



**Cannock Chase AONB Partnership  
Meeting of the Joint Committee  
8<sup>th</sup> December 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	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>		
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5	<b>Finance report – Revenue Budget 2022/23 and 2023/24</b> <i>(a) To note progress on the current net revenue budget for 2022/23 and the current forecast position</i> <i>(b) To consider and approve a draft revenue budget for 2023-24</i> <i>(c) To note progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme</i> Report of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee	(a) INFORMATION  (b) DECISION  (c) INFORMATION	<a href="#">13</a>
6	<b>Additional access funding for Protected Landscapes</b> <i>To inform members of an uplift to AONB core grant to pay for access improvements and invite ideas for projects</i> Report of the AONB Development Officer	INFORMATION	<a href="#">22</a>
7	<b>Diversity and Inclusion</b> <i>To discuss with members the findings and recommendations of a study to investigate diversity and inclusion within Cannock Chase AONB and the AONB Partnership, and consider a response</i> Report of the AONB Development Officer	DECISION	<a href="#">24</a>
8	<b>Carbon baseline assessment and pathway to net zero for Cannock Chase AONB</b> <i>To discuss with members the findings and recommendations of a study about greenhouse gas emissions within the AONB and a proposed pathway to net zero, and consider a response</i> Report of the AONB Development Officer	DECISION	<a href="#">30</a>

9	<b>Delivery of AONB activities</b> <i>To update members on recent AONB activities</i> Report of the AONB Team	INFORMATION	<a href="#">44</a>
10	<b>Planning update</b> <i>To update members on AONB input to planning matters</i> Report of the AONB Landscape Planning Officer	INFORMATION	<a href="#">51</a>
11	<b>AONB communications</b> <i>To discuss with members priorities for AONB communications</i> Verbal report of the AONB Communications Officer	INFORMATION	<a href="#">56</a>
12	<b>AONB Management Plan review 2025-2030</b> <i>To consider and approve a light touch review of a one-year extension of the AONB Management Plan (2024-25)</i> Report of the AONB Development Officer	DECISION	<a href="#">57</a>
13	<b>Protected Landscape reforms</b> <i>To update members on government and NAAONB activity around the implementation of the Landscapes Review</i> Report of the AONB Development Officer	INFORMATION	<a href="#">61</a>
14	<b>Date, time and venue of next meeting</b> <i>Dates for meetings in March, July and December 2023 to be confirmed</i>		

**Item 3****Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

<b>Item for:</b>	Approval
<b>Author:</b>	Richard Harris, AONB Land Management Officer
<b>Financial implications:</b>	None
<b>Recommendations:</b>	The Committee approves the minutes of the meeting and considers any matters arising.



**Cannock Chase AONB Partnership  
AGM and Meeting of the Joint Committee  
Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022 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 Adrienne Fitzgerald	(AF)
Cllr Richard Cox	(RC)

**Representing**

Stafford Borough Council
Cannock Chase District Council
Lichfield District Council

**Officers**

Ian Marshall	(IM)	AONB Unit
Julia Banbury	(JB)	AONB Unit
Richard Harris	(RH)	AONB Unit
Helena Tuck	(HT)	Lichfield District Council
Nikola Mihajlovic	(NM)	Staffordshire County Council
John Rowe	(JR)	Staffordshire County Council

**Advisers**

Hayley Mival	(HM)	National Trust
Susan Kneill-Boxley	(SKB)	CPRE Staffordshire
Chris Evans	(CE)	West Midlands Bird Club

**Public:****1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

- 1.1 The election of Chair and Vice-Chair for the next 12 months was overseen by John Rowe, Honorary Secretary of the AONB Joint Committee.

- 1.2 A call for nominations of Chair was made. Councillor Richard Cox proposed Councillor Frances Beatty re-election as Chair of the Joint Committee for the next 12 months. This was seconded by Councillor Adrienne Fitzgerald. A vote was then taken on the nomination of Councillor Frances Beatty to be appointed as Chair for the next 12 months.
- 1.3 **Resolved:**  
**That Councillor Frances Beatty is appointed Chair of the AONB Joint Committee for the next 12 months.**
- 1.4 A call for nominations for Vice-Chair was made. Councillor Beatty nominated Councillor Len Bates to be appointed as Vice-Chair for the next 12 Months. Councillor Adrienne Fitzgerald seconded the proposal. No further nominations were received. A vote was then taken on the nomination of Councillor Len Bates to be appointed as Vice-Chair for the next 12 Months.
- 1.5 **Resolved:**  
**That Councillor Len Bates is appointed Vice-Chair of the AONB Joint Committee for the next 12 months.**
- 1.6 In order to ensure that future meetings of the Joint Committee are quorate Councillor Beatty asked if local authorities could be represented by substitute members. JR's initial view is that a cabinet member would have to be the Local Authority representative, or a substitute must be another cabinet member. IM to check and come back to FB.

## **2. Welcome and introductions**

- 2.1 Councillor Beatty opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the AGM of the AONB Partnership Joint Committee (JC).

## **3. Apologies for absence**

- 3.1 Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Victoria Wilson	Staffordshire County Council
Councillor Iain Eadie	Lichfield District Council
Councillor Justin Johnson	Cannock Chase Council
Councillor Len Bates	South Staffordshire District Council
Jaclyn Lake	Natural England
Mary Cope	Beaudesert Park Farm
June Jukes	Friends of Cannock Chase
Sarah Bentley	Staffordshire County Council
Mark Kelly	Cemex
Colin Manning	AONB Unit

#### **4. Minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

- 4.1 IM explained there is a video link on the website to watch the proceedings of the AONB Conference at <https://www.cannock-chase.co.uk/get-involved/aonb-annual-conference/>
- 4.2 Following on from a workshop with local artists and art producers to discuss how we can develop collaborative local arts projects; two expressions of interest have been submitted for consideration. These may come forward as applications through the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF).
- 4.3 The Defra grant settlement for 2022-25 has been confirmed and represents a 14.7% uplift on our core budget. All Local Authorities in the AONB partnership have agreed to increase their contributions by the same percentage.
- 4.4 The funding uplift is allowing the Partnership to recruit a part-time Communications Officer. The job will inform people about Cannock Chase, why it is important, change attitudes, inspire, and educate, and promote the work of the AONB partnership.
- 4.5 Councillor Adrienne Fitzgerald commented it was a great role and important to have.
- 4.6 With respect to the response to the Landscapes Review, Defra still reviewing comments. There was no obvious Bill in the Queens speech that relates to this. Defra may, therefore, bid for a bill to introduce the reforms in the 4<sup>th</sup> session of Parliament (May 23/24).
- 4.7 Councillor Frances Beatty asked about the position with respect to Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS), did Staffordshire County Council (SCC) have an update? IM responded that LNRS are enacted under the Environment Act 2021, and that guidance on their preparation is still awaited. The expectation is this is something that SCC will lead on. There is no point in the AONB preparing something separately.
- 4.8 Councillor Len Bates raised the issue of the gate at Shugborough near Essex Bridge. HM confirmed that the gate is open and has been open over the last 12 months. It is open every day from 10a.m.-6p.m., providing access to the formal gardens and the Hall which are areas of the estate where an entrance fee is payable, or entry is by NT membership.
- 4.9 IM has sent the position statement of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership to the Government response to the Landscapes Review to MPs but has had no reply.
- 4.10 Councillor Richard Cox pointed out the incorrect spelling of Michael Fabricant, Member of Parliament for the Lichfield Constituency. The minutes of the previous meeting are to be corrected accordingly.
- 4.11 With respect to the Inclusion and Diversity Study, the draft report is back with the consultant for corrections. The report will be brought back to the Joint Committee with a view to next steps.

4.12 **Resolved:**

**The minutes of the previous meeting are agreed as a correct record and are approved, subject to the amendment of the correct spelling of the surname of Michael Fabricant, Member of Parliament for the Lichfield Constituency.**

5. **Public Questions**

5.1 No questions were received.

6. **Finance Report – Revenue Budget 2022/23**

6.1 Nikki Mihajlovic, Senior Finance Business Partner, presented the revenue budget for 2022/23. This is forecasting an underspend of £42.00

6.2 Councillor Frances Beatty asked what happens to any underspend, is it transferred? IM explained the Core Fund and explained the underspend on the Sustainable Development Fund. There is flexibility to move money through to AONB Projects.

6.3 The AONB reserve is £66,406 after taking into account the Sustainable Development Fund, HS2 etc underspend. For 2022/23 the closing balance is £67,050. Councillor Frances Beatty asked who manages the Reserve? The money sits within the Council. Councillor Beatty asked where the money is invested, we should know. NM to find out and come back to the Joint Committee.

6.4 Councillor Richard Cox asked about the £90k. It was explained that when the old AONB team disbanded and left, there was a gap before a new Team was pointed. With no staff in post, and no-one to deliver AONB Projects, very little of the AONB budget was spent. Defra allowed the AONB to keep the underspend to reinvest once the new team was appointed. This is the reason why in 2020 the budget was very large.

6.5 The Committee extended their thanks to NM.

6.6 **Resolved:**

**(1) The Committee noted the final outturn position for 2021/22 for the Core, Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), AONB Projects, Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme and the closing balance held on the AONB reserve.**

**(2) The Committee approved the revised net revenue budget and noted progress on the current net revenue budget for 2022/23 and its current forecast outturn position.**

**(3) The Committee noted progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme progress on the spend for the FIPL programme**

7. **Delivery of AONB activities**

7.1 IM presented a summary of the delivery of AONB activities. The two-year period business plan (2021-23) sets out our activities. A summary of the first year's achievements is set out in the Annual Review, the second part updates members on the planned activities for the second year (2022-23).

- 7.2 This is the third year of producing the Annual Review in this style. IM ran through the document and the headline achievements.
- 7.3 IM asked if Partners had anything to add? HM responded she had nothing to add.
- 7.4 Councillor Adrienne Fitzgerald (with reference to the Annual Review) said it was a fabulous report, easy to read and was laid out well, and congratulated IM on its production.
- 7.5 Councillor Adrienne Fitzgerald opened an event with 450 children at the Woodland festival based around Cannock Chase camp. It included activities such as how to plant a bulb which was a tremendous success, there was also a booklet to take to their parents. A video was made and was keen to make this an annual event. There was a peddle and play event going up levels in cycling and teaching how to cycle safely and with respect. IM responded that we will have a Comms Officer and new resource available to tap into events like this in the future. Councillor Frances Beatty asked if there was a link to the video and could it be sent to Ian?
- 7.6 The Annual review is digitally available; a request was made to print off a few hardcopies and put in elected members wards. Councillor Adrienne Fitzgerald and Councillor Richard Cox were happy to disseminate digital versions.
- 7.7 IM ran through the planned activities for 2022-23 across the topic areas of landscape character and planning, wildlife and nature, historic environment and culture, experience and enjoyment, communities and business and governance and communication.
- 7.8 IM mentioned that work is progressing on the AONB Highways Design Guide and the Good Lighting Guide, the latter of which is being prepared with the CPRE.
- 7.9 JB is exploring other opportunities with Western Power at potential locations for undergrounding. HM mentioned that the difference at Shugborough of undergrounding has been phenomenal to the landscape.
- 7.10 JB mentioned that she has been encouraging planners to promote the Planning Guides (AONB Design Guide, AONB Views and Setting Guide), and encourage developers to utilise them through continued reference to the guides in consultation responses. This is getting indirect publicity to the guides as AONB responses are publicly available on local authority planning portals.
- 7.11 JB mentioned that the Fixed-Point Photography project is extending the number of monitoring locations. In part this is to include new locations to monitor the effects of HS2 construction and operation on the AONB. Additionally, The National Trust have funding through the Trent Sow Parkland HS2 Group's Environmental Enhancement Fund for a Wood pasturescape Project, restoring wood pasture at a landscape scale JB is talking to Paul Roberts, Lead Ranger, Shugborough Estate, to set up a joint project to monitor this change.
- 7.12 Stafford Borough Council have opened their Community Awards – FB asked if there were any of the AONB's volunteers who might be nominated for an award?

- 7.13 CE provided an update on the quinquennial breeding bird survey of Cannock Chase by West Midland Bird Club supported by Cannock Chase AONB Sustainable Development Fund. The survey element is nearly finished, data has been analysed, a booklet published and circulated. Copies of the booklet will be available for sale for a nominal fee. CE reported there has been a changing picture with respect to birds, with a lot declining. There is an excellent population of willow warbler, but nationally declining. This is thought to be due to scrub area not available elsewhere. Nightjar are faring ok. Tree pipits, wood warbler and pied flycatcher aren't doing well. Long-eared owl not doing too well and may be predated. You are almost guaranteed to hear a cuckoo in some places on the Chase. The booklet is likely to be ready in the Autumn.
- 7.14 JB asked if there might be an event to mark the booklet's publication, as happened with the last survey publication? Consider getting partners together.
- 7.15 Councillor Richard Cox asked about raptors specifically sightings of red kite? CE responded saying they are occasional sightings of young birds that are dispersing.
- 7.16 Training is to be provided in relation to ancient/veteran tree identification using volunteers. A deer census has been commissioned to inform a strategy for the management of deer on the Chase. There is a proposal to update records of priority invasive species and identify opportunities for control programmes through Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.
- 7.17 Councillor Richard Cox asked about the badger and fox population. It was responded that Staffordshire has a high population. HM reported that both are prevalent at Shugborough.
- 7.18 Heritage strategy needs revisiting. County Archaeologist to bring this to a satisfactory conclusion. With respect to the three Trig points on Cannock Chase, we are working with landowners to consolidate these with appropriate conservation works.
- 7.19 At the Commonwealth games Mountain Biking event at Birches Valley on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August the AONB have a presence in the spectator hub. This is an opportunity for us to tell people what is happening within one of England's finest landscapes. We will distribute leaflets and sell the new brochure. A question was asked who should the information to press go through? Contact Adrian Marklew.
- 7.20 A short video has been commissioned to promote the AONB. It should be ready for the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August and will go on the website afterwards.
- 7.21 Proposals for car park improvements as set out in the SAC Partnership's DIPs have been delayed as the SAC Officer left the SAC partnership. Work is being progressed now on the design consultant brief.
- 7.22 With respect to the Information hut on Milford Common a new volunteer group has got together supported by the AONB. There is a lack of presence on the Chase. There is a need for an official presence to address this. We are looking to introduce a new visitor support role.



