



**Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
Business Plan 2021 - 2023**

**DRAFT V7. 21 December 2020**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cannock Chase AONB Partnership brings together local authorities, statutory agencies, voluntary and community bodies to manage the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 1.2 The single statutory purpose of the AONB designation is **to conserve and enhance natural beauty**. National guidance has clarified that *in pursuing this primary purpose, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment. Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.*
- 1.3 The Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019-24 sets out the vision for the AONB and the policies and actions required over the next five years to work towards it. The Management Plan provides a framework for everyone operating in the AONB and includes actions that many organisations may be involved in delivering.
- 1.4 This business plan sets out how the AONB Partnership itself, notably through its dedicated staff team, will operate to deliver its commitments in the AONB Management Plan over the two year period 2021 – 2023.

## 2. Who we are and what we do

### Governance of the AONB

- 2.1 The Cannock Chase AONB Partnership has the following governance structure:

AONB Joint Committee	Decision-making body for the Partnership including voting members from the five local authorities (elected members at Cabinet level) and advisory members from statutory agencies, landowning bodies, voluntary and community organisations.
AONB Officers Working Group	Steers and supports the AONB team and task groups to help implement the Joint Committee's decisions and supports implementation of the AONB management plan; may make decisions under delegation from the Joint Committee.
Task and Finish Groups	Bring together relevant partners to work with the AONB team to implement the management plan. Advisory and delivery-focused, report to the Joint Committee.
AONB Team	Delivery-focused team working to the Joint Committee supported by the OWG; works with the task and finish groups to deliver, monitor and review the management plan by coordinating activity with partners, leading project development and delivery as appropriate.

## The AONB Team

2.2 The AONB Team currently has 3 posts, one of which is part-time, making a total Full Time Equivalent of 2.6 FTE. The current staffing is:

- AONB Development Officer Ian Marshall, full time
- AONB Land Management Officer Richard Harris, full-time
- AONB Landscape Planning Officer Julia Banbury, 0.6 FTE

2.3 The team is hosted by Staffordshire County Council and based at their main office at Staffordshire Place in Stafford. Line management support is through the County Council's Rural County team; however, the team is accountable to the AONB Joint Committee and all work programmes and priorities are agreed through the Officers Working Group based on the business plan approved by the Joint Committee.

## National accountability

2.4 Core funding for AONBs is provided by Defra for the delivery of 'core functions' (Annex 1). The Defra grant is a financial contribution to projects, programmes and other activities in support of, *inter alia*, the defined purposes of the AONB designation, the provisions of the CRoW Act, the defined functions of an AONB Unit, and the locally determined priorities for the AONB as described in the AONB Management Plan, supporting documents and as determined by the Joint Committee. The Defra funding contribution is claimed annually on provision of a work programme and progress report.

2.5 The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) is the umbrella organisation providing a voice for the 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The charity in its position of oversight, provides strategic leadership, encourages collaboration, shares learning, and supports a progressive approach to delivery such that the natural beauty of AONBs is better valued and more secure at the UK level. It does this by supporting and developing a network of ambitious AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards and acting as a collaborative voice for the AONB Family. Cannock Chase AONB is a member of the NAAONB. The NAAONB collates a set of performance indicators for all AONBs that it reports annually to Defra.

## 3. Where we are trying to get to

### Our vision

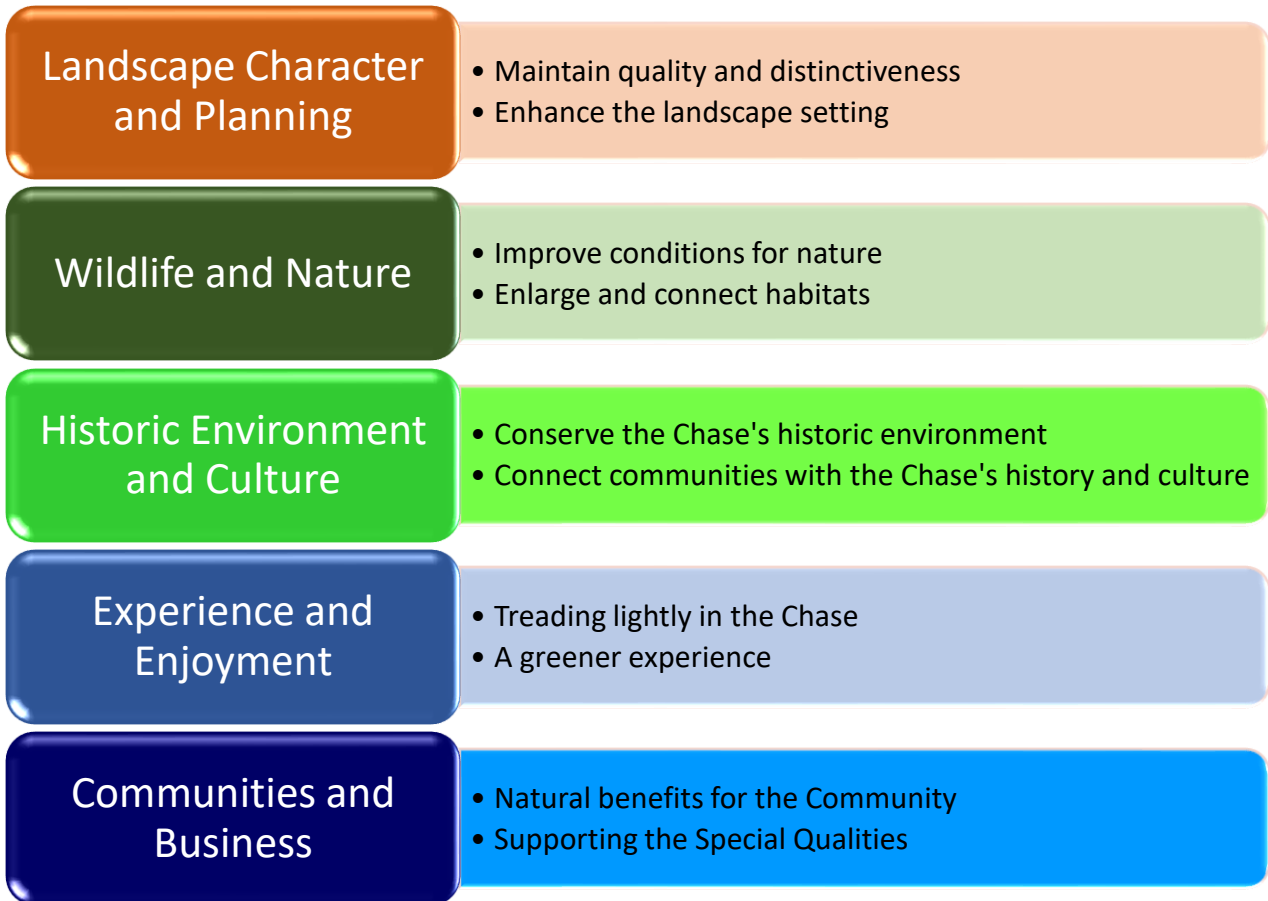
3.1 The Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024 sets out a vision for the AONB in 20 years' time for everyone to work towards:

