



**Cannock
Chase**

Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty



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Cannock Chase AONB

Management Plan 2019-2024

'Special and Connected'



Foreword



Lord Gardiner of Kimble

Lord Gardiner,
Parliamentary Under Secretary of
State for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity

I am fortunate that England's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are part of my Ministerial responsibilities. Whether it be rolling hills, sweeping coastline or a tranquil village, spending time in an AONB can stir the heart and lift the spirit.

This is a pivotal moment for all AONBs. The Government has set its ambition in the 25 Year Environment Plan which states clearly the importance of natural beauty as part of our green future, while AONBs retain the highest status of protection for landscape through national planning policy. Leaving the EU brings with it an opportunity to develop a better system for supporting our farmers and land managers, who play such a vital role as stewards of the landscape. And the Review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty led by Julian Glover - the first of its kind for generations - will make recommendations to make sure our designated landscapes can flourish in the years ahead.

In my visits to AONBs around the country, I have been struck by the passion of many people - farmers, volunteers, and hard-working staff - for the beautiful places they live and work. In this spirit I am delighted to welcome publication of this Statutory Management Plan for Cannock Chase AONB. It is significant that this plan will be delivered in partnership by those who value Cannock Chase. I would like to thank all those involved in preparation of this document, and wish you the best of success in bringing it to fruition.



Frances Beatty

Councillor Frances Beatty MBE,
Chair of the Cannock Chase AONB
Joint Committee

This is the fourth statutory Management Plan for Cannock Chase AONB, prepared to fulfil the requirements of Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000. It builds on the achievements of the previous Plans and draws on new evidence including the revised Landscape Character Assessment for the AONB (2017), the State of the AONB Report (2018) and Visitor Management Strategy (2014).

Development of this Management Plan has been overseen by the Officers Working Group, reporting to the Joint Committee of the AONB. It has involved close working with statutory partners and a range of other organisations who are active in the Chase, including at a workshop in August 2018 and the Annual Conference in September. A draft of this Plan was published in November 2018 for a two-month public consultation, leading to revisions in this final Plan which was adopted by the Joint Committee in March 2019. The Management Plan has been subject to an independent Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to this process for their help in developing a sound and proactive plan designed to balance the protection and enjoyment of the Chase.

Contents

1. About the Plan	4
Purpose of the Management Plan	5
Who the Plan is for	5
Relationship to other plans, strategies and processes	6
How the Plan has been developed	6
Format of the Plan	6
2. About the AONB	8
A Special Place	9
The Special Qualities of Cannock Chase – Statement of Significance	11
A connected landscape delivering public benefits	13
Challenges during 2019–2024	14
Climate change	14
Housing development	14
High Speed 2	15
Commonwealth Games, 2022	15
Brexit and new arrangements for environmental support	15
3. Vision for the AONB	16
4. Landscape Character and Planning	18
Maintain quality and distinctiveness	20
Enhance the landscape setting	23
5. Wildlife and Nature	24
Improve conditions for nature in the Chase	26
Enlarge and connect habitats	29
6. Historic Environment and Culture	32
Conserve the Chase’s historic environment	34
Connect communities with the Chase’s history and culture	35
7. Experience and Enjoyment	36
Treading lightly in the Chase	38
A greener experience	40
8. Communities and Business	42
Natural benefits for the community	43
Businesses Supporting the Special Qualities	45
9. Implementation Action Plan	46
Priority actions to be started in 2019	47
Other actions, which may be started from 2020 onwards	49
10. Monitoring Framework	52
Monitoring delivery	53
Monitoring effectiveness and condition	53



Ian Jones

1. About the Plan

Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

1

About the Plan

Purpose of the Management Plan

- 1.1. This Plan sets out the agenda for the management of Cannock Chase between 2019 – 2024. It is a locally prepared and agreed statement of public policy for managing this nationally important landscape. Now in its fourth edition, this Management Plan builds on previous iterations. Its focus is on delivering the statutory purpose of AONB designation: conserving and enhancing natural beauty, with considerations relating to wider environmental issues, the rural economy, communities and recreation dealt within the context of delivering this purpose. The Plan also sets out the special qualities of the AONB which provide a character-based criterion to judge the impact on the AONB that may take place from development or other activities.
- 1.2. The AONB is governed by the Joint Committee (JC) which has devolved authority from the five local authorities that cover the Chase (Staffordshire County Council, Stafford Borough, Cannock Chase District, South Staffordshire District and Lichfield District). It is the Joint Committee's responsibility to produce this Plan as required by Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000 and to ensure it is reviewed every five years.
- 1.3. This Plan aims to meet and then go beyond this statutory requirement. Through telling the story of this special, nationally important landscape it aims to galvanise, prioritise and inspire action; bring partners together and promote collaboration; and prioritise public investment in order to secure a future for the AONB where its natural beauty is conserved, enhanced and celebrated for the good of the nation and local communities.

Who the Plan is for

- 1.4. This Plan incorporates the views of the Joint Committee and a wide range of public, private and voluntary bodies and individuals and is derived through consensus. It is for the landscape of Cannock Chase AONB, not for one organisation or partnership. It provides a guide for everyone involved with the AONB and engaged in activities which have implications for the area's natural beauty on the actions they can take to help care for and improve the area.
 - 1.5. Audiences that might have a specific interest include:
 - **AONB Partnership Organisations:** These organisations will have a key role in delivering and championing the Management Plan.
 - **Public Bodies:** All public bodies have a duty to have regard to the purposes of designation of the AONB under the CRoW Act (Section 85). This Plan provides a transparent and accessible framework by which public bodies can ensure they are exercising their duty.
 - **Planning Authorities:** It provides planning authorities with policy direction for the AONB and is a material consideration that should be taken into account when preparing Development Plans and Neighbourhood Plans as well as determining planning applications.
 - **Landowners and managers:** Those who own and manage land in the AONB will play a vital role in its future and the Plan aims to guide, support and attract resources for sensitive management of the AONB.
 - **Communities:** Everyone who uses, enjoys and experiences the AONB can play an active role in caring for it. Local communities have diverse social and recreational needs and the Plan identifies ways for everyone, including local businesses and voluntary bodies, to get involved and make a difference.
-

Relationship to other plans, strategies and processes

- 1.6.** This Plan should be used to guide and inform all other plans and activities developed by public bodies and statutory undertakers that may affect the AONB, in line with the CRoW Act requirement for them to have a duty of regard for the primary purpose of the AONB. It should also be used as a guide for other people and organisations in and around the AONB. In turn when drawing up this Plan numerous other existing plans and strategies were considered and where appropriate and goals aligned this Plan will help their delivery. For example, this Plan will help promote and support local delivery of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

How the Plan has been developed

- 1.7.** The progress achieved through the previous Management Plan (2014–2019) was reviewed and recommendations for this fourth edition of this Plan were made by Stakeholders attending the 2016 and 2017 Annual Conferences and by detailed work carried out by the four AONB Task and Finish Groups¹. This culminated in a Management Plan Review Report which was produced in June 2018. A report on the State of the AONB (2018) has drawn together evidence on the condition of the AONB. Consultants (Rural Focus) were employed in July 2018 to work closely with the Joint Committee to consider the recommendations within the Management Plan Review Report and develop and produce this Plan. The AONB's Annual Conference in September 2018 reviewed and refined the special qualities and policies contained in this Plan. Further consultation was undertaken with members of the Task and Finish Groups, and with the AONB Joint Committee. A two-month period of public consultation was undertaken between November 2018 and January 2019, and subsequent amendments were made and agreed with the Joint Committee resulting in this fourth edition of the Management Plan.
- 1.8.** A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) have also been undertaken alongside the preparation and consultation of this Plan.

Format of the Plan

- 1.9.** The Plan takes a landscape-based approach to describe the special qualities of the AONB. Collectively the special qualities provide a statement of the significance of the natural beauty of AONB, justifying its designation and providing a framework for policy and practice to conserve, enhance, celebrate and enjoy the AONB. A Vision sets out the future direction of the AONB.
- 1.10.** The Plan is structured around five themes (see Chapters 4 – 8), with text providing details of the priority objectives that have been identified for that theme. Under each priority objective sits one or more policies, each introduced with a contextual paragraph. Reference is made to the actions that will help deliver each policy. These actions are also set out in full in Chapter 9 of the Plan along with a monitoring framework.
- 1.11.** This Plan is intended to be read as a whole. The natural environment is a system, and the issues that affect it and the objectives that this Plan identifies to address them, are interconnected and cross-cutting. The division of the Plan into key themes means that issues and impacts relating to each theme are addressed discretely in separate places in the Plan and, for brevity and clarity, are not repeated elsewhere. However, it is important for the delivery and implementation of the Plan that the interconnections and holistic nature of the Plan are understood. For instance, actions that seek to move recreational activity away from the most sensitive habitats and species on the Chase should not be implemented in a way that puts the historic environment at greater risk of harm. Where there is doubt about potential conflict between different policies or actions in this Plan, a precautionary approach should be taken, giving priority to the conservation of the AONB's natural beauty.

¹ The four Task and Finish Groups form a key part of the AONBs organisational structure and are made up of elected members and officers from the five Local Authorities that cover the AONB and key partners.

1

About the Plan

The Structure of the Management Plan, split between the following chapters, is shown below.

Ch.2	The Special Qualities of the AONB		
Ch.3	The Vision for 2019-2038		
	Themes	Objectives	Policy topics
Ch.4	Landscape Character and Planning	Maintain quality & distinctiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High standards of design in the built environment • The impacts of traffic in the AONB • Woodland management • Farmland management • Non-farming land uses • Quarrying and other working landscapes • High quality recreational infrastructure
		Enhance the landscape setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting the setting • Softening the boundary • Strategic landscape links
Ch.5	Wildlife and Nature	Improve conditions for nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of the importance of the SAC • Key species and their habitats • Effective management of heathland • Water bodies and wetlands • Invasive weeds, pests and diseases • Deer • Geological exposures
		Enlarge and connect habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration of heathland • Bridges for nature outside the AONB • National leadership for biodiversity gain
Ch.6	Historic Environment and Culture	Conserve the Chase's historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving knowledge of heritage • Improving the condition of heritage
		Connect communities with the Chase's history & culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire through the Chase's history and culture
Ch.7	Experience and Enjoyment	Treading lightly in the Chase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation management • Creation of alternative recreation resources • Group visits
		A greener experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a green identity • Relationship between visitors & the environment • Sustainable travel • A clear message
Ch.8	Communities and Business	Natural benefits for the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting community needs • Giving communities a voice • Coordination of volunteering
		Supporting the special qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harnessing enterprise
Ch.9	Action Implementation Plan 2019-2024		
Ch.10	Monitoring Framework 2019-2024		



Ian Jones

^{2.}About the AONB

Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

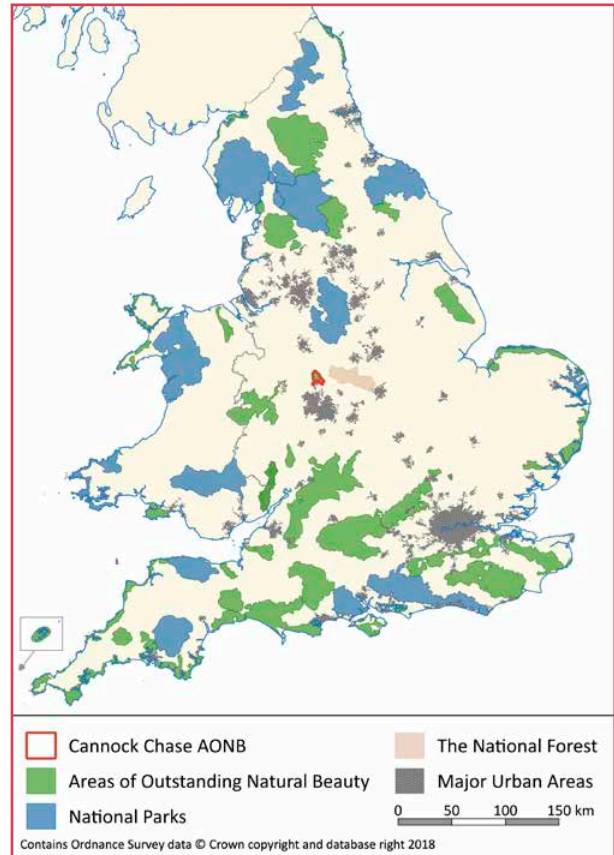
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About the AONB

- 2.1.** Cannock Chase is a nationally and internationally² important landscape. It was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1958 under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, one of only 46 areas to be given this recognition in the UK.
- 2.2.** Whilst it is the smallest inland AONB in the UK, its influence, reputation and reach stretch far beyond the boundary. Sitting in the densely populated West Midlands, the natural beauty of the AONB sits at the heart of the area connecting landscapes, natural processes, habitats, history, culture and communities to it.
- 2.3.** Cannock Chase AONB is a member of the National Association of AONBs – a charitable company that has been set up to work for and on behalf of the family of AONBs, influencing policy and decision makers and sharing good practice. As part of this group Cannock Chase AONB will be able to learn from and inspire other AONBs in the family.



Gary Austin



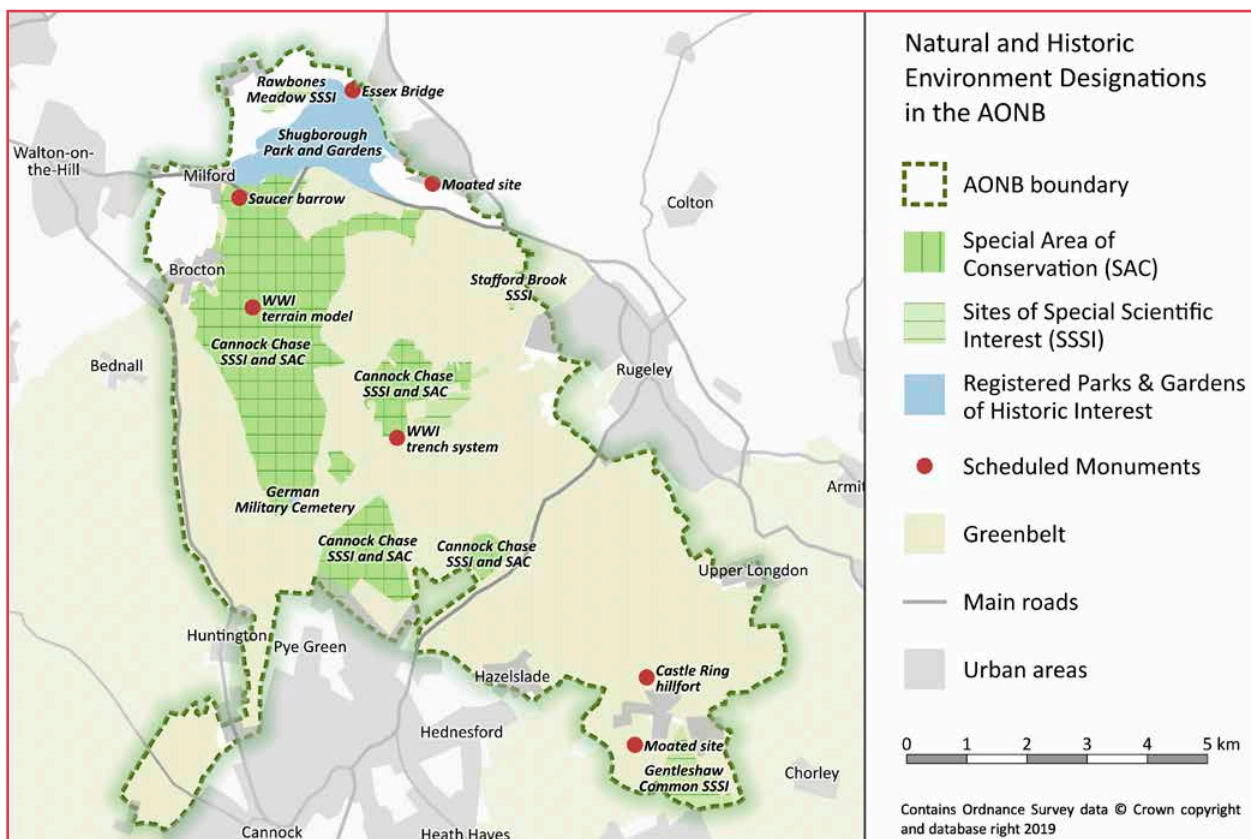
A Special Place

- 2.4.** Understanding why the Chase is so special, and why it was designated, is central to ensuring it is looked after and continues to be special for generations to come.
- 2.5.** There are many special sites within the AONB that are recognised as being important internationally, nationally and locally including; 1,237 ha of the heathland is designated as a Special Area for Conservation under the European Habitats Directive, five Sites of Special Scientific Interest, seven Scheduled Monuments, a Registered Park of Historic Interest and three Local Nature Reserves. Beyond these individual elements, most of the AONB lies in the Greenbelt.
- 2.6.** The AONB designation recognises the importance of the landscape as a whole and in July 2013 the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) confirmed Cannock Chase AONB as meeting its Category V Protected Landscapes Status.