- 7.23 Councillor Adrienne Fitzgerald mentioned the Gruffalo trail at Forestry England, Birches Valley. They are using a digital trail. Can this be done elsewhere, involving interactive activities for children. JB mentioned that as part of the Arts Project that the AONB and SAC Partnership are partnering with Cannock Chase CEP, the SAC Partnership have put forward such a proposal.
- 7.24 SBN asked do we have an app to engage with children? The app could start with identifying trails, provide a facility to find a walk on your phone. We haven't got one at present but need to add this to the list for the new Comms Officer. **Action: Councillor Richard Cox asked if QR codes could go up on noticeboards to link to apps/websites.**
- 7.25 IM reported that 52 representatives of the Defra National Landscapes team came to Cannock Chase and spent two days on the Chase. The event was kindly hosted by National Trust, Shugborough Estate. We were able to tell Defra what we get up to and show them what it is really like to work in a protected landscape. This should heap huge rewards. A question was asked how many had been to Cannock Chase, and the response was only 8 out of the 58 had done so. Interestingly, of the attendees no one had worked in an AONB!
- 7.26 Councillor Frances Beatty mentioned the possibility of a visit onto the Chase as a Board to have a look at the work being done. Councillor Richard Cox asked if we could ask local ward members? This was a good idea. IM raised that this would be an opportunity to highlight what is going on to everyone involved in governance of the AONB. HM was willing to host the day, it could involve a parks landscape visit. Councillor Frances Beatty mentioned we could hire a minibus; avoid September and aim for October for the Board visit.
- 7.27 **Resolved:**  
**(1) The Committee approves the AONB Annual Review 2021-22**  
**(2) The Committee notes the planned activities for 2022-23**

## **8. Farming in Protected Landscapes**

8.1 The Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme (2021-24) is part of Defra's Agricultural Transition Plan. It offers funding to farmers and land managers in England's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and National Parks for projects that:

- Support nature recovery
- Mitigate the impacts of climate change
- Provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage
- Protect or improve the quality and character of the landscape or place.

The programme is open to all farmers and land managers within AONBs and National Parks, as well as outside if there is a benefit to the protected landscape and its objectives.

8.2 Colin Manning (CM) was appointed as Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer in October 2021. The year 1 budget was reprofiled to £80k. The forecast was to spend all

of it but came in underspent due to a combination of weather and illness delaying one project so that it could not be delivered before the year end.

8.3 CM is confident he can spend year 2 allocation. If anyone is aware of a farmer or landowner with a potential project, please get in touch with CM.

8.4 Joint Committee felt this was an excellent job and registered their thanks.

8.5 **Resolved:**  
**(1) The Committee notes the report**

## **9. Sustainable Development Fund**

9.1 RH provided an update on applications and progress with the scheme.

9.2 Two grants have been awarded to West Midland Bird Club, for the second phase of the 2022 breeding bird survey of Cannock Chase, and towards a further phase of an audio survey for long-eared owls. Two applications were refused. Three expressions of interest were also received, and feedback is to be provided. If suitable, these may form applications in the second call for applications to be made imminently.

9.3 **Resolved:**  
**(1) The Committee notes the report**

## **10. Planning update**

10.1 JB provided an update on planning matters since the last meeting. There has been an increase in the number of appeals made on planning decisions, and unauthorised development is becoming more frequent, posing a risk of erosion of the landscape and natural beauty of the AONB.

10.2 Key areas affected are South Staffordshire (one appeal dismissed, and a hearing due in August). This part of the AONB is at high risk of detrimental effects from unauthorised/unacceptable development, so the outcomes of these appeals is very important to the AONB. The area around Cannock Wood is also under pressure from potentially visually intrusive development proposals.

10.3 Councillor Frances Beatty asked if these could be picked up with the Planning Authorities. JB responded that generally planning authorities are trying to protect and conserve AONB. However, applicants may not be satisfied with decisions and may make an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. Where possible the AONB is supporting local authorities in appeals. The concern is that the increasing pressure for housing in and close to the AONB may have a cumulative detrimental effect on landscape quality.

10.4 **Resolved:**  
**(1) The Committee notes the report**

**11. AONB Management Plan review 2024-29**

- 11.1 IM asked the Committee to approve, in principle, a 12-month delay to the review of the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2024-29, subject to Defra guidance on due process.
- 11.2 IM explained it is a legal requirement to review the plan and update it within five years. It is the only legal requirement that AONBs have. IM explained it takes quite a long to prepare for review. The stages are set out in the Joint Committee published papers. We would need to begin scoping in October.
- 11.3 The Government response to the Landscapes Review (March 2022) identified several significant potential changes to protected landscapes including a potential second statutory duty. If implemented some of these will require amendments to the statutory purposes and duties of AONBs. Natural England are updating guidance on management plans. NAAONB have agreed nationally to delay review of management plans to allow for this uncertainty. Defra have viewed this favourably confirming that AONBs can delay management plans but leaving it to AONBs whether they want to delay by 12 months.
- 11.4 In the interim a light touch review is needed. It is suggested we agree and publish one page of text setting out our plans. The paper before Committee is recommending taking up this offer and waiting 12 months.
- 11.5 **Resolved:**  
**(1) The Committee agrees to a 12-month delay in the review of the Cannock Chase AONB management plan, subject to Defra guidance on due process.**

**12. Date, time and venue of next meeting**

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022 10.00a.m. – 12.00p.m. at Rising Brook Community Church, Burton Square, Stafford ST17 9LT

Councillor Frances Beatty thanked everyone for their time and attendance and looks forward to Board meeting in October. **Action: invite local ward members to this meeting as well.**

**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 2022/23 and 2023/24**

**Item for:** Noting and Decision

**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 2022/23 and its current forecast outturn position is noted.
2. The approval of the net revenue budget for 2023/24 is recommended to the Joint Committee.
3. 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 2022/23 and its current forecast outturn position, and also presents a net revenue budget for 2023/24. The recommendations represent an effective way to continue to carry forward the implementation of the Management Plan for the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership.

### **Revenue Budget Update 2022/23**

3. The approved budget presented at the last Joint Committee for the AONB for 2022/23 was £221,95. This has been increased by £66,435 to £288,385 to reflect additional core funding for AONBs awarded by DEFRA for Access for All projects as set out in Appendix 1. The current forecast outturn position when compared to budget is a breakeven position.
4. The individual projects, totalling £3,764 for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) including the £1,000 administration fee, are set out in Appendix 2. This shows the re-allocation of funds to the AONB projects of £6,236.
5. The individual projects, totalling £87,821 for the AONB projects are set out in Appendix 3. This includes the re-allocation of funds from the SDF of £6,236 and the additional DEFRA funding of £66,435 for Access for All projects, to increase the approved budget from £15,150 to £87,821.

### **Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme**

6. 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.

7. The detailed net position for the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme is set out in Appendix 4 and is compared to the approved budget of £289,620. The forecast outturn against the programme is £254,620, which will result in an underspend against the grant of £35,000, which will have to be repaid.

### **Reserve**

8. The balance on the Cannock Chase AONB Reserve currently stands at £66,515 for 2022/23. A summary of the Reserve is attached as Appendix 5.
9. 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.
10. These priorities are reviewed annually in December of each year.
11. It is anticipated that the balance on this reserve at the end of 2022/23 will be £66,515.

### **Revenue Budget 2023/24**

12. The additional core funding from Defra for Cannock Chase AONB in 2022/23 of £22,083.39 is indicative for years 2023/24 and 2024/25. The level of core grant support from DEFRA for national landscapes for 2023/24 has yet to be announced.
13. Salary increases in 2022/23 combined with anticipated further increases in 2023/24 are going to place pressures on the revenue budget for 2023/24. Two options have been calculated for the net revenue budget for 2023/24 for Members' views:
14. Option 1 is set out in Appendix 5 and assumes an inflationary uplift on pay of 4% and pension contributions of 1% and no inflationary uplift on other expenditure budgets:
  - This option results in a funding shortfall of £12,160.
  - In order to mitigate the funding shortfall a number of AONB core expenditure budgets have been reduced from 2022/23 levels as follows: 'Office Equipment' from £1,400 to £500, 'Print and Publicity' from £4,140 to £2,000, 'Annual Conference' from £2,000 to £0 (assumed that the event could net nil through in-kind partner contributions or charging for attendance); and 'Core Activity' from £1,720 to £500). The assumption has also been made that the AONB website hosting and support costs of £2,500 could be funded from the reserves. Combined, this would generate £8,760 of savings from core expenditure.
  - In order to meet the remaining amount of the shortfall, this option also proposes the reallocation of £3,400 from the Sustainable Development Fund to AONB core expenditure. As DEFRA contribute 75% to the core budget element this option assumes an uplift of £2,550 for DEFRA funding and the remaining 25% (£850) which has been apportioned against an increase in Local Authority contributions based on current % contributions.

15. Option 2 is set out in Appendix 6 and assumes an inflationary uplift on pay of 2% and pension contributions of 1% and no inflationary uplift on other expenditure budgets:
- This option results in a funding shortfall of £8,520.
  - In order to mitigate the funding shortfall a number of AONB core expenditure budgets have been reduced from 2022/23 levels as follows: 'Office Equipment' from £1,400 to £500, 'Print and Publicity' from £4,140 to £2,240, 'Annual Conference' from £2,000 to £0 (assumed that the event could net nil through in-kind partner contributions or charging for attendance); and 'Core Activity' from £1,720 to £500. The assumption has also been made that the AONB website costs of £2,500 could be funded from the reserves.
  - This option does not require a reallocation of funds from the Sustainable Development Fund and therefore does not assume an increase in DEFRA funding nor an increase in Local Authority contributions.
16. The 2023/24 net revenue budget, subject to approval by the AONB Joint Committee at today's meeting, will form the basis of the annual grant submission to Defra in January 2023.

### **Equalities Implications**

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

### **Legal Implications**

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

### **Resource and Value for Money Implications**

19. 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**

20. 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**

21. The following recommendations are made to the Joint Committee:
- (1) That progress on the current net revenue budget for 2022/23 and its current forecast outturn position is noted.
  - (2) The approval of the net revenue budget for 2023/24 is recommended to the Joint Committee.

(3) That progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme is noted.



## Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

## Cannock Chase AONB Core &amp; Project Costs

## Forecast for 2022/2023

	Budget	2022 Actuals	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
<b>Core Budget</b>				
Salaries	172,670	84,683	162,469	-10,201
Training Expenses	1,510	-290	260	-1,250
Travel and Subsistence	700	492	700	0
<b>Staff and Associated Costs</b>	<b>174,880</b>	<b>84,885</b>	<b>163,429</b>	<b>-11,451</b>
Office Equipment	1,400	1,163	1,400	0
Annual Audit	0	0	0	0
Volunteer Costs	500	78	500	0
National Liaison	3,160	2,789	3,160	0
Print & Publicity	4,140	10,918	14,926	10,786
AONB Website	0	0	0	0
Annual Conference	2,000	0	2,000	0
Core Activity (including monitoring, community involvement, etc)	1,720	1,475	2,385	665
Partnership Running Costs	9,000	0	9,000	0
<b>Core Budget Subtotal</b>	<b>196,800</b>	<b>101,307</b>	<b>196,800</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Sustainable Development Fund</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>3,764</b>	<b>-6,236</b>
<b>AONB Projects</b>	<b>15,150</b>	<b>17,703</b>	<b>21,386</b>	<b>6,236</b>
<b>Total Budget/Initial Forecast Outturn</b>	<b>221,950</b>	<b>120,011</b>	<b>221,950</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>New Projects to be developed - Access for All</b>	<b>66,435</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>66,435</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Anticipated Forecast Outturn as at 31 March 2022</b>	<b>288,385</b>	<b>120,011</b>	<b>288,385</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Funded By:</b>				
<b>DEFRA Grant</b>				
Core	-147,600	-129,564	-147,600	0
Sustainable Development Fund	-10,000	0	-10,000	0
AONB Projects	-15,150	0	-15,150	0
Additional Projects Allocation - Access for All	-66,435	0	-66,435	0
<b>DEFRA Grant Subtotal</b>	<b>-239,185</b>	<b>-129,564</b>	<b>-239,185</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Local Authority Contributions</b>				
Lichfield District Council	-2,460	0	-2,460	0
South Staffordshire District Council	-2,460	-2,460	-2,460	0
Cannock Chase District Council	-9,840	0	-9,840	0
Stafford Borough Council	-9,840	-9,840	-9,840	0
Staffordshire County Council	-24,600	0	-24,600	0
<b>Local Authority Contributions Subtotal</b>	<b>-49,200</b>	<b>-12,300</b>	<b>-49,200</b>	<b>0</b>
Sales and Donations	0	-246	-246	-246
Membership Fee Income	0	0	0	0
<b>Funding from(+)/to reserve(-)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>246</b>
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>-288,385</b>	<b>-142,110</b>	<b>-288,385</b>	<b>0</b>

## Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

## Sustainable Development Fund

## Budget Update for 2022/23

	Budget	Spent or Committed to Date	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
<b>Approved Projects</b>				
Long-eared owl audio survey	600	0	600	0
Quinquennial breeding bird survey for Cannock Chase (phase 2)	2,164	0	2,164	0
Reallocation of funding to AONB Projects	6,236	0	6,236	0
<b>Approved Projects Total</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Admin Fees</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Currently Unallocated</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>0</b>

## Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

## AONB Projects

## Budget Update for 2022/2023

	Budget	Spent or Committed to Date	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
<b>Approved Projects</b>				
Contribution to Art in the Landscape programme (yr2)	5,000	5,000	5,000	0
Contribution to awareness programme for young people (yr2)	5,000	5,000	5,000	0
Deer census (phase 2)	2,795	2,795	2,795	0
Small World Consulting	4,908	4,908	4,908	0
Poetry Workshop	500	0	500	0
Dark Sky Engagement Activities	1,433	0	1,433	0
Trig Points Structural Assessment and Stabilisation Works	1,500	0	1,500	0
Great War Hut - Sign Copyrighting	250	0	250	0
Access for All Projects	66,435	0	66,435	0
<b>Approved Projects Total</b>	<b>87,821</b>	<b>17,703</b>	<b>87,821</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Original Budget allocated</b>	<b>-15,150</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-15,150</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Re-allocation of Funds from SDF Projects</b>	<b>-6,236</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-6,236</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Additional DEFRA Funding</b>	<b>-66,435</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-66,435</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-87,821</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-87,821</b>	<b>0</b>

## Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant

## Forecast for 2022/2023

	Budget *	2022 Actuals	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
<b>Farming in Protected Landscapes Expenditure:</b>				
Programme Administration	25,290	29,026	25,290	0
Programme Advice & Guidance	42,993	0	42,993	0
Project Spend	221,337	10,082	186,337	-35,000
<b>Total Budget/Initial Forecast Outturn</b>	<b>289,620</b>	<b>39,108</b>	<b>254,620</b>	<b>-35,000</b>
Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant	-289,620	-91,243	-254,620	35,000
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-52,136</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## Cannock Chase AONB Reserve

