

**Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Joint Committee
Annual Meeting**

Thursday 29th September 2016, 10:00am

Cannock Chase Council, Beecroft Road, Cannock WS11 1BG

A G E N D A

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2016**
- 3. Matters Arising**
- 4. Declaration of Interests**
- 5. Welcome to new Joint Committee Members – Outline of role**
Verbal report of Chairman of Officers Working Group
- 6. Financial Update**
Report of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee
- 7. Action Plan Progress**
Report of the Chairman of the Officers' Working Group
- 8. Cannock Chase AONB Partnership Governance Review Update**
Report of the Chairman of the Officers' Working Group
- 9. Any Planning Items that may require consideration**
Report of the AONB Officer
- 10. Partners' News**
Item for Members to update all from their own part of the AONB
- 11. Reports from Joint Committee Advisers**
Verbal reports from Natural England and Forestry Commission
- 12. Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting**

Part Two

Exclusion of the Public and Press

The Chairman to move:

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

**Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Joint Committee
Annual Meeting**

Thursday 16th June 2016

**Lichfield District Council Offices
Frog Lane, Lichfield**

M I N U T E S

Name

Representing

Members

Cllr Bob Awty
Cllr Gill Heath
Cllr Bob McCardle

**Lichfield District Council
Staffordshire County Council
South Staffordshire Council**

Officers

Emma Beaman
Sarah Bentley
Lynn Hammant
John Rowe
Anne Walker

**Cannock Chase AONB Unit
Staffordshire County Council
Lichfield District Council
Honorary Secretary
Cannock Chase AONB Unit, Clerk to the
Joint Committee
South Staffordshire Council
Stafford Borough Council
Cannock Chase Council
Natural England**

Patrick Walker
Bill Waller
Glenn Watson
Jennifer Thorpe

Advisers

Ruth Hÿtch
June Jukes MBE

**Cannock Chase AONB Officer
Chairman, Cannock Chase Advisory
Partnership
Forestry Commission
Natural England**

Jason MacLean
Hazel McDowall

Invited Speaker

Mark Stefan

Design with Nature

Members of the Advisory

Partnership

Cllr Pat Ansell
Cllr Len Bates
Roger Broadbent
Jane Christopher
Michelle Edwards
Graham Evans
Justine Lloyd

**Staffordshire Parish Council's Association
South Staffordshire Council
West Midlands Bird Club
Walton Chasers
Young Peoples' Representative
Staffordshire Ramblers, Area Secretary
Lichfield District Council**

Name
Dick Turton

Representing
Staffordshire Ramblers

Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

417 John Rowe, Honorary Secretary to the Joint Committee, chaired the first part of the meeting, which commenced with a round of introductions. Cllr Beatty, although absent from the meeting, had made it known that she was agreeable to being nominated as Chairman.

Resolved Cllr Beatty was nominated as Chairman by Cllr McCardle, seconded by Cllr Heath and agreed by all. Cllr Beatty was therefore appointed as Chairman of the Cannock Chase Joint Committee up to the annual meeting of the Joint Committee in 2017.

Cllr Heath was nominated as Vice Chairman by Cllr McCardle, and this was agreed. Cllr Heath was therefore appointed as Vice Chairman of the Cannock Chase Joint Committee up to the annual meeting of the Joint Committee in 2017.

In Cllr Beatty's absence, Cllr Heath chaired the remainder of the meeting.

Apologies

418 Apologies were received from Cllr Beatty (Stafford Borough Council), John Broad (Staffordshire County Council, Honorary Treasurer), Cllr John Preece (Cannock Chase Council) and Kelly Harris (South Staffordshire Council)

Minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2016

419 The minutes were accepted and signed by Cllr Heath.

Matters Arising

420 There were no matters arising.

Declaration of Interests

421 None.

Fixed Point Photography Ten Year Report

Presentation by Mark Stefan, Design with Nature

422 The PowerPoint presentation is attached to the minutes. The final report had been completed and will be available on the Fixed Point Photography website shortly. The report will be in A3 format to ensure that the images can be displayed effectively. The decision had been made not to include all of the images from the 10 years for the analysis, rather the baseline images for

October and February, the 5 year point and 10 year point of same. Mark noted that the 360⁰ nighttime image from the top of Etchinghill had not been continued as tree cover now obscured any meaningful viewpoint. The analysis included sub-categories to relate better with the Management Plan. Consultation with partners including the Forestry Commission, other land managers and specialists had helped with the report conclusions.

In summary, Mark noted that generally there had been no overall change, land had been actively managed and had not deteriorated. Quality had been maintained. In the Forestry Commission areas, there are visual changes expected from managed woodland. The main factor in changes had mainly been in areas where there had been an increase in horsiculture, eg, in Cannock Wood/ Gentleshaw area.

Examples of where changes had been most prominent were shown including Peace Vista, Castle Ring (increase in landscape quality with growth of vegetation and more diversity), Hayfield Hill (increase in horsiculture, internal fencing, over grazing, visual clutter), Tackeroo (obscured view from Forestry Commission plantation growth). Views of Forestry Commission plantations may be affected in future with tree disease damage. The view of the fields next the Seven Springs were also shown to illustrate positive landscape improvement over the 10 year period. Some instances of minor change were also shown, eg, Goosemoor Lane, where changes in the landscape include tree growth to screen dwellings and Longdon where forestry management has opened up views of mixed woodland to increase the landscape quality.

In the 10 year report, a summary table has been included to show at a glance changes along with selected recommendations for each location.

Recommendations in the report include a workshop for landowners/tenants involved in horsiculture to explain landscape management in the AONB and also carry out an assessment of key views which are most important. The 360⁰ view from Huntington Mound is partially obscured by tree growth, a few removals would rectify this.

Mark also suggested that the volunteers are provided with GPS device (and training) to ensure that they are taking the image from the exact point. Also suggests an annual event for the volunteers.

There are some suggested additional points, eg, Huntington Belt looking at the south west view, Shugborough looking south from Essex Bridge may show potential impact for increases in visitor numbers following the property being returned to the National Trust in the near future. Also suggests including a possible panorama from Hednesford Hills.

The report will be available on these websites shortly: http://www.cannock-chase.co.uk/Fixed_Point_Photography_Report/ and <http://www.ccaonbfpp.co.uk/>

Cllr Heath thanked Mark for an interesting presentation. Cllr McCardle congratulated Mark on a fascinating talk.

Financial Update

Report of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee

423 Ruth Hýtch presented the financial update in John Broad's absence. A report was circulated prior to the meeting and Ruth outlined the content and the two recommendations. Appendix 1 showed the final outturn for 2015-16 on core, appendix 2 showed the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) projects that had been completed.

Appendix 3 showed spend for the current financial year and appendix 4 showed projects approved for SDF awards. Ruth noted that we are awaiting settlement of last year's Defra grant.

It was reported in section 7 that there is no longer a requirement for the Joint Committee's finances to be externally audited but they will be periodically audited internally.

Section 8 outlined the reserve fund and the agreed use of this fund.

Cllr Heath commended the report and noted that it was good to see the reserve fund increasing.

Resolved

1. Final Revenue Outturn 2015-16 – The Joint Committee approved the final outturn position for 2015-16 for the Core and Project Costs and the Sustainable Development Fund.
2. Revenue Budget 2016-17 – Progress on the current net revenue spend for 2016-17 was noted.

Action Plan Progress

Report of the Chairman of the Officers' Working Group

424 A report was circulated prior to the meeting outlining progress since the last meeting. Hazel McDowall highlighted a couple of points from the report:

- Undergrounding – continuing dialogue with Western Power Distribution on undergrounding power lines, which can have a positive impact on landscape character. There had been two successful schemes in this AONB and potential for other schemes in the future. The process is quite lengthy but the end results are worthwhile. Cllr Awty asked how the scheme was financed. Anne Walker, who leads on this aspect of the Team's work, noted that Ofgem provides funds for distribution companies to underground power lines in protected landscapes (AONBs and National Parks). Cannock Chase AONB is in WPD's West Midland region.

- SAC Partnership – Walsall MBC matter will be reported later in the meeting.
- Hazel asked Emma Beaman to report on the Dementia Friendly Strategy. Emma noted that funding for the Strategy had been received from Natural England’s Innovation Fund. The Strategy had now been completed and includes future action. The launch of the Strategy took place in May, attended by 20 people. The launch included a walk, which is now a monthly event. This is the first AONB to be Dementia Friendly. Now looking at further funding to complete the actions. The final document is due to be printed shortly. Hazel noted that Emma will be attending the National Association for AONBs Annual conference to present this piece of work.
- The file of press coverage and thank you letters was available at the meeting.

Resolved

The Joint Committee noted progress made since the last meeting.

Cannock Chase AONB Partnership Governance Review Update

Report of the Chairman of the Officers’ Working Group

425 A report was circulated prior to the meeting and presented by Hazel, who noted that she would go through the report and then look at recommendations.

There are specific items and new governance arrangements. At the end of the last Joint Committee meeting, it was agreed that the Officers Working Group would take forward tasks on behalf of the Joint Committee: simplify Partnership Agreement (Appendix 1 of the report), work with the AONB Unit on Task and Finish Groups, to be set up over the summer (Terms of Reference also included in the report), take forward the recommendation for the annual conference and provide the AONB Unit staff with clarity for an interim work programme. Also look at co-opted members to be invited to the Joint Committee meeting to be arranged in September.

Progress:

- Partnership Agreement - Officers Working Group members looked at this with advice from legal and finance officers from their local authorities. There was then a pause for advice to be sought on changes from local authority legal officers. Sarah Bentley noted that she spoke to John Rowe, as honorary secretary to the Joint Committee, who was satisfied that there were not huge changes and what is presented is a revised Partnership Agreement. John noted that he had been involved in the process and that a Deed of Variation was not appropriate and it was thought to be beneficial to terminate the existing Partnership Agreement then for the local authorities to enter into a new agreement. Has consulted with colleagues from other local authorities for comment and no disagreement had been received. Each local authority partner will affix its seal to the new document. For Staffordshire County Council, Cllr

Heath will have delegated powers to affix their seal. It is likely to take 6 weeks for this to be completed by all individual local authorities after approval had been received.