² The AONB is classified as a Category V Protected Landscape by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

2

About the AONB



2.7. The Chase was designated as an AONB because it was considered to meet the required level of natural beauty and in order to conserve and enhance it³. The Purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. In addition, the Joint Committee has responsibilities to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities in the context of the Purpose.

The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty

- In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.
- Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.

Countryside Commission statement 1991, restated in 2006⁴

2.8. There is no formal definition of what is meant by natural beauty, but various judgements and guidance have helped to clarify the meaning and intent of the Purpose. Natural England's 2011 Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for Designation gives clear advice on the approach taken to determining if an area should be designated as an AONB. Appendix 1 helpfully sets out Criterion for Natural Beauty along with an evaluation framework to help determine its presence.

2.9. Six contributing factors to natural beauty are identified (Landscape quality, Scenic quality, Relative wildness, Relative tranquillity, Natural heritage features, Cultural heritage) with example sub-factors and indicators. There is no scoring system, thresholds or requirement for all factors or sub-factors to be present or unique, but it is a framework to help provide a degree of transparency and consistency to applying a value judgement as to whether people are likely to perceive a landscape as having sufficient natural beauty in order to be designated⁵ p.11.

³ Defra Guidance Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Designation and Management <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/areas-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-aonbs-designation-and-management> (accessed on 21/09/18)

⁴ The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 set out that AONBs purpose would be similar to National Parks in that they would conserve and enhance natural beauty although National Parks would have an additional purpose to provide opportunities for

open-air recreation and be close to centres of population. The basis for the wording of the subsidiary purposes can be found in the Countryside Act 1968, section 37. The wording of the AONB purpose and subsidiary purpose was set out in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: A Policy Statement 1991. CCP 356 (Countryside Commission) and later restated in the Guidance for the review of AONB Management Plans (Countryside Agency, CA 221, 2006, p.6). The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000 reaffirms the primary purpose of AONBs.

2

About the AONB

2.10. By working through this framework in conjunction with the recently updated Landscape Character Assessment⁶ it is possible to understand the factors and sub-factors that combine to form natural beauty on Cannock Chase in a consistent and robust way.

2.11. Defra guidance states that “*The Management Plan should include an assessment of the special quality of the AONB*”. This understanding of natural beauty, the factors and sub-factors that contribute to it, along with a consideration of distinguishing features related to the sub-purposes forms the basis of the special qualities of Cannock Chase.

The Special Qualities of Cannock Chase – Statement of Significance

2.12. The special qualities of the AONB should define the characteristics (of landscape, wildlife, cultural heritage and natural resources) that give the area its sense of place. Collectively they can provide a statement of the significance of the natural beauty of AONB, justifying its designation and providing a framework for policy and practice to conserve, enhance, celebrate and enjoy the AONB.

2.13. The special qualities of Cannock Chase are listed below. They are shown beside the factors of natural beauty that are set out in Natural England’s Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England⁷.

Factors of Natural Beauty	The Special Qualities of Cannock Chase
Landscape Quality <i>A measure of the physical state or condition of the landscape</i>	A largely intact landscape , particularly in its heathland and wood pasture, providing a historical and spatial continuity of scale, openness, semi-natural land cover, public ownership and access which is in marked contrast to the more urban and fragmented landscapes that surround it.
Scenic Quality <i>The extent to which the landscape appeals to the senses (primarily, but not only, the visual senses)</i>	A varied landscape of heathland, woodland, wood pasture, parkland, mixed pastoral and arable farmland and traditional farmsteads. The large blocks of heathland and woodland in the centre of the AONB contrast with the smaller scale farmed countryside, bisected by thick hedgerows and narrow lanes, around its fringes.
	A domed plateau landform , created by ancient faulting and folding of the rocks, which has been eroded by rivers and streams, particularly on its northern edge by the River Trent.
	Inspiring views , both to the elevated plateau of the Chase from surrounding areas and from the high ground of the Chase across the farmed vales and countryside of the Midlands.
Relative wildness and tranquillity <i>The degree to which relatively wild character and tranquillity can be perceived in the landscape</i>	A haven of tranquillity and wildness , compared to the busy towns and roads that surround it, providing popular spaces for informal recreation such as Marquis Drive and Birches Valley, as well as less visited spots for quiet contemplation and watching nature.

Cont...



⁵ Natural England (2011) Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England 2 March 2011.

⁶ Cannock Chase AONB Review of AONB Landscape Character Framework (2017) (Ashmead Price).

⁷ Natural England (2011). Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England 2 March 2011.

2

About the AONB

► Cont...

Factors of Natural Beauty	The Special Qualities of Cannock Chase
Natural Heritage Features <i>The influence of natural heritage on the perception of the natural beauty of the area. Natural heritage includes flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features</i>	An underlying geology of red sandstone containing sand-cemented pebbles that was formed 220 million years ago, over coal measures formed 300 million years ago. This geology has contributed to the economic prosperity of the area, through a long history of coal mining (now finished) and quarrying (which continues).
	Extensive areas of lowland heathland and associated habitats, which form one of the largest such areas in England, most of it designated for its European importance.
	Rivers, wetlands and waterways , including the Trent and Sow rivers, the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal and the spring-fed mires and wet heaths of the Sherbrook and Oldacre Valleys.
	Ancient broadleaved woodland and wood pastures such as Brocton Coppice, containing veteran oak trees, woodland flowers, birds, bats and insects.
	Wildlife species which are nationally rare, protected and/or strongly associated with the Chase. These include birds such as the nightjar and woodlark, reptiles such as adder and common lizard, plants such as Cannock Chase berry, invertebrates such as the small pearl-bordered fritillary and bog bush-cricket, and the herds of deer which are recognised as the emblem of the Chase.
Cultural Heritage <i>The influence of cultural heritage on the perception of natural beauty of the area and the degree to which associations with particular people, artists, writers or events in history contribute to such perception</i>	A rich history , whose layers in the landscape can be experienced first-hand, including at the Iron Age Hillfort at Castle Ring; the remnants of a medieval hunting landscape; historic houses and parkland; historic field patterns; the rich heritage of iron and glass working and coal mining; the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal; and military camps and cemeteries from the two World Wars.
	Historic parkland, ornamental landscapes , and the relationships between them, often associated with fine houses and landed estates, such as those at Shugborough, Beaudesert, Teddesley, Wolseley and Hatherton.
	Common land , which has an ancient history providing grazing for local farms and smallholdings, including the commons of Cannock Chase, Haywood Warren, Brindley Heath, Penkridge Bank, Shoal Hill and Gentleshaw.
Additional qualities <i>These apply to public understanding and enjoyment of natural beauty</i>	Local communities and interest groups who cherish and help care for the Chase and its designated status.
	A network of well-maintained rides and paths through woodland and heathland providing opportunities for stimulating exercise and exploration.

- 2.14.** The loss, damage or deterioration of any of these special qualities would fundamentally alter the character and quality of the natural beauty of Cannock Chase.

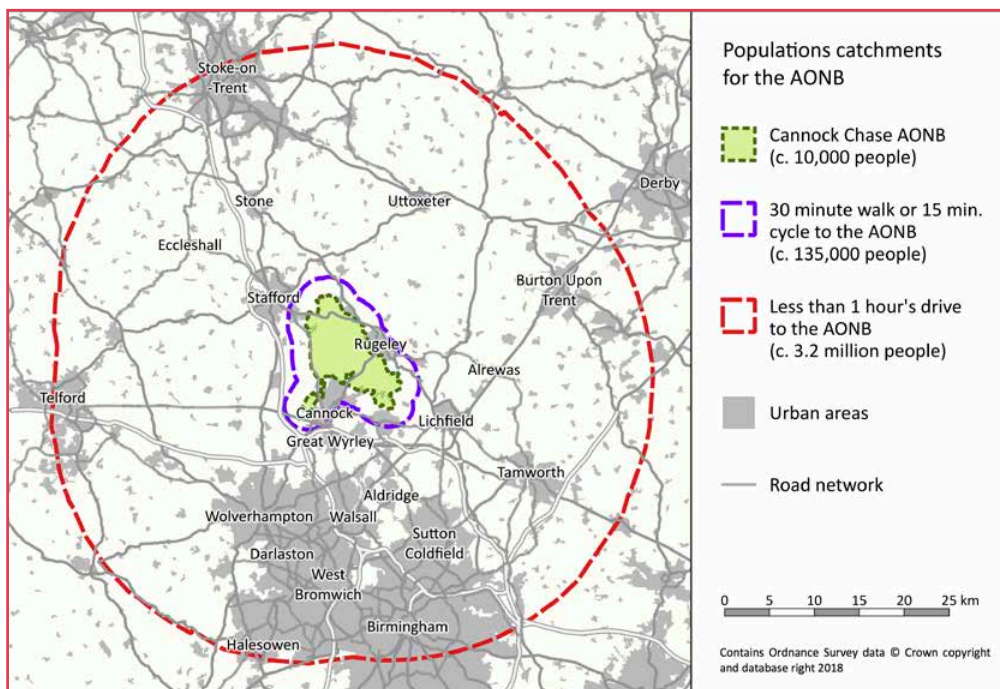
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About the AONB

A connected landscape delivering public benefits

2.15. The benefit of the natural beauty of the Chase is not purely its aesthetic quality. Along with the wider environment the special qualities deliver a wide range of benefits to people such as health and wellbeing and clean air and water. These are derived from the area's 'natural capital' (which is defined as *"the parts of the natural environment that produce value to people"*). The concept of natural capital lies at the heart of the Government's recently published 25 Year Environment Plan and is set to play an increasingly influential role in how public policy develops, especially in special areas such as AONBs.

2.16. Cannock Chase AONB lies in southern Staffordshire in the heart of the densely populated West Midlands. A relatively small number (around 10,000 people) live within the AONB boundary, the large majority in the villages of Cannock Wood, Gentleshaw, Upper Longdon and Brocton or on the edges of Rugeley, Hazelslade, Huntingdon and Pye Green. A much larger number of people live on the doorstep of the AONB. A 30 minute walk or 15 minute cycle could bring 135,000 people to the AONB (including the residents of Cannock, Rugeley and Walton-on-the-Hill). A drive of less than an hour extends the population catchment of the AONB to 3.2 million people, including Stafford, Lichfield, Burton, Tamworth, Walsall, Wolverhampton, much of Birmingham, Telford and Stoke-on-Trent.



2.17. The contrast between the largely intact sparsely populated landscape of the Chase and the dense settlement patterns and fragmented character of the wider countryside is significant. Despite this contrast in the quality of the landscape the AONB does not sit in isolation, with adjacent areas providing its landscape setting. There are strong natural and cultural links to other nearby landscapes such as Sutton Park, Hopwas Hayes, Clent and Lickey Hills, Hanchurch and Maer Hills. The connections between the AONB and its

surrounds are complex, multi-layered and two-way; spanning geology, natural processes (such as hydrology), ecology, history, culture, identity, communities and economics.

2.18. These connections, relationships and public benefits are not static and ensuring that the ongoing influence that the surrounding landscape and communities have on the AONB, and in turn the relationship that the AONB has on its surrounding landscape and communities, is positive and beneficial is central to this Plan.

2

About the AONB

Challenges during 2019-2024

2.19. This Plan anticipates a number of significant threats and opportunities that will face the AONB during the five years of this Plan. The impact of these challenges, and the actions that will be needed, cut across many parts of this Management Plan.

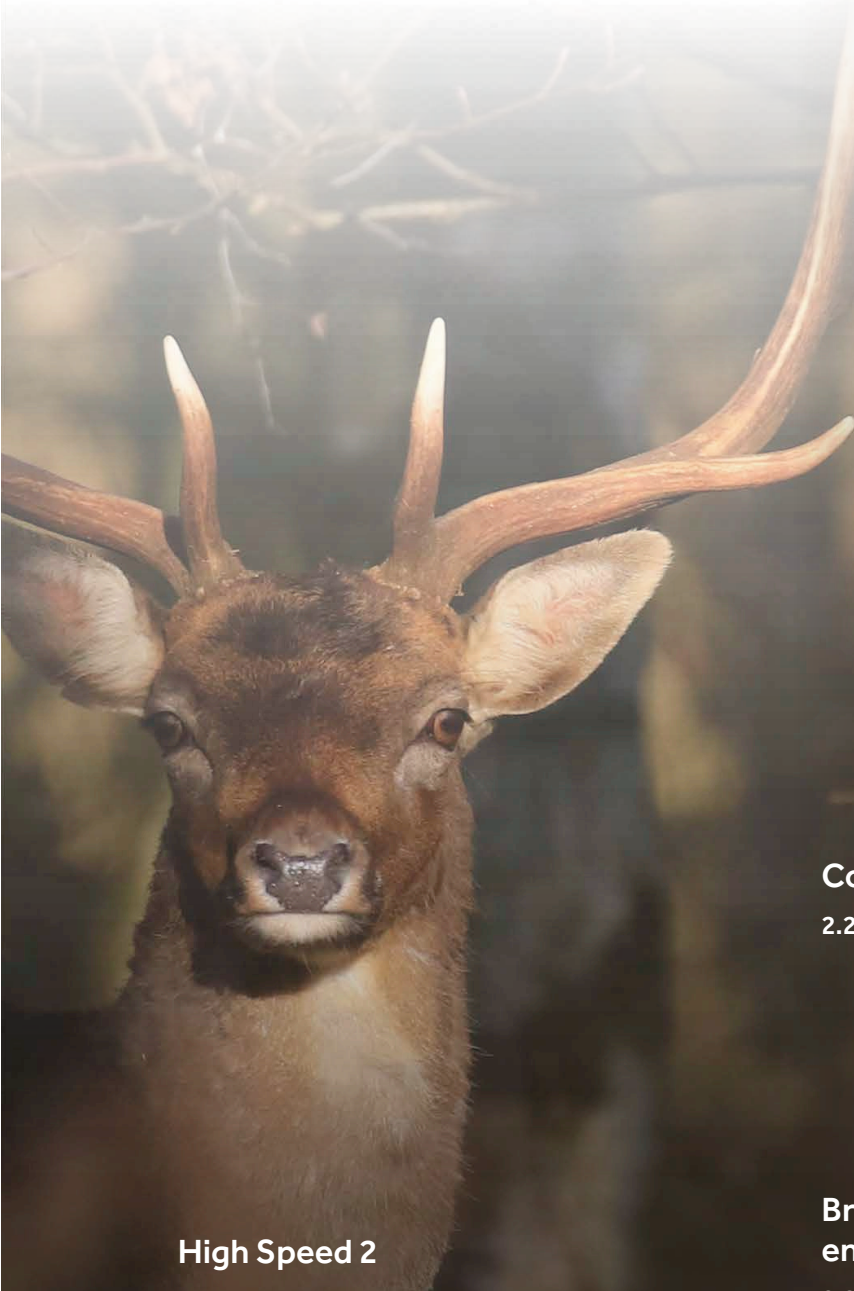
Climate change

2.20. The latest UK Climate Projections (2018) confirm that hot summers in central England are expected to become more common, and that rainfall patterns will continue to be difficult to predict, with potential for periods of drought as well as intense rainfall. These changes will continue to put pressure on habitats and species in the AONB. Developments in Government policy will offer new opportunities for businesses and communities to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Housing development

2.21. Significant new areas of housing are being built close to the AONB and further areas are being allocated in Local Plans. As well as the potential impact of development on the character and setting of the AONB, the growing population is likely to increase recreational activity which could harm the AONB's wildlife and other special qualities. The Special Area of Conservation designation in the AONB requires that action must be taken to prevent or mitigate any negative impacts of development on the designated features and species. The SAC Partnership is involved in delivering an Action Plan of measures which will continue during the period of this Management Plan.





