



**Cannock Chase AONB Partnership
Meeting of the Joint Committee
Monday 15th March 2021 at 10.00 AM
To be held remotely via Microsoft Teams**

Members of the public can watch and listen to proceedings via webcast

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Item 3 **Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 11th December 2021**

Item for: Approval

Author: Ian Marshall, AONB Development Officer

Attendees

Members present

Cllr Frances Beatty
Cllr Len Bates
Cllr Victoria Wilson
Cllr Alan Pearson
Cllr Josh Newbury (observing for this meeting)

Representing

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

Officers

Ian Marshall
Julia Banbury
Nikola Mihajlovic
Sarah Bentley
Lauren Lymer

AONB Unit
AONB Unit
Staffordshire County Council
Staffordshire County Council
Lichfield District Council

Advisers

Mike Shurmer
Roger Broadbent
Paul Roberts
Andrew MacPhail

RSPB
West Midland Bird Club
National Trust
Forestry England

Guests:

Sarah Burgess CPRE Staffordshire

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 Cllr Beatty opened the meeting and welcomed new members to the Joint Committee.

2. Apologies for absence

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from:

Hayley Mival (Paul Roberts substituting)	National Trust
Gary Kelsey (Andrew MacPhail substituting)	Forestry England
Janene Cox	Staffordshire County Council
Richard Harris	AONB Unit
Glenn Watson	Cannock Chase Council
Julian Woolford	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
Jeff Sim	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
Nick Carter	Historic England
Mary Cope	Beaudesert Park Farm
Mark Kelly	Cemex

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 16th July 2020

- 3.1 AONB Guides. Cllr Beatty expressed concern that the Local Planning Authorities were playing lip service to AONB guides, such as, the Design Guide, and had declined to use this and other guides as part of their planning procedures and would like to explore this over the next few months and how they can be used more. Increasingly important that training is put in place. Julia Banbury confirmed that the LPAs are taking into account the views of the AONB Unit when responding to individual applications, and that she is referring to the guides in her responses. . Most of the authorities have issues around adoption and this needs to be taken further with the individual authorities.
- 3.2 Cllr Bates is aware of the situation regarding planning applications. He has requested his planners to make him aware of any planning applications that affect the Chase, and suggests that other members do the same. JB will alert individual Members if there are any planning applications in their area that raise significant concerns.
- 3.3 Landowner meetings. I Marshall reported that the AONB Partnership and SAC Partnership have held three meetings for public landowners and the emergency services since the last meeting of the Joint Committee. The topics were: 31 July – COVID. 3 September - mountain biking. 5 November - Grazing and the second national lockdown.
- 3.4 **Resolved:**
The minutes of the previous meeting are agreed as a correct record and are approved.

4. AONB Projects - updates

- 4.1 A report was circulated prior to the meeting and presented by I Marshall.
- 4.2 Roger Broadbent commented that COVID did restrict some nightjar survey and was mainly looking at impacts of disturbance. A new bird survey will be carried out in 2022. The main problem for nightjars is now birch invasion. I Marshall to discuss birch regeneration with landowners, and to report back to the next meeting of the Joint Committee. The initial findings from the Long-eared owl survey are encouraging.
- 4.3 Cllr Beatty asked who will be developing a local arts programme and that it key that we work with partners who have delivery in the arts. J Banbury asked for members to send her details of any art contacts in the area.
- 4.4 The Committee was also informed about a new project that will refresh the interpretation provision on the former RAF Hednesford Camp, which has received a £5000 contribution from the SAC Partnership.
- 4.5 Cllr Pearson expressed his support for the interpretation provision and that this would benefit the Chase.
- 4.6 **Resolved:**
Members noted the report and progress on AONB projects.

5. AONB Business Plan 2021-23

- 5.1 A report and draft Business Plan for 2021-23 was circulated prior to the meeting and outlined by I Marshall.
- 5.2 Cllr Beatty assumed that the preamble was acceptable to everyone and proceeded to go through the Business Plan page by page. In relation to the proposed work programme Cllr Wilson sought clarification about the proposed sustainable travel and improving the visitor welcome. I Marshall clarified that the AONB Management Plan aims to encourage more people to travel to the Chase sustainably and use the car less. The Chase is served by several train stations and it is proposed to improve the welcome for visitors through the purchase of information totems that offer a welcome, indicating circular walks and cycle rides and embracing the new Cannock Chase place brand. Multiple partners and organisations could be approached to help with funding.
- 5.3 Hazel McDowall commented that this was a fantastic plan with great ambition. As things are changing fast the Plan should be future-proofed to adapt to new announcements like the farming transition and additional resources for protected landscapes to deliver ELMs.
- 5.4 Cllr Beatty has been through the Plan and made small amendments. These included amending the risk register to identify the risk of communication as high.
- 5.5 Mike Shurmer praised the plan from the wildlife point of view, and requested that we don't just restrict conservation action to those species identified in Annex 3 but are flexible and allow for other species to be considered depending on future survey findings.
- 5.6 **Resolved:**
The draft AONB Business Plan 2021-23, with amendments, is approved.

6 Financial report

- 6.1 A report was circulated prior to the meeting and presented by Nikola Mihajlovic.
- 6.2 The revenue budget for 2020/21 has increased slightly due to the receipt of additional funding for the Environmental Land Management Scheme from Defra and NAAONB. The predicted outturn for the end of the year is anticipating an overall underspend of £9,934, of which £8,485 relates to the Sustainable Development Fund. AONB officers are developing new projects to ensure that this year's budget will break even.
- 6.3 Cllr Beatty asked why we struggle to spend the Sustainable Development Fund? I Marshall responded that many community groups were simply not functioning this year due to COVID. Several expressions of interest have been received but did not meet the criteria. It is desirable to retain the SDF, but its availability needs to be better communicated, and earlier to give community groups more time to prepare applications. Roger Broadbent sought clarification of the criteria and whether some of the unspent SDF money can be used to tackle the birch regeneration. I Marshall will respond separately on this matter.

6.4 Defra has not yet announced its grant for next year. The draft net revenue budget for 2021/22 therefore reflects no annual inflationary uplift on salaries but does make provision for incremental growth within pay scales, 1% on pension fund contributions and 0% on all non-pay items. Local authority contributions are staying unchanged for next year. Cllr Beatty commented that Local Authority contributions have stayed unchanged now for 14 years, and that this represents a reduction in real terms. This should be something for discussing with local authorities at a future date. It is to be hoped that at some point Defra will provide AONBs with adequate funding to deliver the Glover recommendations.

6.5 **Resolved:**

(1) Progress on the current net revenue spend for 20/21 is noted.

(2) The draft net revenue budget for 2021/22 is considered and agreed.

(3) The closing balance of AONB reserves at £56,126 is approved.

7 Dark Skies Project proposal

7.1 A report was circulated prior to the meeting and outlined by Julia Banbury.

7.2 This joint project with CPRE Staffordshire and the support of the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust aims to raise awareness and understanding of the value of dark skies and encourage ways to reduce light pollution in the AONB.

7.3 Cllr Pearson asked about the light pollution caused by mountain bikers night riding on the Chase. Cllr Beatty - Part of a wider issue around mountain biking that ought to come back to the Committee.

7.4 Cllr Bates and Cllr Wilson expressed support for the proposal and hoped that it could be progressed and involved children. J Banbury confirmed that we will be working with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to promote dark skies to families and local schools.

7.5 Mike Shurmer supports the project and hoped that there could be opportunities to promote night sounds and to include crepuscular bird like nightjar. J Banbury felt that this something that could also be incorporated into a follow-on arts project.

7.6 Sarah Burgess confirms that CPRE is very happy to support this project and highlighted an all-parliamentary group on dark skies that is presenting a report to government with a number of recommendations including more controls on lighting on planning policy. CPRE will help to promote the project with their contacts locally and involve groups like scouts and guides.

7.7 **Resolved:**

(1) To support the development of a Dark Skies Project for Cannock Chase AONB in order to improve the quality of the dark skies of this nationally important landscape and to offer advice on reducing light pollution

(2) To allocate resources to enable delivery.

8 Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMs) advocacy project

8.1 A report was circulated prior to the meeting and outlined by I Marshall.

- 8.2 Cannock Chase has been awarded £7,200 from Defra and the National Association of AONBs to promote the new Environmental Land Management Scheme with farmers and landowners in the designated area. An agri-environment consultant is going to be recruited to work alongside AONB staff to deliver the work before end March 2021.
- 8.3 Members were informed that since the report had been drafted, the Government had announced that National Landscapes had been allocated £50 million over the next three years (2021-24) to deliver a 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' scheme that will help farmers diversify their income streams and lay the groundworks for Environmental Land Management.
- 8.4 The exact nature of the role was being developed in the new year, but would have significant implications for the AONB Team.
- 8.5 **Resolved:**
Members noted the report and await with interest the forthcoming relationship with farmers.

9. Mountain biking on Cannock Chase

- 9.1 A report on mountain biking issues on Cannock Chase had been circulated prior to the meeting and was outlined by I Marshall.
- 9.2 Whilst most cyclists use Cannock Chase responsibly, there is growing evidence of misuse, irresponsible behaviours and pressures from the sheer volume of cycling activity. A number of areas of concern are identified, with considerable social and environmental consequences.
- 9.3 During 2020 the AONB and SAC Partnerships have brought together the major public landowners and emergency services to agree co-ordinated approaches to tackle these issues.
- 9.4 M Shurmer commented that the report lays out thoroughly the nature conservation interest, but highlighted to members that it is worth mentioning that protected species exist across the Chase outside the SAC.
- 9.5 Cllr Wilson highlighted that SCC land is extremely sensitive for wildlife, but that bike riders believe that they can ride anywhere and so she supports education of these groups. She is aware that some bike riders want extreme trails and asked whether more of these trails can be built? A MacPhail reported that Stile Cop is an area for extreme riders, but that they get bored and make their own trails. Forestry England is trying to make the red trails more extreme, but bikers always want to raise the thrill.
- 9.6 Cllr Pearson agreed with the report and how it presents the problems. He highlighted that the emergency services need access to deal with accidents and that car parking blocking roads is getting to be a real problem. It is an issue that needs looking at and policing properly.

