



**Cannock Chase AONB Partnership
Meeting of the Joint Committee
24th March 2022 at 10.00 AM**

To be held at the Rising Brook Community Church, Burton Square, Stafford ST17 9LT

(please park behind the church and not in front of the shops – thank you)

Members of the public are welcome to attend in person.

No	Item	Item for	Page
1	Welcome and introductions		
2	Apologies for absence		
3	Minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2021	APPROVAL	3
4	Public Questions		15
5	Financial report <i>(a) To note progress on the current net revenue AONB budget for 2021/22</i> <i>(b) To note progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme</i> Report of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee	INFORMATION	16
6	Government Response to the Landscapes Review <i>To consider the Government’s response to the Landscape Review and the position of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership</i> Report of the AONB Development Officer	DISCUSSION AND DECISION	24
7	Planning update <i>To update members on AONB input to planning matters:</i> <i>(a) Development management and planning policy</i> <i>(b) High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2a</i> Report of the AONB Landscape Planning Officer	INFORMATION	37
8	Inclusion and diversity study <i>To update members on a study to begin to move the AONB to being more relevant, inclusive and welcoming</i> Report of the AONB Development Officer	INFORMATION	45
9	Carbon baseline study <i>To update members on a study to improve understanding of the AONB’s carbon footprint, the main sources of emissions, and ways in which emissions can be reduced</i>	INFORMATION	47

	Report of the AONB Development Officer		
10	Date, time and venue of next meeting <i>Thursday 14th July 2022 (AGM)</i> <i>Thursday 8th December 2022</i> <i>Both at Rising Brook Community Church</i>	INFORMATION	

Item 3 **Minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2021**

Item for: Approval
Author: Julia Banbury, AONB Landscape Planning Officer
Financial implications: None
Recommendations: The Committee approves the minutes of the meeting and considers any matters arising.



**Cannock Chase AONB Partnership
Meeting of the Joint Committee
Monday 6th Dec 2021 at 10.00 AM**

Held at the Rising Brook Community Church, Burton Square, Stafford ST17 9LT

(Draft) minutes

Attendees

Members present

Cllr Frances Beatty (FB)
Cllr Len Bates (LB)
Cllr Iain Eadie (IE)

Representing

Stafford Borough Council
South Staffordshire District Council
Lichfield District Council

Officers

Ian Marshall (IM)
Julia Banbury (JB)
Colin Manning (CM)
Janene Cox (JC)
Nikola Mihajlovic (NM)
Sarah Bentley (SB)
Helena Horton (HH)
Sushil Birdi (SBi)

AONB Unit
AONB Unit
AONB Unit
Staffordshire County Council
Staffordshire County Council
Staffordshire County Council
Lichfield District Council
Cannock Chase District Council

Advisers

Sarah Burgess (SBu)
June Jukes (JJ)

CPRE Staffordshire
Friends of Cannock Chase

Public:

Ann Elphick (AE)

Andy McNaughton (AM)
Jonathan Howell (JH)
Ian Jones (IJ)
Richard Hinton (RH)

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1 Cllr Beatty opened the meeting and welcomed everyone including members of the public to the meeting of the AONB Partnership Joint Committee, and thanked them for attending.

2. Apologies for absence

- 2.1 Apologies for absence were received from:
- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Councillor Justin Johnson | Cannock Chase Council |
| Councillor Victoria Wilson | Staffordshire County Council |
| Kezia Taylor | Historic England |
| Natalie LeBrun | RSPB |
| James Benson | SAC Partnership |
| Thomas Forbes-Cox | Cemex |
| Wendy Bannerman | British Horse Society |
| Jeff Sim | Staffordshire Wildlife Trust |
| Hayley Mival | National Trust |
| Steven Stray | Lichfield District Council |
| Heidi Hollins | Cannock Chase Council |
| Bill Waller | Staffordshire Borough Council |
| Patrick Walker | South Staffordshire District Council |
| Richard Harris | AONB Unit |

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2021

- 3.1 No matters arising
- 3.2 **Resolved:**
The minutes of the previous meeting are agreed as a correct record and are approved.

4. Public Questions

- 4.1 3 questions were received, two from a member of the public not present at the meeting. IE requested the response be sent to the questioner if they were not present.
- 4.2 Q1: Within the last month I have witnessed 2 deer versus car collisions and several near misses including dealing with the shock/trauma of one driver. I understand that on Thursday (25th November) there were 3 car v deer collisions within a 20-minute period on the Chase.
- Can committee approach County Council to make the advisory 40 mph across the Chase (especially the road from Pottal Pool traffic island to Rugeley) a compulsory limit?

- Where possible, can vegetation be cut back further from the road edge? (I appreciate this would also mean ditching or banking to prevent verge parking!)
 - Large posters showing vehicle damage that even low speed collisions produce.
- 4.3 SB responded on behalf of Staffordshire County Council (SCC). There are several issues within this question. There is understandable shock when a large number of deer are killed in a short period. This tends to happen when a larger herd crosses road together. SCC monitor collisions over time and the data indicates that overall, the number of collisions is not increasing. There have been conversations with Staffordshire Highways about a possible mandatory 40mph speed limit, but one has to consider how enforceable and how effective that would be. The Authority needs to look at whether a mandatory speed limit is the right approach or whether there are other measures that could be taken.
- 4.4 Regarding cutting back vegetation, if large swathes of vegetation are cut back it can be counterproductive as it promotes a flush of new vegetative growth that encourages grazing by the deer and therefore may encourage herds to come close to the roadside. In addition, vegetation clearance can give the impression of a wider road and encourage faster speeds. It may help to thin selectively so that cover is less dense. Deer can also use roads as mineral licks at this time of the year so SCC is looking to provide mineral licks away from roads as alternative source of minerals.
- 4.5 Posters can be helpful to encourage slower speeds, and in high-risk areas there already are many posters and signs, but overduplication of signage can overload viewers so a balance is needed. Raising awareness on social media could be increased and may be helpful so SCC will be looking at that.
- 4.6 SCC has found the use of deer deterrents is very effective. We have been trialling various systems in combination and they seem to be the best mechanism on the road to reduce collisions.
- 4.7 JJ mentioned that the Friends of Cannock Chase campaigned several years ago to get a mandatory of 30mph. At that time Staffordshire Highways did not support this change but agreed to an advisory speed limit of 40mph.
- 4.8 FB requested SCC come back in next 6-12 months to explain thinking on speed limit and suggested there must be suitable technology available to track vehicle speeds.
- 4.9 Q2: Cannock Chase has become a magnet for off road cycling especially Birches Valley but also Marquis Drive area as another means of accessing the cycle trails. A large amount of money has obviously been invested in cycle tracks, but improvements now need to be made to protect walkers! The increase in electric bikes and scooters which tend to be quieter are starting to be an issue.
- 4.10 Large notices at main access points to paths from visitor centres and car parks (with periodic reminders elsewhere) need to be set up with info such as:
- Walkers always have priority over cyclists
 - All cycles must be fitted with bell or other warning device
 - Warnings must be sounded when approaching from rear
 - Pass on right if possible and in single file

- Always slow down when passing walkers
 - Walkers may have hearing problems
 - Children and dogs may move unexpectedly
 - Dismount means get off! (ie new bridges at Birches Valley)
- 4.11 IM responded that there had been a previous recent paper on this subject presented to the Joint Committee. In summary, the major landowners are working together on this to produce messaging that will be delivered to schools, on social media and on-site signage, along with the removal of unauthorised trails. In the New Year a Ride with Respect campaign will be launched. This is being led by Forestry England with support of other landowners, to raise awareness and change behaviours. The message is it is not wrong to cycle on Cannock Chase, cycling should be in the right places and with respect to wildlife and other (human) users.
- 4.12 Q3: When the Satnall Hills car park is closed it will only be accessible from the Punchbowl car park which involves crossing a busy A road. Has this been risk assessed?
- 4.13 IM explained that Satnall Hills Car Park is on National Trust land, on the north side of the A513, and is part of SAC Partnership proposals this car park will be closed. The SAC Partnership has responded that a Risk Assessment was not conducted as part of their Detailed Implementation Plans. Access to the area north of A513 can also be at Milford Common and Shugborough. During planning improvements to the Punchbowl Car Park traffic calming and pedestrian crossing would be investigated.

5. AONB Project proposal

- 5.1 IM explained that both the AONB Partnership and SAC Partnership want to raise awareness in young people of the special qualities and fragility of the Chase and foster a greater sense of place and pride in the area, along with a desire to do something good for the Chase, so it makes sense work together and pool resources. This project proposes a single contract, comprising 3 projects:
- Library resources packs
 - Cannock Chase guiding and scouting 'I love Cannock Chase' badge
 - Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) expedition pack
- 5.2 Themes will include habitats and associated wildlife, the Chase through time (cultural heritage), dark skies and tranquillity, and Our Chase, Our Future, based around the ecosystem services the Chase provides and the need to look after it. Delivery will be between January 2022 - October 2022, with costs in the region of £20,000 over two financial years: 50/50 AONB/SAC split.
- 5.3 The project should have considerable reach – there are an estimated 14,000 DofE participants, over 20,000 scouts and guides, the 16 local libraries have over 500 classes between them.
- 5.4 Joint Committee is requested to allow officers to work with SAC on this joint proposal and approve the financial resources of £5K this year and £5K in 22-23, both of which will be matched by SAC Partnership.
- 5.5 RH asked why the project was not specifically reaching out to schools?

IM explained that the SAC Partnership already has a contract with SWT to deliver to schools and did not want this proposal to duplicate that.

5.6 AE mentioned that her organisation 'No planet B' has recently created workshops on biodiversity, including reference to Cannock Chase, that they will be taking into schools.

5.7 IE welcomed this AONB Project coming forward and wanted to encourage looking at other ways of delivery.

5.8 **Resolved:**

(1) The Committee welcomed the project and authorised working with the SAC Partnership in its delivery

(2) The Committee approved allocation of the resources requested.

6 AONB Conference

6.1 IM explained that the AONB Constitution requires regular conferences to discuss activities and proposals, although this has proved difficult recently due to the pandemic. The proposal is to hold the next conference in the first week of March 2022.

