed to support nature conservation.

KI3 The publicly managed forest areas need to provide multi-purpose public benefits for the long term.

KI4 Some inappropriate landscape elements and structures are being introduced as a result of land use change to horsiculture and resulting in some poor quality.

KI5 Diversification in the management of farms and other sites can impact and change the landscape character.

KI6 Pressure for development, its quality and impacts may change the character of the AONB landscapes and its setting.

KI7 Encroachment of urban elements into landscapes.

KI8 The need to accommodate infrastructure for renewable energy.

KI9 The development of major new housing provision immediately surrounding the AONB may significantly increase the impact of regular visitors to localised areas.

KI10 Climate change will continue to impact land management and other activities in the AONB.

KI11 Loss of key parkland features such as ancient trees and boundary walls.

KI12 Field patterns and habitats continue to deteriorate due to lack of hedgerow maintenance.

KI13 Maintaining historical features within the landscape.

KI14 Protection and enhancement of biodiversity is essential to the landscape. Connections need to be made between the biodiversity within the AONB and the landscapes surrounding it.

KI15 Fragmentation of habitats is a risk.

KI16 The area is used for all types of recreation, all year round, by a large number of visitors whose pursuit of enjoyment must be balanced against the need to conserve and enhance the AONB.

KI17 The increasing impact of visitors on designated sites, such as the SAC, means greater pressure on other areas and implies greater needs to manage their visits.

KI18 Other formal designations exist within the AONB that must be addressed for long term management.

KI19 Deer population impacts on traffic, landscape, farming, recreation and local residents needs a consistent and agreed approach.

KI20 Maintaining views from and into the AONB.

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KI21 Ancient woodland needs to be protected and restored to secure its long term future.

KI22 Mineral extraction, waste disposal and landfill and restoration of these sites.

KI23 Water quality and flows need to be maintained.

People

Factors

Cannock Chase is very accessible to people via highways, car parking, public rights of way and open access.

High numbers of people interact with the AONB. Visitors' awareness of the AONB designation can be low or lacking. There are some pockets of crime and anti-social behaviour that affect other visitors.

The AONB is rich in historical, cultural and geological links to the landscape. There is a strong "sense of place" and ownership of the AONB within its surrounding communities. Public sector ownership of land can mean prevailing attitudes that rights of access are assumed and contributions of resource to sustain the area have already been made.

There are 46 other AONBs across the UK, as well as National Parks. This offers opportunities to draw upon others good practice and work jointly with other teams.

The majority of visitors arrive in a car and commuter traffic is high. Traffic and transport used by both local people and visitors have an impact on the AONB and its wildlife.

The design/location of the range of 'furniture' (signs etc) needed for the management of traffic has an impact on the visual quality of the area, peace and tranquillity, wilderness and open country.

Key Issues

KI24 Increase awareness of the AONB.

KI25 Increase awareness of the geology and soils of the AONB.

KI26 Raise awareness of the historical features and cultural aspects relating to the landscape.

KI27 Increase involvement and engagement of people in supporting the AONB.

KI28 The volume and speed of cars and HGVs in and around the area has potential to damage environmental quality.

KI29 An AONB-wide approach to highways design and management is required.

KI30 A consistent approach to traffic management needs to be linked to the promotion and management of visitor venues in the AONB.

KI31 Crime against people, property and wildlife.

KI32 Criminal and anti-social activity within AONB car parks e.g. fly tipping, dogging

KI33 Lack of resource for car parking.

Economy

Factors

There are no towns in the AONB, with communities residing in the fringe area around Cannock Chase. Employment within the AONB is largely confined to the core area in forestry, managing recreation and the fabric of the Country and Forest Parks and in the provision of services to visitors. Some of this employment is on the fringe or outside the AONB. Agriculture is confined to the fringe area. In addition, quarrying activity takes place at two sites within the area.

Visitor numbers are increasing each year. Infrastructure to support visitors is struggling to meet the practical needs of increased volumes. Visitors' spend needs to be used to maintain the AONB.

Around the fringes of the area, light industry and small/medium scale businesses exist.

Business activity, such as farming, forestry and provision of visitor facilities, relates directly to the landscape.