Financial Year	Opening Balance	Income/Sales	Great War Hut 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	0	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	0	1,307	78	56,204
2021/2022	56,204	5,740				1,000	3,418	4,418	44	66,406
2022/2023	66,406	-50	-840			1,000		1,000		66,515
		14,825	-840	7,673	27,409	42,744	-38,240	4,504	2,731	66,515

## Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

### Cannock Chase AONB Core & Project Costs

### Draft Cannock Chase AONB Budget 2023-24

	Total Budget £	Defra Grant £
<b>AONB Core Budget</b>		
Staff Salaries and Associated costs	184,540	138,405
Office Equipment	500	375
Annual Audit	0	0
Volunteers	500	375
National Liaison	3,160	2,370
Print & Publicity	2,000	1,500
Partnership Running Costs	9,000	6,750
AONB Website	0	0
Annual Conference	0	0
Core Activity (including monitoring, community involvement, etc)	500	375
<b>Core Budget Subtotal</b>	<b>200,200</b>	<b>150,150</b>
Sustainable Development Fund	6,600	6,600
AONB Projects	15,150	15,150
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>221,950</b>	<b>171,900</b>

	Total	% of Expenditure
<b>Funded By:</b>		
<b>DEFRA Grant</b>		
Core	-150,150	75.00%
Sustainable Development Fund	-6,600	100.00%
AONB Projects	-15,150	100.00%
<b>DEFRA Grant Subtotal</b>	<b>-171,900</b>	
<b>Local Authority Contributions</b>		
Cannock Chase Council	-10,010	5.00%
Stafford Borough Council	-10,010	5.00%
Lichfield District Council	-2,503	1.25%
South Staffordshire Council	-2,503	1.25%
Staffordshire County Council	-25,025	12.50%
<b>Local Authority Contributions Subtotal</b>	<b>-50,050</b>	<b>25.00%</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-221,950</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

### Cannock Chase AONB Core & Project Costs

### Draft Cannock Chase AONB Budget 2023-24

	Total Budget £	Defra Grant £
<b>AONB Core Budget</b>		
Staff Salaries and Associated costs	180,900	135,675
Office Equipment	500	375
Annual Audit	0	0
Volunteers	500	375
National Liaison	3,160	2,370
Print & Publicity	2,240	1,680
Partnership Running Costs	9,000	6,750
AONB Website	0	0
Annual Conference	0	0
Core Activity (including monitoring, community involvement, etc)	500	375
<b>Core Budget Subtotal</b>	<b>196,800</b>	<b>147,600</b>
Sustainable Development Fund	10,000	10,000
AONB Projects	15,150	15,150
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>221,950</b>	<b>172,750</b>

	Total	% of Expenditure
<b>Funded By:</b>		
<b>DEFRA Grant</b>		
Core	-147,600	75.00%
Sustainable Development Fund	-10,000	100.00%
AONB Projects	-15,150	100.00%
<b>DEFRA Grant Subtotal</b>	<b>-172,750</b>	
<b>Local Authority Contributions</b>		
Cannock Chase Council	-9,840	5.00%
Stafford Borough Council	-9,840	5.00%
Lichfield District Council	-2,460	1.25%
South Staffordshire Council	-2,460	1.25%
Staffordshire County Council	-24,600	12.50%
<b>Local Authority Contributions Subtotal</b>	<b>-49,200</b>	<b>25.00%</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-221,950</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Item 6 **Additional access funding for Protected Landscapes**

**Item for:** Information

**Author:** Ian Marshall, AONB Development Officer

**Financial implications:** Capital expenditure for activities will be funded through an uplift in AONB core grant, allocated by Defra. There are no implications for local authority partners.

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

### Background

1. Defra has awarded each of England’s National Parks and AONBs an uplift in core grant in order to make protected landscapes more accessible to people of all ages and abilities and from all backgrounds.
2. This paper explains the purpose of the fund, the guidelines for spend, the allocation to Cannock Chase AONB and proposed projects.

#### List of Background Papers

[25 year Environment Plan](#) 2018

[Landscapes Review](#) 2019

[Government Response to the Landscapes Review](#) 2022

Cannock Chase Inclusion and Diversity Study 2022 (internal AONB commission)

#### Inclusion and Diversity Appraisal

The topics raised in this paper will help to remove barriers to accessing Cannock Chase for some sections of society and make Cannock Chase a more welcoming place.

#### Climate Change Appraisal

Individual activities utilising this additional funding will be assessed for their sustainability and implications for climate change.

#### Environmental Appraisal

The recommendations in this paper will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of protected landscapes.

Individual activities utilising this additional funding will be assessed for any environmental impacts to ensure legal compliance.

### Removing barriers

3. In working to deliver on the Government’s commitments to connect more people from all backgrounds with the natural environment for their health and well-being, Defra has awarded each of England’s National Parks and AONBs an uplift in core grant in order to deliver access improvements. The additional funding has been awarded as part of Defra’s three-year Spending Review settlement, commencing this financial year 22/23.

### Funding allocations

4. Allocations have been calculated by applying a funding formula based on total area, total population within the landscape, total population within a 25km radius of the landscape and the Multiple Deprivation Index. AONBs will receive a weighting of 1.5 and all landscapes will receive a minimum of £50,000 over the three years. All Protected

Landscapes will receive 46% in year 1 and 54% in year 3. Unfortunately, funds are not available in year 2.

5. Based on the calculation described above, Cannock Chase AONB has been allocated a total £130,293.00. The breakdown is as follows:

- 2022/23 £66,435.48\* (includes additional £6,891)
- 2024/25 £70,748.87

### **Spend guidelines**

6. The additional funding is for capital spend only, and can include both physical and digital infrastructure improvements.
7. When considering accessibility improvements protected landscapes are requested to consult with disability representatives, and to adopt a pan-impairment approach and consider what the barriers to access are for all disabled people. Any accessibility infrastructure change or intervention should be accessible for all users and consider safety, value for money and sustainability.
8. Allocations have to be spent within the financial year and no monies can be carried forward.

### **Proposed spend in Cannock Chase AONB**

9. The uplift of funding will support activities that help to deliver the Experience and Enjoyment Theme of our AONB Management Plan 2019-24. A range of potential activities are being discussed with partners and assessed for their meeting the funding criteria and ability to be procured and delivered this financial year, including:

- Improved access for mobility-impaired
- Sensory audit and guide and image visualisation to trails
- Improvements to waymarking signage
- 'Features of Cannock Chase' guide

### **Recommendations**

10. The following recommendation is made to the Joint Committee:

1. The Committee notes the update on the uplift in core funding and is invited to ask questions.

## Item 7 Diversity and Inclusion

**Item for:** Decision

**Author:** Ian Marshall, AONB Development Officer

**Financial implications:** None

**Recommendations:** The Committee is invited to comment on the findings of the study and is asked to approve the 5-point plan with any amendments made at the meeting

### Background

1. The Landscapes Review published in 2019 made recommendations to increase the inclusivity and diversity of the work of Protected Landscapes, from engagement and delivery through to governance. In light of this, the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership has commissioned a study to identify and understand the barriers that people experience towards Cannock Chase – the place, as well as from the governance structure and operations of the Partnership itself.
2. This paper summarises the insight provided by the study, and considers our response and next steps.

<p><b>List of Background Papers</b></p> <p><a href="#">Landscapes Review</a> 2019</p> <p>Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019-2024</p> <p>Cannock Chase AONB Diversity and Inclusion Study, Andrew Meredith Associates and The Research Solution, 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Executive Summary</b></li><li>• <b>Volume 1) Understand the ‘big picture’ context</b></li><li>• <b>Volume 2) Review of local/surrounding research and studies</b></li><li>• <b>Volume 3) Audit of AONB public facing materials</b></li><li>• <b>Volume 4) Audit of AONB Partnership Board, Task &amp; Finish Groups and Operational Staff</b></li><li>• <b>Volume 5) Consultation with Under-Represented and Non-Engaged Audiences</b></li><li>• <b>Volume 6) AONB Partnership Governance Consideration</b></li></ul>
<p><b>Inclusion and Diversity Appraisal</b></p> <p>The topics raised in this paper will help to remove barriers to access our Protected Landscapes</p>
<p><b>Climate Change Appraisal</b></p> <p>The topics raised in this paper will help to address the impacts of climate change.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Appraisal</b></p> <p>The topics raised in this paper will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of Protected Landscapes.</p>
<p><b>Appendices</b></p> <p>None</p>

### Terminology used in this paper

3. The following terminology has been used in this paper:  
*Diversity* – relates to the full range of human differences: the unique characteristics, perspectives and experiences which define us as individuals  
*Inclusion* – fostering an environment where all individuals contribute fully and feel valued, engaged and supported



## Introduction

4. The Landscapes Review 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
5. To understand whether or not these conclusions apply to Cannock Chase AONB, a commission was awarded to A Meredith Associates and The Research Solution 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?, and:
  - 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?

## The approach of the study

6. The study was progressed through a combination of insight into the existence evidence base, and new primary research (in-person interviews, structured interviews, online questionnaires). The gathered data and findings are presented in 6 volumes of reports, with an overarching Executive Summary.
  - **Volume 1) Understand the 'big picture' context** and issues from published national reports and surveys into countryside (non) visiting and barriers
  - **Volume 2) Review of local/surrounding research and studies** - population, demographics, visitor surveys, Index of Multiple Deprivation, health, wellbeing indicators, etc.
  - **Volume 3) Audit of AONB public facing materials** – content, imagery, people (not) represented in promotion and information resources, policy documents, online and print
  - **Volume 4) Audit of AONB Partnership Board, Task & Finish Groups and Operational Staff** - new primary research into the diversity, representation, capacities, attitudes and awareness of those involved with managing and supporting the AONB Partnership
  - **Volume 5) Consultation with Under-Represented and Non-Engaged Audiences** - new primary research; on-street face to face surveys beyond the AONB; County respondents to an online survey; and specific in depth comments from under-represented thematic groups
  - **Volume 6) AONB Partnership Governance Consideration** - Board and Management Plan polices around diversity and inclusion; learning from good practice from other landscape organisations; and evolving solutions to broaden the culture and inclusivity of the Partnership

## Insight and proposed changes for Cannock Chase – the place

7. Issues for access to and experiencing Cannock Chase AONB's landscape and heritage are very closely aligned with national findings, by theme and by the types of under-represented audiences.

### Under-represented audiences on Cannock Chase

8. The research identified the following groups are absent or non-frequent visitors to the Chase.
- A greater proportion of people from ethnic minority communities have never been to the Chase compared with the proportion from white communities
  - A greater proportion of young people (under 35 yrs) had never been to the Chase, than the proportion that have visited at some time
  - Lower income households are significantly less likely to visit the Chase than those on higher income levels. Those in work or paid retirement are more likely to visit
  - People with underlying health conditions, learning or physical disabilities are less likely to visit the Chase. This also applies to families who have a family member with health/disability conditions
  - People in higher social groups are more likely to visit the Chase.
9. AONB leaflets, websites, social media and reports have typically shown very limited imagery featuring people; with the focus on landscape, habitat and species. Images of volunteers are white and middle-aged. More recent resources produced by the AONB for the Cannock Chase place brand show more balanced gender and diversity.

### Barriers to engagement

10. The following barriers to engagement were highlighted by non and infrequent visitors.
- Awareness/perceptions (lack of what the Chase can offer/what people can do/not for them)
  - Accessibility (poorly maintained pathways/lack of seating/disabled parking)
  - Economic (cost of fuel/lack of access to transport/parking charges)
  - Transport (lack of public transport/parking charges/reduced charges for local residents)
  - User conflicts (mountain biking/horses/ dogs and dog litter/inconsiderate behaviour)
  - Lack of interest (too busy/not relevant to their interests)
  - Visitor infrastructure (lack of facilities/seating/toilets/refreshments/better visitor information)
  - Personal safety

### Proposed changes to make Cannock Chase more welcoming and accessible

11. Based on the insight provided from the evidence and local consultations and best practice elsewhere, the consultants put forward changes that could be made to broaden inclusion and make Cannock Chase more welcoming and accessible to a greater diversity of people.

- **Increasing audience reach** including: physical/access; behavioural/group support for people alone/lacking confidence/needing assistance; public transport/sustainable transport; financial; reducing conflicts with other users; more information and greater levels of communication.
- **Building connections with existing access groups** like The Disabled Ramblers/Black Girls Hike UK/Muslim Hikers to help build the awareness and confidence of visiting groups for them to subsequently make future self-led or individual visits.
- **Practical actions on the ground to overcome physical hurdles.** Miles Without Stiles is an ethos, creating routes to tackle the problem of the barriers created by gates, stiles and steep slopes that make it difficult for some people to explore. Investing in routes to increase accessibility so they do not feature any obstacles to climb over; designed for people with limited mobility including those who use wheelchairs, mobility scooters, as well as families with pushchairs. Malvern Hills AONB and Dartmoor National Park advocate and promote this under 'accessibility' sections on their websites.
- **Working with specialist community and health organisations for enhancing mental wellbeing** through the exploration of the outdoors and landscapes. Good practice projects have worked with prehistoric sites in the Avebury archaeological landscape, National Trust estates, including Croome in Worcestershire and with the Sensory Trust to encourage people living with dementia and carers to get outdoors and converse about what they see.

## Insight and proposed changes for Cannock Chase AONB Partnership

### Characteristics of current governance structure

12. An audit of the AONB Partnership revealed the following profile.
  - Even balance of male/female of respondents
  - A mix of fresh insight and long-established links
  - Middle to older age profile
  - Lack of ethnic diversity
  - Social mobility
  - 20% experienced health and accessibility issues
  - The composition of the AONB Partnership does not reflect the Staffordshire and wider population – for example, young people and minority ethnic communities are under-represented.
13. The current membership recognises that the Partnership is white and middle class and that the governance needs to evolve to be more inclusive and attract multi-cultural representatives and disability groups. Task and Finish Groups are perceived to have limited user group representation and limited influence.
 

Proposed changes to enhance the inclusivity and diversity within the governance structure and operations of the AONB Partnership
14. The report includes examples from other Protected Landscapes that are taking steps to broaden participation and governance. These include the operation of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policies and Working Groups (Yorkshire Dales NPA); equality advisory forum

and panels (Cairngorms NPA); projects that enhance audience reach, widen inclusion and improve accessibility to the landscape (Solway Coast AONB); bringing in specialist insight and a champion for equality, diversity and inclusion (Dorset AONB).

