



Cannock Chase National Landscape

**Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership
Meeting of the Joint Committee
6th December 2023 at 14.00 HRS
To be held at the Main Conference Room, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Wolseley
Centre, ST17 0WT**

Members of the public are welcome to attend in person.

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| 1 | Welcome and introductions | | |
| 2 | Apologies for absence | | |
| 3 | Minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2023 | APPROVAL | 3 |
| 4 | Public questions | | 9 |
| 5 | Finance report <i>(a) To note progress on the current net revenue budget for 2023-24 and the current forecast position</i> <i>(b) To consider and approve a draft revenue budget for 2024-25</i> <i>(c) To note progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme</i> Report of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee | INFORMATION DECISION INFORMATION | 10 |
| 6 | Partner presentation - Cannock Chase Forest Plan 2024 - 2034 <i>To inform members about the refresh of the Cannock Chase Forest Plan</i> Verbal presentation by Shona Morton, Forestry England | INFORMATION | 20 |
| 7 | Accessibility Audit and Guide <i>To inform members about the preparation of an accessibility audit of Cannock Chase and Destination Access Audit for disabled persons</i> Verbal presentation by Steven Mifsud and Sophie Malton, Direct Access | INFORMATION | 21 |
| 8 | Cannock Chase National Landscape Annual Conference <i>To consider and approve proposed arrangements for the Annual Conference 2023/24</i> Report of the Communications Officer | DECISION | 22 |

| | | | |
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| 9 | <p>Changes to AONBs <i>To advise members of changes to AONBs, including the re-branding of AONBs to National Landscapes</i> Report of the Team Leader</p> | INFORMATION | 24 |
| 10 | <p>Planning update <i>To update members on National Landscape input to planning matters:</i> (a) <i>Development management and planning policy</i> (b) <i>High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2a</i> Report of the Team Leader</p> | INFORMATION | 29 |
| 11 | <p>Delivery of National Landscape activities <i>To inform members about progress on the delivery of key activities</i> Report of the Team Leader</p> | INFORMATION | 31 |
| 12 | <p>Date, time and venue of next meeting <i>March 2024 TBC</i></p> | | 36 |
| | <p>Exclusion of the Public and Press The Chairman to move: " That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the local Government Act 1972 (as amended) indicated below" Part Two (All reports in this section are exempt)</p> | | 37 |
| 13 | <p>Expressions of interest for advisors to the Joint Committee <i>To invite members to consider expressions of interest from individuals and organisations to become non-voting advisors to the Joint Committee</i> Report of the Team Leader</p> | DECISION | 37 |

Item 3 **Minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2023**

Item for: Noting
Author: Ian Marshall, Team Leader
Financial implications: None
Recommendations: The Committee notes the minutes of the meeting and considers any matters arising.

**Cannock Chase AONB Partnership
Meeting of the Joint Committee
Wednesday 12th July 2023 at 14.00 HRS**

Held at the Rising Brook Community Church, Burton Square, Stafford ST17 9LT

(Draft) Minutes

Attendees

Voting Members present

Cllr Victoria Wilson (VW)
Cllr Tony Pearce (TP)
Cllr Kath Perry (KP)
Cllr Andrea Muckley (AM)
Cllr Alex Farrell (AF)

Representing

Staffordshire County Council
Stafford Borough Council
South Staffordshire Council
Cannock Chase District Council
Lichfield District Council

Officers

| | | |
|----------------|-------|------------------------------|
| Ian Marshall | (IM) | AONB Unit |
| Richard Harris | (RH) | AONB Unit |
| Samantha Hall | (SH) | AONB Unit |
| Colin Manning | (CMa) | AONB Unit |
| Catherine Mann | (CM) | Staffordshire County Council |
| Sarah Bentley | (SB) | Staffordshire County Council |
| Katherine Ross | (KR) | Staffordshire County Council |
| John Rowe | (JR) | Staffordshire County Council |

Advisers

| | | |
|------------------|------|-------------------------------|
| June Jukes | (JJ) | Friends of Cannock Chase |
| Doug Smith | (DS) | British Horse Society |
| Steve Hopkins | (SH) | CPRE Staffordshire |
| Sarah Burgess | (SB) | CPRE Staffordshire |
| Kinga Niedzinska | (KN) | Cannock Chase SAC Partnership |
| Roger Broadbent | (RB) | West Midland Bird Club |
| Wendy Bannerman | (WB) | British Horse Society |

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

1.1 The election of Chair and Vice-Chair for the next 12 months was overseen by John Rowe, Honorary Secretary of the AONB Joint Committee.

1.2 A call for nominations of Chair was made. Councillor Perry proposed Councillor Wilson as Chair of the Joint Committee for the next 12 months. This was seconded by Councillor Farrell. No further nominations were received.

1.3 A call for nominations for Vice-Chair was made. Councillor Pearce was nominated to be appointed as Vice-Chair for the next 12 Months. Councillor Muckley seconded the proposal. No further nominations were received.

1.4 **RESOLVED:**

(1) That Councillor Wilson is appointed Chair of the AONB Joint Committee for the next 12 months.

(2) That Councillor Pearce is appointed Vice-Chair of the AONB Joint Committee for the next 12 months.

2. Welcome and introductions

2.1 Councillor Wilson opened proceedings and welcomed everyone to the meeting of the AONB Partnership Joint Committee.

3. Apologies for absence

3.1 Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Mike Wilcox (Lichfield District Council) (Cllr Alex Farrell attending as substitute), Mary Cope (Beaudesert Park Farm), Patrick Walker (South Staffordshire Borough Council), Sushil Birdi (Cannock Chase Council), Nick Carter (Historic England), Staffordshire Parish Council Association, George Sharp (Cannock Chase SAC Partnership), Hayley Mival (National Trust).

4. Draft minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2022

4.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th December 2022 were submitted. IM explained that as none of the members present today attended the meeting on 8th December, the minutes could only be noted.

4.2 **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the previous meeting are noted.

5. Public Questions

5.1 No questions were received.

6. Finance Report – Revenue Budget 2023/24

6.1 Katherine Ross (KR), SCC Strategic Finance Business Partner advised:

- The final outturn for 2022/23 was a small underspend of £1,026, which has been transferred into the AONB Reserve. The Sustainable Development Fund was underspent and the funds reallocated to AONB Projects. An overspend on AONB Projects was offset by an external funding contribution from the SAC Partnership towards the Future Guardians programme for young people. The budget for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme was underspent against the grant, which will have to be repaid to Defra.
- The revenue budget for 2023/24 includes a contribution from the AONB Reserve to balance. The amount of the contribution has been slightly reduced due to one-off savings following the retirement of the AONB Landscape Planning Officer. The budget is predicting a breakeven position.
- The balance on the AONB Reserve has been reduced following the contribution to this year's core budget.
- The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme budget is predicting a breakeven position.

6.2 RB queried the level of money in the SAC Partnership. It was explained that this fund is not the responsibility of the AONB, and that it is a question to ask Stafford Borough Council.