*'By 2039, the landscapes, habitats and heritage of Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be in good condition through positive management, with standards and facilities befitting their national and international importance. There will be high levels of connectivity between the AONB and its surrounds through its landscapes, habitats, heritage*

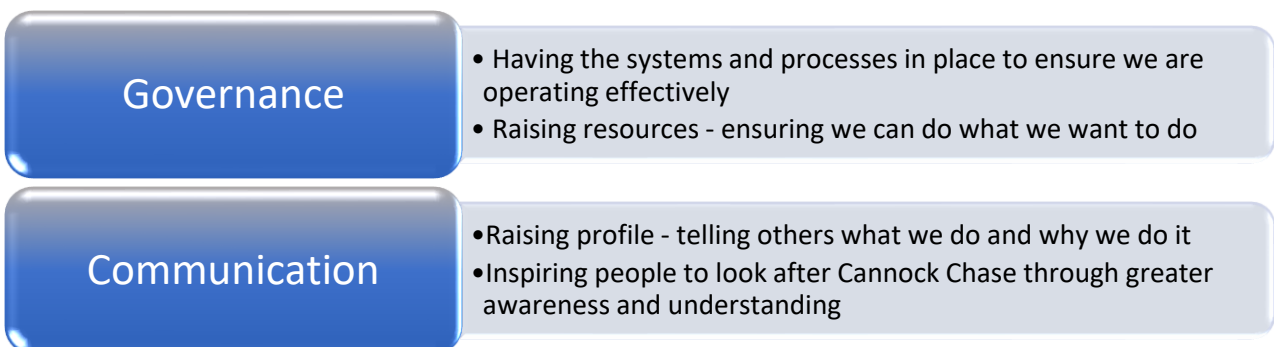
*and cultural landscapes and communities. The natural benefits of the AONB will have a positive impact on those who experience and enjoy the Chase whether from local communities or further afield and these communities will in turn care for, feel pride in and celebrate the AONB'.*

### **Our themes and priority objectives**

3.2 To deliver our vision we have five themes and ten priority objectives:



3.3 To enable us to implement our vision and objectives also requires effective governance and communication:



## Delivery

- 3.4 The delivery of our strategic objectives is set out in an indicative work programme agreed by the AONB Joint Committee (Annex 2).
- 3.5 The programme includes a number of major AONB Projects which will require external funding contributions to proceed (Annex 3). These are listed together with an indication of their costs.

## 4. How we will get there

### The operating context

- 4.1 The AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024 anticipated a number of challenges for Cannock Chase AONB over the five years of its life:
  - Climate change – improving the resilience of habitats and species to cope with climate projections
  - Housing development – ensuring that new development within and close to the AONB is sensitive to and enhances landscape character, as well as putting in place measures to mitigate the anticipated increase in recreational demand
  - High Speed 2 – mitigating the impacts of the proposed route on the setting of the AONB, views, landscape character and habitat connectivity
  - Commonwealth Games 2022 – leaving a lasting positive legacy on the AONB and its special qualities
  - Brexit and new arrangements for environmental support – preparing for the switch of agricultural support to payment for public goods by the end of the plan period.
- 4.2 We will continue to concentrate our attention to these challenges. There are a number of other areas to which we also need to respond and devote our energies:
  - supporting the recovery of nature, and the response of the AONB family through the Colchester Declaration 2019
  - managing the increased demand for access to the outdoors and nature (as witnessed by the unprecedented number of visitors to Cannock Chase during the COVID pandemic)
  - using the arts to engage people with landscape and nature, and transposing the NAAONB Art in the Landscape national strategy into local action on Cannock Chase
  - protecting and celebrating the Chase’s rich cultural and historic environment
  - implementing the recommendations of the Glover Review of Designated Landscapes, and the Government’s response.