6.2 The suggested theme for the conference is 'Changing Perceptions and Behaviour'. The topic underpins much of the AONBs current work on visitor engagement and improving understanding of the sensitivities of the AONB, and sits well alongside the initiatives recently developed including:

- Sense of place and place brand
- Ride with respect campaign
- Arts and culture in the landscape
- Education

6.3 The preferred medium would be face-to-face, but it seems the only way to guarantee delivery is to run a virtual online event, via a Zoom webinar. The other benefit of this is we may get more attendees. A provisional programme is in the Committee Papers, and members will see there are opportunities for Q and A sessions. An event manager will be engaged to ensure smooth running.

6.3 There is a budget allocation of £2K for the annual conference. The estimated cost of this event is coming in under that figure at present but securing a key speaker may require more expenditure.

6.4 IE felt it would be important to highlight the impact of the Commonwealth Games Mountain Biking Event and cycling as a legacy of that. The conference would be an opportunity to showcase what is happening and remind everyone to think about their actions.

6.5 FB raised the matter of the Government's imminent response to the Glover Review (the Review). IM explained that the Review had recommended greater powers and more resources should be given to AONBs. The Government response, as a Green Paper, is anticipated during the week commencing 13.12.21. Word is that the response doesn't give much comfort in terms of additional resources, however we believe there is scope to influence. There needs to be a better balance between funding received by National

Parks (NPs) and AONBs. Currently all the AONBs together receive less funding than one NP. Everyone could get in touch with their MP to try to influence their views.

- 6.6 IJ asked about the possible change in status for AONBs as suggested in the Review. IM explained that the Review contained several suggestions including renaming the AONBs and National Parks as 'National Landscapes' and establishing a National Landscape Service. There had been rumours that the latter would involve a centralised government run service, though this would affect local accountability and has probably subsided as a proposal.
- 6.7 FB reiterated this is an important subject particularly for finance and funding. Local authority contributions haven't changed for 14 years so the AONB is working with reduced funding in real terms, yet the expectation on the AONB team is enormous.
- 6.8 AM asked for an explanation of the difference between NPs and AONBs? IM explained they have the same legal status, but different purposes. AONBs have a primary purpose to conserve and enhance natural beauty, NP's purposes include natural beauty and also to promote public understanding and enjoyment (not a primary purpose for AONBs) but we do take this into account. NPs also make their own planning policy and decisions, have ranger services, and communication teams.
- 6.9 JJ had understood the Review would equalise money between AONBs. IM explained there is a formula for funding AONBs, but the critical thing in our view is the need to level up the funding disparity between AONBs and NPs.
- 6.10 **Resolved:**
Committee welcomed the proposals for the AONB Annual Conference 2021/2, and approved allocation of the resources.

7. Planning update

- 7.1 **Planning** JB reported, summarising from the Planning Report, 55 applications were reviewed, of which 10 were for consultations for amended applications in response to previous objections. 22 applications did not need a full response as there were no concerns to raise.
- 7.2 The AONB made 2 representations to the Planning Inspectorate regarding an appeal against enforcement for unauthorised development off Sandy Lane in South Staffordshire, and an appeal against refusal of a large stable development, also in South Staffordshire. In both cases these representations supported the Local Authority decision. LB asked for further information on the progress of these appeals. JB responded that the AONB is not aware yet of any decisions by the Planning Inspectorate.
- 7.4 **HS2** - The Environmental Enhancement Plan has been approved by the Secretary of State. Projects are now finalising funding agreements and commencement of delivery is anticipated in early 2022.
- 7.5 **Dark Skies** - Work is continuing on the Good Lighting Guide, and we anticipate completion soon. SBu mentioned that CPRE's Star Count is an annual event, and

although last year during lockdown this activity had to take place from participants homes, hopefully this year participants will be able to go further afield.

7.6 **Resolved:**

The Committee noted progress on planning matters.

8. Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (FIPL)

8.1 FB welcomed Colin Manning, the Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer, to the AONB team.

8.2 IM gave a brief introduction to the programme and explained that prior to CM's arrival a consultant was engaged to respond to enquiries, visit potential applicants and prepare applications to the programme.

8.3 CM explained that DEFRA had invited all AONBs to amend their budget allocations between different years due to the delayed commencement of the programme. Officers have elected to significantly reduce the allocation for this year and move it forward into later years to give time to develop work with landowners to deliver more projects. The allocations are provisional awaiting confirmed by DEFRA, and we are on target to spend this year's allocation.

8.4 The AONB FIPL panel has meet to review 4 applications. 3 were approved, we are seeking a few more details on the other. All are on quite small landholdings and have involved grassland and hedgerow enhancements. One includes enhancements for crayfish, which is a protected species. All are phased projects (eg. including grassland management).

8.5 SBU asked if there is enough level of interest? CM responded there were 30 original expressions of interest and there remain 12 to follow up. Part of his role is to actively engage with landowners from our database and he will be starting to actively connect with landowners in the new year when there will also be a new round of publicity. IM added that the catchment includes a buffer of 1km around AONB, where we have about 200 farmers and land managers. From that base we know that the proportion of expressions of interest we have received is comparable to other AONBs

8.6 **Resolved:**

The Committee noted progress on the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme.

9. AONB Business Plan 2021-23

9.1 IM presented an update on delivery of the Business Plan, which delivers our contract with DEFRA and the commitments in the AONB Management Plan. P32 of the Committee Papers includes a summary table. Overall, the picture is good; over half the items have been completed, however there are more red actions than would have been wanted. The reasons are:

- one team member has been off on long-term sickness since June. In a small team of 2.6, having one full time member off sick severely limits work capacity.
- FIPL - setting up a programme of this scale takes time and has diverted staff resources

- Covid has curtailed volunteering so there has been no historic environment surveying and it has disrupted other planned activities
- The team lacks capacity and skills to deliver on communications

9.2 A range of projects has been identified for delivery in 2022/23 including:

- AONB souvenir guidebook (£6,000)
- Audio-visual presentation that celebrates Cannock Chase (£8,000)
- Walk and ride festival (£5,000)
- Development of local arts programme (costs not yet known)
- Adder survey (£10,000)
- Study to understand engagement with under-represented groups (£5,000)
- Consolidation works to surviving trig points (£2,500)
- Landscape visualisations of options for future landscape change (6 visualisations) (£6,000)
- Review draft AONB Interpretation Strategy (draft 2016-2021), and finalise (£6,000)

9.3 We can't afford all the proposed projects, and so need a creative way to secure funding. Several projects relate to visitor welcome timed for the Commonwealth Games: we need a guidebook to celebrate the Chase, and an audio visual that could be available to visitor centres.

9.4 The AONB received an email from DEFRA on Friday offering the possibility of an additional £25K of funding to be spent by 31 March 2022, and we will be expressing an interest in this welcome additional resource.

9.5 FB asked how will projects be prioritised? IM responded they are already in a kind of priority list. The figures given are estimates and may be slightly less. In the case of the souvenir book, we may be able to sell and recoup costs. In that case it may be acceptable to dip into AONB reserves and then replenish funds from sales.

9.6 IE suggested we should avoid silo working and connect with the Destination Staffordshire Partnership (DSP) whose purpose is to attract tourists to Staffordshire. IE advised the AONB gets in touch with Destination Staffordshire to explore how we might share resources. FB has made previous contact before, and she thought there were Constitution issues and the need to make financial contributions into DSP. IE considered the AONB should be represented on DSP.

9.7 **Resolved:**

(1) The Committee noted the progress achieved to date and acknowledged the hard work that the AONB officers to achieve what they had

(2) The Committee approved the proposed projects, allowing for some flexibility in prioritising and delivery.

Item 10 Finance Report – Revenue Budget 2021/22 and 2022/23

10.1 NM presented the Finance Report, reporting in the current net revenue budget for 2021/22 and its current forecast outturn position, and a net revenue budget for 2022/23.

- 10.2 The forecast financial position for the Core and Action budgets (Appendix 1 of the Committee Paper) anticipates an overall breakeven forecast for 2021/22. The latest position for the SDF set out in Appendix 2, indicates projects approved to date amounting to £4240 after administration costs, leaving a balance of £4760. This has been reallocated to AONB Projects.
- 10.3 The latest position for AONB Projects is indicated in Appendix 3, with projects approved to date amounting to £19,910, which gave rise to a project overspend of £4760. After transfer of the balance remaining of SDF funds, this is now forecast to break even.
- 10.4 The draft net revenue budget for 2022/23 is set out in Appendix 4. The core grant support from DEFRA is yet to be announced, and as a precaution the expected contribution has been kept as existing at £192,510. The local authority contribution is also unchanged. The level of SDF and AONB project funding has been kept at 21/22 levels.
- 10.5 There has been an increase in expenditure on staff and associated costs. There is still a dispute on the pay award, so allowance has been made for an estimated increase in costs for this and next year and for an increase on National Insurance and pension contributions. Estimated costs are an additional £9,000 overall, so to balance the books we have had to reduce other budget lines in the core budget. The consequence is that the real value of the budget will be reducing. If the AONB doesn't receive more budget from DEFRA or local authority contributions the Committee will have to consider reducing SDF and funding for AONB Projects in future years.
- 10.6 The AONB Reserve will have the same closing balance. If there is a need to use some of the reserve for a project mentioned in Item 9 that will be reported at the next Joint Committee meeting.
- 10.7 Funding for FIPL is additional funding from DEFRA outside the annual core grant the AONB receives. The potential change in allocation of the budget over the 3 years of operation has been reported in Item 8 and is subject to confirmation by DEFRA.
- 10.8 There is no requirement for an internal audit; this is voluntary now.
- 10.9 **Resolved:**
- (1) The Committee noted the progress on the net revenue budget for 2021/22.**
 - (2) The Committee approved net revenue budget for 2022/23 pending approval of core funding from DEFRA.**
 - (3) The Committee noted progress on the spend for the FIPL programme, pending approval of yearly allocations from DEFRA.**

11. Art in the Landscape Strategy: connecting people to nature through art and culture

- 11.1 JB reported that an Art in the Landscape Strategy was prepared by the NAAONB and adopted in November 2020. The Strategy has been created to galvanise action that enables people to experience a deeper connection to the natural beauty of the landscape through the arts, diversify engagement and develop new trusted

relationships with the arts and cultural sector. It helps to focus delivery of art activity collectively within the AONB family as well as locally.