6.3 Members of the Committee asked if more could be done to encourage farmers to take-up the Farming in Protected Landscapes grants. Officers explained that farmer engagement was new in the AONB and that Cannock Chase receives a very heavy amount of money due to the funding formula that is used to allocate funds to individual protected landscapes. It was noted that a second officer has just been recruited to help promote and deliver the Programme.

6.4 **RESOLVED:**

(1) That the final outturn position for 2022/23 for the Core, Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), AONB Projects, Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme and the closing balance held on the AONB reserve are noted.

(2) That progress on the current net revenue budget for 2023/24 and its current forecast outturn position are noted.

(3) That progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme is noted.

7. **AONB Annual Review 2022-23**

7.1 SH presented to members the latest Annual Review of the achievements of the AONB Partnership during 2022-23. It showcases the breadth of work that has gone on in delivering our core purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of Cannock Chase.

7.2 Members of the Committee congratulated officers for a superb Annual Review and for the range of work that has been delivered. The work to improve accessibility was particularly welcomed and encouraged. When referring to toilet facilities, it was requested that the term 'accessible toilets' is used.

7.3 The adoption of the Cannock Chase Code was welcomed by Members. RB would like to see more communication to reduce the impact of off-lead dogs on ground nesting birds. SH explained how communication messages around nightjars was being shared amongst partners to ensure consistent messaging. Members advised that communication needs to be proactive and well in advance of anticipated issues. Schoolchildren were highlighted as a particularly important target audience. KN drew attention to the free school sessions that the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust is offering on behalf of the SAC Partnership. Third sector organisations, for example, Round Table groups are another important outlet for communication.

7.4 **RESOLVED:**
That the Annual Review is approved for publication.

8. **AONB Business Plan 2023-25**

8.1 IM presented the forward work programme for the AONB set out in the 2-year business plan 2023-25 and gave a verbal update of the key priorities for each of the AONB Management Plan themes. Delivery of the Business Plan will mean that all the policies and actions set out in the current AONB Management Plan will be delivered by 2025.

8.2 Members of the Committee expressed their praise and support for the Business Plan.

8.3 **RESOLVED:**
That the new 2-year Business Plan (2023-25) is approved.

9. **National Landscapes rebrand**

9.1 SH updated members on the development of a National Landscapes brand, including the re-naming of AONBs as 'National Landscapes'. She explained the vision behind this move and its rationale, as well as the implications locally for Cannock Chase.

9.2 Members of the Committee supported the proposed name change to 'National Landscape' for both Cannock Chase the place as well as the organisation. Concerns were expressed about adopting the visual identity that has been developed for Cannock Chase:

- The existing Cannock Chase brand and visual identity was only recently introduced and is widely supported, therefore making the timing of a further change not ideal
- The costs to implement the new brand are significant, and cannot be justified in the present economic climate
- The consequences and impacts nationally to the proposed re-brand for AONBs are unclear and unknown at this time

9.3 **RESOLVED:**
(1) That Cannock Chase uses the name 'National Landscapes' for both the place and organisation.

(2) That a decision about adopting the new visual identity and logo is delayed until there is a clearer picture nationally around the consequences and impacts of the AONB rebrand, and in particular around support to cover the costs of implementation.

10. **Representation on Assessment Panels for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme and AONB Sustainable Development Fund**

10.1 CM and RH informed members about the panels that operate to support the allocations of grants for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme and AONB Sustainable Development Fund. Owing to recent changes arising from local elections, Joint Committee representation on both panels has been vacated, and replacements are being invited.

10.2 **RESOLVED:**

(1) Councillor Tony Pearce will sit on the panel for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme.

(2) Councillor Andrea Muckley will sit on the panel for the AONB Sustainable Development Fund.

11. **Cannock Chase Charitable Fund**

11.1 IM presented a proposal to establish a charitable fund for business and voluntary giving, and distributing the monies gained through grants to activities that support the delivery of the AONB Management Plan. He explained that other AONBs operate similar funds to support core activities, and that this would be set up as a partnership between The Community Foundation for Staffordshire and Staffordshire County Council (on behalf of the AONB Partnership). The arrangement offers a low administrative burden for the AONB Partnership and the opportunity to broaden the funding base of the AONB.

11.2 Members of the Committee expressed their support for the proposal.

11.3 **RESOLVED:**

That the establishment of a Charitable Fund between Cannock Chase AONB Partnership and The Community Foundation for Staffordshire is approved.

12. **Dark Skies Project – AONB Good Lighting Guide**

12.1 IM updated members about the delivery of community engagement activities to raise awareness of the importance of dark skies, as well as the preparation of a Good Lighting Guide for the AONB. He explained how the surrounding conurbations spill light into the AONB, affecting its tranquillity and impacting on human health and wildlife behaviours. Working with CPRE Staffordshire, the AONB intends to support further community events in 2024 to promote the wonder of our dark skies. The Good Lighting Guide will be widely circulated to local planning authorities and land and property owners.

12.2 Members of the Committee commented on the issues of bright lights used, for example, on menages, businesses, all weather football pitches and in householder

gardens, and suggested broadening the circulation of the Guide to equestrian owners, business centre managers, leisure centres, parish councils, libraries and through local council newsletters.

12.3 RESOLVED:

(1) That the success of the community engagement element of the Dark Skies project is noted.

(2) That the Cannock Chase AONB Good Lighting Guide and its publication on the AONB website is approved.

13. Future meeting dates

13.1 The date for the next meeting is Wednesday 6th December, and the venue has been switched to the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's Wolseley Centre.

13.2 RESOLVED:

That the date and venue for the December meeting is noted.

PART TWO

The Committee then considered the following item.

14. Staff update and proposals.

Item 4**Public questions****Item for:**

Questions received (in advance) from members of the public

Author:

None

Financial implications:

None

Recommendations:

The Committee notes the questions and is invited to respond.

Item 5 Finance report – Revenue Budget 2023/24 and 2024/25

Item for: Noting and Decision

Author: Nikki Mihajlovic, Senior Finance Business Partner

Financial implications: The Joint Committee in its role under the AONB Partnership Agreement is responsible for the management of the core funding from Defra and the co-ordination of partner projects.

Recommendations:

1. That progress on the current net revenue budget for 2023/24 and its current forecast outturn position is noted.
2. The approval of the net revenue budget for 2024/25 is recommended to the Joint Committee.
3. That progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme is noted.

Background

1. The Joint Committee in its role under the AONB Partnership Agreement is responsible for the management of the core funding from DEFRA and the co-ordination of the partner projects.
2. This paper sets out progress on the current net revenue budget for 2023/24 and its current forecast outturn position, and also presents a net revenue budget for 2024/25. The recommendations represent an effective way to continue to carry forward the implementation of the Management Plan for the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership.