Some business activity can have a positive and some a negative impact on the area.

Key Issues

KI34 Mechanisms to encourage economic returns from visitors need to be developed.

KI35 Visitor numbers are increasing incrementally each year and most spend little money in the area during those visits.

KI36 There is a desire to ensure some benefits from economic gains are directed back into the management of the AONB.

KI37 Businesses that directly benefit from the AONB do not currently invest in its conservation and enhancement, as appropriate mechanisms are yet to be developed.

KI38 A link can be made between business activity and the AONB environment, creating opportunities for economic benefits that should be used to support sustainably the AONB's management and its communities.

KI39 The health of agriculture and forestry activity needs to be supported within the AONB.

Recreation

Factors

Recreation is one of the main activities/pressures on the AONB, with a focus on the heathland and woodlands. People's enjoyment of these areas and the high percentage of open access are central to its special qualities.

The area offers opportunities for healthy activity.

The main interaction with the AONB revolves around the sheer (and increasing) number of visitors. The majority of these are regular visitors from the many nearby urban areas. Local areas are increasing housing stock that implies an increase of 15% visitors.

The visitors require infrastructure e.g. centres, car parks, places to stay, signs, information and refreshments. The management must achieve a balance between the conservation of the AONB and its visitors.

Income from visitors should provide resources to pay for the cost of managing the AONB.

Cannock Chase is served by five visitor centres. There are further opportunities for visitors to go to areas offering similar activities outside the AONB but nearby. A national tourism accord has been agreed between AONBs, Defra and Visit England to address the right way forward for tourism in AONBs.

The quiet enjoyment appropriate to the AONB's character and sought by the majority of visitors can be disturbed by other recreational activity. The range of differing activities undertaken can cause conflicts of interest.

Visitors can have a particular impact on the following special qualities, affecting the balance of ecosystems:

- peace, tranquillity and open country
- heathland
- flora & fauna.

Key Issues

KI40 The area is used for all types of recreation, all year round, by a large number of visitors whose pursuit of enjoyment must be balanced against the need to conserve and enhance the AONB.

KI41 National policy directs that people are increasingly encouraged to access the countryside and that may conflict with the need to conserve and enhance the AONB.

KI42 An inconsistent approach to car parking is divorced from visitor and access management.

KI43 The AONB is a place that offers opportunities for quiet healthy activity for all people that will have minimal impact on its conservation.

KI44 The retention of the AONB as a place of peace and tranquillity is of high importance to the majority of residents and visitors. A lack of peace and tranquillity and impacts on habitats have been linked to the increasing volumes of visitors coming to the AONB.

KI45 The development of major new housing provision immediately surrounding the AONB may significantly increase the impact of regular visitors to localised areas.

KI46 There is a lack of directional and interpretation signage. Existing signage is not always well maintained. Access and information via newer technologies are yet to be widely available.

KI47 The AONB is a place that offers opportunities for quiet healthy activity for all people that will have minimal impact on its conservation.

KI48 Conflicts can occur between different types of users of the area.

KI49 A consistent strategy is needed for visitor management across the whole AONB.

Support

Factors

The CROW Act requires that the AONB is managed in partnership. Many stakeholders need to be involved and their activity co-ordinated.

There are legislative requirements for specified organisations and how they should manage the AONB.

A range of organisations and individuals have responsibilities for the AONB landscape.

Information on progress in delivery is essential. The approach to data collection needs to be pragmatic.

Management needs and legislative requirements need to be supported by appropriate systems, people and finance to ensure progressive improvement in delivery.

Reducing financial resources require innovation and flexibility in accessing funding for the Partnership's work.

Key Issues

KI50 A wide range of organisations and individuals need to work together in active partnership to achieve delivery of the Management Plan.

KI51 Existing and future legislation directs activity within the AONB.

KI53 Some organisations have statutory duties towards the AONB.

KI54 The policy approach to protecting the AONB needs to be consistent.

KI55 Data on the condition of the AONB and factors affecting it need to be maintained.

KI56 Lack of resources can impact on the delivery of the Management Plan.

KI57 The governance of the Partnership needs to look to the future to enable the maximum resources to be achieved for the delivery of the Management Plan.