- 11.2 The Strategy recommends individual AONBs:
- Adopt the National Arts Strategy
 - Make an in principle commitment to invest in the proposed National Arts resource.
 - Invite at least one person from the culture sector to join the AONB governance groups
 - Develop a local action plan
- 11.3 The AONB has invested in and is working with a programme of arts engagement with Cannock Chase Local Cultural Education Partnership (CCLEP) and Arts Connect. The programme has 3 main areas: Youth Voice bringing together small groups of young people from Rugeley and Cannock to shape the programme and commission artists based on briefs provided; Creative Placemaking; and Raising Aspirations around careers and career development including opportunities to engage in an Arts Award. Activity is due to commence in January 2022, and the programme runs alongside Cannock Chase District Council's strategic Birmingham 2022 group so that there will be a cohesive approach to the planned Eco Cultural Festival and Commonwealth Games Cultural Festivals in 2022.
- 11.4 Assuming that the Committee agree adoption of the National Strategy a key recommendation would be to invite a representative from the cultural sector onto the Joint Committee to help move forward the development of the AONB's own Arts Action Plan. There would be the opportunity to invite the Chair of CCLEP.
- 11.5 IE said he would welcome information on proposed candidates and felt it would appropriate to see if other individuals might be interested in the role.
- 11.6 AE asked how the current partnership programme was engaging and advertising to local artists. JB responded that projects have not started and at present there is no detail around commissioning artists. The programme will be shaped by the young people are they are likely to be encouraged to consider working with a variety of media. Through working with partners who have knowledge of local artists and experience of commissioning the AONB expect that a range of individuals will have the opportunity to be involved.
- 11.7 **Resolved:**
- (1) The Committee resolved to adopt the Art in the Landscape Strategy produced by the NAAONB.**
 - (2) The Committee resolved to invite a representative from the arts and cultural sector onto the Joint Committee and look for potential candidates for that role.**
 - (3) The Committee agreed to consider a possible contribution to the collective national arts fund as the need arises when there is more information to consider.**
 - (4) The Committee agreed to use arts to help join up the AONBs nature recovery and climate mitigation work.**

12. NAAONB Collaboration Group on Climate Change

- 12.1 IM started by emphasising that he is not a climate change expert. This report is to update members on the NAAONB's work on climate change and consider what are the implications of climate change on Cannock Chase AONB and how should we respond.
- 12.2 The AONB has contributed £500 to the work of the NAAONB to develop a collaborative climate change action programme. This is being looked at by 5 subgroups examining Agriculture and Climate Change, Nature-based solutions, Renewable energy, Building design and planning, and Sustainable Tourism and Transport. They are looking at the evidence base and should be making recommendations that will be shared in 2022. Proposed outputs are evidence, toolkits and good practice guidance.
- 12.3 All AONBS will be asked to sign a joint statement with NAAONB on climate change, and a draft text should be circulated in the next few months for comment.
- 12.4 What should we be considering at Cannock Chase AONB? Climate change is identified in the AONB Management Plan as a major pressure, but there is no detail and no information about how we should respond nor any actions in the Management Plan. We need to improve on this.
- 12.5 Potential impacts of climate change are cited on P68 of the Committee Papers. Some examples include
- Significant changes to natural beauty
 - Shifting species ranges
 - Wildfires, flooding and droughts, erosion
 - Historic assets and historic landscapes
 - Diseases
 - Amount and seasonality of recreational activity
 - Crop and livestock productions
 - Impacts of proposed climate change solutions
- 12.6 Some solutions will impact on natural beauty, as natural beauty is a composite of nature, wildness and tranquillity. Species ranges will change, wildfires and flooding will result in erosion and vegetation change and damage; increases in diseases and global warming will have consequences for vegetation; lengthening seasons will affect recreational activity; types of crops that can be grown will influence farming. A greater emphasis on renewables and tree planting may result in negative impacts on landscape and habitats (though right tree, right place here is key).
- 12.7 The AONB provides a range of ecosystem services and has a key role capturing carbon. As the AONB doesn't control any land, our main mechanism for mitigation and adaptation is through encouragement. FIPL activity will be a key driver to helping climate change adaptation.
- 12.8 The Management Plan should be strengthened to integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation into its policies and action, therefore this topic needs to be fully considered in the next review. Although the AONB has no planning powers there may be opportunity to influence how climate change is considered and mitigated in the AONB, through planning consultation responses.

- 12.9 Currently the main limitation to how we respond is evidence. Local planning authorities in the area have developed an evidence base that we could maybe tap in to, but the AONB needs to develop its own and targets and plans for how we can be most effective. Assistance from consultants is needed for this as we don't have in house expertise.
- 12.10 SB welcomed the report as a good starting point. Constituent organisations are already doing things. A Task and Finish Group is needed to bring together landowner organisations to establish where gaps are for AONB and what needs to be taken forward. It is going to require a collaborative effort, and the AONB needs to link with other organisations beyond landowners and local authority, for example, most visitors arrive by car and ways of reducing that needs to be examined.
- 12.11 IM added that we need to understand local authority evidence, where available. The recent offer from DEFRA of additional funds may be opportune to fund a climate change evidence base study.
- 12.12 IJ suggested Forestry England might have already done work on this?
- 12.13 JJ reported that historic attempts to introduce alternative transport was not successful as it was not reliable or convenient enough people. Need to look wider.
- 12.14 LB proposed that the expression of interest to DEFRA should include for the production of a climate change strategy.
- 12.15 Resolved:**
The Committee noted the report and supports the preparation of a climate change strategy for the AONB.

13 Date, time and venue of next meeting

Thursday 24th March 2022

Thursday 14th July 2022

Thursday 8th December 2022

IM mentioned that if the Government issues a response to the Glover Review as a Green Paper they will be inviting a public consultation to their response. Assuming the Green Paper is issued in December we would have until February to respond (before the next Joint Committee meeting). It would be necessary to call an extraordinary meeting of Joint Committee members to discuss and agree the AONB's response to the Government's Green Paper.

(Following the Committee Meeting an update has been received confirming that there is a delay in the Government's response to the Glover Review and this will now not be until early 2022.)

Item 4

Public questions

Item for:

Questions received (in advance) from members of the public

Author:

None

Financial implications:

None

Recommendations:

The Committee notes the questions and is invited to respond.

Item 5 Finance report – Revenue Budget 2021/22

Item for: Noting

Author: Nikki Mihajlovic, Senior Finance Business Partner

Financial implications: The Joint Committee in its role under the AONB Partnership Agreement is responsible for the management of the core funding from Defra and the co-ordination of partner projects.

Recommendations:

1. That progress on the current net revenue budget for 2021/22 and its current forecast outturn position is noted.
2. That progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme is noted.

Background

1. The Joint Committee in its role under the AONB Partnership Agreement is responsible for the management of the core funding from DEFRA and the co-ordination of the partner projects.
2. This paper sets out progress on the current net revenue budget for 2021/22 and its current forecast outturn position. The recommendations represent an effective way to continue to carry forward the implementation of the Management Plan for the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership.
3. Between 2021-24 the AONB Partnership has been allocated additional funding by Defra on top of its annual core grant to support farmers and land managers to deliver the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme. This paper also reports progress on programme spend.

Revenue Budget Update 2021/22

4. The original budget for the AONB for 2021/22 of £192,510 was increased in January 2022 by the offer from Defra of an additional £35,992 of core funding.
5. The forecast financial position for the Core and Action Projects Budget is set out in Appendix 1 which shows the nominal net spend to date of £149,447 together with the outturn currently predicted for the year. The predicted outturn for the end of the financial year totals £221,910, giving rise to an anticipated overall underspend of £6,592 for the year. The underspend is due to lower-than-expected expenditure on AONB staff salaries and travel and subsistence (due to long-term illness of one member of staff and COVID limiting travel).
6. The latest position available for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) for 2021/22 is set out in Appendix 2. Grants have been awarded to four community projects amounting to £4,240 in total. After the administration fee earned by the AONB Unit of £1,000 is deducted, this leaves a balance of £4,760, which has been re-allocated to AONB Projects.

7. The latest position available for the AONB Projects for 2021/22 is set out in Appendix 3, with projects approved amounting to £56,087 in total, which gave rise to a projected overspend of £4,945 of which £4,760, is a transfer of funds from the SDF projects. Therefore, the overall forecast is a projected overspend of £185.
8. The budget for AONB projects at the beginning of the financial year was £15,150 and was increased to £55,902 due to the redistribution of £4,760 of unspent SDF monies and the offer in January 2022 of £35,992 of additional Defra core funding.
9. This extra funding has facilitated the delivery of a greater range of activities identified in the AONB Business Plan 2021-23 than would otherwise have been possible. These include significant pieces of work around climate change, inclusion, and diversity, and improving our visitor welcome.

Reserve

10. The balance on the Cannock Chase AONB Reserve currently stands at £62,944 for 2021/22. A summary of the Reserve is attached as Appendix 5.
11. 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.
12. These priorities are reviewed annually in December of each year.
13. It is anticipated that the balance on this reserve at the end of 2021/22 will be £62,944.

Farming in Protected Landscapes programme

14. Since July 2020 the AONB has been delivering the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme collaborating with farmers and land managers. The funding is for a three-year programme and is provided by Defra and is additional funding on top of the annual core grant that the AONB receives.
15. The re-profiled budget for the programme allocated a total of £80,000 for year 1 expenditure, comprising programme administration and programme delivery (advice and guidance and grants to support farmers to deliver environmental outcomes). The programme's late announcement limited the available time to develop projects. However, grants have been awarded to four projects that will deliver outcomes for climate change, nature, landscape and people within the AONB.
16. A summary of the budget position for the programme is attached as Appendix 5. The predicted outturn for the programme at the end of the financial year £71,766, an underspend of £8,234. This is due to unforeseen illness, one of the applicants will be unable to deliver and claim for all their approved activities before 31 March 2022.

17. Under Defra rules any unspent monies must be repaid back and cannot be carried forward.

Equalities Implications

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

Legal Implications

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

Resource and Value for Money Implications

20. 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

21. 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.

Recommendations

22. The following recommendations are made to the Joint Committee:
 - (1) That progress on the current net revenue budget for 2021/22 and its current forecast outturn position is noted.
 - (2) That progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme is noted.