High Speed 2

2.22. The proposed route of Phase 2 of HS2 (West Midlands to Crewe) lies to the east and north of the AONB, coming within a kilometre of the AONB between Great Haywood and Tixall. HS2 has the potential to have significant impacts on the setting of the AONB, affecting views, landscape character and habitat connectivity, during the construction phase and subsequently. The Trent-Sow Parklands and Cannock Chase AONB HS2 Group has been established to liaise with HS2 Ltd to ensure appropriate action is taken to avoid or mitigate these impacts.

Commonwealth Games, 2022

2.23. Cannock Chase will host the Mountain Biking event as part of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. This promises to raise the profile of the Chase and attract large numbers of spectators to the area. Careful planning will be needed to ensure that the event leaves a lasting positive legacy on the AONB and its special qualities.

Brexit and new arrangements for environmental support

2.24. When this Plan was prepared, it was unclear what the arrangements would be for the UK's departure from the EU, and what economic and regulatory impacts would result. A significant change will be the replacement of the EU Common Agricultural Policy with UK policies to support the provision of public goods from the countryside. Following a period of transition, the Environmental Land Management scheme is likely to be introduced towards the end of this Plan period. The way in which this scheme is designed and delivered could have significant implications for the way farmland and other land use in the AONB is managed.



Ian Jones

3. Vision for the AONB

Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

3

Vision for the AONB

- 3.1.** The special qualities of the AONB articulate what constitutes the natural beauty of Cannock Chase and what needs to be conserved and enhanced, in order to meet the statutory purpose of the designation. The Objectives, Policies and Action presented in the following Chapters (4 – 8) identify how the Joint Committee and its partners will go about ensuring that these special qualities are conserved and enhanced.
- 3.2.** In addition to this, a Vision for the AONB in 20 years-time (2039) is presented to inspire and identify the goal that everyone is working towards.

By 2039, the landscapes, habitats and heritage of Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be in good condition through positive management, with standards and facilities befitting their national and international importance. There will be high levels of connectivity between the AONB and its surrounds through its landscapes, habitats, heritage and cultural landscapes and communities. The natural benefits of the AONB will have a positive impact on those who experience and enjoy the Chase whether from local communities or further afield and these communities will in turn care for, feel pride in and celebrate the AONB.

- 3.3.** The rest of this Management Plan shows how the AONB Partnership will work towards this vision over the period 2019 to 2024.





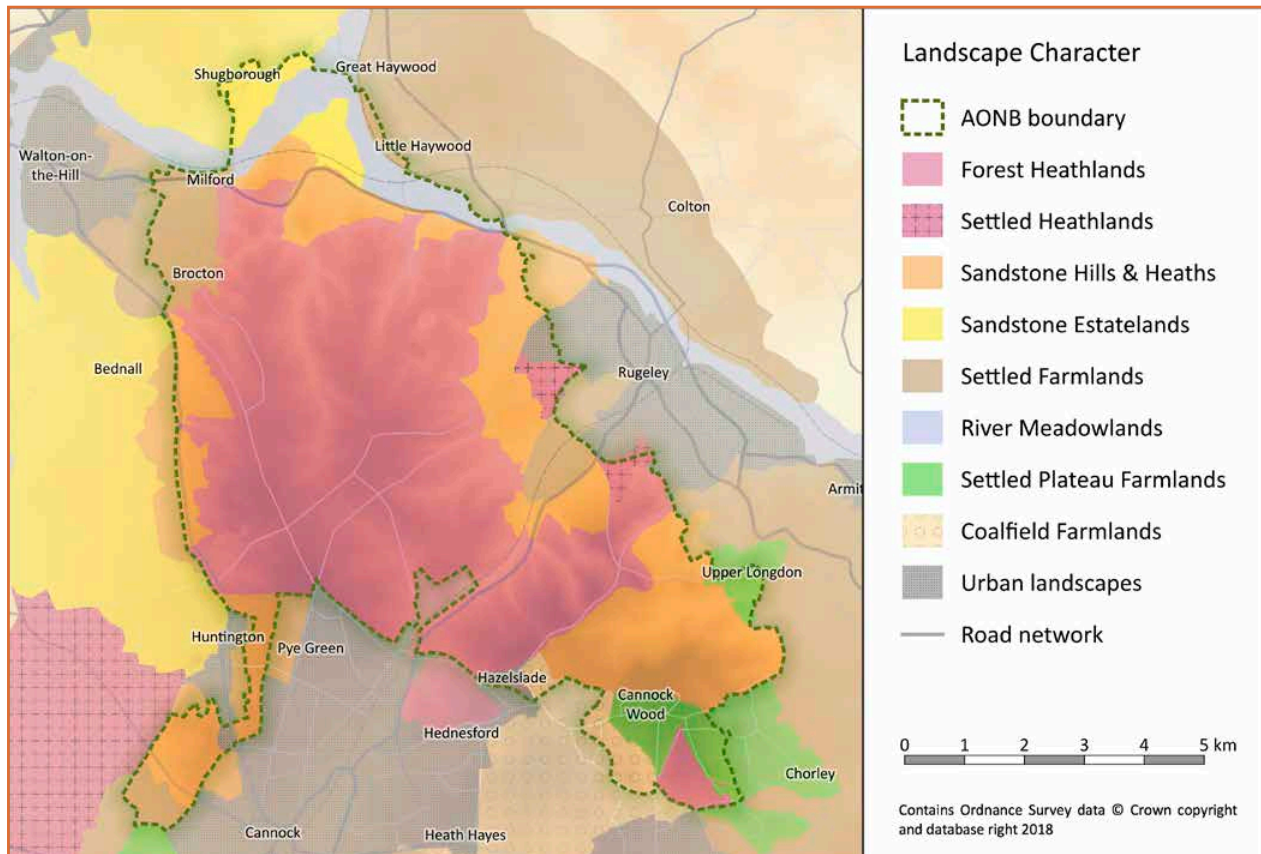
Ian Jones

4. Landscape Character and Planning

4

Landscape Character and Planning

- 4.1.** Cannock Chase holds the AONB designation because of its outstanding and nationally important landscape character and quality. Its special qualities, which have been informed by the recently revised Landscape Character Assessment (see map below), emphasise the contrast between the relatively wild and tranquil character of the Chase and the increasingly busy towns, conurbations and countryside that surround it.



- 4.2.** The landscape of the Chase is varied and there are different elements that are distinctive in different parts of the AONB, including the inspiring views and open prospect to and from parts of the high heathland plateau; the secluded and 'secret' valleys and tracks in the forested areas; and the patterns of small fields, farmsteads and parkland along the northern and eastern edge of the Chase.
- 4.3.** Economic development around the Chase including farming and forestry should improve the lives of local people and provide additional resources for conserving and enhancing the Chase. Nevertheless, it is important that development that comes close to the AONB boundary does not harm or intrude on the special qualities and characteristic features of the Chase's landscapes and its setting. The revised National Planning Policy Framework

(para. 172) strengthens the protection for AONB's against development, stating that the scale and extent of development should be limited in protected areas. It is also important that the contrasts between the Chase's natural beauty and the busy towns and countryside around it are not seen as creating a sharp boundary or barrier, but rather as complementary to each other.

- 4.4.** The policies in this theme are split between two overall objectives to:
- Maintain the quality and distinctiveness of the AONB's landscape character; and
 - Enhance the setting of the Chase within its wider urban and rural landscape

Maintain quality and distinctiveness

4.5. High standards of design in the built environment. There will be a continuing demand for alterations and additions to existing buildings in, and in proximity, to the Chase. Policies in Local Plans make clear that unsuitable new development will be resisted. Beyond that, it is important that development that is allowed is of a high quality based on best practice environmental and design standards so that it does not detract from, and ideally enhances, local landscape character.

Policy LCP1: Development proposals within the AONB should be of high quality design and environmental standards, respecting local distinctiveness, be complementary in form and scale with their surroundings, should take opportunities to enhance their setting⁸ and minimise their carbon footprint and negative impacts on the local environment.

Associated action

A1: Prepare guidance on 'Building and Infrastructure Design in Cannock Chase AONB' which Local Planning Authorities will be invited to adopt.

4.6. The impacts of traffic in the AONB. There are several busy roads which pass through the AONB and traffic, particularly heavy goods vehicles and speeding cars, plus the mechanisms put in place to manage it, can significantly detract from the tranquillity and high quality of the landscape. Highway design also impacts on the quality of the landscape and policy EE4 looks at this issue.

Policy LCP2: The impact of traffic travelling through the Chase, and of highway management, on its tranquillity and other special qualities should be reduced where possible by encouraging alternative routes and by reducing speed, noise and air pollution.

Associated action

B1: Explore with SCC Highways Department, building on good practice, the practical steps that can be taken to reduce traffic and highway management impacts through the AONB.

4.7. Woodland management. The woodlands of the Chase contrast significantly in their character ranging from commercial forestry to semi-natural ancient woodland. The 2,684 ha of woodland, rides and glades that are managed by Forestry Commission England in the Chase, along with the other areas of privately-owned woodland, all contribute greatly to the landscape of the AONB and the public goods it provides. These woodlands face a number of management issues that need to be addressed over the time period of the Plan, including how the woodlands will be affected and adapt to climate change and also the significant detrimental impact that grey squirrels and deer can have on young trees (and other habitats and land uses) when their populations become unsustainable (see policy WN6). The Commission's Cannock Forest Plan describes the objectives and programme of actions that will guide its management over the period 2015-2025, including felling and restocking, ride and open space management and provision of recreational routes. Over the period to 2025, this Plan will improve diversity of tree species including broadleaves, enlarge the area of open space and increase the area under continuous cover forestry.

Policy LCP3: Opportunities will be taken to enhance the contribution that woodland makes to the character of the AONB.

Associated action

B2: Support the work of Forestry Commission England and other woodland owners and managers to deliver both long term forestry/woodland design plans and short-term woodland management operations in ways which enhance the AONB's special qualities.

⁸ Guidance from Historic England in relation to heritage assets (The Setting of Heritage Assets, 2011) helps to define what is meant by setting: "The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration; by spatial associations; and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places".

4

Landscape Character and Planning

4.8. Farmland management. Pasture and arable farming have shaped and helped to maintain the landscape in many parts of the AONB. During the period of this Plan, Brexit is likely to bring a period of uncertainty and transition to farming as the UK replaces the EU policies and subsidies that have supported farming. There will be a growing focus on the public goods provided by farming and on its impacts on climate change. Advice and support will be needed to ensure that the types of farming that contribute to the AONB's special qualities are able to thrive and develop. Appropriate targeting of incentives available from the Countryside Stewardship scheme and its successor(s) will be needed to encourage a smooth transition for farming businesses and management practices.

Policy LCP4: Farming businesses in the Chase should be encouraged and supported to maintain and enhance the types of agricultural land management that contribute to the special qualities of the AONB.

Associated action

A12: Work with local partners to ensure appropriate advice and incentives are available and suitably targeted to farms and smallholdings in the AONB.

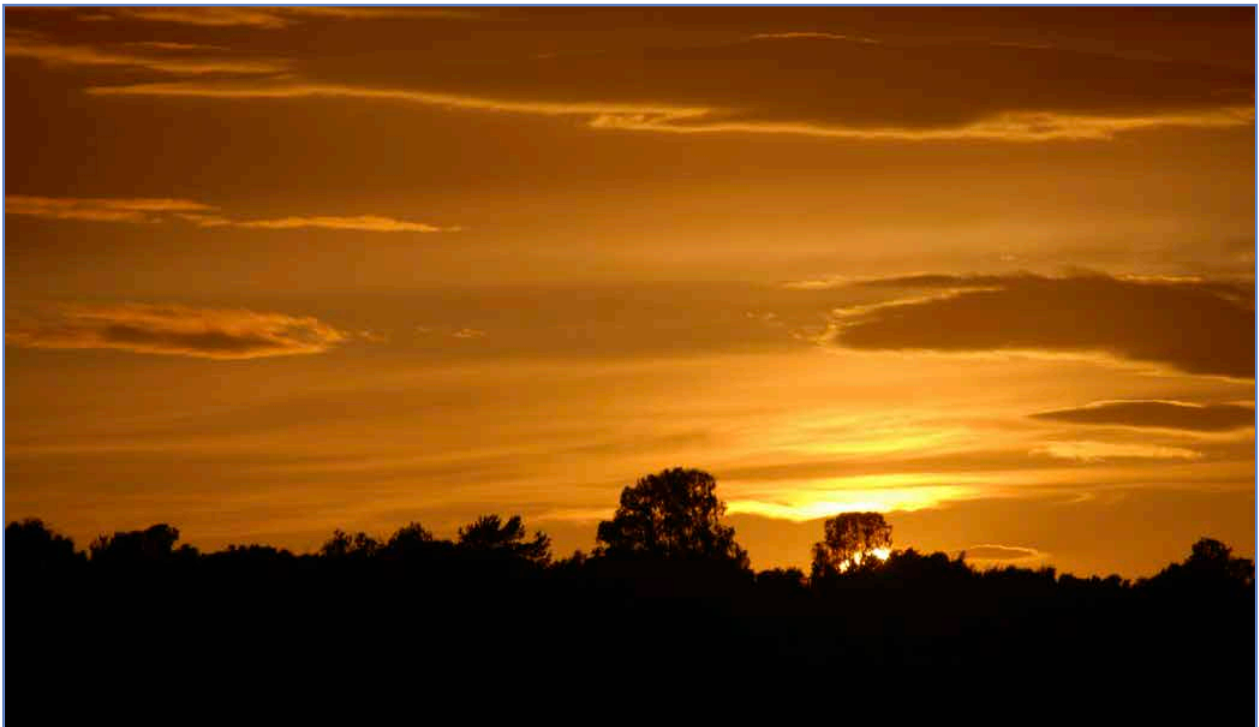
4.9. Non-farming land uses. The villages and farmsteads of the Chase are popular places to live and many residents are keen to manage their own piece of the landscape such as productive smallholdings, pony paddocks and small woodland.