- Terms of Reference for Task and Finish Groups – Groups are set out in the report, AONB Unit to do secretariat and input their expertise. A sponsoring officer from the Officers Working Group will be nominated for each group to ensure consistency and focus on priorities. Since the last Joint Committee meeting these have been developed. The AONB Unit had come up with some questions on the set up of the groups and the points had been addressed.
- Annual Conference – proposed date is Friday 4th November 2016. After discussion with the AONB Unit, it was felt more appropriate to hold the conference at a venue more local to the AONB than the suggested venue of South Staffordshire Council in Codsall. Now looking at other venues and drafting of the programme for the conference will be undertaken over the summer.
- AONB Unit Work Programme – ensuring that this is achievable and meeting the requirements of the Defra grant and the actions in the Management Plan.
- Timetable – set out in paragraph 22 of the report. The next Advisory Partnership meeting will be the final one. Focus will be on how individual members will feed into the new structure. A parish council meeting will also be the last one and will set out how the new structure will work. Intention is the organisations will be invited to the September meeting and will nominate representatives. The September meeting will be the first under the new arrangements. Task and Finish groups to be set up over the summer. These will be fluid to see how they work, include development time. As previously mentioned, the annual conference will be in the autumn.
- Longer term – working on making the AONB partnership sustainable into the future. All under pressure with public funding. Intention is that at September meeting the Officers Working Group will bring forward work on potential models to be part of a feasibility study which will report back to the Joint Committee in March 2016. Other AONBs are also undertaking similar. Also looking at reviewing membership of the National Association for AONBs, pros and cons will be reported to the Joint Committee in September.

Comments/Questions	Response
<p>Roger Broadbent – West Midland Bird Club undertakes a 5-yearly bird survey, the next one due next year. Who will this be reported back to in the absence of the Advisory Partnership. The organisation submits reports giving up to date commentary on the state of the bird life on Cannock Chase, which is a good indicator of other factors of biodiversity,</p>	<p>Hazel – suggests that this information is still reported to Staffordshire County Council. It is a valuable resource and will be a key piece of evidence for the Landscape Task and Finish group, showing where the gaps are and used for management around the AONB. It may also be used for possible project delivery.</p>

<p>sometimes favourable.</p> <p>The benefit of the Advisory Partnership is the opportunity to discuss with others how to fit in with other groups.</p>	<p>An Officers Working Group member will be on each Task and Finish Group to do this.</p>
<p>June Jukes MBE – this issue was discussed at length at the last Advisory Partnership meeting. Asked if members of the Advisory Partnership present would be able to also speak at this meeting.</p>	<p>Cllr Heath confirmed that this would be the case.</p>

June noted that much of the last Advisory Partnership meeting was taken up with debate on this subject. The general feeling is that it a good forum for a variety of groups. There is also a ripple effect with information being taken back to their groups and spread around the area. Goodwill is generated and actions are taken, eg, work on the mountain bike trails. Members feel that it would be a detrimental move, although some would be invited to the Joint Committee. Task and Finish Groups may not be for all of the group and there are concerns about fragmentation. The Advisory Partnership had supported the AONB Unit since its inception. There is an approach to management of the AONB by volunteers and goodwill from this group, do not want to lose this.

June read out a letter from Shaun Denny from Cemex, attached as Appendix 1

Comments/Questions	Response
<p>Jason Maclean – Forestry Commission representative attends the Advisory Partnership for the visitor management aspect. With the task and finish groups, organisations may have direct involvement with other specialists directly rather than 'second hand' as present. Valuable information is gained from people. The new set up will allow this more direct access. He sees this as a beneficial move.</p>	<p>Cllr Heath – Joint Committee had talked about this and the decision is that there will be Task and Finish groups. Let's move to recommendations</p>
<p>Dick Turton – the Ramblers are represented on the Advisory Partnership and have concerns about fragmentation on task and finish groups. Where is the visibility of these new groups? They will be working in isolation, broad titles for these groups. To avoid this isolation, could there not be a point of common communication where expertise is transferred. Could</p>	<p>Hazel – Officers Working Group sponsors will be the links between groups to give the common messages. The annual conference will also be the opportunity for the groups to come together. Website is a good idea.</p>

Comments/Questions	Response
<p>there be a website?</p> <p>Concerned that between meetings groups will also need to be getting together.</p>	
<p>Cllr Ansell – has been a member of the Advisory Partnership since its inception and is a previous Chairman. Coming from a different angle, where is the case for better value for money with this change? There is a relaxed feel for with the Advisory Partnership that will not be the same with the task and finish groups disseminating information to the Joint Committee. Views of smaller groups is important for the AONB. Gave example of visit to Canada in 2002, how well organised including parking. Good example for this AONB to follow to ensure people’s enjoyment of the area. The Advisory Partnership has supported the Management Plan and Visitor Management Strategy. Feels that deletion of the Advisory Partnership is not the way forward.</p>	<p>Cllr Heath – talked about this before, sure it will work. Let’s move to recommendations</p>
<p>Jane Christopher – also involved in topic groups from the start of the partnership. It is difficult to organise the AONB into little boxes. Conservation is important as is the use of the AONB. One of the first members of the Advisory Partnership and found that this has been a good forum for face to face meetings with others. The task and finish groups will lead to fragmentation. The Advisory Partnership has enabled conflicts between user groups to be sorted out in a calm friendly manner. These meetings have always been well attended. Fifteen years ago we worked in topic groups and there were reasons why they were not continued. This move seems to be going backwards. An enormous amount of work had gone on over the last 15 years and lots of partners have come together.</p>	<p>Hazel – thinks that the inclusion of recreation groups in visitor management task and finish group will be more powerful. (Not have a vote on this too.)</p>

Comments/Questions	Response
<p>Interested to see if the task and finish groups can do this. The conference is a good idea but is only a once a year opportunity. Sad to see this retrograde step. On the new Joint Committee, there will only be one place for recreation groups. This does not take into account that each group (orienteers, horse riders, etc) has its own agenda. User groups will have their views diminished.</p>	
<p>Graham Evans – agrees with the points that Jane made. The Advisory Partnership has been a useful forum. Also concerned that there is only one place on the Joint Committee for user groups. Staffordshire Ramblers have had a local representative on the Advisory Partnership who reports back to the area council on AONB matters. May take this issue further than area level.</p>	<p>Cllr Heath – discussed at Joint Committee and Officers Working Group, where we are. Jason comments listened to as he has also been involved, thinks it is a positive way forward. We’ve heard all the emotional stuff now. Move on. Progress and help Chase for future.</p>
<p>Michelle Edwards – understands about task and finish groups but sees advantages for Advisory Partnership also in delivery of actions. Where this falls short is contribution of the general public where they work on the ground. Where is this element of information back to ‘on the ground’? Can see on paper how this will work. Have members been asked? May agree in principle but not if it does not work for them.</p> <p>What about people on the ground, eg, bird watchers. There is a direct link with the Advisory Partnership, issues raised and taken back to individual organisations. Some issues are generic and not specific to one area. How can this unseen body of people fit in with the new model? Also concerned that there is no place on any of the new structures for the voice of young people.</p>	<p>Hazel – has had several discussions at partnership meetings and will be speaking to individuals about where they will be sitting in the structure, where fits and how it will work. Talked about this at many meetings.</p> <p>With representative on task and finish groups.</p>
<p>June – there are several task and finish groups and a number of people</p>	<p>Cllr Heath – suggested going through individual pages of the amended</p>

Comments/Questions	Response
currently on the Advisory Partnership may be involved in more than one. There is a limit to how many meetings people can attend.	Partnership Agreement. Joint Committee gives opportunities for all to be involved.
Roger – suggested representatives?	Cllr Heath – organisations listed to be involved. Sarah Bentley – this is a suggested list, the Joint Committee members can invite others. Flexible. This shows the discussions so far.
<p>Cllr Awty – having heard the comments today, not convinced that the Advisory Partnership should be ended. Interesting to hear views of people who are not just interested from their own groups point of view but in the Chase as a whole. The feedback from the Advisory Partnership is of great value. There are suggested co-opted members, could the Advisory Partnership be a co-opted member? There is a good pool of people exchanging ideas and experiences. Sad if this was fragmented or lost. Is it working so badly that it has to be thrown out? Not voting on this without doubts.</p> <p>Nationally the concern is about money, not heart and soul. In Cannock Chase there is care and protection. What are the costs of the Advisory Partnership as opposed to the proposed changes? Perhaps adjust the number of meetings?</p>	<p>Hazel – the delivery of the Management Plan is not happening through the Advisory Partnership at the moment. The idea of the task and finish groups is to focus on delivery. There is not the staff resources to do all, this has come from the Joint Committee.</p> <p>Unable to do so many meetings.</p> <p>Cllr McCardle – discussions have been undertaken over the last few years. The Advisory Partnership is good but not working on Management Plan achievements. This is what is needed. Not stop people coming along. The system has been agreed to. Late in the day to change this and go back.</p> <p>Cllr Heath – suggested list includes all in the room. This is something that just has to be done.</p>

Cllr Heath concluded the discussion by saying that the objectives are what all in the room want. The Officers Working Group will have no changes and the AONB Unit will report to the Joint Committee and the Officers Working Group.

In terms of delivery arrangements, cannot afford not to do this. There will also be the opportunity to raise income. All have had the chance to speak.

Resolved

- 1 Members approved the revised Partnership Agreement and agreed to take this back to their individual authorities for execution. All three Joint Committee members voted for, none against.
- 2 Members approved introduction of the new governance arrangements as set out in section 22 of the paper. All three Joint Committee members voted for, none against.
- 3 Members approved the proposed next steps as set out in Section 23 of the paper regarding membership of the National Association for AONBs and financial sustainability of the Partnership. All three Joint Committee members voted for, none against.

Cllr Awty noted that he voted on behalf of Lichfield District Council.

Any Planning Items that may require consideration

Report of the AONB Officer

426 A report was circulated prior to the meeting and outlined by Ruth. She noted that she has delegated authority for planning policy and development matters. Note progress since last meeting and highlighted the following:

- Page 3 – planning application at Oakedge Shooting School. A number of applications had been submitted. Anecdotally looking at matters that do not appear to have planning permission on this site. May need to look at the site as a whole with the landowner and Stafford Borough Council.
- P14 – this is a grave matter from Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council. It is a technical matter relating to the site allocation document in the Walsall area and the responsibility to Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Most of the partners will have dealt with this response in relation to their duties to SAC. It is important for Cannock Chase AONB partnership in order to not have responsibility in mitigation to SAC. Our own assessments of the Management Plan might be called into question. It implies that the Joint Committee is responsible legally for the SAC. Could set a national precedent. Working with Natural England on this issue. With other issues, there is no consensus with partners. Has prepared and submitted a response with help from the planning advisor. It is a response to their supposition and does not agree with their assumption. Since this submission, Natural England has written to WMBC and asked them to review their assessment again. If the planning inspector agrees with WMBC, the Joint Committee could become responsible for the SAC. Hope to resolve this. Patrick Walker – aware of concerns and Ruth is right to make this clear. Working with NE and objections to SAD issues. WMBC appears to be trying to get out of obligations, pragmatically sees that this has not any credence. Cllr Heath – reassured that all are in agreement with this.

Cllr Heath asked if feedback is received from local authorities when comments are submitted in relation to planning applications. Ruth noted that some do but not all. The Planning Protocol needs to be reviewed but without the data from local authorities this is proving difficult.

Resolved:

The Joint Committee noted progress made on planning matters since the last meeting.

Partners' News

Item for Members to update all from their own part of the AONB

427 The Joint Committee received the following reports:

South Staffordshire Council

Progressing their site allocations document, responses to be analysed and completed in autumn.

