



**Cannock Chase AONB Partnership
Meeting of the Joint Committee**

**Thursday 5th December 2019 at 2pm
The Rudyard Suite, Staffordshire Place 1, Stafford, ST16 2DH
For directions [click here](#)**

PLEASE NOTE NEW VENUE

Agenda

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8	AONB Chairmen’s Annual Conference, 28 November 2019 Verbal update by the Chair of the AONB Joint Committee	-
9	Protected Landscapes Review Report of the AONB Development Officer	60

10	Any other business	-
11	Date, time and venue of next meeting	-
<p>Exclusion of the Public and Press The Chairman to move: "That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the local Government Act 1972 (as amended) indicated below"</p> <p>Part Two (All reports in this section are exempt)</p>		
12	AONB communications review and strategy Presentation by Cristian Marcucci, Staffordshire County Council Communications Team, followed by discussion.	-

**Cannock Chase AONB Partnership
Annual General Meeting of the Joint Committee
25th July 2019 at 2pm
Trentham Suite, Staffordshire Place 1, Stafford**

Minutes

Name	Representing
Councillor Frances Beatty (FB) Chairperson	Stafford Borough Council
Councillor John Preece (JP)	Cannock Chase Council
Councillor Brian Cox (BC)	South Staffordshire Council
Councillor Len Bates (LB)	South Staffordshire Council
Cllr Mark Winnington	Staffordshire County Council (part of meeting)

Officers

Sarah Bentley (SB)	Staffordshire County Council
Kelly Harris (KH)	South Staffordshire Council
John Broad (JB)	Treasurer to the Committee, Staffordshire County Council
Glenn Watson (GW)	Cannock Chase Council
Janene Cox (JC)	Commissioner for Culture and Communities, Staffs County Council
Lee Bickerton (LB)	Senior Finance Business Partner
Richard Harris (RH)	Cannock Chase AONB officer
Julia Banbury (JB)	Cannock Chase AONB officer
Bill Waller (BW)	Stafford Borough Council

Advisers

Cllr Pat Ansell (PA)	Staffordshire Parish Councils Association
June Jukes MBE (JJ)	Friends of Cannock Chase

Agenda Item No.	Description	Action
1.	JR, Honorary Secretary to the Joint Committee introduced the election of the Chair and Vice Chair: FB nominated as Chair, by CP, and this was seconded by LB JP nominated Vice Chair nominated by FB, seconded by BC Elections supported by all voting members for the forthcoming year.	

Agenda Item No.	Description	Action
2	<p>Apologies for Absence Cllr Lax (Lichfield District Council)</p> <p>Hazel McDowell (Natural England) Ashley Baldwin (Lichfield District Council), Sam Caraway (National Trust), Mike Shurmur (RSPB), Kezia Taylor (Historic England)</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising</p> <p>Minutes agreed and signed off as an accurate record.</p>	
4.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>None</p>	
5.	<p>Work Programmes and Task and Finish Group Updates:</p> <p>Land Management Officer's Work: Verbal update by RH</p> <p><u>Heathland restoration feasibility study.</u> Brief in development. This will examine potential locations, potential sources of money and source contractors.</p> <p><u>Local Wildlife Sites Survey.</u> Contract tendered and underway. Fieldwork is progressing well with the re-survey of the selection of LWSs within the Cannock Chase AONB. Initial findings suggest there are a number of opportunities to enhance and restore a range of sites supporting priority habitat types. Next meeting: 31st July.</p> <p><u>Chase Through Time legacy project.</u> Brief in development. This will assess the significance of heritage assets in and in the vicinity of the AONB. A second phase is the subsequent development of a Project Plan to inform and support a funding bid for a Chase Through Time legacy project focussing on the sustainable management, interpretation of, and public access to, these heritage assets, including parkland.</p> <p>Chase through Time is carrying out geophysics surveys at Castle Ring.</p> <p><u>Crayfish survey:</u> Tender to go out imminently.</p> <p><u>Nightjar survey</u> Survey seems to be showing an excellent year for nightjar. National Trust coming on board by extending survey to Satnall Hills.</p>	

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	<p><u>Bat survey</u> – brief in development.</p> <p><u>Survey of geological sites</u> to be carried out by GeoConservation Staffs led by Dr Ian Stimpson, Senior Lecturer in Geophysics at Keele University.</p> <p><u>Additional work:</u> Gentleshaw Common - Into the Future, under National Grid's (NG) Landscape Enhancement Initiative. The AONB have secured £192,221 for habitat management works at Gentleshaw Common over a 6 year period, to be managed by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. Draft Grant Funding Agreement being drawn up by SCC Legal for the transfer of funds.</p> <p>FB requested asked, if the start date for work was delayed by legal formalities, whether the timescale for claims could be delayed.</p> <p>Historic Environment Task & Finish Group</p> <p>Last meeting held in 28th March, with next set for Monday 29th July.</p> <p><u>Condition monitoring of scheduled monuments</u> – Historic England (HE) is stretched on resources, so consider a Volunteer programme of monitoring. HE to produce proforma monitoring sheets. This part of the project could tie into the State of AONB reports every 5 years. Historic England to provide training for volunteers. Volunteer drive needed, particularly to get younger people involved.</p> <p>Reported on the unveiling of the commemorative panel for New Zealand Rifle Brigade outside the Great War Hut on the 23rd May, paid for by the New Zealand High Commission.</p> <p>Land Management Task & Finish Group</p> <p>RSPB update on Cemex - RSPB bid was unsuccessful, and Cemex remain owners. There are concerns regarding management of the site, and Natural England are contacting Cemex regarding its condition.</p> <p><u>Invasive species:</u> No funding currently allocated to this project. Partners currently contributing to mapping key</p>	<p>RH to get written confirmation from NG</p>

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	<p>invasive species based on current knowledge to provide an initial baseline. This will help develop thinking on strategy for tackling invasive species collaboratively across the landscape. Consider citizen science project for ongoing monitoring of invasive species for appropriate species. This would add to knowledge base plus help raise awareness.</p> <p><u>AONB Sustainable Development fund:</u></p> <p>Some funding is still available so there will be a second call for expressions of interest later in the year. Recently approved projects include: Eco Arts Trail at Beaudesert Park Farm, engaging people with mental health issues Bird boxes for target species Information boards.</p> <p>PA raised a query related to an SDF application by Cannock Wood Parish Council.</p> <p>JP recommended that the Parish Council raise issues of antisocial behaviour with Staffordshire Police's Community Trigger</p> <p>Landscape and Planning Officer's work update: Verbal update by JB</p> <p>Update on Planning Consultations and work of Trent Sow Parklands Group will be covered in Item 9 of the Agenda.</p> <p>Landscape and Planning T& F Group – last meeting 24th July <u>Planning Protocol:</u> Updated Planning Protocol has now been substantially agreed, with only minor changes in wording for clarity. LPA officers agreed a more streamlined approach to responses, particularly those where there was no objection or conditional objection. In future the Planning Report to Joint Committee will be similarly simplified.</p>	

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	<p><u>Design Guidance:</u> Draft consultant's brief was discussed at T&F Group. Agreed to commission work on buildings characterisation to provide the foundation for the guidance. Guidance will include topics such as scale, siting, design, materials and contributing to the landscape and natural beauty of the AONB.</p> <p><u>Views and Setting:</u> T&F Group sought development of a draft brief to include examination of visibility, identification and description of key views and description of the character of the setting. Guidance will highlight issues and provide principles of minimising impact.</p> <p>FB Asked what assurance there was that the LPAs will make best use of these documents to inform decisions.</p> <p>GW responded that there were good working relationships between the Planning teams and the AONB. Changes in the Planning Protocol, and the Guidance Documents will be disseminated to teams.</p> <p>JB reported that development of Guidance on Views and Setting is being welcomed by the LPAs to help inform their Local Plan preparation.</p> <p>Other work:</p> <p><u>Undergrounding</u> (undergrounding of low voltage overhead power lines through Western Power's Protected Landscape Enhancement Initiative): Shugborough Park: National Trust will be undertaking trenching and installing ducting provided by in Western Power October. Western Power to follow on with overhead removal and new supply commencing November 2019.</p> <p>White House to Moors Gorse: Western Power will commence work in mid-September for 16 weeks. Mostly working adjacent to the highway on Marquis Drive or on Forestry England's estate. Work will inevitably cause some minor inconvenience close to Marquis Drive Visitor Centre. There will be a Press</p>	

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	<p>Release explaining the funding and benefits of the project.</p> <p><u>Fixed Point Photography:</u> Volunteers had been contacted and thanked for their continued valuable support. Steve Welch has reported that not all locations were photographed in February. A Training Morning has been arranged on 2nd September at Beaudesert Park Farm. Steve Welch has offered to lead training on Fixed Point Photography techniques. He also offered to seek potential new volunteers via his contacts on social media, and there will be a press release.</p> <p>Visitor Management T&F Group</p> <p>KH reported that there has been no recent meeting of the group as the next T&F Group meeting has been agreed to be once the Car Parking Strategy and Site User Strategy are available for discussion. Draft Strategies prepared by the SAC Partnership are being reviewed by SAC partners and a workshop was held last week to provide initial feedback to the consultants. The SAC Partnership now need to consider comments received and the next steps for engagement with wider AONB partners, and this will be the focus of the SAC Partnership officers working group w/c 29 July 2019, which the AONB team are invited to.</p> <p>The Joint Committee requested that KH reports back to the SAC group that they are concerned at the lack of engagement with the AONB Joint Committee and consultation with wider audiences and hopes that agreement can be reached soon on engagement processes. Concern was raised by FB that full engagement is needed on both draft strategies, given how important they are to all partners involved in the AONB. JC also requested confirmation that due regard had been had to the correct constitutional processes of each partner authority, given the County will need Cabinet sign off. There are also concerns that the strategies need to adequately consider the</p>	<p>JB – to circulate details of the Training day to JC members for wider circulation to potentially interested parties.</p>

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	<p>Commonwealth Games, in view of the current incomplete information.</p> <p>KH requested to report back to AONB Joint Committee on outcomes of SAC Partnership officer group meeting.</p>	
6	<p>Financial Report</p> <p>IB presented the Financial Report. There is a typing correction in Item 6 of the Paper circulated. This should read 'The 2019/2020 budget for core and Project costs is £190,429'.</p> <p>DEFRA has allowed last year's underspend to be carried forward to kick start delivery of work identified in the Management Plan.</p> <p>MW requested clarification whether the reserves cover redundancy costs. SB confirmed this is the case.</p> <p>FB asked for clarity on the predicted slight underspend. SB confirmed that the underspend was due to a slight delay in recruitment. DEFRA is taking a pragmatic approach to officer's work targets, preferring to agree an achievable workload with a slight underspend rather than over-burdening the unit.</p> <p>Decision: Joint Committee accepted the Report and welcomed the work being done by officers to address last year's underspend during the current financial year.</p>	
7.	<p>Staffing Update</p> <p>SB reported that the AONB Development Officer had been recruited. Ian Marshall (IM) will start work on 5th August 2019. He has a background working in Environmental Management and has recently been working for the National Association of AONBs, so is well acquainted with the work of and issues facing AONBs at this time.</p> <p>IM's work programme will include:</p>	