We will be flexible in our approach to meet all of these and other challenges.

### **Corporate risk**

- 4.3 The AONB Team prepares a risk register which is reviewed periodically (Annex 4). This allows us to monitor and respond to potential risks in our day-to-day activities and project work.

### **Monitoring and review**

- 4.4 Individual actions contained within the work programme will be brought before the Joint Committee for information or decision as and when appropriate. Progress on the delivery of the overall business plan will be reported to the Joint Committee annually allowing the Committee to assess the efficacy of actions taken and to review the work programme in the light of changing circumstances. Papers and minutes of all Joint Committee meetings will be freely available on the Cannock Chase AONB website. Our main achievements will be reported in the Cannock Chase Annual Review.

## **5. How we will resource it**

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

### **Core funding**

- 5.2 Core funding covers essential activities to run the AONB partnership and are set out by Defra. They include staff costs, partnership running costs, management plan and monitoring. AONB funding levels are based on a national funding formula and Defra provides grant in aid to meet 75% of the core costs and lower contributions towards other costs. The remaining 25% of the core costs is provided by the local authorities based on a formula which takes into account the proportion of the AONB within their administrative areas.
- 5.3 The grant is currently allocated on an annual basis, pending the announcement of the Government's response to the Glover Review of designated landscapes. The predicted allocation of funding over the next two financial years is set out in Annex 5, and assumes the continuation of the current level of funding with small allowances for inflationary increases. The level of grant support is yet to be confirmed by Defra.

### **Sustainable Development Fund**

- 5.4 The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) is a sum of money within the Defra single pot that the Partnership can allocate as grants to third parties to support projects that contribute to AONB purposes, with match funds either as financial or in-kind contributions. The fund is widely promoted and applications for funding are considered by a grants panel which includes a voting member of the Joint Committee and representatives from the

business, community and recreation sectors. The AONB team draws 10% from the fund to cover the costs of administration.

- 5.5 The SDF has typically been held at around £20,000. In recent years it has been difficult to find sufficient projects that meet the criteria to fund. In 2020/21, therefore, the Fund was reduced to £13,069, and the remainder reallocated as pump-priming money for AONB project development. The SDF would then be targeted at local community projects, with more strategic projects being funded via the single pot. The uptake of the SDF will continue to be monitored.

### **Project development**

- 5.6 Many of the actions identified in the work programme can be delivered within the existing budget and resources of the AONB. Some, however, will require additional funding to proceed. The single pot may be allocated for any matched funding contribution for funding bids, or additionally drawn from the AONB reserve. This will become clear as the development work proceeds and proposals will be brought to the Joint Committee for approval at the appropriate time. Projects are therefore indicative at this stage.



## Annex 1. DEFRA-AONB funded activities

### Background/purpose of the Grant

The purpose of the Grant is to enable the Grant Recipient, pursuant to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and other applicable legislation to initiate and carry out activities (including any specific projects or programmes) that are consistent with its statutory duties and reasonably required to achieve its statutory purposes and in the exercise of its relevant powers and functions, taking into account the following: Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 provides for the adoption, publication and review of AONB management plans and other types of plan the purpose of which is to define how the purposes and functions of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are to be achieved. The Defra grant to AONB partnerships and Conservation Boards is a financial contribution to projects, programmes and other activities in support of, *inter alia*, the defined purposes of the AONB designation, the provisions of the CRoW Act, the defined functions of an AONB Unit, the defined statutory purposes and duties of the Conservation Boards and the locally determined priorities for the AONB as described in the AONB Management Plan, supporting documents and as determined by the Local Joint Advisory, Joint Committee or Conservation Board.

### Funded Activities

The Funded Activities are activities which enable the Grant Recipient to comply with its obligations in accordance with the law, including supporting the purposes for which the AONB was designated, the statutory purposes and duty given to the Conservation Boards and the activities and policies set out in the Management Plan, supporting documents and as determined by the Local Joint Advisory, Joint Committee or Conservation Board from time to time.

<b>Core functions of an AONB staff unit</b>
a) Developing reviewing, preparing and publishing the AONB vision and the CRoW Act AONB Management Plan
b) Promoting the AONB vision and management plan to help distinguish the AONB from adjacent countryside
c) Advising upon, facilitating and co-ordinating implementation by others of the Management Plan
d) Advising Local Authorities on their activities within AONBs, to encourage them to go beyond normal levels of service (attain the highest possible standards) in countryside management
e) Monitoring and reporting on progress against AONB Management Plan targets
f) Monitoring AONB landscape condition
g) Accessing resources for management activities
h) Working with and contributing to the NAAONB activities, sharing advice and best practice nationally and regionally
i) Providing a management role to co-ordinate AONB protection through the actions of the AONB unit, the AONB partnership and other partners at a local and strategic level
j) Developing an involvement by the community in the management of the AONB
k) Providing landscape related planning advice

## Annex 2. Work programme

\*\*is used to indicate those actions with budgetary implications\*\*, and highlighted in Annex 3.

Actions are referenced against AONB Management Plan policy and action numbers.

Actions led by the AONB Unit and/or Task and Finish Group leads are identified (HE – Historic Environment, LM – Land Management and Biodiversity, LP – Landscape and Planning, VM – Visitor Management).