- **Specialist insight** – bring in specialist insight, feedback, guidance and advice by creating a champion for equality, diversity and inclusion, or an equality advisory panel
- **Broadening representation** - beyond the core existing bodies, the report suggests broadening representation of other organisations involved with other thematic interests, such as, public transport; advocates for people with disabilities; housing organisations and community neighbourhood officers from the surrounding towns; organisations involved in minority ethnic communities, outreach and engagement; community and business organisations already nominally engaged; groups representing the arts/cultural sector and academia.
- **Member and staff training** – broaden awareness of inclusivity issues. Identify gaps in training and provide opportunity for improved knowledge and understanding of equality issues through support by appropriate partner organisation or external equality trainers.
- **Learn from approaches of existing partner organisations** - linking with local authorities and other partners to better understand, embed and deliver Equalities plans based on their own organisations' approach.
- **Promote volunteering opportunities to a broader range of audiences and organisations** within and close by. Volunteering builds connections and some potential future people to be involved in advice and even management.
- **Build stronger links with local communities and under-represented groups** - a network with local organisations that could create AONB Volunteers and engagement projects.
- **Develop tailored audience engagement projects with 'hard to reach' sectors** by working with partners in these domains, as existing 'gatekeepers'. Then communicate the outcomes to all Partnership members and local businesses/ organisations. These gatekeepers may be able to provide a role in a Task and Finish group or guidance around inclusivity.
- **Provide activity / taster days for under-represented groups** – work with neighbouring organisations and through outreach to West Midlands groups to enable them to access the special qualities of the protected landscape that is on their doorstep.
- **Undertake more accessibility related work** with partners where necessary, such as through creating 'miles without stiles' routes, and making rights of way easier to access at key locations where the routes are accessible for all, not simply short-stretch 'token' routes.

### Response to the findings and next steps

15. The research and gathered data has provided a helpful analysis of the current situation and presented some potential solutions.
16. With a purpose primarily focussed on landscape protection and not diversity and inclusion, what has emerged is a mixed picture of a place and an organisation that under-serves some sections of society within Staffordshire and the wider region, but where there is already a supportive outlook and willingness to break down barriers to engagement. This

positivity should be applied as much to the organisation and how it operates, as well as to who the landscape is for.

17. As the report concludes: *“The potential is here, audiences and thematic groups have been identified. What is needed is the time-consuming element of building relationships, investing time and people. There should be a reasonable and proportionate level of active pursuit of these under-represented audiences, not to the detriment of partners’ commitment to existing land and business management, audience engagement and enhancing people’s understanding of the sensitivities of the protected landscape”.*
18. To begin the process of removing barriers and making Cannock Chase more welcoming, relevant and inclusive the following 5-point plan of short-term actions is proposed.
  1. **Diversity and Inclusion Statement** - Express our commitment to diversity and inclusion by developing and publicising a statement of what we are trying to achieve
  2. **Champion for Diversity and Inclusion** - Appoint a Champion for Inclusion and Diversity to share best practice, boost awareness and inspire and lead change in the AONB
  3. **Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan** - Convene a group from within the AONB Partnership, together with external advisors, to prepare a long-term Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan to bring back to the Joint Committee for approval
  4. **Broaden representation** - Improve representation of the voices reflected in decision making by reviewing membership and attendance on each of our governance bodies, and filling gaps
  5. **Embed diversity and inclusion practices into AONB activities and projects** - so that diversity and inclusion become integral to our core business and are an automatic consideration in our day-to-day activities.

## Recommendations

19. The following recommendation is made to the Joint Committee:
  1. The Committee is invited to comment on the findings of the study and is asked to approve the 5-point plan with any amendments made at the meeting.

**Item 8** **Carbon baseline assessment and pathway to net zero for Cannock Chase AONB**

**Item for:** Approval

**Author:** Ian Marshall, AONB Development Officer

**Financial implications:** None

**Recommendations:** The Committee is invited to comment on the findings of the study and is asked to approve 5 short-term actions with any amendments made at the meeting.

**Background**

1. Global warming reached 1°C in 2017, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assesses that it is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate.
2. The UK Government passed laws in 2019 to end its contribution to global warming by 2050. This means the UK will be required to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.
3. Climate change is a universal pressure on and threat to Cannock Chase AONB, its environment, economy and communities. Increasing our focus on adapting to climate change and improving the resilience of Cannock Chase is a pressing need. This paper presents the conclusions and recommendations of a study to assess the greenhouse gas emissions and reduction targets in Cannock Chase AONB and invites members to consider our response and next steps.

<b>List of Background Papers</b> A greenhouse gas emissions assessment and target scenario for the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. A report by Small World Consulting. September 2022. Cannock Chase AONB. Carbon footprint assessment and proposed pathway to Net Zero. Small World Consulting, ppt presentation (28 September 2022)
<b>Inclusion and Diversity Appraisal</b> The topics raised in this paper will help to remove barriers to access our Protected Landscapes
<b>Climate Change Appraisal</b> The topics raised in this paper will help to address the impacts of climate change.
<b>Environmental Appraisal</b> The topics raised in this paper will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of Protected Landscapes.
<b>Appendices</b> Appendix 1. Summary of report setting out a carbon baseline assessment and pathway to net zero for Cannock Chase AONB

**Terminology used in this paper**

4. The following terminology has been used in this paper.  
Greenhouse gas emissions The release into the atmosphere of gases that trap solar energy (heat) and prevent the sun’s energy from bouncing back into space, thus creating a “greenhouse effect”. Greenhouse gases (GHG), including the carbon-containing gases carbon dioxide and methane, are measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents.

Carbon footprint A carbon footprint is the total greenhouse gas emissions caused by an individual, event, organisation, service, place or product.

Net zero Net zero refers to a state in which the greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere are balanced by their removal out of the atmosphere.

## Study highlights

5. To inform the AONB Partnership and support its work to address the climate change challenge, a study has been completed by Small World Consulting Ltd (SWC) to assess the greenhouse gas emissions in Cannock Chase AONB and present a pathway to net zero. SWK are UK leaders in carbon footprinting and net zero planning for the UK's protected landscapes). A summary of the report is presented in Appendix 1.

### Greenhouse gas emissions

6. The key highlights of the study include:
  - The total annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from residents, visitors travelling to/from and whilst inside the AONB, and industry is estimated at 237,254 tCO<sub>2</sub> per year.
  - Residents emit more than half (56%) of this total (mainly from flying, and household electricity and fuel emissions).
  - Residents' footprint is estimated to be around 14% higher than the UK average, but slightly lower than the average across other Protected Landscapes.
  - The footprint of visitors travelling to and from the AONB is by far the lowest of any UK Protected Landscape (reflecting the majority of visitors come from within the local catchment).
  - Vehicle fuel accounts for over 70% of the footprint of visitors coming to the AONB; whilst the footprint of visitors while in the AONB is dominated by food and drink (58%).
  - The industry footprint in Cannock Chase is dominated by agriculture and forestry (34%), production (22%), and construction (14%), with the agriculture footprint being significantly higher than the UK average per resident.
  - Cannock Chase is estimated to have a sizeable traffic footprint from the major roads (A460, A34, A513), which amounts to around 17% compared to the total footprint of the residents. Through traffic is estimated to account for just over 60% of the total footprint from the major roads.

### Target setting

7. The report sets out a challenging path for Cannock Chase AONB to reach a net zero target:
  - It includes recommendations for Paris-aligned targets on GHG emissions reduction across six key areas (energy-only emissions by residents, visitors and industry; food and drink consumed by residents and visitors; other goods purchased by residents and visitors; visitor travel to and from the AONB; land use Non-CO<sub>2</sub> component (dominated by livestock and fertiliser emissions) and; use CO<sub>2</sub> component), as well as for carbon sequestration through land-based climate mitigation measures. Together with the estimated 2019 GHG baseline, achieving these targets would mean Cannock Chase AONB reaching net zero in 2034, subject to the targets being fulfilled and to the considerable uncertainties remaining in the data.

- The largest recommended increase in annual carbon sequestration between 2019 and 2050 is from planting new broadleaved or mixed woodlands (-5,721 tCO<sub>2</sub>e/yr or 10.0 hectares / yr), as well as grassland improvement with legumes 32.1 ha / yr.
- A summary of possible interventions for the AONB Partnership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the key categories analysed is presented. These include:
  - Using the planning powers to facilitate development of critical infrastructure such as renewable energy generation, electric vehicle charging points, public transport, cycling infrastructure, and energy-efficient homes.
  - Encouraging land uses that capture and store carbon by rolling out the Farming in Protected Landscape scheme and other countryside stewardship and nature recovery schemes.
  - Working with Local Enterprise Partnerships to encourage carbon audits and decarbonisation of major industry sectors.
  - Promoting sustainable travel plans through communication and by developing the required infrastructure (as above).
  - Educating the public, businesses and governments by using the findings and recommendations of this report, for example by demonstrating the need for more sustainable diets, food systems and land use change to meet the joint climate, biodiversity, health and recreation objectives.
  - Reflecting on all of the above in the AONB Management Plan and actively seeking to meet the stated objectives.

### **Response to the study and next steps**

8. Achieving net zero and adapting to climate change is a complex and pressing issue that will require concerted and co-ordinated actions at international, national and local levels.
9. The study has helped develop our understanding about greenhouse gas emissions on Cannock Chase and the scale of the challenge.
10. The consultants have presented a pathway for Cannock Chase AONB Partnership to cut greenhouse gas emissions in line with the best available current science, and be a leader in the AONB while simultaneously creating better places to live, work and visit. The land use targets and other interventions could help achieve net zero in the AONB by 2034, and in the process contribute to meeting UK-wide 2050 net zero target.
11. A transition to a low-carbon future for Cannock Chase AONB entails strong action in many areas of policy: construction, home energy, food production and diets, travel and transport, business energy use, tourism and the visitor experience, the circularisation of the material economy, and significant changes in land management. As the report concludes, *“this will require active engagement with all stakeholders, drawing on existing relationships and nurturing future ones, including partnership programmes with local organisations, with neighbouring authorities, with the UK Government, and with the general public. It is only through collaborative creative thinking, taken forward in sustained joint efforts by all stakeholders, that a future low-carbon Cannock Chase will become a reality”*.



12. It should be noted that the climate change challenge does not operate in isolation, and needs to be considered alongside and together with other key challenges in Cannock Chase AONB around nature recovery, visitor management and accessibility.
13. To take this work forward the following five-point plan of short-term actions is proposed:
  - **Climate Change Statement** - Express our commitment to create a low-carbon Cannock Chase and adapting to climate change by developing and publicising a statement of ambition and what we are trying to achieve.
  - **Champion for Climate Change** - Appoint a Champion for Climate Change for the AONB to share best practice, boost awareness and inspire and lead change in the AONB.
  - **Climate Change Action Plan** - Work within the Partnership to explore in more detail the opportunities presented in the proposed interventions and prepare a long-term Climate Action Plan to bring back to the Joint Committee for approval.
  - **Raise awareness** – Raise awareness of the impacts of climate change on Cannock Chase, how we need to adapt, and how everyone can contribute.
  - **Embed climate change considerations into AONB activities and projects** - so that they become integral to our core business and are an automatic consideration in our day-to-day activities.

## Recommendations

14. The following recommendation is made to the Joint Committee:
  1. The Committee is invited to comment on the findings of the study and is asked to approve the five-point plan with any amendments made at the meeting.

## Appendix 1

### Summary of report setting out a carbon baseline assessment and pathway to net zero for Cannock Chase AONB

#### Introduction

1. As the world wakes up to the climate and wider environmental emergency, rapid reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and sustainable land management are becoming increasingly central to the local, national and international policy agendas. In 2019 the UK strengthened its production-based targets, setting itself a legally binding target of net zero by 2050.
2. Together, the UK's 15 National Parks and 46 AONBs are home to over 1.5 million residents, attract approximately 250 million visitors per year, and account for around 18% of the UK's land area. If they can become exemplars of low-carbon transition and environment-conscious land management, their national and international profiles could give them a level of influence that far outweighs the scale of their own emissions. The exciting and creative challenge for each protected landscape is to find a way to cut emissions in line with current science, and be leaders in land stewardship while simultaneously creating better places for people to live, work and visit. Almost every action connected with people living, working and spending time in the National Parks and AONBs gives rise to greenhouse gas emissions, which lie within the influence and therefore management responsibilities of the National Park Authorities or Local Authorities for the AONB. While the need to transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy is the single greatest challenge in responding to the climate emergency, for the National Parks and AONBs in particular, land management is also a critical element of dealing with both the climate and biodiversity crises.
3. This prompted the family of UK National Parks and several Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) to seek assessment of their greenhouse gas emissions collectively. The ambition of these protected landscapes was to go beyond the UK Government's production-based targets and identify the full consumption-based scale of the greenhouse gas emissions attributable to residents and visitors, including travel to and from the landscape.
4. This report is one of a series of methodologically compatible reports produced for each UK National Park, each Welsh AONB, as well as the Cotswolds and Cannock Chase AONBs in England. The baseline year for the assessment is 2019, the most recent pre-COVID year. The report also includes recommendations for Paris-aligned targets on GHG emissions reduction across six key areas, as well as for carbon sequestration through land-based climate mitigation measures. Together with the estimated 2019 GHG baseline, achieving these targets would mean Cannock Chase AONB reaching net zero in 2034, subject to the targets being fulfilled and to the considerable uncertainties remaining in the data.

#### Approach of the study

5. The approach used by Small World Consulting has been developed over the last decade with the UK's National Parks, and more recently applied to the 6 Welsh AONBs and now

Cotswolds and Cannock Chase AONBs in England. It is designed to provide a robust and consistent evidence basis for climate action, matched to the unique characteristics and circumstances of each protected landscape. In brief:

- The study assesses the greenhouse gas “footprint” of residents, visitors and industry, including the supply chains of everything that residents and visitors buy and do while in the Protected Landscape (figure 1). Consumption-based reporting attributes the emissions from product and service supply chains to the Protected Landscape, regardless of where emissions are physically released during production. Consumption-based reporting is important for looking at the climate change impacts that people and businesses have through their entire lifestyles and operations, including the food they eat and the products and services they buy.
- The assessment has followed the Cannock Chase AONB geographical boundary, taking account of some expected variation of the local data available.
- The base year for the assessment is 2019 to ensure the carbon baseline and decarbonisation targets are not affected by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The assessment also covers setting decarbonisation targets for each NP/AONB in line with the latest science and policy recommendations, including UK’s 6th Carbon Budget, Tyndall Carbon Budget Tool, and National Food Strategy.
- Estimates of existing land carbon stocks are not used, but instead the potential for land use change to enable carbon sequestration is explored as part of a suggested pathway towards net zero and net negative emissions for each NP/AONB. This will involve setting long-term targets for woodland creation, peatland restoration and regenerative agriculture, taking into account UKwide recommendations from the 6th Carbon Budget, as well as unique land use features of and opportunities for each NP/AONB. The analysis will be restricted to land-based carbon sequestration options and will not cover broader opportunity mapping for enhancing natural capital assets.