Agenda Item No.	Description	Action
	<p>developing the CIO proposals for Joint Committee to consider;</p> <p>lead on Visitor Management;</p> <p>linking with the SAC Partnership;</p> <p>strategic overview leading business planning and work planning for the group.</p>	
8.	<p>Grazing -</p> <p>SB gave a presentation and update on proposals for grazing on Cannock Chase Country Park, owned by SCC.</p> <p>Heath is becoming very rare in the UK. Cannock Chase is the largest remaining heath in the West Midlands, so it is crucial for wildlife to improve its condition.</p> <p>90% of Cannock Chase Country Park is a Special Area for Conservation (SAC), and the County Council has a legal obligation to bring it into favourable condition.</p> <p>A site management review in 2016 assessed existing management techniques of mechanical, herbicide and controlled burning, and these were found not to be effective enough to bring the site into favourable condition. Working with stakeholders and examining evidence from elsewhere it was concluded that reintroducing low intensity grazing (grazing ceased on the Chase after the First World War) would be the best means of habitat improvement, in combination with existing methods.</p> <p>Low intensity cattle grazing is critical to improving species diversity on the heathland as cattle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> graze out competitive species; help to create bare ground and micro-habitats for more wildlife to thrive; very good for rare species; help to control bracken <p>Wider public engagement has raised concerns around access, fencing and efficacy.</p>	<p>JP left the meeting but requested a copy of the Report as it is relevant elsewhere in CCDC</p>

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	<p>SCC are developing a pilot scheme at Moors Gorse. Six cattle will be grazed on a 28 hectare. There are no rights of way across the site, but there will be open access via gates. During the pilot invisible fencing will be tested to reduce the need for permanent fencing in some areas. SCC would like develop grazing in further phases, and SCC will continue with other management.</p> <p>There will be more discussion with communities and user groups and there remain issues to be resolved. SCC has already given assurances that only non-breeding animals will be used, in low numbers. There will be un-grazed areas near to residential and key visitor hubs. There will be different compartments so that it will be possible to avoid encounters with cattle, and there will be an information system on where the cattle are.</p> <p>Proposals to graze the Country Park will need Secretary of State approval and requires an independent decision by the Planning Inspectorate.</p> <p>LB commented on the 'Connecting Cannock Chase' Project between the Forestry Commission on SWT that had low level grazing that mimicked traditional grazing and cutting of material for bedding.</p> <p>RH mentioned that National Trust will be reintroducing grazing on some of their land in the Sherbrook Valley, targeted at enhancing habitat for Pearl Bordered Fritillary.</p> <p>Other Committee members cited examples of grazing at Hednesford Hills and Hazelslade.</p> <p>SB responded to a query around whether other species could be used, that conservation grazing can use goats, ponies, or sheep – and that there had been a Cannock Chase grey faced sheep, but this was now extinct.</p>	

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	<p>SB mentioned that there is a petition against the grazing titled 'Saving Cannock Chase', and the Joint Committee may be asked for a formal view on the proposals in the future.</p>	
9.	<p>Planning matters in the AONB</p> <p>Report of the AONB Landscape Planning Officer was noted.</p> <p>HS2</p> <p>JB provided a verbal update on progress of the Trent Sow Parklands Group and the recent meeting of the group. Design Principles have been broadly agreed as has a format for presenting the Detailed Design Principles. There was a stakeholder engagement event in July for Parish Council and local authority elected members.</p> <p>The deadline for production of the Detailed Design Principles is December 2019. This is a requirement by HS2 in order to inform to their design programme. The Environmental Enhancement Plan is currently programmed for completion by April 2020, when it will be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval.</p> <p>BW confirmed that SBC is a 'Qualifying Authority' for the purposes of the HS2 Bill, and therefore will have a wider range of controls over what needs to be approved after Royal Assent.</p>	
10.	<p>Annual Conference</p> <p>Decision Additional budget agreed.</p> <p>Decision: Agreed that the theme would be Conserving Heathland. Members agreed that heathland encapsulates the key special quality of the AONB and this topic will celebrate this and bring its conservation to the fore.</p> <p>JC suggested a good keynote speaker would set the context and bring enthusiasm to the discussions.</p>	
11.	National Conference	

Agenda Item No.	Description	Action
	<p>The report from Officers was noted.</p> <p>A draft of the Colchester Declaration was put forward at the Conference. Set against a backdrop of the climate and biodiversity emergency this raises up the need for nature recovery across the AONBs. Signing up to this would set Cannock Chase AONB in the National Framework.</p> <p>Themes within the Colchester Declaration have been highlighted in the recently released Interim Findings of the Glover Review. A key proposal is '<i>AONBs should be strengthened, with increased funding, new purposes and a greater voice on development.</i>'</p> <p>Two National events to be involved in: 70@70 to highlight 70 examples of nature recovery work in AONBs; and Landscapes For Life (21 – 29 September) is a week of events to help people reconnect with nature by enjoying and being inspired by the UK's AONBs, which is something to consider for the future.</p> <p>JC suggested involvement this year through social media and linking with 365 Great Things about Staffordshire</p>	<p>Circulate draft Colchester Declaration and links to Interim Findings of Glover Review</p>
12.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>SB reported that the Financial Audit Report had been received.</p>	
13.	<p>Date and time of next meeting</p> <p>Next meeting: TBC</p>	

11/25/2019

Cannock Chase AONB Partnership

Business Plan 2019-21

Progress for Year 1 and outline work plan for Year 2



Ian Marshall
CANNOCK CHASE AONB UNIT

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Cannock Chase AONB Partnership brings together local authorities, statutory agencies, voluntary and community bodies to manage the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 1.2. The primary purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. In pursuing this primary purpose, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment. Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.
- 1.3. The Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019-24 sets out the vision for the AONB and the policies and actions required over the next five years to work towards that vision. The Management Plan provides a framework for everyone operating in the AONB and includes actions that many organisations may be involved in delivering. Delivery is supported through Task and Finish Groups covering the Historic Environment, Land Management & Biodiversity, Landscape & Planning and Visitor Management.
- 1.4. A two year business plan gives details of how the AONB Partnership itself, notably through its dedicated staff team, will operate to deliver its commitments in the AONB Management Plan during 2019-2021.
- 1.5. The purpose of this report is to set out the progress achieved against planned activity in Year 1 (2019-2020) of the business plan, and propose an outline work plan for Year 2 (2020-2021) that will be worked up and brought back to the Joint Committee for approval in March 2020.

2. Core Activity

- 2.1. The following table outlines progress achieved during 2019-20 against core activities identified in the Business Plan, and our aspirations for 2020-21.
 - Activities are referenced against the relevant action number contained within the AONB Management Plan, where appropriate.
 - New activities not previously identified in the Business Plan are highlighted yellow.
 - Activities funded in 2019/20 through the AONB underspend are indicated with red font and a double Asterix **

- Activities proposed for 2020/21 for which costs have not yet been identified are highlighted blue.
- Activities supported through Tasks and Finish Groups are indicated (HE – Historic Environment, LM – Land Management & Biodiversity, LP – Landscape & Planning, VM – Visitor Management)

Activity	Ref	2019/20 progress to date	2020/21 outline work plan	Task & Finish Group
Organising and supporting partnership meetings				
Quarterly meetings of the Joint Committee and Officers Working Group		Meetings have taken place throughout the year.	Ongoing	
Organise and coordinate Task and Finish Group meetings, currently: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape & Planning (LPO) • Land Management (LMO) • Historic Environment (LMO) • Visitor Management (DM) 		All task and finish groups have met throughout the year, except for the CIO development group which has yet to be established.	Ongoing. Establish CIO development group.	
Organise and run the Annual AONB Conference	A7	Held on 4 October 2019 at Brocton Hall Golf Club. 75 delegates, with very positive feedback.	Scheduled for October 2020	
NAAONB activity				
Contribute to the activities of the NAAONB including annual conference and meetings as appropriate		<p>Attended NAAONB Annual conference in July 2019.</p> <p>Attended AONB Chairmen’s conference 29 November 2019.</p> <p>Participation in Colchester Declaration Nature Recovery Steering Group.</p> <p>Supporting NAAONB bid to Arts Council to appoint consultant to advise how</p>	<p>Attend NAAONB Annual conference in July 2020.</p> <p>Participate in new West Midlands Protected Landscapes Group.</p> <p>Participate in Colchester Declaration Nature Recovery Steering Group.</p> <p>Assess findings and explore need for future actions.</p>	

		AONBs embed the arts into their management plans.		
Monitoring delivery				
Monitor progress with the management plan and report to the JC		Progress reported against Business Plan	Ongoing	
Produce an annual report on AONB activity		Activity due Q4 2019-20	Activity due Q4 2020-21	
Report to the NAAONB performance statistics for Cannock Chase AONB against Key Performance Indicators		Partial figures for 2018-19 submitted in August 2019. Performance management recording framework to be set up for capturing figures.	Figures for 2019-20 to be submitted in August 2020.	
Project development and fundraising				
Develop projects to deliver AONB management plan priorities		Several projects are being progressed during 2019-21, utilising AONB underspend.	Projects to be identified and progressed through core budget.	All groups
Undertake research and development work for next phase of heritage project for the AONB	B9	Commission in preparation for a follow-up project to assess the data generated from this phase. This will celebrate the AONB's cultural heritage with local communities and involve them in historic environment citizen science activities – Due to report in February 2020.	Assess findings and explore external funding opportunities for next stage	HE
Undertake research and development work to develop natural environment enhancement project in the AONB		Consider requirements for the preparation of a nature recovery plan for Cannock Chase AONB, including a spatial map for nature recovery, as our contribution to the AONB family's Colchester Declaration.	Prepare a Nature Recovery Plan for Cannock Chase AONB, with key stakeholders	LM

Secure external funding to support project delivery		In 2019-20 all projects are being funded through the Cannock Chase underspend	External funding opportunities to be pursued as necessary to support project delivery	All groups
Heathland restoration feasibility evaluation	B7	Commission in preparation for feasibility evaluation of a land exchange to return up to 650 has of the public forest estate to heathland, if an equivalent area of land for compensation planting can be found – due to report March 2020.	Further activity awaiting consideration of conclusions and recommendations from feasibility evaluation.	LM
Conserve and enhance key species and habitats	A2	Allocation of National Grid mitigation grant of £190,000 to Staffordshire Wildlife Trust for Gentleshaw Common SSSI and nature reserve	Monitor agreement	LM
Increase awareness and appreciation of Local Geological sites	B19	Keele University commissioned to carry out condition assessment of Local Geological Sites.	Need for further activity awaiting outcomes of condition assessment.	LM
Deer management strategy and action plan	B5	Deer impact assessment completed. Deer census completed. Additional deer deterrents installed along Penkridge Road.	Future management strategy to be determined.	
CIO development				
Explore development of a charitable incorporated organisation to support AONB delivery, including functions, relationship to partnership, how it would work, resourcing etc.	A4	Legal advice received on the pros and cons of a CIO. Further activity planned for Q4 2019-20.		
Establishment of CIO including recruitment of trustees etc. as agreed by Partnership	A4	Activity awaiting conclusion of exploration above.	Establish CIO.	