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

Cannock Chase AONB Core & Project Costs

Forecast for 2021/2022

	Budget	2021 Actuals	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
Core Budget				
Salaries	136,260	121,138	131,362	-4,898
Training Expenses	1,510	470	1,020	-490
Travel and Subsistence	2,200	262	500	-1,700
Staff and Associated Costs	139,970	121,869	132,882	-7,088
Office Equipment	2,600	3,193	3,350	750
Annual Audit	400	0	0	-400
Volunteer Costs	500	0	500	0
National Liaison	3,160	3,156	3,160	0
Print & Publicity	5,000	1,859	5,033	33
AONB Website	0	0	0	0
Annual Conference	2,000	878	1,928	-72
Core Activity (including monitoring, community involvement, etc)	4,730	0	4,730	0
Partnership Running Costs	9,000	9,000	9,000	0
Core Budget Subtotal	167,360	139,956	160,583	-6,777
Sustainable Development Fund	10,000	0	5,240	-4,760
AONB Projects	51,142	9,490	56,087	4,945
Total Budget/Initial Forecast Outturn	228,502	149,447	221,910	-6,592
New Projects to be developed	0	0	0	0
Anticipated Forecast Outturn as at 31 March 2022	228,502	149,447	221,910	-6,592
Funded By:				
DEFRA Grant				
Core	-125,520	-113,003	-125,520	0
Sustainable Development Fund	-10,000	0	-10,000	0
AONB Projects	-15,150	0	-15,150	0
Additional Projects Allocation	-35,992	0	-35,992	0
DEFRA Grant Subtotal	-186,662	-113,003	-186,662	0
Local Authority Contributions				
Lichfield District Council	-2,090	-2,090	-2,090	0
South Staffordshire District Council	-2,090	-2,090	-2,090	0
Cannock Chase District Council	-8,370	-8,370	-8,370	0
Stafford Borough Council	-8,370	0	-8,370	0
Staffordshire County Council	-20,920	-20,920	-20,920	0
Local Authority Contributions Subtotal	-41,840	-33,470	-41,840	0
Sales and Donations	0	0	0	0
Membership Fee Income	0	0	0	0
Funding from(+)/to reserve(-)	0	0	0	0
Total Funding	-228,502	-146,473	-228,502	0

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

Sustainable Development Fund

Budget Update for 2021/22

	Budget	Spent or Committed to Date	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
Approved Projects				
Apples on the Chase: a Chase Through Time legacy project	500	0	500	0
Gentleshaw Common interpretation panels	2,913	0	2,913	0
Quinquennial breeding bird survey for Cannock Chase (phase 1)	569	0	569	0
Nature in Brocton Park	258	0	258	0
Approved Projects Total	4,240	0	4,240	0
Admin Fees	1,000	1,000	1,000	0
Re-allocation of Funds to AONB Projects	4,760	0	0	-4,760
TOTAL	10,000	1,000	5,240	-4,760

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

AONB Projects

Budget Update for 2021/2022

	Budget	Spent or Committed to Date	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
Approved Projects				
Contribution to Art in the Landscape programme	5,000	5,000	5,000	0
Contribution to awareness programme for young people	5,000	0	5,000	0
Report of nightjar surveys (2019-2021)	3,000	0	3,000	0
Assessment of local geological sites	500	0	500	0
Adder genetics study	260	260	260	0
Great War Hut visitor welcome (flags and replacement of picket fence and gates)	2,377	2,212	2,377	0
AONB visitor welcome (improved interpretation)	2,315	1,300	2,500	185
Carbon Baseline Study	11,350	0	11,350	0
Art in the Landscape Workshop	600	0	600	0
AONB Website Refresh	6,000	1,000	6,000	0
Inclusion and Diversity Study	15,000	0	15,000	0
Deer Impact Study	4,500	0	4,500	0
Approved Projects Total	55,902	9,772	56,087	185
Original Budget	15,150	9,772	15,150	0
Re-allocation of Funds from SDF Projects	0	0	4,760	4,760
Additional DEFRA Funding	35,992	0	35,992	0
TOTAL	51,142	9,772	55,902	4,760

Cannock Chase AONB Reserve

Financial Year	Opening Balance	Income/ Donations	Membership Fees	Visitor Survey Work	Admin Fees	Transfer to/from Reserve	Balance of Admin Fees / Underspends	Interest	Closing Balance
	£	£		£	£	£	£	£	£
2007/2008	10,214					-1,766	-1,766		8,448
2008/2009	8,448	572			9,303	-1,590	7,713		16,733
2009/2010	16,733	1,326			6,166	-371	5,795		23,854
2010/2011	23,854	896	525	9,564	4,744	-921	3,823		38,662
2011/2012	38,662	1,240	1,367	17,845	3,983	-4,204	-221		58,893
2012/2013	58,893	387	1,108		3,218	-533	2,685	195	63,270
2013/2014	63,270	1,001	1,675		2,459		2,459	249	68,654
2014/2015	68,654	596	1,720		1,327	-54	1,273	289	72,532
2015/2016	72,532		569		500	-2,383	-1,883	293	71,512
2016/2017	71,512	1,475	553		1,565	-108	1,457	132	75,129
2017/2018	75,129	1,471	52		1,809	30,703	32,512	189	109,353
2018/2019	109,353	169	104		2,056	34,361	36,417	685	146,728
2019/2020	146,728				2,307	-94,792	-92,485	577	54,819
2020/2021	54,819				1,307		1,307	78	56,204
2021/2022	56,204	5,740			1,000				62,944
		14,875	7,673	27,409	41,744	-41,658	87	2,687	62,944

Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant

Forecast for 2021/2022

	Budget *	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£
Farming in Protected Landscapes Expenditure:			
Programme Administration	25,290	15,290	-10,000
Programme Delivery (Advice & Guidance & grants)	54,710	56,476	1,766
Total Budget/Initial Forecast Outturn	80,000	71,766	-8,234
Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant	-80,000	-71,766	8,234
Total Funding			

Item 6 Government Response to the Landscapes Review

Item for: Discussion and Decision

Author: Ian Marshall, AONB Development Officer

Financial implications: None

Recommendations: The Committee is asked to approve the proposed position of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership to the Government's response to the Landscapes Review with any amendments

Summary

1. This paper is to highlight the Government's response to the Landscapes Review, to note the position of the National Association for AONBs and to seek approval for the position of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership.

Background

2. In May 2018 the government asked for an independent review into whether or not the protections for National Parks and Areas for Outstanding Natural Beauty are still fit for purpose. In particular, what might be done better, what changes will help and whether the definitions and systems in place are still valid. The review looked at:
 - the existing statutory purposes for National Parks and AONBs and how effectively they are being met
 - the alignment of these purposes with the goals set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan
 - the case for extension or creation of new designated areas
 - how to improve individual and collective governance of National Parks and AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets
 - the financing of National Parks and AONBs
 - how to enhance the environment and biodiversity in existing designations
 - how to build on the existing 8-point plan for National Parks and connect more people with the natural environment from all sections of society and improve health and wellbeing
 - how well National Parks and AONBs support communities
 - the process of designating National Parks and AONBs and extending boundary areas, with a view to improving and expediting the process.
3. Cannock Chase AONB submitted its response to the Landscapes Review in December 2018, and hosted a visit by Julian Glover, chair of the independent panel the following April 2022. The panel's Final Report came back in September 2019 and included 27 wide-ranging proposals in 5 key areas:
 - a. Landscapes Alive for Nature and Beauty
 - b. Landscapes for everyone

- c. Living in Landscapes
 - d. More Special Places
 - e. New Ways of Working.
4. On 15 January 2022 the government issued its long-awaited response to those proposals. Implementing some aspects of the government’s response to the review will require changes to legislation, subject to securing parliamentary time. The government is therefore seeking public views on support for these proposed legislative changes, and their potential effects on different groups and interests. They are also interested to hear any wider views on other aspects of its response to the review. The consultation closes on 9 April 2022.

Position of the National Association for AONBs

5. Proposal 24 of the Glover Review recommended that: ‘*AONBs be strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, renamed as National Landscapes*’. This Proposal forms the crux of the position of the National Association for AONBs (the body which provides a voice for the UK family of 46 AONBs).

Purposes: extension and revision of AONB purposes to reflect contemporary priorities for AONB, natural beauty with a strengthened link to nature recovery on a landscape scale and the importance of cultural heritage. A second purpose to promote understanding and enjoyment of the area.

Powers: strengthening the ‘duty of regard’ linked to strengthening the status of AONB management plan, a formal role in planning and development management.

Resources: a doubling of core funding over this parliament (three years), leading to a dynamic and progressive formula which reflects ambition and future needs.

Governance: robust minimum governance standards which provide sufficient independence to guarantee the integrity of the designation, dynamic and more representative of the wider UK population.

National Landscapes: ready to engage in a discussion on renaming where this reflects the step change above.

Position of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership

6. An outline response of the position of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership is appended for the consideration of the Joint Committee. The publication of the consultation is welcomed and we look forward to working with Government and use this opportunity to strengthen AONBs as exemplars of 21st century designated landscapes.
7. AONB teams have a proven track record of collaborative working with partners, local communities, landowners and business to keep these precious landscapes special. Yet this government consultation fully acknowledges the utterly inadequate current funding for managing Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Overall core funding to

AONBs has been slashed by an eye watering 36% over the past 10 years. Government funding between all 34 AONBs in England totals just £6m per year. An uplift will be essential to achieve all that is being asked of us in this report, and to deliver the ambition for more beautiful, species-rich and accessible landscapes set out by Julian Glover and his team.

Recommendations

8. The Committee is asked to approve the proposed position of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership to the Government's response to the Landscapes Review with any amendments.

Supporting documents

[Landscapes Review, Final Report](#), September 2019

[Government's response to the Landscapes Review](#), 15 January 2022

Appendix: Position of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership

Government Response to the Landscapes Review, 15 January 2022

Appendix: Position of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership

In considering the Government's response we have taken into consideration:

- Potential beneficial effects
- Burdens
- Unintended consequences
- Potential tensions / conflicts

Whilst there is some good news, overall, there is little detail and some recommendations from the Glover Review are missing.

Chapter numbers, headings within chapters and page numbers refer to the sequence set out in the Government's response.