Policy LCP5: Advice and practical guidance should be made available to landowners and those planning changes of use of their land, such as the keeping of horses, to conserve and enhance the Chase's special qualities.

Associated actions

A5: Re-engage and draw up a new updated database of interested parties in the AONB and maintain regular contact with them on matters of interest.

B3: Prepare and publicise information, and offer advisory events, for rural non-farming landowners in the AONB on how they can help conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Chase.



4

Landscape Character and Planning

4.10. Quarrying and other working landscapes.

The Chase is an important working landscape and today quarrying is still active on the Chase. There are two active permitted sand and gravel quarries (Rugeley Quarry and Pottal Pool Quarry) and one restored (Shoal Hill Quarry) that is still within the aftercare and management phase⁹. When these quarries and other working landscapes and land uses come to the end of their economic life it is important that their restoration and subsequent land use is informed and sympathetic to the landscape character, habitats and special qualities of the AONB. Change of use is an opportunity to restore and enhance land within the AONB to naturalistic landforms and appropriate habitats, primarily heathland and broad-leaved woodland, that delivers habitat connectivity both within the AONB and wider landscape, public access to reduce pressure on more sensitive parts of the AONB and enhances the landscape character of the Chase.

Policy LCP6: The restoration and subsequent land use of working landscapes and land where a change of use is sought, should be informed by and sympathetic to the special qualities of the AONB.

Associated action

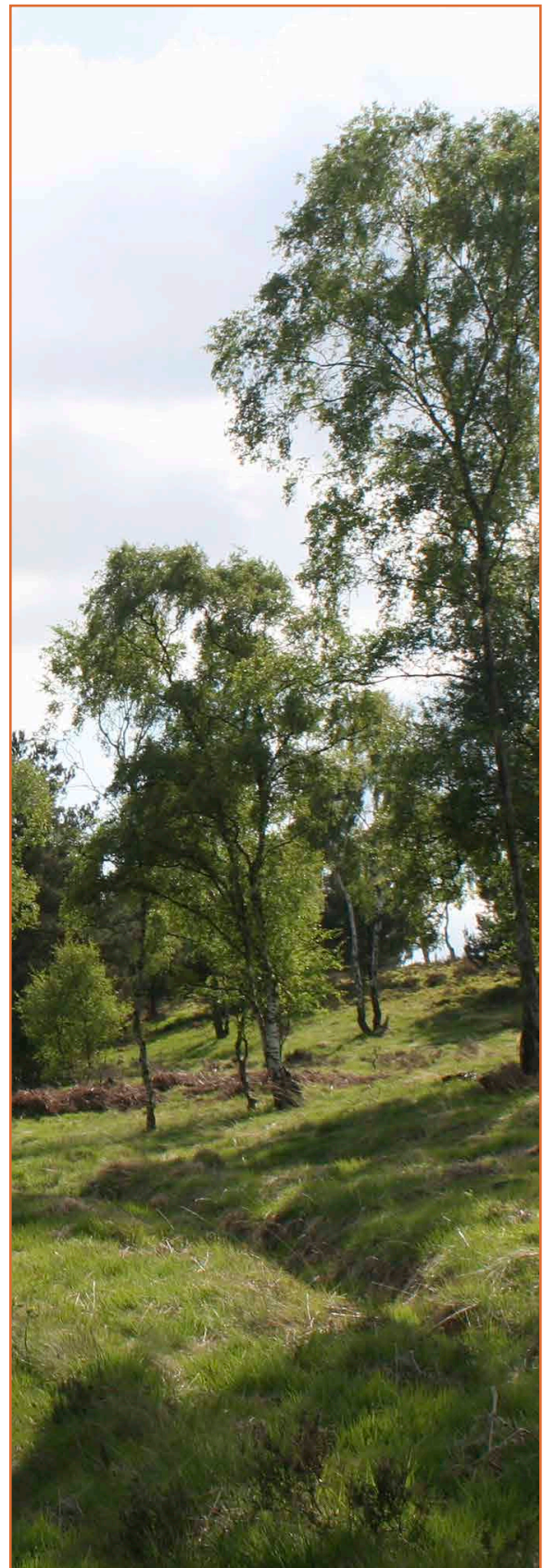
B18: Proactively work with Partners to plan for future land use changes ensuring that opportunities are maximised to support and enhance the special qualities of the AONB.

4.11. High quality recreation infrastructure. The way in which recreation is provided by the different landowners on the Chase, and the condition and style of infrastructure (such as signage, path surfacing and car parking), has a strong impact on the integrity of the landscape.

Policy LCP7: The quality, location and usage of recreation infrastructure maintained by all major landowners in the Chase should be consistent and appropriate to landscape character.

Associated action

A8: Develop a shared design protocol for recreation and leisure facilities, signage and promotional material, aimed at producing consistent high standards for use by all providers in the Chase.



iStock

4

Landscape Character and Planning

Enhance the landscape setting

4.12. Protecting the setting. The elevated plateau of the Chase gives long vistas over the farmed vales and countryside of the Midlands from many places within the AONB. At the same time, the Chase is present as a prominent wooded skyline from many surrounding settlements and roads. The small size of the AONB and its prominent elevation mean that its setting has an increased significance to the Chase's landscape character. Protecting and enhancing the setting of the AONB is important for ensuring the long-term survival of the special qualities. Views, including historic views, are one of the key ways that setting is experienced and understanding these views into and out of the Chase will help to protect them.

Policy LCP8: Development and land management proposals in the area, which by virtue of their nature, size, scale, siting, materials or design can be considered to have a negative impact on the natural beauty and special qualities of Cannock Chase AONB, should be resisted.

Associated action

A15: Produce guidance on the significant view points and views, including historic views, into and out of the AONB¹⁰.

4.13. Softening the boundary. The change in character on the edge of the Chase, from natural and open to busy and built-up, is particularly marked around Cannock, Pye Green, Hednesford and Rugeley, emphasising the sense of the Chase's isolation and fragility and reducing the aesthetic experience of people entering the Chase at these points both in the day and at night due to light pollution.

Policy LCP9: In the immediate vicinity of the AONB, the character of the public realm (e.g. landscaping around roads and buildings, public lighting and signage) should be designed and maintained so that it reinforces and complements the landscape character and quality of the Chase and provides a welcoming experience for those entering the AONB.

Associated action

A1: Prepare guidance on 'Building and Infrastructure Design in Cannock Chase AONB' which Local Planning Authorities will be invited to adopt.

4.14. Strategic landscape links. There is great potential to strengthen the connectivity and integrity of landscape character with areas of countryside around the AONB, particularly through heathland links to Sutton Park in the south, heathland, hedges and woodland to the west and east and along the river valleys to the north building on the work of the Transforming the Trent Landscape Partnership Scheme. The construction of the High Speed 2 rail line (Phase 2a from the West Midlands to Crewe) will have impacts on biodiversity and landscape to the east and north of the AONB, affecting some of its special qualities. These environmental connections are also highlighted in the Nature and Wildlife chapter (Policy WN8).

Policy LCP10: Opportunities should be promoted to enhance the character and quality of the countryside and public open spaces surrounding the AONB so as to enhance the setting of the AONB, reduce its isolation and create strong visual and aesthetic links with surrounding landscapes.

Associated actions

A13: Identify and promote projects that enhance the landscape connectivity, biodiversity resilience and heritage value of countryside and public open space around the Chase.

B8: Through the Trent-Sow Parklands and Cannock Chase AONB HS2 Group, develop and influence design principles, mitigation measures and environmental enhancement measures for the HS2 route that will minimise impacts on, and conserve and enhance, the special qualities of the AONB.

¹⁰ The following guidance may be appropriate for this task: English Heritage (2011) Seeing the history in the view: A method for assessing heritage significance within views. May 2011 and Landscape Institute 3rd edition of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3), April 2013.



Andy Hay (RSPB-images.com)

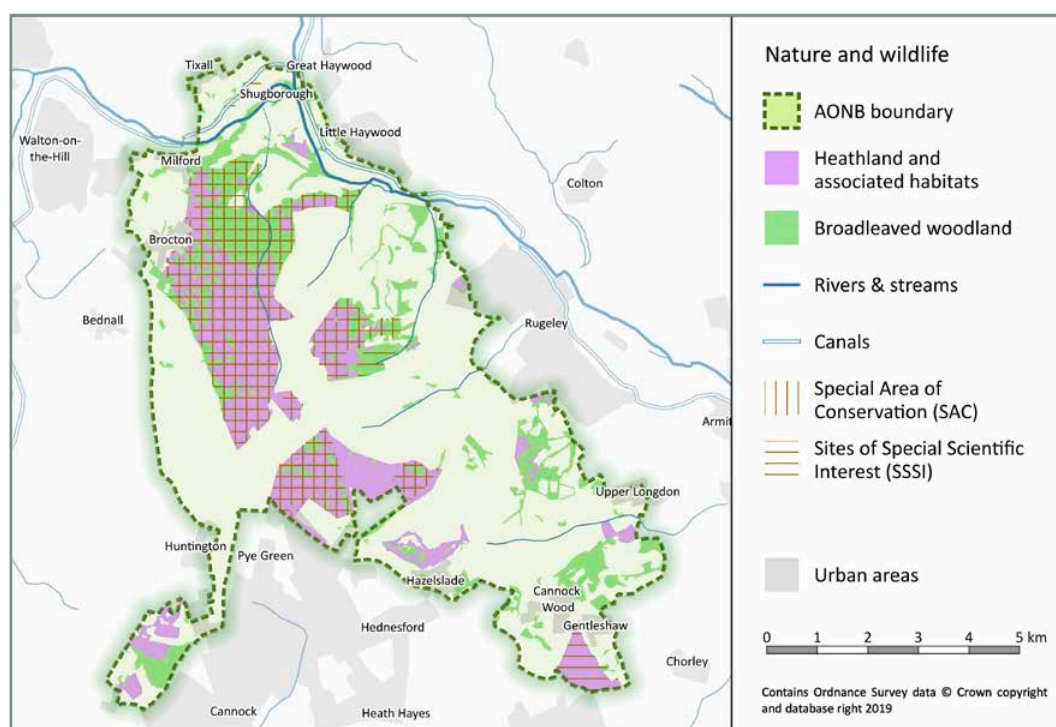
5. Wildlife and Nature

5 Wildlife and Nature

5.1. The heathland and associated habitats of the Chase are of national and international importance. The Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation extends to 1,244 ha and is one of the largest areas of lowland heathland in England. Rare valley mires in the Sherbrook and Oldacre Valleys and ancient wood pasture at Brocton Coppice, and their associated rare insects, add to the exceptional biodiversity value of Cannock Chase. Important populations of protected species such as nightjars and woodlarks¹¹ which are characteristic birds of lowland heathland are found across the AONB, both inside and outside the protected sites. Examples of other

important wildlife habitats are at Hednesford Hills, Gentleshaw Common, Stafford Brook and Rawbones Meadow (all designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or SSSI) and Shugborough, Shoal Hill and Hatherton Hall (classified as Local Wildlife Sites).

5.2. The underlying geology and geomorphology are preserved at the Milford Quarry SSSI, where the disused gravel pit provides excellent three-dimensional exposures of the Lower Triassic Bunter Pebble Beds that form the elevated plateau of the Chase. Areas classified as Local Geological Sites (LoGS) occur at Brocton Quarry West, Cliff Caves at Great Haywood, Dark Slade Wood, Etching Hill and Satnall Hills Quarry.



5.3. The wildlife of the Chase is highly cherished by the many local people who come to spot or hear characteristic birds, catch glimpses of the deer, study the geology or simply get close to nature.

5.4. Although the large size of the habitats on the Chase compared to surrounding areas of countryside provides a degree of protection and resilience to wildlife, the corridors of habitats outside the AONB which connect to other wildlife populations are narrow and fragmented and increasingly under threat.

Wildlife in the Chase faces a number of threats, including disturbance by people and dogs, the changing climate and increased wildfires and new pests and diseases associated with this, and a decline in traditional management techniques. These pressures leave low and isolated populations of some species vulnerable to local extinction. There is a responsibility for all bodies to take action to mitigate and anticipate the impacts from climate change.

¹¹ These and other internationally importance bird species are listed under Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).

5 Wildlife and Nature

5.5. The previous chapter includes a number of policies that address wildlife and nature (for instance LCP3 covering woodland and LCP4 covering farmland) and these are not duplicated here. The policies in this chapter are split between two overall objectives to:

- Improve conditions for nature in the Chase
- Enlarge and connect habitats

Improve conditions for nature in the Chase

5.6. **Recognition of the importance of the SAC.** The five areas in the AONB which are designated as a Special Area of Conservation of European importance are the most extensive areas of lowland heathland in the Midlands, with characteristics of both the northern moorland heaths of England and Wales and those of southern counties. They include both dry heathland communities (*Calluna vulgaris* – *Ulex gallii* and *Calluna vulgaris* – *Deschampsia flexuosa* communities) and Northern Atlantic wet heaths, wood pasture and veteran trees. Within the heathland, species of northern latitudes occur, such as cowberry and crowberry. Cannock Chase has the main British population of the hybrid bilberry *Vaccinium x intermedium*, a rare hybrid between bilberry and cowberry. As noted further below, there are important populations of birds, mammals, reptiles and invertebrates.

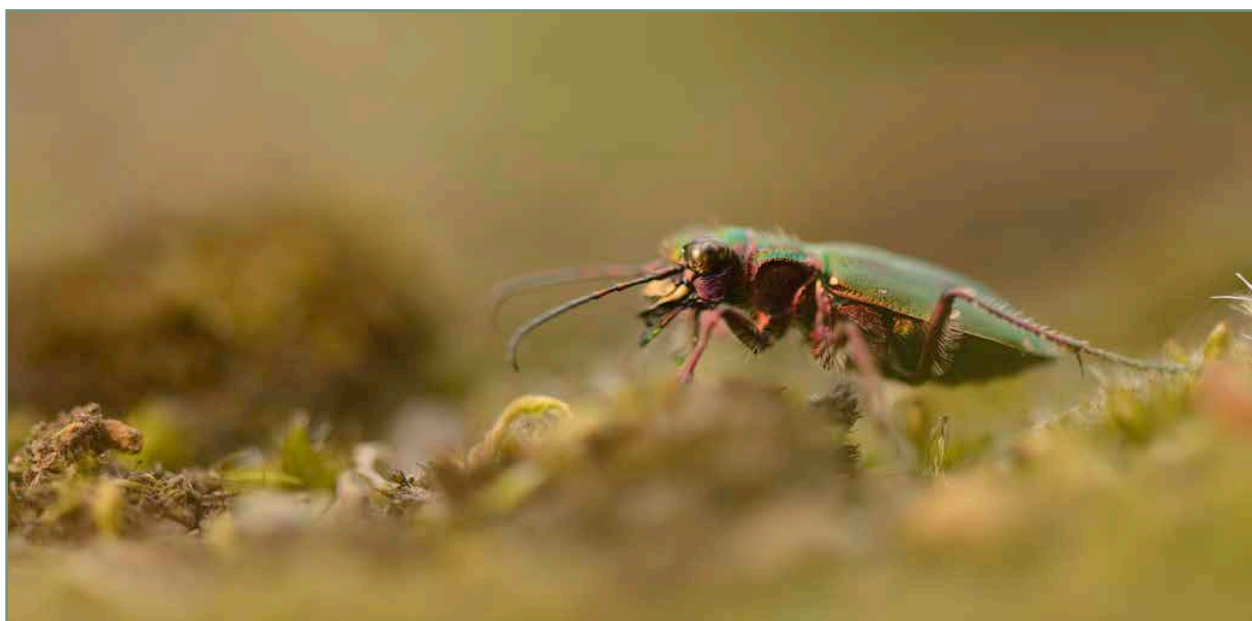
5.7. Coordinated action is being taken by the SAC Partnership to protect the qualifying features of the designation, particularly in relation to increasing recreational pressure (through the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Measures or SAMMM). Nevertheless, the importance, and fragility, of the biodiversity of these areas deserves to be better recognised and given a higher priority by all organisations and individuals whose actions influence the condition of the SAC.

