



**Cannock Chase AONB Partnership  
Meeting of the Joint Committee  
22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 at 14.00 PM**

**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.

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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 note progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme</i> <i>(c) To note progress on spend for the Access for All Fund</i> Report of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee	(a) INFORMATION (b) INFORMATION (c) INFORMATION	<u>17</u>
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7	<b>Dark Skies project - AONB Good Lighting Guide</b> <i>To update members on the delivery of community engagement activities on dark skies and, seek members approval for the publication of a Good Lighting Guide for Cannock Chase AONB</i> Report of the AONB Landscape Planning Officer	INFORMATION AND DECISION	<u>44</u>
8	<b>Planning update</b> <i>To update members on AONB input to planning matters</i> Report of the AONB Landscape Planning Officer	INFORMATION	<u>47</u>
9	<b>Cannock Chase Charitable Fund</b> <i>To seek approval for the establishment of a Cannock Chase Charitable Fund for voluntary and business</i>	DECISION	<u>53</u>

	<i>giving</i> Report of the AONB Development Officer		
10	<b>Externally funded programmes</b> <i>To update members on progress delivering the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and Access for All Fund</i> Report of the Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer and AONB Development Officer	INFORMATION	<u>65</u>
11	<b>Future Guardians of Cannock Chase</b> <i>To update members on this initiative to raise awareness of Cannock Chase with young people</i> Report of the AONB Development Officer	INFORMATION	<u>69</u>
12	<b>Date, time and venue of next meeting</b> <i>Wednesday 12 July 2023, 2-4 pm (AGM)</i> <i>Wednesday 6 December 2023, 2-4 pm</i>		

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

**Item for:** Approval

**Author:** Julia Banbury, AONB Landscape Planning Officer

**Financial implications:** None

**Recommendations:** The Committee approves the minutes of the meeting and considers any matters arising.



**Cannock Chase AONB Partnership  
Meeting of the Joint Committee  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December 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 Len Bates (LB)  
Cllr Adrienne Fitzgerald (AF)  
Cllr Iain Eadie (RC)

**Representing**

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

**Officers**

Ian Marshall (IM) AONB Unit  
Julia Banbury (JB) AONB Unit  
Richard Harris (RH) AONB Unit  
Samantha Hall (SH) AONB Unit  
Colin Manning (CMa) AONB Unit  
Catherine Mann (CM) Staffordshire County Council  
Sarah Bentley (SB) Staffordshire County Council  
Nikola Mihajlovic (NM) Staffordshire County Council

**Advisers**

June Jukes (JJ) Friends of Cannock Chase  
Lisa Horritt (LH) Staffordshire Association of Parish Councils  
Mel Dyer (MD) RSPB  
Jamie Murphy (JM) RSPB  
Chris Evans (CE) West Midlands Bird Club  
Doug Smith (DS) British Horse Society

**1. Welcome and introductions**

- 1.1 Councillor Beatty opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the meeting of the AONB Partnership Joint Committee (JC). Samantha Hall was introduced as the new Communications Officer for the AONB.

**2. Apologies for absence**

- 2.1 Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Victoria Wilson	Staffordshire County Council
Councillor Justin Johnson substituting)	Cannock Chase Council (Cllr Fitzgerald)
Mary Cope	Beaudesert Park Farm
Patrick Walker	Staffordshire Council
Wendy Bannerman	British Horse Society
Mark Kelly	Cemex
Helen Dale	CLA
Scott Latham	SAC Partnership
Roger Broadbent	West Midlands Bird Club (Chris Evans substituting)

IM reported that Natural England have informed the AONB that they are unable to field any officer to Joint Committee meetings for the time being due to staff changes.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

- 3.1 CE reported that Para 7.13 of the Minutes was inaccurate regarding the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) carried out by WMBC. This stated that the survey and analysis had been completed whereas at that time the data had not yet been completely collected from surveyors and analysed. This is now complete, and the booklet is nearly ready for publishing. The BBS indicates that Tree Pipit is doing ok, whereas records of Skylark are down.
- 3.2 IM reported that a field day arranged for October 2022 had to be cancelled due to lack of uptake. FB reiterated the importance of getting Members and Ward Councillors out onto the Chase so that they get a better understanding of what the AONB has to offer and the importance of conserving it. There may be an opportunity for next year. Now that SH has started as Comms Officer, she will be looking at how to engage better with Ward Members and others.
- 3.3 JJ suggested that there may be opportunities for Ward Members to join one of the Friends of Cannock Chase's walks from the new programme being developed. This could provide an opportunity for an informal introduction to the Chase.
- 3.4 **Resolved:**  
**The minutes of the previous meeting are agreed as a correct record and were approved.**

#### 4. **Public Questions**

4.1 No questions were received

#### 5. **Finance Report – Revenue Budget 2022/23**

5.1 Nikki Mihajlovic, Senior Finance Business Partner, presented the revenue budget for 2022/23. 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. The current forecast outturn position when compared to budget is a breakeven position.

5.2 The individual projects, totalling £3,764 for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) include the £1,000 administration fee. Unallocated money from SDF totalling £6,236 has been re-allocated to the AONB projects.

5.3 The individual projects, totalling £87,821 for the AONB projects are set out in the Appendix. 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.

5.4 The net position for the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme forecasts an outturn against the programme of £254,620, which will result in an underspend against the grant of £35,000, which will have to be repaid to Defra. CM reported that he is working to contact as many landowners as possible. FiPL can be used to fund projects outside the AONB. FB requested partners to encourage local landowners to consider making applications.

5.5 The balance on the Cannock Chase AONB Reserve currently stands at £66,515 for 2022/23. NM confirmed that this is invested in line with LG Treasury Management Strategy and attracted £44 interest on the balance last year.

5.6 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. As the level of increase for next year has not yet been announced NM presented two scenarios for the budget for 2023/24 for Member's discussion and decision. These options are set out in detail the Finance Report.

5.7 In brief, Option 1 assumes an inflationary uplift on pay of 4% and pension contributions of 1% and no inflationary uplift on other expenditure budgets. Option 2 assumes an inflationary uplift on pay of 2% and pension contributions of 1% and no inflationary uplift on other expenditure budgets. Both options included proposals to fund the Annual Conference through in-kind contributions or charging for attendance. The assumption has also been made that the AONB website hosting and support costs of £2,500 could be funded from the reserves. Option 1 includes reallocation of SDF to the core fund, which would mean LPAs would have to be requested to make an additional small contribution.

5.8 IM explained that he and FB had been discussing whether to try to find a sponsor or make a small charge to attendees for the Annual Conference. He also explained that

the AONB website is hosted by SCC and is coming to the end of a 3 year contract. He has negotiated a fee of £5K for the next 3 years and proposed this comes out of the AONB reserves.

- 5.9 The purpose of the AONB reserve was discussed. The reserve needs to be adequate to ensure funding for staff redundancies if this proved necessary, and 'exceptional costs' such as the Management Plan Review or to meet shortfalls in funding. IE commented that he would be unable to commit his Authority to additional funding as he didn't know the detail of the Authority's other funding obligations and budgets are difficult. He felt they would not be keen for a further commitment at this time and considered this would be appropriate use of AONB reserves rather than cutting funding to AONB projects.
- 5.10 LB supported IE and added that he is not in favour of charging attendees for the Annual Conference as this would reduce attendance.
- 5.11 LH mentioned that the Staffordshire Association of Parish Council were looking at arranging sponsorship for their conference and suggested this might in any case be a good option for the AONB to explore.
- 5.12 LB agreed, suggesting businesses may be persuaded to sponsor the AONB Conference, possibly collectively by being able to promote their business and the AONB. DS suggested putting forward sponsorship as a raffle where each business provided £100 to appear on advertising as a sponsor.
- 5.13 SB pointed out that the amount of additional funding contribution from each Authority would be very small, with most of the funding (50%) coming from the County Council.
- 5.14 FB understood the reluctance of voting Members to commit to additional contributions now but felt that Joint Committee should be reviewing the level of contributions more frequently than has been done, as the level has stayed the same for many years. She suggested it should be reviewed next year.
- 5.15 IE requested the financial liability of the AONB be calculated should there be a need to wind it up, so that Members were aware of the minimum figure that needs to be held in the reserve.
- 5.16 **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 noted progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme progress on the spend for the FIPL programme**
  - (3) The Committee resolved to assume a 4% increase on salaries for inflationary uplift; to take the whole funding shortfall from the reserve; and requested officers with look for a sponsor(s) for the Conference rather than charge attendees.**

## 6. Access Funding

6.1 IM reported that DEFRA has recently confirmed an award to all AONBs and National Parks for Access Funding. This comprises an uplift in core grant in order to make protected landscapes more accessible to people of all ages and abilities and from all backgrounds. This is capital works for physical and digital improvements. It is a 3 year package of funding although there is no funding in Yr2, and underspend cannot be carried forward. Cannock Chase AONB has been allocated:

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

6.2 The following projects are being developed:

- Resurfacing the path from Marquis Drive Visitor Centre to the ToCH platform
- Making Cannock Chase an accessible destination through audio and visual guides, for example by preparing videos of walking trails so that people can visit virtually and will know the kind of terrain to expect and features of interest.
- Improved waymarking of AONB promoted trails (will require audit and replacement of signage)
- Field Study Council Guide to Cannock Chase highlighting aspects of the historic environment, wildlife, geology etc. Will be available as hard copies and digitally

More ideas are needed so please get in touch with IM.

6.3 JJ suggested work to the Hide, which is in a poor state of repair, and access to Brocton Pools. Trees are restricting access, and this is a good location for all abilities. CE supported this suggestion saying that she had received complaints about the condition and accessibility. There have also been complaints that the car park at the end of Old Acre has been closed which makes access more difficult.

6.4 There aren't many paths that are suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs and this needs to be improved.

6.5 FB asked who will be running the project delivery? IM confirmed that it would be very helpful if other organisations come forward with project ideas and would then be in a position to deliver the projects themselves with the available funding.

## 6.6 **Resolved**

**The Committee notes the update on the uplift in core funding.**

## 7. Diversity and Inclusion

7.1 IM presented the background and findings of the Study carried out for the AONB by A Meredith Associates and The Research Solution. The key questions of the brief were:

- 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?
- 7.2 The findings were not particularly surprising and not unusual for a Protected Landscape. The study found engagement is unequal, some audiences are underrepresented, including people with disabilities and their families. Barriers included lack of awareness of what is on offer and what there is to do; poorly maintained paths and lack of seating; user conflicts (mountain bikers, horse riders, dogs and dog litter, inconsiderate behaviour); visitor infrastructure; perceptions of safety.
- 7.3 Suggested changes include:
- **Increasing audience reach** including physical/access; support for people alone/lacking confidence/needing assistance; 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.** 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.
  - **Working with specialist community and health organisations for enhancing mental wellbeing** through the exploration of the outdoors and landscapes.
- 7.4 The composition of the AONB Partnership does not reflect the wider population we serve. There is no representative for example for the Arts, Education or young people. The report proposed
- **Improved insight** – bring in specialist insight, guidance and advice by creating a champion for equality, diversity and inclusion, or an equality advisory panel
  - **Broadening governance** – including: advocates for people with disabilities; minority ethnic communities; community and business organisations already nominally engaged; groups representing the arts/cultural sector and academia.
  - **Member and staff training** – broaden awareness of inclusivity issues and provide for improved knowledge and understanding of equality issues.
  - **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 the AONB and close by.
  - **Build stronger links with local communities and under-represented groups**
  - **Develop tailored audience engagement projects with 'hard to reach' sectors** by working with partners in these domains.
  - **Provide activity / taster days for under-represented groups** - through working with neighbouring organisations and through outreach to West Midlands groups.
  - **Undertake more accessibility related work** with partners where necessary and make rights of way easier to access at key locations.



