

## **1 A Vision for the Future of Cannock Chase AONB**

### **Vision Statement**

By 2029, 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 both habitat and public access will bring conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity and contribute towards a better quality of life both for local communities and visitors.

### **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*".

- HLO 1 Develop the sense of Cannock Chase AONB as a special place for everyone who lives in, works within or visits the area.**
- HLO 2 Conserve and enhance the distinctive Cannock Chase AONB landscape of local, national and international importance for its biodiversity.**
- HLO 3 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.**
- HLO 4 Ensure a high and sustainable quality of life is offered by a safe, clean and tranquil environment.**
- HLO 5 Maintain a working landscape where prosperity and opportunity increase while natural life flourishes and pressure upon natural resources diminish.**
- HLO 6 Create a place of enjoyment for everyone, providing opportunities for quiet recreation that contributes positively to physical and mental well being.**
- HLO 7 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.

Sections 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*".

## 2 Landscape Character and People in the AONB

This section sets out the landscape character areas within the AONB and factors affecting it (full details are shown at Appendices 4-\*\*). 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 a 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 landscape character assessments cover Cannock Chase AONB.

In addition, man's involvement with aspects of the landscape and its character is what makes Cannock Chase AONB unique. For this reason, other aspects of the AONB have been set out in this section.

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 above. 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.
People	Everything relating to those who visit and use the area, as well as those who are delivering this Management Plan.
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 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 Landscape Character Areas

See Map\*\* at Appendix 3

Landscape Character Area	Landscape Character Area Subdivisions
Open Hills and Heaths	Heathland
	Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland
	Forestry land
Farmed Sandstone Hills and Heaths	
Settled Plateau Farmlands	
Sandstone Estatelands	
Clay Estatelands	
Trent Valley Floodplain	
Designed Parklands	

**Please note: the descriptions relating to the condition of the AONB already set out in the existing Management Plan 2004-2009, will be inserted into the new format in this section. No new information will be added into this section, with the exception of Key Issues (KIs). All the KIs are set out in the next section.**

### **3 Addressing AONB Management**

The management of the AONB must tackle the factors affecting its landscape and special qualities. These are the Key Issues identified in Section 2. The Management Plan Policies in this section set out "*how we must work to get what we want*". They are the basis of individual actions that will continue to be rolled out in the five years' period of this Management Plan.

Shown below is a summary of each of the Management Plan themes and the Key Issues and Policies relating to them.

## Landscape

<b>High Level Objective</b>	
<b>HLO 1</b> <b>Develop the sense of Cannock Chase AONB as a special place for everyone who lives in, works within or visits the area.</b>	
<b>HLO 2</b> <b>Conserve and enhance the distinctive Cannock Chase AONB landscape of local, national and international importance for its biodiversity.</b>	
<b>Key Issues</b>	
<b>KI1</b>	Heathland habitats form the core of the AONB designation.
<b>KI2</b>	It is an intensive task to maintain heathland in favourable condition.
<b>KI3</b>	Woodland habitats are an important large scale landscape element within the AONB, linking to the heathland areas.
<b>KI4</b>	Smaller woodlands need to be managed to support nature conservation.
<b>KI5</b>	The principal publicly owned forest areas need to be managed for multi-purpose public benefits.
<b>KI6</b>	Ancient woodland needs to be protected and managed to secure its long term future.
<b>KI7</b>	Inappropriate landscape elements are being introduced as a result of land use change to horsiculture and resulting in some poor quality.
<b>KI8</b>	Field patterns continue to deteriorate due to lack of hedgerow maintenance.
<b>KI9</b>	Loss of key parkland features such as trees, boundary walls.
<b>KI10</b>	Maintaining historical features within the landscape.
<b>KI11</b>	Groundwater and its impact on the AONB habitats – abstraction.
<b>KI12</b>	Rising mine waters – potential to pollute.
<b>KI13</b>	Streams and valley mires – quality of aquatic environment.
<b>KI14</b>	Floodplain maintenance.
<b>KI15</b>	Encroachment of urban elements into landscapes.
<b>KI16</b>	Pressure for development, its quality and impacts may change the character of the AONB landscapes.
<b>KI17</b>	Mineral extraction.
<b>KI18</b>	Protection of biodiversity.
<b>KI19</b>	Maintaining views.
<b>Policies</b>	
<b>LP1</b>	The Partnership will ensure consistency in management and operational plans relating to the AONB's diverse landscapes.
<b>LP2</b>	The practical management and restoration of heathlands will be a priority within the Partnership's delivery of the Management Plan.
<b>LP3</b>	Sustainable woodland management will be a priority within the delivery of the Management Plan.
<b>LP4</b>	The Partnership will address the impact of horsiculture with land and horse owners.
<b>LP5</b>	Mechanisms will be sought to identify and encourage sustainable agricultural land management practices.