Raising awareness of the AONB				
Promote new AONB website, and further develop project sections	A11	New Cannock Chase AONB website went live on 31 October 2019. AONB Unit received web CMS training on 14 November.	Ongoing development of website	VM
Raising awareness of AONB activity via press / media, partner websites, talks and events – minimum 4 events per annum	A11	News updates feature on new website.	Further activity awaiting Communications strategy recommendations	VM
AONB communications review and strategy	A8, A9, A11	Staffordshire County Council commission to review current communication's procedures, activities and future requirements – due to report Nov/Dec 2010. Development of a place brand for Cannock Chase.	Further activity awaiting Communications strategy recommendations	VM
Community involvement				
Support further development of Love Cannock Chase initiative to engage communities and businesses in the management and celebration of the AONB	B11	Engagement framework prepared by Cannock Chase Healthy Lifestyles and AONB Unit. Development of online e-learning modules for different target audiences (businesses, volunteers and public bodies)	Welcome to Cannock Chase leaflet Explore for a day leaflet	VM
Explore the development of an AONB quality mark for businesses	B14	Activity planned for Q4 2019-20. Investigate examples from protected	Locator logos for businesses.	VM

		landscapes elsewhere, and assess how it would work, resource implications etc	Further activity awaiting outcome of investigations in 2019-20.	
Liaison with partners and stakeholders				
Liaise with landowners, local authorities and other partners to facilitate engagement in AONB activity	B2, A12, A5, B3	Relationships are being renewed now that the AONB Unit is in post.	Ongoing	
Provision of landscape planning advice				
Review AONB planning protocol		Planning protocol drafted and agreed by all local authorities – ready for approval by Joint Committee	Implement procedures and monitor effectiveness	LP
Input to planning policy and development management		Ongoing	Ongoing	
Develop design guidance for the AONB	A1	Commission underway to develop building design guidance – due to report March 2020	Promote, use and disseminate guidance document. Seek adoption by local planning authorities	LP
Develop AONB guidance on views and the AONB setting	A15	Commission underway to develop guidance on views and the AONB setting – due to report March 2020	Promote, use and disseminate guidance document. Seek adoption by local planning authorities	LP
Review current guidance on highways and horsiculture to determine how to take forward	B1	Consideration being given to update the AONB Highways Design Guide 2005 through preparation of shorter guidance document.	Promote, use and disseminate guidance document. Seek adoption by local planning authorities	LP
Input to HS2 landscape group and Commonwealth Games to minimise negative impacts and maximise benefits to the AONB	B8	Input into HS2 detailed design principles and environmental enhancement schemes. Attendance at Commonwealth Games stakeholder workshop November 2019.	Ongoing input	LP
Undergrounding				

Work with statutory undertakers to explore opportunities for undergrounding powerlines in the AONB		Between September – December 2019 approximately 3.5 kilometres of overhead electricity lines from White House to Moors Gorse are being removed and placed underground.	In 2020 a further kilometre of overhead lines at Shugborough Estate will be removed to restore the historic character of this iconic Grade I listed park. Pursue further opportunities as they arise.	
Monitoring landscape condition				
Coordinate fixed point photography monitoring		Training workshop with 20 volunteers held on 2 September 2019. All fixed point photography records being transferred onto new AONB website	Ongoing	
Assess condition of local wildlife sites in the AONB	A2	Commission in progress with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust – due to report March 2020	Further activity to enhance and restore sites pending findings of survey	LM
Undertake targeted surveys of flagship and indicator species	A2	Crayfish survey commissioned – due to report March 2020. First phase of Nightjar survey carried out in 2019. Survey of bats, invertebrates and long-eared owl pending.	Nightjar survey Phase two. Survey of bats, invertebrates and long-eared owl if carried over from 2019-20.	LM
Monitor condition of SAMs in the AONB – Historic England to support	B16	Discussions underway with Historic England and Staffordshire County Council’s Historic Environment Team to develop a strategy to assess the condition of the seven scheduled	Volunteers will then put this training into practice, providing Historic England with up-to-date information on the condition of these monuments and enable them to provide targeted	HE

		monuments located within Cannock Chase AONB. This will involve training volunteers on how to locate and assess the condition of these nationally important heritage assets.	advice and support to landowners and other stakeholders.	
Assess condition of non-designated heritage assets	A14	Staffordshire County Council's Historic Environment Team and the National Trust will be training volunteers how to locate, identify, assess and record the condition of these features in the field. This information will assist landowners and stakeholders to make informed decisions on managing this important and extensive archaeological resource.	Provision of advise to landowners and stakeholders, as required.	HE
Manage the Sustainable Development Fund				
Promote SDF, support development where required and coordinate funding panel; management of claims etc.		7 projects have been approved to date, amounting to £14,726 grants awarded in total. A second call for applications was announced in October 2019. Further discussions are currently on-going with new potential grant recipients to ensure that this year's SDF allocation is fully spent by the end of the financial year	Ongoing management of the Sustainable Development Fund.	
Volunteering in the AONB				
Coordination and support to existing AONB volunteers	A6	Ongoing support being provided to volunteers engaged with Great War Hut,	Ongoing	HE

		Fixed Point Photography, and Historic Environment surveys.		
Review of volunteering in the AONB to determine how the Partnership can add value to existing activity	A6	Support and engage with Cannock Chase Council Chase Up! Green Volunteer Network	Ongoing	VM
Responding to the Designated Landscapes Review				
Adopt and implement recommendations from the Glover Review, and encourage implementation of actions led by others, e.g. government, local authorities		Support NAAONB and others to encourage Government to implement recommendations. Review Cannock Chase state of readiness for each of the 27 recommendations	Improve Cannock Chase AONB's state of readiness	
Visitor management				
Develop more inspiring, provoking and co-ordinated interpretation across the Chase	A8		Revisit and bring to a conclusion the draft AONB Interpretation Strategy prepared in April 2016	VM
Improve visitor experience and impressions of the AONB by improving highways infrastructure such as welcome and gateway signage, reducing sign-clutter, and improvements to the roadside environment	A8	Prepare car park design standards	Preparation of costed programme of roadside improvements	VM
Encourage visitors to Cannock Chase to travel more sustainably	B12		Design artwork for totems to be located at train stations, introducing visitors to the AONB and the network of trails for walkers and cyclists from each station (Stafford, Rugeley, Hednesford and Cannock).	VM

3. Introduction to funding

3.1. Defra is the major funder for the AONB and issues a grant which includes funding for core activity, sustainable development fund and project funding. The grant is issued as a 'single pot' giving partnerships the flexibility to decide how to allocate it to different areas of activity, in line with treasury funding rules.

3.2. The proposals for allocation of the funding over the next two financial years are set out below in 4.3.

4. Core funding

4.1. Core funding covers essential activities to run the AONB partnership and are set out by Defra. They include staff costs, partnership running costs, management plan and monitoring. AONB funding levels are based on a national funding formula and Defra provides grant in aid to meet 75% of the costs as part of the single funding pot. The remaining 25% is provided by the local authorities based on a formula which takes into account the proportion of the AONB within their administrative areas.

4.2. Core income for 2019-21 is as follows:

Source	% contribution	2019-20 £	2020-21 £
Defra	75	125,520	125,520*
Staffordshire County Council	12.5	20,920	20,920
Cannock Chase District Council	5	8,368	8,368
Stafford Borough Council	5	8,368	8,368
South Staffordshire Council	1.25	2,092	2,092
Lichfield District Council	1.25	2,092	2,092
TOTAL	100	167,360	167,360

*Defra grant for 2020-21 is still to be confirmed, but assumed to be at the same level as for 2019-20.

4.3. Core expenditure for 2019-21 is:

2019-20		2020-21	
Core item	Predicted outturn 2019/20 £	Core item	Budget 2020/21 £
Staff salaries and associated costs	111,954	Staff salaries and associated costs	135,620
Office equipment	6,088	Office equipment	2,600
Annual audit	400	Annual audit	400
Volunteer costs	500	Volunteer costs	500
NAAONB membership	2,619	National liaison	3,000
Print and publicity	3,465	Print and publicity	5,000
Partnership running costs	9,000	Partnership running costs	9,000
AONB website	1,000	AONB website	2,500
Annual Conference	1,681	Annual Conference	2,000
Monitoring	0	Core activity (incl monitoring, community involvement)	6,740
Community involvement	0		
Core activity	220		
TOTAL	136,928 (-30,432)		167,360

5. Sustainable Development Fund

5.1. The latest position available for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) for 2019/20 is set out below with projects approved to date currently amounting to £14,726 in total. After the administration fee earned by the AONB Unit of £2,307 is deducted from the SDF Grant this leaves a balance of £6,486 yet to be allocated during the remainder of this year. Further discussions are currently on-going with new potential grant recipients to ensure that this year's SDF allocation is fully spent by the end of the financial year.

5.2.

December 2019	Budget	Spent or Committed to Date	Predicted Outturn
	£	£	£
Approved Projects			
Longdon Parish Council - Information Boards	700	0	700
Love Cannock Chase - Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	1,250	0	1,250
Beaudesert Care Farm CIC - Beaudesert Eco Arts Trails	4,828	0	4,828
Beaudesert Care Farm CIC - improved drainage for camp site	1,500	0	1,500
Chelmarsh Ringing Group - Bird Boxes	1,498	1,100	1,498
Brereton and Ravenhill PC - Information board	500	0	500
Museum of Cannock Chase - Interpretation of the AONB	4,000	0	4,000
Approved Projects Total	14,276	1,100	14,276
Admin Fees	2,307	2,307	2,307
Currently Unallocated	6,486		6,486
TOTAL	23,069	3,407	23,069

5.2 In 2020/21 the amount allocated to the SDF is going to be reduced to £13,069, and £10,000 reallocated for used for matched funding for AONB projects

6. Utilisation of AONB Reserve

6.1. With the reorganisation of the AONB Partnership and recruitment of a new AONB team from 2017-19 the budget was not fully utilised during this period and funds have been held in reserve to allow delivery of the new AONB Management Plan from 2019. The following table outlines how the AONB reserve is being utilised for this purpose. Additional information about the activities is given in section 2 above. All underspend monies have to be spent by 31 March 2020.

Activity	Budget estimate £	Actual Cost committed £	Predicted Outturn £	Task & Finish Group
Planning guidance - setting / views	20,000		20,000	LP
Planning guidance - design	15,000	22,770	22,770	LP
Chase through Time legacy project development	7,500	17,783	17,783	HE
Online e-learning tool and promotional materials for Love Cannock Chase campaign	3,000		3,000	VM
Heathland restoration feasibility study	7,500		7,500	LM
Local wildlife sites survey	25,000	24,750	24,750	LM
Crayfish survey	5,000	6,300	6,300	LM
Nightjar survey	6,000	2,500	2,500	LM
Long-eared Owl survey	600	500	500	LM
Collation of invertebrate data	3,000		?	LM
Collation of bat data	4,000		?	LM
SUBTOTAL	96,600	74,103	105,103	
Survey of geological sites in AONB	500	500	500	LM
REVISED TOTAL	97,100	74,603	105,603	

6.2. Significant progress continues to be made against most of the items in the Underspend Plan. The position at 22 November 2019 is for a predicted outturn of £105,603 (against a budget estimate of £97,100).