- 7.5 A five-point plan is suggested to Committee for discussion and decision:
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. **Appoint a 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. **Prepare an Action Plan** with external advisors, 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, and filling gaps
  5. **Embed diversity and inclusion practices into AONB activities and projects** - so these become integral to our core business and our day-to-day activities.
- 7.6 IE observed that resources for this would be challenging, and one has to be pragmatic about what can be taken forward on limited resources. Suggested most useful would be a Champion for Diversity and Inclusion. Has worked well in Lichfield where they have a Youth Council working together with those with special educational needs. They could be tasked with looking at how to improve the situation. Lots of young people use the Chase for Duke of Edinburgh Award so they might be a good source of interest and ideas. DS agreed – Riding for the Disabled has an Equality and Engagement Group that works well.
- 7.7 AF suggested there would be potential interest from Scouts and Guiding groups (as part of a badge), or some of the young people engaged in the Woodland Wonderfest or other Arts / community engagement areas.
- 7.8 MD said that this is probably the most important thing that the AONB will do in the next 5 years. The Environmental Sector is the least diverse sector in the UK. This is a very important piece of work that she is very happy to put time into. Cannock Chase AONB has potential to deliver on this in a big way because of its catchment.
- 7.9 LH stated that some Parish Councils have tried Youth Councils and she could see which are still active – perhaps there would be representatives willing to help here?
- 7.10 IM advised that the AONB used to have a youth forum and the AONB has been working on youth engagement recently with the Future Guardians project and developing a badge for Scouts and Guides.
- 7.11 IE suggested gathering information on what Youth Councils there are in the area and putting a public call out for a Champion.
- 7.12 Several suggestions were made for potential sources of support. FB requested ideas be sent to IM for him to report back at the next Committee Meeting in March.
- 7.13 Resolved**  
**The Committee notes the findings of the Inclusion and Diversity Report and supports the appointment of a volunteer Champion for Diversity and Inclusion.**

## 8. Carbon Baseline assessment and pathway to net zero

- 8.1 IM had previously reported that the AONB had appointed Small World Consulting to prepare this assessment and recommendations for the AONB's pathway to net zero. Along with the Cotswolds AONB, we are the first English AONB to carry out such a study.
- 8.2 To avoid skewing the study due to Covid the assessment was based on figures for 2019. One might expect visitors to make the largest quantity of greenhouse gas emissions, but the findings indicate that it is residents who are the highest contributors. Residents emit more than half (56%) of the total (mainly from flying, and household electricity and fuel emissions).
- 8.3 The footprint of visitors travelling to and from the AONB is by far the lowest of any UK Protected Landscape (reflecting that most visitors come from within the local catchment). However, vehicle fuel accounts for over 70% of the footprint of visitors coming to the AONB.
- 8.4 The relatively large area of semi-natural vegetation on the Chase is capturing carbon and counteracting other emissions.
- 8.5 The report looks at the options for the AONB to attempt to achieve net zero by 2024 and tries to consider what the AONB could influence and in practical terms this is likely to be very challenging. The largest recommended increase in annual carbon sequestration between 2019 and 2050 would be from planting new broadleaved or mixed woodlands as well as grassland improvement with legumes.
- 8.6 A five point action plan is suggested:
- **Climate Change Statement** - Develop and publicise 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.
- 8.7 LB advised that Patrick Walker supports the plan as a sensible starting point. It would be helpful to have more information on how emissions could be reduced. South Staffs Council has been working on this topic LB wanted to discuss further with PW. IM welcomed the offer of support.
- 8.8 FB pointed out that other action by the government and in changes to farming will be contributing. Need to be aware of all other activity from other bodies and understand how these will influence the Chase.

8.9 IE welcomed the report and suggested that the approach needed to be in manageable chunks. A Climate Change Champion is a good idea. The role of the Partnership is to influence land management and possibly to influence residents to change behaviours. The rest is really down to Local Plan Policy.

8.10 MD pointed out that there is also a Biodiversity crisis, and this is closely meshed with the Climate Crisis. Planting trees to contribute to carbon sequestration is only appropriate in the right place. Planting trees on the heathland, for example, would be counterproductive in halting the biodiversity crisis and therefore such a proposal needs to be carefully considered. Right trees, for the right reasons, in the right place. MD suggested any Statement should cover Climate Change and Biodiversity

#### **8.11 Resolved**

**The Committee notes the findings of the Carbon Baseline Assessment and Report and supports the appointment of a volunteer Champion for Climate Change**

### **9. Delivery of AONB activities**

9.1 RH presented a snapshot of the Committee Report on activities.

#### **9.2 Fixed Point Photography**

JB summarised the activities of the FPP project and encouraged people to look at the newly updated website, which provides an insight into changes in the landscape since the project began in 2005.

9.3 JB confirmed that the AONB Highways Design Guide is currently awaiting agreement of Staffordshire County Council (Highway Authority) before publication.

#### **9.4 Dark Skies**

We are working with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to deliver some bespoke sessions on Dark Skies during their February Half Term Activities, to raise awareness of dark skies. These dates coincide with CPRE's national Star Count.

We are also working in partnership with CPRE to deliver a Dark Skies Event for Scouts and Guides at Beaudesert. This will be supported by astronomers from Keele University.

#### **9.5 FIPL**

RH presented slides of a few of the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) projects that CM has been facilitating with landowners. CM has been approaching landowners and there are now 17 approved projects. Example projects included creating herbal leys which are better for wildlife and enhance soil structure and carbon capture on a farm, and heathland regeneration of a former conifer plantation at Beaudesert Golf Club.

#### **9.6 Wildlife and Nature**

Adder project is progressing with the Amphibian and Reptile Group ARGUK, looking at modelling potential distribution of adders. Surveys will be carried out by volunteers, and they are investigating the possibility of radio tracking.

## 9.7 **Deer management**

Previously deer population estimates have been based on surveys carried out by volunteers. A thermal imaging drone is now available, which was deployed in November 2022 and should provide a more accurate assessment. Working with partners towards a Deer Management Strategy that will sustain a healthy deer population.

## 9.8 **Historic Environment**

The condition of Ordnance Survey Triangulation points (Trig points) is currently being assessed. Some of have suffered from erosion at the base and these will be made safe and reinstated.

## 9.9 **Experience and Enjoyment**

'Local Cultural Place Makers, Global Change Makers' arts programme which the AONB is contributing funding towards, has seen young people working with artists. A slide was shown showing the lanterns created by children from out-of-date leaflets from the AONB. These formed part of a temporary installation in Rugeley. New interpretation panels have been installed incorporating the new AONB place branding using AONB and SAC Partnership funding. There are 5 new panels at RAF Hednesford, 2 at Brindley Village.

## 9.10 **Community and business**

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. These will be launched in the New Year. There is a new Visitor Welcome at Milford Common, manned by volunteers. Since April, there have been 791.5 volunteer hours recorded by volunteers for the AONB.

## 9.11 **Resolved:**

**The Committee notes the update on activities and thanked the team for their hard work.**

## **10. Planning Update**

10.1 JB provided a brief update planning matters. An outline of consultations commented on can be found in the committee report.

10.2 The Planning Appeal for a site in the AONB in South Staffordshire near Hatherton too place in August. JB was pleased to report that the Planning Inspector dismissed the appeal allowing 12 months for site restoration.

## 10.3 **Resolved:**

**The Committee noted the report.**

## **11. **Communications****

11.1 SH reported that she has been with the AONB team since 2<sup>nd</sup> November. She is working to the Communications Strategy approved by Joint Committee and will be aiming to raise the profile of Cannock Chase as a National Landscape, valued by all. She's been meeting other Partner's Communications Officers, visited the Visitor Centres and been

involved in meetings with the National Association of AONBs Communications Lead Officers. Key pieces of work that she is already engaged in include:

- Website improvements – would like to make improvements to content and images. Visuals are very important, and so will be requesting images for inclusion both for website and social media.
- Social media – looking to set up a new Facebook page as unable to use the old address for administration reasons. New Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest accounts to be set up to help target some of the audiences mentioned above.
- E newsletter – this has already gone out to 1700 people who have signed up. Call out to increase sign ups as this is an excellent way to communicate about the work of the AONB and partners.
- Partnership Bulletin – This will be a new tool to help communication between partners. Sam will request contributions for inclusion in the bulletin.

#### 11.2 **Resolved**

**The Committee welcomed SH to the AONB and are optimistic for the difference that will be made as a result of her appointment.**

### 12. **Management Plan Review**

12.1 At the last Meeting, Joint Committee resolved to delay preparation of the Management Plan to allow for national reforms and guidance to be published. To comply with the law Protected Landscapes need to provide a 'light touch' review in which they commit to producing a new Management Plan after the guidance is published.

12.2 IM presented the proposed Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2025-2030 Light-touch review for one-year extension 2024-2025, as set out in Appendix 1 of the Committee Papers. The objectives for 2024-2025 include continuing to deliver on the current Action Plan and beginning to address issues around climate change and inclusion and diversity. FB requested reference to biodiversity issues be included.

#### 12.3 **Resolved:**

**The Committee approved the 'light touch' review to the Management Plan for 2024 - 2025 and this be sent to Natural England for approval.**

### 13.0 **Protected Landscapes Reforms**

13.1 IM summarised that, as reported previously the Government has not responded formally to the consultation on the Glover Review of England's protected landscapes. However, things are nevertheless being discussed at officer level and being moved where possible to implement reforms that do not require legislation.

13.2 It is understood that AONBs will have a second statutory duty of public enjoyment and engagement. The government will need to find legislative space to implement this through being tabled by an MP. It could be potentially included in the proposed Levelling up Bill, or, if not through this avenue, DEFRA would need to sponsor a Bill.

13.3 Consultants have been appointed to draft the new Management Plan Guidance, which is expected in for completion around March/April 2023. Natural England will be ensuring that Management Plans make contributions to national targets.

- 13.4 Targets and Outcomes - 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. New 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, targets under the Environment Act 2021 and the Net Zero Strategy. Targets will be apportioned to individual AONBs. 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 (will this be the AONB or the entire Partnership?).
- 13.5 National Landscape Service – The government was initially keen on this suggestion however rather than being a new service, this will now take the form of a collaborative new partnership including National Parks, AONB and National Trails. There is a group looking at the possible remit of the partnership. The chair will be a ministerial appointment.
- 13.6 Branding – The Glover Review found that the public do not understand and relate to the name AONB, and their national significance should be highlighted in their name. The government agrees with this, and Defra is working with the National Association for AONBs to identify the best way to exemplify the values which underpin the family of protected landscapes in their branding. As part of that work, the proposal is to rename AONBs as 'National Landscapes'. We have jumped ahead and have already embraced the term with the new Place brand. The national change might come into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, and we will be invited to 'become' Cannock Chase National Landscape. Some AONBs are not yet convinced by the proposal.
- 13.7 Resourcing - All English AONBs have recently received a 3 year financial settlement from Defra which provides for an increase in funding. This settlement falls well short of supporting the transformative change for AONBs envisioned by Julian Glover, particularly if AONBs take on a second statutory duty. The Defra Landscapes team have indicated they will do as much as possible on additional resourcing for AONBs. In the short-term additional funds are likely to come as 'project' money – eg, Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and 'Access for All'.
- 13.8 The NAAONB is liaising with Defra to develop more capacity for AONBs to realise Green Investment opportunities with corporate businesses wanting to invest in nature recovery. This area will be one of the new roles for the new National Landscapes Partnership.

**13.9 Resolved:  
The Committee noted the report.**

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

Joint Committee Meetings for the year have been arranged to avoid Thursdays which are difficult for several members due to obligations to other Committees.

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 - 14:00. – 16.00

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023 - 14:00. – 16.00

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 - 14:00. – 16.00

All meetings will be held at Rising Brook Community Church, Burton Square, Stafford ST17 9LT, unless informed differently.

**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. That the update on the net revenue budget for 2023/24 is noted.
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 an update on the net revenue budget for 2023/24 that was previously presented at the December Committee.
3. 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**

4. The forecast financial position for the Core and Action Projects Budget is set out in Appendix 1 which shows the nominal net spend to date of £179,938 together with the outturn currently predicted for the year. The predicted outturn for the end of the financial year totals £288,835, giving rise to a breakeven position. There is a small underspend against the core budget of £4,370 which has been used to offset the overspend against AONB projects referred to in paragraph 6 below.
5. The individual projects, totalling £5,409 for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) including the £1,000 administration fee, are set out in Appendix 2. Originally, a re-allocation of funds of £6,236 from SDF to AONB projects was reported, but due to the increase in costs associated with the quinquennial breeding bird survey for Cannock Chase this has now reduced by £1,645 to £4,591.
6. The individual projects, totalling £100,546 for the AONB Projects are set out in Appendix 3. This includes the re-allocation of funds from the SDF of £4,591, additional DEFRA funding of £66,435 for Access for All projects and additional funding from the SAC Partnership of £10,000 towards the cost of the awareness programme for young people. AONB projects are currently forecast to overspend by £4,370 which it is

currently assumed will be funded from the forecast underspend against the core budget.