6. The methodology and findings are set out in a lengthy technical report, and summarised in an accompanying slide presentation.

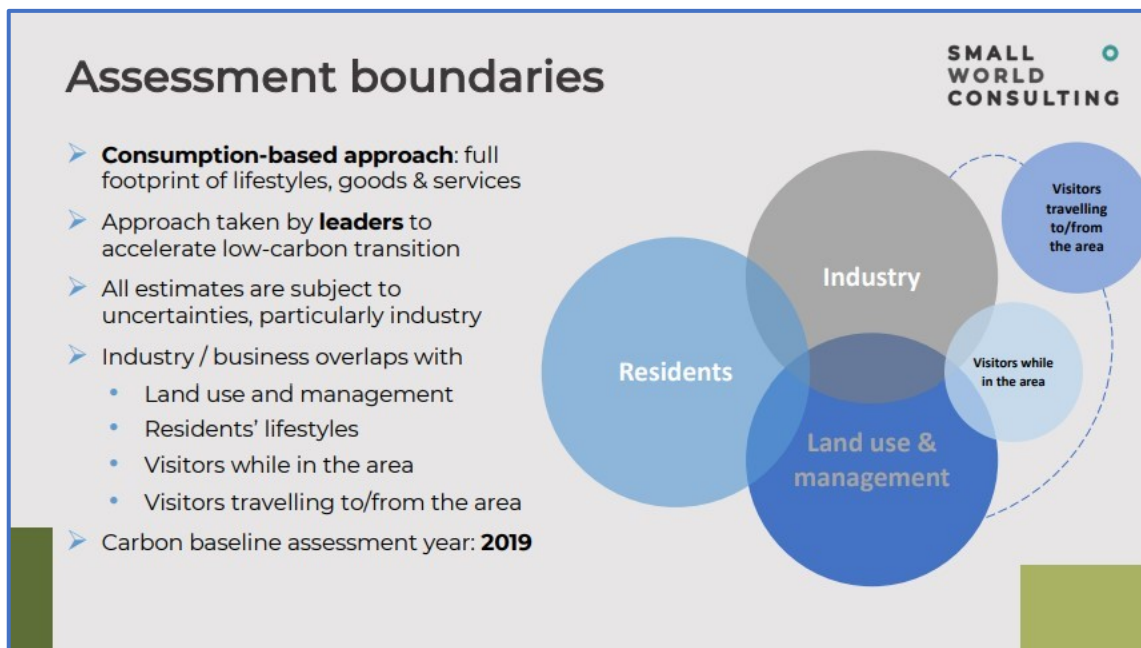


Figure 1. Assessment boundaries

## Greenhouse gas emissions in Cannock Chase AONB

7. The study has for the first time calculated 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.

Sector	Greenhouse gas emissions (carbon footprint)
Residents	132,384 tCO <sub>2</sub> e per year
Visitors while in the area	29,171 tCO <sub>2</sub> e per year
Visitors travelling to and from the area	13,521 tCO <sub>2</sub> e per year
Industry	62,178 tCO <sub>2</sub> e per year
Through-traffic and major roads	22,183 tCO <sub>2</sub> e per year

### Residents

8. Cannock Chase residents have the greatest carbon footprint, estimated at 132 thousand tCO<sub>2</sub>e. The data shows that the typical footprint of a Cannock Chase resident is 14.1% higher than that of the average UK resident. The highest emissions arise from food and drink (24%), personal flights (12%) and vehicle fuel (12%) (figure 2).

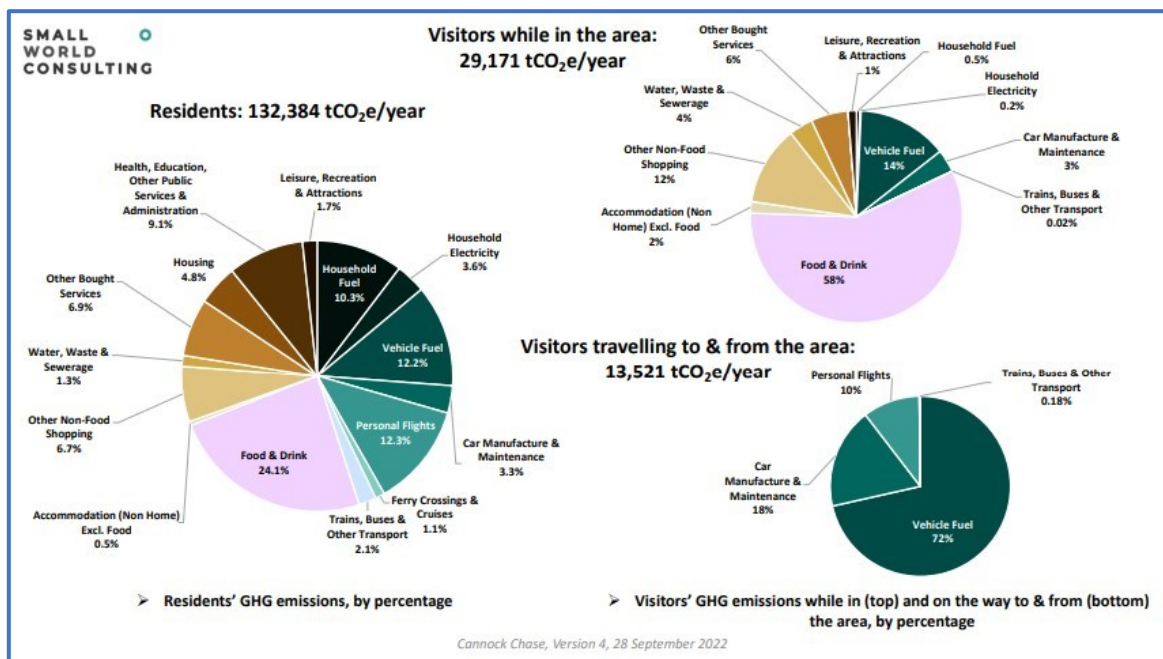


Figure 2 Greenhouse gas emission estimates for visitors and residents

### Visitors

9. The GHG emissions produced by visitors to the Cannock Chase totalled 34 thousand tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2019, comprising 13,521 tCO<sub>2</sub>e from travelling to and from the AONB, and 29,171 tCO<sub>2</sub>e produced while in the AONB (figure 2). The chart presenting visitor travel to and from the AONB indicates that GHG emissions are dominated by vehicle fuel (71%) and car manufacture & maintenance (18%), with only 0.2% arising from public transport (excluding flights). Of the footprint of visitors while in the AONB, 58% is linked with food & drink, while vehicle fuel accounts for 14%.

- Car travel is the single largest contributor to the travel footprint of the AONB (22% of the combined footprint of residents and visitors).

### Industry

- Industry-related GHG emissions for Cannock Chase total 62,178 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. Figure 3 highlights that agriculture, forestry & fishing as the largest source of GHG emissions (20,836 tCO<sub>2</sub>e; 34%), followed by production, including sand and gravel quarrying (13,619 tCO<sub>2</sub>e; 22%), and construction (8,942 tCO<sub>2</sub>e; 14%).
- The results indicate that Cannock Chase AONB has higher than national average figures for greenhouse gas emissions for agriculture, forestry, fishing and construction.

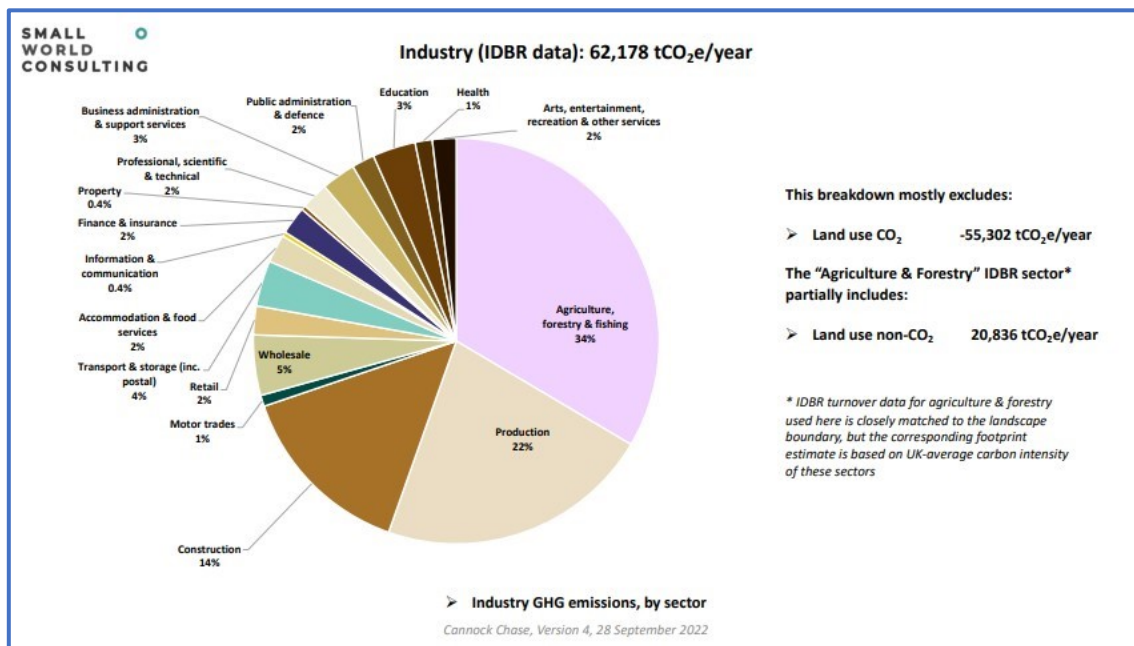


Figure 3. Greenhouse gas emissions for industry

### Emissions from through-traffic and major roads

- For Cannock Chase, estimated total through-traffic emissions from cars, buses, motorbikes, vans and lorries are 13,846 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. This data is not included in the residents', visitors' or industry footprints. We also report emissions from smaller and larger subsets of selected A-roads, which carry elements of through-traffic as well as traffic from residents, visitors and industry. The selected roads assessed for Cannock Chase are the A460, A34 and A513. The estimated footprint of the A460 alone is 10,014 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year across all vehicle types. All the selected A-roads combined, including the A460, produce an estimated 22,183 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year, which amounts to around 17% compared to the total footprint of the residents.



*Figure 4 Greenhouse gas emissions from major roads through the AONB*

### Pathway to net zero and proposed interventions

14. Six categories of emissions were selected for emission reduction targets on the basis of: covering everything of significance within the influence of policy makers; keeping the target simple enough to describe; avoiding double-counting and; making use of readily available data for tracking progress.
  - Energy-only greenhouse gas emissions
  - Food and drink consumed by residents and visitors
  - Non-food shopping
  - Travel to/from the area
  - Land-based non-CO<sub>2</sub>
  - Land-based CO<sub>2</sub>
  
15. Across these six categories, the 2019 carbon baseline (figure 5) for the Cannock Chase AONB is estimated at 102,702 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year, which follows from the estimates presented in figures 2-4. Cannock Chase AONB's existing woodland cover already acts as a strong carbon sink which offsets a sizeable fraction of the AONB's current greenhouse gas emissions.

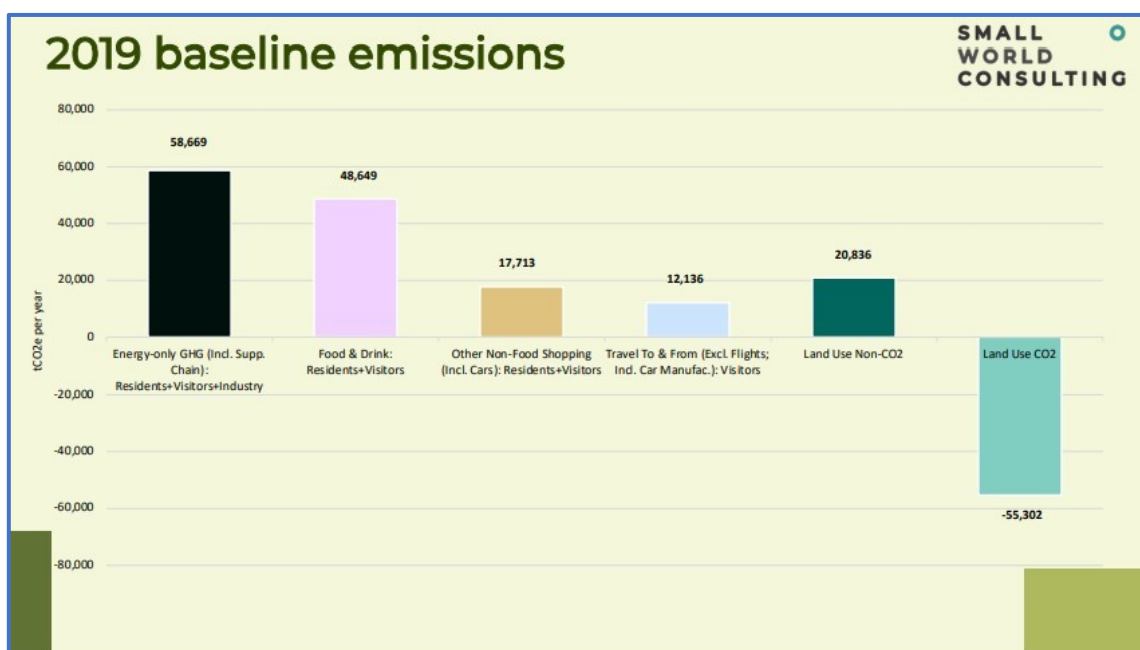


Figure 5. 2019 carbon baseline emissions

16. Following the principles outlined above, some components of the wider carbon footprint of Cannock Chase AONB presented in the previous sections have been excluded from the 2019 carbon baseline and the associated emissions reduction targets. The expectation is that these footprint components will be tackled, where appropriate, by the other local authorities, the UK Government, international climate agreements, and the local, national and international industries responsible for the respective types of emissions.
17. It is assumed that emissions in each category will decrease each year, but will still leave an unavoidable residual level of greenhouse gas emissions. These residual emissions have to be offset through the introduction of measures to manage land sustainably and increase carbon uptake. The consultants have set out a proposed rate of land-use change drawn from the Sixth Carbon Budget and apportioned to Cannock Chase AONB according to its land characteristics.