Revenue Budget Update 2023/24

3. The approved budget presented at the last Joint Committee for the AONB for 2023/24 was £237,700. The current forecast outturn position when compared to budget is a breakeven position, this is after transferring £13,070 from the AONB reserve to fund the core services funding shortfall (as approved by Joint Committee on 8 December 2022), which is £2,680 less than originally budgeted. There has also been a further transfer from the reserve of £5,000 to fund hosting and support for the AONB website that was previously not built into the budget for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 1.
4. The individual projects, totalling £10,000 for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) including the £1,000 administration fee, are set out in Appendix 2.
5. The individual projects, totalling £14,536 for the AONB Projects are set out in Appendix 3. Currently £613 of the original £15,150 budget remains unallocated.

Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme

6. Since July 2020 the AONB has been delivering the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme collaborating with farmers and land managers. The funding is for a three-year programme and is provided by Defra and is additional funding on top of the annual core grant that the AONB receives.

7. The detailed net position for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme is set out in Appendix 4 and is compared to the approved budget of £502,890. The current forecast outturn position when compared to budget is a breakeven position. In the event of there being any underspend, this will have to be returned to Defra.

Reserve

8. The balance on the Cannock Chase AONB Reserve currently stands at £70,448 for 2023/24. A summary of the Reserve is attached as Appendix 5.
9. It has previously been recommended that the priorities for the use of the Reserve Fund should be as follows:
 - Income from sales, donations and consultancy work should be available to supplement the delivery of projects within the Annual Action Plans and to provide 'matched funding' for any major grant applications and;
 - The remaining funds should be earmarked to enable the AONB unit to respond to the implications of any potential future reductions in funding.
10. These priorities are reviewed annually in December of each year.
11. It is anticipated that the balance on the reserve at the end of 2023/24 will be £54,228, after accounting for the proposed transfers in and out of the reserve.

Revenue Budget 2024/25

12. The level of core grant support from DEFRA for national landscapes for 2024/25 has yet to be announced. Indicative allocations received in 2022/23 suggest that the DEFRA grant will remain at the same level as 2023/24 which is £172,750, which when combined with Local Authority contributions, this would give rise to a total budget allocation for 2024/25 of £221,950.
13. Further salary increases in 2023/24 combined with anticipated further increases in 2024/25 are going to place pressures on the Revenue budget for 2024/25. Two options have been calculated for the net revenue budget for 2024/25 for Members' views.
14. Option 1 is set out in Appendix 6 and assumes an inflationary uplift on pay of 3% and pension contributions of 1% and no inflationary uplift on other expenditure budgets:
 - This option results in a funding shortfall of £13,240.
 - In order to mitigate the funding shortfall, it is proposed that £13,240 would be transferred from the AONB reserve to achieve a balanced budget. This would reduce the balance on the Reserves from its current anticipated level at the end of 2023/24 of £54,228 to £40,988.
15. Option 2 is set out in Appendix 7 and assumes an inflationary uplift on pay of 3% and pension contributions of 1% and no inflationary uplift on other expenditure budgets:
 - This option results in a funding shortfall of £13,240.
 - To mitigate the funding shortfall, it is proposed that the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) budget is reduced by £5,000 and the AONB projects

budget is reduced by £8,240 to give rise to a saving of £13,240, which would then be re-allocated to the core funding budget to achieve a balance budget.

16. Neither option requires an increase in Local Authority contributions.
17. The 2024/25 net revenue budget, subject to approval by the AONB Joint Committee at today's meeting, will form the basis of the annual grant submission to Defra in January 2024.

Equalities Implications

18. This report has been prepared in accordance with the Equal Opportunities policies of the County Council.

Legal Implications

19. Actions recommended in this report are in accordance with the provisions of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership Agreement.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

20. This report recommends actions to ensure the continued efficient delivery of the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan and reflects the principles set out in the Partnership Agreements.

Risk Implications

21. If continuity of funding and spend are not continued as recommended to the Joint Committee, then the five authorities involved in the current Partnership will need to seek other methods of fulfilling their statutory obligations for the AONB under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Recommendations

22. The following recommendations are made to the Joint Committee:
 - (4) That progress on the current net revenue budget for 2023/24 and its current forecast outturn position is noted.
 - (5) The approval of the net revenue budget for 2024/25 is recommended to the Joint Committee.
 - (6) That progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme is noted.

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

Cannock Chase AONB Core & Project Costs

Forecast for 2023/2024

| | Budget | 2023 Actuals | Predicted Outturn | Variation |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Core Budget | | | | |
| Salaries | 188,420 | 90,096 | 165,868 | -22,552 |
| Consultancy Costs | 0 | 12,993 | 19,500 | 19,500 |
| Training Expenses | 1,510 | 1,133 | 1,510 | 0 |
| Travel and Subsistence | 700 | 778 | 1,000 | 300 |
| Staff and Associated Costs | 190,630 | 105,000 | 187,878 | -2,752 |
| Office Equipment | 1,400 | 1,193 | 1,400 | 0 |
| Annual Audit | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Volunteer Costs | 500 | 0 | 200 | -300 |
| National Liaison | 3,160 | 2,928 | 2,928 | -232 |
| Print & Publicity | 4,140 | 1,949 | 3,000 | -1,140 |
| AONB Website | 0 | 0 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| Annual Conference | 2,000 | -1,467 | 2,000 | 0 |
| Core Activity (including monitoring, community involvement, etc) | 1,720 | 1,871 | 3,550 | 1,830 |
| Partnership Running Costs | 9,000 | 0 | 9,000 | 0 |
| Core Budget Subtotal | 212,550 | 111,473 | 214,956 | 2,406 |
| Sustainable Development Fund | 10,000 | 613 | 10,000 | 0 |
| AONB Projects | 15,150 | -7,814 | 15,150 | 0 |
| SDF/AONB Projects Subtotal | 25,150 | -7,201 | 25,150 | 0 |
| Total Budget/Initial Forecast Outturn | 237,700 | 104,272 | 240,106 | 2,406 |
| Funded By: | | | | |
| DEFRA Grant | | | | |
| Core | -147,600 | -147,602 | -147,600 | 0 |
| Sustainable Development Fund | -10,000 | -10,000 | -10,000 | 0 |
| AONB Projects | -15,150 | -15,150 | -15,150 | 0 |
| DEFRA Grant Subtotal | -172,750 | -172,752 | -172,750 | 0 |
| Local Authority Contributions | | | | |
| Lichfield District Council | -2,460 | -2,503 | -2,503 | -43 |
| South Staffordshire District Council | -2,460 | -2,503 | -2,503 | -43 |
| Cannock Chase District Council | -9,840 | 0 | -9,840 | 0 |
| Stafford Borough Council | -9,840 | 0 | -9,840 | 0 |
| Staffordshire County Council | -24,600 | 0 | -24,600 | 0 |
| Local Authority Contributions Subtotal | -49,200 | -5,006 | -49,286 | -86 |
| Sales and Donations | 0 | -850 | 0 | 0 |
| Membership Fee Income | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Website Development Contribution from reserve | 0 | 0 | -5,000 | -5,000 |
| Funding from(+)/to reserve(-) | -15,750 | 0 | -13,070 | 2,680 |
| Total Funding | -237,700 | -178,608 | -240,106 | -2,406 |