6.3. The explanation for this overspend is that prices for some items have come in higher than their budget estimates. Notably, the price for the Building Design Guide commission came in at £22,770, some £7,770 more than the budget estimate; whilst the price for the Chase through Time legacy project came in at 17,783 compared with its budget estimate of £7,500. The reason for this latter variation is that the project scope and required outputs significantly broadened since it was originally proposed. As initially conceived, the project aim was to review the data collated regarding heritage assets on the Chase to assess their significance. The updated project specification includes this but now goes further, seeking to utilise this enhanced understanding to develop a strategy to help Staffordshire County Council and the Cannock Chase AONB manage, and where appropriate, interpret and provide access to, the heritage assets in a sustainable and sensitive way. Furthermore,

the preferred bid also includes an element of additional research and fieldwork on the parklands of the Chase which will feed into the development of a Parklands specific project within the wider legacy of Chase Through Time, and would be essential in the development of a holistic management strategy for the heritage of the Chase.

- 6.4. Two other significant items in the underspend plan will soon be commissioned. (1) the preparation of views and setting guidance, and (2) the heathland restoration feasibility study (land exchange). Both are predicted to come in at their budget estimates, or possibly slightly higher.
- 6.5. Discussions are underway with Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles to develop e-learning modules for the Love Cannock Chase campaign, and also with the West Midland Bird Club for volunteers to carry out the long-eared owl survey. Both of these activities are predicted to be delivered by 31 March 2020.
- 6.6. Procurements for the collation of invertebrate data and bat data have not yet begun.
- 6.7. In conclusion, the budget for the underspend plan is predicted to overspend by c.£8,500 - £10,000, dependent on the prices received for the two items identified in 6.4. Any overspend can be covered by utilising the AONB's Core and Action Projects budget for the current financial year, which is giving an anticipated underspend of £30,432. Any underspend would have to be refunded to Defra.
- 6.8. In order to fully utilise this year's underspend, therefore, and avoid refunding any monies to Defra, two further potential activities have been identified to add to the two remaining activities not yet begun in the table set out in 6.1.

Activity	Purpose	Outputs	Estimated cost £
Remaining “underspend” activities			
Collation of invertebrate data	Contributes to management plan action A2; exploring the status of key species and recommends future conservation work.	Report detailing knowledge of invertebrates in the AONB from previous studies and recommendations for future survey, monitoring and management	3,000
Collation of bat data	Contributes to management plan action A2; exploring the status of key species and recommends future conservation work.	Report detailing knowledge of bats from previous studies and recommendations for future survey, monitoring and management	4,000
Further potential activities to be considered			
Development of a place brand for Cannock Chase	Provides context for the management plan, creating a single identity for Cannock Chase which people can relate to, unite behind, and come together to enjoy, understand, value and then look after the area.	A clear, authentic story about Cannock Chase, past, present and future. Feelings, values, what the Chase stands for, pulled together into a brand using words, imagery, photographs and film. Brand guidelines and products.	15,000
Preparation of car park design standards	Contributes to management plan action A10, encouraging high quality standards for car park layout, detailed design, implementation and construction befitting a nationally important landscape. Provide context and consistency for all those involved in the planning, design, construction and management of car parks on Cannock Chase used for informal recreation.	Design standards, illustrative drawings, specification and checklist of requirements.	5,000

7. Project development 2020-21

7.1. The table in 2.1 above proposes a wide range of activities for 2020/21. At this stage, these are outline proposals, and further work is needed to estimate their likely costs and means of delivery. Match contributions for funding bids may be required and it is proposed that some of the single pot should be allocated for this purpose. The Defra grant for 2020/21 is not yet confirmed but around £8 - 13k is estimated for this purpose. Some additional funds may also be required from the AONB reserve. This will become clear as the development work proceeds.

8. Cannock Chase AONB Partnership Risk Register (Revised and updated November 2019)

Topic	Key Risks	Potential Impact	Mitigation	Remaining Risk
Staffing	Loss of capacity due to long term ill health	Impact on delivery of the AONB programme	Risk assessments in place including stress risk; staff support measures in place; resilience training available; absence management policy in place	Medium
	Failure / delay in recruiting new posts	Impact on delivery of the AONB programme	Adverts widely promoted; all staff recruited so high priority tasks can be addressed.	Low
Contractors	Inadequate performance; failure to deliver outputs and outcomes	Impact on delivery of the AONB programme; reputational risk	Compliance with SCC Procurement and contract management rules; involvement of partners to monitor contract delivery	Low
Funding / finances	Loss of core funding for unit	Impact on delivery of the AONB programme; potential impacts on staff posts which could have financial implications e.g. redundancy costs	Defra funding confirmed to 2020; partnership agreement in place for local authority contributions.	Medium
	Failure to secure wider funding for delivery	Impact on delivery of AONB programme	Development officer post will bring expertise in funding; CIO development will over time provide access to broader funding base	Medium

	Financial mismanagement	Loss of funds; failure to comply with grant requirements; penalties	Regular external audits undertaken; managed through council systems with appropriate procedures in place	Low
Partnership	Loss of partner support	Impact on delivery of programme as work hinges on positive relations and input from others	New structure supports positive engagement by partners in delivery and development of projects	Medium
	Inadequate support for volunteers	Impact on delivery of AONB Programme; loss of volunteers; loss of reputation	Support processes for volunteers in place and regularly monitored	Low
Office Accommodation	Temporary loss of access to office accommodation e.g. fire etc.	Disruption to delivery	Office safety procedures in place to reduce risks; Flexible working in place so that staff can work from different offices and touch-down centres; systems backed up	Low
Communication	Fragmented, confused and mixed messages; lack of awareness of AONB purpose and activities; out of date and inaccurate information	Unrealistic expectations from partners and public; loss of reputation; disjointed and ineffectual effort	Communications review and strategy in preparation, leading to greater collaboration, raised awareness of conservation issues, and changes to people's behaviour	Medium
Information and Data Management	Breach of security or failure to comply with GDPR	Potential legal implications and loss of trust	Sensitive data is minimal for AONB work; systems, procedures and training in place via host authority	Low
	Loss of data	Impact on delivery	Backup systems in place to minimise risks;	Low

Local Members Interest
N/A

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

5th December 2019

**Finance Update
Revenue Budget 2019/20 and 2020/21**

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

Recommendations

1. a) **Revenue Budget Outturn 2019/20**

That progress on the current net revenue spend for 2019/20 is noted.

b) **Revenue Budget 2020/21**

The draft net revenue budget for 2020/21 is considered and agreed.

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.
- The approval of budget provision. The current proposal for the 2020/21 net revenue budget is recommended to the Joint Committee.

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 2019/20

- 4.1 The forecast financial position for the Core and Action Projects Budget is set out in *Appendix 1* which shows a nominal net spend to date of £78,696 together with the outturn currently predicted for the year. The predicted outturn for the end of the financial year totals £159,997 compared to the approved net budget of £190,429, giving an anticipated underspend of £30,432. However, AONB officers are in the process of developing a number of new projects to ensure that this year's budget is fully spent. If this does not prove possible and the current forecast underspend is fully realised, £7,608 will be transferred to the AONB Reserve while the remaining £22,824 underspend on the Defra funding will need to be refunded to Defra.
- 4.2 The latest position available for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) for 2019/20 is set out in *Appendix 2* with projects approved to date currently amounting to £12,776 in total. After the administration fee earned by the AONB Unit of £2,307 is deducted from the SDF Grant this leaves a balance of £6,486 yet to be allocated during the remainder of this year. Further discussions are currently on-going with new potential grant recipients to ensure that this year's SDF allocation is fully spent by the end of the financial year.

5. Revenue Budget 2020/21

- 5.1 The draft net revenue budget for 2019/20 is set out in *Appendix 3* and generally reflects an annual inflationary uplift of 2% on salaries and 0% on all non-pay items.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the net revenue budget for the 2019/20 Core Programme Costs should remain at its existing 2019/20 funding level of £167,360 of which £148,589 is to be confirmed Defra Grant funding. The total SDF funding for 2020/21 available will reduce from its existing 2019/20 funding level of £23,069 to £13,069, with £10,000 being allocated to AONB projects. This gives a total net revenue budget of £190,429 for 2020/21.
- 5.3 The 2020/21 net revenue budget, subject to approval by the AONB Joint Committee at today's meeting, will form the basis of the annual grant submission to Defra in January 2020.

6 Reserve

- 6.1 The balance on the Cannock Chase AONB Reserve currently stands at £149,035 for 2019/20. A summary of the Reserve is attached as *Appendix 4*.
- 6.2 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 and;
 - The remaining funds should be earmarked to enable the AONB unit to respond to the implications of any potential future reductions in funding.
- 6.3 These priorities are reviewed annually in December of each year.
- 6.4 It is estimated that the balance on this reserve at the end of 2019/20 will be £60,007. This is because it is anticipated that the underspends from the previous two financial years totalling £96,636 will be fully spent this financial year. Proposals for the use of these underspends were

agreed at the March 2019 committee and subsequently agreed with Defra. The team is working hard to deliver the projects, which will then bring the budget back to a standard level of funding from 2020/21. The estimated balance also includes the forecasted underspend of £7,608 from this financial year being carried forward to the reserve.

7. Equalities Implications

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

8. Legal Implications

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

9. 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.

10. 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:

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List of Background papers

None

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

Cannock Chase AONB Core and Project Costs

Predicted Outturn for 2019/2020

December 2019	Budget £	Spent or Committed to £	Predicted Outturn £	Variation £
Care Budget				
Salaries	132,500	56,028	108,410	-24,090
Travel and Subrintence	2,200	628	1,246	-954
Training & First Aid Payments	1,760	1,999	1,999	239
Recruitment	400	299	299	-101
Staff and Associated Costs	136,860	58,954	111,954	-24,906
Office Equipment	2,600	3,914	6,088	3,488
Annual Audit	400	0	400	0
Volunteer Costs	1,000	0	500	-500
National Association of AONB's Members	2,700	2,619	2,619	-81
Print & Publicity	3,000	0	3,465	465
Partnership Running Costs	9,000	9,000	9,000	0
Care Budget subtotal	155,560	74,487	134,927	-21,533
Care Programmer				
Website	1,000	0	1,000	0
Monitoring Projects	2,000	0	0	-2,000
Annual Conference	1,800	1,681	1,681	-119
Community Involvement and Awareness	2,000	0	0	-2,000
Care Activity	5,000	220	220	-4,780
Care Programmer subtotal	11,800	1,901	2,901	-8,899
Sustainable Development Fund	23,069	2,307	23,069	0
Total Budget	190,429	78,696	159,997	-30,432

Funded By:				
DEFRA Grant				
Care	125,520	0	102,696	-22,824
Sustainable Development Fund	23,069	0	23,069	0
DEFRA Grant subtotal	148,589	0	125,765	-22,824
Local Authority Contributions				
Lichfield District Council	2,092	0	2,092	0
South Staffordshire District Council	2,092	0	2,092	0
Cannock Chase District Council	8,368	0	8,368	0
Stafford Borough Council	8,368	0	8,368	0
Staffordshire County Council	20,920	20,920	20,920	0
Local Authority Contributions sub	41,840	20,920	41,840	0
Salor and Donations	0	0	0	0
Membership Fee Income	0	0	0	0
Funding from (+)/to reserve(-)				
		0	-7,608	-7,608
Total Funding	190,429	20,920	159,997	-30,432