Lead AONB Officers are identified for each action (DO – Development Officer, LMO – Land Management Officer, LPO – Landscape Planning Officer).

<b>Landscape Character and Planning</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain quality and distinctiveness</li> <li>• Enhance the landscape setting</li> </ul>						
<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key milestones</b>	<b>AONB policy / action Nos.</b>	<b>T&amp;F Group Lead</b>	<b>AONB Team Lead</b>	<b>By when</b>
Encourage landscape-led development	Monitor the effectiveness of our planning protocol with local planning authorities	Report to Joint Committee	LCP1	LP	LPO	Annually
	Input landscape advice to planning policy and development management	Responses to consultations	LCP1	LP	LPO	As required
	Promote and disseminate AONB Design and Views and Setting guidance amongst elected members, officers and developers	Training events held	LCP1, A1, A15	LP	LPO	Annually
	Represent the AONB in discussions around the Commonwealth Games to ensure that impacts are minimised, and the legacy is maximised	Engagement in meetings. Response to consultations	LCP1	LP	LPO	As required
	Provide landscape design input to HS2 enabling works	Responses to consultations	LCP1	LP	LPO	As required
Reduce traffic and highways impacts	Work with SCC Highways to update the AONB Highways Design Guide 2005	Refreshed Design Guide published and distributed	LCP2, B1	LP	LPO	2021-22, Q2

		to relevant partners and contractors				
Improve the quality and experience of the night skies	**Work with CPRE Staffordshire and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to develop a Dark Skies Project**	Project approved  Light pollution assessment undertaken  Good lighting guide produced  Star count undertaken by volunteers	LCP1, LCP9, A1	LP	LPO	2021-22, Q1
Protect and enhance views within and from the AONB	Work with statutory undertakers to explore opportunities for undergrounding powerlines in the AONB	Removal of a kilometre of overhead lines at Shugborough Estate to restore the historic character of this iconic Grade I listed park  Further opportunities identified	LCP8	LP	LPO	Ongoing
Encourage and support agricultural land management that contributes to the special qualities of the AONB	Continue to foster links with the farmer network and encourage uptake of Countryside Stewardship following the conclusion of the Environmental Land Management Scheme National Landscapes advocacy project (2020-21), and during the Farming in Protected Landscapes theme of the Government's new farming policy (2021-24)	Network meetings  Countryside Stewardship applications submitted	LCP4, LCP5, A12	LP LM	LPO, LMO	Ongoing
Monitor the condition of the landscape	Support Fixed Point Photography volunteers to monitor 56 key views twice a year, and upload the results onto the AONB website	Photos taken and uploaded	LCP1-10	LP	LPO	Biannually
	Hold an interim review with volunteers	Review meeting held	LCP1-10	LP	LPO	Annually

	**Work with partners to prepare landscape visualisations of options for future landscape change**	Visualisations prepared.	LCP1-10	LP, LM, HE, VM	LPO, DO, LMO	2021-22, Q2
<b>Wildlife and Nature</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve conditions for nature</li> <li>• Enlarge and connect habitats</li> </ul>						
<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key milestones</b>	<b>AONB policy / action Nos.</b>	<b>T&amp;F Group Lead</b>	<b>AONB Team Lead</b>	<b>By when</b>
Priority habitat recovery (woodland)	Work with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and landowners to deliver recommended conservation measures arising from assessment of woodland County Wildlife Sites carried out in 2020-21	All landowners advised, and conservation measures implemented	WN2, A2	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q3
Priority habitat recovery (wood pasture)	**Work with Natural England, partners and landowners to deliver Midlands Heathland Heartland Initiative (Project 1 Wood pasturescape)**	Delivery programmes underway	WN8, WN9, B7, A13	LM	LMO, LPO, DO	Ongoing
Priority habitat recovery (heathland)	**Work with Natural England, partners and landowners to deliver Midlands Heathland Heartland Initiative (including project 2 Public Forest Estate Land Exchange)**	Delivery programmes underway	WN8, WN9, B7, A13	LM	LMO, LPO, DO	Ongoing
	Monitor delivery of habitat and access improvements on Gentleshaw Common SSSI through the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative	Receipt of monitoring reports	WN3, A2	LM	LMO	Ongoing
	Work with landowners and Natural England to reintroduce livestock grazing to key sites, promoting the reasons and benefits to local communities	Grazing reintroduced at key sites, including Connecting Cannock Chase corridors	WN3, B4	LM	DO, LMO, LPO	Ongoing

Priority habitat recovery (wetlands)	**Develop and implement wetland restoration programme including Cannock Chase springs audit, peatland inventory, Sher Brook restoration programme, Sher Brook hydrological monitoring**	Programme developed and funded.	WN2, WN4, A2	LM	LMO	2022-23, Q4
Priority habitat recovery (grasslands)	**Develop and implement grassland inventory**	Preparation of inventory identifying all remaining unimproved grasslands	WN2, A2	LM	LMO	2022-23, Q4
Priority species recovery	**Support the West Midland Bird Club to carry out the 2022 Cannock Chase Bird Survey**	Publication of quinquennial bird survey	WN2, A2	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q4
	**Work with partners and landowners to deliver recommended conservation improvements arising from past surveys and audits for:	All landowners advised, and conservation measures implemented	WN2, A2	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q4
	Crayfish Bats Invertebrate groups Nightjars Long-eared owls					
	**Develop and implement Adder survey**	Publication of survey findings	WN2, A2	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q4
	**Develop and implement key invertebrate surveys**	Publication of survey findings	WN2, A2	LM	LMO	2022-23, Q4
	**Development and implement early successional species survey**	Publication of survey findings	WN2, A2	LM	LMO	2022-23, Q4
	Survey remaining woodland County Wildlife Sites not surveyed in 2019-20	Sites surveyed	WN2, A2	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q1
	Work with Woodland Trust and volunteers to improve our knowledge and understanding of veteran trees	Veteran tree records	WN2, A2	LM, LP, HE	LMO, LPO	From 2021-22
Balance the needs of a healthy deer population, with	Work with landowners to prepare a deer management strategy and action plan	Publication of deer management strategy and action plan	WN6, B5	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q2