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

7. 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.
8. 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 £226,764 which will result in an underspend against the grant of £62,856 which will have to be repaid.

### **Reserve**

9. The balance on the Cannock Chase AONB Reserve currently stands at £68,296 for 2022/23. A summary of the Reserve is attached as Appendix 5.
10. 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.
11. These priorities are reviewed annually in December of each year.
12. It is anticipated that the balance on this reserve at the end of 2022/23 will be £68,296.

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

13. At December Joint Committee, members were informed about pressures on the revenue budget for 2023/24, and presented with estimated budget options to meet the funding shortfall (4% and 2% uplifts). Members resolved to assume a 4% increase on salaries for inflationary uplift and to take the whole of the funding shortfall from the AONB Reserves.
14. The actual budget shortfall for 2023/24 is larger than estimated in December, and stands at £15,750. In accordance with the resolution, for the moment this sum will be met out of the AONB Reserves in order to balance the budget. However, as members are aware, imminent staffing changes within the AONB Team allows the opportunity to review staff costs and minor modifications are being explored with a view to balancing the budget. Proposals will be brought to funding partners in the coming weeks for consideration and outcomes, and a revised budget, will be reported at the next meeting of the committee.

15. For members' information, the current level of AONB Reserves is sufficient to meet current priorities and anticipated needs in relation to core funding, though this will be reviewed in light of forthcoming changes to staffing arrangements.

### **Equalities Implications**

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

### **Legal Implications**

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

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

18. 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**

19. 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**

20. 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) That the update on the net revenue budget for 2023/24 is noted.
  - (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	132,272	161,570	-11,100
Training Expenses	1,510	-180	135	-1,375
Travel and Subsistence	700	825	825	125
<b>Staff and Associated Costs</b>	<b>174,880</b>	<b>132,917</b>	<b>162,530</b>	<b>-12,350</b>
Office Equipment	1,400	2,420	2,660	1,260
Annual Audit	0	0	0	0
Volunteer Costs	500	78	100	-400
National Liaison	3,160	2,789	2,789	-371
Print & Publicity	4,140	11,100	11,231	7,091
AONB Website	0	0	0	0
Annual Conference	2,000	300	1,735	-265
Core Activity (including monitoring, community involvement, etc)	1,720	1,597	2,385	665
Partnership Running Costs	9,000	9,000	9,000	0
<b>Core Budget Subtotal</b>	<b>196,800</b>	<b>160,201</b>	<b>192,430</b>	<b>-4,370</b>
<b>Sustainable Development Fund</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>5,409</b>	<b>-4,591</b>
<b>AONB Projects</b>	<b>15,150</b>	<b>18,737</b>	<b>24,111</b>	<b>8,961</b>
<b>SDF/AONB Projects Subtotal</b>	<b>25,150</b>	<b>19,737</b>	<b>29,520</b>	<b>4,370</b>
<b>Total Budget/Initial Forecast Outturn</b>	<b>221,950</b>	<b>179,938</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>179,938</b>	<b>288,385</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Funded By:</b>				
<b>DEFRA Grant</b>				
Core	-147,600	-129,565	-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	-66,435	-66,435	0
<b>DEFRA Grant Subtotal</b>	<b>-239,185</b>	<b>-196,000</b>	<b>-239,185</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Local Authority Contributions</b>				
Lichfield District Council	-2,460	-2,460	-2,460	0
South Staffordshire District Council	-2,460	-2,460	-2,460	0
Cannock Chase District Council	-9,840	-9,840	-9,840	0
Stafford Borough Council	-9,840	-9,840	-9,840	0
Staffordshire County Council	-24,600	-24,600	-24,600	0
<b>Local Authority Contributions Subtotal</b>	<b>-49,200</b>	<b>-49,200</b>	<b>-49,200</b>	<b>0</b>
Sales and Donations	0	-404	-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>-245,604</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	3,809	1,645
Reallocation of funding to AONB Projects	6,236	0	4,591	-1,645
				0
<b>Approved Projects Total</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Admin Fees</b>	1,000	1,000	1,000	0
<b>Currently Unallocated</b>	0	0	0	0
<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	12,500	15,000	10,000
Deer census (phase 2)	2,795	2,795	2,795	0
Small World Consulting	4,908	4,908	4,908	0
Poetry Workshop	500	478	478	-22
Dark Sky Engagement Activities	1,433	556	1,080	-353
Trig Points Structural Assessment and Stabilisation Works	1,500	0	3,500	2,000
Great War Hut - Sign Copyrighting	250	0	0	-250
Access for All Projects	66,435	0	66,435	0
Species at risk for Cannock Chase	0	350	350	350
Contribution to NAAONB Arts Council bid	0	1,000	1,000	1,000
<b>Approved Projects Total</b>	<b>87,821</b>	<b>27,587</b>	<b>100,546</b>	<b>12,725</b>
<b>Original Budget allocated</b>	-15,150	0	-15,150	0
<b>SAC Partnership Contribution to Awareness Programme for Young People</b>	0	0	-10,000	-10,000
<b>Re-allocation of Funds from SDF Projects</b>	-6,236	0	-4,591	1,645
<b>Re-allocation of Funds from Core Budget</b>	0	0	-4,370	-4,370
<b>Additional DEFRA Funding</b>	-66,435	0	-66,435	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-87,821</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-100,546</b>	<b>-12,725</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	14,502	17,417	-7,873
Programme Advice & Guidance	42,993	29,004	34,833	-8,160
Project Spend	221,337	40,124	174,514	-46,823
<b>Total Budget/Initial Forecast Outturn</b>	<b>289,620</b>	<b>83,629</b>	<b>226,764</b>	<b>-62,856</b>
Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant	-289,620	-91,243	-226,764	62,856

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	Transfer To Fund Core Service	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	0	1,000			68,296
2023/2024	68,296									-15,750	52,546
		14,925	840	7,673	27,409	42,744	-38,240	4,504	2,731	-15,750	52,546

## Item 6 **AONB Business Plan 2021-23 end-year review**

**Item for:** (1) Information

(2) Decision

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

**Financial implications:** Business Plan activities are funded through AONB core funding provided by Defra, together with any externally funded programmes

**Recommendations:** That members:

(1) note progress achieved for year 2 of the current Business Plan (2022/23 activities)

(2) note the commitment to prepare a new 2-year Business Plan (2023-25) and approve the indicative priorities, with any amendments

### Background

1. At the meeting of the AONB Joint Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2020 members approved a two year AONB Business Plan for the period 2021-23. This report updates members on progress to deliver year 2 activities of that plan and sets out some indicative priorities for a new Business Plan for 2023-25.
2. Our Business Plan details how the AONB Partnership itself, notably through its dedicated staff team, operates to deliver its contract with Defra and the commitments in our AONB Management Plan 2019-24.

### Progress against Year 2 (2022-23) of the AONB Business Plan

3. The appended Business Plan shows the progress that has been achieved against the actions set out around our five themes - Landscape Character and Planning, Wildlife and Nature, Historic Environment, Experience and Enjoyment, Communities and Business, as well as measures to ensure effective Governance and Communication.
4. Progress against actions at the end of 2022/23 is described and traffic lighted. Our general progress against each of the themes can be gauged from the table below.

Theme	Nos of actions in Business Plan	Green	Amber	Red
Landscape Character and Planning	12	9	2	1
Wildlife and Nature	18	9	8	1
Historic Environment and Culture	5	3	0	2
Experience and Enjoyment	13	8.5	0	4.5
Communities and Business	13	10	0	3
Governance	15	11	2	2
Communications	16	6.5	1	8.5
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>22</b>

5. The picture overall is a favourable one. The majority (62%) of the actions contained in the Business Plan have been delivered or are in progress and on track. A further 13 actions (14%) are in progress but taking slightly longer to deliver than anticipated and will be concluded in the 2023-25 Business Plan. The number of actions that have not been started is down from that reported at the end of year 1 of the Business Plan (from 27 to 22). These have not been started for various reasons (capacity within the Team and wider Partnership, shifting priorities, lack of opportunities, dependent actions not being progressed etc). They will be re-considered for inclusion within the 2023-25 Business Plan, or omitted if they are no longer considered to be required/worthwhile.

### **Scope and priorities for new Business Plan 2023-25**

6. The next Business Plan marks the final one in the cycle to deliver the current Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan (2019-24). As resolved by Joint Committee on 14 July 2022, the review of the Management Plan will be delayed by 12 months until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 in order to allow new guidance and Protected Landscape reforms to be published. The Business Plan will, therefore, cover the two-year period 2023-25.
7. The new Business Plan will be brought for approval to Joint Committee in July. Its scope and priorities will be shaped by the following considerations:
  - The progress we have already made to deliver the policies and Implementation Action Plan in our statutory Management Plan, and what remains to be done
  - Announcement of any Protected Landscape reforms, for example,
    - Targets and outcomes framework
    - Required inputs to the new National Landscapes, Parks and Trails Partnership
    - National Landscapes name change and re-brand
  - Continued delivery of externally funded programmes (Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme and Access for All)
  - Outcomes that deliver against the Government's focus and priorities for Protected Landscapes around:
    - Climate change
    - Nature
    - Access
    - Place
  - Requirements and timetable for the review of the AONB Management Plan 2025-30, including a new State of the AONB report drawing together evidence on the condition of the AONB, and stakeholder engagement.
8. The Business Plan will ensure that the AONB Partnership continues to conserve and enhance Cannock Chase through targeted deployment of financial and staff resources and building on the strong links with local people and groups.
9. It is assumed that AONB core funding comprising 75% from Defra and 25% from constituent local authorities will continue at current levels.



10. Whilst many of the actions identified in the work programme can be delivered within the existing budget and resources of the AONB, additional funding will be required if some are to proceed. Wherever possible, therefore, the AONB will develop actions collaboratively with partners and pool resources where aims are shared and this will lead to mutual benefits. Indicative priorities against the AONB Management Plan themes are set out in the table below.

<b>Management Plan Theme</b>	<b>Indicative priorities for 2023-25</b>
Landscape Character and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of Highways Design Guide</li> <li>• Promotion of Dark Skies</li> <li>• Promotion and delivery of Yr 3 and Yr 4 of the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme</li> </ul>
Wildlife and Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution to 30 by 30 and publication of Nature Recovery Plan</li> <li>• Development of priority species conservation projects</li> <li>• Publication of deer management strategy</li> </ul>
Historic Environment and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of heritage strategy</li> <li>• Improved access and interpretation measures</li> <li>• Condition assessments of non-designated heritage assets</li> </ul>
Experience and Enjoyment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved visitor welcome and experience</li> <li>• Promotion and delivery of Yr 3 of the Access for All Fund</li> <li>• Collaboration with national arts programme</li> </ul>
Communities and Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment and promotion of Cannock Chase Fund for business and voluntary giving</li> <li>• Promotion of Future Guardians of Cannock Chase resource materials</li> <li>• Promotion of Sense of Place toolkit with local businesses</li> </ul>
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving communication within the AONB Partnership</li> <li>• Broadening the AONB's presence in all communication channels</li> <li>• Implementing the Cannock Chase place brand and National Landscapes re-brand</li> </ul>
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the AONB Management Plan 2025-30</li> <li>• Delivery of Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan</li> <li>• Delivery of Climate Change Action Plan</li> </ul>

## Recommendations

11. The Committee is requested to
- (1) note progress achieved for year 2 of the current Business Plan (2022/23 activities)
  - (2) note the commitment to prepare a new 2-year Business Plan (2023-25) and approve the indicative priorities, with any amendments



## **Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

### **Business Plan 2021 - 2023**

#### **Year 2 Work Programme – end-year review**

Ian Marshall

March 2023

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## Work programme




The following table outlines progress achieved against Year 2 of our work programme set out in our latest Business Plan 2021-23.