- 9.7 Cllr Beatty asked that mountain biking can be brought back. At the end of the day our responsibility is to manage the Chase for ecology and wildlife, it is not to make it a playground and we have to deal with the problem.
- 9.8 R Broadbent is heartened by the report. Have to recognise the popularity of mountain biking and endorse the importance of the Chase for natural beauty, and be more understanding of what is desirable and possible. Most bird watcher concerns are around disturbance to bird nesting and the impact that unofficial routes have to ground nesting birds. Cyclists must keep to designated routes.
- 9.9 **Resolved:**
Members noted the report.

10. Cannock Chase business engagement

- 10.1 A report was circulated prior to the meeting and outlined by I Marshall.
- 10.2 One of the ways that the AONB Partnership is working to strengthen its relationship with local businesses is through the development of a place brand for Cannock Chase and the preparation of an accompanying sense of place toolkit.
- 10.3 Businesses operating in and around Cannock Chase will be invited to register to use the toolkit and the Cannock Chase brand and associated products. By so doing it is hoped that businesses will develop a stronger and deeper emotional attachment to Cannock Chase in their products and services.
- 10.4 **Resolved:**
Members noted the report and looked forward to businesses signing up.

11. Planning update

- 11.1 A report on various planning matters was circulated prior to the meeting and presented by J Banbury.
- 11.2 Welcome that she is being consulted on a number of pre-application enquiries.
- 11.3 Involved in discussions on the Commonwealth Games and raising issues around the potential for damage to the Chase from un-ticketed spectators and clarity is being sought on spectator and traffic management.
- 11.4 £1.5 million secured from HS2 for Environmental Enhancement Projects. Trent-Sow Parkland and Cannock Chase AONB HS2 Group has been impressed by the variety of projects submitted by organisations and local community groups, including improvements for biodiversity, access, and landscape. Cllr Beatty commented that the HS2 environmental enhancement projects are very exciting and looks forward to them coming to fruition.
- 11.5 **Resolved**
Members noted progress on planning matters.

12 Any other business

- 12.1 R Broadbent reported that he had written an article in West Midland Bird Club news magazine an article highlighting their concerns that the Chase is dying. Turtles dove, pied flycatchers and redstarts are all suffering due to the effects of recreation, with a plea to all recreational users to take responsibility for their actions and remember what Cannock Chase is about. Cllr Pearson supported this and emphasised that the Chase must come first.

13. Date, time and venue of next meeting

Monday 15 March 2021
Monday 12 July 2021 (AGM)
Monday 6 December 2021

All meetings to take place remotely via Microsoft Teams, unless otherwise informed.

PART TWO

The Chairman moved:

"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".

14 Running of AONB Joint Committee meetings

(1) Public participation

- 14.1 A report was circulated prior to the meeting and introduced by I Marshall.
- 14.2 Currently, the public can only attend and listen to proceedings of meetings of the AONB Joint Committee: there being no provision in the constitution of the AONB Partnership for the public to participate and speak.
- 14.3 In the interests of facilitating public attendance and engagement with the business of the Joint Committee it is proposed that public speaking is introduced, and an example procedure from that used by the Cotswolds AONB Conservation Board was presented.
- 14.4 Members supported the principle of a public question time at meetings, and that this should last for 15 minutes. Questions should be raised in advance of meetings, and supplementary questions should not be permitted.
- 14.5 It was also agreed that meetings are webcast for the time being.
- 14.6 **Resolved:**
- (1) Public speaking at meetings of the AONB Joint Committee is permitted.**
 - (2) That a procedure for public speaking is prepared and discussed with members for adoption at the March 2021 meeting.**
 - (3) Meetings continue to be webcast for the time being.**

(2) Request for resident representation on the Joint Committee

- 14.7 The Committee discussed a formal request from Stuart Haynes of the Save Cannock Chase group that they have resident representation on the AONB Joint Committee.
- 14.8 Members noted that residents are already represented on the Joint Committee by their elected local authority members, as well as by the Association of Parish Councils.
- 14.9 Members agreed unanimously to decline the request. I Marshall to draft a letter for the Chair to send in reply to the request.
- 14.10 **Resolved:**
That the Save Cannock Chase group is informed that their request is declined.

Item 4 Financial report

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

Item for: Information

Authors: Nikki Mihajlovic, Finance Unit

Sarah Bentley, Rural County

Recommendations: a) **Revenue Budget Outturn 2020/21**

That progress on the current net revenue spend for 2020/21 is noted.

b) **The AONB Reserve**

That the current balance held on the AONB Reserve is noted.

c) **Defra Funding Settlement 2021/22**

The update on the Defra funding settlement for 2021/22 is noted.

Part A

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

1. The Joint Committee in its role under the Partnership Agreement is responsible for:-
2. 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 2020/21 budget and its current, initial forecast outturn position.

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:

Revenue Budget Update 2020/21

4. 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 £160,791 together with the outturn currently predicted for the year. The predicted outturn for the end of the financial year totals £199,720, compared to the approved net budget of £199,720, giving rise to a breakeven position.
5. The latest position available for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) for 2020/21 is set out in *Appendix 2* with projects approved amounting to £4,078 in total. After the administration fee earned by the AONB Unit of £1,307 is deducted from the SDF Grant this left a balance of £7,685 which has been re-allocated to fund AONB projects. This is partly due to the impact of COVID with charity and community group staff and volunteers being on furlough, but also due to several of the expressions of interest we

received not being directly relevant to our core purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty and, therefore, ineligible for funding.

6. The latest position available for the AONB Projects for 2020/21 is set out in *Appendix 3* with projects approved amounting to £20,839 in total after utilising the re-allocation of £7,685 mentioned in the above paragraph from the Sustainable Development Fund.

The AONB Reserve

7. The balance on the Cannock Chase AONB Reserve currently stands at £56,126 for 2020/21. A summary of the Reserve is attached as *Appendix 4*.
8. 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.
9. These priorities are reviewed annually in December of each year.
10. It is anticipated that the balance on this reserve at the end of 2020/21 will be £56,126.

Defra Funding Settlement 2020/21

11. An update was received from Defra on the 17 February 2021 stating that they can provide reassurance that Defra fully intends to provide grant funding in 2021/22. Confirmation of individual grant settlements to protected landscape organisations remains subject to the department's business planning process, which is at an advanced stage. They are working to confirm funding allocations and are currently preparing urgent advice for Ministers.
12. In the meantime they will be working with us to put new grant funding agreements in place to cover 2021/22, and intend to have these in place for the commencement of the new financial year.

Equalities Implications

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

Legal Implications

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

Resource and Value for Money Implications

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

Risk Implications

16. 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*.

Appendix 1

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

Cannock Chase AONB Core and Project Costs

Predicted Outturn for 2020/2021

March 2021	Budget *	Spent or Committed to Date	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
Core Budget				
Salaries	131,910	121,319	130,610	-1,300
Training Expenses	1,510	50	100	-1,410
Travel and Subsistence	2,200	144	266	-1,934
Staff and Associated Costs	135,620	121,513	130,976	-4,644
Office Equipment	2,380	2,409	2,508	128
Annual Audit	400	-400	400	0
Volunteer Costs	500	0	931	431
National Liaison	3,000	3,156	3,156	156
Print & Publicity	5,220	3,013	7,798	2,578
Partnership Running Costs	9,000	9,000	9,000	0
Core Budget subtotal	156,120	138,690	154,768	-1,352
Core Programmes				
AONB Website	0	0	0	0
Annual Conference	2,000	0	0	-2,000
Core Activity (including monitoring, community involvement, etc)	9,240	1,637	11,518	2,278
Core Programmes subtotal	11,240	1,637	11,518	278
Sustainable Development Fund	13,070	1,307	5,385	-7,685
AONB Projects	12,080	19,158	20,839	8,759
Environmental Land Management Scheme	7,210	0	7,210	0
Total Budget/Initial Forecast Outturn	199,720	160,791	199,720	0
New Projects to be developed	0	0	0	0
Anticipated Forecast Outturn as at 31 March 2021	199,720	160,791	199,720	0
Funded By:				
DEFRA Grant				
Core	-125,520	-125,519	-125,520	0
Sustainable Development Fund	-13,070	-13,070	-13,070	0
AONB Projects	-12,080	-12,080	-12,080	0
Environmental Land Management Scheme	-5,210	-5,202	-5,210	0
DEFRA Grant subtotal	-155,880	-155,871	-155,880	0
Local Authority Contributions				
Lichfield District Council	-2,090	-2,092	-2,090	0
South Staffordshire District Council	-2,090	-2,092	-2,090	0
Cannock Chase District Council	-8,370	-8,368	-8,370	0
Stafford Borough Council	-8,370	-8,368	-8,370	0
Staffordshire County Council	-20,920	-20,920	-20,920	0
Local Authority Contributions subtotal	-41,840	-41,840	-41,840	0
Sales and Donations	0	0	0	0
National Association of AONB - Environmental Land Management Scheme.	-2,000	-2,000	-2,000	0
Membership Fee Income	0	0	0	0
Funding from(+)/to reserve(-)	0	0	0	0
Total Funding	-199,720	-199,711	-199,720	0

* Budget rounded to nearest £10

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

Sustainable Development Fund

Budget Update for 2020/2021

Mar-21	Budget	Spent or Committed to Date	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
Approved Projects				
West Midland Bird Club - long-eared owl monitoring	465	0	465	0
Staffordshire Wildlife Trust - wildlife garden	813	0	813	0
National Trust - orangery restoration	1,000	0	1,000	0
Cannock Chase Film	800	0	800	0
Then and Now Photo Project	1,000	0	1,000	0
Approved Projects Total	4,078	0	4,078	0
Admin Fees	1,307	1,307	1,307	0
Funds Re-allocated to AONB Projects	7,685	0	0	-7,685
TOTAL	13,070	1,307	5,385	-7,685

Appendix 3

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

AONB Projects

Budget Update for 2020/2021

Mar-21	Budget	Spent or Committed to Date	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
Approved Projects				
Brindley Heath Interpretation	3,000	0	3,000	0
RAF Hednesford	8,000	0	8,000	0
Dark Skies	731	0	731	0
SWT Woodland Sites Survey	6,500	0	6,500	0
Deer Road Deterrents	2,608	0	2,608	0
Approved Projects Total	20,839	0	20,839	0
Currently Unallocated	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	20,839	0	20,839	0

Appendix 4

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				-92,485	577	54,819
2020/2021	54,819				1,307		56,126
		9,134	7,673	27,409	-913	2,610	56,126

Item 5 Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan – progress on the delivery of the first 2 years of the Implementation Plan

Item for: Information

Author: Ian Marshall, AONB Development Officer

Financial implications: Delivery of the actions contained in the AONB Management Plan is funded through the AONB budget, and external funding contributions, as required.