Landscape Policies

- LP1** The Partnership will ensure consistency in management and operational plans relating to the AONB's diverse landscapes and the biodiversity within them.
- LP2** The practical management, restoration and protection of heathlands will be a priority within the Partnership's delivery of the Management Plan.
- LP3** Sustainable woodland and tree management, restoration and creation will be a priority within the delivery of the Management Plan.
- LP4** The Partnership will address the impact of horseculture with land and horse owners.
- LP5** Mechanisms will be sought to identify and encourage sustainable agricultural land management practices.
- LP6** The Partnership will seek to influence planning policies, Local Plans and planning decisions to ensure they incorporate measures for the conservation and enhancement of the AONB landscape and scenic beauty.
- LP7** Development that acknowledges and respects the special qualities of the AONB and meets other Management Plan policies will be supported.
- LP8** Inappropriate development by extractive, waste and landfill industries will be resisted.
- LP9** Management strategies for the area will be adapted to protect against changes in climate, plant and animal health.
- LP10** Parklands will be conserved and enhanced.
- LP11** Work will be undertaken to ensure protection of all landscape, heritage, geological and ecological designated assets.
- LP12** Significant archaeological, geological and historical landscapes and their settings will be identified, conserved and enhanced.
- LP13** Species within the AONB will be managed to maintain a viable, sustainable and balanced ecosystem.
- LP14** The landscape's wilderness and open qualities will be protected for people to enjoy.
- LP15** The distinctive landscape character of the AONB will be conserved and enhanced, including views into and out of the area.
- LP16** Nature will be conserved to ensure the sustainability of the area's ecosystems, ensuring that links to habitats and landscapes to surrounding areas are also maintained.
- LP17** Other areas of conservation designated within the AONB boundary will have specific measures for management supported.
- LP18** Water environments will be conserved in accordance with the Water Framework Directive and the Humber River Basin Management Plan through liaison and action with the steering group for the River Trent area.

People Policies

PP1 The importance of the AONB will be communicated clearly and consistently to foster a greater appreciation and respect for the designation.

PP2 Co-ordinated, high quality information, interpretation and educational material will be provided and available to everyone about Cannock Chase AONB to support sustainable visitor management.

PP3 Centres of excellence will be created at the network of local AONB visitor centres to explain the importance of Cannock Chase AONB.

PP4 Communities, visitors and businesses will be engaged actively.

PP5 The Partnership will seek to influence those who control highways and traffic issues to ensure solutions appropriate to the AONB.

PP6 The Partnership will seek management measures that minimise the potential for crime and anti-social behaviour.

PP7 A strategy integrating visitor access and management (including car parking, public transport, walking and cycling) will be developed and implemented.

Economy Policies

EP1 Only sustainable, quality tourism will be promoted.

EP2 New and existing business within the AONB will be encouraged to contribute financially to the management of the AONB via mechanisms identified by the Partnership.

EP3 Sustainable economic proposals will be considered positively when they contribute to conserving and enhancing the AONB, in accordance with the statutory duty of the Partnership.

Recreation Policies

RP1 Recreation activities will be supported through positive, consistent and area-wide management in areas that are the least vulnerable and most capable of absorbing impacts, including other areas nearby.

RP2 New RP Integrated strategies will be developed in Partnership to manage visitors, enabling their enjoyment of the area appropriate to its sustainability and linking with other visitor destinations nearby.

RP3 Peace and tranquillity will be protected.

RP4 A welcoming, informative culture will be developed to support a balance between the sustainability of the area and visitors' enjoyment and use of it.

RP5 The Partnership will work closely with those engaged in the preparation and implementation of sustainable tourism strategies and in accordance with the national accord between Defra, National Association for AONBs and Visit England.

RP6 Improvement of the access networks will minimise degradation of sensitive areas.

RP7 Visitors of all abilities will be encouraged to take healthy activity.

RP8 Respect for all those using the area will be improved through provision of information and education.

RP9 Clear signage and a range of physical and virtual interpretation appropriate to the character of the AONB will be developed and implemented to support sustainable visitor management whilst protecting the scenic beauty and quiet enjoyment of the area.

RP10 Partners will create and implement a consistent visitor management strategy for the area, linked to other nearby areas. In particular, consistency will be sought across the publicly owned areas of land that form the majority of the AONB.