Actions are arranged by the themes of the AONB Management Plan 2019-24 and referenced against AONB Management Plan policy and action numbers.









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

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

Progress at the end of 2022-23 is described and traffic lighted  = activity COMPLETED or ON TRACK,  = GENERALLY ON TRACK BUT WITH SOME MINOR ISSUES,  = OFF TRACK, activity not able to be completed.



Landscape Character and Planning							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain quality and distinctiveness</li> <li>Enhance the landscape setting</li> </ul>							
Priorities	Action	Key milestones	AONB policy / action Nos.	T&F Group Lead	AONB Team Lead	By when	2022-23 end-point review
Encourage landscape-led development	Monitor the effectiveness of our planning protocol with local planning authorities	Report to Joint Committee	LCP1	LP	LPO	Annually	 Report to Joint Committee in March 2023
	Input landscape advice to planning policy and development management	Responses to consultations	LCP1	LP	LPO	As required	 Between 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 assessed 135 development proposals: recommendations made on 55
	Promote and disseminate AONB Design and Views and Setting guidance amongst elected members, officers and	Training events held	LCP1, A1, A15	LP	LPO	Annually	 Guidance will underpin planning responses and other advice

	developers						
	Represent the AONB in discussions around the Commonwealth Games to ensure that impacts are minimised, and the legacy is maximised	Engagement in meetings. Response to consultations	LCP1	LP	LPO	As required	 Input provided to trail construction, event, and discussions around legacy ongoing
	Provide landscape design input to HS2 enabling works and design development	Responses to consultations	LCP1	LP	LPO	As required	 Input continuing as required
Reduce traffic and highways impacts	Work with SCC Highways to update the AONB Highways Design Guide 2005	Refreshed Design Guide published and distributed to relevant partners and contractors	LCP2, B1	LP	LPO	2021-22, Q2	 Design guide drafted and artwork completed. Paper for Joint Committee approval deferred to July 2023 meeting. Publication and circulation of guidance to follow.
Improve the quality and experience of the night skies	Work with CPRE Staffordshire and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to develop a Dark Skies Project	Project approved  Light pollution assessment undertaken  Good lighting guide produced  Star count undertaken by volunteers	LCP1, LCP9, A1	LP	LPO	2021-22, Q1	 Good lighting guide drafted and to be taken to March 2023 Joint Committee for approval. Publication and circulation of guidance to follow.   The importance of Dark Skies has been promoted in interpretation and awareness-raising projects in Dark Skies week 2023. The AONB supported a star-gazing session with CPRE Staffordshire for Scouts and Brownies on 15 February 2023 and two family friendly dark skies events on 20 and 22 February at Wolseley Bridge run by the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. In total 90 children and their guardians attended.
Protect and enhance views within and from the AONB	Work with statutory undertakers to explore opportunities for undergrounding powerlines in the AONB	Removal of a kilometre of overhead lines at Shugborough Estate to restore the historic character of this iconic Grade I listed park  Further opportunities to	LCP8	LP	LPO	Ongoing	 Possible further schemes have been put forward to Western Power locally for initial consideration and cost estimate, however Western Power's Protected Landscape Group, that selects and approves prospective projects for delivery, has not been convened since before the pandemic.

		be identified					
Encourage and support agricultural land management that contributes to the special qualities of the AONB	Continue to foster links with the farmer network and encourage uptake of Countryside Stewardship following the conclusion of the Environmental Land Management Scheme National Landscapes advocacy project (2020-21), and during the Farming in Protected Landscapes theme of the Government's new farming policy (2021-24)	Network meetings  Funding applications submitted	LCP4, LCP5, A12	LP LM	LPO, LMO	Ongoing	 Administer the FiPL programme to deliver outcomes for nature, access, climate change and place, and report progress to Defra.  Continue to build relationships with farmers and land managers through the delivery of the FiPL programme.  Meetings of the LAP panel held on 3 May, 30 June, 23 Aug, 31 Oct, 1 Feb 2023  In 2022-23, 17 projects have been approved, awarding grants totalling £162,748.72. An underspend of £35,000 has been returned to Defra.
Monitor the condition of the landscape	Support Fixed Point Photography volunteers to monitor 56 key views twice a year, and upload the results onto the AONB website	Photos taken and uploaded	LCP1-10	LP	LPO	Biannually	 Website photos updated in Autumn 2022. HS2 monitoring viewpoints recorded Autumn 2022 to be included in the project during 2023
	Hold an interim review with volunteers	Review meeting held	LCP1-10	LP	LPO	Annually	 Volunteer meeting arranged for March 2023
	Work with partners to prepare landscape visualisations of options for future landscape change	Visualisations prepared.	LCP1-10	LP, LM, HE, VM	LPO, DO, LMO	2021-22, Q2	 New monitoring locations from National Trust woodpasture restoration project agreed for inclusion as part of a Fixed Point Photography. Baseline views and location information still to be recorded.
<b>Wildlife and Nature</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve conditions for nature</li> <li>• Enlarge and connect habitats</li> </ul>							
<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key milestones</b>	<b>AONB policy / action Nos.</b>	<b>T&amp;F Group Lead</b>	<b>AONB Team Lead</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>2022-23 end-point review</b>
Nature recovery	Prepare nature recovery plan for AONB	Plan agreed	WN9,	LM	LMO,	2022-23, Q4	 Awaiting lead from Staffordshire County












	working with SCC and SWT		A13		DO		Council so that plan will be prepared in line with emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Work in preparation to identify priority conservation species. Will be completed in the next Business Plan.
Priority habitat recovery (woodland)	Work with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and landowners to deliver recommended conservation measures arising from assessment of woodland County Wildlife Sites carried out in 2020-21	All landowners advised, and conservation measures implemented	WN2, A2	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q3	😊 Woodland owners are being made aware of opportunities for funding through FiPL programme
Priority habitat recovery (wood pasture)	Work with Natural England, partners and landowners to deliver Midlands Heathland Heartland Initiative (Project 1 Wood pasturescape)	Delivery programmes underway	WN8, WN9, B7, A13	LM	LMO, LPO, DO	Ongoing	😐 Input to National National Trust Shugborough Woodpasture project continuing as required. Project having to be modified due to felling licence consideration.
Priority habitat recovery (heathland)	Work with Natural England, partners and landowners to deliver Midlands Heathland Heartland Initiative (including project 2 Public Forest Estate Land Exchange)	Delivery programmes underway	WN8, WN9, B7, A13	LM	LMO, LPO, DO	Ongoing	😞 On hold. Looking at the contribution Cannock Chase Forest could make to 30 by 30.
	Monitor delivery of habitat and access improvements on Gentleshaw Common SSSI through the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative	Receipt of monitoring reports	WN3, A2	LM	LMO	Ongoing	😊 2020-21 monitoring reports received from SWT and project on-track.
	Work with landowners and Natural England to reintroduce livestock grazing to key sites, promoting the reasons and benefits to local communities	Grazing reintroduced at key sites, including Connecting Cannock Chase corridors	WN3, B4	LM	DO, LMO, LPO	Ongoing	😐 Lease between Forestry England and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust for reinstatement of management of Connecting Cannock Chase corridors under discussion.  😊 Continuation of Staffordshire County Council grazing trial at Moors Gorse.
Priority habitat recovery (wetlands)	Develop and implement wetland restoration programme including Cannock Chase springs audit, peatland inventory, Sher Brook restoration	Programme developed and funded.	WN2, WN4, A2	LM	LMO	2022-23, Q4	😊 Natural England is carrying out hydrological monitoring in the Sher Brook valley to monitor water levels over the next two years.

	programme, Sher Brook hydrological monitoring						
Priority habitat recovery (grasslands)	Develop and implement grassland inventory	Preparation of inventory identifying all remaining unimproved grasslands	WN2, A2	LM	LMO	2022-23, Q4	☹️ Scope of inventory under discussion with Natural England and Staffordshire Ecological Record. Activity to continue in 2023-24.
Priority species recovery	Support the West Midland Bird Club to carry out the 2022 Cannock Chase Bird Survey	Publication of quinquennial bird survey	WN2, A2	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q4	😊 Survey published and circulated with the support of the Sustainable Development Fund
	Work with partners and landowners to deliver recommended conservation improvements arising from past surveys and audits for:  Crayfish Bats Invertebrate groups Nightjars Long-eared owls	All landowners advised, and conservation measures implemented	WN2, A2	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q4	😊 Follow-up audio survey of long-eared owls underway. So far, SWT has carried out 1.3km of habitat enhancements for crayfish. Crayfish reintroductions are being planned for Sherbrook and Oldacre Valleys. Natural England Field Unit scheduled to carry out surveys of some invertebrate groups on the Chase. Meetings to be held with landowners and land managers to take forward recommendations from the Nightjar report. For example, Forestry England has adapted its tree felling operations from strip felling to clear felling to provide more suitable habitat for nightjars
	Develop and implement Adder audit and survey	Publication of survey findings	WN2, A2	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q4	☹️ Centre for Ecology and Hydrology have agreed to model the Chase landscape for adders. Reptile seminar planned for Chase land managers. Activities to be completed in 2023-24.
	Develop and implement key invertebrate surveys	Publication of survey findings	WN2, A2	LM	LMO	2022-23, Q4	☹️ Identify requirements for surveys for 2023/24
	Development and implement early successional species survey	Publication of survey findings	WN2, A2	LM	LMO	2022-23, Q4	☹️ Identify requirements for surveys for 2023/24
	Work with Woodland Trust and volunteers to improve our knowledge	Veteran tree records	WN2, A2	LM, LP, HE	LMO, LPO	From 2021-22	😊 On 18 October the Woodland Trust, Cannock

	and understanding of veteran trees						Chase AONB and Forestry England held a training day for 18 volunteers to record trees to the Ancient Tree Inventory. A further training day is planned for Autumn 2023.
Balance the needs of a healthy deer population, with habitats, property owners and the public	Work with landowners to prepare a deer management strategy and action plan	Publication of deer management strategy and action plan	WN6, B5	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q2	 Two thermal imaging deer censuses, one before breeding and one after, and deer activity and impact assessment study completed.  Continuing to work with Deer Management Strategy Group to develop scope of deer management plan for Cannock Chase, informed by findings of deer activity and deer surveys.
Control invasive species	Prepare an audit of invasive weeds, pests and diseases	Audit completed	WN5, B6	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q3	 Invasive species list provided by Staffordshire Ecological Record. Partners to update records of priority invasive species in 2023/24.
	Share information with landowners to inform land management decisions and support development of collaborative approaches	Information shared	WN5, B6	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q4	 Promote opportunities for control of invasive species through FiPL funding
Raise awareness and appreciation of Local Geological Sites	Work with partners and landowners to deliver recommended conservation measures arising from assessment of Local Geological sites carried out in 2020-21	All landowners advised, and conservation measures implemented	WN7, B19	LM	LMO	2021-22, Q2	 Assessment reported to Land Management Group  Recommendations for any conservation measures discussed with landowners, utilising FiPL funding
<b>Historic Environment and Culture</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve the Chase's historic environment</li> <li>• Connect communities with the Chase's history and culture</li> </ul>							
<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key milestones</b>	<b>AONB policy / action Nos.</b>	<b>T&amp;F Group Lead</b>	<b>AONB Team Lead</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>2022-23 end-point review</b>
Improve the condition of	Work with landowners and Historic England to develop and implement	All landowners advised, and	HC2, B17	HE	LMO	From 2021-22	 Conclusion of draft strategy carried over into 2023-25 Business Plan.