Recommendations: The Committee notes progress made on the first two years delivery of the AONB Management Plan and is invited to make any comments

Background

1. This paper presents the progress achieved to deliver the first two years of the AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024.
2. The Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan sets out the agenda for the management of Cannock Chase between 2019 – 2024. Its production and review every five years is a statutory requirement of the AONB Joint Committee.
3. The focus of the Management Plan is on delivering the statutory purpose of AONB designation to conserve and enhance natural beauty. It includes an Implementation Action Plan setting out the actions that will be taken to realise the policies contained within it.
4. The detail that describes how we deliver the actions is set out in our Business Plan; the latest version for 2021- 2023 was presented and approved at the Joint Committee on 11 December 2020.

Progress achieved against the Implementation Action Plan

5. Appendix 1 sets out the progress that has been achieved by the AONB Unit and AONB partners against the 35 actions contained in the Implementation Action Plan.

Priority actions due to be started in 2019 (15 actions in total)

- 13 of the actions have been completed or substantial progress is being made, and a further one partially so.
- 1 action has not yet started (The need for the Cannock Chase Landscape Trust (CIO) is awaiting the outcome of the Government’s response to the recommendations of the Glover Review).

Priority actions due to be started in 2020 onwards (20 actions in total)

- 6 actions have been completed or substantial progress is being made, and a further 2 partially so.
- 8 actions have started and are partially completed.

- 4 actions have not yet started.

Achievements

6. Highlights of the achievements made against each of the themes set out in the AONB Management Plan is as follows:

Landscape Character and Planning

- publication of Building Design guide
- publication of Views and Setting guide
- publication of car park landscape principles
- powerlines undergrounded at Moors Gorse and Shugborough
- Environmental Land Management Scheme advocacy project
- support for farmers, woodland managers and other land managers through Farming in Protected Landscapes
- Highways Design principles under review
- design principles for HS2 signed off

Wildlife and Nature

- conservation measures for white-clawed crayfish and control of invasive Signal crayfish
- survey of County Wildlife Sites
- nightjar survey
- long-eared owl survey
- bat audit
- invertebrate audit
- support for Midlands Heathland Heartlands
- £192,291 grant from National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative to improve Gentleshaw Common
- initiatives for (re)introducing grazing on the Chase
- preparations for deer management strategy underway
- feasibility study for land exchange for heathland restoration

Historic Environment and Culture

- training for Chase Through Time volunteers
- publication of assessment of heritage assets
- preparation of heritage conservation, access and interpretation strategy

Experience and Enjoyment

- support for Cannock Chase Wayfinding project
- volunteer support for Fixed Point Photography, Great War Hut and Chase Through Time
- publication by the SAC Partnership of Detailed Implementation Plan for car parks and site users
- improved interpretation provision and visitor welcome at Brindley Heath, RAF Hedgesford and Marquis Drive Visitor Centre

Communities and Business

- preparation and roll out of Cannock Chase place brand

- preparation of resources for local businesses including sense of place toolkit
- e-learning courses in preparation

Governance and communication

- re-engagement with interested parties
- publication of communications review and strategy
- refresh of AONB website
- launch of AONB enewsletter
- establishment of landowner and emergency service group
- launch by SAC Partnership of Cannock Chase visitor hub

Sustainable Development Fund

7. Additional to the above, are the local community projects that we continue to support through the Sustainable Development Fund, including: long-eared owl survey; parkland restoration; information panels, eco and art therapy project, historical landscape change, bird boxes at Shugborough and Hednesford Hills Nature Reserve.

Overall assessment

8. Two years into the five year life of the AONB Management Plan, good progress is being made against the Implementation Action Plan. The next AONB Business Plan 2021 – 2023 will ensure that actions are further progressed. No risks are currently identified of actions not being able to be delivered.

Recommendation

9. The Committee notes progress made on the first two years delivery of the AONB Management Plan and is invited to make any comments

Appendix 1. Implementation Action Plan

This table sets out the actions that will be taken to deliver the policies set out in Chapters 4 to 8 of the [Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024](#). The actions are split into two parts. The first table describes the priority actions that will be started in 2019/2020, whereas the second table describes other actions that may be started from 2020/2021 onwards.

Progress against each action is assessed using a traffic light system: Green = action COMPLETED or ON TRACK TO BE COMPLETED; Amber = action STARTED / PARTIALLY COMPLETE; Red = action NOT YET STARTED.

Priority actions to be started in 2019

Actions	Lead and Key Partners	Policies delivered					Progress 19-20
		LCP	WN	HC	EE	CB	
A1: Prepare guidance on 'Building and Infrastructure Design in Cannock Chase AONB' which Local Planning Authorities will be invited to adopt.	Lead: AONB Unit.	19					☺ Building Design Guide published and approved July 2020, and LPAs invited to adopt.
A2: Monitor and report on the conservation status and needs of key species and their habitats in the AONB, including where they occur outside the SAC, and draw up actions to address identified threats.	Lead: AONB Unit.		2				☺ Activities carried out for white-clawed crayfish and nightjar. ☺ 19 County Wildlife Sites surveyed. ☺ Nightjar surveys supported 2019 and 2020 ☺ Bat audit completed February 2021 ☺ Invertebrate audit completed March 2021.
A3: Work with local authority transport and green infrastructure teams to design and provide safe, connected cycle and pedestrian routes into the AONB.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partners: Local authorities / Highway authority, SCC Active Travel				6		☺ AONB Partnership supporting Cannock Chase Wayfinding application (Feb 2021) to Sports England to connect communities in Hednesford with Cannock Chase.
A4: Support the establishment of the Cannock Chase Landscape Trust (CIO) and, through its business plan, develop ways of proactively engaging local businesses and community groups with delivery of this Management Plan.	Lead: AONB Unit, Key partner Officers Working Group					1 2 4	⊗ Not started during 2019-20. Need for CIO awaiting government's response to the recommendations of the Glover Review.

<p>A5: Re-engage with, and draw up an updated database of, interested parties in the AONB and maintain regular contact with them on matters of interest.</p>	<p>Lead: AONB Unit.</p>	<p>5</p>				<p>2</p>	<p>☺ Parties re-engaged in governance meetings and steering groups to deliver projects.</p> <p>☺ E-newsletter instigated as vehicle for regular communication (grown from 780 to 1090 subscribers).</p>
<p>A6: Work in Partnership with organisations currently using volunteers in the AONB and local area to identify ways that the promotion and recruitment of volunteers can be coordinated, and their inputs made best use of for different activities on the Chase.</p>	<p>Lead: AONB Unit.</p>					<p>3</p>	<p>☺ Supported and engaged with Cannock Chase Council Chase Up! Green Volunteer Network.</p> <p>☺ AONB volunteers currently focussed on Fixed Point Photography, Great War Hut and Chase Through Time.</p>
<p>A7: Use the Annual Conference to report to partners and the local community on the progress of actions contained within this Management Plan. Use this platform to fully engage with these groups and take account of their views.</p>	<p>Lead: AONB Unit.</p>					<p>2</p>	<p>☺ 75 delegates attended 2019 Conference, with very positive feedback.</p>
<p>A8: Develop a shared design protocol for recreation and leisure facilities, signage and promotional material, aimed at producing consistent high standards for use by all providers in the Chase.</p>	<p>Lead: SAC team. Key partner: AONB Unit</p>	<p>7</p>			<p>4</p>		<p>☺ Place brand for Cannock Chase has been prepared, which will encourage high quality, consistent interpretation and information materials.</p> <p>☺ Place brand being rolled out, for example, Brindley Heath and RAF Hednesford interpretation provision.</p>
<p>A9: Draw-up and co-ordinate dissemination of consistent messages about the significance and conservation requirements of sensitive sites and species in the AONB to key decision-making bodies and networks.</p>	<p>Lead: SAC team. Key Partners: AONB Unit, SCC CP, FC, NT, SWT, RSPB, NE. Key decision-making bodies and networks include Friends of Cannock Chase, Visitor Centres,</p>	<p>1</p>			<p>7</p>		<p>☺ AONB Communications Review (2019) and Strategy (2020) published.</p> <p>☺ SAC Team has prepared Cannock Chase Proud to Protect messages, which are being promoted on AONB website, Communications Strategy and Cannock Chase place brand.</p> <p>☺ Landowner/emergency services group set up to improve collaboration and co-ordination of actions and messages.</p>