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

Sustainable Development Fund

Budget Update for 2023/24

| | Budget | Spent or Committed to Date | Predicted Outturn | Variation |
|---|---------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Approved Projects | | | | |
| West Midlands Ringing Group - Nightjar thermal drone | 3,706 | 0 | 3,705 | -1 |
| John Bamford Primary School - wildlife garden | 3,500 | 0 | 3,500 | 0 |
| West Hill Primary School - bat, bird and wildlife boxes | 486 | 486 | 486 | 0 |
| Beaudesert Park Farm - improved learning opportunities | 1,308 | 0 | 618 | -690 |
| West Midland Bird Group Accrual | 0 | 127 | 127 | 127 |
| Unallocated Spend | 0 | 0 | 350 | 350 |
| Approved Projects Total | 9,000 | 613 | 8,786 | -214 |
| Admin Fees | 1,000 | 0 | 1,000 | 0 |
| SDF Funding Transfer to AONB Projects | 0 | 0 | 214 | 214 |
| TOTAL | 10,000 | 613 | 10,000 | 0 |

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

AONB Projects

Budget Update for 2023/2024

| | Budget | Spent or Committed to Date | Predicted Outturn | Variation |
|---|---------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Approved Projects | | | | |
| Future Guardians of Cannock Chase | 1,610 | 1,610 | 1,610 | 0 |
| Museum of Cannock Chase display | 188 | 88 | 188 | 0 |
| Brindley Heath, Milford Common, RAF Hednesford Trails | 290 | 0 | 290 | 0 |
| Walking Cannock Chase promoted routes | 500 | 0 | 500 | 0 |
| Dark Skies - CPRE Stargazing Event 21/02/2024 | 606 | 0 | 606 | 0 |
| Cannock Chase Charitable Fund - Legal Oversight | 1,500 | 0 | 1,500 | 0 |
| AONB Adder Land Owner Training Day | 500 | 500 | 500 | 0 |
| Stream Corridor & Aquatic Intertebrate Survey | 5,250 | 0 | 5,250 | 0 |
| Deer Impact & Activity Survey | 3,257 | 0 | 3,257 | 0 |
| Corten Steel Great War Hut Panel Costs | 335 | 0 | 335 | 0 |
| Deer Management Strategy Artwork Production | 500 | 0 | 500 | 0 |
| 22/23 Project Accrual Variation | 0 | 828 | 828 | 828 |
| Approved Projects Total | 14,536 | 3,026 | 15,364 | 828 |
| Currently Unallocated | 614 | 0 | 0 | -614 |
| Re-allocation of Funds to SDF Projects | 0 | 0 | -214 | -214 |
| Additional DEFRA Funding | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 15,150 | 3,026 | 15,150 | 0 |

Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant

Forecast for 2023/2024

| | Budget | 2023 Actuals | Predicted Outturn | Variation |
|---|----------------|---------------|----------------------|-----------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Farming in Protected Landscapes Expenditure: | | | | |
| Programme Administration | 41,540 | 12,597 | 41,540 | 0 |
| Programme Advice & Guidance | 70,630 | 25,195 | 70,630 | 0 |
| Project Spend | 390,720 | 1,516 | 390,720 | 0 |
| Total Budget/Initial Forecast Outturn | 502,890 | 39,308 | 502,890 | 0 |
| | | | | |
| Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant | -502,890 | -38,968 | -502,890 | 0 |
| Total Funding | 0 | 340 | 0 | 0 |

Cannock Chase AONB Reserve

| Financial Year | Opening Balance | Income/Sales | Great War Hut Donations | Membership Fees | Visitor Survey Work | Website Development | Admin Fees | Transfer to/from Reserve | Balance of Admin Fees / Underspends | Interest | Transfer To Fund Core Service | Closing Balance |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | | £ | | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| 2007/2008 | 10,214 | | | | | | | -1,766 | -1,766 | | | 8,448 |
| 2008/2009 | 8,448 | 572 | | | | | 9,303 | -1,590 | 7,713 | | | 16,733 |
| 2009/2010 | 16,733 | 1,326 | | | | | 6,166 | -371 | 5,795 | | | 23,854 |
| 2010/2011 | 23,854 | 896 | | 525 | 9,564 | | 4,744 | -921 | 3,823 | | | 38,662 |
| 2011/2012 | 38,662 | 1,240 | | 1,367 | 17,845 | | 3,983 | -4,204 | -221 | | | 58,893 |
| 2012/2013 | 58,893 | 387 | | 1,108 | | | 3,218 | -533 | 2,685 | 195 | | 63,270 |
| 2013/2014 | 63,270 | 1,001 | | 1,675 | | | 2,459 | 0 | 2,459 | 249 | | 68,654 |
| 2014/2015 | 68,654 | 596 | | 1,720 | | | 1,327 | -54 | 1,273 | 289 | | 72,532 |
| 2015/2016 | 72,532 | | | 569 | | | 500 | -2,383 | -1,883 | 293 | | 71,512 |
| 2016/2017 | 71,512 | 1,475 | | 553 | | | 1,565 | -108 | 1,457 | 132 | | 75,129 |
| 2017/2018 | 75,129 | 1,471 | | 52 | | | 1,809 | 30,703 | 32,512 | 189 | | 109,353 |
| 2018/2019 | 109,353 | 169 | | 104 | | | 2,056 | 34,361 | 36,417 | 685 | | 146,728 |
| 2019/2020 | 146,728 | | | | | | 2,307 | -94,792 | -92,485 | 577 | | 54,819 |
| 2020/2021 | 54,819 | | | | | | 1,307 | 0 | 1,307 | 78 | | 56,204 |
| 2021/2022 | 56,204 | 5,740 | | | | | 1,000 | 3,418 | 4,418 | 44 | | 66,406 |
| 2022/2023 | 66,406 | 50 | 594 | | | | 1,000 | 1,026 | 2,026 | 1,372 | | 70,448 |
| 2023/2024 | 70,448 | 604 | 246 | | | -5,000 | 1,000 | | | | -13,070 | 54,228 |

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

Cannock Chase AONB Core & Project Costs

Draft Cannock Chase AONB Budget 2024-25 - Option 1

| | Total Budget £ | Defra Grant £ |
|--|-------------------|------------------|
| AONB Core Budget | | |
| Staff Salaries and Associated costs | 188,120 | 141,090 |
| Office Equipment | 1,400 | 1,050 |
| Annual Audit | 0 | 0 |
| Volunteers | 500 | 375 |
| National Liaison | 3,160 | 2,370 |
| Print & Publicity | 4,140 | 3,105 |
| Partnership Running Costs | 9,000 | 6,750 |
| AONB Website | 0 | 0 |
| Annual Conference | 2,000 | 1,500 |
| Core Activity (including monitoring, community involvement, etc) | 1,720 | 1,290 |
| Core Budget Subtotal | 210,040 | 157,530 |
| Sustainable Development Fund | 10,000 | 10,000 |
| AONB Projects | 15,150 | 15,150 |
| Total Budget | 235,190 | 182,680 |

| | Total | % of Expenditure |
|---|-----------------|------------------|
| Funded By: | | |
| DEFRA Grant | | |
| Core | -147,600 | 75.00% |
| Sustainable Development Fund | -10,000 | 100.00% |
| AONB Projects | -15,150 | 100.00% |
| DEFRA Grant Subtotal | -172,750 | |
| Local Authority Contributions | | |
| Cannock Chase Council | -9,840 | 5.00% |
| Stafford Borough Council | -9,840 | 5.00% |
| Lichfield District Council | -2,460 | 1.25% |
| South Staffordshire Council | -2,460 | 1.25% |
| Staffordshire County Council | -24,600 | 12.50% |
| Local Authority Contributions Subtotal | -49,200 | 25.00% |
| Total Income | -221,950 | 100.00% |