heritage assets	conservation and enhancement measures arising from the Chase Through Time strategy (2020)	conservation measures implemented					
	Work with landowners to consolidate surviving OS trig points	Trig points consolidated	HC2, B17	HE	LMO	2021-22, Q4	😊 Conservation works at 3 trig points agreed with landowners and delivered with AONB funding during March 2023.
Raise awareness and understanding of the Chase's history and culture	Work with landowners, Historic England and visitor centres/hubs/attractions to celebrate the AONB's cultural heritage through improved access and interpretation measures arising from the Chase Through Time strategy (2020)	Funding secured and measures implemented	HC3, B9	HE	LMO	From 2021-22	😞 Progress pending conclusion of Heritage Strategy and carried over into 2023-25 Business Plan
Monitor the condition of the historic environment	Work with Historic England to support, co-ordinate volunteer activity to locate and assess the condition of the 7 Scheduled Monuments in the AONB	Number of monuments assessed  Recommended management actions communicated to landowners	HC1, B16	HE	LMO	Ongoing	😊 Condition Surveys have been carried out on 6 of the 7 Scheduled Monuments. (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). Scrub clearance work (funded through FiPL) is being carried out at Castle Ring to enable a more detailed condition survey. The condition assessment of Essex Bridge is planned for March so that should complete the condition assessments of all the Scheduled Monuments.
	Work with the National Trust to support, co-ordinate volunteer activity to locate and assess the condition of priority non-designated heritage assets in the AONB	Number of heritage assets assessed  Recommended management actions communicated to landowners	HC1, A14	HE	LMO	Ongoing	😊 Volunteers (Chase Through Time and National Trust) have had refresher training from the National Trust and have commenced condition surveys on the non-designated heritage assets. These are currently focussed within the Shugborough Estate.
<b>Experience and enjoyment</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treading lightly in the Chase</li> </ul>							

• A greener experience							2022-23 end-point review
Priorities	Action	Key milestones	AONB policy / action Nos.	T&F Group Lead	AONB Team Lead	By when	
Connect people with the landscape, heritage and wildlife of Cannock Chase	Organise and run an annual Cannock Chase Walk and Ride Festival	Festival held	EE3, EE5	VM	DO, CO	Annually	 Activity cancelled for 2022. Reconsider need/benefits for next Business Plan 2023-25.
	Work with the Ramblers and SAC Partnership to review and refresh AONB promoted walking routes (X9)	Leaflets re-published	EE4, EE5	VM	DO	2021-22, Q4	 6 walking routes agreed as part of new Walking Cannock Chase programme. Minor amendments to be sorted out. Publication and circulation carried over into 2023-25 Business Plan
	Work with the British Horse Society to review and refresh AONB promoted horse riding routes (X2)	Leaflets re-published	EE4, EE5	VM	DO	2021-22, Q4	 Condition assessment of bridleways on Cannock Chase carried out by Staffordshire County Council.  Refresh of AONB horse-riding leaflets carried over into 2023-25 Business Plan.
	Prepare and publish with partners Explore Cannock Chase leaflet	Leaflet published	EE4, EE5	VM	DO, CO	2021-22, Q2	 Welcome leaflet published and distributed.  Leaflets handed out to visitors at Commonwealth Games mountain biking event held on 3 Aug.
	Work with SCC and SAC Partnership to refresh RAF Hednesford Interpretation panels, leaflet and digital information	Panels and leaflets refreshed and installed	EE4, EE5	VM	DO	2021-22, Q4	 5 panels installed at RAF Hednesford.  2 panels installed at Brindley Heath  Trail leaflets for RAF Hednesford, Brindley Heath and Milford Common published and distributed  8 interpretation boards installed within Milford Information Hut  Refreshed interpretation panel at Great War










							Hut in preparation.
	Develop and distribute audio-visual presentation	Presentation produced and used in key locations	EE4, EE5	VM	DO	2021-22, Q4	😊 First iteration of video produced July 2022 and posted on AONB website.
	Develop and distribute through retail an AONB souvenir guidebook	Guidebook published and for sale in retail outlets	EE4, EE5	VM	DO	2021-22, Q4	😊 Cannock Chase Guide published and distributed. 😊 Guide handed out to visitors at Commonwealth Games mountain biking event held on 3 Aug.
Encourage visitors to Cannock Chase to travel more sustainably	Utilising the Cannock Chase place brand design work with train operators, local councils and SAC Partnership to install artwork for totems and posters located at train stations, introducing visitors to the AONB and the network of trails for walkers and cyclists from each station (Stafford, Rugeley, Hednesford and Cannock)	Totems installed	EE6, B12	VM	DO	Ongoing	😞 The opportunity has been raised with partners, but not taken up. Activity carried over into 2023-25 Business Plan.
Improve the visitor experience of Cannock Chase	Support the SAC Partnership to implement car park and site user implementation plans including improvements to car parks, interpretation provision, highways infrastructure such as welcome and gateway signage, reducing sign-clutter, and improvements to the roadside environment	Improvements implemented	EE1, EE4, A10	VM	DO, LPO, CO	As required	😊 Input and joint working with SAC Partnership continuing as required 😊 The use of the Cannock Chase code is promoted as opportunities arise
	Review the draft AONB Interpretation Strategy (draft 2016-2021), and finalise	Strategy reviewed and published	EE4, A8	VM	DO, CO	2021-22, Q2	😞 Review to be discussed with Visitor Management group and carried over into 2023-25 Business Plan
Connect people to nature and landscape	Adopt the National AONB Arts strategy and develop a local action plan in partnership with local art groups and	Strategy adopted. Local Action Plan	EE5	VM	DO	2021-22	😊 Continue input to 'Local Cultural Place Makers, Global Change Makers' local arts




through the arts	artists	adopted					programme with young people. Outputs delivered include: Digital Discoveries, Eco-trails on Hednesford Hill, 'Small change, Big Difference' with high schools; Heritage Trail stories  😊 Poetry workshop on Cannock Chase held to coincide with National Poetry Day 6 October  😊 Support provided to NAAONB for nationally significant project art bid to Arts Council England
	Prepare and publish an anthology of poetry inspired by Cannock Chase	Anthology published	EE5	VM	DO	2021-22	😞 Reconsider needs/benefits in 2023-25 Business Plan.
	Organise poetry walks and workshops with Staffordshire Poet Laureate	Walks and workshops held	EE5	VM	DO	Annually	😊 Poetry workshop on Cannock Chase held to coincide with National Poetry Day 6 October

### Communities and Business

- Natural benefits for the community
- Supporting the special qualities





Priorities	Action	Key milestones	AONB policy / action Nos.	T&F Group Lead	AONB Team Lead	By when	2022-23 end-point review
Strengthen our volunteer base	Draft a volunteer policy, ensuring that we are compliant with all appropriate H&S, and equality and diversity legislation	Policy published	CB3, A6	AONB Unit	LMO	2021-22, Q1	😊 Ongoing input given to development of Rural County Volunteer Strategy.
	Provide ongoing support to volunteers engaged with Great War Hut, Fixed Point Photography, and Historic Environment surveys	Training and social sessions.	CB3, A6	AONB Unit	LMO	Ongoing	😊 Support for volunteers continuing as required. 😊 Support given to the establishment of a new volunteer group to provide visitor welcome at Milford Information Hut.
	Identify additional volunteer roles and recruit	Roles identified and volunteers	CB3, A6	AONB Unit	LMO, DO,	As required	😞 Discuss with landowners need for new











		recruited			LPO		Visitor Support Volunteer role, and set up if consensus agreed in next Business Plan 2023-25
Promote volunteering opportunities across the Chase	Support and engage with Cannock Chase Council Chase Up! Green Volunteer Network	Volunteers signposted to Chase Up!	CB3, A6	AONB Unit	LMO, DO, LPO, CO	Ongoing	 Continue to signpost enquiries through the Green Volunteer Network.  Where appropriate, volunteer enquiries are also directed to SCC, NT, SWT and FE
Inspire young people to appreciate and look after Cannock Chase	Develop a resources pack to be used in schools and libraries, based on the Cannock Chase Code	Resources pack published	CB1, B20	AONB Unit	DO	2022-23	 Future Guardians resource materials being finalised with user groups (Libraries, DofE, Staffordshire Scouts, Girlguiding Staffordshire)
	Explore with outdoor education providers the scope for providing every child in Staffordshire to experience a 'night under the stars'	Outdoor education providers contacted	CB1, B20	AONB Unit	DO	2022-23	 The potential has been explored, but no opportunities have arisen.
	Improve links with Duke of Edinburgh, Scouts and Guides, and outdoor activity and education providers, and develop informatives about the value of the AONB	Informatives produced	CB1, B20	AONB Unit	DO	2021-22, Q4	 Future Guardians resource materials being finalised with user groups (Libraries, DofE, Staffordshire Scouts, Girlguiding Staffordshire)
Raise awareness and understanding of Cannock Chase and the AONB	Publicise Cannock Chase e-learning training courses with key audiences (volunteers, public bodies and businesses), and seek use as part of staff induction	Number of participants completing the course	CB1, CB2, B11	VM	DO, CO	Ongoing	 Revisit the needs/benefits of the e-learning courses for inclusion in 2023-25 Business Plan
Build more sustainable and empowering relationships with local businesses by improving their awareness of Cannock Chase and embedding the AONB in their products, services and ethos.	Invite all known businesses on and in close proximity to Cannock Chase to register to use the sense of place toolkit	Businesses registered	CB4	AONB Unit	CO	2021-22, Q1	 Toolkit is being promoted as opportunities arise.
	Support registered businesses	Businesses supported	CB4	AONB Unit	CO	Ongoing	 Toolkit is being promoted as opportunities arise.
	Encourage businesses to apply for the Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark award	Businesses signposted to SEQM	CB4, B14	AONB Unit	CO	Ongoing	 Toolkit is being promoted as opportunities arise.








We will reach out and connect to all parts of society, especially those who currently fail to benefit from Cannock Chase.	Prepare a targeted plan to spread our key messages to 'missing audiences'	Study commissioned	CB2	AONB Unit	DO, CO	April 2022	 Diversity and Inclusion study concluded and presented to Dec 22 Joint Committee with 6 point action plan to take forward   Year 1 of the Access for All Fund projects include: Cannock Chase accessibility audit and guide; Field Studies Council guide to Cannock Chase; purchase of inclusive and adaptive bikes; informative trail videos; 95 metres resurfacing works for disabled trail; interpretation panel at Great War Hut, improved waymarking of AONB promoted routes
	Promote the AONB Sustainable Development Fund, support applications where required and coordinate funding panel; management of claims etc.	Applications supported, and grant fully committed	CB2	AONB Unit	LMO	Call for EOI biannual	 2 grant awards totalling £4,409 have been awarded in 2022-23

**Governance**








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

Priorities	Action	Key milestones	AONB policy / action Nos.	T&F Group Lead	AONB Team Lead	By when	2022-23 end-point review
Support effective governance and management of the AONB Partnership	Organise and support meetings of the Joint Committee	Minimum of 3 meetings each year (March, July (AGM) and December)	All	AONB Unit	DO	March, July, Dec	 Meetings held on 14 July 2022, 8 Dec 2022 and 22 March 2023.  Cannock Chase members tour scheduled for October 2022 cancelled
	Organise and support meetings of the Officers Working Group	Minimum of 3 meetings each year (March, July and December)	All	AONB Unit	DO	March, July, Dec	 Meetings held on 29 June 2022 and 26 Oct 2022
	Organise and support meetings of Task and Finish Groups, currently:	Meetings held as and when	All	AONB Unit	AONB Unit	As required	 No key issues to warrant a meeting of the Landscape and Planning Group 2022/23