	Destination Management Partnership and Staffordshire Parish Councils Association					
A10: Review and influence the content and delivery of visitor management plans and open space strategies surrounding the AONB to ensure they identify and promote sites, facilities and activities inside and outside the AONB boundary that will reduce the negative impacts of recreation on sensitive sites and species in the Chase.	Lead: SAC team		1		1 2	<p>☺ SAC Team has published Detailed Implementation Plans for Car Parks and Site Users within Cannock Chase.</p> <p>☺ AONB Position statement supporting the proposals published Sept 2020.</p> <p>☺ AONB team has published car park landscape principles (2021) to support the implementation of the proposals.</p>
A11: Develop the on-line/social media presence for the Chase, using this to promote its special qualities, coordinate information from partners and signpost to appropriate websites and other sources.	Lead: SAC Team.				3 5 7	<p>☺ AONB Team has refreshed its website, promoting news and work about the AONB Partnership.</p> <p>☺ SAC Team has created Cannock Chase visitor hub website.</p> <p>☹ AONB social media presence not developed</p>
A12: Work with local partners to ensure appropriate advice and incentives are available and suitably targeted to farms and smallholdings in the AONB.	Lead: Natural England.		4			<p>☺ ELM advocacy project (Jan-Mar 2021) is providing farmer insight and re-establishing farming contacts.</p> <p>☺ New role for the AONB delivering Farming in Protected Landscapes 2021-24 will provide support for farmers and land managers.</p>
A13: Identify and promote projects that enhance the landscape connectivity, biodiversity resilience and	Lead: Natural England. Key		10	9 10		☺ Support to Natural England to progress projects in Midlands Heathland Heartland.

heritage value of countryside and public open space around the Chase.	partners: Working with SCC and District Councils.						☺ £192,291 awarded from National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative to improve Gentleshaw Common.
A14: Assess updated historic environment information on non-designated features to prioritise sites for survey, condition assessment and monitoring to inform future management.	Lead: SCC Historic Environment Team			1			☺ Assessment of heritage assets published September 2020. This enhanced understanding will inform a strategy to manage, interpret and provide access to heritage assets in a sustainable way (see B9 and B17).
A15: Produce guidance on the significant view points and views, including historic views, into and out of the AONB.	Lead: AONB Unit.	8					☺ Views and Setting Guide published and approved July 2020, and distributed to LPAs. ☺ 2 sections of power lines have been undergrounded at Moors Gorse (2019) and Shugborough (2021)

Other actions, which may be started from 2020 onwards

Actions	Lead and Key Partners	Policies delivered					Progress 2020
		LCP	WN	HC	EE	CB	
B1: Explore with SCC Highways Department, building on good practice, the practical steps that can be taken to reduce traffic impacts through the AONB.	Lead: AONB Unit.	2					☺ Highways Design principles under review, due to be completed 2021-22.
B2: Support the work of the Forestry Commission and other woodland owners and managers to deliver both long term forestry/woodland design plans and short-term woodland management operations in ways which enhance the AONB's special qualities	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partners: Forestry Commission.	3					☺ Support for woodland managers will be picked up through new role for AONB delivering Farming in Protected Landscapes 2012-24.
B3: Prepare and publicise information, and offer advisory events, for rural non-farming landowners in the AONB on how they can help conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Chase.	Lead: AONB Unit.	5					☺ Will be picked up through new role for the AONB delivering Farming in Protected Landscapes 2021-24, which includes farmers and other land managers.
B4: Work with stakeholders and local communities to develop a phased reintroduction of livestock grazing to key sites to support sustainable management.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partners: Site owners		3				☺ SCC is beginning a grazing trial at Moors Gorse in 2021.

						<p>☺ NT has reintroduced grazing at Berry Hill in 2020.</p> <p>☺ The AONB team is working with FE to restart grazing on the Connecting Cannock Chase corridors.</p>
B5: Draw up a strategy and action plan for monitoring and managing the deer population in the Chase and engaging and informing the public about the need to manage the deer population.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partners: Forestry Commission and SCC		6			☺ Discussions started around scoping of the strategy began in Feb 2021.
B6: Monitor invasive species and support collaborative and targeted management to address them where required.	Lead: AONB Unit.		5			<p>☺ Activities carried out by partners for controlling invasive Signal crayfish.</p> <p>☺ Call made to partners through LM T&F Group for records of invasive species in 2019. Needs following up.</p>
B7: Develop a project to identify suitable heathland restoration areas on conifer plantations, acquiring land for compensation planting and planning a phased approach to delivery.	Lead: AONB Unit.		8			<p>☺ Feasibility evaluation of a land exchange to return up to 650 has of the public forest estate to heathland published 2020.</p> <p>Way forward for delivery of the project still to be agreed.</p>
B8: Through the Trent-Sow Parklands and Cannock Chase AONB HS2 Group, develop and influence design principles, mitigation measures and environmental enhancement measures for the HS2 route that will minimise impacts on, and conserve and enhance, the special qualities of the AONB	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partners: Natural England, Historic England, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and National Trust		10			☺ Design principles for HS2 signed off and endorsed by AONB Partnership in 2020.
B9: Building on the success of 'The Chase Through Time', develop a project to engage local communities by celebrating the AONB's cultural heritage and involving them in historic environment citizen science activities.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partners: SCC Historic Environment			3		☺ Heritage conservation, access and interpretation strategy due to be completed March 2021.

	Team & Historic England						
B10: Improve facilities at key visitor sites such as Marquis Drive to develop an enhanced visitor experience appropriate to a nationally important protected landscape.	Lead: Site Owners. Key partners: AONB Unit & SAC team.				4		☺ SCC has been successful with RDPE funding to refresh the interior interpretation at Marquis Drive. Due to be delivered 2021.
B11: Develop the 'Love Cannock Chase' project to promote the ways in which visitors and local businesses can protect and enhance the AONB's special qualities.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partner: Community Foundation for Staffordshire, SAC team				5	2	☺ Online e-learning training course about Cannock Chase AONB in preparation.
B12: Work with facility providers and attractions within the AONB to encourage visitors to arrive by sustainable means of transport through provision of information, incentives such as discounts and the provision of facilities such as secure bicycle parking.	Lead: AONB Unit.				6		☹ Not yet started.
B13: Work with healthcare providers to develop and promote activity and wellbeing programmes suitable for different groups, based on key visitor sites.	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partner: Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles, Cannock Chase					1	☹ Not yet started.
B14: Explore the development of an AONB quality mark for businesses within the AONB and wider local economy that support and help deliver the special qualities of the AONB.	Lead: AONB Unit					4	☺ Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark promoted through Sense of Place toolkit (published March 2021)
B15: Report progress with the new Ground Water modelling being undertaken by the EA and PWS companies to ensure sustainable abstractions.	Lead: Environment Agency. Key partners: Severn Trent Water, Natural England, Forestry Commission		4				☹ Not yet started.

B16: Monitor the condition of designated heritage features in the AONB to identify management requirements.	Lead: AONB Unit & SCC Historic Environment Record team			1			☺ Chase through Time volunteers have received training. ☹ Condition programme needs to be put in place.
B17: Develop and deliver sustainable management regimes for heritage assets with land owners, managers, decision makers and local communities through raising their awareness of the historic environment and its significance and providing them with support and guidance.	Lead: SCC Historic Environment Team. Key partners: Historic England			2			☺ Heritage conservation, access and interpretation strategy completed March 2021.
B18: Proactively work with Partners to plan for future land use changes ensuring that opportunities are maximised to support and enhance the special qualities of the AONB	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partner: County Minerals Planning team	6					☹ Phased restoration at Cemex quarry discussed. Discussions between RSPB and Cemex nationally.
B19: Increase awareness and appreciation of Local Geological Sites within the AONB amongst Partners and identify ways to coordinate their monitoring and management	Lead: AONB Unit		6				☹ Not yet started.
B20: Work with education providers to coordinate, develop and promote educational opportunities that allow every local child to understand, experience and explore the natural benefits that the AONB has to offer	Lead: AONB Unit. Key partner: County Education and Learning Department					1	☹ Discussions with SAC Partnership to produce education resource for libraries and schools. On hold pending re-appointment of SAC Engagement Officer.

Item 6 Cannock Chase Local Education Partnership Arts Programme Proposal

Item for:	Decision
Author:	Julia Banbury, AONB Landscape Planning Officer
Financial implications:	Allocation of £10,000 from AONB core budget, over 2 years
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To authorise officers to work with the Cannock Chase Local Education Partnership in steering development of a local arts programme, engaging young people with the arts and the environment of the AONB.2. To allocate resources to enable delivery.

Background

1. Members will recall reporting in December 2020 of the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) National Arts Strategy which it adopted at its AGM on 19th November 2020. The NAAONB National Arts Strategy aims to connect people with nature and culture, and at the same time help them to better understand the climate emergency and nature recovery. The strategy is founded on the evidence that art and culture programmes can be used as structured steps to help people to engage with the landscape in a sensitive and meaningful way, leading to pro-environmental behaviour, an appreciation of the natural beauty and thereby help with Nature Recovery.
2. Officers have been considering the best means for developing a local Arts Strategy, embedding arts delivery in the AONB Management Plan and delivering arts projects in the AONB, post Covid 19, bearing in mind the limited in-house experience in this area.
3. The AONB has been approached by Cannock Chase Local Education Partnership (CCLEP) to collaborate on a programme of arts development for young people from Cannock. The programme seeks offer opportunities for young people to experience the arts and culture working around themes of the environment, sustainability and cultural heritage. CCLEP are working with Arts Connect, the Bridge Organisation for the West Midlands aiming to improve the quality of the arts and cultural engagement for children and young people across the region. Arts Connect are providing funding and support to submit a bid to the Arts Council and are seeking to secure match funding investment in the programme from partner organisations.
4. Preliminary meetings with CCLEP and Arts Connect have provided the platform to start to shape the programme themes. Key themes would include messages around 'leave no trace', and there would be the opportunity to open up discussion around protecting wildlife and avoiding wildlife disturbance, understanding the landscape, keeping to existing trails, biking responsibly, enjoying the wild and tranquil. There may be potential to link this with the Dark Skies project. There is an ambition for this to develop into a long term programme.