- LP6** Parklands will be conserved and enhanced.
- LP7** Significant archaeological, geological and historical landscapes and their settings will be identified, protected and managed.
- LP8** The maintenance and improvement of water levels and quality will be promoted.
- LP9** Only development that acknowledges and respects the special qualities of the AONB will be supported.
- LP10** New activity by extractive industries will be resisted.
- LP11** The long-term health of Cannock Chase's wildlife population will be maintained.
- LP12** The landscape's wilderness and open qualities will be protected for people to enjoy.
- LP13** The distinctive landscape character of the AONB will be conserved and enhanced.

## People

<b>High Level Objective</b>	
<b>HLO 3</b>	<b>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.</b>
<b>HLO 4</b>	<b>Ensure a high and sustainable quality of life is offered by a safe, clean and tranquil environment.</b>
<b>Key Issues</b>	
<b>KI20</b>	Lack of awareness of the importance of the AONB.
<b>KI21</b>	Awareness of the geology and soils of the AONB is low due to a lack of interpretation.
<b>KI22</b>	Raising awareness of the historical features and cultural aspects relating to the landscape.
<b>KI23</b>	Lack of involvement and engagement of people in supporting the AONB.
<b>KI24</b>	The work in the AONB is part of a nationwide network of protected landscape organisations that can support us.
<b>KI25</b>	The volume and speed of cars and HGVs in and around the area has potential to damage.
<b>KI26</b>	Car parking within the AONB.
<b>KI27</b>	The visual impact of highways design in the area.
<b>KI28</b>	Commuters passing through the AONB.
<b>Policies</b>	
<b>PP1</b>	The importance of the AONB will be communicated clearly and consistently to foster a greater appreciation and respect for the designation.
<b>PP2</b>	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.
<b>PP3</b>	Centres of excellence will be created at the network of local AONB visitor centres to explain the importance of Cannock Chase AONB.
<b>PP4</b>	Communities, visitors and businesses will be engaged actively.
<b>PP5</b>	The Partnership will seek to influence those who control highways and traffic issues to ensure solutions appropriate to the AONB.

## Economy

<b>High Level Objective</b>	
<b>HLO 5</b>	<b>Maintain a working landscape where prosperity and opportunity increase while natural life flourishes and pressure upon natural resources diminish.</b>
<b>Key Issues</b>	
<b>KI29</b>	A link can be made between business activity and the AONB environment, creating opportunities.
<b>KI30</b>	Land management practices can generate economic benefits for the area through their products.
<b>KI31</b>	Farm intensification and modern farm buildings impact on the landscape character.
<b>Policies</b>	
<b>EP1</b>	Prosperous and sustainable land management practices will be promoted as part of a living and working countryside.
<b>EP2</b>	The development of new local businesses complementary to AONB aims will be encouraged.
<b>EP3</b>	Businesses will be encouraged to become actively involved in the delivery of the Management Plan.
<b>EP4</b>	The purchase and use of local products will be encouraged.
<b>EP5</b>	Sustainable, quality tourism will be promoted.
<b>EP6</b>	Where development does take place, it will be ensured that it contributes to the quality of the AONB.

## Recreation

<b>High Level Objective</b>	
<b>HLO 6</b>	<b>Create a place of enjoyment for everyone, providing opportunities for quiet recreation that contributes positively to physical and mental well being.</b>
<b>Key Issues</b>	
<b>KI32</b>	The area is used for all types of outdoor recreation by thousands of people all year round.
<b>KI33</b>	National policy directs that certain sectors of people are targeted to access the countryside that may conflict with the need to conserve and enhance the AONB.
<b>KI34</b>	Conflicts can occur between different types of users of the area.
<b>KI35</b>	There is a lack of directional and interpretation signage. Existing signage is not always well maintained.
<b>KI36</b>	A principal concern of visitors relates to litter and dog fouling.
<b>KI37</b>	The development of major new housing provision immediately surrounding the AONB would significantly increase the impact of regular visitors to localised areas.
<b>Policies</b>	
<b>RP1</b>	Recreation activities will be encouraged, through positive management, towards areas that are the least vulnerable and capable of absorbing impacts.
<b>RP2</b>	Areas of peace and tranquillity will be protected.
<b>RP3</b>	A welcoming, informative culture will be developed for visitors.
<b>RP4</b>	The Partnership will work closely with those engaged in the preparation and implementation of sustainable tourism strategies.
<b>RP5</b>	Visitor use of the AONB will be assisted through the improvement of access networks to minimise degradation of sensitive areas.
<b>RP6</b>	Visitors will be encouraged to take healthy activity.
<b>RP7</b>	Visitors will be encouraged to visit other areas nearby but outside the AONB boundary.
<b>RP8</b>	Respect for all those using the area will be improved through provision of information and education.
<b>RP9</b>	Clear signage and all types of interpretation appropriate to the character of the AONB will be developed and installed to support sustainable visitor management and the protection of the visual amenity of the area.
<b>RP10</b>	Provision of new or the expansion of existing recreation activities will only be supported where they are sustainable and benefits to the AONB can be identified.
<b>RP11</b>	Where development does take place, mitigation will be sought to protect the AONB.