Proposed Land Use Targets	Value	Units
New Native Broadleaf / Mixed Woodland	10.0	ha per year
New Productive Coniferous Woodland	0.0	ha per year
Restored Peatland	NA	ha per year
Agroforestry (improved grassland & cropland)	5.0	ha per year
New Hedgerows (improved grassland & cropland)	0.3	ha per year
Legumes (improved grassland)	32.1	ha per year
Cover Cropping (cropland)	6.5	ha per year
Associated Carbon Sequestration	Value	Units
New Native Broadleaf / Mixed Woodland	-184.6	tCO <sub>2</sub> e per year per year
New Productive Coniferous Woodland	0.0	tCO <sub>2</sub> e per year per year
Restored Peatland	NA	tCO <sub>2</sub> e per year per year
Agroforestry (improved grassland & cropland)	-11.6	tCO <sub>2</sub> e per year per year
New Hedgerows (improved grassland & cropland)	-3.0	tCO <sub>2</sub> e per year per year
Legumes (improved grassland)	-66.0	tCO <sub>2</sub> e per year per year
Cover Cropping (cropland)	-7.6	tCO <sub>2</sub> e per year per year

Figure 6. Proposed land use changes for Cannock Chase

18. When measured in hectares per year converted, the “grassland improvement with legumes” target comes on top at 32.1 ha/yr., followed by new native broadleaf / mixed woodland at 10.0 ha/yr., and cover cropping at 6.5 ha/yr. Other measures are comparatively small, and we assume no new productive conifer plantations in Cannock Chase in order to prioritise native broadleaf and/or mixed species. When converted to changes in carbon sequestration fluxes, the native broadleaf / mixed woodland creation (- 184.6 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year added each year) provides around 3 times more sequestration compared to the second-largest contribution from grassland improvement, and over 15 times more sequestration compared to the third-largest contribution from agroforestry (Table 7). This clearly illustrates the priorities for land use measures in order to achieve Net Zero.
19. The six elements outlined above can be combined into an overall decarbonisation pathway, which in the case of Cannock Chase AONB results in a net zero date of 2034.

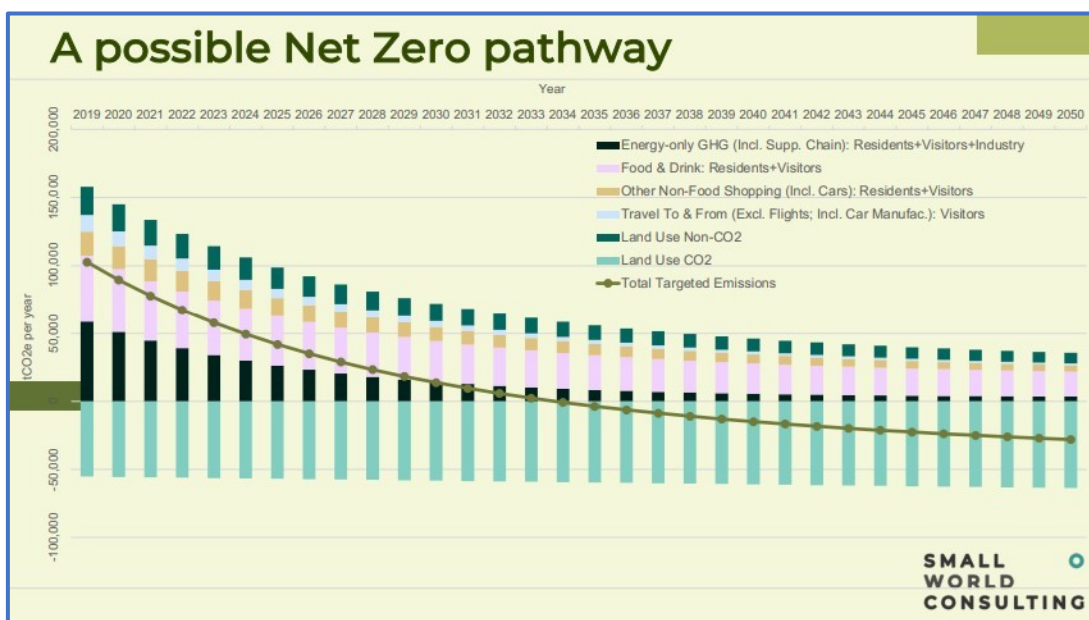


Figure 7. Possible Net Zero pathway

## Conclusions and recommendations

20. The emissions assessment in this report is designed to bring every relevant area of carbon management into perspective for policy makers. A transition to a low-carbon future for Cannock Chase AONB entails strong action in many areas: construction, home energy, food production and diets, travel and transport, business energy use, the nature of tourism and the visitor experience, the circularisation of the material economy (including repair, maintenance, renting and reselling of consumer goods), and significant changes in land management.
21. A summary of possible interventions by the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership to reduce GHG emissions across the key categories analysed in this report is provided and is included at the end of this appendix. The summary includes very approximate empirical scores describing the ability of the AONB Partnership to influence each intervention, the scale of investment needed, and the likely impact on reducing emissions.



22. The challenge is to find a coherent way of bringing these policy areas together, one that adds up to more than the sum of its parts and delivers an enhanced experience of living, working and spending time in the AONB. The recommended interventions for the AONB Partnership outlined in this report include:
- Using the planning powers to facilitate development of critical infrastructure such as renewable energy generation, electric vehicle charging points, public transport, cycling infrastructure, and energy-efficient homes
  - Encouraging land uses that capture and store carbon by rolling out the Farming in Protected Landscape scheme and other countryside stewardship and nature recovery schemes
  - Working with Local Enterprise Partnerships to encourage carbon audits and decarbonisation of major industry sectors • Promoting sustainable travel plans through communication and by developing the required infrastructure (as above)
  - Educating the public, businesses and governments by using the findings and recommendations of this report, for example by demonstrating the need for more sustainable diets, food systems and land use change to meet the joint climate, biodiversity, health and recreation objectives • Reflecting on all of the above in the AONB Management Plan and actively seeking to meet the stated objectives
23. If all the targets proposed in this report were met, the Cannock Chase AONB would achieve net zero GHG emissions in 2034. It would subsequently reach negative emissions of approximately -28,118 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year by 2050, with annual carbon sequestration in the AONB scaling up to around -63,757 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year, and annual residual emissions dropping to roughly 35,638 tCO<sub>2</sub>e across the shortlisted policy priority areas (35% of the present-day carbon footprint baseline).
24. The report comments that public perceptions of how a protected natural landscape should look may also need to evolve, in order for people to continue visiting the AONB and finding it beautiful after changes in land use. Most UK National Parks and AONBs have considerable areas of low-grade grassland and moorland, which create the landscapes familiar to many in the UK and abroad. However, centuries ago the majority of the UK was covered in woodland, compared to just 12% today, and relatively large swathes of land may need to be returned to this forested state in the coming years and decades, in line with climate goals. Visitors and residents' perception of natural beauty in these protected landscapes may therefore need to shift towards greater appreciation of more widespread woodland coverage, alongside protected and restored peatland areas, applying the "right tree, right place" principle.
25. To assist with the transition towards the required land use and management options, there are a range of new funding opportunities which may be available to landowners, tenant farmers or public sector partners, depending on each set of grant conditions.

## Cannock Chase GHG emissions by sector and target areas for interventions

Table 8 (of the final report) summarises key interventions by the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership to reduce GHG emissions across key categories. The accompanying empirical scores describing the ability of the AONB Partnership to influence, the scale of investment needed, and the likely impact on reducing emissions come with important caveats:

- The scores are very approximate; a more precise ranking requires an in-depth cost-benefit analysis of the interventions
- The scores are not weighted according to the GHG emissions totals for each broad category (Residents, Visitors while in the AONB, Visitors while travelling to & from the AONB, Industry); we recommend keeping unweighted scores as a default and reflect on the actual emissions reduction potential in a follow-up in-depth cost-benefit analysis
- When multiple interventions are listed together, the “scale of investment” score reflects on the costliest option up-front (e.g. improving home insulation rather than switching to renewable energy suppliers in the “Home and accommodation” intervention category)
- We recommend that the scale of investment should be assessed both according to the up-front costs and the potential long-term savings as part of a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis.

Sector	GHG emissions (tCO2)	Carbon reduction interventions	Ability of the AONB to influence (1-5)	Scale of intervention investment (1-5)	Likely level of impact of the intervention (1-5)
Residents	132,384	Food – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaign to “Buy local, eat local”</li> <li>• Eliminate food waste</li> <li>• Dietary change</li> </ul>	1	2	5
		Home and accommodation – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewable energy suppliers</li> <li>• Home energy efficiency improvements</li> </ul>	1	5	5
		Travel – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote use of public transport</li> <li>• Promote visits by cycle and improve cycling infrastructure</li> <li>• Encourage switch to electric cars and provide EV charging points</li> </ul>	3	4	4
		Everything else – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage access to green/blue space</li> <li>• Procurement choices</li> <li>• Mitigating the impact of air pollution</li> <li>• Supporting healthy river basin catchments</li> <li>• Nature recovery</li> <li>• Improved connection between nature and people</li> </ul>	3	4	4

Visitors – travelling to and from the AONB	13,521	Travel – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote visits by train</li> <li>Promote visits by cycle and improve cycling infrastructure</li> <li>Provide EV charging points at car parks</li> </ul>	3	4	4
Visitors – whilst in the AONB	29,171	Food – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support campaign to “Buy local, eat local”</li> </ul>	1	2	5
		Travel – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandatory 40mph speed limit</li> <li>Provide EV charging points at car parks</li> </ul>	3	3	4
		Accommodation – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renewable energy suppliers</li> <li>Building energy efficiency improvements</li> </ul>	1	5	5
Industry	62,178	Agriculture – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote FiPL programme</li> <li>Promote other agri-environment schemes</li> <li>Promote low-carbon farming practices</li> <li>Improve productivity and efficiency</li> <li>Reduce waste</li> </ul>	3	2	5
		Production – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with LEP to encourage companies to assess their GHG emissions and develop decarbonisation strategies</li> </ul>	1	1	3
		Construction – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with LEP to encourage companies to assess their GHG emissions and develop decarbonisation strategies</li> </ul>	1	1	3
		Land use emissions – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Woodland creation</li> <li>Peatland restoration</li> <li>Grassland improvement</li> <li>Regenerative farming practices, including grassland improvement</li> </ul>	4	4	5

## Item 9 Delivery of AONB activities

**Item for:** Information

**Author:** Ian Marshall, AONB Development Officer

**Financial implications:** AONB activities are funded through the AONB core budget

**Recommendations:** The Committee notes the update and is invited to ask questions

### Background

1. Our Business Plan (2021-23) sets out how the AONB Partnership, notably through its dedicated AONB staff team, operates to deliver its contract with Defra and the commitments in our Management Plan (2019-24).
2. Members were presented with an account on 14<sup>th</sup> July of achievements in the first year of this plan (AONB Annual Review 2021-22), as well as planned activities for the second year of the plan 2022-23.
3. This paper updates members on recent activities carried out by the AONB Team for information and comment. The activities are presented under each of the themes set out in the AONB Management Plan.

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
AONB Management Plan 2019-24
AONB Business Plan 2021-23
Draft minutes of the meeting of the AONB Joint Committee 14 <sup>th</sup> July
<b>Inclusion and Diversity Appraisal</b>
The topics raised in this paper will help to remove barriers to access our Protected Landscapes
<b>Climate Change Appraisal</b>
The topics raised in this paper will help to address the impacts of climate change.
<b>Environmental Appraisal</b>
The topics raised in this paper will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of Protected Landscapes.

### Recent activities

#### Landscape character and planning

##### Planning advice and representation

4. A separate update is reported to Members under agenda item 10.

##### Highways Design guide

5. The final graphics work is being completed for the updated Highways Design Guide. Final sign-off from Staffordshire County Council's Highways is awaited before publication.

##### Fixed point photography

6. The Fixed Point Photography web pages have been updated to now include images taken in 2022, for 49 of the 55 locations. For ease of access, Location 37 Shugborough Park, has been relocated onto the Right of Way following fencing of the Right of Way by The National Trust as part of their Conservation Management Plan. [The Fixed Point](#)

[Photography webpages](#) illustrate the changes that have taken place over time from 2004 through 2014 to the present. We will be using these latest images to help inform our next State of the AONB Report.

7. Three new locations for monitoring the effects of construction (and subsequent operation) of HS2 have been recorded and baseline photographs taken and are being edited. These will be added to the website when available.
8. In August we met with National Trust (NT) to discuss potential locations for monitoring the Woodpasturescape Restoration project, one of the Projects that will benefit from funding secured from HS2 through the Trent Sow Parkland HS2 Group's Environmental Enhancement Fund.

#### Dark Skies

9. Members will recall that the community engagement part of this project didn't materialise due to Covid. We have recommenced discussions with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust regarding this work. They are keen to help us deliver some bespoke sessions on Dark Skies during their February Half Term Activities to coincide with Star Count (as was originally set out in the Project Proposal). Unfortunately, due to staffing they are currently unable to deliver any education in schools, though this may be possible in future.
10. We have also met with CPRE Staffordshire, who are also keen to take forward some dark sky themed events, and we are optimistic that we will be able to deliver some joint events.
11. Production of a Good Lighting Guide for the AONB has slipped due to other work commitments, the intention is to complete this in 2023. In the meantime, in planning responses I often request conditions for lighting and provide additional information to inform appropriate controls, and this has been well received by Planning Officers and incorporated into planning decisions.

#### Farming in Protected Landscapes programme

12. The programme is continuing to be promoted through a direct approach to landowners and farmers as well as specific groups such as members of the Staffordshire Young Farmers Club and National Farmers Union.
13. There is still a good level of interest with seventeen approved projects over the length of the programme so far. However, it does take a significant amount of time to develop a project from an initial discussion to a final application ready for decision.
14. It is anticipated that there will be an underspend of £35,000 on the allocation of £289,620 for 2022-23, which cannot be carried forward into 2023-24 due to Defra rules. Any underspend will be returned to Defra. Detailed information about the programme, including summaries of funded projects can be found on the Cannock Chase AONB website [www.cannock-chase.co.uk/get-in-involved/farming-in-protected-landscapes/](http://www.cannock-chase.co.uk/get-in-involved/farming-in-protected-landscapes/)

## Wildlife and nature

### Adders

15. A meeting has been held with representatives of Amphibian and Reptile Group UK and Shropshire and Staffordshire Amphibian and Reptile Group (S&SARG) to agree a way forward to better understand our adder population and inform future management to protect and increase numbers and range. The AONB is looking to carry out the following in conjunction with partners:
- Landscape model for adders based on habitat attributes for Cannock Chase AONB and surrounds
  - Use trusted surveyors from S&SARG to undertake adder surveys (and other reptiles) to establish presence/likely absence across the Chase
  - ARG UK to look to set up a Land Manager Adder Networking Day on Cannock Chase
  - Investigate the possibility of radio-tracking the movements of adder using telemetry of tagged snakes, potentially funded through the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme.