Programme proposal:

5. The attached project outline Local Cultural Place Makers, Global Change Makers – a Partnership Investment Programme for Cannock Chase sets out the approach to the

programme, along with a budget estimate. The programme would be made up of three distinct areas:

A group of active young people leading the design and delivery of creative responses to local challenges prepared by the investment partners

A team of young people will be recruited to support the programme as a steering group of cultural place-makers. The group will take part in the activity themselves, as well as commissioning artists and creatives to work with other groups of young people and their families.

Regular activity animating local areas

Through commissions instigated by the steering group, the programme will develop activity that animates local areas.

Festival and event activity will be shaped around key themes, largely focused on environmental sustainability, using the arts as a medium through which to grow awareness of issues and actions with audiences.

Skills and qualification building

Young people engaging with either the steering group or more broadly with activity will be able to participate in [Arts Awards](#), a nationally recognised qualification.

Separately, Arts Connect have offered to assist the AONB in writing a Cannock Chase AONB Arts Strategy.

Resources

6. Overall estimated programme costs and AONB contribution:

	AONB funding	Total programme costs
Year 20/21	£5,000 (core budget)	£50,000
Year 21/22	£5,000 (core budget)	£72,000
Totals	£10,000 (core budget)	£122,000

7. In addition to a financial contribution from the AONB, as a co-investor in the Partnership AONB staff would attend Steering Group meetings (3-4 times per year), as well as input occasionally to commission briefs, festivals and events, and engaging with young people and schools. These commitments are considered reasonable and manageable.

Outcomes

8. It is anticipated that participation in this programme offers a number of benefits for the AONB including:
- Enabling the AONB to develop a relationship with the arts and cultural sector - co-creating a new programme that will help to deliver the vision of the AONB Management Plan
 - Connecting young people with nature and the natural beauty of Cannock Chase – increasing creativity, wellbeing and pro-environmental behaviour

- Using the arts and young peoples' creativity - to change perceptions and celebrate what makes Cannock Chase special
- Levering in resources – through investment and expertise

Recommendations

9. (1) To authorise officers to work with the Cannock Chase Local Education Partnership in steering development of a local arts programme, engaging young people with the arts and the environment of the AONB.
- (2). To allocate resources to enable delivery.

Appendix 1. CCLEP Partnership Investment Programme

Local Cultural Place Makers, Global Change Makers – a Partnership Investment Programme for Cannock Chase

Cannock Chase Local Cultural Education Partnership was formed in July 2017. The Partnership is a formal network of like-minded people who are committed to creating a sustainable opportunities to deliver arts and culture opportunities for children and young people 0-25 years, within the area. It brings together different sectors such as education from early years to University, Local Authority, and cultural providers to promote the value of arts, culture and heritage for children and young people, their families and other adults that support them. The Partnership is chaired by Louise Rose from Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles and its vice Chair is Kerry Hutchings from Staffordshire County Council Library Service. Since forming, the Partnership has delivered high-profile local festivals such as the EMERGE Youth led Festival, Arts Award (a national qualification), run events that bring sectors together, as well as providing CPD training for teachers and artists.

Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs) were formed as a response to the Cultural Education challenge set by Arts Council England in 2015, with over 100 LCEPs in the country, as key priority in responding to the localised challenges posed for young people in accessing a diverse arts and culture offer. LCEPs are supported by Bridge Organisations, one in each region, who facilitate networks, leverage support, and manage a Partnership Investment Fund to underpin long-term programmes to enable LCEPs to deliver activity for the benefit of their children and young people.

As a Bridge Organisation for the West Midlands, Arts Connect aims to improve the quality of the arts and cultural engagement for children and young people across the region. Its aim is to ensure that every child and young person can access and enjoy the arts and culture that the region has to offer. As part of this work, Arts Connect supports 14 LCEPs in the West Midlands.

Arts Connect works with a range of partners to ensure increased and sustainable investment is brought into the West Midlands for the LCEPs to deliver on each of their aims and objectives. This partnership investment is vital to the work of LCEPs and involves strategic support from organisations such as Local Authorities, NHS, Academy Trusts, Colleges, Local Authorities, Private Donors and Trusts amongst others.

2021 is a pivotal year for Cannock Chase. There is significant development in the area and the Chase's focus as a site for the Commonwealth Games means it will be in a national and indeed international spotlight in 2022. Cannock Chase is a place of strong local heritage and has vibrant communities, as well as one of England's finest landscapes, with 60% of the District

designated as Green Belt.¹ There are challenges though, with a recently declared poverty emergency and the County Council of Staffordshire, and Cannock Chase District Council, declaring a climate change emergency it is essential that the area is preserved for future generations, and that children and young people grow up recognising the value and heritage of what is on their doorstep, developing the aspirations to match.

'Local Cultural Place Makers, Global Change Makers' is Cannock Chase CEP's long-term programme supporting young people to take ownership of their environment and contribute to their sense of place. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic there has been an increased focus on families' immediate locale and this programme offers local children and young people the opportunity to be part of shaping Cannock Chase through arts and culture for future generations, whilst addressing global issues like climate change and responding to major international initiatives through the Commonwealth Games.

The programme will be delivered in the first instance over two years, and is made up of three distinct areas:

- **A group of active young people leading the design and delivery of creative responses to local challenges**

A team of young people will be recruited to support the programme as a steering group of cultural place-makers. The group will meet regularly and respond to real briefs from investment partners and will take part in activity themselves, as well as commissioning artists and creatives to work with other groups of young people and their families.

The steering group will be supported by Cannock Chase CEP to act as co-producers, co-programmers and facilitators for all activity. This co-agency model will empower the group, and grow children and young people's sense of citizenship, and aspiration.

- **Regular activity animating local areas**

Through commissions instigated by the steering group, the programme will develop activity that animates local areas. This may be supported by investment partners, or through showcasing work at other local events such as Rugeley Charter Fayre or the Brereton Carnival.

Festival and event activity will be shaped around key themes, largely focused on environmental sustainability, using the arts as a medium through which to grow awareness of issues and actions with audiences. Investment partners will be encouraged to support the young people's steering group through inputting into briefs, and agendas for these events.

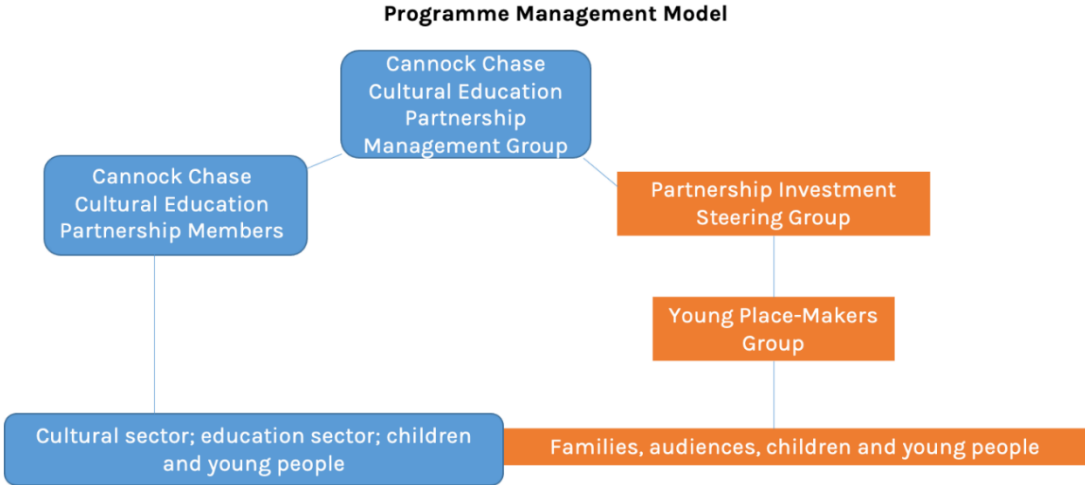
- **Skills and qualification building**

Young people engaging with either the steering group or more broadly with activity will be able to participate in [Arts Awards](#), a nationally recognised qualification which at its highest level contributes UCAS points. Arts Connect is the primary Arts Award delivery body in the West Midlands and will support Cannock Chase CEP to deliver this.

Investing in the programme

¹ https://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/corporate_plan_2018-2023.pdf

Arts Connect already have £25,000 invested into the development of this programme, meaning that every pound from other investors is matched. Cannock Chase CEP is currently seeking investors to support this programme and activate match funding from Arts Connect/Arts Council England. As part of investing, funders will sit on the steering group for the programme and play a role in shaping the activity that the young people’s steering group respond to. The Partnership Investment Steering Group will be made up of partner organisations who’ve invested funding into the work. They will report into the central Cannock Chase CEP Management Group.



‘Local Cultural Place-Makers, Global Change-Makers’ will address a number of key agendas of partner organisations, all with a key interest in making Cannock Chase a vibrant place to live, work and learn.

Cannock Chase AONB and the programme

(The Chase’s) role in sense of place, memory and knowledge and fostering cultural traditions that help make it the special place it is today.

