

Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan Review

1 Background

The Cannock Chase AONB Partnership is a legally established organisation tasked with the duty of conserving and enhancing the Cannock Chase AONB. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW), s85 places a duty on all public bodies to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an area of outstanding natural beauty. It also sets out that there must be a body acting together for the area. The Cannock Chase AONB Partnership fulfils this requirement. Under CROW, the Partnership must also prepare and publish a management plan for a five year period and review it at a mid point during the delivery period. As the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan covers 2004-2009, the review is now taking place. When it is complete a report on the review and its outcome must be presented to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

2 The review process

The review is not a total re-write. It assesses whether there are any changes in the context of the Management Plan such as new legislation, other linked strategies and policies and if these necessitate a change in the content of the Management Plan. It is also to assess progress made to date on delivering against the actions identified in the plan and whether these need changing, adding to or removing. Guidance on how to undertake the review points to the fact that it must be an expedient review, making sensible use of the resources available to undertake it and addressing essential points of change, if any are identified. The Partnership must consult with Natural England and other stakeholders in order to complete the review. However it is an opportunity to remind the broader "AONB community" about the area's needs and address their interests and any issues they wish to raise. For this reason, there is the opportunity for any interested organisation or individual to have input into the process. There are a number of ways in which this can be achieved and these are set out below.

Involving Stakeholders in the Review

3 Methods of involving others in the review.

The nominated representatives across the formal structure of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership will continue to be consulted and be involved in the roll out of the review process. It is anticipated that those who represent

organisations will involve their colleagues as appropriate. However there are a number of other ways in which everyone can be involved. These are:

- *Using the dedicated area of the Cannock Chase AONB website* and submitting comments or completing the questionnaire form provided. The website area can also be used to keep up to date with the review process as it moves forward.
- *Attendance at one of four "roadshows"* around the AONB area. Four dates at differing times have been set for anyone who wishes to come along and speak to representatives from the Partnership and offer their views or leave written comments at the venue.
- *Feedback from the Partnership's annual conference.* Exercises involving all the delegates in relation to the Management Plan were recorded at the event held in July 2007.
- *Involvement in topic groups relating to specific themes.* Meetings will be set as appropriate the process rolls out and dates and venues advertised on the website and by correspondence. Representations will be welcomed from all and interested parties can register their interest in specific topics via the Cannock Chase AONB Unit or the website. Meetings will be the exception and topic groups will undertake the majority of the more detailed review process by correspondence. Again, anyone not regularly involved in this work can register an interest and be included in circulation lists.
- *Separate representation.* At any stage of the process comments can be submitted. These should be received in order that they can be incorporated into the published schedule for review.

Open consultation on the overall Management Plan will finish on 31 March 2008. Throughout the rest of 2008, re-drafting of elements of the Management Plan will be taking place and will be subsequently consulted upon before being finalised. Anyone interested in having their say on a specific issue within the Management Plan should refer to the Review timetable and contact the AONB Unit to enable their involvement in this part of the drafting process.

4 Progress to date

Feedback from the annual conference held in July 2007, the public consultations and responses from the principal Partners within the AONB Partnership have identified that the same issues that were originally identified in the Management Plan are still appropriate. Some issues, such as water and wetlands and climate change, require expanding and greater focus within the plan. However the main comments* are that the AONB community remains satisfied with the overall content and direction of the Management

Plan. In addition, progress on delivery of the actions in the Management Plan has been tracked throughout its lifetime and logged. Some actions will therefore not need to be carried forward to the next five years' Management Plan (2009-14). Other actions relate to on-going work that will continue to be necessary to maintain the AONB.

Whilst the content of the Plan is meeting the AONB's needs, the style appears a little dated and makes it difficult to cross refer the Management Plan with other relevant policies and strategies that will run concurrent to its lifetime, such as the Regional Spatial Strategy. Some up-dating of factual and organisational information is also required. Overall, the main focus for the re-drafting and re-publication of the Management Plan will be on making it relevant to its current context and developing a more concise style of presentation.

*See the feedback summaries which will be posted on the publications/leaflets page on the website.