Support Policies

SP1 The formal Partnership will be maintained and work with others to deliver the Management Plan.

SP2 Activity will be co-ordinated across the AONB Partnership.

SP3 The Partnership will seek to ensure organisations fulfil their statutory duties towards the AONB.

SP4 The Partnership will work to influence others to adopt policy and strategy to ensure the AONB is placed at the heart of decision-making.

SP5 Work will be undertaken with national and international protected landscape communities to ensure best practice.

SP6 The condition of the AONB will be monitored and progress reported, using integrated data where possible.

SP7 Sustainable practices will be encouraged in the operational work of the AONB Partnership.

SP8 Sustainable levels of human and financial resource will be generated and maintained to deliver the Management Plan efficiently.

Actions

Landscape	
Group 1 – Strategic Management	
LA1	Ensure there is integration between all management plans for heathland.
LA2	Ensure all AONB land management plans link to one another.
LA3	Ensure land management plans incorporate an approach that allows for habitats and species to thrive in areas adjacent to each ownership boundary.
LA4	Ensure there is a long term approach to land management planning.
LA5	Ensure land management plans incorporate a range of techniques to develop mixed habitats.
LA6	Incorporate new landscape character assessments with the existing local character descriptions, landscape and heritage character assessments and National Character Assessments to support the development of information upon which future AONB Management Plans are based and measured, ensuring no previous baseline data are lost. (Undertake additional assessments, as necessary).
LA7	Ensure the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) strategy incorporates a landscape scale approach to nature conservation within and around the AONB.
LA8	Incorporate management strategies within the visitor management plan that enable the protection of peace and tranquillity and open and wilderness qualities within the AONB.
Group 2 – Implementing management	
LA9	Implement the Higher Level Scheme (HLS) for the Country Park.
LA10	Implement the Higher Level Scheme (HLS) for Gentleshaw Common.
LA11	Implement the Higher Level Scheme (HLS) for Shoal Hill Common.
LA12	Maintain current knowledge of adaptation measures for climate change and incorporate it into land management plans.
Group 3 – Woodland management	
LA13	Carry out woodland management to the UK Forestry Standard.
LA14	Support private woodland owners to carry out woodland management to the UK Forestry Standard.
LA15	Participate in reviews and re-drafting of the woodland management plans for Cannock Chase.
Group 4 – Parkland management	
LA16	Encourage the preparation and implementation of management plans for parkland, through demonstrating the impact of planning and delivery in the Shugborough plans.
LA17	Support the management of parklands appropriate to their character and siting.
LA18	Resist the loss of parkland area.
Group 5 – Heritage management	
LA19	Assess the full extent of heritage assets within the AONB through research in accordance with a heritage strategy brief and including assessment of the HER, historic landscape character assessments and LIDAR data.
LA20	Develop an AONB heritage map in order to derive a strategy for the conservation and enhancement of identified heritage assets.
LA21	Undertake three targeted excavations to identify ecological and heritage conditions and support conservation planning.
LA22	Develop and deliver project ideas to support the commemoration of the Great War in the context of the AONB's role in preserving its history and the ability to accommodate visitors to conserved heritage assets.
LA23	Identify, develop and deliver targeted projects to conserve heritage at Beaudesert.
LA24	Identify, develop and deliver conservation projects for Castle Ring.
Group 6 - Geology management	
LA25	Identify, protect and manage sites of importance for geology, soils or landform to