Lichfield District Council

Nothing additional to report.

Staffordshire County Council

Chase Through Time, Heritage Lottery Fund project. Successful with the bid, £96,000 had been awarded. Project will include LiDAR survey of the AONB and will look at Great War remnants and how the area evolved through time. A number of people helped to develop the project. Links with the Friends of Cannock Chase with their Heritage Lottery Funded WW1 project. Volunteer input will also be part of the project. Cllr Heath noted that it was good news that this grant had been awarded.

Reports from Joint Committee Advisers

428 The Chairman of the Advisory Partnership reported the following from the last meeting in April:

- Shaun Denny reported on Rugeley Quarry operation, noting that they were altering the phases of the quarry operations. This will include a planting scheme and 2m high bund. A planning application had also been submitted for soil production on the site. This will increase lorry movements to and from the site.
- HS2 presentation – impact of the construction phase and how much land will be taken during this time was outlined. Noise and flooding issues were also discussed. The proposed strategic rail hub at Four Ashes was also mentioned. The AONB Unit will be looking at views in and out of the AONB that may be affected by HS2.

Forestry Commission:

- Work commenced on the impact that climate change, pests and diseases is having on plantations. Expanding range and types of trees, researching work for future planting regimes. The landscape will change

- as areas are felled and replanted. Capability of growing trees and landscapes.
- On site work at Birches Valley for this year's concerts is now taking place.

Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

429 The next scheduled meeting is Monday 12th December 2016, 10:00am, venue to be arranged.

The meeting discussed the date for the additional meeting in September. The week beginning 26th September 2016 had been identified by the AONB Unit as a possibility. Cllr Heath noted that she is unavailable that week and requested that the previous week in looked at, if not a substitute would need to be arranged.

Venue to be arranged.

Any other business

430 Cllr Heath used Chairman's prerogative for an 'Any Other Business Item'. After discussion with John Broad, there was no objection to this.

Sarah informed the meeting that Emma Beaman, currently the Assistant AONB Officer, had been offered and accepted a new role with Staffordshire County Council as the Countryside Manager. Thanks were expressed by all for the work that Emma had done with the AONB Unit.

Meeting closed at 11:55am.

Part Two

Exclusion of the Public and Press

The Chairman to move:

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

None

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee
29th September 2016
Briefing note to new Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee Members
Agenda Item 5

What are AONBs?

- The primary purpose of an AONB is to conserve and enhance natural beauty
- The needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and the economic and social needs of local communities should be taken into account
- Demand for recreation should be met as far as is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty

Protected by legislation:

- 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside
- Countryside & Rights Of Way (CROW) Act 2000

CROW Act (2000)

- Reaffirmed purposes of designation
- Places a duty on all public bodies and statutory undertakers to have regard to the purposes of AONBs
- Statutory responsibility for local authorities to produce and review AONB Management Plans

Family of AONBs:

- 46 AONBs in Britain
- 33 wholly in England
- 4 wholly in Wales
- 1 straddles English/Welsh border
- 8 in Northern Ireland
- Cover 18% of our countryside

The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) brings together the AONB family to act on their behalf to ensure that the natural beauty of AONBs is valued and secure.

How are AONBs Managed? AONB partnerships:

Local Authorities are responsible for preparing Management Plans but they are not solely responsible for caring for AONBs:

- Joint Advisory Committees
- Joint Committees

- Conservation Boards

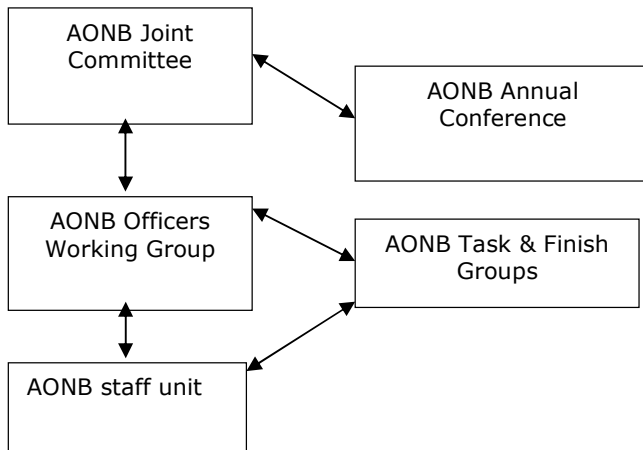
Cannock Chase AONB Partnership

Cannock Chase AONB Partnership was established in 2003 to enable partners to act jointly to deliver their statutory responsibilities to the AONB, including development, delivery and review of the AONB management plan.

Cannock Chase AONB is a Joint Committee including voting members from the five local planning authorities with administrative areas that include the AONB. The governance arrangements were recently reviewed and revised to create a more streamlined structure with greater input from a wider range of partners to decision-making and delivery.

The Joint Committee now includes a number of co-opted advisory members including statutory agencies, non-governmental organisations, landowner and business representatives, voluntary sector bodies and representatives from user groups.

The AONB Partnership Agreement provides details of the new structure and working arrangements.



Local Members Interest
N/A

**Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee
29th September 2016**

**Finance Update
Revenue Budget 2016-17**

Report of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee and the AONB Officer.

Recommendations

1. That progress on the Cannock Chase AONB current net revenue spend for 2016/17 is noted.

Part A

Why is it coming here – what decision(s) are required?

2. The Joint Committee in its role under the Partnership Agreement is responsible for:-
 - The management of the core funding from Defra and the co-ordination of partner projects. This report updates the Joint Committee on progress to date on the current year's budget.

Reasons for Recommendations:

3. The recommendations represent an effective way to continue to carry forward the implementation of the Management Plan for the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership.

Part B

Background:

4. Revenue Budget Update 2016/17

- 4.1 The forecast financial position for the Core and Action Projects Budget is set out in *Appendix 1* which shows a net spend to date of £49,462 together with the outturn currently predicted for the year. The predicted outturn for the end of the financial year totals £158,311 compared to the approved net budget of £183,020 to give a current underspend of £24,709. The Officers Working Group will need to work with the AONB Unit to allocate these savings to either staff recruitment and/or appropriate projects in support of Management Plan actions otherwise this underspend on funding would have to be returned to Defra at the year end.
- 4.2 The latest spend position for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) for the current year is set out in Appendix 2. At present, a total of £11,076 has so far been committed to 9 specific community projects leaving £3,009 of funding currently unallocated (net of the expected £1,565 annual administration fee).

5. Reserve and Risk Register

- 5.1 The balance on the Cannock Chase AONB Reserve stood at £64,547 at the start of 2016/17. A summary of the Reserve is attached as *Appendix 3*.
- 5.2 It has previously been recommended that the priorities for the use of the Reserve Fund should be as follows:
- Income from sales, donations and consultancy work should be available to supplement the delivery of projects within the Annual Action Plans and to provide 'matched funding' for any major grant applications (*approximately £34,550*) and;
 - The remaining funds should be earmarked to enable the AONB unit to respond to the implications of any future reductions in funding (*approximately £30,000*).
- 5.3 These priorities are reviewed annually in December of each year in conjunction with the annual update of the Cannock Chase AONB Risk Register.

6. Equalities Implications

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

7. Legal Implications

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

8. Resource and Value for Money Implications

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

9. Risk Implications

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

Report authors:

Authors Name	John Broad	Place Finance Unit	01785 854861
	Ruth Hýtch	AONB Unit	01785 619184

List of Background papers

None

CANNOCK CHASE AONB JOINT COMMITTEE

Predicted Outturn for 2016/2017 for Cannock Chase AONB Core and Project Costs

	Previous Years			2016/2017			
	Actuals 2013/2014	Actuals 2014/2015	Actuals 2015/2016	Approved Budget	Spent or Committed to Date	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<u>AONB Core Budget</u>							
Staff Salaries and Associated costs	110,752	118,989	121,794	127,230	41,503	101,900	-25,330
Accommodation /Office Equipment	8,678	8,436	7,421	7,570	7,627	7,570	0
Transport	4,722	4,995	5,113	5,110	1,600	5,110	0
Partnership budget for PR events	3,683	3,706	2,784	2,500	1,138	2,500	0
Sustainable Development Fund			5,000	15,650	1,896	15,650	0
Partnership running costs (In kind)	6,600	6,600	6,600	6,600	6,600	6,600	0
	134,435	142,726	148,713	164,660	60,364	139,330	-25,330
<u>Core Action Projects</u>							
AONB Website	160	160	160	160	0	160	0
AONB Annual Review	448	435	388	500	0	500	0
Monitoring Projects	1,975		0	1,000	490	1,000	0
Community Involvement and Awareness Events	2,606	2,237	3,415	2,500	932	2,500	0
Planning Support Project	5,994	6,000	6,240	6,000	6,000	6,000	0
Maximising Income	3,498	3,019	1,525	1,000		1,000	0
Advisory Partnership WW1			3,151	500		500	0
Dementia Friendly Community Project			5,206	700	692	700	0
Visitor Management yr 2	7,714	6,595		6,000		6,000	0
Management Plan	5,460	3,849	0	0	0	0	0
Heritage Projects							0
Business Plan	1,950						0
Annual Conference					585	585	585
Gateway Signs			4,875		0		0
Dog Projects							0
Walkers Project							0
Annual Action Plan							0
AONB Partner Awareness raising events							0
AONB Newsletters							0
Interpretation Strategy			4,814		36	36	36
Peace & Tranquillity		2,338	3,600				0
Implement Signs Program	3,120						0
State of AONB Report							0
AONB Membership Project							0
Fixed Point Photography Analysis Report			6,224		0		0
	32,925	24,633	39,598	18,360	8,735	18,981	621
TOTAL BUDGET	167,360	167,359	188,311	183,020	69,099	158,311	-24,709
FUNDED BY:							
Natural England			4,300				0
Defra	125,520	125,518	138,792	141,180	0	141,180	0
Lichfield District Council	2,092	2,092	2,092	2,092	2,092	2,092	0
South Staffordshire District Council	2,092	2,092	2,092	2,092	2,092	2,092	0
Cannock Chase District Council	8,368	8,368	8,368	8,368	8,368	8,368	0
Stafford Borough Council	8,368	8,368	8,368	8,368	8,368	8,368	0
Staffordshire County Council	20,920	20,921	20,920	20,920	20,920	20,920	0
	167,360	167,359	184,932	183,020	41,840	183,020	0
Sales and Donations	3,461	542	996	0	658	0	0
Membership Fee Income					6,965	0	0
Funding from(+)/to reserve(-)	-3,461	-542	2,383	0	0	-24,709	-24,709
	167,360	167,359	188,311	183,020	49,462	158,311	-24,709