### Deer management

16. We are continuing to work with landowners, public bodies and non-governmental organisations through the Deer Management Strategy Group with the aim of reaching consensus on a strategy and action plan to establish a sustainable and healthy wild deer population that is in balance with the needs of the natural, social, and economic environment.
17. To inform this work, during 2022 the AONB has commissioned a thermal imaging deer census and deer activity and impact assessment. A minimum of 899 fallow and 111 red deer were counted during the census (April 2022) bringing the total deer counted to 1,010. This compares with 678 fallow and 79 red deer counted in 2018; and 623 fallow and 21 reds counted in 2019. Muntjac deer, an invasive non-native species, are also present throughout the Chase but were not counted in the spring survey. A second census is being undertaken in November 2022 to identify numbers after the breeding season.
18. Deer impacts on habitats have been assessed at 35 plots across Cannock Chase. Sixteen of the sites showed an increase in impact, fourteen showed no change and four showed a decrease. The findings indicate Fallow were the species identified as causing the largest impacts across the AONB, Red deer cause a significant impact in some areas to the south with Muntjac also causing more significant damage in some areas than in 2019. The deer census carried out in April highlighted the difference of deer density and distribution between the Forestry England estate, where deer control takes place, and the neighbouring landowners where control is less frequent.

### Unimproved grasslands

19. Within Cannock Chase unimproved grasslands incorporate a range of habitats that are of principal importance under Section 41 of The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) for the conservation of biodiversity in England. These include lowland dry acid grassland, lowland heathland, purple moor grass & rush pastures, and floodplain grazing marsh.

20. We are currently in the process of examining known data to help to understand the distribution and extent of unimproved grasslands across the Chase. This knowledge will help to target Farming in Protected Landscapes funding and focus our conservation effort.

#### Veteran trees

21. Veteran trees are living monuments, that can have immense ecological value through their range of microhabitats, cavities, and decaying wood. We want to increase our knowledge about their distribution and status on Cannock Chase AONB, as well as building respect for them, so we can help protect, care for and plan how best to conserve them for the future.
22. On 18th October, the Woodland Trust, Cannock Chase AONB and Forestry England held a field-based training day for volunteers to record trees to the Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI) at Wolseley Park plantation, near Etchinghill, Rugeley. A further training day is planned for 2023.

#### Priority species

23. In order to identify priority species to include in our nature recovery plan for Cannock Chase, and to focus conservation efforts we have begun to compile a list of priority species of conservation concern with the support of the Staffordshire Ecological Record. This will comprise all taxonomic groups e.g., birds, bats, reptiles and amphibians, terrestrial mammals, flowering plants, bryophytes etc. This can then be refined and amended in consultation with specialists to produce a 'short list' which is Cannock Chase specific.

### **Historic environment and culture**

#### Trig points

24. Trig points are Ordnance Survey (OS) triangulation pillars (more commonly known as trig points), about 4' tall and made of concrete, which were used by the Ordnance Survey in order to determine the exact shape of the country. They are generally located on the highest ground in the area, so that there is a direct line of sight from one to the next. The trig points on Cannock Chase form an interesting part of the historic environment in our nationally designated landscape and should be considered to be a non-designated heritage asset in their own right (indeed the trig point at Stile Cop has been included on the Cannock Chase District local list). Highways Structures have been approached to provide a structural assessment to ensure the structures are safe. This will be followed by any required works to make them structurally sound. The final phase of work will involve reinstatement of any missing component parts and restoration of the original features.

#### Condition assessments of Scheduled Monuments

25. Condition surveys of Scheduled Monuments have commenced by Historic England on Courtbanks Covert, Castle Ring, Great War Practice Trench, the moated site 160m south-west of St Michael and All Angels Church, Saucer Barrow at Spring Hill and the Messines Model. A condition assessment for Essex Bridge is proposed in the first quarter of 2023.

#### Condition assessment of non-designated assets

26. For non-designated heritage assets, volunteers (Chase Through Time and National Trust) have had refresher training from the National Trust and will be carrying out condition surveys on non-designated heritage assets in Shugborough over the winter months.

## **Experience and enjoyment**

### Commonwealth Games, 8<sup>th</sup> August

27. The mountain biking events for the Commonwealth Games were held at Cannock Chase Forest on 8<sup>th</sup> August. The AONB Team attended along with Forestry England, the SAC Partnership and Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles and it was an opportunity to engage with members of the public and distribute copies of our new Welcome leaflet and Guide booklet.

### 'Local Cultural Place Makers, Global Change Makers' arts programme with young people

28. Several activities have now been delivered engaging with young people. As part of the 'Celebrating Birmingham 2022' an artist was commissioned to work in schools. Using old leaflets and out of date maps from the AONB the children created lanterns that were temporarily installed in Rugeley and were again on display in the welcome area at the Commonwealth Games 2022 Mountain Biking Event. Other projects under development include 'Digital Discoveries' an App game aimed at families, which encourages users to collect 'prizes'. The game will follow a trail, selected by the SAC Partnership and include key messages from the Cannock Chase Code presented in a fun interactive way.

### Poetry workshop, 8<sup>th</sup> October

29. To celebrate National Poetry Day in October, local nature poet Cherry Doyle and the Poet Laureate of Wolverhampton, Kuli Kohli, led a poetry workshop on the theme 'The Environment of Cannock Chase' at the Museum of Cannock Chase. Seven budding poets who were new to either poetry, nature poetry, or to the stunning landscapes of Cannock Chase, took part and created their own poems based on what they had observed and learned during the day.

### Walking Cannock Chase

30. Working with the Ramblers and the Cannock Chase SAC Partnership, 6 walking routes have been agreed as part of a new 'Walking Cannock Chase' programme. The purpose of the programme is to provide:
1. A welcoming and safe environment for walking on the Chase
  2. A network of walking routes that connect communities within and near to the AONB with its landscape, attractions, transport hubs and gateways
  3. A greater awareness and appreciation of the special qualities of Cannock Chase
  4. Improved enjoyment, health and wellbeing for all
  5. A network that reduces environmental impacts and encourages responsible behaviour.
31. Artwork and design of leaflets for each of the walks is being finished off, with a view to launch the new programme in the New Year.

### SAC Partnership – implementation of car park and site user implementation plans

32. The AONB Team continues to support the SAC Partnership to deliver the car park and site user implementation plans, for example, the Punchbowl car park improvement plans.

### Interpretation provision at RAF Hednesford and Brindley Heath

33. 5 new interpretation panels have been installed at RAF Hednesford and 2 at Brindley Heath, telling the military and social history stories of the two sites. The panels have been



jointly funded by the AONB and SAC Partnership and developed with the support of the landowner Staffordshire County Council as well as Brindley Village Legacy Group.

## **Communities and business**

### AONB volunteers

34. The Great War Hut and Milford Hut AONB volunteers delivered a combined volunteer contribution of 464.5 hours for the period August-October (327 hours in April-July) to the work of the AONB. There are 11 volunteers at the Great War Hut and 15 volunteers at Milford Hut. Volunteers at Milford Hut provide a welcome to all visitors of the AONB and Milford Common explaining about its landscape, heritage, and wildlife. Great War Hut volunteers provide a welcome to everyone visiting the hut and provide information about Cannock Chase during the Great War.

### Future Guardians of Cannock Chase

35. The AONB Team has continued to work closely with officers from the SAC Partnership to inspire young people to appreciate and look after Cannock Chase. A range of resource materials for the use of Duke of Edinburgh, Staffordshire Libraries, Staffordshire Scouts and Staffordshire Guides is nearing completion. The project is also improving links with these organisations.

### Diversity and Inclusion

36. The findings from a study investigating diversity and inclusion on Cannock Chase and within the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership has been concluded, and is reported elsewhere on this agenda.

## **Governance and communication**

### Defra mid-year claim

37. In accordance with our grant agreement, our mid year claim for 2022-23 of £129,564.29 was submitted to Defra on 13 September 2022.

### AONB Communications Officer

38. Samantha Hall joined the AONB Team on 2<sup>nd</sup> November in the new role of AONB Communications Officer. The role of the post is to deliver the communications objectives of the AONB Partnership:
1. To promote the profile and understanding of Cannock Chase – the place
  2. To inspire people to want to love and look after Cannock Chase
  3. To strengthen the profile of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership and increase the transparency of, and support for, its work

### NAAONB Annual Conference, 12-15 September

39. The Chair of the Joint Committee together with the AONB Team attended this year's annual conference of the National Association for AONBs, held at the University of Lancaster. The theme was Engagement, in its widest sense. Speakers from inside the protected landscape network and the wider world talked about a range of subjects: ethnic minority communities, financial and social deprivation, young people, improving mental health, education, effective use of social media, farming, nature recovery and biodiversity.

Carbon Baseline Assessment and pathway to net zero

40. The findings from a study investigating the greenhouse gas emissions of Cannock Chase has been concluded, and is reported elsewhere on this agenda.

**Recommendations**

41. The following recommendations are made to the Joint Committee:
  1. The Committee notes the update on activities and is invited to ask questions.

**Item 10**                      **Planning update****Item for:**                      Information**Author:**                      Julia Banbury, AONB Landscape Planning Officer**Financial implications:**      None**Recommendations:**        The Joint Committee notes progress made on planning matters since the last meeting and is invited to ask questions.**Development management and planning policy**

1.        Between June and November 2022 the Landscape Planning Officer reviewed 54 planning applications of which four were major applications (including for Reserved Matters), and four were Section 17 applications for Early Environmental Works for HS2. Representations and comments were made on 33 applications. 9 consultations related to amended applications in response to previous objections. 21 applications did not need a full response as there were no concerns to raise. 1 pre-application response was made regarding West Midlands Interchange, and one response made to a Felling License application.
2.        The AONB had the opportunity to formally comment on the Cannock Wood Neighbourhood Plan consultation. The AONB had previously been invited to comment and input into the emerging Plan, so no further comment was needed other than to welcome the document.
3.        Members will be interested in the outcome of the Planning Appeal in South Staffordshire which was mentioned in the Papers from the July Joint Committee Meeting. The subject of the Appeal related to unauthorised development and an associated planning application near Hatherton. The Hearing took place in August, and the Inspector dismissed the Appeal.
4.        The table below indicates applications reported on previously that have now been decided, and consultations from June where an objection was made, along with the outcomes to date. Full responses are available from the AONB Landscape Planning Officer.

**Recommendations**

5.        The Joint Committee notes progress made on planning matters since the last meeting and is invited to ask questions.

	Planning inspectorate Application /Appeal			Major application	
	Planning policy			Other consultation (eg. Felling license)	
Authority area	Reference	Site and Description	Response	Response date	LPA decision
Stafford	21/33668/COU	Land adj Bower Lane, Etchinghill  COU from agri land to dog exercise area with track and parking area	Objection  Prominent location on the AONB boundary. Urbanising features would detrimentally affect natural beauty in and in the setting of the AONB. Impact on trees.	20.10.21  15.12.11  03.03.22	Refused 09.11.22
Cannock Chase	CH/22/0095	Park Gate Barn, Park Gate Road, Cannock Wood Detached Garage	Objection	07.04.22	Refused 11.08.22
South Staffs	22/00412/FUL	Shore Croft West Wing Sandy Lane Hatherton Extension to stable block to include 3 further stables	Conditional objection. Tree protection plan and clarity on lighting requested	24.05.22	Approve 15.06.22 with conditions including restrictions on lighting and bringing on containers ancillary buildings, caravans etc
South Staffordshire	22/00483/FUL	Land at Cocksparrow Lane Use of land for equine for Stable and store	Request conditions for mitigation planting, materials and lighting	29.06.22	Approve with conditions 08.08.22
Cannock Chase	CH/22/0190	Hill Farm, 82 Hayfield Hill, Cannock Wood Demolition and replacement with 3 new dwellings and conversion of 4 <sup>th</sup> building to residential	Objection. Proposal would detrimentally affect the character and openness of the landscape and the natural beauty of the AONB. Visually intrusive would not comply with AONB Design Guide and Views and Setting Guide	09.06.22	Withdrawn 29.09.22
Stafford	22/36129/DCON	The Besoms Brook Lane, Brocton	Details of lux levels and curfew requested as close to the SAC	12.07.22	Awaiting decision

		Conditions for lighting and materials			
Stafford	22/35752/HOU	37 Old Acre Lane, Brocton Demolish garage 2 storey house extension and works to boundary	Application amended in response to comments	20.07.22 26.07.22	Approve 04.08.22
Lichfield	22/00875/FUH	116 upper Way, Upper Longdon 2 storey extension, front wall and entrance gates	Tree survey and protection requested prior to decision. Concern re scale of dev and assimilation. Condition for materials, landscape proposals, lighting	20.07.22	Awaiting decision
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	Appeal Dismissed 29.09.22
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	Hearing date 31.08.22  Appeal Dismissed 29.09.22
Lichfield	22/01014/OUT	Land rear of the Nook, Lower Way, Upper Longdon Outline one detached dwelling all matters reserved	Objection Impact on AONB and setting of Upper Longdon	16.08.22	Withdrawn 28.09.22
Stafford	22/35971/HOU	The Ferns, 6 Broc Hill Way Brocton Triple bay detached garage	Objection. Positioning to minimise urban spread so seen better in association with other buildings. Potential impact on trees. Condition for lighting	18.08.22 10.11.22	Awaiting decision

Cannock Chase	CH/22/0279	The Buds, Buds Road, Cannock Wood  Change of use to storage (retrospective) change from Dev plan	Objection Inappropriate use giving rise to detrimental impacts on the openness of the Green Belt and on the natural beauty of the AONB	18.08.22	Awaiting decision
Cannock Chase	CH/22/0266	Stable Block, Cumberledge Hill, Cannock Wood Demolition and replacement of stable Amended	Objection. Detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt, the landscape and natural beauty of the AONB	24.08.22	Refused 03.10.22
Stafford	22/35623/HOU	Brookside, 23 Main Road Milford two storey side and single storey rear extensions	Objection. Overdevelopment, impact on trees	26.05.22	Awaiting decision
Cannock Chase	CH/22/0306	The Smallholding, Kingsley Wood Road, Rugeley  Change of use of existing building currently approved for repairs, maintenance relating to forestry & agriculture to motor vehicle repairs & maintenance and to include a DVSA for MOT test centre for light vehicles up to 6500kg	Conditional objection	05.09.22	Awaiting decision
Lichfield	22/01207/FUH	4 The Grange, Upper Longdon Extension and porch	Conditional objection Concern re scale of development. request for conditions for details of materials and colour render to break up scale of development, lighting.	05.09.22	Awaiting decision
Lichfield	22/01164/COU	222 Chorley Road Burntwood Change of use from garage to separate 2 bedroom dwelling	Objection Adjacent to the AONB boundary Requires a substantial extension to existing building. Impact on AONB from development and associated urbanisation	05.09.22	Refuse 01.11.22 Involves extension. Harm to GB, impact on AONB

Cannock Chase	CH/22/0315	Stonehouse Barn, Penkridge Bank Road  Detached 6 bay garage with first floor and dormer windows	Objection Building, lighting, parking and other urbanising features would be detrimental to the openness of the Green Belt and natural beauty of the AONB	06.09.22	Refused 07.10.22  Harm to Green Belt and AONB
Cannock Chase	CH/22/0321	The Holding, Rugeley Road, Hazelslade  Demolition of Equestrian Buildings and Erection of 3- bed Dwelling	Objection	22.09.22	Refused 12.10.22
Stafford	22/36447/PTEL	Navigation Farm, Meadow Lane, Little Haywood  Installation of 1No 12.5m telegraph pole and equipment	Objection Would introduce urbanising, detracting features into the protected landscape.	15.09.22  26.09.22	Refused 19.10.22 Intrusive on Conservation Area and AONB
Stafford	22/36536/OUT	Land off Old Croft Lane Walton on the Hill Residential Development 40 dwellings Outline	Objection	07.11.22	Awaiting decision

**Item 11**

**AONB communications**

**Item for:**

Information

**Author:**

Verbal report of the AONB Communications Officer

**Financial implications:**

None

**Recommendations:**

The Committee notes the report and is invited to ask questions



## **Item 12** **AONB Management Plan review 2025-2030**

**Item for:** Approval

**Author:** Ian Marshall, AONB Development Officer

**Financial implications:** The publication and adoption of a one-year extension of the AONB Management Plan will not incur any costs.