	ensure their continuing role in defining the character of the AONB.
Group 7 – Aquatic management	
LA26	Assess the impacts of rising mine waters to identify whether they will impact the area.
LA27	Manage wetland areas, streams and watercourses to maintain and improve water quality and species.
LA28	Assess the impact of historical land management on water courses and create land management plans as appropriate.
LA29	Work directly with the River Basin Management Plan partnership to identify land management issues within the AONB to support delivery of the Water Framework Directive.
LA30	Deliver identified projects from the Trent area of the Humber catchment plan.
Group 8 – Supporting land owners and managers	
LA31	Target information to those involved in equestrian activity in the area to ensure understanding of the AONB's importance is maintained.
LA32	Support the promotion and implementation of environmentally sensitive use of agricultural land within the landscape.
LA33	Encourage the uptake of agri-environment schemes.
LA34	Provide advice to land owners on species and habitat management appropriate to the AONB.
LA35	Encourage land owners to restore missing and poorly maintained hedgerows, through incentives and advice.
LA36	Work with farmers, residents and the Highways Authority to gather data to inform the management of deer across the AONB.
LA37	Develop a strategy and practical mechanisms to deliver management of deer, enabling the protection of this and other species, habitats and people within the AONB.
LA38	Support land managers to develop and promote regimes that address removal and reduction of litter and fouling.
Group 9 – Planning and development	
LA39	Seek protection of the AONB and its setting in accordance with the agreed Planning Protocol.
LA40	Review (and revise as necessary) the Planning Protocol with planning authorities to enable active interventions in planning matters that support the conservation of the AONB's special character.
LA41	Seek to prevent inappropriate extensions of existing quarries and obtain the highest standards of restoration.
LA42	Work with local authorities responsible for the mitigation of impact on the SAC to deliver projects appropriate to the health of both the SAC and the AONB's conservation.
LA43	Seek mitigation from development that impacts the AONB via developer contributions including CIL and s106 mechanisms.
Group 10 - Connectivity	
LA44	Encourage land managers within and adjacent to the AONB to enhance the value and extent of heathland and other BAP habitats and species.
LA45	Identify and deliver "cross boundary" projects in support of connectivity e.g. Connecting Cannock Chase.
People	
Group 1 – Develop understanding	
PA1	Review and update the Interpretation Strategy.
PA2	Implement the AONB Interpretation Strategy and its Action Plan.
Group 2 – Creating tools for understanding	
PA3	Provide information and interpretation to champion the AONB, using a wide range of media and targeting understanding and enjoyment.
PA4	Ensure suite of leaflets is up to date and available in appropriate media.

PA5	Establish clear usage for each of the AONB web based information sites.
PA6	Work with other partnerships e.g. DMP to ensure the AONB information is widely understood.
Group 3 – Visitor information	
PA7	Develop the role of the visitor centres located within the AONB as providers of co-ordinated information.
PA8	Develop projects for future provision of visitor facilities that address increasing visitor needs and balance these with the protection of the AONB.
PA9	Seek resource to deliver appropriate changes to visitor facilities.
PA10	Establish the most appropriate base for the work of the AONB Partnership within the network of visitor and other accessible facilities within the AONB boundary and secure resources for its delivery.
Group 4 – Involving communities	
PA11	Raise awareness of the importance and relevance of the AONB to its local communities and strive to increase the involvement of those communities in decisions, projects and management.
PA12	Provide support to local communities for activities that will assist in achieving the aims of the Management Plan.
PA13	Develop and implement innovative ways to increase community action, volunteering and cultural activity in the AONB.
PA14	Involve local and interest communities in reviews of the Management Plan and its delivery.
Group 5 – Transport links	
PA15	Develop and publish a strategy for transport within the AONB, working with the Highways Authority that respects the local distinctiveness of the AONB and reconciles the needs of the AONB with businesses, residents and visitors.
PA16	Implement traffic management schemes from the AONB transport strategy.
PA17	Support initiatives to increase the use of public and non-motorised transport.
PA18	Identify and seek appropriate speed limits and traffic calming measures to reflect the special nature of the AONB.
PA19	Develop a car parking strategy which will consider an AONB-wide approach to issues including location, capacity, crime, charging and provision of alternative means of access to the AONB.
PA20	Develop an area wide strategy for dealing with each key issue of crime and anti-social behaviour affecting the AONB.
PA21	Incorporate land management measures that “design out” the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour.
PA22	Conduct targeted campaigns of action to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the AONB.
Economy	
Group 1 - Tourism	
EA1	Ensure there are specific measures for tourism in the AONB within the visitor management strategy.
EA2	Identify infrastructure needs to deliver sustainable tourism in the AONB.
EA3	Develop and deliver infrastructure projects in partnership with land owners.
EA4	Work with other tourism providers to develop a sub regional strategy for attracting visitors that enables the protection of the AONB and offers wider opportunities for visitors in places surrounding and linked to the AONB.
EA5	Identify and implement means for economic returns from tourism to benefit the AONB.
EA6	Develop and implement tourism projects that showcase and protect the AONB.
Group 2 – Engaging with business	
EA7	Maintain and strengthen links with the Local Enterprise Partnerships that work with the AONB.