habitats, property owners and the public						
Control invasive species	Prepare an audit of invasive weeds, pests and diseases	Audit completed	WN5, B6	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q3
	Share information with landowners to inform land management decisions and support development of collaborative approaches	Information shared	WN5, B6	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q4
Raise awareness and appreciation of Local Geological Sites	Work with partners and landowners to deliver recommended conservation measures arising from assessment of Local Geological sites carried out in 2020-21	All landowners advised, and conservation measures implemented	WN7, B19	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q2
<b>Historic Environment and Culture</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve the Chase's historic environment</li> <li>• Connect communities with the Chase's history and culture</li> </ul>						
<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key milestones</b>	<b>AONB policy / action Nos.</b>	<b>T&amp;F Group Lead</b>	<b>AONB Team Lead</b>	<b>By when</b>
Improve the condition of heritage assets	**Work with landowners and Historic England to develop and implement conservation and enhancement measures arising from the Chase Through Time strategy (2020)**	All landowners advised, and conservation measures implemented	HC2, B17	HE	LMO	From 2021-22
	**Work with landowners to consolidate surviving OS trig points**	Trig points consolidated	HC2, B17	HE	LMO	2021-22, Q4
Raise awareness and understanding of the Chase's history and culture	**Work with landowners, Historic England and visitor centres/hubs/attractions to celebrate the AONB's cultural heritage through improved access and interpretation measures arising from the Chase Through Time strategy (2020)**	Funding secured and measures implemented	HC3, B9	HE	LMO	From 2021-22
Monitor the condition of the historic environment	Work with Historic England to support, co-ordinate volunteer activity to locate and assess the	Number of monuments assessed	HC1, B16	HE	LMO	Ongoing

	condition of the 7 Scheduled Monuments in the AONB	Recommended management actions communicated to landowners				
	Work with the National Trust to support, co-ordinate volunteer activity to locate and assess the condition of priority non-designated heritage assets in the AONB	Number of heritage assets assessed  Recommended management actions communicated to landowners	HC1, A14	HE	LMO	Ongoing

### Experience and enjoyment

- Treading lightly in the Chase
- A greener experience

Priorities	Action	Key milestones	AONB policy / action Nos.	T&F Group Lead	AONB Team Lead	By when
Connect people with the landscape, heritage and wildlife of Cannock Chase	**Organise and run an annual Cannock Chase Walk and Ride Festival**	Festival held	EE3, EE5	VM	DO	Annually
	**Work with the Ramblers and SAC Partnership to review and refresh AONB promoted walking routes (X9)**	Leaflets re-published	EE4, EE5	VM	DO	2021-22, Q4
	**Work with the British Horse Society to review and refresh AONB promoted horse riding routes (X2)**	Leaflets re-published	EE4, EE5	VM	DO	2021-22, Q4
	Prepare and publish with partners Explore Cannock Chase leaflet	Leaflet published	EE4, EE5	VM	DO	2021-22, Q2
	**Work with SCC and SAC Partnership to refresh RAF Hednesford Interpretation panels, leaflet and digital information**	Panels and leaflets refreshed and installed	EE4, EE5	VM	DO	2021-22, Q4

	**Develop and distribute audio-visual presentation**	Presentation produced and used in key locations	EE4, EE5	VM	DO	2021-22, Q4
	**Develop and distribute through retail an AONB souvenir guidebook**	Guidebook published and for sale in retail outlets	EE4, EE5	VM	DO	2021-22, Q4
Encourage visitors to Cannock Chase to travel more sustainably	**Utilising the Cannock Chase place brand design work with train operators, local councils and SAC Partnership to install artwork for totems and posters located at train stations, introducing visitors to the AONB and the network of trails for walkers and cyclists from each station (Stafford, Rugeley, Hednesford and Cannock)**	Totems installed	EE6, B12	VM	DO	Ongoing
Improve the visitor experience of Cannock Chase	Support the SAC Partnership to implement car park and site user implementation plans including improvements to car parks, interpretation provision, highways infrastructure such as welcome and gateway signage, reducing sign-clutter, and improvements to the roadside environment	Improvements implemented	EE1, EE4, A10	VM	DO, LPO	As required
	**Review the draft AONB Interpretation Strategy (draft 2016-2021), and finalise**	Strategy reviewed and published	EE4, A8	VM		2021-22, Q2
Connect people to nature and landscape through the arts	**Adopt the National AONB Arts strategy and develop a local action plan in partnership with local art groups and artists**	Strategy adopted. Local Action Plan adopted	EE5	VM	DO	2021-22
	Prepare and publish an anthology of poetry inspired by Cannock Chase	Anthology published	EE5	VM	DO	2021-22
	Organise poetry walks and workshops with Staffordshire Poet Laureate	Walks and workshops held	EE5	VM	DO	Annually