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Budget Shortfall | 13,240 |
|-------------------------|---------------|

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

Cannock Chase AONB Core & Project Costs

Draft Cannock Chase AONB Budget 2024-25 - Option 2

| | Total Budget £ | Defra Grant £ |
|--|-------------------|------------------|
| AONB Core Budget | | |
| Staff Salaries and Associated costs | 188,120 | 141,090 |
| Office Equipment | 1,400 | 1,050 |
| Annual Audit | 0 | 0 |
| Volunteers | 500 | 375 |
| National Liaison | 3,160 | 2,370 |
| Print & Publicity | 4,140 | 3,105 |
| Partnership Running Costs | 9,000 | 6,750 |
| AONB Website | 0 | 0 |
| Annual Conference | 2,000 | 1,500 |
| Core Activity (including monitoring, community involvement, etc) | 1,720 | 1,290 |
| Core Budget Subtotal | 210,040 | 157,530 |
| Sustainable Development Fund | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| AONB Projects | 6,910 | 6,910 |
| Total Budget | 221,950 | 169,440 |

| | Total | % of Expenditure |
|---|-----------------|------------------|
| Funded By: | | |
| DEFRA Grant | | |
| Core | -147,600 | 75.00% |
| Sustainable Development Fund | -10,000 | 100.00% |
| AONB Projects | -15,150 | 100.00% |
| DEFRA Grant Subtotal | -172,750 | |
| Local Authority Contributions | | |
| Cannock Chase Council | -9,840 | 5.00% |
| Stafford Borough Council | -9,840 | 5.00% |
| Lichfield District Council | -2,460 | 1.25% |
| South Staffordshire Council | -2,460 | 1.25% |
| Staffordshire County Council | -24,600 | 12.50% |
| Local Authority Contributions Subtotal | -49,200 | 25.00% |
| Total Income | -221,950 | 100.00% |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Item 6 | Partner presentation – Cannock Chase Forest Plan 2024 - 2034 |
| Item for: | Information |
| Author: | Verbal presentation by Shona Morton, Forestry England |
| Financial implications: | None |
| Recommendations: | The Committee notes the presentation and is invited to ask questions. |

Item 7**Accessibility Audit and Guide****Item for:**

Information

Author:

Steven Mifsud and Sophie Malton, Direct Access

Financial implications:

The preparation of the audit and guide was funded from Defra's Access for All Fund. Recommendations will be discussed with partners, and funding for implementation sought from various sources as appropriate, for example, Access for All and Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme.

Recommendations:

The Committee notes the presentation and is invited to ask questions.

Item 8 Cannock Chase National Landscape Annual Conference

Item for: Decision

Author: Sam Hall, Communications Officer

Financial implications: The National Landscape budget includes an allocation of £2,000 for the Annual Conference.

Recommendations: The Joint Committee is requested to approve the proposals set out for the 2023/24 Annual Conference.

Background

1. The governance arrangements for Cannock Chase National Landscape include a commitment to hold an annual conference to discuss our activities and issues.
2. The last annual conference was held in March 2023 at Brocton Hall Golf club, with the theme The Chase Through Time – Legacy, lessons and what happens next.
3. A proposal for the conference for 2024 is set out, to take place in March or April 2024. The proposed theme for the conference is Nature Recovery.

Conference theme

4. Cannock Chase is blessed with a diverse range of habitats, rich in wildlife. It enriches our lives and is integral to the special qualities that define the protected landscape.
5. The Government is committed to protecting 30% of our land and sea for nature by 2030. Protected Landscapes are expected to make a significant contribution to this target.
6. Required by law under the Environment Act 2021, every county in England will have to produce a Local Nature Recovery Strategy to restore, create and connect habitats across their area. Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council are currently working on the preparation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which will include Cannock Chase. Decisions about where and how to recover nature will be reached through consultation with a wide range of people and groups in each county, from ecologists and community groups to health professionals and local businesses.
7. In 2024 we will begin the process of reviewing the AONB Management Plan. Nature recovery will be central to our vision for the area for the next 5 years. The conference theme of nature recovery is, therefore, timely in terms of national and local aspirations, and will allow us to reflect on the state of nature in the National Landscape; what we mean by nature recovery; and how we can work in partnership for nature.
8. The conference will also allow us to celebrate the National Landscape's achievements over the past year and look forward to future plans for England's Protected Landscapes.

Conference programme

9. This will be a one-day event. The target audience is primarily local comprising National Landscape partners, stakeholders, organisations with an interest in nature, wildlife and environment and the public. The date for the event is provisionally earmarked for Thursday 25th April 2024.
10. Presentations will focus on the state of nature on Cannock Chase and how we are tackling this in practice and partnership. National context and perspectives will also be presented. Opportunities for questions to speakers are built in throughout both morning and afternoon sessions. There will be a small exhibition of local and regional organisations who will be invited to bring displays to show projects they are currently working on and encourage conversations and discussion in the coffee and lunch breaks.
11. The provisional programme for the event is set out below.

| | | |
|----|---------------|--|
| | 09.30-10.30 | Arrival for coffee, networking and view partners exhibition |
| AM | 10.30-10.35 | CONFERENCE WELCOME and opening remarks |
| | 10.35-11.00 | Review of the year |
| | 11.00-11.30 | Q&A |
| | 11.30- 12.00 | The future for AONB's in conversation with Defra |
| | 12.00 -12.15 | Q&A |
| | 12.15 – 13.45 | LUNCH and opportunity for networking and view exhibition |
| PM | 13.45 – 14.00 | Nature Recovery – setting the scene |
| | 14.00 – 14.15 | The state of nature on Cannock Chase |
| | 14.15 – 15.00 | Nature Recovery in practice and partnership (3 case studies) |
| | 15.00 – 15.20 | Thinking big – landscape scale nature recovery |
| | 15.20-15.30 | Q&A |
| | 15.30 | CONFERENCE CLOSING REMARKS |
| | 15.30-16.00 | View exhibition |

Event management

12. Cannock Chase National Landscapes Team will be responsible for the programme content, promotion and event management. The conference will be promoted from early January through all partners and stakeholders, the National Landscapes website and direct to our newsletter subscribers.
13. A number of possible venues for the conference are being investigated.
14. The anticipated costs for the event comprise: venue hire, lunch and refreshments. Keynote speaker fees may need to be added to these costs, but are as yet unknown.