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

Sustainable Development Fund

Budget Update for 2019/2020

December 2019	Budget	Spent or Committed to Date	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
Approved Projects				
Longdon Parish Council - Information Boards	700	0	700	0
Love Cannock Chase - Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	1,250	0	1,250	0
Beaudesert Care Farm CIC - Beaudesert Eco Arts Trails	4,828	0	4,828	0
Beaudesert Care Farm CIC - improved drainage for camp site	1,500	0	1,500	0
Chelmarsh Ringing Group - Bird Boxes	1,498	1,100	1,498	0
Brereton and Ravenhill PC - Information board	500	0	500	0
Museum of Cannock Chase - Interpretation of the AONB	4,000	0	4,000	0
Approved Projects Total	14,276	1,100	14,276	0
Admin Fees	2,307	2,307	2,307	0
Currently Unallocated	6,486		6,486	0
TOTAL	23,069	3,407	23,069	0

Appendix 3

Dec 2019 draft Cannock Chase AONB Budget 2020-21

	Total	Defra Grant
AONB Core Budget		
Staff Salaries and Associated costs	£135,620.00	£101,715.00
Office Equipment	£2,600.00	£1,950.00
Annual Audit	£400.00	£300.00
Volunteers	£500.00	£375.00
National Liaison	£3,000.00	£2,250.00
Print & Publicity	£5,000.00	£3,750.00
Partnership Running Costs	£9,000.00	£6,750.00
Core Budget subtotal	£156,120.00	£117,090.00
Core Programmes		
AONB Website	£2,500.00	£1,875.00
Annual Conference	£2,000.00	£1,500.00
Core Activity (including monitoring, community involvement, etc)	£6,740.00	£5,055.00
Core Programmes subtotal	£11,240.00	£8,430.00
Sustainable Development Fund	£13,069.00	£13,069.00
AONB Projects	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Total Expenditure	£190,429.00	£148,589.00

	Total	% of Expenditure
Funded By:		
DEFRA Grant		
Core	£125,520.00	75.00%
Sustainable Development Fund	£13,069.00	100.00%
AONB Projects	£10,000.00	100.00%
DEFRA Grant subtotal	£148,589.00	
Local Authority Contributions		
Cannock Chase Council	£8,368.00	5.00%
Stafford Borough Council	£8,368.00	5.00%
Lichfield District Council	£2,092.00	1.25%
South Staffordshire Council	£2,092.00	1.25%
Staffordshire County Council	£20,920.00	12.50%
Local Authority Contributions subtotal	£41,840.00	25.00%
Total Income	£190,429.00	100.00%

Cannock Chase AONB Reserve

Financial Year	Opening Balance	Income/ Donations	Membership Fees	Visitor Survey Work	Balance of Admin Fees / Underspends	Interest	Closing Balance
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
2007/2008	10,214				-1,766		8,448
2008/2009	8,448	572			7,713		16,733
2009/2010	16,733	1,326			5,795		23,854
2010/2011	23,854	896	525	9,564	3,823		38,662
2011/2012	38,662	1,240	1,367	17,845	-221		58,893
2012/2013	58,893	387	1,108		2,685	195	63,270
2013/2014	63,270	1,001	1,675		2,459	249	68,654
2014/2015	68,654	596	1,720		1,273	289	72,532
2015/2016	72,532		569		-1,883	293	71,512
2016/2017	71,512	1,475	553		1,457	132	75,129
2017/2018	75,129	1,471	52		32,512	189	109,353
2018/2019	109,353	169	104		36,417	685	146,728
2019/2020	146,728				2,307		149,035
		9,134	7,673	27,409	92,572	2,033	149,035

Estimated balance at end of 2019/2020

60,007

Item 5- Report of the AONB Landscape Planning Officer:

a) Development control and Planning Policy

b) High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2a

Item for: Part a): Information

Part b): Discussion and Decision

Author: Julia Banbury, AONB Landscape Planning Officer

Financial implications: None

- Recommendations**
- 1. The Joint Committee notes progress made on planning matters since the last meeting, as shown below**
 - 2. Members to note the progress of the work of the local group on High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2a**
 - 3. The Committee is requested to consider and agree to give delegated authority to Officers to sign off the 2nd Draft of Design Guide for HS2 – Design Principles on behalf of the AONB Partnership. The Final Draft will be emailed to Members for information.**

Item _ a) Development management and Planning Policy

Since July the Landscape Planning Officer has reviewed 46 applications, of which 23 required no comment and 2 were withdrawn. The table below shows the comments made on planning applications, policy documents and any related planning issues. The information is presented in summary form, but the full responses are available from the AONB Landscape Planning Officer

Category	Summary of response	Outcome/notes
Planning Application		
CH/19/128 Holly Grove, Holly Hill Road, Cannock Wood Single storey extension for gym	Objection Recommend development should be set back further from the road frontage to better reflect local character. Condition requested for scheme of landscape mitigation	Approve 06.08.19 with conditions – materials, tree protection and landscape scheme
18/01303/FULM Land North of Bellamour Lane Gas fired electricity generation	Objection Inappropriate development in the setting of the AONB	Awaiting decision

<p>CH/19/154 Court Bank Farm, Slang Lane, Cannock Wood Storage building for equestrian</p>	<p>Objection Issues. The impact of the proposed development on the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB; Potential impact due to removal of trees If the principle of an additional storage building is considered acceptable, recommend the footprint and the height of the proposed building should be reduced, so the extension appears subservient to existing development, to minimise visual intrusion and detrimental landscape impacts. Also need to secure tree retention and scheme of landscape mitigation</p>	<p>Approved 30.10.19 See comment under consultation dated 07.10.19</p>
<p>CH/19/053 Pursuant to CH/13/0449. Aldene, 7, Stafford Brook Road, Rugeley, WS15 2TY vary Condition 3, to allow use of Annexe by non householders as a holiday let.</p>	<p>Objection Issues: Visual impacts and effects on the AONB. Recommend clear proposals for all the external areas within the site, indicating proposed hard standing, retained trees and mature hedgerow, and scheme of landscape mitigation.</p>	<p>Awaiting decision</p>
<p>CH/19/167 6 Henley Grange, Etchinghill Single Storey side extension</p>	<p>Secure Tree protection and retention</p>	<p>Refused 16.09.19</p>
<p>CH/19/156 The Stonehouse, Penkridge Bank Road, Rugeley, WS15 2UE Garage, pond, formalise access etc</p>	<p>Objection Issues: excessive loss of trees and potential impact on trees and resultant detrimental impact on the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB,</p>	<p>Awaiting decision</p>
<p>CH/19/173 Hill Farm, 84 Hayfield Hill, Cannock Wood</p>	<p>Objection Issues: Detrimental impact on the natural beauty of the AONB; Inclusion of pasture field to the east of the yard, which forms an integral part of the</p>	<p>Awaiting decision</p>

Application to regularise use of site as Class B1(c) Light industrial, retention of Building D to house fork lift truck	farmland character of this part of the AONB and would be an inappropriate change of use. Suggest removing permitted development rights.	
CH/19/192 Bellscale How, Chapel Lane, Cannock Wood Proposed single storey front & side extensions, part demolition & conversion of existing detached garage & new 1.8m high boundary walls / electric entrance gates	Objection Issues: Impacts on the natural beauty of the AONB and suburbanising effects	Refused Disproportionate additions, harm to Green Belt
CH/19/201 and LDC 19/00753/OUTMEI Rugeley Power Station redevelopment Outline	Development would not give rise to direct landscape or visual effects on the AONB or its setting. AONB issues relate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential for increased user pressure affecting the special qualities of the AONB. - Adequacy of CIL/S106 for SAC mitigation and other AONB related measures - Support provision of recreation facilities that would encourage users to participate in activities outside the AONB, thereby helping to reduce user pressures within the AONB, such as pedestrian and cycling routes along the Trent Valley and the wider countryside. 	Awaiting decision
19/30639/HOU The Gables Chase Rd, Brocton Replacement sun room and	Request a Condition is to require a scheme of replacement tree planting and reinstatement of hedgerow if that proves necessary.	Approved 31.07.19

replacement garage		
18/01217/OUTFL M Land at Cricket Lane, Lichfield Outline planning application (with all matters reserved except access points to Cricket Lane) for the construction of up to 520 dwellings, and up to 10.73 hectares for employment uses	Development would not give rise to direct landscape or visual effects on the AONB or its setting. AONB issues relate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential for increased user pressure affecting the special qualities of the AONB. - Adequacy of CIL/S106 for SAC mitigation and other AONB related measures - Support provision of recreation facilities that would encourage users to participate in activities outside the AONB, thereby helping to reduce user pressures within the AONB, such as pedestrian and cycling routes along the Trent Valley and the wider countryside. 	Awaiting decision
CH/19/156 The Stonehouse, Penkridge Bank Road, Rugeley, WS15 2UE Garage, pond, formalise access etc	previous verbal agreement of the Tree Officer for retention and removal of trees on the site.	Awaiting decision
CH/19/128 Holly Grove, Holly Hill Road, Cannock Wood Single storey extension for gym	Amended Plans, Objection removed	Approved 06.08.19
19/30971/FUL Sister Dora Rest Home, Milford Entrance Pillars and MEB switch building	Objection Introduction of inappropriate suburbanising visual clutter on the road frontage with resultant detrimental impact on the character of the AONB Issues: Impact of the proposed development on the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB Proposed structures should either be relocated close to the main building, so that they would visually merge with that structure, and therefore be less visually	Approved 09.10.19

	detracting. Alternatively, visual mitigation should be provided on the boundary with Brocton Road comprising native species hedge planting, including a high proportion of evergreen.	
SS.19/03/604 MW Pottal Pool quarry Non-compliance with conditions	Satisfied the proposed silt lagoon would not appear incongruous, as it will be seen in the context of current approved operations. Request the heights of equipment do not exceed that approved, to ensure that visual intrusion is no greater than currently permitted.	Awaiting decision
CH/19/323 18 Etching Hill Road, Etchinghill Extension	No concerns in principle. Recessive materials requested	Awaiting decision
CH/19/154 Court Bank Farm, Slang Lane, Cannock Wood Storage building for equestrian AMENDED PLANS	Objection. Amended plans do not substantially improve the situation. Proposed landscape scheme will only filter views at lower elevations in the medium term	Approved 30.10.19 Condition for landscape scheme and tree retention
19/31289/FUL Sister Dora Rest Home Vary conditions re landscaping and fencing	Objection Increased impacts due to amendments to fencing. Seek enhanced landscape mitigation	Awaiting decision
19/00681/VAR Lower Drayton Farm Lower Drayton Lane Penkrige Vary conditions	No objection, Subject lighting being dimmed at night as indicated as recommendation on the plans.	Awaiting decision
19/01477/FUH Windy Ridge, commonside, Gentleshaw 2 storey extension	Conditional Objection Conditions required for sensitive materials and colours, and landscape scheme	Awaiting decision
CH/19/360	No Objection	