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape &amp; Planning</li> <li>• Land Management</li> <li>• Historic Environment</li> <li>• Visitor Management</li> </ul>	required					 Meetings of the Land Management Group held on 15 June and 18 August 2022   No key issues to warrant a meeting of the Historic Environment Group 2022/23   Meetings of the Visitor Management Group held on 15 December 2022
	Provide an annual report for the Joint Committee on progress of the Business Plan	Progress reported annually (Q4) against the Business Plan	All	AONB Unit	DO, CO	Q4 annually	 Report presented to Joint Committee on 14 July 2022.
	Submit regular claims to Defra for core grant	Interim claim (75%) submitted September Final claim (25%) submitted March	All	AONB Unit	DO	Q2 and Q4 annually	 Mid-year (Sept 2022) and end-year (Mar 2023) claims submitted
	Maintain and update risk register	Register updated	All	AONB Unit	DO	Annually	 Prepare for July 2023 Joint Committee
Raise the profile of the AONB and articulate the value of what we do	Organise and run the Annual AONB Conference	Annual conference held	CB2, A7	AONB Unit	DO, CO		 AONB Annual Conference held 8 March 2023
	Produce an annual report on AONB activity, showcasing the positive outcomes from AONB Partnership work	Annual report published	All	AONB Unit	DO, CO	Q2 annually	 2021-22 Annual Review approved by Joint Committee and published in July 2022.
	Report to the NAAONB performance statistics for Cannock Chase AONB against key metrics	Annual performance statistics returned by August each year	All	AONB Unit	DO	August annually	 Performance statistics for 2021-22 submitted to NAAONB in January 2023
Play an active role in national AONB family activity	Contribute to the activities of the NAAONB including annual conference, AONB Chairmen's conference, AONB Lead Officer and Lead Comms Officer meetings as appropriate	Attendance at meetings	All	AONB Unit	AONB Unit	As required	 Team attended NAAONB annual conference 12-15 September 2022.   Participated in AONB Lead Officer meetings

							held on 24 May, 14 June, 26 July, 6 Sept 2022, 18 Oct 2022, 29 Nov 2022, 25 Jan 2023,  Attended AONB Chair conference 18 Nov 2022  Attended AONB Comms Officer meetings 9 <sup>th</sup> and 29 <sup>th</sup> Nov, 14 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2022
	Contribute to the Climate change Collaborative Programme	As required	All	AONB Unit	DO	As required	 Findings of carbon baseline study for Cannock Chase AONB prepared and reported to Joint Committee (Dec 2022) with 6 point Action Plan
Develop our relationship with regional protected landscapes	Attend meetings of the West Midlands Protected Landscapes Group	Attendance at meetings	All	AONB Unit	AONB Unit	As and when required	 No regional meetings have taken place.
Raise resources	Establish the Cannock Chase Foundation (charitable incorporated organisation) to support AONB delivery	Agreed constitution.  Agreed MoU with AONB Partnership.  Establishment of CIO.  Recruitment and appointment of Trustees	CB1, A4	AONB Unit	DO	Pending the Government's response to the review of Designated Landscapes	 Discussions underway with Staffordshire Community Foundation to establish Cannock Chase Charitable Fund.
Respond to the Government's recommendations of the Designated Landscape Review	Adopt and implement recommendations from the Glover Review and encourage implementation of actions led by others	Recommendations implemented	All	AONB Unit	DO	As required	 Bring report to the Joint Committee once the Government has prepared its final Response to the Landscapes Review.
Prepare for the update of the	Set out a timetable and resource provision for an updated State of the	Timetable agreed.	All	AONB Unit	DO	2022-23, Q4	 Joint Committee (14 July) agreed to defer



AONB Management Plan	AONB report 2023 and updated AONB Management Plan 2024-2029	Budgetary provision agreed					preparation of review by 12 months to allow for publication of new management plan guidance. Activity carried over into 2023-25 Business Plan
<b>Communication</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising profile – telling others what we do and why we do it</li> <li>Inspiring people to look after Cannock Chase through greater awareness and understanding</li> </ul>							
<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key milestones</b>	<b>AONB policy / action Nos.</b>	<b>T&amp;F Group Lead</b>	<b>AONB Team Lead</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>2022-23 end-point review</b>
Implement the Cannock Chase place brand	Apply the identity to websites, social media, posters and other publicity, signage and interpretation	Place brand adopted	CB1, CB2	VM	CO	Ongoing	 Continue to seek opportunities to promote the place brand in all our work
	Encourage visitor centres/hubs/attractions to use the Cannock Chase place brand and communicate consistent messaging about the special qualities of the nationally important landscape	Place brand promoted at all sites	CB1, CB2	VM	CO	Ongoing from 2021-22	 More work required to seek opportunities to incorporate the place brand at visitor centres / hubs
	Provide targeted training for front of house staff at visitor centres/hubs	Training sessions held	CB1, CB2	VM	CO	2021-22, Q2	 Visitor Centre Group has not met to discuss and agree any requirements
	Develop promotional merchandise to disseminate the place brand	Merchandise produced and sold in retail outlets	CB1, CB2	VM	CO	2021-22, Q4	 Discuss with Visitor Management group and Visitor Centre group and, if consensus, take forward in 2023-25 Business Plan
Sustain regular communication channels to all partners within the AONB Partnership and with our key stakeholders	Keep partners and subscribers updated with news, events and activities through our newsletter	Minimum 4 newsletters published each year	CB2	AONB Unit	CO	Ongoing	 Newsletters published on 4 July, 25 July, 1 Aug 2022, 29 Nov 2022, 31 Jan 2023  1,847 subscribers in Jan 2023 (open rate of 49%), up from 1,592 subscribers on 16 Sept 2022, and 1,400 on 20 Sept 2021)
	Review the effectiveness of our newsletter and gauge how well our objectives have been understood	Survey undertaken	CB2	AONB Unit	CO	July 2021	 Survey deferred to 2023-24

	Keep partners informed about one another's activities	Partnership bulletin	CB2	AONB Unit	CO	Ongoing	 First bulletin published February 2023
Engage with the online community	Post on our social media channels at least once every two weeks	Minimum 2 posts each week	CB2	AONB Unit	CO	Ongoing	 Reactivation of social media channels deferred to 2023-24 pending announcement of National Landscapes branding.
	Using our Cannock Chase network, we will encourage our partners to share our social media posts on their pages to increase its reach.	Social media posts shared	CB2	AONB Unit	CO	Ongoing	 Reactivation of social media channels deferred to 2023-24 pending announcement of National Landscapes branding.
Raise awareness of Cannock Chase and the benefits it provides through co-ordinated public awareness campaigns across our partnership network	Work with our partners to deliver a calendar of awareness campaigns to share co-ordinated messages on our social media platforms, websites and other appropriate platforms, including Landscapes 4 Life week	Minimum 6 campaigns each year	CB2	VM	CO	Annually	 Calendar of promotional events for 2023-24 prepared
	Support Forestry England and other landowners to promote the Ride with Respect campaign	Campaign launched	CB2	VM	CO	As required	 Ongoing support being provided as requested.
Maintain the AONB website as the focus for information about the AONB and the work of the AONB Partnership	Keep the AONB website up to date, and aim to post news items at least once every two weeks	Minimum of one news item posted every two weeks	CB2	AONB Unit	CO	Ongoing	 The AONB website has undergone a refresh in the Cannock Chase place brand.  Posting of news items is not meeting the target.
	Using our Cannock Chase network, we will encourage our partners to share news items on their websites to increase their reach	News items shared	CB2	VM	CO	Ongoing	 Requirements to be discussed and agreed with Visitor Management group and Visitor Centre group in 2023/24
Gain local press and media coverage to raise awareness of Cannock chase and the importance of protecting and conserving it	Work across the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership, SAC Partnership and Visitor Centres/hubs to find stories that we can develop into press and media releases on a bi-monthly basis.	Release 6 media stories annually	CB2	VM	CO	Ongoing	 Requirements to be discussed and agreed with Visitor Management group and Visitor Centre group in 2023/24
	Update these stories on our website and ask our partners to share the press release with their contacts in the media	Media releases shared	CB2	VM	CO	Ongoing	 Requirements to be discussed and agreed with Visitor Management group and Visitor Centre group in 2023/24

<p>Raise Cannock Chase AONB's profile nationally, and work with the National Association for AONBs and AONB family to shape the national agenda and drive forward our collective ambition for designated landscapes</p>	<p>With the National Association for AONB's and the AONB family, we will contribute towards national press, research, papers and advocacy to promote Cannock Chase and help deliver the outcomes of the Glover Review.</p>	<p>Number of outcomes</p>	<p>CB2</p>	<p>AONB Unit</p>	<p>CO</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p> Continue to input as requested</p>
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## **Item 7                                 Dark Skies Project – AONB Good Lighting Guide**

**Item for:** Information and Decision

**Author:** Julia Banbury, AONB Landscape Planning Officer

**Financial implications:** None

**Recommendations:** 1. Members note the delivery of community engagement activities on dark skies.

2. Members approve the Cannock Chase AONB Good Lighting Guide for publication

### **Background**

1. Cannock Chase is the smallest inland AONB, sitting between Stafford 4 km to the northwest, Rugeley directly to the east and Cannock and Burntwood directly to the south. The surrounding conurbations have a significant effect upon tranquillity, spilling light into the darker skies of the AONB. Light spillage from outside the area creates a challenge to the AONB to deliver its core purpose to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the protected area.
2. Members will recall the development of work on Dark Skies in the AONB that has been ongoing since 2020 in partnership with CPRE Staffordshire. This Project aimed to raise awareness and engage with the local community to:
  - better appreciate and enjoy the wonder of dark skies in Cannock Chase AONB
  - better understand the effects of light pollution on human well-being, wildlife and sustainability, and
  - foster a sense of responsibility towards protecting and enhancing dark skies and reducing light pollution in the area.
3. The project proposal included 3 main elements:
  - Community Engagement / Citizen Science Cannock Chase AONB Star Count
  - Dark Skies Survey
  - AONB Good Lighting Guide
4. Progress on some elements of the project were delayed by the pandemic. This included community engagement and the Good Lighting Guide. This report updates the Joint Committee on delivery of community engagement and completion of the AONB Good Lighting Guide.

### **Community Engagement / Citizen Science Cannock Chase AONB Star Count**

5. CPRE nationally promotes Star Count as an annual event and the AONB continues to help promote the event locally on the AONB website.
6. The community engagement element of the project working in partnership with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT), was for family sessions (at Wolseley Bridge) and a pilot Dark Skies school programme (resources plus 3No sessions). These could not

proceed as planned due to the pandemic, and unfortunately, SWT advised that they are currently only able to deliver the family activities, due to staffing. SWT delivered the two bespoke Dark Skies events for families (each for approximately 30 people) on 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> February, as free events supported by the AONB. The events were advertised initially by SWT on their social media channels and proved very popular being fully booked overnight.

7. Activities focussed why light pollution affects creatures that are active at dusk / dawn or at night and showcasing these at The Wolseley Centre; adaptations for seeing / foraging in the dark; discovering basic constellations and ending with a campfire in the outdoor classroom and a look at animal skulls found locally.
8. Staffordshire CPRE also organised a Dark Skies event for Scouts and Brownies which the AONB supported financially. 72 children attended 2 one-hour sessions at Beaudesert Scout and Guide Camp on 15<sup>th</sup> February, where astronomers from Keele University, who had kindly given their time voluntarily, explained about the wonders of the night sky, with an opportunity to observe the constellations through telescopes.
9. All events were co-ordinated to coincide with the few days around the new moon which means that the stars are more visible.
10. Numbers had to be limited for all the events but there is clearly great enthusiasm and interest in the night sky from the local community and a demand for similar events in future.

### **AONB Good Lighting Guide**

11. Originally a piece of work to be commissioned, it was decided that the guide would be prepared in-house. After much research, AONB Officers sought permission from Blackdown Hills AONB to incorporate elements of their published Good Lighting Guide to inform the preparation of a bespoke guide for Cannock Chase AONB. Officers also consulted Bob Mizon of the Commission for Dark Skies during the preparation of the guide.
12. The guide explains that light pollution has the potential to erode and destroy that tranquillity and sense of remoteness. It diminishes the ability to see and understand the dark night skies and beauty of our galaxy. It also has adverse impacts on our health and wellbeing, wildlife behaviour, and wastes resources. Artificial lighting also introduces a suburban feel and can detract from the landscape beauty of the AONB. Evidence is included of the darkness of the skies in and around the AONB, along with the results of the Sky Quality Survey of the AONB, carried out by volunteers in 2021.
13. The purpose of the guide is to raise awareness of dark skies, and to demonstrate how simple changes to the way we light our homes, businesses and neighbourhoods can have big impacts. It provides information and advice to individuals, businesses and decision makers interested in reducing and avoiding light pollution so that we keep Cannock Chase special.