EA8	Develop working relationships, particularly with local businesses, that are long-term and benefit both business and the AONB's sustainability and management through specifically identified delivery mechanisms.
EA9	Develop "ready to go" Management Plan projects attractive for businesses to become involved in.
EA10	Develop a stronger "brand" for the AONB and ensure it is used to support programmes that sustain the area.
EA11	Work with tourism and business professionals to create an environment where they wish to continue delivering their work.
EA12	Identify finance generation mechanisms to help sustain AONB management e.g. payback schemes.
EA13	Deliver the finance generation mechanisms.
EA14	Review and revise the impact of the finance generation mechanisms.
Group 3 – Linking economic health directly to the AONB	
EA15	Work with planning and business professionals to create only infrastructure development that conserves and enhances the character of the AONB.
EA16	Support initiatives to develop the markets for products that originate from the AONB, particularly forestry, agriculture and heathland produce.
EA17	Develop protocols and practices to identify products suitable for AONB endorsement.
Recreation	
Group 1 – Balancing visitor activity with AONB protection	
RA1	Develop, agree and implement an integrated AONB-wide visitor and recreation management strategy, working with tourism providers, land owners, recreational users and local communities to ensure that conflicts between multiple users, as well as the environment, are minimised.
RA2	Ensure the visitor management strategy links to other activity within the surrounding region, working with venues, the Destination Management Partnership, the Local Nature Partnership and Local Enterprise Partnerships.
RA3	Encourage joint working with other visitor destinations and create links between them and the AONB.
RA4	Identify complementary visitor destinations to the AONB to accommodate more widely activities that are creating particular pressure on the AONB's character and conservation.
RA5	Agree a prioritised action plan for the AONB visitor management strategy.
RA6	Deliver the visitor management strategy action plan.
Group 2 – Providing access	
RA7	Encourage the use of designated access networks.
RA8	Liaise with those responsible for formal access networks to ensure their maintenance and use.
RA9	Ensure that formal access networks are well maintained and waymarked.
RA10	Develop a cycling strategy related to the current and planned infrastructure within the AONB.
RA11	Deliver the actions identified within the cycling strategy.
RA12	Repeat the peace and tranquillity monitoring to assess whether it is being maintained.
RA13	Develop and implement management practices that maintain peace and tranquillity.
RA14	Develop and implement programmes for healthy activity.
Group 3 – Sustainable recreation	
RA15	Review recreational activities to monitor their effects.
RA16	Work with recreational groups to engage and involve organised recreation bodies and individuals in the development, organisation and monitoring of responsible recreational activity.
RA17	Continue the annual programme of awareness raising with targeted recreational groups.