Policy WN1: The international significance of the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and the fragility and needs of its biodiversity, should be fully taken into account in all forms of public policy and private practice that will affect the condition of the SAC.

Associated actions

A9: Draw-up and co-ordinate dissemination of consistent messages about the significance and conservation requirements of sensitive sites and species in the AONB to key decision-making bodies and networks.

A10: Review and influence the content and delivery of visitor management plans and open space strategies surrounding the AONB to ensure they identify and promote sites, facilities and activities inside and outside the AONB boundary that will reduce the negative impacts of recreation on sensitive sites and species in the Chase.



5 Wildlife and Nature

5.8. Key species and their habitats. The Chase is home to many characteristic and/or iconic species, all of which require specific habitats and conditions to thrive. These species include plants of the valley mires such as bog mosses, cranberry, marsh violet; plants of dry heathland such as the Cannock Chase berry; birds of the heathland including the internationally important nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler¹²; birds of woodland and scrub such as redstart, tree pipit, wood warbler and lesser-spotted woodpecker; birds of farmland habitats such as turtle dove, yellowhammer and grasshopper warbler. The Chase is home to four of the six British reptiles (slow worm, grass snake, adder and common lizard); five species of bat; and rare or characteristic invertebrates such as white-clawed crayfish, small pearl-bordered fritillary, Welsh clearwing, bog bush cricket, green tiger beetle and black darter dragonfly. The large scale of the Chase's heathland and the preservation of rare habitats such as the valley mires and wood pasture help maintain viable populations of these species. However, they may be at risk from a number of threats including disturbance from recreational activities, pollution and invasive species.

Policy WN2: A coordinated approach across landholdings will be taken to monitor and undertake actions to enhance the conservation status of populations of key species and their habitats, taking particular account of threats such as disturbance and pollution.

Associated action

A2: Monitor and report on the conservation status and needs of key species and their habitats in the AONB, including where they occur outside the SAC, and implement actions to address identified threats and opportunities.

5.9. Effective management of heathland.

Traditionally, the Chase's heathland vegetation was grazed by cattle which provide an efficient and nature-friendly way of keeping a varied and open structure to the vegetation and preventing dominance of bracken and scrub. The use of grazing livestock in public open spaces requires careful management for the good of the animals and for people and it has been successfully reintroduced to many other similar heathland

sites in the region. The alternative of mechanical vegetation cutting is less environmentally sustainable, less beneficial for wildlife and more expensive.

Policy WN3: The preferred form of management for most areas of heathland and associated habitats, including wood pasture, should be grazing by livestock in combination with other management techniques. Grazing schemes will be developed by working closely and building consensus with local communities and user groups.

Associated action

B4: Work with stakeholders and local communities to develop a phased reintroduction of livestock grazing to key sites to support sustainable management

5.10. Water bodies and wetlands. The AONB contains a number of important aquatic habitats including the Stafford Brook SSSI, the valley mires in the Sherbook and Oldacre Valleys, stretches of the Rivers Trent and Sow and part of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal. The internationally important valley mire habitats in the Chase rely on seasonally natural water tables. However, there is concern that the level of the groundwater has declined over time, resulting in the habitats becoming drier and shrinking in size. The causes of this are not yet fully understood.

Policy WN4: Investigate and address factors impacting on valley mires and other wetlands to bring them into favourable condition.

Associated action

B15: Report progress with the new Ground Water modelling being undertaken by the EA and PWS companies to ensure sustainable abstractions.

¹² These three bird species are listed in Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive and warrant special protection.

5 Wildlife and Nature

5.11. Invasive weeds, pests and diseases. Climate change may have many impacts on the AONB over the next 20 years. The warming climate and past introductions from other countries are leading to growing numbers and populations of invasive species which are threatening native plants and animals. Invasive species requiring monitoring and action include the water mould *Phytophthora ramorum* (threatening the hybrid Bilberry on heathland and larch in the forestry), the fungus *Hymenoschyphus fraxineus* (which causes ash dieback - previously known as *Chalara*), parrot's feather and New Zealand pigmyweed (water weeds that can choke streams, ponds and lakes) and the signal crayfish (which carries a disease of the native white-clawed crayfish) populations. The native red squirrel survived in the Chase until the 1990s but has been ousted by the grey squirrel.

Policy WN5: The incidence, spread and impacts of invasive species, pests and diseases in the AONB must be better understood, and where information is available, it should be used to inform land management decisions.

Associated action

B6: Monitor invasive species and support collaborative and targeted management to address them where required.

5.12. Deer. The herds of deer that roam the Chase are a well-loved emblem that the public enjoy seeing as part of their experience of the AONB. These herds do however present management challenges for land managers impacting on habitats, particularly woodlands and young trees, and also when they come into conflict with other human activity such as road users. Careful coordinated monitoring and management is required, working closely with the public to ensure these challenges and conflicts are minimised.

Policy WN6: A collaborative approach to monitoring and managing the deer population across the Chase should be developed, working closely with land managers and the public to balance the needs of both a healthy deer population and habitats.

Associated action

B5: Draw up a strategy and action plan for monitoring and managing the deer population in the Chase and engaging and informing the public about the need to manage the deer population.

5.13. Geological exposures. Rock faces in several places in the AONB reveal its geological history, showing the stratigraphy of the red sandstone, pebble beds and coal measures. They help to explain the Chase's landform and its story of quarrying and gravel pit extraction. The geology and soils of the Chase as a whole are undervalued and the public and land managers are often unaware of their importance and fragility. As noted at the start of this chapter, there are six designated geological sites in the AONB. The Milford Quarry SSSI is judged to be in unfavourable but recovering condition. Four of the Local Geological Sites (LoGs) have a positive conservation status, at Cliffs Caves, Dark Slade Wood, Etching Hill and Satnall Hills Quarry, while Brocton Gravel Pit (West) is in poor declining status¹³.

Policy WN7: The profile of Local Geological Sites within the AONB should be raised and monitoring and management arrangements improved to ensure their long-term conservation.

Associated action

B19: Increase awareness and appreciation of Local Geological Sites within the AONB amongst Partners and identify ways to coordinate their monitoring and management.

5

Wildlife and Nature

Enlarge and connect habitats

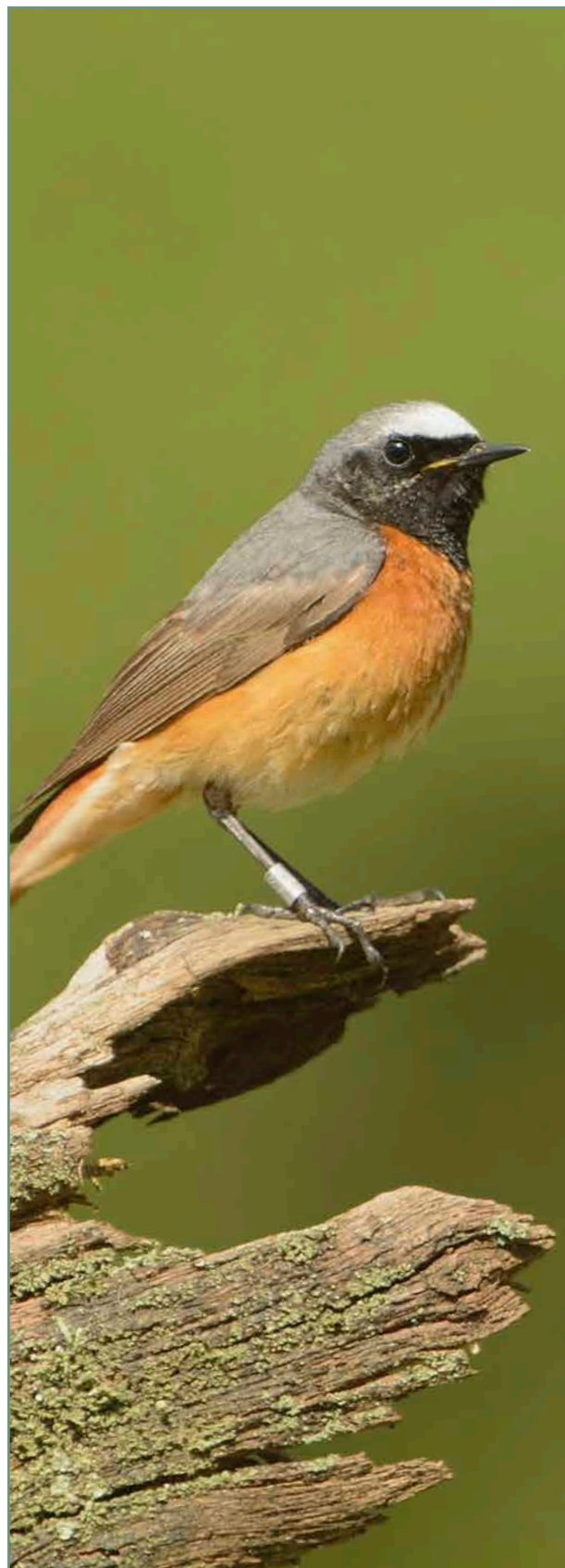
5.14. Along with the privilege of hosting such large areas of internationally important habitats, comes a responsibility to help nature recover and spread, both inside the AONB and into surrounding areas where it has been lost¹⁴.

5.15. **Restoration of heathland.** Most of the commercial forestry in the AONB was established on heathland during the 20th century. There are potential opportunities through Forestry Commission England to return some areas of forestry to heathland, if an equivalent area of land for compensation planting can be found. The new area of compensation planting could provide public benefits such as helping to mitigate air pollution and providing access for quiet recreation, reducing pressure on the Chase.

Policy WN8: Explore and develop opportunities to restore heathland from forestry plantations in the Chase.

Associated action

B7: Develop a project to identify suitable heathland restoration areas on conifer plantations acquiring land for compensation planting and planning a phased approach to delivery.



Ben Andrew (RSPB-images.com)

¹⁴ See the 'Lawton Principles' Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network, DEFRA 2010

5

Wildlife and Nature

5.16. Bridges for nature outside the AONB. Outside the AONB there are a range of core habitat areas and networks that are permeable to wildlife but are currently disconnected from each other. To allow wildlife to thrive across this landscape these core habitat areas and networks with wildlife-friendly habitats need to be joined up. These include areas of heathland, wood pasture and PAWS sites to the north west (at Maer Hills, Bishops Wood Loggerheads and Hanchurch), heathland, wetland and PAWS to the south (across the Chasewater and the Southern Staffordshire Coalfield Heaths SSSI complex towards Sutton Park National Nature Reserve in Birmingham and across to Tamworth), flood plain grassland along the north and east (along the Trent and Sow valleys) and the ancient woodlands (the Needwood Forest)

and woodland and parkland to the south west (towards Codsall and Albrighton). These areas are shown on the map on page 31.

Policy WN9: The AONB Partnership will actively support opportunities to build connected networks of wildlife sites extending beyond the AONB and improve landscape permeability, as a means of enhancing the resilience and viability of wildlife populations currently concentrated in the Chase.

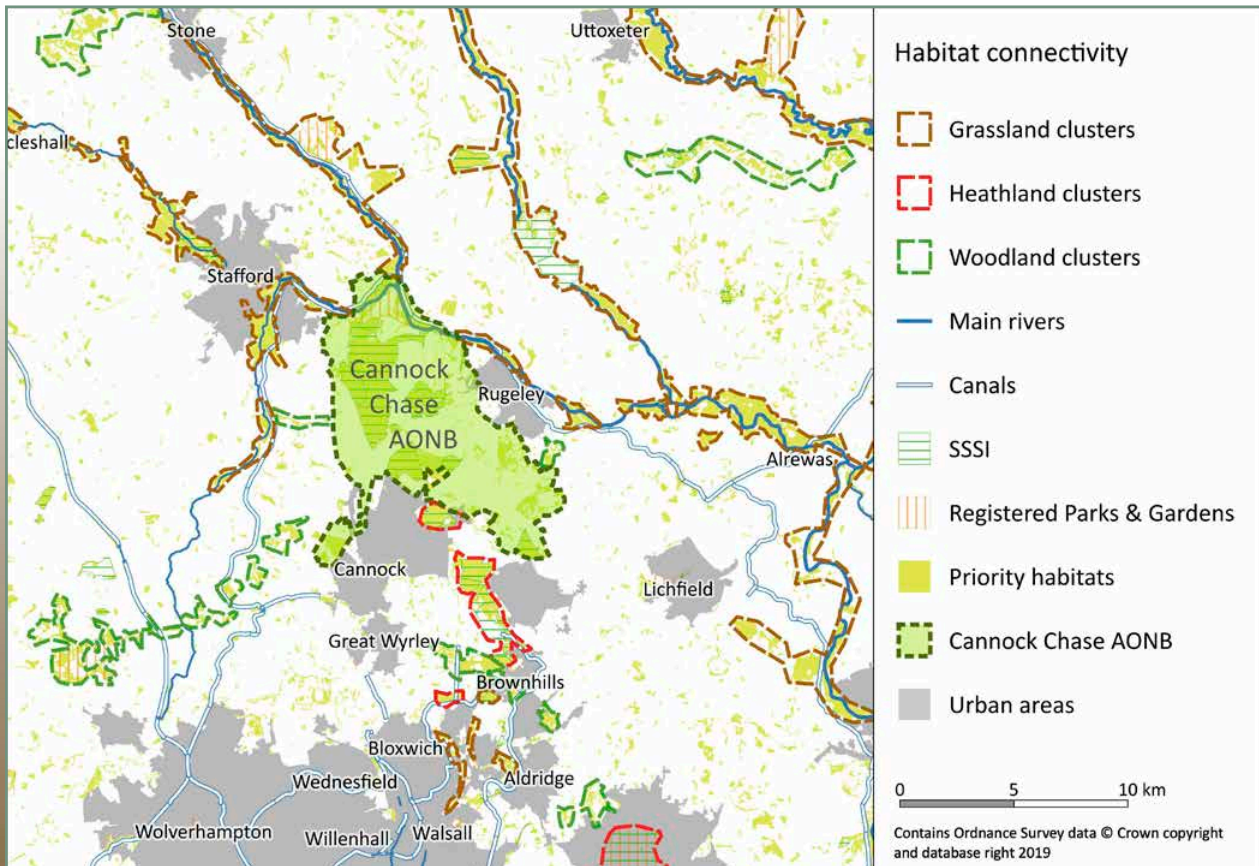
Associated action

A13: Identify and promote projects that enhance the landscape connectivity, biodiversity resilience and heritage value of countryside and public open space around the Chase.



5

Wildlife and Nature



5.17. National leadership in biodiversity net gain. The measures already being taken using developer funding to protect the Cannock Chase SAC from the negative impacts of new housing development, and the pioneering role being taken by Lichfield District Council in planning policy, provide a launch pad for the AONB Partnership to respond proactively to the development that will take place around the Chase. This will enable the Partnership to relieve pressure on the nature and natural beauty in the Chase, becoming a pathfinder amongst other protected landscapes.