## Communities and Business

- Natural benefits for the community
- Supporting the special qualities



Priorities	Action	Key milestones	AONB policy / action Nos.	T&F Group Lead	AONB Team Lead	By when
Strengthen our volunteer base	Draft a volunteer policy, ensuring that we are compliant with all appropriate H&S, and equality and diversity legislation	Policy published	CB3, A6	AONB Unit	LMO	2021-22, Q1
	Provide ongoing support to volunteers engaged with Great War Hut, Fixed Point Photography, and Historic Environment surveys	Training and social sessions.	CB3, A6	AONB Unit	LMO	Ongoing
	Identify additional volunteer roles and recruit	Roles identified and volunteers recruited	CB3, A6	AONB Unit	LMO, DO, LPO	As required
Promote volunteering opportunities across the Chase	Support and engage with Cannock Chase Council Chase Up! Green Volunteer Network	Volunteers signposted to Chase Up!	CB3, A6	AONB Unit	LMO, DO, LPO	Ongoing
Inspire young people to appreciate and look after Cannock Chase	**Develop a resources pack to be used in schools and libraries, based on the Cannock Chase Code**	Resources pack published	CB1, B20	AONB Unit	DO	2022-23
	**Explore with outdoor education providers the scope for providing every child in Staffordshire to experience a 'night under the stars'**	Outdoor education providers contacted	CB1, B20	AONB Unit	DO	2022-23
	Improve links with Duke of Edinburgh, Scouts and Guides, and outdoor activity and education providers, and develop informatives about the value of the AONB	Informatives produced	CB1, B20	AONB Unit	DO	2021-22, Q4
Raise awareness and understanding of Cannock Chase and the AONB	Publicise Cannock Chase e-learning training courses with key audiences (volunteers, public bodies and businesses), and seek use as part of staff induction	Number of participants completing the course	CB1, CB2, B11	VM	DO	Ongoing
Build more sustainable and empowering relationships with local	Invite all known businesses on and in close proximity to Cannock Chase to register to use the sense of place toolkit	Businesses registered	CB4	AONB Unit	DO	2021-22, Q1

businesses by improving their awareness of Cannock Chase and embedding the AONB in their products, services and ethos.	Support registered businesses	Businesses supported	CB4	AONB Unit	DO	Ongoing
	Encourage businesses to apply for the Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark award	Businesses signposted to SEQM	CB4, B14	AONB Unit	DO	Ongoing
We will reach out and connect to all parts of society, especially those who currently fail to benefit from Cannock Chase.	**Prepare a targeted plan to spread our key messages to 'missing audiences'**	Study commissioned	CB2	AONB Unit	DO	April 2022
	Promote the AONB Sustainable Development Fund, support applications where required and coordinate funding panel; management of claims etc.	Applications supported, and grant fully committed	CB2	AONB Unit	LMO	Call for EOI biannual

### Governance

- Having the systems and processes in place to ensure we are operating effectively
- Raising resources – ensuring we can do what we want to do

Priorities	Action	Key milestones	AONB policy / action Nos.	T&F Group Lead	AONB Team Lead	By when
Support effective governance and management of the AONB Partnership	Organise and support meetings of the Joint Committee	Minimum of 3 meetings each year (March, July (AGM) and December)	All	AONB Unit	DO	March, July, Dec
	Organise and support meetings of the Officers Working Group	Minimum of 3 meetings each year (March, July and December)	All	AONB Unit	DO	March, July, Dec
	Organise and support meetings of Task and Finish Groups, currently: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape &amp; Planning</li> <li>• Land Management</li> <li>• Historic Environment</li> <li>• Visitor Management</li> </ul>	Meetings held as and when required	All	AONB Unit	DO, LMO, LPO AONB Unit	As required

	Provide an annual report for the Joint Committee on progress of the Business Plan	Progress reported annually (Q4) against the Business Plan	All	AONB Unit	DO	Q4 annually
	Submit regular claims to Defra for core grant	Interim claim (75%) submitted September Final claim (25%) submitted March	All	AONB Unit	DO	Q2 and Q4 annually
	Maintain and update risk register	Register updated	All	AONB Unit	DO	Annually
Raise the profile of the AONB and articulate the value of what we do	Organise and run the Annual AONB Conference	Annual conference held	CB2, A7	AONB Unit	DO	As required
	Produce an annual report on AONB activity, showcasing the positive outcomes from AONB Partnership work	Annual report published	All	AONB Unit	DO	Q2 annually
	Report to the NAAONB performance statistics for Cannock Chase AONB against key metrics	Annual performance statistics returned by August each year	All	AONB Unit	DO	August annually
Play an active role in national AONB family activity	Contribute to the activities of the NAAONB including annual conference, AONB Chairmen's conference and AONB Lead Officer meetings as appropriate	Attendance at meetings	All	AONB Unit	DO, LMO, LPO	As required
Develop our relationship with regional protected landscapes	Attend meetings of the West Midlands Protected Landscapes Group	Attendance at meetings	All	AONB Unit	DO, LMO, LPO	As and when required
Raise resources	Establish the Cannock Chase Foundation (charitable incorporated organisation) to support AONB delivery	Agreed constitution.  Agreed MoU with AONB Partnership.  Establishment of CIO.	CB1, A4	AONB Unit	DO	Pending the Government's response to the review of Designated Landscapes