Bellscale How, Chapel Lane, Cannock Wood Demolition of bungalow and replacement	Seek contribution to Management Plan Policy LC1 for enhancing the setting and filtering views	
Planning Policy		
LDC Green Belt Review Method Statement	Commitment to detailed landscape character assessments is welcomed. Assessment should include analysis of the site's contribution to maintaining the openness of the countryside, and contribution to the setting and special qualities of the AONB. Attention drawn to relevant policies in latest Management Plan	
CCDC Local Plan issues and options	The Management Plan 2014 -2019 describes challenges facing the AONB. This includes potential impact of new housing built close to the AONB that could impact on the setting of the AONB, and the growing recreational activity which could harm the AONB's wildlife and special qualities unless mitigation is put in place. Provision of easily accessible high-quality recreational areas outside the AONB would be welcomed to relieve recreational pressure in the AONB. The AONB supports allocating greenspace of strategic significance on a district scale, to focus enhancement of open space outside the AONB, thereby potentially relieving recreational pressure within the AONB. Site allocations within the AONB or in the setting of the AONB should be resisted	
Burntwood Neighbourhood Plan S16 Consultation	Cannock Chase AONB abuts the northern boundary of the Burntwood Neighbourhood Plan area at Gentleshaw and Cannock Wood, and the area of countryside between the settlement of Burntwood and the AONB boundary that lies within the Plan area forms the setting	

	<p>of the AONB. Objectives and policies in the Burntwood Neighbourhood Plan therefore have the potential to affect the AONB and its setting.</p> <p>The Portrait of Burntwood should refer to the position of the AONB in relation to the Plan area and reference the designated status of the AONB. Reference to the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan would be welcomed in setting out planning issues, and in objectives and policies, and could provide support for these in the Plan. Of particular relevance are policies for conserving the AONB's special qualities and respecting local distinctiveness and protecting and enhancing the setting of the AONB.</p>	
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b) High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2a

Background

1. Members will recall the paper circulated for the Joint Committee meeting in July 2019 setting out the remit and progress of the Trent Sow Parklands HS2 Group to produce Design Principles and propose Environmental Enhancements that will be funded from the £1.5million secured from HS2. The Group's Terms of Reference are agreed with HS2, HS2 attends all Group meetings, and the programme for delivery is set and agreed by HS2.
2. **Design Guide**
Land Use Consultants has been working with the Group to develop both general and Detailed Design Principles (DDPs) for works across the project area, that seek sympathetic integration of the railway into the special landscape of the area.
3. Consultation on the first draft of the Vision and Design Principles took place in September. The AONB Landscape Planning Officer submitted a report on the Draft and invited comments from members of the Landscape Task and Finish Group. A formal response was then made. Consultation responses from all Stakeholders have been discussed and where necessary any differences of opinion resolved. LUC are in the process of amending the document and completing outstanding pieces of work. The number and complexity of comments has resulted in a delay to the programme, with the result that the Second Draft, which should have been complete on 13th November 2019 and therefore available for circulation and approval by Joint Committee at the meeting on 5th December, will now not be available until the 4th December, which allows insufficient time for proper consideration. The proposed

timetable for production and approval by the AONB Joint Committee is now as follows:

Complete DDPs D2 circulated	4th December
DPS D2 agreed by AONB officer working group	4-10 December
Trent Sow Group (TSG): Identify any unresolved comments in draft 2 TSG& LUC: Agree resolution to any comments and final wording of Design Principles in group meeting.	4-11th December 11 December
Produce and adopt Final Draft for DDPS LUC November LUC produce final report LUC Finished DDPs circulated to group to instigate adoption procedure.	11-dec- 20th January 20th January
Adoption by group members Final Design Principles sent to AONB Joint Committee Members by email for agreement to adopt	20 January – early-mid February (date to be confirmed)

4. **Environmental Enhancements (outside the Bill Limits)**

The Group has compiled a long-list of enhancement projects with input from key stakeholders and drawn up a short list of projects based on agreed selection criteria. Projects have the potential to enhance the area for wildlife, the historic environment and the landscape, and deliver community benefits. There are six main projects and a group of 8 Small Projects. Projects include proposals for landscape scale habitat enhancement, access improvements, research, protection and interpretation of historic environmental features. All projects require further development to establish detailed costs and their viability for delivery.

Item 6 – AONB Planning Protocol

Item for:	Discussion and Agreement
Author:	AONB Landscape Planning Officer
Financial implications:	None
Recommendations	The Joint Committee agrees the adoption of the Updated Planning Protocol 2019.

Background

1. The AONB unit commissioned a review of Planning activity in March 2017 which identified a need to update the Planning Protocol which was subsequently referred to the Joint Committee and the Officer Working Group.
2. Consultation has taken place with planning officers from Local Authority partners through the Landscape and Planning Task and Finish Group, to review and agree an updated protocol. The protocol aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) updated in 2019 and includes reference to the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019 -2024.
3. The updated protocol reflects the need to recognise the shrinking resources available to both the AONB unit and local planning authorities, to focus time and effort on applications which may have the greatest impact on the AONB.
4. The updated Planning Protocol 2019 incorporates the following main changes:
 - a. Reflects changes in national legislation and guidance,
 - b. Reflect changes in the local planning policy context, including development of Neighbourhood Plans.
 - c. Consultation topics are set out in a clear structure
 - d. Minimum size of residential development is retained at 5 dwellings. Retained as the landscape character and settlement pattern of the AONB could be adversely affected if the threshold for consultation is increased.
 - e. Removed consultation on agricultural prior notifications, as there are limited considerations Local Planning Authorities can take into account on such applications and therefore it is unlikely their concerns could be taken into account in determining these prior notifications.
 - f. Prior notifications for conversion of redundant farm buildings or change of use will only be considered where design or external appearance form part of the prior approval process.
 - g. Wording on consultation on enforcement reinforces opportunities for AONB support
 - h. New section on Other Matters for Consultation seeking closer working in relation to major infrastructure projects that could affect the AONB and collaborative approach on policy and strategies relating to the SAC.

**CANNOCK CHASE AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
(AONB) PARTNERSHIP**

**PLANNING PROTOCOL BETWEEN
CONSTITUENT LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES
AND THE CANNOCK CHASE AONB
JOINT COMMITTEE**

2005 (Updated 2019)



**PLANNING PROTOCOL BETWEEN CONSTITUENT LOCAL PLANNING
AUTHORITIES AND THE CANNOCK CHASE AREA OF OUTSTANDING
NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT COMMITTEE**

1 Aims

1 To provide the opportunity for the Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee to comment on planning applications (as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015), the preparation of development plans (including Neighbourhood Plans) and related land use, spatial planning and transport planning documents (including relevant plans and strategies for the Special Area of Conservation – SAC) on behalf of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership.

2 To provide a formal procedure/communication between the Local Planning Authority partners within the AONB and the AONB Joint Committee on planning matters within and adjoining or directly affecting, the AONB. (The AONB Landscape Planning Officer will look at the weekly lists and either ask to be consulted or submit comments but ensuring that the Unit is properly resourced to comment in a reasonable timeframe, noting that there will be referrals which do not need AONB comment).

1.1 The protocol sets out how the AONB Joint Committee and Local Planning Authority Partners in the AONB Partnership will consider planning matters affecting the AONB.

2 Scope

2.1 It covers the following issues:-

- The development plan and other spatial/land use policy work of local authorities which the Joint Committee wishes to be involved in.
- The planning applications it wishes to have the opportunity to make comment on.
- The broad priorities and criteria that the Joint Committee will apply in coming to its view.
- How the view of the Joint Committee will be arrived at, including streamlined delegation arrangements and how it will be conveyed to the relevant planning authority.
- The practical responsibilities of the relevant planning authority, in terms of consultation, reporting and monitoring.

3 The Need to Consult the AONB Joint Committee

3.1 The AONB is a national designation which seeks to protect the landscape and natural beauty of an area of finest countryside. The size and location of the Cannock Chase AONB means that it is vulnerable to development pressures. Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a general duty on public bodies in the following terms:

“In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty”.

3.2 The publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2018 reinforced the status and importance of protected area, including National Parks and AONBs.

Paragraph 170 states: *“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);’

Paragraph 172 states: *“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks*

and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;

b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and

c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.’

3.3 Consequently, there is a need for consistency in the Local Planning Authorities’ approach to dealing with planning issues, both in terms of policy formulation and dealing with planning applications. There is also a need for an AONB ‘voice’ to be able to make a positive contribution towards planning decisions which affect the AONB.

3.4 Within the broad context of helping to protect the AONB, the Partnership Agreement (December 2003) defines one of the functions of the Joint Committee as follows: “to consider and make representations on Development Plan Policies and Proposals and proposals for development affecting Cannock Chase AONB.” (para. 3.3.7). Reflecting the approach taken in Management Plans since 2004, the most recent Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024 contains the following Vision Statement: -

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

3.5 In order to achieve that Vision, it will be necessary for Development Plan Policies, related Supplementary Planning Documents, subsequent planning decisions and the design of major infrastructure projects (for example HS2), to complement the role of the Management Plan in setting out policies to protect and enhance this important landscape in decision making, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4 Revision and Review

4.1 This protocol is a working document and may be subject to further discussion and review as considered necessary. The current review is based on the following needs:

- To reflect changes in national legislation and guidance, for example: The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance.
- To reflect changes in the local planning policy context, for example: the adoption of new Local Plans and the making of several Neighbourhood Plans.
- To reflect the need to recognise the shrinking resources available to both the AONB unit and local planning authorities, to focus time and effort on applications which may have the greatest impact on the AONB.

5 The Role of the AONB in Planning Matters

5.1 The Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee is a consultee on planning matters, not a decision maker. Decisions on planning matters will remain with the relevant planning authorities:

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

Consultations on Development Plans and Other Planning Policy

5.2 The AONB Joint Committee will be a consultee in the preparation of Development Plan documents (including Neighbourhood Plans) and related land use and spatial planning policy documents, including Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Planning Guidance, affecting* all or part of the AONB and its setting. (*Affecting means directly affecting, in that the policy relates to land or areas within the AONB itself, or indirectly, in that it relates to land or areas

which are contiguous with or can be seen from the AONB or where the policy or application is of such a nature that it might undermine the quality or purposes of the AONB). Consultation may occur at several relevant stages of the same document. It is noted that, to fulfil the consultation requirement on Neighbourhood Plans, Parish and Town Councils and Neighbourhood Forums will need to be made aware of the Protocol, but they will not necessarily need to formally sign up to it.

5.3 Consultations will be carried out in accordance with the relevant legislation and the Statements of Community Involvement prepared by the Local Planning Authorities.

6 Consultation on Planning Applications

6.1 There is the need to consult the Joint Committee on planning applications: -

- Which give rise to concerns or raise issues contrary to AONB Management Plan policy for the AONB.
- Are likely to have an adverse impact on either the character of the local landscape and/or its scenic beauty, nature conservation interests within the AONB or on its setting.

6.2 This includes applications relating to land within the AONB itself and land which is contiguous with or can be seen from the AONB or where the application is of such a nature that it might undermine the quality or purposes of the AONB. The AONB Joint Committee will be consulted on the following categories of planning applications within the AONB or in its setting:

Residential development:

- Applications proposing the development of 5 dwellings or more, including changes of use to residential, within existing settlements defined within the relevant development plans.
- Any applications or prior notifications for a single dwelling or more or changes of use to form dwellings in the open countryside (i.e. outside of a settlement).
- Outside the AONB, applications for urban extensions that might affect the setting of the AONB.