14. A position statement is included in the guide:
- Building on the adopted AONB Management Plan and mindful of the simple improvements that can be made to provide good and adequate lighting without prejudicing dark skies, Cannock Chase AONB Partnership takes the position that all artificial external lighting within its borders, or within the setting of the AONB, should be muted, screened, and the minimum required. Any temporary lighting that may be required for safety at permitted events should be similarly limited to the minimum necessary. The appropriateness of proposals for temporary decorative installations, such as on historic assets, should be carefully considered to avoid impact on dark skies and wildlife.
  - Advice is separated into information for owners and developers, and for local authority decision makers. The aim of the guide is to raise awareness of lighting issues; encourage residents and developers to use less light polluting, more efficient lighting to reduce environmental impacts from light pollution; provide information on good practice and point readers to further information to inform their decisions. Checklists are provided for ease of reference.
15. The guide (Appendix 1) has been prepared in consultation with Staffordshire Highways and partner local authorities.

### **Recommendations**

16. (1) To note the success of the community engagement element of the Dark Skies project
- (2) To approve the Cannock Chase AONB Good Lighting Guide and its publication on the AONB website.

### **Appendix (issued separately)**

Light Pollution and Dark Skies in Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: A Good Lighting Guide

## **Item 8**                                **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 November 2022 and March 2023, the Landscape Planning Officer reviewed 48 planning applications of which 1 related to a major application (Reserved Matters). Representations and comments were made on 22 applications. 4 consultations related to amended applications in response to previous objections. 26 applications did not need a full response as there were no concerns to raise. The AONB also responded to two local plan consultations.
2.        The table below indicates applications reported on previously that have now been decided, and consultations from where an objection was made, along with the outcomes to date. Full responses are available from the AONB Landscape Planning Officer.

### **Recommendations**

3.        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
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	Approve 15.11.22  Condition re materials
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	Application withdrawn
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
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	Conditional objection	05.09.22	Awaiting decision



		repairs & maintenance and to include a DVSA for MOT test centre for light vehicles up to 6500kg			
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
Stafford	22/36536/OUT	Land off Old Croft Lane Walton on the Hill  Residential Development 40 dwellings Outline	Objection	07.11.22	Awaiting decision
Stafford		Stafford Borough Plan 2020 – 2040 Preferred Options consultation	Allocation of potential site at Brancote for a solar farm, could impact on the setting of the AONB. Consideration of potential impacts requested prior to setting in policy	08.12.22	
South Staffs		Local Plan Review, Plan Publication	Land at Weeping Cross – reduction in site area noted. In view of potential impacts on the AONB, request a requirement for a Development Brief / Master Plan for the site setting out key requirements for design. This should include requirements for:  Wooded buffer alongside the A34 retained, protected and enhanced.  Dwellings with higher elevations located on the lower parts of the site and away from the south and southeast parts of the site  A vegetated buffer including tree and hedge planting on the site’s southern	19.12.22	

			<p>boundary to filter views of development.</p> <p>Sensitive approach to lighting to minimise light spillage to help conserve the darker skies of the AONB and reduce impacts on wildlife.</p>		
Stafford	22/35971/HOU	The Ferns, 6 Broc Hill Way Brocton Triple bay detached garage	Request for lighting condition, advice provided.	23.11.22	
Cannock	CH/22/0408	7 Park Gate Road, Cannock Wood 2 storey side extension and single rear	Protection of roadside hedge requested  Objection withdrawn after further detail	15.12.22  01.02.23	
Stafford	22/36890/PTEL Prior approval Notification	Shugborough Estate Car park  1No. 15m Alpha7-18 pole, 1No. Tri-Sector. antennas, 2No. 0.3m dishes and 3No. ground-based equipment and ancillary development	<p>Objection</p> <p>Proposal would introduce urbanising, incongruous, detracting features into the landscape.</p> <p>Shugborough is a key destination in the AONB; the Listed Park and Gardens are integral to the landscape and natural beauty of the AONB. NT is restoring the walled gardens and the Ha-ha as part of their Conservation Management Plan and working to elevate this part of the Estate.</p> <p>The proposed development would be located only 100m from the walled gardens and be open to view by high numbers of visitors, detrimentally affecting appreciation of the historic landscape.</p>	10.01.23	

Lichfield	22/01712/FUH	Bardy Farm Cottage, Bardy Lane Upper Longdon  Extensions	Conditional objection No objection to the proposed alterations to the dwelling. 'garden room' is a concern due to its size and location away from the main dwelling	23.01.23	
Cannock	CH/22/0351	Woodford House, Slitting Mill Road, Slitting Mill  Single storey extension	Conditional objection regarding tree protection, subsequently removed following detail	16.01.23  06.02.23	
Cannock	CH/22/0475	Holly Lodge, 9 Ivy Lane, Cannock Wood Conversion of garage to annex with external alterations	Objection Dominates and unsympathetic to street scene.	19.01.23	Refused 06.02.23
Stafford	22/36536/OUT	Land Adj Old Croft Road, Walton on the Hill  Outline residential	Objection maintained. The proposal would have a detrimental impact on the special qualities and landscape and natural beauty of the AONB. Evidence in the LVA from the AONG is not representative of wider views such as from areas of open heath at higher elevation. The AONB believes effect of development on the AONB has been understated.	25.01.23	
Stafford	23/36953/OHL	Railway Verge West of Shugborough Outdoor Education, Shugborough  New free-standing pole with transformer (National Grid)	Objection	26.01.23	Awaiting decision
Cannock	CH/22/0044	Brereton Former Colliery  Amended application, additional information	Conditional objection No HRA Question the need for 100 lodges. Conditions sought for mitigation for impacts on the SAC and the landscape and	31.01.23	

			natural beauty of the AONB. Recommend limit on the number of lodges, detailed mitigation for impacts on the SAC, detailed landscape proposals and site management. Part of the long term site management should include proposals for visitor engagement and education.		
Lichfield	23/00061/FUH	Southdown, Lower Way, upper Longdon  Extension alterations	Remodelling of the roof substantially increasing the bulk and mass of the first floor and the roof, would dominate street scene and material would be out of character with the village.	09.02.23	
Stafford	23/36949/FUL	Riverside Grange Orchard Lane Wolsley Bridge  Free standing PV's (solar panels)	Clarity sought on ground treatment. Recommend planting to assimilate better into the landscape.	22.02.23	
South Staffs	22/00936/FUL	Land At Littywood Farm Toft Lane, Copenhall  Ground mounted Solar array and infrastructure	AONB Views and Setting Guide indicates effects on views from the AONB would be unlikely. Seek clarity on possible effects due to glare.	23.02.23	
Cannock	CH/23/0055	Wagstaff, Land at corner of Cumberledge Hill and Holly Hill Road, Cannock Wood  Erection of 2 bedroom bungalow and integral garage	Objection Development would detrimentally affect the openness of the Green Belt and detract from the landscape and natural beauty of the AONB,	23.02.23	
Cannock	CH/23/0069	2 Birches Valley, Etchinghill  Single storey rear extension	Conditional objection – colour of render and lighting	22.02.23	

## **Item 9 Cannock Chase Charitable Fund**

**Item for:** Approval

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

**Financial implications:** Setting up and operating a new Charitable Fund would not incur any additional financial burdens on the AONB. A fee to cover the costs of managing the Fund would be charged by the Community Foundation for Staffordshire and Cannock Chase AONB Partnership.

**Recommendations:** To approve the establishment of a Charitable Fund for Cannock Chase between Cannock Chase AONB Partnership and the Community Foundation for Staffordshire

### **Background**

1. In 2017 the former AONB Team with external consultants explored various models to improve the financial sustainability of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership in response to concerns at the time about a possible future reduction in Defra core funding.
2. The preferred option from those investigations to create a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) has not been progressed, and the perceived threat of reduced Defra core funding for AONBs has receded over the intervening years.
3. Whilst the threat to the core funding of AONBs is reduced it is nonetheless prudent to consider ways to broaden our funding base to allow us to support and expand the delivery of AONB activities. Specifically, setting in place a means whereby we can receive donations from those residents, business and visitors who want to invest in Cannock Chase.

### **Proposal for a Cannock Chase Charitable Fund**

4. Given that our needs have changed, a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) is over and above what we now require. Discussions have, therefore, taken place with the Staffordshire Community Foundation for an alternative option that would be less complex and lighter in its administrative burden for the AONB Partnership. The Mendip Hills AONB has set up the [Mendip Hills Fund](#) in partnership with the Somerset Community Foundation, and is an example of the kind of arrangement that better suits our needs. Annually, this brings in c.£15,000 per annum. The money is held by the Somerset Community Foundation who do due diligence on applications. The AONB Team administers the independent panel that make the grant award decisions. The AONB and Community Foundation each take a management fee from the funds to cover the costs of management and administration of the fund.
5. A draft agreement between the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership and the Community Foundation for Staffordshire for a Cannock Chase Charitable Fund is appended, based on the Mendip hills Fund model. This would be signed by Staffordshire County Council on behalf of the AONB Partnership.

## **Key points**

6. The establishment of a Charitable Fund for Cannock Chase would enable us to take advantage of businesses, individuals and visitors who want to invest in the future of the AONB. We would also be able to explore raising (voluntary) contributions on overnight stays, event registration etc.
7. Grants would be given to support community and voluntary groups as well as the non-statutory activities of the Partnership itself that further the aims of the AONB Management Plan.
8. The Community Foundation would manage the application process, deal with enquiries, vet applications and forward to the AONB Partnership those that they believe meet the criteria for funding.
9. An independent Panel would be set up and run by the AONB Team to assess the applications. Initially, it is proposed that this would be the existing panel set up to assess applications to the Sustainable Development Fund (see section below).
10. The Community Foundation would take a management fee to establish and operate the fund (proposed at 9% of the income generated each year). The AONB Partnership would take a management fee to provide the secretariat to the independent panel (proposed at 6% of the income generated each year).
11. The Charitable Fund would supplement the core funding we have available for AONB projects thus enabling us to fund a greater range of activities.

## **Relationship with the AONB Sustainable Development Fund**

12. A Sustainable Development Fund has been operated by Cannock Chase AONB since 2006/07, supporting projects that demonstrate a strong level of support for the AONB and its environment, and the social and economic needs of the local community. The amount within the Fund has diminished over recent years, and currently stands at £10,000.
13. If members agree to the proposed establishment of the new Charitable Fund for Cannock Chase it is proposed to operate this concurrently with the Sustainable Development for a trial period of 2 years so that its viability and success can be gauged. If the new fund is successful, then it is proposed that it would replace the Sustainable Development Fund at the end of the trial period. The budget allocation for the Sustainable Development Fund can then be permanently transferred to AONB projects delivered by the AONB Team.
14. During this trial period it is proposed that the current Sustainable Development Fund panel assesses applications made under both the new Cannock Chase Charitable Fund and Sustainable Development Fund.

## Next steps

15. If members approve the establishment of the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund, the following next steps are proposed:
  - Make any final amendments to the Agreement and agree these with the Staffordshire Community Foundation.
  - Staffordshire County Council (on behalf of the AONB Partnership) and Staffordshire Community Foundation sign the Agreement.
  - The Community Foundation establishes the infrastructure for donations and the grant-application process.
  - Webpages are set up on both the AONB and Community Foundation websites.
  - The new Fund is promoted and launched in September 2023 to coincide with the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the confirmation of the Designation Order of Cannock Chase AONB.

## Recommendations

16. The Committee approves the establishment of a Charitable Fund between Cannock Chase AONB Partnership and the Community Foundation for Staffordshire.

## Appendix 1



# **Cannock Chase Charitable Fund 'Greener Cannock Chase' AGREEMENT (DRAFT)**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This agreement sets out the aim, purposes and details for establishing the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund, a partnership between Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership and the Community Foundation for Staffordshire (Community Foundation).

## **2. AIMS**

- 2.1 Cannock Chase AONB Partnership and the Community Foundation have agreed to work together to establish a Charitable Fund to raise and distribute money for local projects that help to keep Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) special.

2.2 The Cannock Chase Charitable Fund (promoted as ‘Greener Cannock Chase’) will be established from funds raised from voluntary donations from businesses, individuals and visitors wishing to conserve and enhance the special qualities of Cannock Chase, and to benefit local communities and the natural and historic environment. The money generated each year will be used to fund projects, programmes and activities that meet the fund criteria and help to deliver the vision and activities of the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan.

### 3. AREA OF BENEFIT

3.1 The Cannock Chase Charitable Fund will support projects which benefit communities and the environment of the Cannock Chase AONB. The Fund will also consider projects in adjacent areas where benefit to the designated Cannock Chase protected landscape and its communities can be demonstrated.