		Recruitment and appointment of Trustees				
Respond to the Government's recommendations of the Designated Landscape Review	**Adopt and implement recommendations from the Glover Review and encourage implementation of actions led by others**	Recommendations implemented	All	AONB Unit	DO	As required
Prepare for the update of the AONB Management Plan	Set out a timetable and resource provision for an updated State of the AONB report 2023 and updated AONB Management Plan 2024-2029	Timetable agreed.  Budgetary provision agreed	All	AONB Unit	DO	2022-23, Q4
<b>Communication</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising profile – telling others what we do and why we do it</li> <li>• Inspiring people to look after Cannock Chase through greater awareness and understanding</li> </ul>						
<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key milestones</b>	<b>AONB policy / action Nos.</b>	<b>T&amp;F Group Lead</b>	<b>AONB Team Lead</b>	<b>By when</b>
Implement the Cannock Chase place brand	**Apply the identity to websites, social media, posters and other publicity, signage and interpretation**	Place brand adopted	CB1, CB2	VM	DO	Ongoing
	Encourage visitor centres/hubs/attractions to use the Cannock Chase place brand and communicate consistent messaging about the special qualities of the nationally important landscape	Place brand promoted at all sites	CB1, CB2	VM	DO	Ongoing from 2021-22
	Provide targeted training for front of house staff at visitor centres/hubs	Training sessions held	CB1, CB2	VM	DO	2021-22, Q2
	Develop promotional merchandise to disseminate the place brand	Merchandise produced and sold in retail outlets	CB1, CB2	VM	DO	2021-22, Q4
Sustain regular communication	Keep partners and subscribers updated with news, events and activities through our newsletter	Minimum 4 newsletters published each year	CB2	AONB Unit	DO	Ongoing

channels to all partners within the AONB Partnership and with our key stakeholders	Review the effectiveness of our enewsletter and gauge how well our objectives have been understood	Survey undertaken	CB2	AONB Unit	DO	July 2021
Engage with the online community	Post on our social media channels at least once every two weeks	Minimum 2 posts each week	CB2	AONB Unit	DO, LPO, LMO	Ongoing
	Using our Cannock Chase network, we will encourage our partners to share our social media posts on their pages to increase its reach.	Social media posts shared	CB2	AONB Unit	DO, LPO, LMO	Ongoing
Raise awareness of Cannock Chase and the benefits it provides through co-ordinated public awareness campaigns across our partnership network	Work with our partners to deliver a calendar of awareness campaigns to share co-ordinated messages on our social media platforms, websites and other appropriate platforms, including Landscapes 4 Life week	Minimum 6 campaigns each year	CB2	VM	DO	Annually
	Support Forestry England and other landowners to promote the Ride with Respect campaign	Campaign launched	CB2	VM	DO	As required
Maintain the AONB website as the focus for information about the AONB and the work of the AONB Partnership	Keep the AONB website up to date, and aim to post news items at least once every two weeks	Minimum of one news item posted every two weeks	CB2	AONB Unit	DO, LPO, LMO	Ongoing
	Using our Cannock Chase network, we will encourage our partners to share news items on their websites to increase their reach	News items shared	CB2	VM	DO, LPO, LMO	Ongoing
Gain local press and media coverage to raise awareness of Cannock chase and the importance of protecting and conserving it	Work across the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership, SAC Partnership and Visitor Centres/hubs to find stories that we can develop into press and media releases on a bi-monthly basis.	Release 6 media stories annually	CB2	VM	DO, LPO, LMO	Ongoing
	Update these stories on our website and ask our partners to share the press release with their contacts in the media	Media releases shared	CB2	VM	DO, LPO, LMO	Ongoing

<p>Raise Cannock Chase AONB's profile nationally, and work with the National Association for AONBs and AONB family to shape the national agenda and drive forward our collective ambition for designated landscapes</p>	<p>With the National Association for AONB's and the AONB family, we will contribute towards national press, research, papers and advocacy to promote Cannock Chase and help deliver the outcomes of the Glover Review.</p>	<p>Number of outcomes</p>	<p>CB2</p>	<p>AONB Unit</p>	<p>DO, LPO, LMO</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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### Annex 3. AONB projects

Project	Estimated cost
Dark Skies project (light pollution assessment and publication of good lighting guide)	£10,000
Landscape visualisations of options for future landscape change (6 visualisations)	£6,000
Heathland / forestry land exchange	c. £20 million
2022 Cannock Chase Bird Survey	Not yet known
Conservation improvements for key species, including:  Crayfish Bats Invertebrate groups Nightjars Long-eared owls Adders	Not yet known (pending audit /survey recommendations)
Woodland Local Wildlife Sites survey	£4,000
Wetland restoration programme including Cannock Chase springs audit, peatland inventory, Sher Brook restoration programme, Sher Brook hydrological monitoring	£30,000
Adder survey	£10,000
Key invertebrate surveys	£10,000
Early successional species survey	£5,000
Consolidation of surviving trig points	£2,500
Walk and Ride Festival	£5,000
Walk leaflets re-design and re-print X9	£5,000
Horse riding leaflets re-design and re-print X2	£1,000
RAF Hednesford Interpretation refresh (panels, leaflet and digital information)	£15,000
Audio-visual presentation	£8,000
AONB souvenir guidebook	£6,000
Sustainable travel welcome and interpretation totems and posters at train stations	£20,000
Review the draft AONB Interpretation Strategy (draft 2016-2021), and finalise	£10,000
Develop and implement a local arts action plan in partnership with local art groups and artists	Not yet known
Resources pack to be used in schools and libraries,	£5,000
Explore with outdoor education providers the scope for providing every child in Staffordshire to experience a 'night under the stars'	Not yet known
Study to understand engagement with under-represented groups	£5,000
Adopt and implement recommendations from the Glover Review	Not yet known