Policy WN10: The AONB Partnership will take a leading role in supporting and facilitating practical delivery of biodiversity net gain, through measures such as Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy, to provide suitable areas of new habitat that enhance the resilience and recovery of wildlife living in the AONB.

Associated action

A13: *Identify and promote projects that enhance the landscape connectivity, biodiversity resilience and heritage value of countryside and public open space around the Chase.*



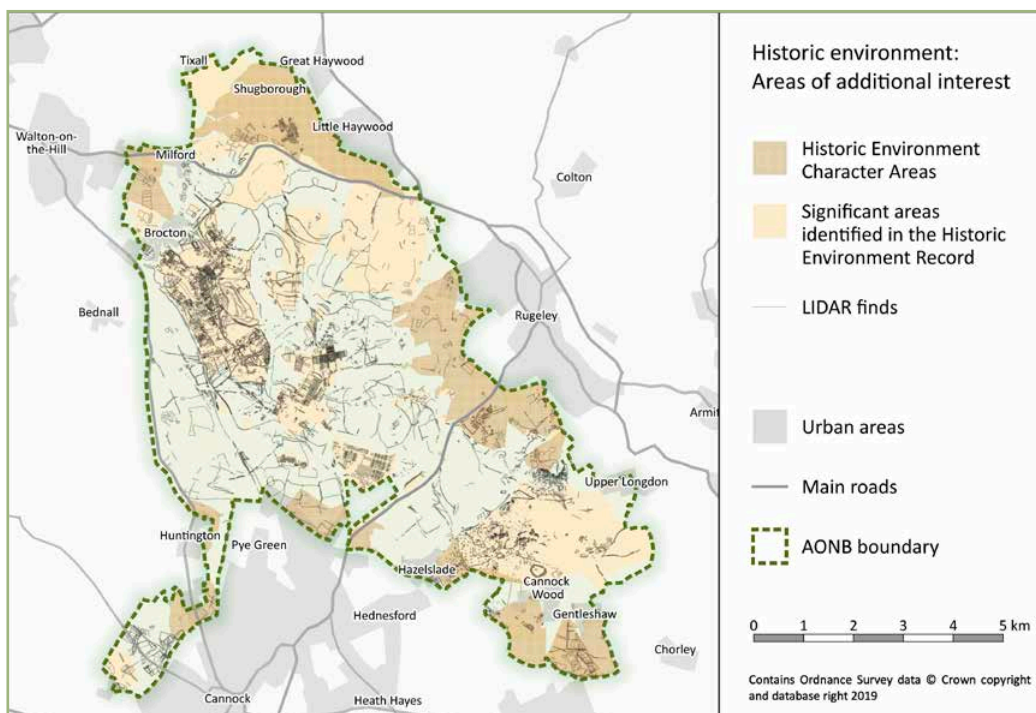
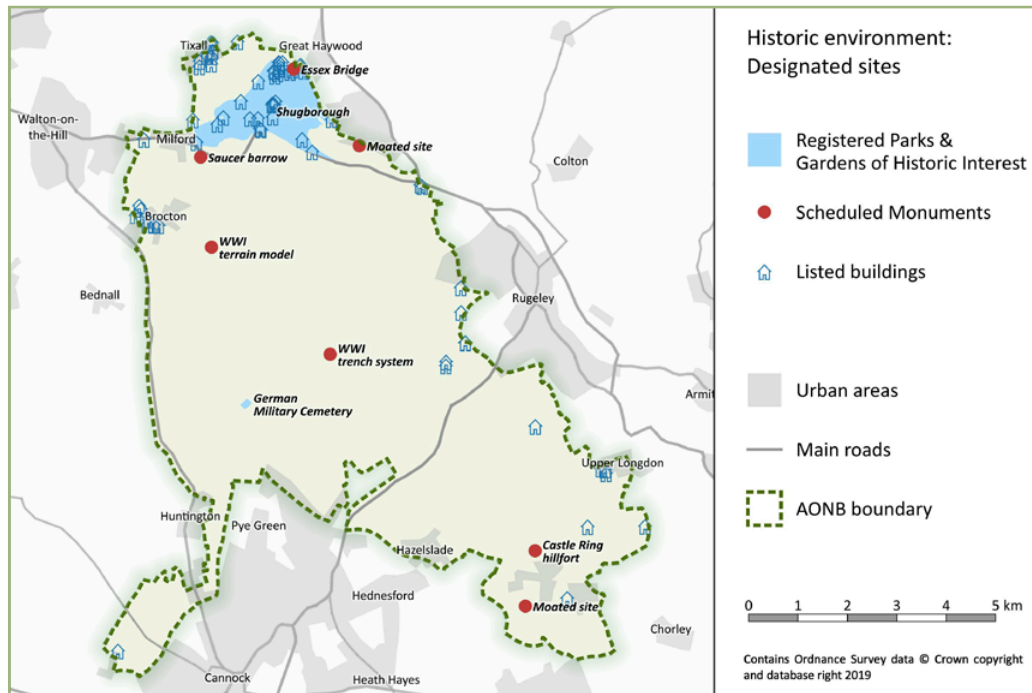
National Trust, David Goacher

6. Historic Environment and Culture

6

Historic Environment and Culture

- 6.1. The Chase has a rich history (see maps below) that has shaped its landscape and communities and this history is at the heart of many of the qualities that make it special. Whilst there is a feeling that this history has been somewhat overlooked, recent technological advancements have revealed the sheer extent of the heritage assets that exist on the Chase extending into surrounding communities. There is also, more widely, a renewed recognition of the important role that history and culture have in providing communities with their sense of place, memory and knowledge and fostering cultural traditions, providing important means to engage local communities and contribute to meeting their educational and social needs.



6

Historic Environment and Culture

6.2. The policies in this theme are split between two overall objectives to:

- Conserve the Chase's historic environment; and
- Connect communities with the Chase's history and culture

Conserve the Chase's historic environment

6.3. A Special Quality of the Chase is the depth and diversity of its historic environment and how this has influenced the land use and landscape that is evident today; from the Neolithic barrow at Spring Hill, the Iron Age Hill Fort at Castle Ring, the medieval hunting chase, historic parkland, ornamental landscapes, common land, iron workings and coal mines, military camps and cemeteries from the two World Wars. In 2015 600 heritage assets (including buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and landscapes) were recorded on Staffordshire's Historic Environment Record for the AONB¹⁵, the recent LIDAR survey has uncovered hundreds more and the next steps are to get a better understanding of significance and condition of everything that has been found. Designated assets¹⁶ form a small proportion of what is of historic interest. Some of the best-known assets on the Chase, including the military camps from the First World War, currently do not have protected status.

6.4. **Improving knowledge of heritage.** In addition to ensuring that designated historic assets are fully understood and actively managed in the most appropriate way there is a pressing need to fully understand the significance and survival of all the non-designated heritage assets in the AONB. In particular these non-designated heritage assets need to be prioritised and decisions made on the best way to manage and protect them, for instance if they need to be put forward for designation.

Policy HC1: Improve understanding of the significance and condition of heritage assets within the AONB.

Associated actions

A14: Assess updated historic environment information on non-designated features to prioritise sites for survey, condition assessment and monitoring to inform future management.

B16: Monitor the condition of designated heritage features in the AONB to identify management requirements.



National Trust, David Goacher

¹⁵ Staffordshire County Council, (2015) Historic Environment Assessment Cannock Chase AONB.

¹⁶ Currently including seven Scheduled Monuments, 68 nationally Listed Buildings, two Registered Parks and Gardens and five Conservation Areas

6

Historic Environment and Culture

- 6.5. Improving the condition of heritage.** In order to improve the condition of all heritage assets in the AONB it is important that knowledge reaches those whose actions have a direct impact on them. It is important that measures are also put in place to ensure that land owners, managers and decision makers appreciate the scale of historic interest within the AONB and the potential for significant historic assets to be unprotected. Easily accessible resources and knowledge need to be available to help them be aware where these assets exist on land they are responsible for and understand how they can contribute to their conservation and successful management.

Policy HC2: Work with landowners, managers, decision makers and local communities to positively manage the historic environment to ensure its successful conservation and enhancement.

Associated action

B17: Develop and deliver sustainable management regimes for heritage assets with land owners, managers, decision makers and local communities through raising their awareness of the historic environment and its significance and providing them with support and guidance.



i Stock

Connect communities with the Chase's history and culture

- 6.6.** The long history of the Chase and its landscapes are closely intertwined with the communities that surround it. This rich history doesn't stop at the boundary of the AONB but extends into its surrounding communities. Whilst there is an understanding amongst the public and decision makers about certain aspects of the Chase's history other parts of its diverse history and its wider cultural landscapes are less well known and understood. Particularly the many intangible aspects of this history and these cultural landscapes; its role in sense of place, memory and knowledge and fostering cultural traditions that help make it the special place it is today.
- 6.7. Inspire through the Chase's history and culture.** Improving understanding and celebrating the history and culture of the Chase will help to engage and inspire the public and further the connection between the AONB and its communities, reinforcing the importance and 'specialness' of the Chase and the need to protect it. As new communities spring up adjacent to the Chase the need to appreciate and celebrate the cultural importance of the Chase and foster this connection with communities becomes even more important.

Policy HC3: Engage and inspire local communities and visitors to enjoy and appreciate the AONB's historic environment through education, interpretation and events.

Associated actions

B9: Building on the success of 'The Chase Through Time', develop a project to engage local communities by celebrating the AONB's cultural heritage and involving them in historic environment citizen science activities.



Historic England Archive

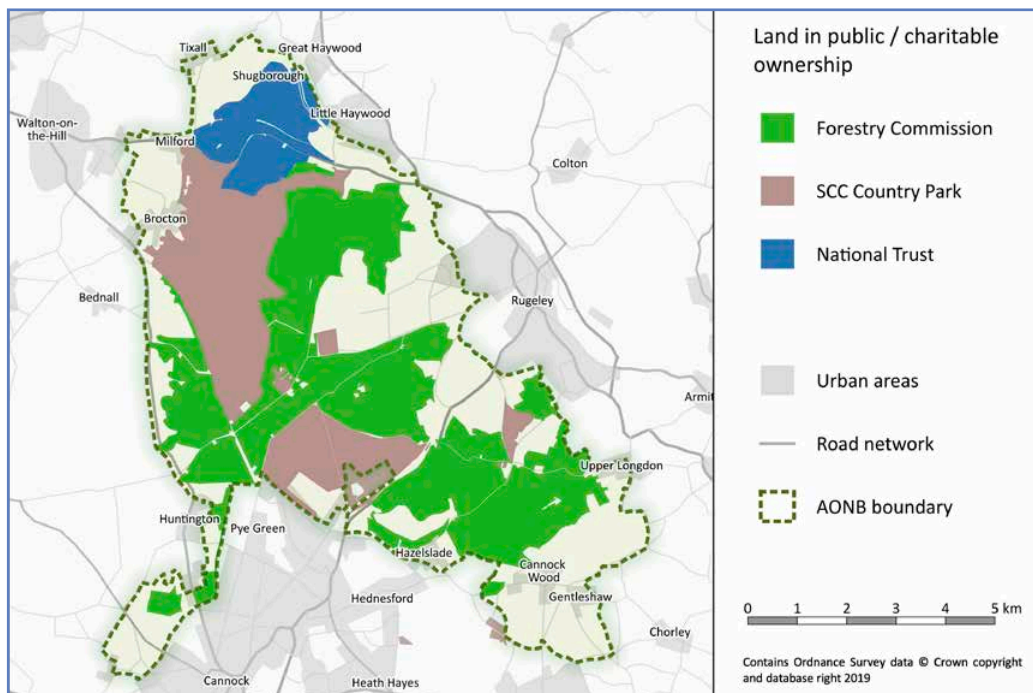
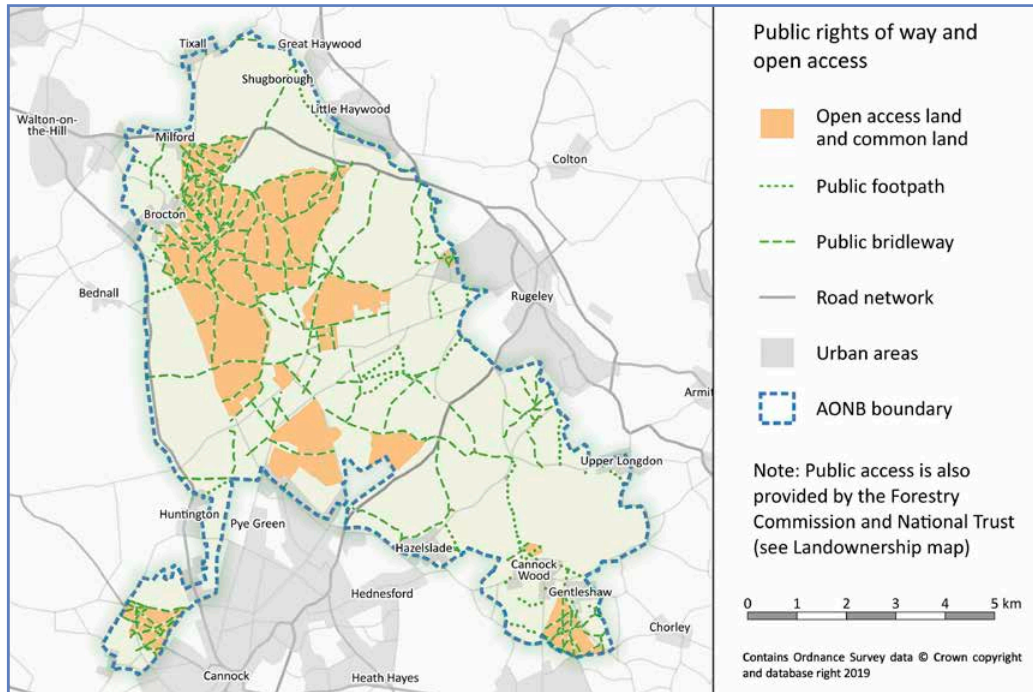
7. Experience and Enjoyment

Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

7

Experience and Enjoyment

- 7.1. Central to the appeal of the AONB is the ability for people to experience and enjoy it. One of its key special qualities is the opportunity it provides for stimulating exercise and exploration, made possible not only by the area's extensive network of rides and paths but also the 4,000 hectares of land that is publicly accessible (see maps below). The varied landscape is full of interest, including a rich history and inspiring views and it is a haven of tranquillity and wildness compared to the busy towns and roads that surround it.



7

Experience and Enjoyment

- 7.2. Ensuring that the special qualities that attract people to the Chase are conserved and enhanced should be central to guiding activities that impact and have influence on the AONB.
- 7.3. The policies in this theme are split between two overall objectives:
- Treading lightly in the Chase
 - A greener experience

Treading lightly in the Chase

- 7.4. **Recreation Management.** The AONB is a popular destination and received an estimated 2.3 million visitors in 2010/11, up from an estimated 1.3 million in 2000¹⁷. The number of visitors is expected to carry on rising as a result of the significant increases in new housing being proposed nearby. The current volume of visitors, their clustering in particular areas of the AONB and the activities they undertake puts significant pressure on and threatens the special qualities that draw people to the area in the first place.