Recommendation

15. The Committee is requested to approve the proposed arrangements for the 2023/24 Annual Conference.

Item 9 Changes to AONBs

Item for: Information

Author: Ian Marshall, Team Leader

Financial implications: AONB activities are currently funded through a combination of Defra (75%) and local authority (25%) contributions.

Recommendations: The Committee notes the changes to AONBs, including the re-branding to National Landscapes, and is invited to ask questions.

Background

1. The 'Glover' Landscapes Review of National Parks and AONBs in England, published in September 2019, contained 27 proposals for Government. Proposal 24 stated that *"AONBs should be strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, and renamed as National Landscapes."*
2. The Government issued a consultation setting out its response to the Glover review on 15 January 2022. The Government's formal response to the Glover Review is still awaited, but expected shortly.
3. A series of amendments to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB), adopted by the Government, will require relevant authorities in England to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, and enable the Secretary of State to make provision to require relevant authorities in England to contribute to furthering Management Plan targets and actions. Further legislation will be required to fully implement updated powers and purposes for AONBs.
4. The National Association for AONBs (now the National Landscapes Association) has been working closely with DEFRA to foster collaboration and collective action and create a national landscape designation fit for the 21st Century.
5. This report advises members on the major changes for AONBs that are in preparation and considers their implications.

New duty 'to further the purpose of AONBs'

6. Current legislation (Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) requires that *'in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect land'* in an AONB *'a relevant authority shall have regard to'* their statutory purposes.
7. The introduction of new legislation in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill replaces the duty *'of regard'* with a stronger requirement on partners to *'must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty'*.
8. The addition of *'must seek to further'* will ensure that more rigorous attention is paid to the statutory purposes of the designation which is greater than simply giving or having consideration when taking decisions or undertaking actions which may affect the designation. The proposed change would provide for a more structured and proactive

process, one which is undertaken with greater transparency of the best endeavour. This would help public bodies, like local authorities or Natural England, to fully understand why, for example, if a scheme or proposal does not further AONB purposes what other actions, adaptations or mitigations are implemented instead. It should also help the planning system and associated appeals procedures to operate more efficiently by providing a more substantive test against which decisions can be measured.

Enhanced Management Plans

9. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill also makes provisions to enhance management plans to contribute to meeting any target set under Chapter 1 of Part 1 of the Environment Act 2021;
 - These are long-term Environmental targets, which relates to—
 1. (a) the natural environment, or
(b) people’s enjoyment of the natural environment.
With priority areas of (a) air quality; (b) water; (c) biodiversity;
(d) resource efficiency and waste reduction.
 2. Particulate matter
 3. Species abundance
10. Making AONB Management Plans contribute to these national targets will significantly strengthen the status of National Landscapes and their Plans.
11. The Secretary of State may also make provision requiring a relevant authority in England to contribute to the preparation, implementation or review of AONB Management Plans.
12. Currently, under the CRoW Act Section 89, local authorities have to produce a AONB Management Plan and review it every 5 years. But there is no requirement to implement the Plan. This provision amends that oversight.
13. It is worth noting that the Secretary of State will also be covered by the new duty ‘to further the purpose’ of AONBs, which would be progressed by making these new provisions.

Targets and Outcomes Framework for Protected Landscapes

14. Defra, Natural England and other partners have been working to identify priority nationally aligned targets that will be set for all 44 protected landscapes in England as a collective. New ambitious outcomes will be agreed to deliver on the government’s goals for nature recovery and climate, aligned with the revised 25 Year Environment Plan as well as environmental targets under the Environment Act 2021 and the Net Zero Strategy. Natural England will monitor and evaluate progress against the key indicators and outcomes and will also support individual protected landscapes to translate these targets into their management plans.
15. The national targets are waiting to be signed off by the Secretary of State. The extrapolation and apportioning of national targets and outcomes down to individual

National Landscapes needs careful consideration to be fair, meaningful and achievable. Given that National Landscape Teams have limited powers and resources to deliver direct change, the accountability for the delivery of the targets and outcomes will need clarification.

Guidance for AONB and National Park Management Plans

16. The preparation of updated guidance for AONB and National Park Management Plans is ongoing. In addition to being aligned with national priorities and targets, future management plans will also need to ensure clear alignment with Local Nature Recovery Strategies so as to facilitate delivery of priority nature recovery actions without duplication.
17. In accordance with Defra guidance, Cannock Chase National Landscape opted to delay the review of its management plan by 12 months in order to allow the new management plan guidance and protected landscape outcomes to be published and considered.

Protected Landscapes Partnership

18. The Government agrees with the finding of the Landscapes Review that stronger governance is needed to provide national leadership and coordination for our Protected Landscapes. It is, therefore, supporting the creation of a new partnership between the National Landscape Association, National Parks England, National Trails UK and Natural England to deliver a range of exciting projects and programmes on nature recovery and widening access to nature. The partnership will also boost opportunities for private sector investment in our Protected Landscapes. The first meeting of the partnership is due to take place at the end of November, and it will be backed by over £2m of funding.

National Landscapes name and rebrand

19. On November 22nd all AONBs in England and Wales were re-named as National Landscapes, including Cannock Chase which has become Cannock Chase National Landscape. The new name reflects our national importance; the vital contribution we all make to protect the nation from the threats of climate change, nature depletion and the wellbeing crisis, whilst also creating greater understanding and awareness for the work that we do. This is a significant milestone for the UK and the next step in fully realising the National Landscapes' vision to be the leading exemplars of how thriving, diverse communities can work with and for nature in the UK.
20. The National Association for AONBs (National Landscapes Association), working with a design agency and supported by DEFRA, have created new brand guidelines to help shape each National Landscape's branded communications and create consistency across all applications and media. This covers the different elements that make up the new National Landscapes identity, including the logo, colour, typography, graphic language, iconography, illustration and photography styles.

21. The new logo for Cannock Chase is below. It is an evolution of the AONB's place brand, conveying the sense of moving from woodland to an open heathy landscape with the freedom of the soaring buzzards overhead.



Cannock Chase National Landscape

22. Stage 1 of the rebranding programme completes with the national launch. Following the launch, Stage 2 commences with a national campaign raising awareness of the new branding. The implementation of the new branding will be accompanied by a comprehensive set of assets including:
- a. A Brand identity for each National Landscape
 - b. Branding guidelines that will support each National Landscape to implement the brand, including guidance on how to use the brand, fonts to use and a range of templates for design platforms
 - c. A licence to use the design font Effra that will be available for all National Landscapes to download
 - d. A presentation that articulates why we are making the change and what it is – it will be designed for all National Landscape teams to use to communicate to their partners. This will include guidance on the use of the new brand and when the legal designation should be referred to.
 - e. The National Landscapes Association will trademark each of the brand identities ensuring that each marque is protected and giving each National Landscape free use of the brand.
23. £3,000 has been made available to each National Landscape for 2023/24 to start to make basic changes to websites and digital assets.
24. Legally, the designation will remain an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Statutory documents will also remain with AONB in their titles, such as, State of the AONB report and AONB Management Plan. The 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' tagline will continue to be used where appropriate.
25. Whilst referred to as the Cannock Chase National Landscapes Joint Committee, the Joint Committee will remain, technically, the "Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Committee" as established under the 2016 Partnership Agreement between the 5 constituent authorities. There will be an indefinite transition period until legislation and policy catches up with the rebranding, during which time we all will need to assist our stakeholders with any confusion that may arise. In the meantime the new logo will start to be adopted and used in key situations and the Cannock Chase AONB Team will rebrand as the Cannock Chase National Landscape team and the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership will be referred to as the Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership.