CANNOCK CHASE AONB JOINT COMMITTEE

Budget Update for 2016/2017 for Sustainable Development Fund

September 2016

	Forecast Outturn 2016/2017 £
AONB SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND	
Approved Projects	
Forest School Training - Leisure and Culture Charitable Trust	1,250
Inspired by Nature - Independent Community Arts Partnership	1,500
Chase Fit - Dementia Walks at Marquis Drive - Hettie Piggott	1,500
Deer Deter Equipment - Ranger Service	1,079
Wildlife Monitoring and Research - Ranger Service	1,043
Brewood Ringers - Siskin migration	396
Dementia Training - CASS	1,818
Photography Training - FPP Group	1,490
Bird Survey - West Midlands Bird Club	1,000
Total Approved Projects	11,076
Admin Fees	1,565
Currently Unallocated	3,009
TOTAL PROPOSED/APPROVED	15,650

CANNOCK CHASE AONB RESERVE

Financial Year	Opening Balance	Income/ Donations	Visitor Survey Work	Admin Fees	Transfer from Reserve	Interest	Closing Balance
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
2007/2008	10,214				-1,766		8,448
2008/2009	8,448	572		9,303	-1,590		16,733
2009/2010	16,733	1,326		6,166	-371		23,854
2010/2011	23,854	896	9,564	4,744	-921		38,136
2011/2012	38,136	1,240	17,845	3,983	-4,204		57,001
2012/2013	57,001	387		3,218	-533	195	60,269
2013/2014	60,269	1,001		2,459		249	63,979
2014/2015	63,979	596		1,327	-54	289	66,137
2015/2016	66,137			500	-2,383	293	64,547
		6,020	27,409	31,700	-11,822	1,026	64,547

Notes:

Admin Fees earned against the SDF may be subject to 25% 'match funding' if drawn down to offset revenue budget or project spend - TBC

**Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee – 29 September 2016
Report of the Chairman of the Officers' Working Group
Agenda Item 7**

Management Plan Delivery Progress

1 Recommendations

1.1 The Committee notes the progress made since the last meeting.

2 Progress

Activity	Outcome	Comments
Strategic delivery		
2.1 Developing sustainable governance	Members and their support officers developing ideas for new model.	Subject of a separate report.
2.2 Undergrounding	Western Power Distribution (WPD) undergoing internal restructuring which has led to some confusion on 'carry over' schemes from the previous price review period. National Grid scheme – discussions under way with site managers about the potential to access grant scheme funding related to high voltage lines near Gentleshaw Common.	The West Midlands AONBs and the Peak District National Park representatives have been in email correspondence with WPD and have concerns about the lack of response to requests for information.
Partnership liaison		
2.3 Continued liaison with the four District Commissioning Leads from Staffordshire County Council	Further meetings attended and contacts created in support of developing the revised Management	

Activity	Outcome	Comments
	Plan, future projects and awareness within districts of AONB work.	
2.4 SAC Partnership	Continued representation to support development of a cohesive and practicable mitigation plan for the impact of increased visitors to the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and supporting the integrity of the AONB.	SAC partnership continues to fund AONB projects as part of its mitigation programme delivery.
2.5 Public Health liaison	Regular meetings with representatives from Public Health maintained.	
2.6 National Trust	Parkland Visioning Day	Assistant AONB Officer attended day of site visits around the parkland area of Shugborough.
Programme delivery		
2.6 Programme monitoring	Fixed point photography – SDF grant awarded for further workshops with volunteer photographers.	
2.7 Healthy living in the AONB	Dementia Strategy published. AONB Officer attended initial meeting with the proposed Dementia Alliance for Cannock Chase District.	Launch of the Alliance due to be held on 29 th September.
2.8 Project development World War 1	Two school visits from Anglia Tours – 50 pupils Four walks – 67 people, including group of army cadets. Training session at WW1 Hut for	Interest continuing from members of the public. Volunteers are taking more of a lead role in delivering talks and walks, developing new skills. Contact from Cannock Army

Activity	Outcome	Comments
	<p>volunteers in advance of iPads being installed.</p> <p>Phase 2: Two workshops held to gather family memories of the WW1 camps – 25 people Three bus tours – 70 people Two scheduled talks – 47 people One additional talk to a ladies group from Bloxwich, follow up from bus tour – 14 people</p>	<p>Cadets who are interested in volunteering at the WW1 Hut. Training to be delivered in October. Phase 3 HLF application being drafted.</p>
2.9 Visitor Management Strategy	<p>Requested guidance from Natural England in respect of the need to HRA each action as it is developed into a project. Response received and is being considered.</p> <p>Ambassadors Training brief prepared and circulated.</p>	<p>The need for each project to be subject to HRA will increase the costs. Requested that we have an all-encompassing HRA for all actions/projects.</p> <p>Quotes to be returned by the end of September.</p>
2.10 Sustainable Development Fund	9 projects approved totalling £11,065.	
Awareness raising & community involvement		
2.11 Community volunteering	<p>5 volunteer days held – 22 people Milford Hut 14 Sundays x 5 hour days manned by 2 volunteers. WW1 hut manned for 31 days at a minimum of 2 volunteers.</p>	
2.12 Raising awareness of the AONB	<p>Attendance at Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Playday – 1200 visitors Attendance at Forestry Commission</p>	

Activity	Outcome	Comments
	Enchanted Forest Day – 1000 visitors Chase Fit Walking Festival – Rabbit Trail for children at Brindley Heath – 30 people took part, plus contact with other members of the public.	
2.13 Annual Conference	Arranged for Friday 4 th November 2016.	Venue booked, speakers confirmed, 'save the date' email circulated to around 200 people.
Partnership administration		
2.14 Partner briefings	One briefing organised with new elected member in August, postponed to a later date.	
Press and communications		
2.15 Coverage of the AONB work	3 press releases sent. The file showing the press coverage received since the last meeting will be available for Members to view at the meeting. Up-dates are also posted on the blog, Facebook and Twitter sites. A separate file shows thank yous and AONB membership comments.	

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee
29th September 2016
Cannock Chase AONB Governance Review Update
Agenda Item 8

Recommendations

1. Members to approve the commissioning of consultants to deliver the financial sustainability models work as detailed in Annex 1
2. To note the progress on delivery of the governance review and the recommendations outlined in the 'Next Steps'.

Why is it coming here – what decision(s) are required?

The Officer's Working Group has taken forward the tasks agreed by the Committee at the last meeting. This report is to outline progress to date, get feedback from Members on the financial sustainability models draft brief and to get approval for the next steps and future timetable.

Background

At the June 2016 Joint Committee meeting the Members tasked Officer's Working Group, alongside the AONB Unit, to:

- a. Take back the agreed new Partnership Agreement to their individual authorities for adoption;
- b. Invite the specified wider partners to join the Joint Committee Meeting in September as advisory members;
- c. Set up Task and Finish Groups as detailed in the Partnership Agreement;
- d. Organise an Annual Conference for Autumn 2016;
- e. Work with the AONB team on an interim work programme/service plan for 2016/17;
- f. Draft a brief, for discussion and approval, examining the options and feasibility of alternative long term financial sustainable delivery models;
- g. The pros and cons of re-joining the Association for AONBs to be articulated for discussion at the September 2016 meeting.

Progress Update

Partnership agreement

The revised partnership agreement is going through the system with each local authority for adoption and no issues are anticipated.

Wider Partners

A letter has gone out from the Chair of the Partnership to invite the wider representation, as detailed in the Partnership Agreement, along to the Joint Committee meeting in September. An e-mail, from the Chair of the Officer's Working Group, has also been sent to all partners inviting them to confirm their input into the new structure.

Task and finish groups

Since the last Joint Committee meeting, Partners have been asked to confirm which of the groups they would like to participate in.

All Task and Finish Groups have been allocated a sponsor from Officer's Working Group. These sponsors alongside the AONB Unit will initiate the first meetings of each group. These meetings are anticipated to be held as soon as possible. All groups will work to the Terms of Reference set out in the Partnership Agreement and will be given a clear remit about Management Plan delivery.

- Landscape T&F Group (OWG Sponsor – Hazel McDowall) to commence on 27th September
- Visitor Management T&F Group (OWG sponsor – Kelly Harris)
- Land management T&F Group (OWG sponsor – Bill Waller)
- Historic Environment T&F group (OWG sponsor – Sarah Bentley)

Members are very welcome to join a Task and Finish Group(s) as and when they wish.

Annual Conference

The conference will be held on Friday 4 November 2016 at the Aquarius Ballroom & Function Suite in Hednesford.

Draft itinerary:

9:30 – 10:00	Register, tea/coffee available
10:00 – 10:10	Welcome from Chairman of AONB Joint Committee – Chair unable to attend on this date. Vice Chair? Set the scene, explain why we are together, recent changes
10:10 – 10:20	Amanda Milling MP
10:20 – 10:45	AONB Unit – celebrate achievements/projects in last year Forward look.
10:40 – 11:00	Dr Della Hooke Landscape Change
11:00 – 11:15	Refreshment break
11:15 – 12:30	Project workshops/rotation – exploring landscape change
12:30 – 1:30	Lunch
1:30 – 2:00	Rob Fairbanks, Surrey Hills AONB Officer to highlight recent work on long term financial sustainability for AONB
2:00 – 2:45	Financial sustainability workshops opportunity for discussion/input from attendees
2:45 – 3:00	Chairman's closing remarks
3:00	Close of Conference

AONB Unit Service Plan

The Committee agreed at its last meeting that the Officers Working Group should support the AONB Unit in developing a work plan for 2016/17. Work on this is ongoing and aims to ensure that the unit has an achievable work plan that embeds the new governance arrangements and meets Defra requirements.

Financially sustainable operating models

This is the subject of a separate paper (Annex 1) for discussion.

Next steps

The OWG proposes the following actions to progress arrangements:

- a) **Task and Finish Groups** - All groups are initiated and in a position to report back on their first meetings at the December Joint Committee;
- b) **Financially sustainable operating models** – Further to discussions today that the contract is let and will report to the March Committee meeting;
- c) **National Association for AONBs membership** – It is proposed that the OWG, with input from the team, review the pros and cons of membership and bring a proposal to the next meeting of the Committee.

- **Annex 1**
- **DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION**
- **Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

Project specification: Options appraisal for new operating models to deliver improved financial sustainability

- **Purpose of the project**

Cannock Chase AONB Partnership was established in 2003 to enable partners to act jointly to deliver their statutory responsibilities to the AONB, including development, delivery and review of the AONB management plan. Like other AONB partnerships Cannock Chase currently operates a model that is heavily dependent on public sector resources, with funding principally through Defra and the five local authorities. A membership scheme has been developed as an alternative way to source funds, which could be further developed.

As public sector finances become increasingly pressured, the Partnership wishes to explore alternative operating models which would make the organisation more resilient and financially sustainable. This would include the ability to access different sources of funding not available to the current local authority-based model.

The role of the local authorities and their ability to meet statutory requirements within each model should be considered. Likewise the role of other stakeholders and the local community should also be considered, including potential opportunities and links to existing bodies.