- 7.5. Although the AONB covers a relatively small area, over 4,000 hectares of it (58% of the AONB) is publicly accessible through a combination of statutory and permissive access¹⁸. However, visitors are not spread evenly throughout the AONB with six main hotspots accounting for over 50% of visitors namely; Marquis Drive, Birches Valley, Milford Common, Moor's Gorse, Seven Springs and Brocton Coppice Car Park¹³. Clustering of visitors causes pressure on some of the most sensitive parts of the AONB. The SAC is particularly vulnerable to visitor pressure and yet this is also one of the areas that has the highest density of footpaths, rides and car parks. This results in soil erosion, eutrophication, disturbance to wildlife, especially priority species and their habitats, and a loss of tranquillity. Populations of protected species outside of the SAC are also vulnerable to visitor pressure.



National Trust, Jana Eastwood

¹⁷ Lepus Consulting (October 2012), 2010-11 Cannock Chase AONB Visitor Survey
Analysis: Final Report

¹⁸ Cannock Chase AONB Partnership (2014) Visitor Management Strategy

- 7.6.** In order to protect the special qualities of the AONB from recreational pressure there is a need to direct visitors and the disruptive activities away from the most sensitive areas of the Chase, both within the AONB boundary and where appropriate outside of it.

Policy EE1: Wherever possible, recreational activity should be moved away from the most sensitive parts of the AONB, ensuring that suitable measures are in place to reduce the negative impacts of an increase in visitors (both within and outside the AONB boundary).

Associated action

A10: Review and influence the content and delivery of visitor management plans and open space strategies surrounding the AONB to ensure they identify and promote sites, facilities and activities inside and outside the AONB boundary that will reduce the negative impacts of recreation on sensitive sites and species in the Chase.

7.7. Creation of Alternative Recreational Resources.

Those experiencing the AONB have a distinct profile compared to many protected areas, influenced by the geographical relationship between the AONB and areas of local population. A relatively small population live within the AONB boundary, but there are significant built up areas surrounding, in many cases directly adjoining, it. The majority of those who directly experience the AONB are local residents¹⁹ who visit to undertake recreational activities or who drive through the area on one of the locally important roads that bisect the AONB. 52% of those visiting came on a weekly basis¹³ and 85% visits were less than 3 hours long¹³. The range of recreational activities taking place reflects this with the most common activities being walking, dog walking and cycling¹³. Dog walkers and people visiting to run are particularly local, whereas mountain biking has a large catchment as a well-known regional centre for mountain biking with good off road tracks and trails.

- 7.8.** Many of the shortest but highest frequency visitors are dog walkers and providing alternative open spaces close to where people live will positively benefit the AONB as well as local communities and help accommodate future increases in visitor numbers.

Policy EE2: Improvements to the quality and connectivity of existing, and development of new, Green Infrastructure and Open Space outside of the AONB boundary should be supported. This should involve working with Partners to help reduce recreational and visitor pressure within the AONB.

Associated actions

A10: Review and influence the content and delivery of visitor management plans and open space strategies surrounding the AONB to ensure they identify and promote sites, facilities and activities inside and outside the AONB boundary that will reduce the negative impacts of recreation on sensitive sites and species in the Chase.

- 7.9. Group visits.** Mainly as a result of lack of awareness of the requirements of wildlife, there is a danger that unsuitable public access and activities on the most wildlife-rich areas of the Chase, such as the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation, will harm wildlife and damage its international conservation importance. Whilst landowners can seek to direct and, where necessary, limit organised group activities an increase in groups using the Chase for visits and events without seeking permission is much more difficult to manage. These unofficial visits by groups range from school outings, large social events to sporting events.

Policy EE3: Visitors and organisers of groups coming to the AONB, and in particular the SAC, should be made more aware of the wealth of wildlife and sensitive habitats in the area, their role in conserving it and the need to seek permission before organising events.

Associated action

A11: Develop the on-line/social media presence and other visitor information for the Chase, using this to promote its special qualities, co-ordinate information from partners and signpost to appropriate websites and other sources.

¹⁹ 88% of those surveyed in the 2010-11 AONB visitor survey had travelled from within 15km¹⁷, few staying overnight or on holiday

7

Experience and Enjoyment

A greener experience

7.10. Creating a Green Identity. As a landscape of national importance there is, or at least should be, an expectation amongst visitors that they will experience a landscape and environment of the highest order. This impression is given not only by the landscape itself but by every aspect of the visitor experience, the information they receive, the approach to the AONB, the highways they arrive on, the facilities they use, the products they buy – in short, all the interactions they have from the point of planning their visit to the moment they leave the AONB. High standards of visitor provision appropriate to a nationally important landscape need to be forged that are whole heartedly based on protecting the environment, landscape and special qualities that they have come to visit.

Policy EE4: High qualities of visitor infrastructure and provision, using best practice environmental design standards, should be adopted throughout the AONB, including a common approach to branding, interpretation and the reduction of visual clutter.

Associated actions

A8: Develop a shared design protocol for recreation and leisure facilities, signage and promotional material, aimed at producing consistent high standards for use by all providers in the Chase.

B10. Improve facilities at key visitor sites such as Marquis Drive to develop an enhanced visitor experience appropriate to a nationally important protected landscape.

7.11. Relationship between Visitors and the Environment. It is also vital that visitors understand their responsibility to the AONB and how their actions, both when they are visiting and at home, impact on the environment and landscape that they have come to experience and enjoy. AONBs have an amazing opportunity to help educate and bring to life understanding of how individuals can play their part in the big environmental challenges that face us.

7.12. A clear and consistent message about the importance of the AONB's environment needs to be present in the first interactions that visitors have with the AONB, in information presented by both the AONB and partner organisations to the public.

7.13. The work started by Love Cannock Chase on codes of conduct for visitors should be extended and enhanced to incorporate this environmental message, including for example, impacts of recreational activities, heathland management, risks to heritage assets, travel into the Chase and climate change mitigation.

Policy EE5: Increase awareness and encourage visitors to play a positive role in conserving and enhancing the AONB and to be 'good environmental ambassadors'.

Associated actions

A11: Develop the on-line/social media presence for the Chase, using this to promote its special qualities, co-ordinate information from partners and signpost to appropriate websites and other sources.

B11: Develop the 'Love Cannock Chase' project to promote the ways in which visitors and local businesses can protect and enhance the AONB's special qualities.



7

Experience and Enjoyment

7.14. Sustainable Travel. Despite the majority of visitors to the Chase being local residents almost 77% travel to AONB by private car and only 1% by public transport¹³. This causes a high demand for car parking on the Chase, congestion on roads as well as associated effects from high volumes of traffic such as injuring or killing wildlife attempting to cross roads, pollution, noise, and climate change impacts. The short distance and regular nature of many visitors' journeys to the AONB mean that there is significant potential to encourage visitors to arrive for their visit to the AONB by more sustainable means. Safe, joined up walking and cycling routes from the centres of population closest to the AONB are needed, along with information about these routes, facilities (such as safe bicycle parking) and incentives (such as reduced entry to visitor attractions when arriving by sustainable mode of transport).

Policy EE6: The use of alternative means of transport by visitors to the Chase should be explored and actively promoted.

Associated actions

A3: Work with local authority transport and green infrastructure teams to design and provide safe, connected cycle and pedestrian routes into the AONB.

B12: Work with facility providers and attractions within the AONB to encourage visitors to arrive by sustainable means of transport through provision of information, incentives such as discounts and the provision of facilities such as secure bicycle parking.

7.15. A Clear Message. Being able to achieve a greener visitor experience and delivering each of the previous policies under this objective relies on getting a clear consistent message out to the public. Currently there is little coordination between different AONB programmes and the different media used for communicating with the public. Ensuring a streamlined coordinated approach to all social media, websites and printed materials that are related to the AONB as well as information at the six visitors centres and at the Cannock Chase Museum is central to this and will avoid confusion and conflicting messages.

Policy EE7: Communication with the public about the AONB, activities and events should be consistent, coordinated and streamlined.

Associated actions

A11: Develop the on-line/social media presence for the Chase, using this to promote its special qualities, co-ordinate information from partners and signpost to appropriate websites and other sources.

A9: Draw-up and co-ordinate dissemination of consistent messages about the significance and conservation requirements of sensitive sites and species in the AONB to key decision-making bodies and networks.





8. Communities and Business

8

Communities and Business

- 8.1.** The Communities that surround the Chase have a strong connection to it and it plays a central part in their sense of place and identity. There are also numerous businesses, both land and recreation based, within the AONB and in the wider local economy that both rely on and support the special qualities and these businesses should be supported and encouraged.
- 8.2.** The need to further engage with the public appears in many places throughout the Management Plan in addition to this Chapter, notably: Policies LCP5, HC2, HC3, EE3, EE5, EE6, EE7 and Actions A5, A8, A10, B3, B5, B6, B10, B11, B12, B13, B14, B18.
- 8.3.** The policies in this theme are split between two overall objectives:
- Natural Benefits for the Community
 - Businesses supporting the Special Qualities

Natural benefits for the community

- 8.4. Meeting Community Needs.** The Chase strongly serves the local community as a place to take part in recreation, relax and enjoy. There are areas close to the Chase where people have particular needs that the AONB can help to address, such as long-term ill-health and limited access to adjacent green space.

- 8.5.** Further work and engagement are needed by the AONB partnership to link with these communities, to understand how the full range of natural benefits provided by the Chase can serve its community and to widen access to these natural benefits. This might be achieved through social prescribing by the health and social care services, outdoor or classroom learning by schools and colleges, or vocational and skills development by training providers and businesses. It is expected that the proposed Cannock Chase Landscape Trust will provide new opportunities for community groups to support the AONB and gain from the benefits it offers.

Policy CB1: Ways should be developed to ensure that the natural benefits that the AONB delivers are fully taken advantage of by local communities and help meet the needs of all members of those communities, whilst conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the AONB.

Associated actions

A4: Support the establishment of the Cannock Chase Landscape Trust and, through its business plan, develop ways of proactively engaging local businesses and community groups with delivery of this Management Plan.

B13: Work with healthcare providers to develop and promote activity and wellbeing programmes suitable for different groups, based on key visitor sites.

B20: Work with education providers to coordinate, develop and promote educational opportunities that allow every local child to understand, experience and explore the natural benefits that the AONB has to offer.



8

Communities and Business

8.6. Giving Communities a Voice. This revised Management Plan provides a timely opportunity to reconnect with both existing and new stakeholders and to refocus efforts on working together to both conserve and enhance the AONB and ensure the benefits that the AONB offers reach the widest range of people.

Policy CB2: Efforts should be made to fully engage stakeholders, businesses, community and other interested groups with the work going on in the AONB, helping them to support the enhancement of the special qualities.

Associated action

A4: Support the establishment of the Cannock Chase Landscape Trust (CIO) and, through its business plan, develop ways of proactively engaging local businesses and community groups with delivery of this Management Plan.

A5: Re-engage with, and draw up an updated database of, interested parties in the AONB and maintain regular contact with them on matters of interest.

A7: Use the Annual Conference to report to partners and the local community on the progress of actions contained within this Management Plan. Use this platform to fully engage with these groups and take account of their views.

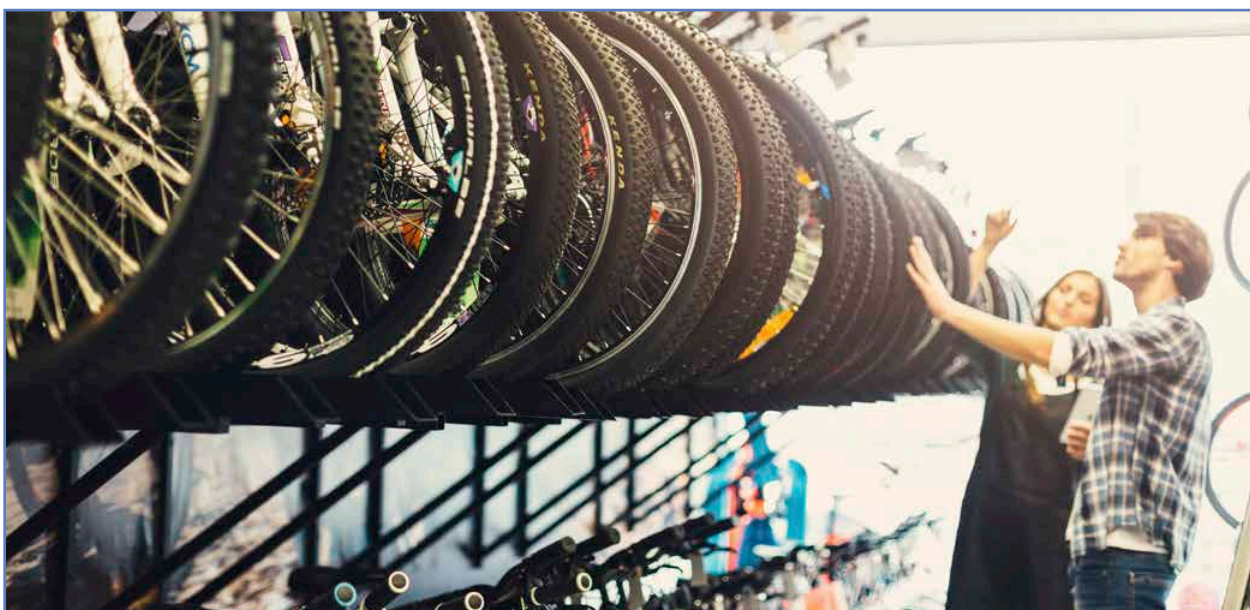
B11: Develop the 'Love Cannock Chase' project to promote the ways in which visitors and local businesses can protect and enhance the AONB's special qualities.

8.7. Coordination of Volunteering. Many organisations within the AONB provide volunteering opportunities to the local communities and have successfully developed specialisms (for example land management or education) in their use of volunteers. However, there is currently a lack of coordination resulting in sources of potential volunteers remaining untapped and inputs from volunteers not being made best use of.

Policy CB3: Coordinate volunteer activities throughout the AONB and draw on the skills developed by different organisations; Increase involvement by local communities and businesses in activities that support the special qualities of the AONB.

Associated action

A6: Work in Partnership with organisations currently using volunteers in the AONB and local area to identify ways that the promotion and recruitment of volunteers can be coordinated, and their inputs made best use of for different activities on the Chase.