## Support

<b>High Level Objective</b>	
<b>HLO 7</b>	
<b>Maintain and develop a successful partnership working together to manage Cannock Chase AONB effectively.</b>	
<b>Key Issues</b>	
<b>KI38</b>	A wide range of organisations and individuals need to work together to achieve delivery of the Management Plan.
<b>KI39</b>	Existing and future legislation directs activity within the AONB.
<b>KI40</b>	Some organisations have statutory duties towards the AONB.
<b>KI41</b>	The policy approach to protecting the AONB needs to be consistent.
<b>KI42</b>	Knowledge on the condition of the AONB and factors affecting it needs to be maintained.
<b>KI43</b>	A response needs to be made to the impact of climate change.
<b>KI44</b>	Lack of resources can impact on the delivery of the Management Plan.
<b>Policies</b>	
<b>SP1</b>	The formal Partnership will be maintained and work with others to deliver the Management Plan.
<b>SP2</b>	Activity will be co-ordinated across the AONB Partnership.
<b>SP3</b>	The Partnership will ensure organisations fulfil their statutory duties towards the AONB.
<b>SP4</b>	The Partnership will work to influence others to adopt policy and strategy to ensure the AONB is placed at the heart of decision-making.
<b>SP5</b>	Work will be undertaken with national and international protected landscape communities to ensure best practice.
<b>SP6</b>	Partners will aim to reach consensus on how to accommodate regional and local planning requirements.
<b>SP7</b>	The condition of the AONB will be monitored and progress reported.
<b>SP8</b>	Sustainable practices will be encouraged in the operational work of the AONB Partnership.
<b>SP9</b>	Land management strategies will provide for adaptation to climate change and avoid contributing to its increased impact, whilst maintaining the integrity of the AONB.
<b>SP10</b>	Sustainable levels of human and financial resource will be generated and maintained to deliver the Management Plan efficiently.

#### **4 Delivering AONB Management**

The key issues and policies identified in the Sections 2 and 3 above have been broadly consulted upon across local, regional and national individuals and organisations. Set out in this section are the actions the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership intends to take to address them in the period 2009-14. Also identified are the means to be taken to measure the impact of those actions. These reflect "*what we must do*" and "*how we will measure the impact of our actions*".

## Landscape

Actions	
<b>LA1</b>	Undertake long-term management using a range of techniques to create a mix of linked habitats.
<b>LA2</b>	Ensure a comprehensive and effective approach to nature conservation throughout the AONB that also incorporates the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).
<b>LA3</b>	Encourage land managers within and adjacent to the AONB to enhance the value and extent of heathland and other BAP habitats and species.
<b>LA4</b>	Implement the Higher Level Scheme (HLS) for the Country Park.
<b>LA5</b>	Ensure there is integration between all management plans for heathland.
<b>LA6</b>	Carry out sustainable woodland management practices to protect and enhance landscape and nature conservation value.
<b>LA7</b>	Participate in reviews and re-drafting of the woodland management plans for Cannock Chase.
<b>LA8</b>	Encourage good practice for the welfare of the AONB.
<b>LA9</b>	Target information to those involved in equestrian activity in the area to ensure understanding of the AONB's importance is maintained.
<b>LA10</b>	Support the promotion and implementation of environmentally sensitive use of agricultural land within the landscape.
<b>LA11</b>	Encourage land owners to restore missing and poorly maintained hedgerows.
<b>LA12</b>	Encourage the targeting and uptake of agri-environment schemes.
<b>LA13</b>	Provide advice to landowners on species and habitat management appropriate to the AONB.
<b>LA14</b>	Encourage the preparation and implementation of management plans for parkland.
<b>LA15</b>	Support the use of parklands appropriate to their character and siting.
<b>LA16</b>	Resist the loss of parkland area.
<b>LA17</b>	Undertake conservation of the heritage of the AONB for people to appreciate.
<b>LA18</b>	Identify, protect and manage sites of importance for geology, soils or landform to ensure their continuing role in defining the character of the AONB.
<b>LA19</b>	Assess the impacts of rising mine waters and plan for mitigation.
<b>LA20</b>	Manage wetland areas, streams and watercourses to maintain water quality and species.
<b>LA21</b>	Assess the impact of water extraction on creation of new wetland habitats and implement plans as appropriate.
<b>LA22</b>	Seek protection of the AONB and its setting in accordance with the agreed Planning Protocol.
<b>LA23</b>	Establish criteria supplementary to the Planning Protocol for addressing proposals for renewable energy installations.
<b>LA24</b>	Seek to prevent inappropriate extensions of existing quarries and