A partnership between Cannock Chase CEP and the Chase AONB is an opportunity for collaboration around the central themes of environment and place. Engaging with an active group of young people around the central theme of “leaving no trace” on the Chase aligns well with the AONB Management Plan’s objectives² to *increase awareness and encourage visitors to play a positive role in conserving the AONB, and to be good environmental ambassadors.*

With representation on the Partnership Investment Steering Group, AONB will play a key role in shaping the briefs given to the young place-makers and ensuing that their outputs deliver against its objectives. Cannock Chase CEP see this being realised in several ways:

- Young people delivering activity directly on the Chase when Covid-19 restrictions are eased, raising awareness for local communities of the benefits of the area, as well as how to enjoy the Chase sensitively
- Supporting engagement with local schools through commissioning artists to develop cultural activity with environmental outputs, and a focus on biodiversity. Directly

² <https://cannock-chase.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/AONB-Cannock-Chase-Management-Plan-2019-24.pdf>

responding to the Management Plan’s objective to *Work with education providers to promote educational opportunities that allow every local child to understand, experience and explore the natural benefits that the AONB has to offer.*

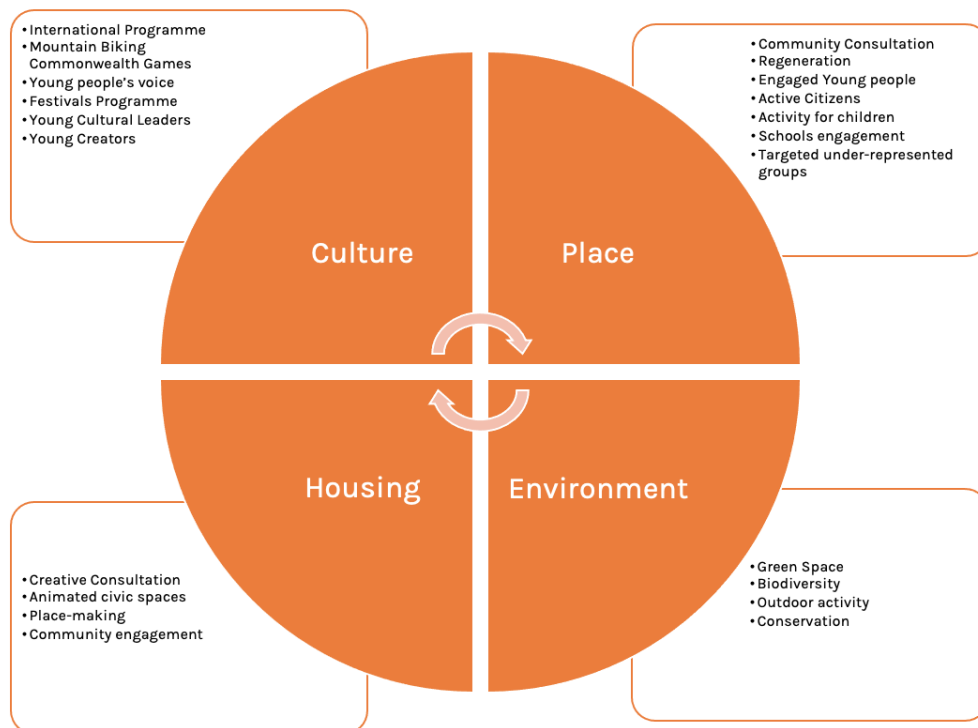
- Supporting growing and understanding the history and culture of the Chase through commissioning artists to develop creative responses which inspire families, and local communities, and in doing so responding to the Management Plan’s objective to *reinforce the importance and ‘specialness’ of the Chase and the need to protect it*

Despite the challenges of Covid-19 meaning that in the short-term, physical presence on the Chase may be reduced, there is significant scope to weave in key messaging to early artist commissions as part of the process – eg a digital marketing campaign raising awareness of returning to the Chase responsibly; or a design commission to support future messaging around biking on the Chase linked to the Commonwealth Games. This virtual activity can be shared online and significantly increase the reach of the partnership and the programme.

Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is one of England’s finest landscapes offering wildlife, open landscapes, tranquillity and cultural connections. Lying within the district, this presents a unique opportunity here to engage young people in nature and the environment, and consider the vulnerability of these to modern day pressures.

The activity is likely to engage 15-20 young people as a core steering group, and up to 2000 community members over the initial two years of the programme, through schools, family events and the final festival.

The investment sought from AONB to be part of this partnership is a minimum of £10,000 over two years, which will generate £20,000 of support for the overall programme through partnership investment. This equates to circa 8% of the overall project cost.



Budget projections

Cannock Chase PI				
	2021/22	2022/23	TOTAL	Notes
Income				
Arts Connect/ACE PI	£25,000.00	£36,000.00	£61,000.00	PI investment in year one/ proposed additional 5k match
SAC	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£10,000.00	
AONB	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£10,000.00	
Local Authority (Local, District and County)	£10,000.00	£5,000.00	£15,000.00	Cannock Chase DC allocated - Healthy Lifestyles budget allocation,
To be confirmed	£5,000.00	£15,000.00	£20,000.00	
Commonwealth Games funding		£6,000.00	£6,000.00	Pending community grants programme for Commonwealth Games Cultural Activity
TOTAL	£50,000.00	£72,000.00	£122,000.00	
Expenditure				
Programme Co-ordinator	£27,000.00	£27,000.00	£54,000.00	*£225 per day for 3 days per week assuming 40 weeks per year
Artist Commissions	£10,500.00	£12,000.00	£22,500.00	Range of commissions
Festival Commission		£10,000.00	£10,000.00	2 x 5k commission for Festival in yr 2
Festival Operations		£7,500.00	£7,500.00	Infrastructure for Eco-Festival in 2022/23
Commonwealth Games Cultural Event		£6,000.00	£6,000.00	Pending community grants programme for Commonwealth Games Cultural Activity
Weekly YP meetings	£1,250.00	£1,250.00	£2,500.00	£50 per week for 25 sessions per year
Materials	£4,000.00	£4,000.00	£8,000.00	
Marketing	£500.00	£2,250.00	£2,750.00	Higher marketing to include festival in year 2
Recruitment of YP	£750.00		£750.00	
Fundraising support	£4,000.00		£4,000.00	8 days support
Evaluation	£2,000.00	£2,000.00	£4,000.00	
			£0.00	
TOTAL	£50,000.00	£72,000.00	£122,000.00	
Variance	£0.00	£0.00		

Timeline

Partnership Investment Schedule	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	
Activity																										
Partnership Investment Steering Group established	█																									
Design co-ordinator role	█	█																								
Advertise role		█	█	█																						
Recruit and appoint Co-ordinator		█	█	█																						
Recruitment of YP group		█	█	█	█																					
Summer Activity - Digital/live					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Regular young people's group meetings						█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Commissioned work at local events							█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Commonwealth Games Programmed activity														█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Eco-Festival - co-produced by young people																								█	█	█
CCCEP events																										
Careers Event			█	█	█											█	█									
Tea Party - teachers, cultural and partner organisations coming together											█	█	█	█												
CPD Network with Stoke/North Staffs LCEP						█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Arts Award	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
External Events																										
Commonwealth Games																										
Commonwealth Games Cultural Festival														█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Rugley Charter Fayre			█	█										█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Brereton & Ravenhill Carnival			█	█	█											█	█									
Hednesford Festival					█	█											█	█								
Chase Pride																										
Forest Concerts																█	█									
The Wolsely Centre Family Day		█	█			█	█															█	█	█	█	█
World War 1 Weekend															█	█										

Item 7 Farming in Protected Landscapes

Item for:	Information
Author:	Ian Marshall, AONB Development Officer
Financial implications:	To be confirmed
Recommendations:	The Committee notes the report and is invited to make comments

Background

1. This report advises members on the announcement in December 2020 of Defra's new three year 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' programme (2021-24).
2. The programme will build on the engagement with farmers and other land managers and advocacy of the new Environmental Land Management Scheme we are currently progressing with funding received from Defra and the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) (the 'ELM Advocacy Project', running between January-March 2021).
3. The ELM Advocacy Project and Farming in Protected Landscapes programme will provide exciting opportunities for us to work with farmers and land managers to deliver objectives in the AONB Management Plan for landscape and nature recovery, heritage conservation, enhancing the visitor experience, and supporting businesses and communities.

Farming and land management in Cannock Chase AONB

4. The AONB designation, through legislation and guidance, requires the conservation and enhancement of this nationally and locally cherished landscape, recognising its inherent value to local communities and the rural economy.
5. There are very few controls over the way that land is managed in AONBs. AONB Partnerships do not own land and, therefore, rely on encouraging and supporting landowners, farmers and land managers to deliver environmental outcomes that conserve and enhance natural beauty.
6. Cannock Chase is unusual in that 64% of the area is in the control of public bodies and charitable organisations, including the local authorities, Forestry England and the National Trust. The remaining 36% is in the hands of multiple private farmers and land managers, mainly around the fringes of the elevated forest and heath core of the Chase.

The changing face of UK agriculture

7. The face of UK agriculture is changing. From 2021 direct payments (the Basic Payment Scheme) will be phased out in the lead up to the roll out of a new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELM) in 2024 which will focus on: improving the environment; improving animal health and welfare and; reducing carbon emissions
8. The National Association for AONBs has, through input to the Glover Review of Protected Landscapes (2019) and directly to Defra, pitched for a strong role for AONB organisations in the new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme. In the government's Agricultural Transition Plan published on 30 November 2020 (see extract

at Appendix 1) Defra has announced a new three year programme for National Parks and AONBs 'Farming in Protected Landscapes'.

9. The funding allocation is understood to be £22M in 2021-22, followed by £15M in 2022-23 and 2023-24 across the 44 protected landscapes in England.

Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme

10. In the information provided so far, the money is expected to meet protected landscape aims, 25 Year Environment Plan goals and recommendations from the Glover Review, and is also expected to support farmers.

11. The scheme will deliver funding through the Protected Landscapes bodies to support farmers, particularly upland farmers (75% of whom live and work in Protected Landscapes), to make improvements to the natural environment, cultural heritage and public access on their land.

12. It is to be delivered across two elements:

(A) Farm level projects to diversify incomes, prepare for our Environmental Land Management offer and create more green jobs.