8

Communities and Business

Businesses Supporting the Special Qualities

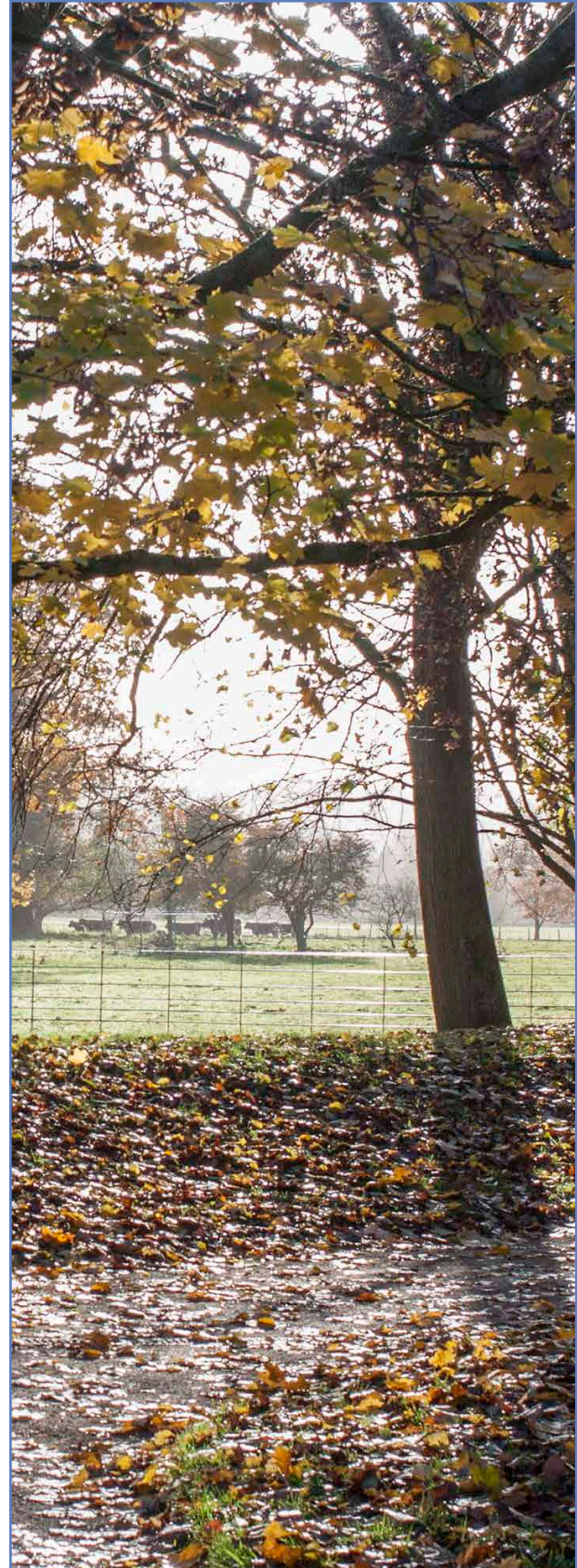
- 8.8. Harnessing Enterprise.** The natural capital, services and benefits that the AONB and its special qualities provide local businesses needs recognition and protection. It is important that local businesses understand the integral role the AONB often plays in their business and the opportunities and potential that exists from further strengthening this mutually beneficial link.
- 8.9.** The Chase is a nationally important landscape with internationally important heathland at its heart. This recognition of how special the Chase is, is an important part of the AONB's brand and holds significant opportunities for local businesses which have not been fully explored to date. Opportunities should be sought to support businesses both within the AONB and the wider local economy to benefit from the AONB brand where their values and operations support and enhance the vision and special qualities of the AONB. The proposed Cannock Chase Landscape Trust should provide a mechanism for this to take place.

Policy CB4: Local businesses should be encouraged and supported to develop high quality products and services, and growth and innovation, that support the special qualities and the AONB brand.

Associated action

A4: Support the establishment of the Cannock Chase Landscape Trust (CIO) and, through its business plan, develop ways of proactively engaging local businesses and community groups with delivery of this Management Plan.

B14: Explore the development of an AONB quality mark for businesses within the AONB and wider local economy that support and help deliver the special qualities of the AONB.





Dick Turton

9. Implementation Action Plan

9

Implementation Action Plan

This Chapter describes the actions that will be taken to deliver the policies that were set out in Chapters 4 to 8. The actions are split into two parts. The first table describes the priority actions that will be started in 2019/2020, whereas the second table describes other actions that may be started from 2020/2021 onwards.

Priority actions to be started in 2019	Lead and Key Partners	Policies delivered				
		LCP	WN	HC	EE	CB
A1: Prepare guidance on 'Building and Infrastructure Design in Cannock Chase AONB' which Local Planning Authorities will be invited to adopt.	Lead: AONB Unit.	19				
A2: Monitor and report on the conservation status and needs of key species and their habitats in the AONB, including where they occur outside the SAC, and draw up actions to address identified threats.	Lead: AONB Unit.		2			
A3: Work with local authority transport and green infrastructure teams to design and provide safe, connected cycle and pedestrian routes into the AONB.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partners: Local authorities / Highway authority, SCC Active Travel				6	
A4: Support the establishment of the Cannock Chase Landscape Trust (CIO) and, through its business plan, develop ways of proactively engaging local businesses and community groups with delivery of this Management Plan.	Lead: AONB Unit, Key partner Officers Working Group					124
A5: Re-engage with, and draw up an updated database of, interested parties in the AONB and maintain regular contact with them on matters of interest.	Lead: AONB Unit.	5				2
A6: Work in Partnership with organisations currently using volunteers in the AONB and local area to identify ways that the promotion and recruitment of volunteers can be coordinated, and their inputs made best use of for different activities on the Chase.	Lead: AONB Unit.					3
A7: Use the Annual Conference to report to partners and the local community on the progress of actions contained within this Management Plan. Use this platform to fully engage with these groups and take account of their views.	Lead: AONB Unit.					2

9

Implementation Action Plan

Priority actions to be started in 2019	Lead and Key Partners	Policies delivered				
		LCP	WN	HC	EE	CB
A8: Develop a shared design protocol for recreation and leisure facilities, signage and promotional material, aimed at producing consistent high standards for use by all providers in the Chase.	Lead: SAC team. Key partner: AONB Unit	7			4	
A9: Draw-up and co-ordinate dissemination of consistent messages about the significance and conservation requirements of sensitive sites and species in the AONB to key decision-making bodies and networks.	Lead: SAC team. Key Partners: AONB Unit, SCC CP, FC, NT, SWT, RSPB, NE. Key decision-making bodies and networks include Friends of Cannock Chase, Visitor Centres, Destination Management Partnership and Staffordshire Parish Councils Association		1		7	
A10: Review and influence the content and delivery of visitor management plans and open space strategies surrounding the AONB to ensure they identify and promote sites, facilities and activities inside and outside the AONB boundary that will reduce the negative impacts of recreation on sensitive sites and species in the Chase.	Lead: SAC team.		1		12	
A11: Develop the on-line/social media presence for the Chase, using this to promote its special qualities, co-ordinate information from partners and signpost to appropriate websites and other sources.	Lead: SAC Team.				357	
A12: Work with local partners to ensure appropriate advice and incentives are available and suitably targeted to farms and smallholdings in the AONB.	Lead: Natural England.	4				
A13: Identify and promote projects that enhance the landscape connectivity, biodiversity resilience and heritage value of countryside and public open space around the Chase.	Lead: Natural England. Key partners: Working with SCC and District Councils.	10	910			
A14: Assess updated historic environment information on non-designated features to prioritise sites for survey, condition assessment and monitoring to inform future management.	Lead: SCC Historic Environment Team			1		
A15: Produce guidance on the significant view points and views, including historic views, into and out of the AONB.	Lead: AONB Unit.	8				

9

Implementation Action Plan

Other actions, which may be started from 2020 onwards

Actions to be started in 2020 onwards	Lead and Key Partners	Policies delivered				
		LCP	WN	HC	EE	CB
B1: Explore with SCC Highways Department, building on good practice, the practical steps that can be taken to reduce traffic impacts through the AONB.	Lead: AONB Unit.	2				
B2: Support the work of Forestry Commission England and other woodland owners and managers to deliver both long term forestry/woodland design plans and short-term woodland management operations in ways which enhance the AONB's special qualities.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partners: Forestry Commission England.	3				
B3: Prepare and publicise information, and offer advisory events, for rural non-farming landowners in the AONB on how they can help conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Chase.	Lead: AONB Unit.	5				
B4: Work with stakeholders and local communities to develop a phased reintroduction of livestock grazing to key sites to support sustainable management.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partners: Site owners		3			
B5: Draw up a strategy and action plan for monitoring and managing the deer population in the Chase and engaging and informing the public about the need to manage the deer population.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partners: Forestry Commission and SCC		6			
B6: Monitor invasive species and support collaborative and targeted management to address them where required.	Lead: AONB Unit.		5			
B7: Develop a project to identify suitable heathland restoration areas on conifer plantations, acquiring land for compensation planting and planning a phased approach to delivery.	Lead: AONB Unit.		8			
B8: Through the Trent-Sow Parklands and Cannock Chase AONB HS2 Group, develop and influence design principles, mitigation measures and environmental enhancement measures for the HS2 route that will minimise impacts on, and conserve and enhance, the special qualities of the AONB.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partners: Natural England, Historic England, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and National Trust	10				

9

Implementation Action Plan

Actions to be started in 2020 onwards	Lead and Key Partners	Policies delivered				
		LCP	WN	HC	EE	CB
B9: Building on the success of 'The Chase Through Time', develop a project to engage local communities by celebrating the AONB's cultural heritage and involving them in historic environment citizen science activities.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partners: SCC Historic Environment Team & Historic England			3		
B10: Improve facilities at key visitor sites such as Marquis Drive to develop an enhanced visitor experience appropriate to a nationally important protected landscape.	Lead: Site Owners. Key partners: AONB Unit & SAC team.				4	
B11: Develop the 'Love Cannock Chase' project to promote the ways in which visitors and local businesses can protect and enhance the AONB's special qualities.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partner: Community Foundation for Staffordshire, SAC team				5	2
B12: Work with facility providers and attractions within the AONB to encourage visitors to arrive by sustainable means of transport through provision of information, incentives such as discounts and the provision of facilities such as secure bicycle parking.	Lead: AONB Unit.				6	
B13: Work with healthcare providers to develop and promote activity and wellbeing programmes suitable for different groups, based on key visitor sites.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partner: Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles, Cannock Chase					1
B14: Explore the development of an AONB quality mark for businesses within the AONB and wider local economy that support and help deliver the special qualities of the AONB.	Lead: AONB Unit					4
B15: Report progress with the new Ground Water modelling being undertaken by the EA and PWS companies to ensure sustainable abstractions.	Lead: Environment Agency. Key partners: Severn Trent Water, Natural England, Forestry Commission England				4	

9

Implementation Action Plan

Actions to be started in 2020 onwards	Lead and Key Partners	Policies delivered				
		LCP	WN	HC	EE	CB
B16: Monitor the condition of designated heritage features in the AONB to identify management requirements.	Lead: AONB Unit & SCC Historic Environment Record team			1		
B17: Develop and deliver sustainable management regimes for heritage assets with land owners, managers, decision makers and local communities through raising their awareness of the historic environment and its significance and providing them with support and guidance.	Lead: SCC Historic Environment Team. Key partners: Historic England			2		
B18: Proactively work with Partners to plan for future land use changes ensuring that opportunities are maximised to support and enhance the special qualities of the AONB.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partner: County Minerals Planning team	6				
B19: Increase awareness and appreciation of Local Geological Sites within the AONB amongst Partners and identify ways to coordinate their monitoring and management.	Lead: AONB Unit.		6			
B20: Work with education providers to coordinate, develop and promote educational opportunities that allow every local child to understand, experience and explore the natural benefits that the AONB has to offer.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partner: Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles, Cannock Chase					1



Ian Jones

^{10.} Monitoring Framework

Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

10 Monitoring Framework

10.1. A monitoring framework for the Management Plan is required to answer three questions:

- Is the Management Plan being **delivered**?
- How **effective** is the management of the AONB?
- What is the **condition** of the AONB, is its natural beauty being conserved and enhanced?

10.2. It is important that the monitoring framework does not increase the reporting burden on the AONB Unit and the indicators selected below are not intended to provide an in depth understanding of the outputs and outcomes of every policy in the Management Plan. The monitoring framework is intended to be proportionate and the indicators hope to provide a useful insight and understanding of the direction of travel of the Management Plan using readily accessible source of data that, where possible, are already being collected.

Monitoring delivery

10.3. It is important for the AONB Unit and its partners to track progress on the delivery of the Management Plan, the outputs as opposed to the outcomes of the process, enabling them to identify where areas of weakness are and celebrate success. The simplest method to do this is for the AONB Unit to track the delivery of actions and then feed these results into their Annual Reporting to Defra. In order to do this the AONB Unit along with Task and Finish Groups will need to set parameters for each of the actions to define what successful implementation will look like.

Monitoring effectiveness and condition

10.4. In addition to understanding how well the delivery of the Management Plan is progressing it is also important to understand how effective the policies and actions have been at addressing the issues that they were designed to address, what the overall condition of the AONB is and whether the special qualities are being conserved or enhanced. Indicators that focus on how effective the Management Plan is and the condition of the AONB will feed into the State of the AONB Report, the next iteration of which will be produced in 5 years' time, to help inform the development of the next Management Plan.

10.5. The AONB's Task and Finish Groups have also identified detailed monitoring indicators for each theme which will enable them to monitor condition on a year-on-year basis. Whilst the monitoring of the delivery and effectiveness of the Management Plan are very much focussed on the five-year horizon until it is next reviewed there is also benefit in undertaking some longer-term monitoring of the condition of AONB special qualities. With longer term monitoring that is not directly tied to Management Plan policies there is also an opportunity to compare the progress of Cannock Chase against other protected areas in the Country.

10.6. Natural England's Framework for Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes (FMEOPL) (2014) provides a consistent framework for monitoring how effectively the protected landscapes' statutory purposes and management plan objectives have been delivered. It was developed by a partnership of protected landscape management bodies and statutory bodies. Based on the Evaluation Framework for Natural Beauty Criterion²⁰ the framework presents the best available set of existing national statistics (and the frequency of their provision) that sheds light on a range of environmental outcomes or benefits in each AONB and National Park and is split into four themes (natural beauty, recreation, ecosystem services and sustainable communities).

10.7. For the purposes of monitoring this plan, 15 key indicators have been selected that provide both an insight into the effectiveness of the Plan as well as the condition of the AONB drawing on the Table of Monitoring Indicators FMEOPL and the existing monitoring taking place in the AONB.

10 Monitoring Framework

Table of Monitoring Indicators

Actions	Indicator	Notes – data source etc.
Landscape Character and Planning	Number of Planning Applications where AONB has made a formal comment and raised an objection.	New. Data source - Cannock Chase AONB Partnership Planning Protocol
	Change in % of AONB recorded as 'most tranquil'	MP 2014-19
	Fixed point photography landscape monitoring	MP 2014-19
Wildlife and Nature	% of SSSI in favourable condition	MP 2014-19
	Environment Agency reports on Ground Water Investigation at Cannock Chase	Environment Agency
	Area under agri-environment schemes	Rural Payments Agency Annual Monitoring
History and Culture	% of heritage assets that are 'at risk' including buildings at risk, monuments, registered parks and gardens and scheduled ancient monuments	indicators listed in the State of the AONB Report: Number, condition of, and area covered by scheduled monuments; Number, Grade and condition of listed buildings; Number and condition of registered parks and gardens
	Change in condition of Scheduled Monuments	AONB Unit and Historic England
	Number of archaeological/historic features managed through agri-environment schemes	State of the AONB report
Experience and Enjoyment	Change in the number of sites receiving greatest proportion (over 5%) of visitors	State of the AONB report (popular visitor locations indicator)
	% change in all activity levels (mapped on Strava) within the AONB occurring outside of the SAC area	New: Strava heat mapping used in State of AONB report
	% change in visitors arriving in the AONB by private car.	New: new visitor surveys needed?
Communities and Business	Number of people taking part in awareness days and community work	State of the AONB Report: Education and involvement in the AONB indicator
	Number of Volunteers	MP 2014-29
	Number of business engaged	MP 2014-19



Development of the management plan has been led by Robert Deane of Rural Focus (UK) Ltd and Louise Tricklebank, Environmental Planning Consultant, with extensive input from AONB partners and stakeholders.



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



South
Staffordshire
Council



Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Staffordshire
County Council

Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is supported by:

Defra, Cannock Chase Council, Lichfield District Council, South Staffordshire Council, Stafford Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council, Forestry Commission England, Natural England, Historic England, National Trust, RSPB, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, British Horse Society, Cemex UK Operations Ltd, Country Land and Business Association, Friends of Cannock Chase, Hanson Aggregates, National Farmers Union, Ramblers, Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, Swinnerton Cycles Forest Centre Ltd, Walton Chasers, West Midland Bird Club.



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