There are a number of particular opportunities for Cannock Chase, detailed below, that should also be considered under this contract linked to wider initiatives. The potential for new models to link with these opportunities should be fully considered with an assessment of pros and cons. A preferred option should be identified from the appraisal and an implementation plan proposed, including any phasing of changes. The project will need to consider the resources required to operate the new model, including the supporting structures and direct staffing. A fully costed proposal and implementation plan are required as outputs to the contract.

- **Background**

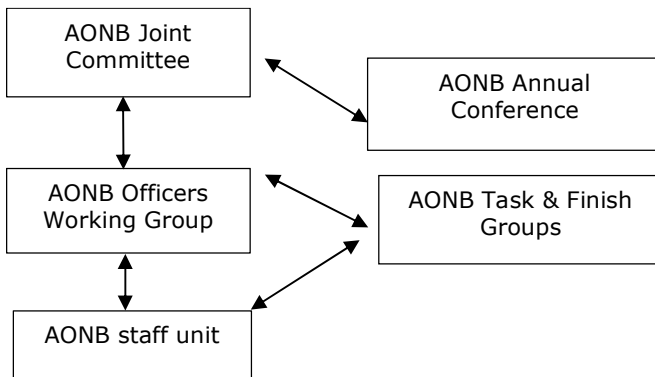
Cannock Chase AONB is governed through a Joint Committee including voting members from the five local planning authorities with administrative areas that include the AONB. The governance arrangements have recently been reviewed and revised to create a more streamlined structure with greater input from a wider range of partners to decision-making and delivery.

The Joint Committee therefore now includes a number of co-opted advisory members including statutory agencies, non-governmental organisations, landowner and business representatives, voluntary sector bodies and representatives from user groups.

The Joint Committee is supported by an Officers Working Group and a number of task and finish groups are currently being established to drive forward delivery of the AONB Management Plan. There is also an Annual Conference bringing all stakeholders together to explore particular themes and issues.

The AONB has a dedicated team of three staff, including AONB Manager, Assistant AONB Officer and Office Manager.

The AONB Partnership Agreement provides details of the structure and working arrangements.



- **Wider considerations**

There are a number of other initiatives which are relevant to the AONB and which should be considered as part of this contract. NB These are key considerations but there will be others identified through the contract which should also be included.

Staffordshire County Council Countryside Estate Review – the County Council is currently reviewing the management of its country parks, picnic / smaller sites and greenways. These are currently managed through an in house ranger service and works unit, supported by environmental specialists. With increasing demand and more limited resources, the Council is exploring alternative ways to manage the estate in future, including through partnerships, by setting up a charitable body / social enterprise, through management agreements with other bodies including community / voluntary groups or retaining in house with increased development strategy / income generation. These options are still being explored for Cannock Chase and could link to options for the AONB Partnership.

Cannock Chase to Sutton Park wider landscape area – The area from Cannock Chase to Sutton Park (near Birmingham) was identified as a biodiversity enhancement area in the former regional spatial strategy. Historical maps show that this area was once an extensive heathland landscape and this provides an important landscape context to the AONB. There has been consideration in recent years of developing an initiative to focus on this wider landscape, to explore opportunities to create better linked and connected habitats and to provide more joined up green space for the growing population. The creation of a Nature Improvement Area for Birmingham and the Black Country has helped create a more connected landscape in the south of the area but did not extend into Staffordshire. However there is still interest in this approach and there may be opportunities to explore more joined up management approaches which could benefit the AONB by looking outside the AONB boundary.

The Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - the Cannock Chase SAC is an area of protected lowland heathland which lies within the Cannock Chase AONB, and is afforded separate statutory protection under the Habitat Regulations. In particular, the SAC requires careful management due to the pressures for visitor recreation from existing and new residents in the surrounding area. As such, a number of local authorities (the Cannock Chase SAC Partnership) within the ‘zone of influence’ of the SAC have agreed to provide a number of Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Measures (SAMMM) through financial contributions from new

housing developments. These agreed measures seek to ensure the effective mitigation of visitor impacts upon the SAC, and may potentially offer opportunities for co-ordination between the management of the Cannock Chase SAC and AONB.

- **Objectives**

The objectives for the project are:

1. To secure financial sustainability of the Partnership.
2. To deliver a more joined up and co-ordinated approach to management of the AONB and its surrounding landscapes, improving the resilience of the AONB's special features.
3. To improve delivery of the AONB management plan through increased access to resources.

Options should be scored against these objectives.

- **Specification**

Costs should be provided for delivery of the following tasks:

- **Task 1: Background research and risk analysis / horizon scanning**

- Develop a broad understanding of the current model to inform future proposals
- Explore work undertaken by other AONBs to avoid duplication of effort (e.g. report commissioned by South Devon AONB, Shropshire Hills proposals, etc.)
- Explore opportunities presented by the SCC countryside estate review plus links to other initiatives including the SAC partnership and emerging ideas for linking Cannock Chase to Sutton Park
- Identify key risks to financial sustainability and horizon scan for future risks and opportunities (e.g. devolution, Brexit etc.)

- **Task 2: Options appraisal of models**

- Identify potential operating models / approaches; these might include:
 - Charitable trust / arm
 - Charitable incorporated organisation
 - Community / landscape foundation
 - Community interest company
 - Social enterprise
- Identify the pros and cons / undertake SWOT analysis of each option including broad estimates of costs to implement and operate, and appraise against the objectives
- Consider how the proposed models would link to the existing Joint Committee Structure
- Consider how the models would link to current initiatives (e.g. membership scheme) and also any potential impacts on other bodies (e.g. other charitable bodies operating in the area)

- Consider how the models could link to the SCC countryside estate review, SAC partnership and Cannock Chase to Sutton Park wider approach plus other opportunities / threats identified under task 1.
- Identify other sources of funding and evaluate their potential for Cannock Chase AONB. These might include:
 - Grants
 - Modern philanthropy
 - Crowd sourcing
 - Green bonds
 - Income generation through consultancy
- **Task 3: Identify preferred model / approach**
 - From the analysis in task 2, identify a preferred model with a clear rationale
 - This should include any phasing that may be required if appropriate
- **Task 4: Support and resourcing**
 - Identify the support and governance structures that would be required to operate the model and opportunities to deliver these within existing governance structures
 - Review the staffing of the AONB to identify the roles that would be required to operate the model and deliver AONB functions, including benchmarking against similar appropriate bodies.
- **Task 5: Implementation Plan**
 - Develop an implementation plan outlining the steps that would be required to bring the proposed model into operation, identifying any key costs that would need to be budgeted for and how success would be measured.
- **Outputs**

Outputs to be delivered include:

 1. Detailed report against the five tasks outlined above with clear appraisal of the options, rationale for the preferred model, assessment of resource requirements and implementation plan. The report should include an executive summary outlining the conclusions from each task and clear recommendations and actions. The report should be provided electronically in Word and pdf formats plus five printed copies.
 2. Attendance and input to the following meetings to be held in Staffordshire in locations appropriate to the AONB:
 - a. Inception meeting with Officers Working Group
 - b. Running a workshop session with AONB stakeholders at the annual conference on 4th November to gain ideas on alternative models
 - c. Attendance at a meeting with the Officers Working Group and Joint Committee between tasks 2 and 3.
 - d. Attendance at a meeting of the Officers Working Group and core funding partners between tasks 4 and 5.

- e. Attendance at Joint Committee meeting to report on the conclusions and recommendations of the project.

- **Time scales**

Timings for the project are as follows:

Activity	Deadline	Notes
Submission of tender documents	5pm 12 th October 2016	
Contract start date	18 th October 2016	
Inception meeting	Week commencing 24 th October	
Run workshop session at AONB conference	4 th November	
Attend meeting with OWG and JC after task 2	Early to mid-December	
Attend meeting with OWG & funders after task 4	Late January / early February 2017	
Issue draft final report	Early March 2017	
Present findings to Joint Committee	March 2017	
Issue final report	By 20 th March 2017	

- **Project management**

This contract is commissioned by Staffordshire County Council on behalf of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership.

The project manager and key contact for the contract is Sarah Bentley, Environmental Advice Manager – sarah.bentley@staffordshire.gov.uk or 01785 276047

The contract will be overseen by a steering group which will be the AONB Officers Working Group. This includes the following:

- Hazel McDowall, Natural England (Chair)
- Kelly Harris, South Staffordshire District Council
- Lyn Hammant, Lichfield District Council
- Bill Waller, Stafford Borough Council
- Angela Grove, Cannock Chase District Council
- Andy Coggins, Forestry Commission

- **Submission of tenders**

Tenders should be submitted electronically to sarah.bentley@staffordshire.gov.uk by 5pm on the 12th October 2016.

Your tender documents should demonstrate how you would approach the contract, your relevant skills and experience and a full cost breakdown. They should also demonstrate your ability to meet the Council's essential requirements set out below.

Award criteria will be as follows:

Essential requirements	
Commitment to meet the County Council's general requirements, including Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities & Diversity, and Environmental Management	Yes / No
Ability and commitment to meet the project delivery timescales	Yes / No
Qualitative criteria	Weighting
Cost	40%
Relevant knowledge, skills and experience to be able to deliver the specification	60%

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee 29 September 2016
Agenda Item 9 - Planning Issues for period since last Joint Committee

Recommendation

The Joint Committee notes progress made on planning matters since the last meeting.