Resourcing

26. All English National Landscapes are currently in year 2 of a 3 year core funding agreement. Although this provided a 14.7% increase in core funding for 2022-23 (over the base budget for 2021-22), flat line core funding for 2023-24 and 2024-25 and rising costs are creating budgetary pressures. Without additional resources, we will struggle to deliver against our statutory purpose, and our ability to deliver meaningful change will be constrained.
27. The funding formula for National Parks and National Landscapes is currently being reviewed by Defra. Members may be interested to learn that for 2022-23 the 34 English National Landscapes received £7,668.52 core funding, compared with £48,762,405 core funding received by the 10 English National Parks (not including an extra £4,400,000 funding boost announced in March 2023). So for 2022-23 the 10 English National Parks received 6.4 times as much core funding as the 34 English National Landscapes.
28. In the short term, any additional funds are likely to come in the form of 'project' money – for example, the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and funding for work to remove barriers in National Landscapes - 'Access for All'.

Recommendations

29. The following recommendation is made to the Joint Committee:
 1. The Committee notes the changes to AONBs, including the re-branding to National Landscapes, and is invited to ask questions.

Item 10 Planning update

Item for: Information

Author: Ian Marshall, Team Leader

Financial implications: Planning advice is funded through the National Landscape core budget

Recommendations: The Joint Committee notes progress made on planning matters since the last meeting and is invited to ask questions.

Development management and planning policy

1. In May 2023 Julia Banbury, AONB Landscape Planning Officer retired. Since that time, landscape planning advice has been provided by a landscape consultant. Liz Garbutt will be joining the National Landscapes Team as the new Landscape Planning Officer on 28 November.
2. Between 1 January and 14 November 2023 the AONB has been consulted on 107 planning applications. This compares with 145 for the full calendar year 2022 and 124 for 2021. Consultations received from each local authority are as follows.

| | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Cannock Chase Council | 37 |
| Lichfield District Council | 21 |
| Stafford Borough Council | 34 |
| South Staffordshire Council | 14 |
| Staffordshire County Council | 1 |
| Other | 0 |
| TOTAL | 107 |

The types of development can be broken down as follows.

| | |
|--|------------|
| Equine | 2 |
| Agriculture | 1 |
| Recreation | 2 |
| Renewables | 10 |
| New housing | 17 |
| Alterations and extensions to existing | 56 |
| Other | 19 |
| TOTAL | 107 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Major development | 24 |
| Householder / dwelling | 62 |
| Minor development (excluding dwellings) | 8 |
| Change of use | 4 |
| Other | 9 |
| TOTAL | 107 |

3. Representations and comments were provided on 39 consultations (32 of these were objections/conditional objections; 5 were requests for further information, and 2 applications were supported). No comments were returned on 63 applications. A full list of the consultations and responses are available from the National Landscapes Team.

HS2 Phase 2a

4. Following the Government's announcement cancelling HS2 north of Birmingham, the Trent Sow Parkland and Cannock Chase HS2 Group has sought the following assurances that:
 - The £1.5 million allocated to the Trent Sow Environmental Enhancement Programme is honoured in full.
 - Closure costs of the Group are met in full.
 - Governance of the Environmental Enhancement Programme currently provided by the Group is agreed until the completion of the projects in October 2025.
 - The Group's Design Principles and HS2's Key Environmentally Sensitive Worksite Management Plan are upheld during demobilisation and reinstatement of worksites and compounds in the Trent Sow area.
5. A formal response is awaited from HS2.

Recommendations

6. The Joint Committee notes progress made on planning matters since the last meeting and is invited to ask questions.

Item 11 **Delivery of National Landscape activities**

Item for: Information

Author: Ian Marshall, Team Leader

Financial implications: National Landscape activities are funded through the National Landscape core budget

Recommendations: The Committee notes the update and is invited to ask questions

Background

1. Our Business Plan (2023-25) sets out how the National Landscapes Partnership, notably through its dedicated staff team, operates to deliver its contract with Defra and the commitments in our Management Plan (2019-24, extended 2024-25).
2. This paper updates members on recent activities carried out by the National Landscapes Team for information and comment. The activities are presented under each of the themes set out in the AONB Management Plan.

Recent activities

Landscape character and planning

Planning advice and representation

3. A separate update is reported to Members under agenda item 10.

Highways Design guide

4. The updated Highways Design Guide is awaiting sign-off from Staffordshire County Council's Highways department before being brought to Joint Committee for approval for publication.

Fixed point photography

5. We are providing ongoing support to the Fixed-Point Photography volunteers to monitor 56 key views of the National Landscape twice a year. The autumn series of photographs is underway, and the results will be uploaded onto the National Landscapes website. The Lake District National Park Partnership approached us having heard of our longstanding project. They are considering setting up something similar. Next year is the 20th anniversary of the Fixed-Point Photography project and we are keen on doing a commemorative event.

Dark Skies

6. We are joining forces again with CPRE Staffordshire to repeat the successful stargazing event held in 2023. Stargazing 2024 will be held on 21st February 2024 at Beaudesert Outdoor Activity Centre to share the wonders of the night sky with children from Scouts, Brownies and Guides. Professional astronomers from Keele University's Observatory will be on hand with their telescopes to allow children to enjoy views of the sky and explain what can be seen.

Farming in Protected Landscapes programme

7. The programme is continuing to be promoted through direct correspondence, the National Landscapes newsletter and website as well as an information event for public applicants at Beaudesert Park Farm in Upper Longdon held on 29th November attended by 24 delegates.
8. There is a good level of interest in the programme with 3 projects totalling £133,569 approved since the last meeting of the Joint Committee. These will be delivered over 23/24 and 24/25. There is a likelihood of an underspend for 23/24, so £50,000 of the £552,889 allocation has been returned to Defra for re-distribution nationally.

Wildlife and nature

30x30

9. For the Government's 30x30 target (30% of land and sea managed for nature by 2030) the National Landscapes Association is testing how six National Landscapes (including Cannock Chase) could contribute to 30x30. Preliminary results suggest that Cannock Chase has the potential to exceed the Government's 30x30 target (in excess of 40% of the designated area could be protected and managed for nature).

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

10. The National Landscapes Team is engaged in the early discussions to establish the Staffordshire & Stoke Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Officers will feed into the various governance groups. The work will inform the preparation of a separate Nature Recovery Plan for the National Landscape.