Non-residential applications including recreation and outdoor sporting facilities

- Applications for the use of land or buildings for recreational purposes, including tourist accommodation (caravans, camping and the provision of self-catering and other holiday accommodation), the formation of lakes, ponds and other significant landscape features
- Equestrian related developments.
- Agricultural and horticultural developments on individual land holdings, for example, the construction of new storage facilities
- Applications for the conversion of redundant farm buildings, change of use of land or buildings.

Other major development

- Applications for non-residential / businesses,

Minerals and Waste disposal

- Applications proposing new or extended operational areas for mineral workings or waste disposal, the restoration of old or existing workings, applications to vary or rescind conditions relating thereto.

Utilities and other infrastructure

- Applications for utilities and other infrastructure, including renewable energy development, telecommunications towers, aerials and extension to existing aerials.
- Proposals for any structures that would be visible over a wide area of AONB and/or the surrounding area.

Other development Proposals

- Other proposals for development including changes of use which by virtue of their particular characteristics are likely to have an adverse effect on the landscape character and scenic beauty of the AONB and its setting / or set a precedent.
- Applications where the case officer and the AONB Landscape Planning Officer agree it appropriate for the AONB to be consulted.

6.3 The AONB Partnership should be consulted on enforcement matters and planning appeals related to cases upon which comments have been made at an earlier stage, providing the opportunity to support the Local Planning Authority.

6.4 Major development, as defined in guidance and legislation, should necessitate mandatory consultation with the AONB unit. It is recognised that other types and scales of development should involve the AONB unit where the Local Planning Authority (i.e. the case officer) request a comment from the AONB and it is the intention of this Protocol to inform such decisions.

7 Other Matters for Consultation

7.1 There will be some proposals for development that fall outside the remit of the Local Planning Authorities, for example national infrastructure projects such as HS2. It is hoped that the relevant agencies, whilst not signatory to this Protocol, will be aware of the need to engage with the AONB partnership on the documents/projects for which they are responsible. However, the local authority partners will themselves be consultees on such projects and they can use this protocol to invite comments from the AONB Partnership to inform their own consultation responses, for example:

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- The AONB Partnership should be consulted on the planning and delivery of major infrastructure projects (e.g. concerning road and rail transport, power generation and transmission and the provision of utility services) which are within, adjoining/in the setting of the designated area or will be visible from it.

7.2 The AONB partnership will continue to work effectively and collaboratively with the SAC Partnership and should be consulted on policy documents, strategies and management plans for the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation.

8 AONB Criteria

8.1 8.1 In considering both policy development and individual planning applications, the Joint Committee's main concern will be the purpose of statutory designation of the AONB, that is, conserving landscape and scenic beauty, reflecting The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) which requires all relevant authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of AONBs when performing their functions. However, in forming a view it will also bear in mind the economic and social needs of local communities, recognising the role of existing agriculture, forestry and other rural industries. It will also consider transport and recreational issues as they impact on the AONB. Consultation responses will refer to AONB evidence and studies, rather than opinions, to add more detail or factual information to reinforce general Local Plan policy and provide a strong basis for decision making.

The Joint Committee will not concern itself with applications or aspects of applications, which it regards as relating solely to the private interests of an individual or group of individuals. That is, the Joint Committee will limit interventions and comments to matters of public concern where there are relevant to the conservation of the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. Even on matters of public interest, it may decide to leave extensive comment to bodies or organisations better placed to provide it. These bodies or organisations may be members of the AONB Partnership who are consulted in their own right.

9 Consultation Procedure

9.1 In practice, this protocol has been used proactively by the local authority partners and the way in which AONB comments are sought through formal consultation on planning applications is welcomed. However:

- The AONB Landscape Planning Officer will check weekly planning applications lists (on the relevant websites).
- The AONB Officer will be able to ask to be consulted on applications which are considered to fall into any of the categories set out in 6.1 and 6.2 (above).
- The AONB Landscape Planning Officer will submit any comments on behalf of the Joint Committee within 21 days of being consulted, or any other appropriate timescale agreed with the case officer.
- LPAs will enter into early discussions with the AONB Landscape Planning Officer if any issues arise.
- If necessary, the AONB Landscape Planning Officer will check on progress made in dealing with the applications.
- The views of the Joint Committee will be determined and made known according to the procedures and scheme of delegations set out in Appendix I.
- Where appropriate, the local planning authority will consider including the AONB Landscape Planning Officer in pre-application discussions or referring the pre-applicant to the role of the AONB Unit, where defined AONB interests are likely to be affected by the proposal or the LPA response to it.

10 Monitoring and Feedback

10.1 The Joint Committee will be given an annual report from the AONB Unit on planning issues, which will include:

- (a) An overall summary of applications made, policy issues raised and of the AONB responses.
- (b) A judgement as to whether the AONB and its designation are being taken proper account of by the relevant local planning authorities.
- (c) A review of how well this protocol is working and suggestions for any improvements considered to be appropriate.

11 AONB Staff and Staffordshire County Council

11.1 Although working on behalf of the AONB partnership, the staff of the AONB Unit are employed by Staffordshire County Council in respect of the terms and conditions of employment and provision of line management. In dealing with planning issues within the AONB, and within the terms of this protocol, the AONB Landscape Officer will be expected to take a view determined by the purposes of designation of the AONB and the policies of the AONB Management Plan, rather than by the planning or other policies of the County Council, if different.

11.2 The Partnership Agreement, signed by the local planning authority gives the AONB Officer delegated powers as follows: - *“When authorised by the Joint Committee, to represent the Joint Committee on applications on which the Joint Committee has decided to make representations.”*

APPENDIX 1: PROTOCOL & SCHEME OF DELEGATION FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING CONSULTATIONS BY THE AONB JOINT COMMITTEE

Executive Committee Decision Making

The time constraints on making consultation responses, particularly with regard to planning applications, dictate expeditious procedures. The AONB Joint Committee recognised, based on the experience of implementing the existing Protocol over several years, that it does not/is not able to consider most consultations at its full meetings. At that time, to help discharge its consultation functions The Joint Committee constituted a standing committee termed the “Planning Sub-Group” to which it delegated responsibility for considering and deciding on formal consultations on planning policy matters and planning applications falling within the terms of the protocol. The AONB Joint Committee decided on the composition of this Sub-Group and its chair annually. The Group was to be convened at the request of the AONB Landscape Planning Officer at a minimum of 3 days’ notice.

In practice, The Sub-Group has worked via e-mail rather than meeting in person. If meetings were necessary, the Sub-Group was deemed quorate if two members and the AONB Officer attended.

It is proposed, within the terms of this revised Protocol that all Sub-Group meetings will be “Virtual” and undertaken by email, unless exceptional circumstances, in terms of the scale or contentious nature of an application or Development Plan matter dictate otherwise. The Sub-Group will be deemed to quorate if two AONB representatives (either Joint Committee members or officers from the Officer Working Group) and the AONB Landscape Planning Officer are involved. Where consultation gives rise to an issue of very major significance, the Sub-Group will continue to refer it with a recommendation to the full Joint Committee for a final decision. All other consultations on planning applications will be dealt with by the AONB Landscape Planning Officer under a scheme of delegation.

Scheme of delegation to the AONB Manager (planning applications)

The Joint Committee delegates to the AONB Landscape Planning Officer the responsibility for deciding whether a consultation warrants a response on behalf of the Joint Committee and day-to-day responsibility for deciding which consultations are referred to the Sub-Group. In general, the Sub-Group will expect to be consulted on the proposed responses of the AONB Officer to applications giving rise either to:

- i - a significant issues(s) of principle or policy for the AONB, or
- ii - likely to have a significant adverse impact on either the landscape and scenic beauty of the local area or the AONB as a whole, including its setting.

The Joint Committee delegates to the AONB Landscape Planning Officer the responsibility for making a consultation response on its behalf for those consultations not referred to the Sub-Group and for consultations which are agreed by the Sub-Group when it has been convened. In discharging these duties the AONB Landscape Planning Officer will take full account of the outcomes of any consideration of matters by the Sub-Group. When the Sub Group has been

convened, the identity of the officers involved will be recorded in the regular/annual monitoring reports on planning activity to the Joint Committee.

AONB Unit Office Procedures

- All formal consultations shall be received and logged by the AONB Unit.
- The AONB Landscape Planning Officer will endeavour to ensure that all responses are made within the period set for consultations (e.g. for planning applications, usually 21 days, unless otherwise agreed by the relevant officer or authority).
- All formal consultation responses on behalf of the Joint Committee will be issued and signed by the AONB Landscape Planning Officer on behalf of the Joint Committee.
- The AONB Unit will keep a public record of all consultation responses on planning matters made by the Joint Committee.

Item 7 - AONB Annual Conference 2019 – evaluation and feedback

Item for: Information
Author: AONB Development Officer
Financial implications: None

Recommendations **The Joint Committee notes the evaluation and feedback from the AONB Annual Conference 2019**

Background

1. Cannock Chase AONB Annual Conference 2019 took place on Friday 4th October at Brocton Hall Golf Club. In addition to an update and discussion about AONB progress, the theme was “Changing views – heathland management on Cannock Chase”, and the conference *explored how landowners, local communities, interest groups and user groups on Cannock Chase can come together to ensure that heathlands are part of our future.*

Feedback

2. 75 delegates from organisations, community groups and businesses across the Chase attended the Conference. 31 delegates provided feedback using the feedback evaluation forms.

Satisfaction levels

Overall satisfaction with the conference –	4.4/5.0
Conference booking and registration process -	4.6/5.0
Usefulness of the AONB activity update	4.5/5.0
Usefulness of the heathland session	4.1/5.0
Quality of the speakers/presentations	4.5/5.0
Rating of conference facilities	4.5/5.0
Rating of refreshments	4.5/5.0

Suggestions for improving the organisation and administration of the conference

- Half day plus lunch is perfect – allows time for networking.
- Larger type on name badges, and recycle badges.
- About right. Like the focus on heathland. The improvement on previous conferences is night and day.
- Needed to introduce the Q&A Panel.
- Half day is just right.
- Everything felt the correct pace and length – with lots of different areas to discuss.
- Preferred this venue to Hednesford.
- Maybe allow more time for guest speakers.
- Length of conference is ideal and venue perfect, ie, on the Chase, easy to find, adequate parking.

- Information was well presented. Recommend that after lunch there could be an additional .5 to 1 hour for delegates to ask questions and address their concerns.
- Useful to send questions in advance and have an open discussion.
- Maybe have online booking
- Need to use social media more to engage with Chase users.
- Programme could have gone out earlier, with map and postcode.
- Could have had a wider representation of recreational users

Suggested topics or themes for future AONB Annual Conferences

- Archaeology – history themes. Visitor survey + other monitoring work. Trees and tree diseases. Local food and farming.
- Wildlife. Delivery of 25 YEP. Partnership working, shared visions and understanding.
- Management of the Country Park, and introduction of grazing.
- Session on SAC.
- Will Hednesford Hills heathland become part of the larger linked heathland?
- Ancient woodland, trees and growth of new native trees, including tree planting.
- Improving access to Cannock Chase without a car, eg, bus improvements, cycle lanes and cycle parking.
- More detail on how management decisions are taken.
- How is it decided what to aim for and which species to prioritise?
- How do we balance recreation and conservation?
- ELMs process and applications.
- More nature themed topics.
- Impact of climate change.
- Q&A session on open topics relating to Cannock Chase.
- Expand on the role of the Joint Committee.
- More on the work of the Task and Finish Groups.
- Impact of mountain bikers on other users.