Planning Applications

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
Cannock Chase Council	Brereton Fields Farm, Gorse Lane, demolition of existing & erection of new cottage amended Ref: CH/15/0400	21/6/16	The amendment concerns the access and circulation arrangements which have been changed so as to offer more protection to the orchard trees on site. We did not object to the original application and note and support the changes.
Lichfield District Council	Residential Development; up to 150 dwellings with parking, landscaping and external works. Outline including access, other matters reserved. South Milestone Way Burntwood. Ref: 16/00666/OUTM	15/7/16	The application site is outside the AONB, 2km (1.25 miles) south of AONB boundary at Gentleshaw Common. It is within the built up framework of Burntwood. The site is not visible from the AONB at Gentleshaw Common, by virtue of the urban location and topography. Therefore, any potential AONB issues relate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential for over-provision of housing which could lead to pressure on the environment. - Adequacy of CIL/S106 for SAC mitigation and other AONB related measures. We cannot comment on the overall housing land supply situation and acknowledge that there is a need for the authority to maintain at least a five-year housing land supply. We have commented in the past on the Core Strategy

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>and the CIL to the effect that AONB considerations, linked with, but separate, from those of the SAC, should form part of the consideration of infrastructure requirements as development is planned and permitted. Therefore, with reference to Planning Obligations and the use of CIL, should the proposed development proceed, it would be necessary to direct some funds towards work within the AONB to mitigate the effects of the new development on the area. The typical projects that could be considered should relate the 2014-19 AONB Management Plan, including habitat and access management work.</p> <p>Provided that any wider impact on the AONB is taken into account and appropriate measures required, the AONB Joint Committee has no objection to this planning application.</p>
Stafford Borough Council	Brackenwood, Brook Lane, Brocton, Stafford ST17 0TZ. Removal of conservatory and extension to front and rear of existing dwelling. Ref: 16/24275/HOU	25/7/16	<p>Subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the height of the extensions not extending above the original line of the property; • the development remaining well contained within the curtilage of the property; • the development remaining well screened through the use of appropriate planting i.e. separated away from views from the adjacent heathland and hills; • materials used are in keeping with the existing property; <p>the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership has no further comments.</p>
South Staffordshire Council	Ref. 16/00641/TEL. Chaseside Farm,	09/08/2016	The AONB Partnership has agreed a Planning Protocol which includes consideration of any applications that

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
	Cannock Rd, Bednall. Cabinet installed, antennas swapped out like for like basis Orange PCS		<p>“are likely to have an adverse impact on either the character of the local landscape and/or nature conservation interests within the AONB or on its setting”. This site is within the AONB which means that careful consideration needs to be given to the impact of proposed development the landscape and scenic beauty of the area in accordance with the CROW act, the NPPF and the adopted South Staffordshire Local Plan. Taken together, this policy context could rule out new telecommunications installations in the AONB.</p> <p>However, I note that the application is for the updating of an existing installation, the upgrading of which was approved in 2013 (13/00021/FUL), without objection from the AONB Joint Committee. The existing installation comprises a 20m “Scots Pine” mast and a compound with several cabinets and associated equipment, set within a copse of mature Pine trees, which lies around 200 metres north of the Dark Slade public footpath (Heart of England Way). The copse is visible in the landscape and upon careful examination the mast can be seen.</p> <p>Other than replacement antennae, the mast is to be unaltered and the only new elements of the installation will be a small cabinet and low level cable feeders at ground level in the compound. These will have no additional impact on the landscape and no existing trees should be affected and I can confirm, therefore, that the AONB Joint Committee has no objection to the</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>proposed development</p> <p>However, in the event of permission being granted, I consider that a planning condition should be applied to ensure that the work does not result in the lopping or removal of any of the trees on site and that they are protected during any construction. Thank you for consulting me on this application Please let me know if you have any queries on these comments. I would be glad to receive notification of your decision in due course.</p>
Cannock Chase Council	CH/16/275. Land at Oakenway, Kingsley Wood Road, Residential Development: Demolition of existing bungalow, garage & outbuilding. Erect one house	18/08/2016	<p>The application site comprises an extensive (1.6Ha.) plot with a small existing bungalow, a detached garage and small outbuilding. The property is screened by virtue of existing trees and shrubs there are three properties on adjoining plots, each larger than the bungalow which is proposed to be demolished. The woodland, heathland and scrub to the rear is included in the SAC.</p> <p>There are no public footpaths on the rear boundary, but further along, Kingsley Wood Road becomes a footpath leading into open land and Pepper Slade.</p> <p>The proposal is for the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of a new two storey dwelling set further back into the plot.</p> <p>The Local Planning Authority will wish to consider the impact of the proposed extension on the adjoining</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>properties and Green Belt policy. The main issue from an AONB perspective is the principle of the development and the impact that it could have on the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB and the ecology of the SAC.</p> <p>The design approach is noted and the proposed house will reflect the character of others on Kingsley Wood Road. A tree survey has been presented as part of the application, but more detail could be provided on tree retention and landscaping to show that development would not involve loss of habitat or the introduction of non-native species, with reference to character of the area and the integrity of the adjoining SAC.</p> <p>I have concluded that, in principle, the proposed development should not have any adverse effect on the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB or the ecological quality of the SAC. I can confirm, therefore, that the AONB Joint Committee has no objection (in principle) to this planning application.</p> <p>However, prior to any permission being issued, should that be your recommendation, more information on landscaping should be provided. Thereafter, if these proposals are deemed to be acceptable, I would request that planning conditions are applied to cover materials, landscaping and boundary treatments. It would also be desirable, if it is legally practicable, to restrict permitted development rights in order to enable any further extension proposals, including remote buildings and</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			structures in the rear garden, to come under planning control. This would enable AONB and SAC interests to continue to be taken into account in the future.
Cannock Chase Council	CH/16/278 Erection of a block of stables including tack and feed store. Land off Shooting Butts Road, Rugeley.	18/08/2016	<p>I wish to make the following comments on the above planning application on behalf of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Joint Committee. The policy context was provided in my submission on the earlier application for a more extensive development, which was withdrawn. (CH/15/0178 Change of use of land to an equestrian facility including erection of stable block, construction of new access, parking, hard standing and 5 No. touring camping pitches). It is not, therefore, repeated in this letter.</p> <p>The application site is in the SW corner of a large rectilinear field, with access to be taken from an already improved farm access off Shooting Butts Road. The field is one of several, to the rear of houses on Stonehouse Road and immediately east of Shooting Butts Road, which form part of a tract of open countryside to the west of Rugeley. The fields are down to grass and are open in character, with post and rail fencing along the Shooting Butts Road frontage and sparse hedges, with isolated trees, between them. In contrast the rear boundary of the houses on Stonehouse Road is well screened by virtue of hedges and trees in gardens. The site is clearly visible from Penkrige Bank and Shooting Butts Road. There is a well-used public footpath along the eastern edge of the field, connecting Stonehouse</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>Road and Penkridge Bank, from which the proposed building could be seen.</p> <p>The application involves the proposed construction of an "L" shaped block of five stables and a tack room, with a common hardstanding. It is acknowledged that this is a different, smaller scale of development than was proposed in the earlier application. However, although the supporting information suggests that they are to be for the personal use of the applicant, 5 stables and the extent of grazing that could be available if the 3.9 ha (9.6 acre) field were to be subdivided into paddocks, suggests a potential for commercial use and expansion, especially given the configuration of the access and the buildings.</p> <p>The Local Planning Authority will wish to consider general Green Belt policy, but the openness of this land is an important part of the local AONB landscape. The issue from an AONB perspective is whether it would have an adverse impact on the landscape, scenic beauty and quiet enjoyment of the protected area. In this instance the proposal represents substantial development in a prominent position in open countryside, which would, in the form proposed, detract from the rural character of the AONB. In addition, if it is permitted, the number of horses that could be kept would lead to the inevitable sub-division of the field into paddocks. Although this would fall outside planning control, the landscape impact is significant and it would</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>not occur without the development of stables.</p> <p>I can confirm, therefore, that the AONB Joint Committee is concerned is about this planning application and I may wish to submit an objection. However, I would wish to hold any formal objection in abeyance pending further information from the applicant on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The justification for constructing 5 No. stable based on the number of horses owned by the applicant. - The potential to split the building into two separate units to reduce the overall visual impact. - Using a hipped roof, rather than gables, on the east and north elevation. - Consideration of locating the building(s) a little further from the road alongside the southern hedgerow. - Consideration of a landscaping scheme <p>In the meantime, should the application ultimately be approved, I would request that planning conditions are applied on materials (and colours) for the building. In addition, extensive landscaping, comprising native trees and shrubs should be required around the buildings. In addition, I would request that the attention of the applicant is drawn to the good practice guidance on horse-keeping set out in the leaflet "Horse Sense in the AONB" - see http://www.cannock-chase.co.uk/assets/downloads/Cannock.AONB.Horse.pdf</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
Staffordshire County Council	SS.16/02/613W: Cocksparrow Lane, Huntington, Cannock. Proposal: Application to vary Condition 1 of planning permission SS.13/03/613 W to reflect the final design of the AD facility - the site layout, cross sections and elevation drawings	18/08/2016	<p>This site is outside, but within the setting of, the AONB. It is included in the Green Belt. I am familiar with the site and the AONB Planning Adviser has viewed it from the adjoining road, the network of formal and informal footpaths on Shoal Hill Common and the Littleton Leisure Park ("Huntington Mound"). It is noted that the last site is not in the AONB, but this wooded site and the adjoining open (green belt) land form an important element of the setting of the AONB.</p> <p>You will be aware of the comments that were submitted in 2009 & 2013 on the original application by the AONB Joint Committee, the principles of which still apply to consideration of the recent application. The policy context, in relation to the CROW Act and the need to take account of the AONB Planning Protocol, as outlined in my previous letter, also remain. The NPPF contains specific reference to AONBs and the local planning context is now provided by the recently adopted South Staffordshire Core Strategy.</p> <p>As noted in the letter on the previous applications, the view of the AONB Joint Committee remains that consideration should be given to the impact upon the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB of this development, in terms of views into and from the AONB and (possibly) traffic generation.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that, as stated by the applicant, the proposed amendments result from operational and</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>efficiency reasons and that they will not alter the approved quantum, nature or treatment processes or the permitted vehicle movements and plant function previously approved.</p> <p>However, I am concerned that the application seems to include the relocation of the AD process to another part of the site and that this involves new structures of a significant size. The application does not provide for the comparison of the height and scale of the buildings which are subject to amendment, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the two Anaerobic Digester fermenters (which are to be 15m high at the apex of the conical roof). - the Anaerobic Digester covered storage tank, (which is to be 20m high at the apex of the conical roof). <p>The AONB planning adviser has looked through the current application and the records of the approved scheme on the SCC website, but he has been unable to obtain a clear picture. However, there does seem to be a significant set of differences in terms of site layout, building type and building heights between the 2008 approved Drawing; Ref. 874/200(Rev. B) and the Views & Plant Layout plans, submitted as part of the current application.</p> <p>The applicant has subsequently provided a comparisons table of key changes between the approved scheme</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>layout and the proposed revisions. Although the functions and processes are unaltered, the output of the Anaerobic Digestion (AD) operation is to be increased by around 70% from 2.5 to 3.5 MW and the proposed AD structures are up to 12m higher than those approved. In addition, through the amended layout, they would be located in a different part of the site, as separate structures to the main waste handling building. Given the scale of these changes, I have concluded that a new landscape impact assessment, with focus on the effect on the AONB, needs to be undertaken, in order for the effect of the changes to be fully considered.</p> <p>In addition, given the increased size of the structures, no longer located within the main building, I would question if this matter should be dealt with as a full application rather than a variation of Condition 1 of the original approval?</p> <p>In the absence of the landscape impact assessment referred to above, I would be grateful if you would regard this letter as a holding objection by the AONB Joint Committee to the proposed amendments.</p>
South Staffordshire Council	Ref. 16/00527/FUL. Erection of 8 No. poultry buildings, boiler building, site office, hardstandings, drainage attenuation	18/08/2016	I have been contacted by local residents in connection with the above application and any potential impact on the AONB. I wish, therefore, to make comments on the above planning application on behalf of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Joint Committee.