- Support for farmers for delivering environment/landscape outcomes. Examples might include peat restoration, planting woodland, hay meadow restoration, creation of heathland and scrub, moorland management, enhancement of wetlands, and dry-stone wall repairs
- Support to farmers on areas such as carbon capture, business planning, and skills development including apprenticeships

(B) Wider infrastructure investment and projects supporting farmers and rural economies

- Infrastructure, such as better access, clearer and simpler signage, dedicated cycling/electric bike access – to attract more diverse groups of visitors (to farm businesses, camping barns, etc.) as well as creating jobs (e.g. expansion of landscape rangers supporting farmers and visitors)
- Strengthened public engagement with landscapes to attract more, and more diverse, visitors, improving mental health outcomes and better disabled access; walking routes to better connect landscapes.

Details of the programme

13. We had no knowledge of this programme before it was published in the Agriculture Transition Plan, and further information is expected before the end of March 2021.

14. The National Association for AONBs is providing views to Defra on how aspects of it could work. All AONB teams are in agreement that additional staff capacity will be needed to implement the programme, and it appears clear that this will be legitimate spend from within the programme budget.

15. Important factors:

- A budget allocation will be offered to Cannock Chase AONB (decided by Defra).
- Budget is likely to be split between elements A and B of the programme (may be decided by Defra or for us to decide?).

- Budget profile across the three years – possible frontloading with higher budget in year 1 creates real challenges.
- Delivery methods are currently unknown, but decisions would be needed on:
 - Eligibility
 - Priorities and guidance
 - Grant duration and conditions
 - Timing of application cycles/windows
 - Decision making on grant awards
 - Dovetailing with existing agri-environment schemes and existing advisers
 - Payments
 - Monitoring

Implications

16. Without any detail it is difficult to anticipate fully the implications of the programme in terms of: the impact on the AONB Team to administer and deliver it; the benefits for farmers and land managers, and; the benefits for the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of Cannock Chase and people's enjoyment of it.
17. However, the programme could potentially be transformative in several ways:
 - The AONB becoming the 'trusted partner' with farmers and other land managers
 - Raising the AONB's profile with rural communities
 - Supporting farming, jobs and the rural economy
 - Delivering environmental and health and wellbeing outcomes
18. It should be recognised that the programme will come with challenges. It will be a new work area for the AONB Team; farmers and land managers will be unfamiliar with the AONB and its Team and vice versa, and; there are likely to be teething problems with a new programme. The AONB Partnership, with the breadth of expertise and knowledge of its individual partners, is well placed to make this a success.

Recommendations

19. The Committee notes the report and is invited to make comments

Appendix 1. Extract from (pages 44-45)

The Path to Sustainable Farming: An Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-transition-plan-2021-to-2024>

B.6 Farming in Protected Landscapes

We want: To support farmers and other land managers in Protected Landscapes*, to help them diversify their income streams and lay the groundwork for our Environmental Land Management offer.

*The 44 Protected Landscapes include 10 National Parks and 34 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

We will: Provide support to farmers, via National Park Authorities and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty bodies, to help grow businesses, create green jobs, enhance biodiversity and invest in infrastructure to attract more diverse visitors to support local economies.

Farmers in Protected Landscapes operate in challenging agricultural conditions and are often very reliant on Direct Payments. At the same time, they provide huge environmental, social and cultural benefits.

In addition to the other policies laid out here, we are proposing a specific and time limited package to help farmers adapt during the transition. This programme will support farmers and land managers so they can work with Protected Landscapes to deliver environmental outcomes, lay the groundwork for our Environmental Land Management offer, and contribute towards the delivery of recommendations in the Glover Review of National Landscapes.

Scheme description

The scheme will deliver funding through the Protected Landscapes⁶ bodies to support farmers, particularly upland farmers (75% of whom live and work in Protected Landscapes) to make improvements to the natural environment, cultural heritage and public access on their land.

Eligibility

Farmers and other land managers in Protected Landscapes will have the opportunity to work with their National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. More information will be provided on this scheme in early 2021.

Payments

The scheme will use existing delivery mechanisms through Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Park Authorities, who have existing infrastructure and relationships across Protected Landscapes.

The spend each year would support delivery against two complementary areas: (A) farm level projects and (B) wider infrastructure and projects on farmland.

Farmers and other land managers will benefit from:

(A) Farm level projects to diversify incomes, prepare for our Environmental Land Management offer and create more green jobs.

- Support for farmers for delivering environment/landscape outcomes. Examples might include peat restoration, planting woodland, hay meadow restoration, creation of heathland and scrub, moorland management, enhancement of wetlands, and dry-stone wall repairs
- Support to farmers on areas such as carbon capture, business planning, and skills development including apprenticeships

(B) Wider infrastructure investment and projects supporting farmers and rural economies

- Infrastructure, such as better access, clearer and simpler signage, dedicated cycling/electric bike access – to attract more diverse groups of visitors (to farm businesses, camping barns, etc.) as well as creating jobs (e.g. expansion of landscape rangers supporting farmers and visitors)
- Strengthened public engagement with landscapes to attract more, and more diverse, visitors, improving mental health outcomes and better disabled access; walking routes to better connect landscapes.

Item 8 Planning update

- (a) Development management and planning policy**
- (b) High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2a**
- (c) Dark Skies**

Item for: Part (a): Information
 Part (b): Information
 Part (c): Information

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,
 2. Members to note the update on High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2a
 3. Members to note the update on the Dark Skies project

Part (a) Development management and planning policy

1. Since late November 2020 the Landscape Planning Officer has reviewed 25 applications, of which 2 were for amended applications in response to previous objections. 18 applications did not need a full response as there were no concerns to raise. There has also been consultation on three pre-application discussions, one of which is an on-going discussion and involved no change in response. The Unit was also consulted on a Forestry Commission Felling License Application.
2. The table below indicates applications where an objection was made and the outcomes to date. Full responses are available from the AONB Landscape Planning Officer.

Category	Summary of response	Outcome/notes
Planning Application		
CH/20/381 Land used as a pony paddock, field to the north of, Rawnsley Road, Cannock Residential development (60 houses)	The proposal to infill green space is a fundamental concern as if permitted this would adversely affect the character, quality and openness of the setting of the AONB and potentially impact on the AONB itself. The development has potential to be prominent in the landscape. Proposed changes to site elevations mean that development is likely to be locally prominent with rooflines seen above existing off-site vegetation	Awaiting decision

	<p>The density of the proposed layout allows no space for structural landscape to help assimilate the development into the landscape. Proposed tree planting species are neither ecologically appropriate nor could develop the stature to deliver longer term landscape and visual mitigation or habitat enhancement.</p> <p>The potential impact of light pollution on the AONB needs to be carefully considered.</p> <p>Impacts on the SAC requires adequate mitigation.</p>	
<p>20/33270/HOU</p> <p>Casa de Lune 32 Pool Lane, Brocton Garage with accom over</p>	<p>Application is for a larger scale, higher 2 storey garage with side façade directly on the road frontage than approved in 11/15995/HOU. This would be visually intrusive, dominate and be out of character with the street scene. Would have a negative impact on the density of development in the area and detrimental impact on the AONB. Mature trees would be affected by development, not acknowledged in the application.</p>	<p>Awaiting decision</p>
<p>20/33270/HOU</p> <p>Bracondale, Chase Rd Brocton Variation of condition 2 on application 17/26901/HOU</p>	<p>No issue with canopy</p> <p>Object to proposals to front wall- wall would be approximately 3m above the road frontage, with additional 1.8m high fence above: total height above Chase Road more than 4.5 m. This would be excessively domineering and out of character with this part of Brocton with detrimental impact on the local street scene and the character of AONB</p>	<p>Awaiting decision</p>
<p>20/32141/HOU</p> <p>66 Main Road, Milford Extensions and Alterations</p>	<p>Amendment welcomed as it distances the parking from the road frontage and allows space for mitigation. Highway Authority requested a requirement that ‘the visibility splays .. should be improved by reducing the height of the hedges’. This would reduce the efficacy of the hedge to deliver mitigation and its standing in the street scene. Request a modest scheme of landscape enhancement and mitigation behind the hedge.</p>	<p>Approved 29.01.21</p>
<p>20/00988/FUL</p>	<p>Area it is highly vulnerable to inappropriate development that would erode the special landscape qualities and natural beauty of the</p>	<p>Awaiting decision</p>

Land South of Parkside Lane Hatherton New field access and turning area	AONB. The application would remove hedgerow and introduce urbanising features with detrimental impacts. When considered in the context of approved development under 19/00701/FUL, this proposal would risk very concerning cumulative development of the area.	
20/33615/OUT Land Adjacent Railway Terrace Holdiford Road Residential (access only)	The density of development indicated on the Proposed Site Plan does not reflect the character of the rest of Milford, and the external areas offer little potential to soften the development or enhance the character appropriate to the AONB. The site is overlooked and would potentially detract from a well-used area at a key gateway.	Awaiting decision
20/33463/FUL The Paddock 182 Main Street Milford	Mitigation Planting requested resist any future proposals for floodlighting manage as this would have detrimental impact in this elevated location.	Awaiting decision
Pre- application discussions		
20/01823/PREAPP Upper Way, Upper Longdon 2 storey extension and reconfiguration of house	<p>Upper Longdon is an important gateway to the AONB, the site lies within the AONB less than 50m from the AONB boundary. It is important to ensure that development does not detract from the character of the village or the approach to the AONB.</p> <p>This part of Upper Way has low rise residential character predominantly modern brick bungalows with low rooflines of clay tiles. The property is currently well furnished with trees and shrubs that filter views of the house. Approaching Upper Longdon and the AONB boundary on Breretonhill Lane there are views towards the edge of the village with the roofscape and rear gardens on Upper Way seen on the horizon.</p> <p>The proposal is two storey with angular roofline and strongly contrasting colour palette. We are concerned that the proposal would stand out in stark contrast to the mainly mellow tones and more traditional style within the street scene.</p> <p>To sustain the area's natural beauty, it is important to ensure that future development is locally characteristic and distinctive in terms of its design, siting and the materials used.</p>	

	Please refer the applicant to the AONB Design Guide.	
Commonwealth Games 2022 Consultation on Application boundary	<p>The AONB remains very concerned about the potential impacts on the natural beauty and wildlife of the AONB from spectators, whether they be ticketed or un-ticketed. We also remain very concerned that more visitors will want to attend the event than either the ticketed or un-ticketed provision allows.</p> <p>We support CCDC's request to increase the area covered in the planning application boundary. We agree that drop off locations, temporary or permanent improvements made to walking routes, car parking areas and / or installation of temporary fencing to control pedestrian movement should all be included within the application boundary so that impacts are fully assessed and the proposals are enforceable through conditions.</p> <p>It will be essential to have a clear approach to managing all visitors and this needs to be enforceable.</p>	

3. The AONB Felling License application was submitted by the Forestry Commission for operations in Cannock Chase Forest. The application covered clear fell and restocking with conifers. The response requested:
- a. interventions to enhance potential for use by bird species favouring recent clear fell, such as nightjar, woodlark and tree pipit,
 - b. advisory regarding bats
 - c. greater inclusion of native hardwood content that would better support the semi-natural woodland and heathland habitats and associated wildlife of the AONB and enhance connectivity.
 - d. take the opportunity to enhance the character of the roadside experience through planting hardwoods on the plantation edge.
 - e. information regarding reference to restoration to grazed wood pasture and upland heathland (moor) as compensatory planting.