Chapter 1: A more coherent national network	
Government's response	Position of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership
Strengthened AONBs (page 7) Action needs to be a priority in AONBs in order to unlock their full potential in achieving our vision alongside our National Parks	Despite having the same status as National Parks and experiencing many of the same challenges and issues and public expectations, AONBs lack recognition, strength in law and policy, and support in resources. We strongly welcome, therefore, the Government's acknowledgement that action needs to be a priority in AONBs. Levelling up is urgently needed.
AONBs are re-named as 'National Landscapes'.	We can see benefits in the places that AONBs represent being re-branded 'National Landscapes' to manage public expectations and provide consistent messaging. Cannock Chase AONB has already developed a new place brand for Cannock Chase in order to create a local identity around a sense of place and elevate the standing of the area in the perception of the public and our partners. Any rebranding, however, should allow flexibility within the AONB family to incorporate local individuality and values that resonates with local communities.

	Any transition to National Landscapes must be properly resourced to achieve the intended benefits.
<p>Strategic direction (pages 7 and 8)</p> <p>A new National Landscapes Partnership is established for our existing partners to work together more effectively at a national level and provide stronger governance.</p>	<p>We can see merits in closer collaboration between National Parks, AONBs and National Trails as a ‘national landscapes family’ for a number of reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared vision for our protected landscapes • Consistent messaging • Building capacity • Stronger and united advocacy • Co-ordinated and joined up programme delivery • Shared resources <p>The principle of stronger national leadership is also welcomed. However, the Government needs to be aware of and sensitive to potential tensions between any moves to centralisation, standardisation, conformity and uniformity and losing the individuality of AONB Partnerships and their strength in being rooted in their local communities, with their individual identities and local sense of place. Differences should be recognised and retained as they add flexibility and strength.</p> <p>A new National Landscapes Partnership would need to be funded through new resources, and clearly set out relationships with National Parks England and the National Association for AONBs.</p> <p>Details on the purpose and functions of the new Partnership are lacking, as is clarification on how these will complement, differ from or replace the current responsibilities of Natural England as statutory advisor on England’s landscape.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to the relationship of the Partnership with the Defra family: Forestry England, Natural England, Environment Agency as well as Historic England, National Parks England and the NAAONB.</p>
Clearer strategic direction for protected landscapes will be provided through a new National Landscape Strategy	Landscape has dropped off the radar in recent years and an updated and renewed focus on landscape at national level is welcomed. It could provide a helpful framework for protected landscapes but needs to be brought up to date to support delivery of wider environmental ambitions within the context of landscape character and condition.

Natural England's role as statutory advisor on England's landscape will be reinvigorated to support national landscapes and advise government.	NE will need to be adequately resourced with the required specialist expertise to undertake this work, but a stronger statutory remit around landscape generally and protected landscapes is welcomed.
A unified mission (page 8) The statutory purposes of AONBs and National Parks are more closely aligned.	We welcome the closer alignment of the statutory purposes of AONBs and National Parks as part of the 'levelling up' between the two protected landscapes. However, greater consistency in how these areas are protected and managed will only be achieved through more equitable powers and resources.
Chapter 2: Nature and climate	
Government's response	Position of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership
The Nature Recovery Network and 30 by 30 (pages 9-10) Protected Landscapes could play an important role in the delivery of the Nature Recovery Network and achieving the Government's role to protect 30% of our land for nature by 2030.	AONBs are ambitious to deliver more for nature, climate change and demonstrate leadership. The scale of the ambition needs to be matched by equivalent duties, powers, plans, monitoring, resources and governance to deliver them. There is a fundamental misconception that protected landscapes have control and influence over the use and management of the land within their designations; whereas in fact their powers are no more/no less than those that exist across the rest of the country.
Protected landscapes support responsible authorities in preparing and delivering Local Nature Recovery Strategies	Designated landscape bodies should have a formal role in Local Nature Recovery Strategies as an essential stakeholder. Management Plans should take account of the priorities identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategies and there should be direct read across between the two. Regular monitoring and reporting will be key to evaluating delivery of the Management Plan's SMART targets and designated landscapes' contributions towards 30x30 and other environmental ambitions.
A stronger mission for nature recovery (pages 10-11) The current statutory purpose to 'conserve and enhance natural beauty' to be strengthened to actively recover nature in protected landscapes. A revised purpose should be more specific with regards to nature outcomes and explicitly mention 'biodiversity'. The principle of natural capital should also be included.	AONBs are recognised as Category V Protected Areas by the IUCN: areas managed mainly for their landscape and recreation, where the interaction of people and place over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. 'Natural beauty' needs to be retained as the core purpose for AONBs as it is an enduring concept which embraces the landscape in its entirety (landscape quality, scenic quality, natural heritage, cultural heritage, relative wildness and relative tranquillity). Alternatively, all these

	<p>aspects would need to be included and referred to in some way. Either way, the addition of more explicit terms around nature recovery would be positive.</p> <p>AONBs play an important role in nature conservation, and this should be emphasised by more weight and focus being given to the flora and fauna of these landscapes in their Management Plans. AONBs and National parks play a valuable role in delivering the Lawton principles of ‘bigger, better and more, well connected.’ They should have the ability to work outside of their boundaries in order to deliver these principles.</p> <p>We would question the use of natural capital as terminology like this can change over time. Terms must be those that will stand the test of time and be meaningful to all.</p>
<p>Setting ambition and monitoring progress (page 11)</p> <p>Improved monitoring and reporting in protected landscapes will help us to understand the state of nature and prioritise action towards desired environmental outcomes.</p>	<p>Only those sections of designated landscapes (rather than their entirety) that are well-managed and protected for nature and are in good or improving ecological condition, as demonstrated by regular monitoring, should be counted towards the Government’s target to protect at least 30% of the UK for nature by 2030.</p> <p>Protected landscapes are funded by public money so it is only right and proper that performance against management plan activities is monitored and reported in standard ways.</p> <p>Protected landscapes need access on a regular and periodic basis to a range of environmental, social and economic data. With the exception of MEOPL data (Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes) which is collected and distributed by Natural England, each protected landscape currently independently collects its own data. Much of this data is similar across Protected Landscapes, and independent collection duplicates effort and wastes resources. Centralised and co-ordinated collection and distribution of data should be a function for the new National Landscapes Partnership.</p>
<p>Agricultural transition (page 12)</p> <p>Consider options for how the special status of protected landscapes can be reflected in environmental land management schemes’ design and delivery.</p>	<p>The new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme must be ambitious and sufficiently resourced to drive good land management for nature, climate and people in designated landscapes and across the countryside.</p> <p>Protected Landscapes should be given a pro-active role to promote take-up of the new ELM scheme in their area so that they become the trusted partner with local farming communities</p>

	and have greater ability to influence targets for landscape and nature recovery. ELM needs to link to ambitions set within the Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
Chapter 3: People and place	
Government's response	Position of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership
<p>Landscapes for everyone (page 13)</p> <p>Establish a national co-ordination function for the new National Landscapes Partnership to enhance and expand community engagement.</p> <p>Support or reward landowners for enhanced access to their land.</p> <p>Develop opportunities across government to strengthen the role of protected landscapes to support health and wellbeing by working with the Probation Service's community payback scheme; support capacity building in schools to engage with nature; deliver green social prescribing provision.</p> <p>Seek ways to increase the number of rangers engaging with people in protected landscapes.</p>	<p>Improving access to protected landscapes and addressing the current inequality in those accessing the landscape is seen as a priority. Whilst this needs balancing with managing visitor pressure, we are extremely supportive of ensuring our protected landscapes are accessible to all. Note that this could bring additional burdens to highway / access authorities and additional resources are required for any meaningful improvements.</p> <p>The proposals are welcomed, however further detail is required to be able to assess their impacts and consequences. Furthermore, with no commitment to additional funding, AONBs will be unable to deliver the long-term engagement activities required to increase the diversity of people using the landscape.</p>
<p>A stronger mission for connecting people and places (page 14)</p> <p>A strengthened secondary purpose for National Park Authorities, also extended to AONBs.</p>	<p>As stated above, we welcome the closer alignment of the statutory purposes of AONBs and National Parks as part of the 'levelling up' between the two protected landscapes. However, greater consistency in how these areas are protected and managed will only be achieved through more equitable powers and resources.</p> <p>If AONBs are to gain a second purpose for public enjoyment and understanding, there would need to be a clear policy statement that where conflicts occur between conserving and enhancing natural beauty and recreation, natural beauty should take priority (i.e., the 'Sandford Principle'). If this purpose is also supported by strengthened duties, then further clarity on expectations and potentially an additional burdens assessment would be required. For example, would there be additional expectations for management of public rights of way – if</p>

	<p>so, would this sit with the PL body or the Highway Authority? In either case, additional funding would be required.</p> <p>Cannock Chase at just 26 square miles receives more visitors annually (2.5 million) than the Cairngorms National Park (UK's largest protected landscape) and more than 4-5 times the density of footfall than the Lake District National Park (England's most visited protected landscape). Solutions to managing the recreational pressures in our landscape (for example, by providing alternative greenspace elsewhere away from the AONB to ease pressures) may not always sit easily with a new second purpose to promote public enjoyment and understanding of the special qualities.</p>
<p>Supporting local communities (page 14)</p> <p>The Government does not propose to introduce a new third statutory purpose for Protected Landscapes to foster the economic and community vitality of their areas. Instead, the Government proposes to support its lead partners to discharge their existing duties effectively and consistently through government guidance and best practice, and by supporting programmes such as FiPL.</p>	<p>AONB Partnerships cannot solve all of the issues affecting rural communities in their areas and notes that these issues are often a result of rurality rather than being specific to protected landscapes. We therefore support the government's position not to impose a third statutory purpose.</p>
<p>Sustainable transport (page 15)</p> <p>Local Authorities should consider opportunities to encourage more sustainable travel as part of their Local Transport Plans</p>	<p>Over 80% of the visitors to Cannock Chase AONB travel by car. A shuttle bus service from local communities onto the Chase (the Chase Hopper) was abandoned a few years due to the unaffordable cost. We support the development of new sustainable ways to visit the area, but additional resources will be required to facilitate and support such services.</p>
<p>Open access land (page 15)</p> <p>Review open access maps to clarify rights and inform any further consideration of expanding open access rights.</p>	<p>58% of Cannock Chase AONB is already open access land where the public has the right to roam.</p> <p>Protected Landscapes need to develop and nurture trusted relationships with farmers and landowners. Any further expansion of open access rights on privately owned land may have the unfortunate consequence of alienating these key stakeholders and needs careful</p>