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
	pond and associated infrastructure. Land North of Cannock Road (SE of Pillaton Farm), Penkridge		<p>The AONB Partnership has agreed a Planning Protocol which includes consideration of any applications that “are likely to have an adverse impact on either the character of the local landscape and/or nature conservation interests within the AONB or on its setting”.</p> <p>The site is within the setting of the AONB (Shoal Hill is 1.4km to SE - 2.2km to higher ground – and at Pottal Pool 2.2 km to NE). The scale of the proposed development is substantial, with 8No. poultry buildings measuring approximately 125m x 25m x 3 to 6m, 20No. feed silos, a biomass building (12m high) and ancillary structure. This means that careful consideration needs to be given to the impact of proposed development on the landscape and scenic beauty of the area in accordance with the CROW act, the NPPF and the South Staffs. Core Strategy.</p> <p>The AONB planning advisor has reviewed the submitted plans and visited the area around Shoal Hill Common to ascertain if there would be any unacceptable visual impact on the AONB. In addition, it is noted that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) will wish to consider any Green Belt issues.</p> <p>Despite the scale of the proposed development, the review concludes that a combination of the following factors:</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - topography and existing tree cover, - proposed landscaping, - the limited height of the main buildings, and - the control of the colour of cladding & roofing material by planning conditions, <p>means that it is very unlikely that there would be views of the application site from the nearest point of the AONB, including the higher ground on Shoal Hill or from Pottal Pool/Badgers Wood.</p> <p>Therefore, I have concluded that, without prejudice to the need for the LPA to consider Green Belt implications and matters related to traffic, noise, smell etc. plus local landscape impact, there is unlikely to be a demonstrably adverse impact on the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB.</p> <p>I note however that the development would lead to the generation of additional HGV traffic and this would need to be controlled such that it does not lead to any increased pressure on the roads within the AONB, including the B5012 through Shoal Hill and Pottal Slade further to the north.</p> <p>I can confirm, therefore, that provided that the identified traffic issues and the choice of materials can be addressed by appropriate conditions, the AONB Joint Committee has no objection to the proposed</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			development.
Cannock Chase Council	CH/16/310: Erection of agricultural building to replace existing agricultural buildings: Parkside Farm, Chapel Lane, Cannock Wood, Rugeley, WS1 54SE.	30/08/2016	<p>The application is for the replacement of a fire damaged "Dutch Barn" farm building, constructed primarily from corrugated metal sheeting. The new building will have a slightly larger floor area (668 sq. metres rather than 642) and the building will be of a more modern appearance with the lower walls comprising concrete panels, the upper walls green profiled metal sheeting and the shallow pitched roof, natural coloured fibre cement sheets. This reflects the nature of other existing newer buildings on the site. However, details of the actual colours of the proposed materials are not given in the application.</p> <p>There are no public footpaths in the vicinity of the farm buildings and the view of the lower parts of the existing buildings from the lane is screened by an existing hedge. I am satisfied, therefore, that the replacement building can be accommodated without an adverse effect on the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. I can confirm, therefore, that the AONB Joint Committee has no objection to this planning application.</p> <p>However, I would request that planning conditions are applied to cover materials, such that the colour of the proposed metal cladding sheets and fibre cement roof sheets can be approved prior to construction.</p>
South Staffordshire Council	16/00717/FUL. Lower Drayton Farm, Penkridge, ST19 5RE.	31/08/2016	The site is outside the AONB, approximately 4km to the west of the boundary on the A34 at Vivian's Wood and 4.5 km from the public footpath at Dark Slade where it

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
	On farm gas to grid anaerobic digestion plant for bio-methane & electricity, ancillary equipment, access, highway improvements & landscaping		<p>emerges onto open ground, inside the AONB. At this point the altitude is around 160m and although the application site is lower, at 85m, the undulating topography and landscape, which contains a number of mature woodlands, means that the installation is unlikely to be visible from the AONB.</p> <p>In addition, I note the extensive on and off site landscaping and planting that is proposed and the fact the application site is to the west of the M6 motorway which runs on an embankment at that point.</p> <p>I can confirm, therefore, the AONB Joint Committee has no objection to the proposed development.</p>
Cannock Chase Council	CH/16/313. Land Adjacent to No. 4, West Butts Road, Etchinghill, Rugeley Proposed erection of detached dormer bungalow	01/09/2016	<p>The application site is within the AONB, albeit in the existing residential area of Etchinghill. It comprises part (0.12 acres) of the garden of No. 4 West Butts Road, which is a large detached Victorian house. The adjoining property, (No.2) is a detached bungalow of similar age. The majority of the proposed development site is vegetated with a number of smaller trees and mature shrubs. Some trees in the adjoining garden (No.2) are covered by a TPO. The site is within the built up area of Etchinghill as defined the Local Plan</p> <p>The proposal is for the construction of a substantial 3/4-bedroom dwelling, described in the application as a dormer bungalow. The design is sympathetic to the character of the area, especially in terms of materials and detailing, but the roof ridge height is almost up to</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>the level of the existing two storey house.</p> <p>Whilst there are two (3 storey) houses are under construction, further up the road, this application needs to be considered on merit, especially in relation to the spacious, low density nature of development, with many mature trees around the junction of West Butts Road, Stonehouse Road and Chaseley Road. This area represents a transition from the established residential area of Etchinghill to the open countryside of the AOB to the West and South.</p> <p>It is for the Local Planning Authority to consider matters of residential amenity and access. From an AONB perspective, although this is not a development in the open countryside of the AONB, it is important that infill development does not detract from the landscape and scenic beauty of the designated area.</p> <p>The AONB Joint Committee does not object to the principle of residential development on this infill plot within the built up area. There is, however, a significant concern over the size and scale of the proposed dwelling and any possible impact on the established leafy character of the area, including trees covered by TPOs (these are on an adjoining site and will be retained, but some pruning is referred to). I would, therefore, welcome a reconsideration of the size of the dwelling proposed, so as to maintain the spacious and leafy character of the area and more fully recognise the</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			setting, inside the AONB.

Local Plans

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
Lichfield District Council	Lichfield Local Plan Policies on the AONB	09/08/2016	<p>The AONB officer has been asked to comment on whether the Lichfield District Council (LDC) Local Plan (LP) saved policy (NA1) on the AONB should be retained.</p> <p>After several years in preparation, the Local Plan Strategy 2008-2029 was adopted on 17th February 2015. A legal challenge was lodged, but this was unsuccessful.</p> <p>The Council is now preparing a Local Plan Allocations Document which will identify the requirements for the development of sites and areas that will contribute to the Core Strategy. The anticipated completion of this document, together with the adopted Strategy, will remove the need for most, if not all, of the "Saved Policies" from the old 1997 Local plan. (Saved Policies fall under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Unless expressly replaced by a 'new' policy, 'old' policies (adopted local plan policies) are saved for 3 years. The Secretary of State may make a direction to save specified policies beyond the 3-year period).</p> <p>The Saved Policies for Lichfield are listed in Appendix J of the adopted 2015 Strategy, but they will be replaced by Allocations Document when this is adopted, unless</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>specifically approved for retention by the Secretary of State. The relevant Saved AONB Policy is:</p> <p>Policy NA.1: Cannock Chase - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</p> <p>The District Council will conserve and enhance the landscape, nature conservation and recreational value of Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Development will not be permitted except where proposals accord with Green Belt policy and are compatible with the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. Where development is acceptable it shall be of the highest standards of design in sympathy with the architectural and landscape characteristics of the area.</p> <p>Explanation: Most of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies within Cannock Chase District but the eastern edge lies within Lichfield District. The area makes an important contribution to the character of the District and special control is required in order to ensure that its visual qualities are maintained.</p> <p>AONB Considerations</p> <p>The AONB JC commented on the preparation of the adopted Local Plan in 2012/13. At that time, support was expressed for the comprehensive (but non-AONB specific) approach to environment, landscape and habitat protection including Policies CP13 (Our Natural Resources) and NR3 (Biodiversity, protected Species & their Habitats). However, some concern was expressed</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>over the all-embracing approach in that, there is also subsequent weakness in terms of a slight, but significant, loss of clarity on the absolute protection of the AONB landscape that is afforded under the policies. It was stated that this did not necessarily reflect the status afforded to AONBs in the NPPF (paras 115 & 116).</p> <p>The comment from the AONB JC stated that: "As currently drafted, the Local Plan affords protection to the AONB, but this is combined with wider issues and other areas in Core Policy 13 – Our Natural Resources and Policy NR3 – Biodiversity, Protected Species and their Habitats. This means that the absolute value of offering protection to the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB for its own sake is not explicitly stated.</p> <p>In order to add this clarity and therefore, to ensure that the Local Plan fully reflects the provisions of the NPPF, it is suggested that a sub-paragraph is added either to CP13 or to NR3, or that a new NR policy, solely applying to the AONB, is added. The following wording could be considered in each instance.</p> <p>"Within the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and in adjoining or nearby locations, where there is a demonstrable impact on the setting of the AONB, development will only be permitted where proposals accord with Green Belt policy and are compatible with the conservation of the landscape and scenic beauty of the area. Where development is</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>acceptable it shall be of the highest standards of design in sympathy with the architectural and landscape characteristics of the area".</p> <p>"Most of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies within adjoining Districts, but the eastern edge lies within Lichfield District. The AONB makes a unique contribution to the character of the District and special control is required in order to ensure that its visual qualities and inherent landscape value are maintained, in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 115 & 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework."</p> <p>This wording is in part derived from the existing (1998) Local Plan Policy NA1, which is specific to the AONB, to ensure consistency but it is also updated to reflect the provisions in the NPPF and the CROW Act."</p> <p>However, in recognition of the overall quality and strength of the Strategy Document, these points were not pursued through to objection.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The development and recreational pressures on the AONB remain substantial, indeed they may have grown in the last 5 years, since the Local Plan Strategy Document was conceived in 2011/12. Considered alongside the specific protection which is afforded to National Parks and AONBs in the NPPF, I consider that this justifies specific policy coverage for the Cannock Chase AONB, provided that this would not undermine (which it should not) the existing policy coverage for</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>environment, landscape and habitats in the adopted Strategy Document.</p> <p>It is requested, therefore, that either Saved Policy NA.1. is maintained, subject to the agreement of the Secretary of State. Alternatively, if this is legally and/or practically possible, could a specific AONB policy, based on the wording suggest in 2012 and outlined above, be included in the emerging Allocations Document?</p>

Other

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
Planning Inspectorate	Planning appeal - Land adjacent Shenley Cottage, Main Road Little Haywood Stafford ST18 0TR APP/Y3425/W/16/3149840	4/7/16	We draw your attention to the submission which we made on the application (15/22731/OUT) in September 2015 (and on the earlier application - 14/20477/OUT). We remain of the opinion that, notwithstanding the appeal decision on the refusal of planning permission for the earlier scheme, weight should be given to AONB interests (and to matters relating to the Special Area of Conservation). Further in this respect, we believe that this appeal should now consider the increased weight which can be given to the Colwich Neighbourhood Plan, for which the Examiner's report was issued in March 2016. In that Plan, the tight settlement boundaries around Great and Little Haywood and the proposed designation of Local Green Spaces