<b>LA25</b>	obtain the highest standards of restoration. Maintain assessments of the AONB's wildlife as an indicator of its condition.
<b>LA26</b>	Maintain the Deer Management Partnership to deal with deer related issues.
<b>LA27</b>	Develop and implement management practices that maintain peace and tranquillity.
<b>Monitoring – to be completed when actions have been finalised</b>	
<b>LM1</b>	
<b>LM2</b>	

## People

<b>Actions</b>	
<b>PA1</b>	Champion the AONB using a wide range of media.
<b>PA2</b>	Provide information and interpretation, using a wide range of media, which promotes the understanding and enjoyment of all aspects of the AONB.
<b>PA3</b>	Develop the role of the visitor centres located within the AONB as providers of co-ordinated information.
<b>PA4</b>	Implement the AONB Interpretation Strategy and its Action Plan.
<b>PA5</b>	Review and update the Interpretation Strategy every five years.
<b>PA6</b>	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.
<b>PA7</b>	Provide support to local communities for activities that will assist in achieving the aims of the Management Plan.
<b>PA8</b>	Develop innovative ways to increase community action and cultural activity in caring for the AONB.
<b>PA9</b>	Involve community stakeholders in implementation and review of the Management Plan.
<b>PA10</b>	Explore and implement options for further volunteer activities.
<b>PA11</b>	Develop and implement a strategic approach to transport that reconciles the needs of the AONB with businesses, residents and visitors and works through the Local Transport Plan.
<b>PA12</b>	Ensure traffic management schemes respect the local distinctiveness of the AONB.
<b>PA13</b>	Support initiatives to increase the use of public and non-motorised transport.
<b>PA14</b>	Identify and seek appropriate speed limits and traffic calming measures to reflect the special nature of the AONB.
<b>PA15</b>	Seek to implement highways design guidelines.
<b>PA16</b>	Develop a car parking strategy which will consider issues including location, capacity, crime, charging and provision of alternative means of access to the AONB.
<b>Monitoring - to be completed when actions have been finalised</b>	
<b>PM1</b>	

## Economy

<b>Actions</b>	
<b>EA1</b>	Increase the understanding and awareness of the potential of the AONB to support the diverse rural economy, particularly with local businesses.
<b>EA2</b>	Promote specific land management practices.
<b>EA3</b>	Encourage economic returns that benefit the AONB.
<b>EA4</b>	Work with economic development and business professionals to identify, access and attract businesses that are appropriate to the AONB.
<b>EA5</b>	Encourage businesses to become more environmentally and economically sustainable, particularly in ways that sustain the natural beauty of the AONB.
<b>EA6</b>	Develop relationships with businesses that can help delivery of the Management Plan.
<b>EA7</b>	Create links with businesses to advise on best practice management within the AONB.
<b>EA8</b>	Support initiatives that improve the markets for products which originate from the AONB.
<b>EA9</b>	Support the development of new and existing markets for local timber and woodland produce through product development, improved marketing and entry into national certification schemes.
<b>EA10</b>	Support produce from farmland and heathland managed sustainably and in accordance with the AONB's needs.
<b>EA11</b>	Develop protocols and practices to identify the AONB with products that exemplify sustainable practice and land management.
<b>EA12</b>	Ensure tourism is sustainable and based upon the natural beauty and local distinctiveness of the AONB.
<b>EA13</b>	Ensure that economic returns from tourism help to benefit the AONB.
<b>Monitoring - to be completed when actions have been finalised</b>	
<b>EM1</b>	