Aquatic invertebrates

11. We have commissioned Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to survey the ecological conditions and evaluate the biological quality of the streams across all areas of Cannock Chase. The results will inform the preparation of the State of the AONB Report 2023 and future conservation management of the watercourses.

Nightjar

12. Cannock Chase National Landscape and Staffordshire County Council are jointly funding West Midland Ringing Group to purchase a thermal drone to detect nightjar nests on the Chase. Thermal imaging will improve detection of nest sites, provide habitat details of nest sites, and enable nest monitoring to establish breeding success. Off the back of a commissioned report by the AONB in 2022, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust is putting in place nightjar nesting plots across Cannock Chase over the winter for the next breeding season.

Adders

13. Following on from a Stakeholder meeting held on Cannock Chase in the summer, the Amphibian and Reptile Group UK is preparing to submit a 2 stage application for Farming in Protected Landscapes funding, in partnership with Cannock Chase National Landscape and local landowners and managers (FE, SWT, SCC, Cemex and Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH)). Phase 1 will involve conducting on-the-ground survey and monitoring with experienced surveyors to establish the distribution and abundance

of the adder across the Chase. This baseline information will be used to refine an existing model carried out by CEH to make it more accurate for the landscape of Cannock Chase. This will enable us to identify the sites where remedial habitat works would improve or connect 'good habitat' to encourage more sustainable and resilient adder populations, which will be achieved in a Phase 2 FiPL application next year.

Deer management

14. The National Landscape is working on a High-Level Statement on Deer management across the Chase. To underpin this, we are financially supporting the preparation of further deer surveys and impact assessments.

Historic environment and culture

Historic Environment Strategy

15. We are working with the County Archaeologist to finish drafting an Historic Environment Strategy for the National Landscape. This will set out a vision and framework for the protection of the rich and diverse historic environment on the Chase based around the philosophy of understanding, enjoying and caring. It will include a list of potential key project ideas to stimulate the development and implementation of new initiatives for the National Landscape Partnership, local community and heritage groups.

Condition assessment of non-designated assets

16. For non-designated heritage assets, volunteers (Chase Through Time and National Trust) have had refresher training from the National Trust and will be carrying out condition surveys on non-designated heritage assets in Shugborough and across the wider Chase on SCC land over the winter months. Staffordshire County Council Historic Environment Team is currently working with SCC ICT to procure software and hand-held tablets to allow the volunteers to record condition data digitally in the field.

Experience and enjoyment

Walking Cannock Chase

17. Six new AONB promoted walking routes have been published and circulated to all of the visitor hubs on the Chase as well as other outlets as part of our 'Walking Cannock Chase' programme. The routes have been selected to encourage exploration of less well-used parts of the Chase and ease pressure on the more ecologically sensitive sites.

Horses on Cannock Chase

18. The SAC Partnership has been running guided horse-riding events to encourage responsible riding behaviour. To improve understanding about horse riding on the Chase as well as the needs and expectations of horse riders, the National Landscapes Team has undertaken a short survey. 48 responses have been received. The responses will provide insight on information that horse riders want and how we can better signpost them to information about the Chase.

Interpretation provision at Great War Hut, Marquis Drive

19. A new interpretation panel has been installed outside the Great War Hut at Marquis Drive. It tells the story of this former barrack hut and what life was like for young

recruits in the training camps. The panel was funded by the National Landscape through the Access for All Fund as a contribution towards the refresh of the interpretation of the Chase Heritage Trail.

Communities and business

National Landscape volunteers

20. Great War Hut volunteers continue to provide a welcome to visitors to the hut, including school groups, providing information about the hut, and the history of Cannock Chase during the Great War. The Hut is open every weekend of the year. Milford Common volunteers operate Milford Common Information Hut at weekends providing a welcome to visitors explaining about the landscape, heritage, and wildlife of Milford Common and the wider National Landscape. Volunteers have contributed 854 volunteer hours to the National Landscape between April – October 2023.

Future Guardians of Cannock Chase

21. Following its launch in July, the Future Guardians programme has been widely promoted with young people in Staffordshire Scouts and Girlguiding Staffordshire, Duke of Edinburgh and Staffordshire Libraries. The guides have had 150 requests for challenge badges.

Accessibility audit and Destination Access Guide

22. During the summer consultants Direct Access have been preparing an audit of the existing access provision for disabled people and their families and carers on the Chase. This is being accompanied by a destination access guide to help visitors better plan their visits. A presentation about the audit and guide will be reported to Members under agenda item 7.

Governance and communication

Defra mid-year claim

23. In accordance with our grant agreement, our mid year claim for 2023-24 of £129,564.29 was submitted to Defra on 4 September 2023.

Call for advisors to the Joint Committee

24. In September we issued a call for expressions of interest for new advisors to the Joint Committee as part of our ambition to be more diverse and inclusive. A separate update is reported to Members under agenda item 13 (Part Two).

Cannock Chase Community Fund

25. Legal oversight is being provided for the partnership agreement between the National Landscape and The Community Foundation for Staffordshire and Shropshire for the establishment of a fund for voluntary giving and supporting community projects.

State of the AONB Report

26. An updated evidence base for the refresh of our AONB Management Plan is in preparation. The State of the AONB Report 2023 will describe the baseline condition for a series of indicators about the special qualities of Cannock Chase as well people's quality of life and understanding and enjoyment. The Report provides insight into the trajectory of any changes and the reasons for them. Six themed chapters are being

written for: Landscape, tranquillity, biodiversity and geodiversity, historic environment, community and economy, and access and recreation.

Access for All

27. Cannock Chase National Landscape has been allocated £41,200 for additional Year 2 funding under Defra's Access for All Fund. The money will be used to fund the installation of induction loops in visitor hubs/centres, further waymarking of public rights of way, replacing stiles with accessible gates, removing barriers at the Wolseley Centre, and refreshing the Tolkien Trail leaflet.

National Landscape website

28. In October our website suffered a malicious cyber attack, which resulted in it having to be taken offline for a number of weeks. With the support of Staffordshire County Council's Digital Team, the website has had to be completely rebuilt, and is now live again.

National Landscapes re-brand

29. The Team has been engaged with the National Association for AONBs, AONB Team Leaders and AONB Communications Officers with the development of the National Landscapes re-name and re-brand. A separate update is reported to Members under agenda item 9.

National Landscapes newsletter

30. In October 2023 we reached a milestone of recruiting the 2,000th subscriber to our newsletter. The number of recipients is now 2028.

Recommendations

31. The following recommendations are made to the Joint Committee:
 1. The Committee notes the update on activities and is invited to ask questions.

Item 12

Date, time and venue of next meeting

March 2024 TBC

Exclusion of the Public and Press

The Chairman to move:

"That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the local Government Act 1972 (as amended) indicated below"

Part Two

(All reports in this section are exempt)

Item 13

Expressions of interest for advisers to the Joint Committee

Item for:

Decision

Author:

Ian Marshall, Team Leader

Financial implications:

None

Recommendations:

The Committee is invited to consider the expressions of interest and decide whether or not to invite the individuals/organisations as advisers to the Joint Committee.