<p>Explore the barriers that may exist to the provision of permissive access by landowners and seek to remedy these.</p>	<p>consideration. Greater encouragement for improved access through permissive routes may lead to better outcomes.</p> <p>Careful management would also be required to ensure potential conflicts between nature recovery and open access can be addressed.</p>
<p>National Trails (page 15)</p> <p>The new National Trails charity to be included as a member of the new National Landscapes Partnership.</p>	<p>Cannock Chase AONB does not include any National Trails however generally this would seem a positive step.</p>
<p>Sustainable tourism (page 16)</p> <p>Representatives from the Protected Landscapes to help inform the preparation of a Sustainable Tourism Plan.</p> <p>Increase the range of enforcement powers available to National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority to help manage visitor pressures.</p> <p>Explore options for protecting green lanes from damaging vehicular uses.</p>	<p>AONBs receive similar numbers of visitors and the same visitor pressures as National Parks. Any consideration of strengthening enforcement powers also needs to apply to the local authorities that comprise AONBs.</p> <p>Cannock Chase AONB has very few green lanes and does not suffer from damage from off-road motor vehicles. We are aware of the considerable problems this causes other protected landscapes and would support restrictions for their use.</p>
<p>Planning reform (page 17 – 19)</p> <p>Seek views on how AONB Teams can achieve better outcomes through the plan-making process.</p> <p>AONB Teams be granted statutory consultee status.</p> <p>Continue to monitor the use of permitted development rights in protected landscapes and identify future opportunities to review their use.</p>	<p>For Cannock Chase AONB, we have relatively little housing in the area but there are constant pressures on or around the setting of the AONB. We would like to see a stronger role for AONBs and greater flexibility so AONBs can take a greater role in local decisions.</p> <p>The way in which designation works alongside the Green Belt could also be considered. This will not apply to a lot of NPs and the rural AONBs but in Cannock Chase, which on the edge of the West Midlands conurbation, the two policies overlap (literally) and are complementary. Maintaining the openness of the Green Belt is important to the landscape of the AONB, and its setting.</p>

	<p>A final point is to consider the interpretation of the wording of para. 172 of the NPPF with reference to NPs and AONBs. The addition of the comment that the scale and extent of development in these areas should be limited, is welcomed, but the reference to “major development” remains. The review should consider how this can be interpreted/defined. In small, pressured area such as Cannock Chase, additional development, including small groups of houses and even individual dwellings can have an adverse impact and establish precedent for development which can lead to a cumulative adverse impact on landscape and scenic beauty.</p> <p>Any planning reforms must lead to improved planning decisions and outcomes for development within AONBs and their settings. Statutory consultee status views are given weight in planning decisions, but the implications for AONB staff should not be underestimated.</p> <p>Cannock Chase AONB has a planning protocol in place which ensures that AONB staff are consulted on development proposals that harm the special qualities of the AONB or its setting.</p>
<p>Affordable housing (page 19)</p> <p>The Government does not support the Glover Review recommendation for a new, publicly funded housing association specifically for protected landscapes, and will, instead, progress alternative means to deliver suitable housing for local communities in rural areas.</p>	<p>No comment. Affordable housing within Cannock Chase AONB is not an issue.</p>
<p>Chapter 4: Supporting local delivery</p>	
<p>Government’s response</p>	<p>Position of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership</p>
<p>Local governance (page 20-22)</p> <p>Minor reform of National Park Authorities and Conservation Boards such as size, diversity and appointments.</p> <p>Natural England to produce clear governance principles, processes, and structures for AONB that</p>	<p>We welcome the intention to provide clarity through guidance but are disappointed in the largely limited proposals for AONB Partnerships, although we recognise that that are local authority based so there is less opportunity to influence.</p> <p>Greater input from NE to provide consistency etc would help</p> <p>Those governing National Parks and AONBs should have significant experience, expertise and passion across their statutory purposes, especially to address the nature and climate emergency.</p>

<p>local authorities would be expected to follow, linked to Defra grant agreements.</p>	<p>National support, oversight and scrutiny should be provided to facilitate a race to the top on achieving targets and delivering transformative action in designated landscapes for nature, climate and people.</p>
<p>Management plans (page 22)</p> <p>Proposed National Landscapes strategy will provide strategic direction.</p> <p>Natural England will produce an outcomes framework, provide annual reporting to track progress against the outcomes, and advise on where further action is needed.</p>	<p>Management Plans are important tools that designated landscape bodies have to help deliver for nature, climate and people. However, they must be impactful and strengthened to contain specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic and time-bound (SMART) targets and actions to tackle the nature and climate emergency and to connect all parts of society to designated landscapes.</p> <p>To ensure the delivery of the Management Plan, relevant bodies should be given a duty to act jointly to support its development and implementation of the Management Plan and report on how they are achieving this, and designated landscape bodies should be required to coordinate and report on its overall implementation.</p> <p>AONB Management Plans are locally agreed and democratically determined, so targets and KPIs need to be aware of this. In setting targets it needs to be recognised that each AONB is different</p>
<p>A clearer role for public bodies (page 22)</p> <p>The wording of due regard to be strengthened so that that they are given greater weight when exercising public functions.</p>	<p>The existing duty on all relevant bodies (including designated landscape bodies, Natural England, Forestry Commission, local authorities and utilities providers) to the statutory purposes of designated landscapes should be strengthened from ‘have regard’ to ‘further’ the amended statutory purposes of designated landscapes.</p> <p>In addition, all relevant bodies should be more accountable and report (e.g., through Management Plans) on how they are supporting the delivery of the statutory purposes. This should include policies, decisions and the management of public landholdings that lie within protected landscapes.</p>
<p>Sustainable financing (page 23-24)</p> <p>Scale of the ambition matched by equivalent resources, particularly in AONBs.</p> <p>Grant allocation model should also be reviewed to ensure transparency</p>	<p>We welcome the focus on AONBs but are disappointed that it falls short of Glover’s recommendations.</p> <p>Designated landscapes must have the sufficient resources and robust governance to deliver their purposes and Management Plans, and any new burdens arising out of the review should be fully funded immediately.</p>

<p>Private and blended financing models for nature recovery and nature-based solutions.</p> <p>A dedicated national finance team, part of a proposed national landscape partnership, to generate additional income through green finance initiatives and joint funding bids and coordinate a pipeline of investment-ready projects.</p> <p>The national landscapes partnership should publish a commercial strategy within a year of being established.</p>	<p>The Government should commit to increased and long-term funding for designated landscape bodies and delivery partners. For AONBs, where the greatest need for additional resources lies, the Glover proposal to double their modest funding from £6.7 million to £13.4 million should be implemented without further delay. This must be done by increasing the overall funding available for designated landscapes to ensure it does not lead to any reduction in funding available for National Parks.</p> <p>Any new funding should not require an increase in local authority funding, but lock-in at least current levels</p> <p>The proposed new funding model with more diverse sources of funding, such as private finance for nature-based solutions and a role for the new landscapes partnership to harness commercial and sponsorship opportunities does not provide protected landscapes with the certainty they need to plan ahead. There is also concern that private investors could influence management decisions or that they use their investment to offset their environmental impact elsewhere. Private investors (even if they are forthcoming) will want to see a return for their investment on the ground – they will not want to core fund as that support is invisible.</p>
<p>General power of competence (page 24-25)</p> <p>Broaden the legal competence of National Park authorities and the Broads Authority to a more general power, similar to that of local authorities</p>	<p>No comments.</p>

Item 7**Planning update**

- (a) Development management and planning policy
(b) High Speed Rail (HS2) Phase 2a
- Item for:** Part (a): Information
Part (b): 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

Part (a) Development management and planning policy

1. Between November 2021 and March 2022, the Landscape Planning Officer reviewed 39 planning applications, and made representations to 1 Planning Inspectorate Appeal, 1 Local Plan consultation, 1 non-statutory consultation from Natural England and 1 pre-application consultation. One application was classified as major development associated with retail development in Cannock district. Seven consultations related to amended applications in response to previous objections. Twelve applications did not need a full response as there were no concerns to raise.
2. The table below indicates applications reported on previously that have now been decided, and consultations from July where an objection was made, along with the outcomes to date. Full responses are available from the AONB Landscape Planning Officer.

	Planning inspectorate Application /Appeal		Major application		
	Planning policy		Other consultation (eg. Felling license)		
Authority area	Reference	Site and Description	Response	Response date	LPA decision
Cannock Chase	CH/20/381	Land used as a pony paddock, Rawnsley Road, Cannock Residential - 60 houses	Objection	27.05.21	Awaiting decision
South Staffordshire	21/00644/FUL 21/00645/FUL 21/00646/FUL	Coppice Farm, Cannock Rd, Bednall Applications for equestrian arena, stable blocks	Objection Requires landscape mitigation strategy to mitigate AONB setting	14.07.21 15.07.21 22.07.21 09.08.21	Approved 10.09.21 With conditions (landscape)
South Staffordshire	PINS reference 21/3274332 21/3274333 21/3274334	Planning Appeal against enforcement notice Land at Dovelelys Farm Sandy Lane	Support LPA enforcement action. Urbanising features would result in detrimental impacts. In the context of approved development 19/00701/FUL, would risk concerning cumulative impact.	02.08.21	Awaiting decision
Lichfield	21.01097FUL	Caligari Lower Way Upper Longdon Alterations and minor extension	Request clarity on tree retention	26.01.22	Awaiting decision
Stafford	20/33151/FUL	Casa de Lune, 32 Pool Lane, Brocton Garage with living over	Proposal set back from boundary similar to original approved application. Request conditions	11.08.21	Awaiting decision
Lichfield	21/01069/FUL	Tara House, School Lane, Gentleshaw Amended application Outdoor covered manège			Awaiting decision
Stafford	21/34563/COU	Brocton Park Farm Change of use of agricultural field to supplying telegraph	Objection Elevations indicate proposed lighting angled upward impacting on the tranquillity of the	16.12.21 11.01.22	Awaiting decision