## Recreation

<b>Actions</b>	
<b>RA1</b>	Encourage visitors to enjoy the AONB without incurring damage to its precious landscape and habitats through the development and implementation of a co-ordinated visitor management strategy.
<b>RA2</b>	Visitors will be encouraged to use formal access networks.
<b>RA3</b>	Develop the draft cycling strategy to full agreement with partners.
<b>RA4</b>	Develop the peace and tranquillity methodology with visitors to identify the most pressured areas.
<b>RA5</b>	Develop and implement mechanisms to protect the peaceful and tranquil areas.
<b>RA6</b>	Review action to date against the existing AONB Interpretation Strategy.
<b>RA7</b>	Update and implement new actions within the AONB Interpretation Strategy for co-ordinated provision of information and interpretation at agreed visitor locations.
<b>RA8</b>	Develop and implement tourism projects that showcase and protect the AONB.
<b>RA9</b>	The Partnership will liaise with those responsible for formal access networks to ensure their maintenance and use.
<b>RA10</b>	It will be ensured that formal access networks are well maintained and waymarked.
<b>RA11</b>	Develop and implement programmes for healthy activity.
<b>RA12</b>	Identify alternative visitor destinations to the AONB.
<b>RA13</b>	Encourage joint working with other visitor destinations and create links between them and the AONB.
<b>RA14</b>	Develop and implement a co-ordinated approach to visitor and recreation management to ensure that conflicts between multiple users, as well as the environment, are minimised.
<b>RA15</b>	Review recreational activities to monitor their effects.
<b>RA16</b>	Engage and involve responsible organised recreation bodies in the development, organisation and monitoring of appropriate recreational activity.
<b>RA17</b>	Support land managers to develop and promote regimes that address removal and reduction of litter and fouling.
<b>RA18</b>	Promote the local code of conduct created by the Partnership.
<b>RA19</b>	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.
<b>RA20</b>	Use signs to provide information and also to help create a sense of identity within the AONB.
<b>RA21</b>	Develop and implement projects to interpret and convey the importance of conserving and enhancing all aspects (cultural, historical, geological, environmental) of the landscape.
<b>RA22</b>	Review, update and adhere to the Partnership logo design rules, branding principles, Interpretation Strategy and Highways Design Guide in the implementation of signage projects.
<b>Monitoring - to be completed when actions have been finalised</b>	
<b>RM1</b>	

**Support**

<b>Actions</b>	
<b>SA1</b>	Ensure that the AONB management meets legislative requirements.
<b>SA2</b>	Maintain and develop effective partnerships to co-ordinate management.
<b>SA3</b>	Continue to progress contacts at a regional level with government agencies.
<b>SA4</b>	Hold meetings and other events in accordance with agreed constitution.
<b>SA5</b>	Each Partner must deliver all constitutional requirements.
<b>SA6</b>	Review regularly Topic and project action groups to ensure appropriate delivery throughout the period of the Plan.
<b>SA7</b>	Develop and implement a co-ordinated approach to educational visits.
<b>SA8</b>	Seek to include regular reports about the AONB Partnership within the reporting structure of all partners and feedback from partners on AONB issues.
<b>SA9</b>	Encourage the organisations that have statutory duties towards the AONB to meet them.
<b>SA10</b>	Ensure the AONB is appropriately represented in local, regional and national policies, plans and strategies.
<b>SA11</b>	Actively seek to champion the AONB with influencers, policy and decision makers at a local, regional, national and international level.
<b>SA12</b>	Strengthen links with other protected areas by the AONB Unit and partners through involvement with the NAAONB and other relevant organisations and networks.
<b>SA13</b>	Share knowledge and information about AONB issues both locally and amongst other AONBs.
<b>SA14</b>	Review the operation of the Planning Protocol, amend and update, as necessary.
<b>SA15</b>	Ensure a monitoring and review programme for the AONB Management Plan is maintained.
<b>SA16</b>	Landscape condition within and adjacent to the AONB will be monitored, assessed and appropriate measures supported to ensure landscape quality is maintained or enhanced.
<b>SA17</b>	Investigate, pursue and access all available funding sources to support delivery of the Management Plan.
<b>SA18</b>	Create grant funds to deliver individual projects, as appropriate.
<b>SA19</b>	Sustain local and national government funding and support for the AONB Unit.
<b>Monitoring - to be completed when actions have been finalised</b>	
<b>SM1</b>	