## Annex 4. Risk register

Topic	Key Risks	Potential Impact	Mitigation	Remaining Risk
Coronavirus	<p>Loss of staff capacity due to ill health and/or isolation.</p> <p>Loss of volunteer capacity</p> <p>Restrictions for containment, and advice on gatherings and travel may impact on normal working practices, meetings etc.</p>	Impact on delivery of the AONB Programme	<p>Monitor situation and respond to Government advice.</p> <p>Provide support for staff who become ill or are isolated.</p> <p>Cancel gatherings.</p> <p>Defer volunteer activities</p> <p>Implement distancing strategy (working from home / meetings via video / tele-conferencing). (NB. All staff are already equipped to work remotely as required).</p>	Medium
Staffing	Loss of capacity due to long term ill health	Impact on delivery of the AONB programme	Risk assessments in place including stress risk; staff support measures in place; resilience training available; absence management policy in place	Medium
	Failure / delay in recruiting new posts	Impact on delivery of the AONB programme	Adverts widely promoted; all staff recruited so high priority tasks can be addressed.	Low
Contractors	Inadequate performance; failure to deliver outputs and outcomes	Impact on delivery of the AONB programme; reputational risk	Compliance with SCC Procurement and contract management rules; project management measures in place; involvement of partners to monitor contract delivery	Low
Funding / finances	Loss of core funding for unit	Impact on delivery of the AONB programme; potential impacts on staff posts which could have	Defra funding confirmed to 2020; partnership agreement in place for local authority contributions.	Medium



		financial implications e.g. redundancy costs		
	Failure to secure wider funding for delivery	Impact on delivery of AONB programme	Development officer post will bring expertise in funding; CIO development will over time provide access to broader funding base	Medium
	Financial mismanagement	Loss of funds; failure to comply with grant requirements; penalties	Regular external audits undertaken; managed through council systems with appropriate procedures in place	Low
Partnership	Loss of partner support	Impact on delivery of programme as work hinges on positive relations and input from others	New governance structure is supporting positive engagement by partners in delivery and development of projects	Medium
	Inadequate support for volunteers	Impact on delivery of AONB Programme; loss of volunteers; loss of reputation	Support processes for volunteers in place and regularly monitored	Low
Office Accommodation	Temporary loss of access to office accommodation e.g. fire etc.	Disruption to delivery	Office safety procedures in place to reduce risks; Flexible working in place so that staff can work from different offices and touch-down centres; systems backed up; staff work from home	Low
Communication	Fragmented, confused and mixed messages; lack of awareness of AONB purpose and activities; out of date and inaccurate information	Unrealistic expectations from partners and public; loss of reputation; disjointed and ineffectual effort	Communications review and strategy in preparation, leading to greater collaboration, raised awareness of conservation issues, and changes to people's behaviour	High

Information and Data Management	Breach of security or failure to comply with GDPR	Potential legal implications and loss of trust	Sensitive data is minimal for AONB work; systems, procedures and training in place via host authority	Low
	Loss of data	Impact on delivery	Backup systems in place to minimise risks;	Low

## Annex 5. Budget prediction for 2021-22

The draft net revenue budget for 2021/22 is set out below, and 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.

	Total	Defra Grant
<b>AONB Core Budget</b>		
Staff Salaries and Associated costs	£139,440	£104,580
Office Equipment	£2,600	£1,950
Annual Audit	£400	£300
Volunteers	£500	£375
National Liaison	£3,160	£2,370
Print & Publicity	£5,000	£3,750
Partnership Running Costs	£9,000	£6,750
<b>Core Budget subtotal</b>	<b>£160,100</b>	<b>£120,075</b>
<b>Core Programmes</b>		
AONB Website	£0	£0
Annual Conference	£2,000	£1,500
Core Activity (including monitoring, community involvement, etc)	£5,260	£3,945
<b>Core Programmes subtotal</b>	<b>£7,260</b>	<b>£5,445</b>
Sustainable Development Fund	£10,000	£10,000
AONB Projects	£15,150	£15,150
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£192,510</b>	<b>£150,670</b>

	Total	% of Expenditure
<b>Funded By:</b>		
<b>DEFRA Grant</b>		
Core	£125,520.00	75.00%
Sustainable Development Fund	£10,000.00	100.00%
AONB Projects	£15,150.00	100.00%
<b>DEFRA Grant subtotal</b>	<b>£150,670.00</b>	
<b>Local Authority Contributions</b>		
Cannock Chase Council	£8,370.00	5.00%
Stafford Borough Council	£8,370.00	5.00%
Lichfield District Council	£2,090.00	1.25%
South Staffordshire Council	£2,090.00	1.25%
Staffordshire County Council	£20,920.00	12.50%
<b>Local Authority Contributions subtotal</b>	<b>£41,840.00</b>	<b>25.00%</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£192,510.00</b>	<b>100.00%</b>