		poles, storage and modular office buildings	rural landscape in the setting of the AONB and contributing to light pollution. Seek sensitive lighting and condition for colour finish of offices	03.02.22	
Natural England	015/2788/2021			14.09.21	
Staffordshire County Council	CH.20/04/709 M	Rugeley Quarry Vary conditions – phasing	Seek enhanced restoration. Request conditions for details of areas for trialling landform enhancements and phased habitat restoration.	15.09.21	Awaiting decision
Cannock Chase	CH/21/0383	30 Rugeley Road, Hazelslade Demolition of bungalow 3 new detached houses	Objection 3 properties would reduce the perceived green space between the centre of Hazelslade and the outlying properties.	04.10.21	Awaiting decision
Stafford	21/33668/COU	Land adj Bower Lane, Etchinghill Change of Use from agricultural land to dog exercise area with track and parking area	Objection - Proposal, in a prominent location, would introduce detracting urbanising elements. Potential impact on trees.	15.12.22 03.03.22	Awaiting decision
South Staffordshire	21/00396/FUL Appeal ref W/21/3281030	Shore Croft West Wing Sandy Lane Hatherton Extension to stable block to include further stables, hay store, grooming, feed, tack and rugs room together with construction of a manège	Support LPA refusal due to detrimental impact on AONB and openness of Green Belt. Proposal would considerably increase the mass of built forms and introduce detracting features, fragmenting the landscape of the designated area.	21.10.21	Awaiting decision
Lichfield	21/01620/FULM	Land to west of Stoneyford Lane, Blithbury Solar Farm	Objection Located 3.5km from AONB with Rugeley in the foreground. Seek enhanced mitigation for views of larger structures. Concerns regarding cumulative impact of this proposal and 21/00359/FULM.	28.10.21	Awaiting decision

South Staffordshire		Local Plan Preferred Options	<p>Policy DS1 Green Belt - Concerned potential housing allocation and release of Green Belt proposed at Huntington would result in inappropriate development in the setting of the AONB – refer to Views and Setting Guide.</p> <p>Policy DS2 Open Countryside – Southern edge of Stafford lies in 'Open Countryside' only 1km from the AONB, land between the boundary and Stafford is critical to its setting. Would welcome additional wording to highlight the sensitivities of the AONB and its setting.</p> <p>Allocation of site 591 seriously concerning to AONB. Detailed reasons given.</p> <p>Land South of Stafford 1km from AONB boundary. Requires sensitive layout and design to avoid impacts on AONB setting.</p> <p>Would welcome reference to AONB Design Guide and Views and setting Guide.</p>	23.12.21	
Cannock Chase	CH/21/0402	Cannock Chase Forest Centre Temporary use of area for Commonwealth Games 2022 Mountain Biking event	<p>Objection</p> <p>Inadequate consideration of: Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Potential impacts from spectators and traffic on event day and training days. Long term effects of increased human pressure as a legacy of the event</p>	26.01.22	Awaiting decision

South Staffordshire	Planning Appeal PINs reference APP/3430/W/21/328790 2 21/3287902	Land north of the White House, Sandy La, Hatherton Change of use for keeping horses & as residential caravan site for 3 gypsy families, each with 2 caravans and 1 static caravan/mobile home, hardstanding, 3 amenity buildings	Objection The introduction of residential permanent / semi-permanent caravans, buildings and hardstanding would introduce urban features that would detract from the natural beauty and tranquillity, and the openness of the Green Belt	09.02.22	Awaiting hearing
South Staffordshire	21/01297/FUL	Land at Mansty Lane Change of use equestrian plus indoor riding arena	Conditional objection – concerns regarding potential impact of covered arena to the north of main farm complex and potential impact of lighting.	23.02.22	Awaiting decision
South Staffordshire	21/00040/FUL	Springslade Works Cannock Road Bednall Redevelopment - 5 new dwellings - Amended	Objection Amended plans: new layout with additional plots, amended dwelling sizes and styles. Reduced space for landscape scheme to integrate into the landscape.	22.02.22	Awaiting decision
Cannock Chase	CH/22/0044	Brereton Former Closed Colliery change of use of land for an outdoor recreational country park, the erection of an ancillary visitor centre, visitor car park, and the siting of 100 holiday lodge caravans	Objection Unable to make a fully informed judgement. Application needs to be supported by HRA, full Ecological Assessment, and clarification regarding potential visibility of the proposed development and viability of mitigation proposal on restored land.	08.03.22	Awaiting decision

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

3. There was a press release on 1st March, announcing the Environmental Enhancement Plan developed by the Trent Sow Group. The Plan has received £1.5m funding from HS2 Ltd to deliver six projects over 2 years in the Trent Sow Parklands and Cannock Chase AONB. These projects will deliver green corridor benefits, enhancing the landscape, preserving the historic environment, improving access and creating new habitats for wildlife. They are focussed across an area of just over 3,500 hectares, extending approximately 3km north and south from the HS2 line, six environment projects will be implemented alongside the construction and subsequent operation of HS2, further integrating the railway in the landscape.

The six Trent Sow projects

4. The six projects are described as follows.
 - *Shugborough Woodpasturescape* will be led by the National Trust, supported by Natural England and Cannock Chase AONB Partnership. It will create 40 hectares of new/restored habitat and a block of 220 hectares of contiguous priority habitat that links Shugborough to Brocton Coppice. A Veteran Tree Management plan will be developed to support the long-term legacy for the area.
 - The *Trent Sow Washlands Project* will be led by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust supported by Trent Rivers Trust, Environment Agency, National Trust, and Stafford Borough Council. The project will work with local landowners to restore wet grassland and wetland habitats along the Trent Sow river corridor. It will restore 50 hectares of grasslands and wetland habitats including wildlife ditches and clean water ponds to deliver more, bigger and better connected sites, establishing a strong and connected natural environment network of grassland and wetland habitats along the river corridor.
 - *Connecting Towpaths* will be led by the Canal and River Trust supported by Ingestre with Tixall Parish Council. An improved towpath on the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal will provide a safe and accessible off-road route between Great Haywood, Tixall and Milford, with this forming a significant proportion of a larger towpath project into Stafford.
 - *Ingestre Orangery Garden* will be led by Friends of Ingestre Orangery supported by Ingestre Hall, and local residents. The project will restore key historic features of the garden including the Long Walk and yew arches with a programme of maintenance in place. It will also enhance connectivity with the historic garden and landscape through a number of features including a new seating and viewing area, tree planting, art installation and outdoor learning space, leading to increased access, enjoyment and use of the gardens.
 - The *Shugborough Estate Gardens Project* will be delivered by The National Trust with support from local volunteers. It will improve the quality of the garden and the landscape views, resulting in better access and enjoyment for visitors to the gardens. The historic landscape setting of Shugborough's Grade I Listed landscape, the Cats Monument and the Chinese House will be improved, and the historic shelter belt and shrubbery walk will be re-established.

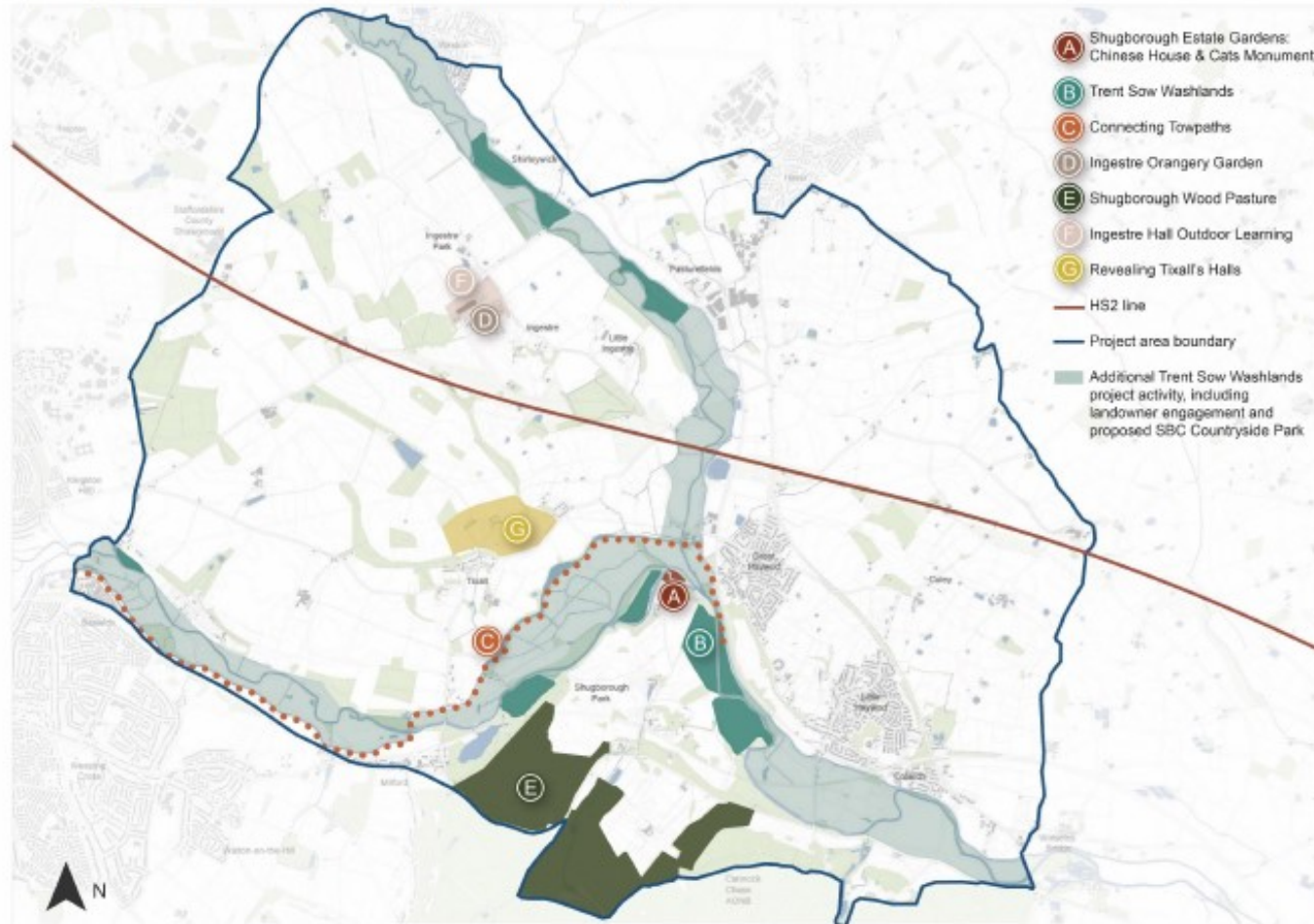
- *Revealing Tixall's Halls* will be led by Cannock Chase AONB and Chase Through Time Volunteers supported by Staffordshire County Council's Historic Environment Team. The project will improve understanding of the below ground archaeology and heritage around Tixall Gatehouse to inform appropriate management in the future. It will engage the local and wider community, including the local Young Archaeologists' Club, in the heritage on their doorstep.
5. Two of the projects are now underway – at Ingestre Orangery Garden and Shugborough Estate Gardens.
 6. The [Environmental Enhancement Plan](#) is available on the AONB website. A map of the area covered by the Plan along with locations of the proposed projects is provided in Appendix 1 to this report.
 7. Members will be aware that Early Environmental Works have commenced near Ingestre, just outside the AONB. The AONB Landscape Officer and volunteers from the Fixed Point Photography team have visited the area around the railway alignment to establish suitable locations for monitoring change associated with the HS2 works. Three new locations are proposed for monitoring the effects: from The Triumphal Arch, Shugborough, from the towpath at Tixall Wide and from the canal towpath south of Hoo Mill Lock. These locations will be included in the regular monitoring with immediate effect.