Part (b) High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2a

4. Members will be aware that HS2 phase 2A gained royal assent on the 11th of February. This means one of the two conditions attached to the release of the group's Environmental Enhancement Fund has been met. The Group requires the Department of Transport to sign off the Enhancement Plan in order to progress funding.
5. The group were happy with the 1st draft of the Environmental Enhancement Plan. It has taken a little longer than anticipated to get sign off for this draft from HS2, but nevertheless the document should be finished by 8th March, ready for submission to the Secretary of State.
6. Since the last Joint Committee meeting the Group has been consulted on design proposals for Early Environmental Works. It is anticipated that design engagement will now broaden and pick up pace.

Part (c) Dark Skies – project update

7. Members will recall the Dark Skies Project Proposal, discussed, and approved at the Joint Committee in December. CPRE's Star Count 2021 took place in mid-February. Due to national lockdown this was by necessity a home-based participation event. Working with CPRE, it was widely publicised in and around the ANOB. We have not yet had results from CPRE nationally as to levels of participation, but the weather was not ideal for star gazing that week, so we should be realistic in our expectations.
8. AONB officers reviewed the approach to the Sky Quality Survey in the light of national lockdown. Instead of appointing a consultant to carry out the survey we designed the survey in house, based on the advice of Bob Mizon, a dark skies expert, purchased Sky Quality Meters and have secured the help of volunteers in partner organisations help us to carry out the survey. We are very grateful to National Trust, Forestry England, and Staffordshire County Council for assisting. The survey is time constrained – to get the darkest readings measurements should be taken around the time of a new moon. Weather permitting the survey will be carried out in March.

Recommendations

9. (1) The Joint Committee notes progress made on planning matters since the last meeting.
(2) Members to note the update on High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2a.
(3) Members to note the update on the Dark Skies Project

Item 9 **Heritage Strategy**

Item for: Information

Author: Ian Marshall, AONB Development Officer

Financial implications: Project proposals arising from the strategy will be delivered through a combination of existing resources and additional external funding sources, brought to the Joint Committee for approval at the appropriate time.

Recommendations: The Committee notes progress made on the strategy and is invited to make any comments

Background

1. This report updates members on progress to prepare a heritage conservation, access and interpretation strategy for Cannock Chase.
2. Cannock Chase has a rich historic and cultural environment which includes archaeological remains, historic buildings and landscape features. The AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024 includes policies to both conserve the Chase’s historic environment, as well as connect communities with the Chase’s history and culture.
3. Heritage consultants, Fearn Heritage, have been engaged to develop a strategy that will present proposals to deliver both of these elements.

Methodology

4. The strategy builds on, and takes forward, previous work to inform our understanding of human activity across the Chase (Chase Through Time, 2016-18), and a 2020 assessment of the significance, vulnerabilities of heritage assets and their suitability for visitor access and interpretation.
5. It has been progressed through:
 - Desktop review of all relevant documents, published and non-published
 - Site familiarisation visits (restricted due to COVID restrictions)
 - Stakeholder engagement and discussions (4 workshops held during January with managers of attractions and visitor hubs, local community groups, landowners and heritage professionals)
 - Strategy and implementation plan development
 - Costing and funding analysis

Heritage Conservation, Access and Interpretation Strategy – structure of the strategy

6. The strategy will outline a broad framework for interpretation and access, setting out a series of themes and key messages to be conveyed along with ideas for styles and modes of interpretation. It will also include a conservation management framework setting out guidelines and principles of management. Strategic objectives and recommendations will be set for each aspect and the document will include a selection of project proposals each of which fulfils the strategic objectives and could be worked up into a detailed project when funding sources are available.

7. At the Committee meeting, Janine Young of Fearn Heritage will provide a presentation on the key elements of the strategy.

Next steps

8. The implementation of the Strategy will be taken forward through the new AONB Business Plan 2021-23.

Recommendations

9. The Committee notes progress made on the strategy and is invited to make any comments.

Item 10 Protocol for public questions

Item for:	Decision
Author:	Ian Marshall, AONB Development Officer
Financial implications:	None
Recommendation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the Protocol for public questions set out in Appendix 1 is adopted by the Joint Committee2. That the Standing Orders to the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership Agreement 2016 are amended accordingly

Background

1. All meetings of the Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee are open to the public unless they are excluded because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. The public have only been able to attend and listen to proceedings of meetings: there being no provision in the constitution of the AONB Partnership for the public to participate and speak.
2. In the interests of encouraging greater public involvement in the operation of the business of the AONB Joint Committee, the Committee on 11 December 2020 resolved that:
 - (1) Public speaking at meetings of the AONB Joint Committee is permitted
 - (2) A procedure for public speaking is adopted
 - (3) The Standing Orders to the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership Agreement 2016 are amended accordingly

Proposal

3. Appendix 1 sets out a protocol for public questions. It sets out:
 - Who can speak
 - When speaking will occur during meetings
 - The process for persons to notify the AONB Joint Committee of their intention to speak
 - How long each person will be permitted to speak
 - How responses to questions will be given
 - The conduct expected of speakers
4. Once the protocol is agreed, an additional short paragraph would be added in the standing orders along the lines of 'Members of the public may ask questions at a meeting in accordance with the Joint Committee's Protocol for Public Questions'.

Recommendation

5. (1) That the Protocol for public questions set out in Appendix 1 is adopted by the Joint Committee
- (2) That the Standing Orders to the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership Agreement 2016 are amended accordingly

Appendix 1. Protocol for public questions

Introduction

Formal legal responsibility for Cannock Chase AONB lies with the five local authorities that cover the area: Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase Council, Lichfield District Council, Stafford Borough Council and South Staffordshire Borough Council.

The local authorities (with advisors like Natural England, Historic England and Forestry England) work together as a Joint Committee to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB³ in the interests of local residents, landowners, businesses and visitors.

Meetings of the AONB Joint Committee are open to the public to attend, but are not public meetings. This means that meetings are held for the Joint Committee to conduct its business, in an atmosphere conducive to working, and that the public are allowed to watch and listen to proceedings.

The local authorities are committed to extend the level of public involvement in the operation of the business of the Joint Committee and agree to provide for questions from the public in accordance with this Protocol.

Who can speak?

Any member of the public can request to speak at meetings.

When will speaking occur during the meeting?

Provision shall be made for public questions in the agenda. The item shall appear next after the items dealing with apologies for absence, signing the minutes of the last meeting as a correct record, and the taking of matters arising from those minutes.

For the purposes of this Protocol a 'public question' shall mean the asking of any question in relation to the business of the Joint Committee and the statutory purpose of the AONB.

The time allowed for public questions will not exceed 15 minutes.

Notification of intention to speak

Persons wishing to ask questions must inform the AONB Team in writing by electronic email no later than 5.00pm three working days before the day of the meeting (cannockchase@staffordshire.gov.uk).

Each question must give the name and address of the questioner.

A question may be rejected if it:

- is not about a matter for which the Joint Committee has a responsibility or which affects the Cannock Chase AONB
- is defamatory, frivolous or offensive
- is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Joint Committee in the past six months; or

³ The statutory purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. In pursuing this purpose, account is taken of the economic and social needs of local communities. Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as it is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other land uses.

- requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

At any one meeting, no person may submit more than one question, and no more than two questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation.

Questions will be asked in the order notice of them was received, except that the Chair may group together similar questions.

How long does each speaker have?

The Chair of the Committee will invite those who have given prior notice to pose their question at an appropriate time. The questioner may speak for up to 2 minutes.

If a questioner who has submitted a written question is unable to be present, they may ask the Chair to put the question on his/her behalf. The Chair may ask the question on the questioner's behalf and/or indicate that a written reply will be given.

Responses to questions

An answer may take the form of:

- a) a direct oral answer;
- b) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

Any question which cannot be dealt with during public question time, because of lack of time, will be dealt with by a written answer.

A record of questions and responses shall be recorded in the formal minutes of the meeting.

Conduct of speakers

The Chair will have the discretion to interject if the speaker departs from the topic of their question.

Any remarks considered by the Chair to be defamatory, offensive or relate to an individual Member or officer will not be permitted and the speaker will be informed accordingly.

No facilities for presentations or visual aids may be used by a speaker.

During public questions, speakers must conduct themselves in an orderly manner or they will be asked to leave the meeting.

The Chair has the last say on any matter and can refuse to allow a speaker to continue at any time they consider fit.