Requests for further information on topics people have heard discussed during the conference

- Update on grazing programme.
- Hub website details.
- Geophysical survey of Castle Ring.
- Fixed Photography Project.
- What is happening with fencing, grazing and rationalisation of car parks.
- Protect Cannock Chase cartoons.
- Work on climate change
- Local access forums.
- How to better engage with Love Cannock Chase project.
- Developing a new relationship with our heathlands.
- Communication.

Item 9 - Protected Landscapes Review

Item for: Information

Author: AONB Development Officer

Financial implications: c.50% of the recommendations contained in the Review, are already being delivered, are planned for delivery, or could be delivered with some additional requirements for cost or capacity.

c.50% of the recommendations would need significant additional funding and/or capacity to deliver.

Recommendations **The Joint Committee notes the recommendations of the Protected Landscapes Review, and Cannock Chase AONB's state of readiness to implement them.**

Background

1. The Government appointed Independent Panel's review of AONBs and National Parks was published on 21 September 2019 and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review>
2. As part of the evidence gathering for the review, Cannock Chase AONB Partnership submitted a written response as well as having the opportunity to discuss issues with Jonathan Glover in person during a visit to the Chase on 26 April 2019.
3. The Review team has acknowledged the value of the AONB designation and the hard work that AONB staff and members carry out to conserve and enhance these special areas. They also recognise that, given adequate resources and a supportive policy framework, there is so much more that we can deliver for nature and natural beauty; for people who live in and visit our landscapes; and a lot more to meet the needs of our many fellow citizens who do not know the countryside, or do not always feel welcome in it, but should be able to enjoy it.
4. The underlying argument of the Review, which covers England, is that our system of national landscapes should be a positive force for the nation's wellbeing. Central to the proposition is:
 - A rephrasing of the purpose(s) of AONBs and their alignment with those of the National Parks
 - A restating of the need for closer working between AONBs and National Parks
 - The renaming of AONBs as National Landscapes, served by a new National Landscapes Service shared with National Parks
 - Strengthening of the focus on nature recovery and engaging people in nature
 - A heightened ambition around inclusion, diversity, and delivering for the nation

- A greater voice on development
 - Increased funding for AONBs
 - The encouragement of a wider range of non-designated systems of landscape protection, which should be members of the national landscapes family and served by the National Landscapes Service
5. The National Association for AONBs and the 34 AONB Partnerships are now working with Defra and Natural England to ensure this proposition becomes reality.

The proposals

6. In total, the Review makes 27 recommendations focused on five areas. It is important that the AONB Partnership has a shared understanding of the Review's key proposals and what they mean for it going forward.
7. The following table lists each of the 27 recommendations and indicates Cannock Chase AONB Partnership's state of readiness to deliver them:
- (column A) which proposals we are already delivering, or planning to deliver
 - (column B) which we could reasonably embed in our work with minimal requirements for additional costs or capacity
 - (column C) which we could deliver but would need significant funding and/or capacity to do so

Protected Landscapes Review key recommendations

Focus and proposals	Cannock Chase AONB state of readiness	A	B	C
Landscapes alive for nature and beauty				
Proposal 1: National landscapes should have a renewed mission to recover and enhance nature, and be supported and held to account for delivery by a new National Landscapes Service	Cannock Chase is committed to contributing to the AONB family Colchester Declaration for nature recovery. The preparation of a nature recovery plan for Cannock Chase will be included as an action for Year 2 of the current Business Plan, but will require additional resources.			✓
Proposal 2: The state of nature and natural capital in our national landscapes should be regularly and robustly assessed, informing the priorities for action	The state of nature on Cannock Chase is regularly monitored and reported in five-yearly State of the AONB reports which, in turn, inform priorities in the AONB Management Plan (A2). A natural capital audit has not been undertaken for Cannock Chase and would represent a new activity requiring additional resources.	✓		✓
Proposal 3: Strengthened Management Plans should set clear priorities and actions for nature recovery including, but not limited to, wilder areas and the response to climate change (notably tree planting and peatland restoration). Their implementation must be backed up by stronger status in law	The current AONB Management Plan includes priority actions for nature recovery (B4, B15, B7). Targets and a spatial plan for nature recovery within Cannock Chase and between the Chase and the wider network will be developed in the proposed nature recovery plan described in 1 above.		✓	
Proposal 4: National landscapes should form the backbone of Nature Recovery Networks – joining things up within and beyond their boundaries	The current AONB Management Plan (A13) recognises that Cannock Chase is part of a wider ecological network extending beyond the AONB. Additional resources would be required to deliver improvements on the ground.			✓
Proposal 5: A central place for national landscapes in new Environmental Land Management Schemes	The AONB Management Plan includes a commitment to work with local partners to ensure appropriate advice and incentives are available and suitably targeted to farms and smallholdings in the AONB (A12). The preparation of a Nature Recovery Plan for Cannock Chase would offer a mechanism for targeting the delivery of a new ELMs to maximise public benefits. Liaison with farmers and landowners to advise and secure the benefits through ELMs would be an			✓

	additional activity requiring additional resources.			
Proposal 6: A strengthened place for national landscapes in the planning system with AONBs given statutory consultee status, encouragement to develop local plans and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework	<p>The AONB Partnership and local planning authorities have agreed a planning protocol to ensure that the AONB Unit is consulted for its views on development proposals affecting the special qualities of the AONB or its setting.</p> <p>Statutory consultee status would mandate this arrangement, and may require additional resources to be properly serviced.</p> <p>The preparation of a Development Plan Document for the AONB would be used alongside Local Plans and national planning policy guidance to determine planning applications and also to influence infrastructure provision and environmental management. The preparation of such a document would represent a new activity requiring additional resources.</p>	✓	✓	✓
Landscapes for everyone				
Proposal 7: A stronger mission to connect all people with our national landscapes, supported and held to account by the new National Landscapes Service	The AONB Management Plan includes commitments to engage more with all those who visit, live or work on or near Cannock Chase (A4, B13, B20, A11, B11). More could be done to identify and engage those groups that are currently disadvantaged.		✓	
Proposal 8: A night under the stars in a national landscape for every child	This would represent a new activity not currently being provided within the AONB.			✓
Proposal 9: New long term programmes to increase the ethnic diversity of visitors	Increasing the ethnic diversity of visitors would represent a new activity not currently being provided within the AONB.			✓
Proposal 10: Landscapes that cater for and improve the nation's health and wellbeing	The AONB Management Plan recognises the natural benefits that the Chase offers, and includes actions to increase engagement with healthcare and education providers (B13, B20).	✓		
Proposal 11: Expanding volunteering in our national landscapes	The AONB Management Plan (A6) seeks to better co-ordinate volunteering activities throughout the AONB. The AONB Partnership is actively working with Cannock Chase	✓		

	<p>Council's "Green Volunteer Network" to achieve this goal.</p> <p>An expansion of volunteering opportunities in the AONB would require additional facilitation and supporting resources.</p>			✓
Proposal 12: Better information and signs to guide visitors	<p>The need for co-ordinated and high standard welcome and directional signage, and interpretation on Cannock Chase to be refreshed and improved is acknowledged in the AONB Management Plan (A8). Current protocols are outdated. The SAC Partnership also highlights this need, and is a potential source of funding for new signage.</p>			✓
Proposal 13: A ranger service in all our national landscapes, part of a national family	<p>Several bodies within Cannock Chase operate ranger or warden services, for example, Staffordshire County Council and the National Trust. Extending a ranger service across the entire AONB would represent a new activity, requiring additional resources.</p>			✓
Proposal 14: National landscapes supported to become leaders in sustainable tourism	<p>This would represent a new activity not currently being provided within the AONB.</p>			✓
Proposal 15: Joining up with others to make the most of what we have, and bringing National Trails into the national landscapes family	<p>The AONB Partnership is a member of NAAONB.</p> <p>No National Trails pass through Cannock Chase AONB.</p>	✓		
Proposal 16: Consider expanding open access rights in national landscapes	<p>58% of Cannock Chase AONB is already open access land, comprising land in public ownership and/or common land. Expanding open access rights further across the AONB represents a new activity not currently being provided.</p>			✓
Living in landscapes				
Proposal 17: National landscapes working for vibrant communities	<p>The AONB Management Plan includes commitments to encourage and support local businesses to appreciate and utilise the benefits that the AONB brand offers to their values and operations (A4, B14).</p>	✓		
Proposal 18: A new National Landscapes Housing Association to build affordable homes	<p>No comments</p>			
Proposal 19: A new approach to coordinating public transport piloted in the Lake District, and new, more sustainable ways of accessing national landscapes	<p>The AONB Management Plan includes commitments to explore and promote alternative means of transport for those visiting the Chase (A3, B12).</p>	✓		✓

	The provision of alternative facilities such as secure bicycle parking, park and ride, installation of e-charging points, shuttle buses would require additional resources.			
More special places				
Proposal 20: New designated landscapes and a new National Forest	No comments			
Proposal 21: Welcoming new landscape approaches in cities and the coast, and a city park competition	No comments			
Proposal 22: A better designations process	Cannock Chase AONB does not currently have any proposed boundary amendments.			
New ways of working				
Proposal 23: Stronger purposes in law for our national landscapes	New statutory purposes for Cannock Chase AONB (nature recovery, health and wellbeing, economic and community vitality) would need to be accompanied by additional resources			✓
Proposal 24: AONBs strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, renamed as National Landscapes	New statutory purposes for Cannock Chase AONB (nature recovery, health and wellbeing, economic and community vitality) would need to be accompanied by additional resources			✓
Proposal 25: A new National Landscapes Service bringing our 44 national landscapes together to achieve more than the sum of their parts	Cannock Chase AONB is a member of the NAAONB - working with and contributing to the NAAONB activities, sharing advice and best practice nationally and regionally. Reporting, working with and subscribing to a new National Landscapes Service is unlikely to impose any additional burdens.	✓		
Proposal 26: Reformed governance to inspire and secure ambition in our national landscapes and better reflect society	The governance structure recently introduced for Cannock Chase AONB Partnership is broadly consistent with the governance reforms recommended in the Review. The Partnership should, however, consider its approach to diversity – of social background, gender, age, ethnicity and (dis)ability).		✓	
Proposal 27: A new financial model – more money, more secure, more enterprising	The replacement of the current funding model (Defra and local authority funding) with a new system of funding overseen by the new National Landscapes Service should not impose any additional burdens.	✓		

	The proposal within the AONB Management Plan to establish the Cannock Chase Landscape Trust (CIO) to generate business and community support is consistent with the Review Panel's recommendations for National Landscapes to be more ambitious commercially and in fund raising.			
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