Recommendations

8. (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.

Figure 5.2: Visual masterplan showing Environmental Enhancement Projects and the HS2 line within the Trent-Sow landscape



Item 8 Inclusion and diversity study

Item for: Information

Author: Ian Marshall, AONB Development Officer

Financial implications: £15,000 has been allocated for this study utilising additional core funding received from Defra in January 2022

Recommendations: The Committee notes the report and is invited to ask questions.

Background

1. The Communities and Business theme of the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019-24 highlights that further work and engagement is needed by the AONB Partnership to connect with both existing and new local communities to ensure that the natural benefits that the AONB offers reach the widest range of people (policies CB1 and CB2 refer).
2. A [review of England's Protected Landscapes](#) carried out by a panel led by Julian Glover and published in 2019 concluded that:
 - Large parts of society have no relationship with protected landscapes
 - Many communities feel that these landscapes hold no relevance for them
 - Governance structures are remote and there is a lack of diversity
3. Protected Landscapes rely on local support to deliver their aims and objectives. We need to understand, therefore, whether or not these findings apply to Cannock Chase AONB and, if they do, what changes need to be put in place in order to champion a culture for the organisation and Cannock Chase, the place that is:
 - Relevant – where locals and visitors are able to establish a personal connection to Cannock Chase - the place, and find meaning and value in the purpose of the AONB Partnership
 - Diverse – actively encourages people of different backgrounds, perspectives, thoughts and beliefs
 - Inclusive – builds an organisational culture that is flexible, values diverse ideas and embraces the meaningful participation of all

Study proposal

4. Following a competitive procurement process a commission has been awarded to A Meredith Associates and The Research Solution. The practices have strong heritage, tourism, community engagement and market research backgrounds, and have worked extensively with tourism, heritage and leisure clients, local authorities and government agencies across Staffordshire and the country, including working in AONBs.

5. The brief seeks to answer a series of questions:
 - What is the current situation - who does and doesn't get the opportunity to visit and connect with Cannock Chase?
 - What does the community think - for those who do not use the AONB, why don't they and what are the barriers?
 - What changes are required to make Cannock Chase more welcoming and accessible to a greater diversity of people?
 - How inclusive and diverse are the governance structure and operations of the AONB Partnership, and does the culture of the Partnership need changing and how?

6. Under-represented groups may be identified by protected characteristics, including - age, disability, ethnicity and gender, as well as socio-economic barriers such as health and well-being, and restricted income. There may be rational and logical choices why some people choose not to visit Cannock Chase, including lack of awareness, but there may be unintentional 'barriers' that lead to the exclusion of some or make them feel unwelcome. These barriers may include physical obstructions, lack of knowledge, lack of confidence, fear of abuse, inability to access transport connections, and socio-economic.

7. A strength of AONB Partnerships is that their governance models are adapted to suit local circumstances and achieve wide local 'ownership'. Their governance structures are, however, a reflection of the memberships of those organisations and groups represented in their areas. This may not always reflect the broader external characteristics of neighbouring users/ or surrounding non-visiting communities less able to access the countryside.

Approach

8. The study will be progressed through a three-stage methodology.

Stage 1 Insight into the existing evidence base - Desktop research to understand the context and plan for the primary research in stage two (national context, review of local/surrounding research and studies, audit of AONB public facing materials, audit of AONB Partnership governance structures and operational staff)

Stage 2 Undertake new primary research - From the analysis of local data a series of consultations with structured interviews will be delivered both online / through social media and as in-person interviews and discussions in surrounding towns.

Stage 3 Corporate governance and reporting - From the summary reporting of the above stage 1 and 2 strands of research findings, the emerging implications will be presented and discussed with the AONB Partnership. This stage will include internal attitudes towards the need for and approach to diversifying staff/Partnership representation.

Outputs and outcomes

9. The study will deliver the following reports to accompany each of the stages.

Stage 1 - Interim Summary report from the analysis, and initial proposed approach to consulting. This early, brief, literature review will identify key issues that these documents have flagged up, and examples of how they have conversed with their stakeholders, local communities and non-visiting audiences. Interim progress meeting to share these findings and proposed approach to consulting in the next stage. Thus, in terms of methodology, rather than 're-invent the wheel', the aim is to look for good practice approaches, then adapt them to the Cannock Chase content.

Stage 2 - Primary Research Summary report - A headline analysis of these findings and key issues arising will be shared to the client team. More detailed analysis will be worked on 'behind the scenes' to inform the Stage Three consultation with the AONB Partnership.

Stage 3 - Full Report with a headline analysis of all evidence and indications of attitudes. This report will draw out headline recommendations and indicative priorities for the consideration of the AONB Partnership to re-focus its structure and outlook.

10. This in effect represents the 'start of the beginning' towards moving to a more inclusive and welcoming approach for the AONB. The intended outcome of the study is that it will set the AONB and the AONB Partnership on a path to championing a culture that is relevant, diverse and inclusive for all sections of society.

Recommendation

11. The Committee notes the report and is invited to ask questions.

Item 9 **Carbon baseline study**

Item for: Information

Author: Ian Marshall, AONB Development Officer

Financial implications: £10,000 has been allocated for this study utilising additional core funding received from Defra in January 2022

Recommendations: The Committee notes the report and is invited to ask questions.

Background

1. At its December 2021 meeting, Joint Committee was informed about the collaborative work on climate change being undertaken by the National Association for AONBs. The purpose of the paper was to begin a conversation on the impacts of climate change for Cannock Chase AONB and how we might respond to the challenges in partnership with our local communities, partners and stakeholders whilst at the same time continuing to deliver our statutory duty to conserve and enhance natural beauty.
2. One of the conclusions of the December paper was that a better understanding is required of the full impacts of climate change on the AONB as well as potential adaptation and mitigation measures and their consequences on our core purpose.
3. We have begun to inform our understanding of these complex issues by commissioning Small World Consulting Ltd (SWC), UK leaders in carbon footprinting and net zero planning for the UK's protected landscapes, to prepare a carbon footprint assessment and reduction plan for the AONB.
4. The recommendations from the study will form a core component of a future climate change mitigation and adaptation plan for the AONB.

Study proposal

5. Small World Consulting is currently undertaking a carbon footprint assessment for all of the UK's national parks as well as several AONBs. The programme builds on a decade-long collaboration between SWC and the Lake District National Park and aims to scale up the efforts by the protected landscapes to contribute to meeting the UK's 2050 net zero target.
6. Using a standard methodology SWC is applying across all protected landscapes, the study will for the first time:
 - Calculate Cannock Chase AONB's existing carbon footprint (the combined carbon emissions from residents, businesses, visitors and the principal land uses in the AONB). The baseline emissions will become the reference point from which future emissions can be measured.
 - Identify the main sources of emissions.
 - Propose emission reduction targets across the key components of the total carbon footprint that could be influenced the most through the AONB partnership.

- With local stakeholder input, identify land-based measures to sequester carbon alongside broader benefits such as biodiversity gains and improved flood resilience. These insights will be used to propose land use targets which will help achieve net zero and possibly net negative emissions in the AONB, as well as contribute to meeting UK-wide 2050 net zero target.
7. The methodology adopts consumption-based carbon accounting methods, thus the assessment opens up policy areas such as food, shopping, business supply chains and travel by both residents and visitors to and from the AONB. This approach complements more traditional estimates that focus on fuels-related and electricity-related emissions in a specified geographical area, allowing for more far-reaching measures to be taken to reduce the true carbon footprint of our lifestyles.
 8. Importantly, the SWC programme will also explore the potential for land use change in the AONB to enable carbon sequestration as part of a suggested pathway towards net zero and net negative emissions. This will involve setting long-term targets for woodland creation, peatland restoration and regenerative agriculture, taking into account UK-wide recommendations from the Sixth Carbon Budget (2020), as well as the unique land use features of and opportunities for the AONB.

Benefits

9. The exciting and creative challenge for each National Park and AONB is to find a way to cut emissions in line with current science and be land stewardship and planning authority leaders, while simultaneously creating better places to live, work and visit. The SWC programme will provide a platform to help us achieve these aspirations on Cannock Chase AONB.
10. The study will enable us to identify carbon reduction and storage projects that can fulfil the 'mitigation' element of the proposed climate mitigation and adaptation plan for Cannock Chase AONB. This will sit alongside proposals for building the resilience of Cannock Chase so that it can adapt to the impacts of climate change. These have yet to be considered by the Partnership but may include: habitat protection, protecting ecosystem services, connecting landscapes, capturing and storing carbon, building knowledge and understanding, and inspiring people.

Recommendations

11. The Committee notes the report and is invited to ask questions.

Note:

The terms '[climate mitigation](#)' and '[climate adaptation](#)' are used in accordance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change definitions.