RA18	Continue to develop "AONB ambassadors" within each recreational user group to ensure ownership and sustainability of projects implemented.
RA19	Deliver projects identified via the awareness raising and monitoring in partnership with the specific user groups as part of an annual rolling programme.
RA20	Review and up-date the AONB local code of conduct.
RA21	Promote the revised local code of conduct.
Group 4 – Directing and informing visitors	
RA22	Work with the relevant authorities to establish the nature, location and provision of signing outside the AONB, where it relates to facilities within the area.
RA23	Complete the audit of existing signage within the AONB boundary and identify areas of need, including sense of identity for the AONB, direction and interpretation.
RA24	Agree with authorities and land owners the provision of new signage, both physical and virtual.
RA25	Implement the installation of the identified suite of direction and interpretation signage.
RA26	Develop and implement a co-ordinated approach to educational visits.
RA27	Develop and implement projects to interpret and convey the importance of conserving and enhancing all aspects (cultural, historical, geological and environmental) of the landscape.
RA28	Review, update and adhere to the Partnership logo design rules.
RA29	Develop branding principles and confirm a formal copyright for the Partnership logo.
Support	
Group 1 – Making the Partnership effective	
SA1	Ensure that the AONB's management meets legislative requirements.
SA2	Maintain and develop effective partnerships to co-ordinate management.
SA3	Each Partner must deliver all constitutional and statutory requirements.
SA4	Review the Partnership's administrative arrangements to ensure effective and consistent delivery.
SA5	Up-date the Partnership Agreement as identified in the review and agree with Defra.
SA6	Ensure co-ordinated delivery of actions across all those who have agreed them.
SA7	Review regularly topic and project action groups to ensure appropriate delivery throughout the period of the Plan.
SA8	Ensure regular discussion about the AONB and its Management Plan within individual partners' organisations and that this is communicated to the Partnership.
Group 2 – Working in partnership with others	
SA9	Ensure the AONB is appropriately represented in local, regional and national policies, plans and strategies.
SA10	Actively seek to champion the AONB with influencers, policy and decision makers at a local, regional, national and international level.
SA11	Share best practice and information with other protected landscapes, working on joint initiatives as appropriate.
Group 3 – Monitoring AONB condition and delivery success	
SA12	Research and monitor habitats and key species identified as an indicator of AONB condition within the State of the AONB reporting.
SA13	Identify readily available monitoring data to minimise research effort.
SA14	Liaise with Natural England and Defra on national key indicators for AONB condition.
SA15	Monitor, assess and maintain records on landscape condition within and adjacent to the AONB.
Group 4 – Maintaining and securing resources for delivery	
SA16	Investigate, pursue and access all available funding sources to support delivery of the Management Plan.
SA17	Assess whether current Partnership arrangements allow the best access to available funding to sustain work in the AONB.

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SA18	Create grant funds to deliver individual projects, as appropriate.
SA19	Sustain existing funding into the Partnership and support for the AONB Unit.
SA20	Deliver projects in the most sustainable way possible in the operational work of the Partnership.

Foreword to Monitoring Chapter

The progress in implementing the Management Plan and the State of the AONB.

Monitoring the actions within this plan will be split down into two groups 1 - Monitoring condition and 2 - Monitoring performance. Both types of monitoring play an important role in identifying key issues and in assessing the continual performance and relevance of the Management Plans objectives and policies.

Monitoring performance will establish how well the partnership is progressing in implementing its plans and objective. An operational plan will be developed from the Management Plan that will be performance monitored.

Monitoring condition will establish whether the special qualities / features of the AONB are in favourable condition, remaining the same or deteriorating. The aim of condition monitoring is to ensure that the main objective of the AONB 'to conserve and enhance' is achieved. A list of key indicators has been selected to measure the change of condition of the key objectives of the AONB.

Much of the condition monitoring is set out within the State of the AONB report and is gathered by the AONB Partnership, this is a long-term and ongoing process. Under each habitat a set of relevant indicators are identified that can be consistently measured over time.

The 5 local authorities within this area and other partners particularly Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England and the Environment Agency make positive contributions to the efficient collation of data for monitoring as part of their general duty to conserve and enhance the AONB.

Where funding allows the range and quality of data and information will be expanded through targeted survey work and research.

Theme	Monitoring Indicator
Landscape	% of SSSI's in favourable / recovering condition
	Fixed point photography landscape monitoring
	State of AONB individual species monitoring
	Change in % of AONB recorded as 'most tranquil'
	HLS targets
	Condition and number of RIGS
	Water quality(individual species monitoring – SAAONB)
	Number of pollution incidents from source
	Condition of horse pasture
	Area managed under agri-environmental schemes (Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA), Environmental Stewardship (ES).
	% of SAC in favourable condition
	% increase in different habitats (heathland, woodland etc)
	Farming – area under agri environmental schemes
	Length of cable undergrounded
	Length of hedgerows restored / planted
% of heritage assets that are 'at risk' including buildings at risk, monuments, registered parks and gardens and scheduled ancient monuments	
People	Operational plan performance
	Number of projects achieved by AONB volunteers
	Income raised from external sources
	Projects actioned
	Air pollution
	Number of volunteers
Economy	Income raised from external sources
	Number of businesses engaged
Recreation	Visitor numbers
	Ease of use of Public ROW
	Peace and tranquillity
Support	Resources sustained for partnership work
	Partnership remains together