**Recommendations:** The Committee approves the light touch review to the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan for 2024-25

### **Background**

1. Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee at its meeting on 14 July 2022 resolved to delay the review of the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan by 12 months until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 in order to allow new guidance and Protected Landscape outcomes to be published.
2. In order to comply with the law without compromising the integrity of future Management Plans, Defra judges that AONB Partnerships that opt for such a delay produce a 'light-touch' review in which they commit to producing a new Management Plan after the guidance is published. This paper sets out (Appendix 1) a light-touch review for Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2024-25 for Members' consideration and approval. Notification of our intention to publish and adopt a one year review will then be sent to Natural England together with a revised timetable for the production of the full Review 2025-2030 (Appendix 2).

<b>List of Background Papers</b> Draft minutes of the meeting of the AONB Joint Committee 14 <sup>th</sup> July 2022 Letter from Lord Benyon, 7 <sup>th</sup> July 2022 AONB Management Plan 2019-24
<b>Inclusion and Diversity Appraisal</b> The topics raised in this paper will help to remove barriers to access our Protected Landscapes
<b>Climate Change Appraisal</b> The topics raised in this paper will help to address the impacts of climate change.
<b>Environmental Appraisal</b> The topics raised in this paper will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of Protected Landscapes.
<b>Appendices</b> Appendix 1. Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2025 – 2030. Light touch review for one year extension 2024-2025 Appendix 2. Revised timetable for the production of the full review of the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2025-2030

### **Light-touch review**

3. Defra has considered what a light-touch review of an AONB Management Plan might look like and advises the following:
  - Partnerships would agree and publish one page of text setting out their intentions for the next Management Plan.

- This could include a brief vision statement, a summary of how the Management Plan will be structured, and a summary of the Partnerships' objectives over the next five-year review period (carrying forward actions and/or adding new ones for the year affected by the delay).
4. A proposed format and content of a light-touch review for Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan based on this advice is set out in Appendix 1.

### **Recommendations**

5. The following recommendation is made to the Joint Committee
1. The Committee approves the light touch review to the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan for 2024-25.

## Appendix 1.

# **Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2025-2030 Light-touch review for one-year extension 2024-2025**

## **Introduction**

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee at its meeting on 14 July 2022 resolved to delay the review of the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan by 12 months until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 in order to allow new guidance and Protected Landscape outcomes to be published. To fulfil the legal requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and in accordance with Defra advice from Lord Benyon (7<sup>th</sup> July 2022), a Review of the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 to include 2024-2025 is presented below.

## **Cannock Chase AONB vision**

*Cannock Chase will be an inspiring place, valued and cherished by local people, businesses and visitors for the distinctive beauty, nature, culture and heritage of its heaths and forests, historic parklands and farmlands.*

The aims of the AONB Partnership are for Cannock Chase to be:

- A place where people feel relevant and welcomed
- A landscape whose natural and cultural resources are managed and used wisely
- Where the distinctive local character and national importance of the Chase is understood, valued and celebrated
- Where local people, businesses and visitors take pride in the Chase, respect it and come together in a united purpose to conserve and enhance its natural beauty for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations.

## **Management Plan 2025 – 2030 structure**

Dependent on guidance from Nature England on future AONB management plans and the involvement of our stakeholders, it is expected that our plan for 2025-2030 will include:

- a) Our statement of significance
- b) The management plan in the context of international, national and local legislation, policy and guidance and challenges
- c) Vision and objectives
- d) A description of the landscape, nature and heritage, the ecosystem services they provide, and the public benefits they deliver
- e) Explanation of governance, accountability and delivery mechanisms
- f) Delivery plan
- g) Performance and monitoring framework

## **Cannock Chase AONB Partnership objectives 2024-2025**

We will continue to deliver the Implementation Action Plan as set out in the approved Management Plan for 2019-2024 under the themes of: Landscape Character and Planning; Wildlife and Nature; Historic Environment and Culture; Experience and Enjoyment and; Communities and Business. In addition, during 2024-25 we will begin to address cross-cutting issues around climate change and inclusion and diversity.

Appendix 2.

Revised timeline for AONB Management Plan review 2025-30

Activity	2022	2023				2024				2025
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
<b>Updated AONB Management Plan guidance</b>										
New guidance issued by Natural England	●									
<b>State of the AONB Report</b>										
<b>Start up</b>										
Write to Task & Finish Groups – notification of update		●								
Scope specification – paper to OWG		●								
Scope specification – paper to JC		●								
<b>Initiation</b>										
Procure consultant		●								
Project meetings with Task & Finish Group representatives			●							
Draft Report										
Report completed				●						
<b>AONB Management Plan</b>										
<b>Start up</b>										
Write to LAs / NE – notification of review				●						
Scoping paper to OWG				●						
Scoping report to JC				●						
<b>Initiation</b>										
Procure consultant			●							
Create logs and registers for review										
Draft ToR for Management Plan Review Group										
Assess lessons learnt										
MPRG meetings					●	●	●	●	●	●
Consideration of SPD status										
<b>Stage 1 consultation</b>										
Initial public consultation										
Initial stakeholder consultation										
<b>Stage 2 draft development</b>										
Consider consultation responses										
Draft management plan										
Input from staff / MPRG										
<b>Stage 3 consultation on draft</b>										
Interested public consultation										
Statutory agencies consultation										
Input responses into draft										
<b>Stage 4 Screening</b>										
Compliance with SEA / HR / ED										
<b>Stage 5 Approval and adoption</b>										
OWG approval										●
JC approval										●
Statutory agencies adoption										
LAs adoption										
<b>Closing</b>										
Design management plan document										
Publish new management plan										

## Item 13 Protected Landscape reforms

**Item for:** Information

**Author:** Ian Marshall, AONB Development Officer

**Financial implications:** AONB activities are currently funded through a combination of Defra (75%) and local authority (25%) contributions.

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

### Background

1. The Government set out its response to Julian Glover’s review of England’s protected landscapes on 15 January 2022. This is an opportunity to renew and enhance Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as a modern, dynamic national landscape designation, setting the standard both here and internationally.
2. Implementing its response to some proposals would involve changes to primary legislation, and the Government consulted on those changes earlier in 2022. The Government is still in the process of considering its response to the views it has received from that consultation.
3. For the statutory changes (such as updated powers and purposes for AONBs), there is a need to find legislative space to do this. The possibility of clauses within the current Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill may be considered, but if this is not possible, opportunities for a new Defra-sponsored bill during a later session of Parliament will be considered.
4. In the meantime, work has been carrying on at pace by officers to implement a number of reforms that do not require legislation. This report updates members on the major changes that are in preparation and considers their implications for Cannock Chase AONB.

#### List of Background Papers

[25 year Environment Plan](#) 2018

[Landscapes Review](#) 2019

[Government Response to the Landscapes Review](#) 2022

[National Landscape. The Designation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. National Association for AONBs 2022.](#)

#### Inclusion and Diversity Appraisal

The topics raised in this paper will help to remove barriers to access our Protected Landscapes

#### Climate Change Appraisal

The topics raised in this paper will help to address the impacts of climate change.

#### Environmental Appraisal

The topics raised in this paper will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of Protected Landscapes.

### Terminology used in this paper

5. The following terminology has been used in this paper.  
Protected Landscapes The areas designated as National Parks, the Broads, and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England, that are referred to collectively as ‘protected landscapes’.

Landscapes Review The review of England’s National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty carried out by a panel chaired by Julian Glover, published in September 2019 with 27 wide-ranging proposals.

Government response to the Landscapes Review The Government’s response to the Landscapes Review, published on 15 January 2022.

### **AONB Management Plans**

6. The Government agrees with the Landscapes Review call for strengthened management plans which set clear priorities and actions for nature recovery and the response to climate change. Going forward, therefore, management plans will need to be aligned with relevant national policies and targets such as the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and Net Zero, along with other key goals such as access and community engagement.
7. Natural England will review all revised management plans, ensuring that these make fair and ambitious contributions to national targets. To facilitate this new process, Natural England is updating guidance on management plans for protected landscapes.
8. In addition to being aligned with national priorities and targets, management plans will also need to ensure clear alignment with Local Nature Recovery Strategies, to facilitate delivery of priority nature recovery actions without duplication.
9. In accordance with Defra guidance, Cannock Chase AONB has opted to delay the review of its management plan by 12 months in order to allow new management plan guidance and new protected landscape outcomes to be published and considered (see also agenda item 12).

### **Targets and Outcomes Framework**

10. The Landscapes Review recommended improving the monitoring and reporting in protected landscapes to help us to understand the state of nature and prioritise action towards desired environmental outcomes.
11. Defra has been liaising with Natural England and other partners to identify the priority nationally aligned targets that they will set for all 44 protected landscapes as a collective by January 2023. New ambitious outcomes will be agreed for the role of protected landscapes in delivering on the government’s goals for nature recovery and climate, aligned with the revised 25 Year Environment Plan and interim environmental targets under the Environment Act 2021 and the Net Zero Strategy. Natural England will monitor and evaluate progress against the key indicators and outcomes and will also support individual protected landscapes to translate these targets into their management plans.
12. The extrapolation and apportioning of national targets and outcomes down to individual AONBs needs careful consideration to be fair, meaningful and achievable. Given that AONB teams have limited powers and resources to deliver direct change, the accountability for the delivery of the targets and outcomes needs clarification.

## **National Landscapes, Parks and Trails Partnership**

13. The Government agrees with the finding of the Landscapes Review that stronger governance is needed to provide national leadership and coordination, and to ensure that the lead partners in National Parks and AONBs collaborate much more effectively to achieve the ambition for Protected Landscapes.
14. Rather than create a new separate public body at considerable expense, the Government is focussing on ensuring that existing partners work together more effectively at a national level.
15. A National Landscapes, Parks and Trails Partnership is therefore being developed to create a more collaborative way of working that amplifies and scales up the impact and influence of the (English) National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Trails. The structure and purpose of this new partnership is being worked up over the coming months, with a view to it commencing work in April 2023.
16. The partnership will have a strong focus on delivery in its first two years. Two themes for strategic programmes have been identified for joint work, to ensure the partnership can hit the ground running and to provide a focus for unlocking financial support from Government. These are nature recovery and diversity of workforce and visitors. This financial support will fund dedicated resource within existing partners to support the partnership to develop and deliver the programmes. Development of the programmes will be a task for the partnership. The partnership will also have an income generation remit to support delivery activities by attracting investment through green finance initiatives, commercial activities and joint funding bids.
17. The Chair of the Partnership will be a ministerial appointment, independent of the partners.
18. There is a lot to do this financial year to flesh out current plans and provide the clarity on purpose, responsibilities and ways of working necessary to enable the partnership to begin to make a difference as soon as possible. Care needs to be taken to ensure the partnership will add value rather than replicate or scrutinise work being carried out elsewhere. The appointment of the Chair is clearly crucial - someone who can be effective as an advocate and champion, but can also convene and facilitate in a way that brings the partners together and fosters genuine shared ownership of ambitions and plans.

## **National Landscapes name and rebrand**

19. The Landscapes Review called for “AONBs strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, renamed as National Landscapes”. The Government agrees that the national significance of AONBs should be reflected in their name. Defra is currently working with the National Association for AONBs to identify the best way to exemplify the values which underpin this renewed family of protected landscapes in their branding. As part of that work, the proposal to rename AONBs as ‘National Landscapes’ is being tested.
20. Any name change must represent a step change for AONB teams with the ambitious new title encompassing new purposes delivered by skilled teams, sustainable funding and

robust governance. Pulled together as a package these proposals have the potential to deliver a transformational approach to AONB leadership and management. Cannock Chase AONB has already embraced the term 'A National Landscape in the place brand that it has developed for Cannock Chase. Some work may be required locally to align with any national branding exercise.

## **Resourcing**

21. All English AONBs have recently received a 3 year financial settlement from Defra which provides a 14.7% increase in core funding for 2022-23 (over the base budget for 2021-22, and equating for us on Cannock Chase to an additional £22k), but followed then by a flat line of the same cash amount for the following two years. While the current year increase is welcome, the following two year freeze at a time of rising costs will put pressure on our budget and means that our ability to deliver meaningful change will be constrained.
22. Overall this settlement falls well short of the transformative change for AONBs envisioned by Julian Glover. The Defra Landscapes team have indicated their will to do as much as possible on resourcing. In the short term additional funds are likely to come in the form of 'project' money – for example, the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and funding for work to remove barriers in AONBs - 'Access for All'.
23. The NAAONB is liaising with Defra to develop more capacity for AONBs to realise Green Investment opportunities with corporate businesses wanting to invest resources in nature recovery.

## **NAAONB prospectus**

24. The National Association of AONBs has sent a [prospectus](#) to the Secretary of State and Shadows to highlight the ambition of AONBs and to demonstrate the work of AONBs and our value to government.

## **Recommendations**

25. The following recommendation is made to the Joint Committee:
  1. The Committee notes the update and is invited to ask questions.