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>(especially LGS 6 - which includes the appeal site) support of AONB objectives, in that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - they provide opportunities for walking and outdoor recreation which can take pressure from the AONB, - they help to maintain a rural setting around the edges of the AONB, - they include viewpoints from which the AONB can be seen.
West Midlands Interchange	Informal consultation	25/7/16	<p>Site location: To the east and north-east, the land rises to 110m at the AONB Boundary at Hatherton Hall, and further east to 133m at the foot of Shoal Hill and to 175m on Shoal Hill itself.</p> <p>The site is around 2.5 km from the AONB boundary and 3.5 km from higher land on Shoal Hill. This is some distance but the topography means that the extensive roofs of the warehouses units (and possibly stacked container units) are likely to be visible from Shoal Hill. We note that there is reference to the AONB Management plan (paras. 7.56 & 57 - Environmental Report) and the Consultation Overview Report states: "4.26 At this early stage of the project it is anticipated that there would be landscape and visual effects upon the landscape character and features of the site (including the canal corridor and woodland, trees and hedgerows), upon the landscape character of the wider area and upon residents and users with views towards the site. Throughout the design and EIA process any potential effects will be more fully investigated and appraised in order to inform the evolving scheme and to</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>adopt specific mitigation measures, where deemed appropriate. 4.27 Opportunities for new landscape and green infrastructure provision will be explored as part of the overall development proposal.”</p> <p>However, it is felt the current analysis is too inward looking and that more and earlier consideration should be given to on-site and off-site measures to reduce the environmental and landscape impact of the scheme on the AONB. The following measures could be considered.</p> <p>1 - Restrictions on the heights of buildings and stacked containers to the minimum necessary for the reasonable commercial operation of a facility such as this.</p> <p>2 - A requirement for the colour of roofing materials to be muted, avoiding reflective surfaces which might cause the roofscape of the interchange to be visible from the AONB.</p> <p>3 - A commitment that HGV traffic using the facility is directed to use only the strategic highway network and that there will be no increase in HGV traffic on roads within the AONB.</p> <p>4 - A requirement or a wider landscape assessment of the proposed development, including views from key points within the AONB (e.g. on Shoal Hill Common).</p> <p>5 - Related to the findings of (3) above, proposals for strategic (on-site and off-site) landscaping, including advance planting should be developed and consulted upon prior to the submission of formal proposals to the Planning Inspectorate.</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
Longdon Parish Council	Longdon Neighbourhood Plan	23/08/2016	<p>P8 Setting the Scene -the inclusion of the following text is a little confusing - The Parish adjoins Cannock Chase, a biologically and historically important landscape that can be traced back thousands of years – long before it became known as a royal hunting area. It is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).</p> <p>1 This gives the impression that the parish does not include the AONB, whereas Gentleshaw, Beaudesert Old Park and Upper Longdon are all within the designated AONB area and the adjoining areas immediately to the east are important to the setting of the AONB.</p> <p>2 It is correct that part of the AONB includes a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) but the reference to the SAC is probably not necessary, because the area covered by the NP does not include any of it.</p> <p>P10 The Vision and Objective 2– the reference to the value placed on and importance of the AONB is welcomed.</p> <p>1 It might be helpful to include a map to show the extent of the AONB in the NP area (alongside the SAC, SSSI and Forest of Mercia, should you wish). This could be derived from the Map in Appendix 1 of the Evidence Base document, but noting that the AONB is a landscape designation rather than a Biodiversity site</p> <p>P14 The Policies</p> <p>1 See comments on P8, above, the inclusion of the following text may be confusing - The Parish adjoins Cannock Chase, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>(AONB) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).</p> <p>2 The reference to the equine sector – The recent ‘horsification’ of the area (with paddocks becoming more prevalent), has begun to replace the more traditional farming patterns, to meet the needs of the equine industry, or the leisure pursuits of local horse riders. Is important and from an AONB perspective it is important to encourage good practice (see leaflet Horse Sense in the AONB http://www.cannock-chase.co.uk/assets/downloads/Cannock.AONB.Horse.pdf (In addition see comments on P26, below, the inclusion of a specific policy or clause in an existing policy, to cover instances where planning permission is needed for equine related development would be welcomed).</p> <p>P19 – Landscape & Built Environment - Policies 1 to 4.</p> <p>1 These are welcomed, but it is felt that the importance of the landscape could be given greater emphasis, for example, through a reference to the need to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB (and its setting) in accordance with para. 115 of the NPPF. Reference could also be made to the need to “to meet the need for quiet enjoyment of the countryside” which is one of the stated purposes of AONBs. The Countryside & Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 places a duty on all public bodies, from parish and community councils to public utility companies, to have regard for the purposes of the AONB.</p> <p>P22 Movement Policies (9 Improving Access)</p> <p>1 This policy is supported, but it is suggested that</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>reference could also be made to the need to maintain and enhance pedestrian and cycle access to the countryside, including the AONB, in order to minimise the use of private cars.</p> <p>P24 Community Facilities and Leisure Policies The following reference to the AONB is welcomed. Outdoor recreation Longdon Parish is blessed in its location. It is part of a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which provides a wealth of opportunities for walking, horse riding and generally enjoying a beautiful landscape.</p> <p>As an observation, although this is not strictly speaking an AONB matter, it is not possible to use the term "Presumption against" (Policy 12), unless this is with reference to the Green Belt</p> <p>P26 Rural economy and Infrastructure Policies The analysis is sound, with the reference to changing agriculture and the emergence of equine related development and the polices are welcomed. However, it is suggested that Policy 16 could include an additional clause relating to the landscape impact of changes in agriculture, including equine related development and the need for this to meet AONB (and Green Belt) requirements such that the landscape and scenic beauty of the designated area is conserved, in accordance with the NPPF.</p> <p>P28 Delivery The Cannock Chase AONB Partnership would be happy to be mentioned as a possible implementation partner.</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			In addition, the reference to a project "Creation and maintenance of public footpaths and bridleways.", is welcomed.
Staffordshire County Council	Proposed 40mph Speed Limit on Bower Lane / Stafford Brook Road,	30/08/2016	Cannock Chase AONB Partnership supports the speed reduction proposal which will support pedestrian and cycle access to/within the AONB. Traffic management will enable the quiet enjoyment of the AONB to an increased extent, in support the purpose of the AONB as referred to in the CRoW Act 2000. There is a public footpath which emerges onto Stafford Brook Road (SBR) from Etchinghill and two others that leave SBR 200 metres south west and (at more distance) into the quarry site.
Hednesford Town Council	Draft Hednesford Neighbourhood Plan	23/08/2016	<p>I would like to make the following comments on the Draft Hednesford Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of the Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee. I commented originally in August 2014 on the consultation by Cannock Chase Council concerning the designation of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, an extract from my letter at that time is appended to this letter for information.</p> <p>The Town Council and others involved in the Hednesford Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) are to be commended, especially in relation to the comprehensive consultation exercise, including the informative and engaging video, which is being undertaken.</p> <p>As far as the content of the HNP is concerned, it is noted that only a small part of the AONB (the triangular</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>area of woodland from Broadhurst Green to Pye Green) is within the HNP area, however, the following issues are important from an AONB perspective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the needs to consider the setting of the AONB, around Pye Green and along Rawsley Road, - the need for good quality pedestrian/cycle access into the countryside, including the AONB - the way in which Hednesford Hills plays a complementary role to the AONB , - the quality of any development that takes place adjoining the AONB, the way in which any development impacts on the SAC and, - what local people think about the AONB and how they use it (although this is not strictly a land use planning matter). <p>The way in which the HNP avoids duplication of the Policies (for the SAC, Hednesford Hills and the AONB), in the adopted Cannock Chase Local Plan is supported as a sound approach. It is also acknowledged that the AONB is referred to in Section 10 (Reference Sources). However, I feel that there could be a reference to the AONB at earlier points in the document, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On page 2 (why have the HNP) an additional clause, "maintaining the landscape and scenic

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>beauty and the heathland habitats, of Cannock Chase AONB (and its setting) and of the Hednesford Hills SSSI” could be considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On page 4 - timeline – consider adding “1958 Designation of Cannock Chase AONB. <p>On pages 9 & 10 (Key Issues & Opportunities), Point 2, including the encouragement of tourist accommodation in the town centre, is supported, as is Point D, including the identification and protection of a Greenspace Network and the general commitment to good quality design which reflects local character.</p> <p>In terms of the Policies, the general intent of the Plan is supported and the following policies are specifically welcome from an AONB perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open Space Policy OC1 - this is complementary to AONB and the green network could help sustainable access to the designated area. - Industrial/Business Parks - EMP 1, because the improvement of the Rugeley Road/Station Road area would benefit the setting of the AONB. <p>In Appendix 3, the inclusion of the AONB Partnership as a Consultation Body would be welcomed.</p> <p>In Section 10 (References/Sources):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The inclusion of the AONB Management Plan

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>2014-19, would be welcomed.</p> <p>2 The reference to Local Plan Policies covering the AONB (C14), SAC (CP13) and Hednesford Hills (CP12) and the cross reference to the AONB coverage on the CCC LP Proposals Map is welcomed.</p> <p>3 The reference to the proposed footpath/cycleway on the route of the old mineral railway north of Rawnsley Road (planned to link Hednesford with Rawnsley, Prospect Village and Hednesford - CP10) is supported.</p> <p>4 There could be a reference to the AONB designation in "About Hednesford" – e.g. <i>"Cannock Chase was designated as an AONB in 1958 because of its beautiful landscape, its wildlife and its history. Cannock Chase is the largest surviving area of lowland heathland in the Midlands. Lowland heath is an internationally scarce and threatened wildlife habitat."</i></p> <p>The only matter of concern that I have about the HNP policies relates to Policy BE 1, in which it is proposed to identify the Communication Tower and Water Tower at Pye Green as locally listed buildings/structures (Nos. 1 and 2). From the point of view of the statutory purpose of the AONB: <i>"the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area"</i> (as set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) and</p>

Local Authority	Application / Location	Comments submitted	Summary of Comments
			<p>the need to "<i>conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the area</i>" (Paragraph 115 of the NPPF), there could be benefit in the removal of these structures and the naturalization of the sites, should the facilities be no longer operationally necessary. However, in this instance the views of the local community would be respected and the AONB Joint Committee would not object to the policy and the local listing of these two structures at the Submission/Examination stage of the HNP (under Regulation 16), if it is supported by a clear majority of the local people who respond to the Draft Plan and through the comments made by consultees, including Natural England, Staffordshire County Council and Cannock Chase Council.</p> <p>I would like to congratulate you again on the production of the Draft Plan and I look forward to keeping in touch with the process as it moves through submission, examination and referendum. In the meantime, please let me know if you need any further information on the AONB or if you have any questions about the points raised in this consultation response.</p>