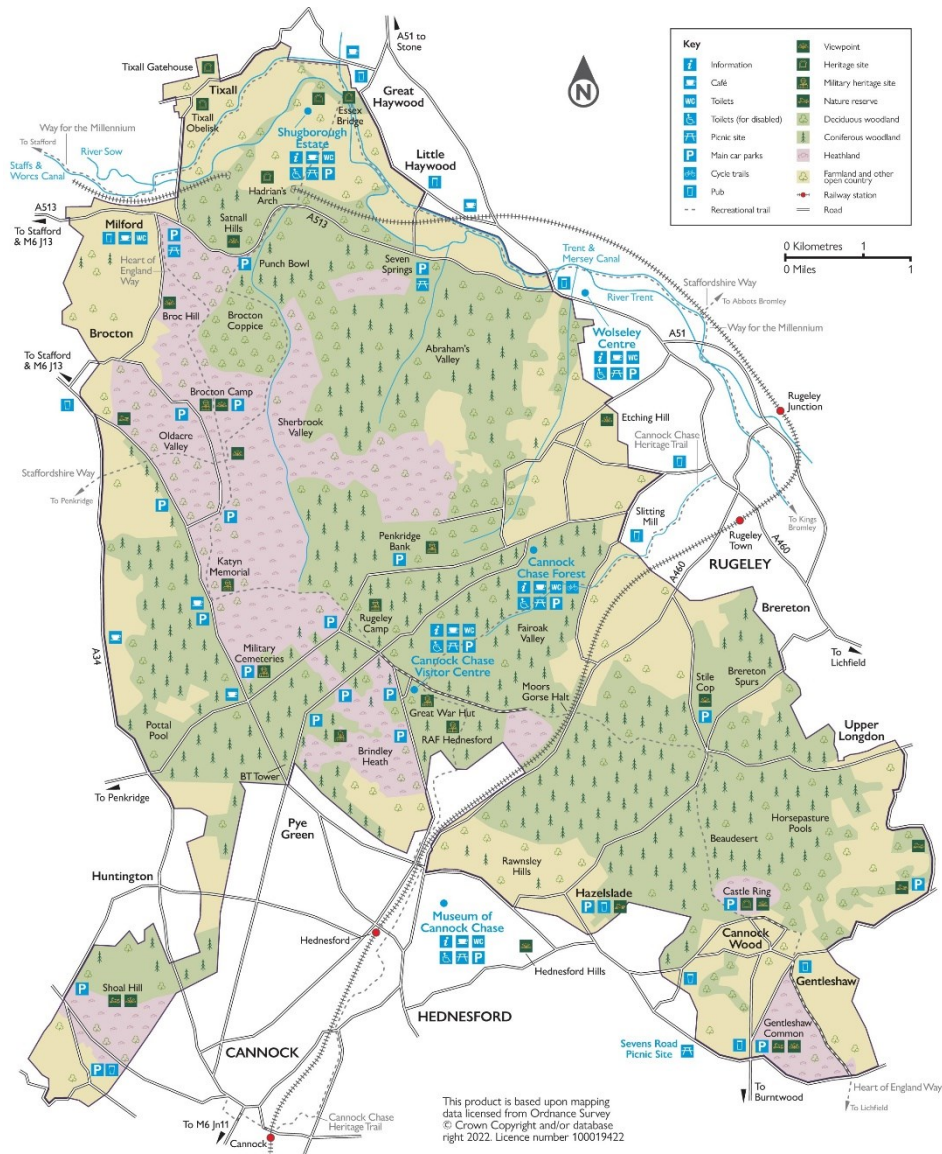


Figure: boundary of Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



## 4. FUND CRITERIA

4.1 Grants will be awarded to support community and voluntary groups as well as the non-statutory activities of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership, including projects, programmes and project staff within the following criteria:

- **Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Cannock Chase AONB**

Activities could include grants to community groups and, in exceptional circumstances, landowners or land managers for:

- Conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (as identified in the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan)
- Maintenance and management of natural features, for example, coppicing, tree and hedgerow planting, pond restoration, grassland and wetland management and heathland conservation
- Restoration of historic features
- Restoration of viewpoints
- Equipment to undertake conservation activities

- **Promote public understanding and enjoyment of the Cannock Chase AONB**

Activities could include grants for:

- Education visits and activities
- Visitor information and interpretation
- Art and cultural activities
- Events and festivals
- Outreach projects, for example, targeting disadvantaged groups

- **Support the social and economic well-being of Cannock Chase AONB**

Activities could include grants to local communities for:

- Sustainable transport schemes
- Enhancing community facilities, for example village halls
- Start up social enterprises, for example, farm shops, local food initiatives
- Community enterprises, for example, village shops, village play schemes

4.2 The Fund particularly welcomes projects that:

- demonstrate innovation or best practice
- link community, economy, culture, and environment
- develop skills and “capacity building” in the community
- involve disabled people, young people or older people
- combat social exclusion and promote diversity
- bring organisations and people together to co-operate in tackling problems or promoting new ideas
- encourage links between rural and urban groups
- lever in contributions from other sources

- have little access to alternative public funding
- add value or new dimensions to existing sustainability projects

4.3 The criteria can be varied at any time in the future by written agreement between the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership and the Staffordshire Community Foundation. For example: to add a further area of special concern or to change a priority.

## **5. FINANCE**

5.1 The Cannock Chase Charitable Fund will build over time from donations and fundraising.

5.2 All or part of a donation may be 1) used to fund a Cannock Chase Charitable Fund managed project, programme or activity or 2) paid out in grants. For either, the express wishes of donors will be taken properly into account, for example, to support specific projects, groups or needs within the area of benefit.

## **6. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

6.1 The Cannock Chase Charitable Fund will be separately identified in the books of the Community Foundation with all funds applied towards the charitable objectives.

6.2 All Cannock Chase Charitable Fund finances are restricted and cannot be used for any purpose/s other than those specified in the fund agreement or by any subsequent variations agreed between the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership and the Community Foundation.

6.3 Grants from the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund or pledges to award future grants will only be made up to the agreed limit of the funds available for distribution. Grants cannot be made or pledged against anticipated income.

6.4 All grant-making procedures will be carried out in the name of 'Cannock Chase Charitable Fund', administered by the Community Foundation'.

6.5 This Agreement will be reviewed annually each February.

6.6 Should the Community Foundation cease to exist any Funds donated by statutory organisations remaining in the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund, after any debts paid, will be returned to the AONB Partnership host organisation to be managed by the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership; any privately donated funds will be transferred to another charity with similar objects to the Community Foundation, with the restrictions remaining in place

6.7 Should the AONB Partnership cease to exist the Community Foundation will continue to manage the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund with the advice of the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund Advisory Panel (or whatever name the Panel advising on Cannock Chase Charitable Fund is known by).

## **7. MANAGEMENT FEE**

7.1 The contribution to Community Foundation's costs in managing the fund will be 9% of the income generated in each year. This covers the initial costs of establishing the infrastructure for donations and the grant application process (web page with on-line form and guidance notes), as well as handling donations and grant processes.

7.3 The contribution to the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership costs in supporting the administration of the fund will be 6% of the income generated each year. This covers the cost of providing the secretariat to the independent Advisory Panel to assess applications.

7.3 The fee charges will be subject to annual review.

## **8. DONATION PROCESS**

8.1 The Community Foundation will set up the platforms for people to be able to make voluntary donations.

## **9. GRANT MAKING PROCESS**

9.1 Grants made from the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund will be consistent with the Community Foundations charitable purposes.

9.2 Applicants will apply to the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund through the Staffordshire Community Foundations grant process and application form.

9.3 The Community Foundation will organise the grant-making process and all the due diligence on grants including the following:

- Receiving and assessing grant applications against the fund criteria agreed with the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership
- Providing support and advice to voluntary and community groups, charities and local residents in making an application
- Directing applicants to other sources of funding as appropriate both within Community Foundation and other external sources
- Presenting grant assessments to the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund Assessment Panel for consideration
- Making grant payments
- Monitoring the results of grants

9.4 Assessed applications will be considered by the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund Assessment Panel after considering any specific wishes from donors. The Cannock Chase AONB Partnership will provide the secretariat to the Panel.

9.5 All grant-making procedures will be carried out in the name of Cannock Chase Charitable Fund, administered by the Community Foundation.

9.6 The Trustees of the Community Foundation for Staffordshire are ultimately accountable for all grants made. The Community Foundation will advise the Panel if they have reason to believe that a grant would not be wisely or safely spent by a recipient and reserves the right not to make a grant requested in this unlikely event or in the circumstances of a request not being consistent with the Community Foundation's charitable purposes.

## **10. CANNOCK CHASE CHARITABLE FUND ADVISORY PANEL**

10.1 The Cannock Chase AONB Partnership will delegate consideration and assessment of applications to a 'Cannock Chase Charitable Fund Advisory Panel'.

10.2 The Cannock Chase Charitable Fund Advisory Panel Terms of Reference are appended

## **11. REPORTING**

11.1 Management accounts will be produced for each of the Joint Committee meetings of the AONB Partnership (March, July and December).

11.2 An annual Fund Statement will be provided to the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership. The Fund Statements will show:

- The value of the Fund at 31 March each year
- Additions to the Fund during the year
- Donations made to the Fund
- Grants made from the Fund including name of the grant recipients, amount awarded, total cost of the project and a summary of the project
- Charges made for the management of the Fund.

11.3 The Community Foundation will include the accounting, audit and reporting responsibilities involved in managing the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund within its submission to Companies House and the Charity Commission.

## **12. PROMOTION**

12.1 The AONB Unit will undertake publicity to promote the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund, including webpage content, press releases, newsletters and annual reports and organising photo calls. The Community Foundation will assist with joint promotion as appropriate.

12.2 The Community Foundation will host a Cannock Chase Charitable Fund page on its own web site that will link to the Cannock Chase AONB web site [www.cannock-chase.co.uk](http://www.cannock-chase.co.uk)

## **13. CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

13.1 The Community Foundation respects the confidentiality of information given in the course of its business and will not disclose information to third parties either through written documents, email or conversation unless previously agreed with the donor.

Signed ..... Date.....

Name:.....

On behalf of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership

Signed .....Date.....

Name:.....

The Community Foundation for Staffordshire

**Cannock Chase Charitable Fund Advisory Panel  
Terms of Reference (DRAFT)**

**Name of the Panel**

1. The panel will be known as the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund Advisory Panel.

**Purpose**

2. To consider and decide on applications for projects submitted to the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund, according to the criteria set out in the funding agreement.

**Scope**

3. The panel shall:
  - Refer all enquiries for the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund to the Community Foundation for Staffordshire without prejudicing their decision making.
  - Set a minimum and maximum level of grant that can be awarded to any one application.
  - Receive a report and recommendation on all valid applications from the Community Foundation and consider all applications along with any reports and recommendations.
  - Assess applications, giving regard to the fund criteria and other guiding documents, and marking applications to achieve the desired outcomes of the Charitable Fund.
  - Award, partially award, request more information or refuse applications.
  - Attach to the grant any conditions considered appropriate to deliver the desired project outcomes.
  - Give precise reasons for decisions - these reasons should refer to the guidance documents and scheme criteria.
  - Treat decisions as confidential until notice has been issued to the applicant.

- Review and make recommendations for alterations to the Panel’s Terms of Reference; these recommendations will be considered by AONB Officers or their nominee and the Chair of the panel.
- Have regard to the [Nolan Principles](#)<sup>1</sup> in all its affairs.

## Membership

4. The Panel will be appointed by the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership rather than subject to recruitment processes. Panel membership should comprise at least 5 panel members, and:
  - Ensure a good geographical and thematic spread across Cannock Chase AONB.
  - As far as practical represent the diversity of the people who live, work and spend time in the AONB.
  - Have excellent specialist knowledge in their field, good knowledge of the local area and the respect and support of their peers.
  - Include at least one elected member representative from one of the five local authorities that comprise the AONB Partnership.
5. The panel will keep its membership under review and may, at the discretion of the Chair and officers of the AONB, invite additional members or remove members.
6. The Panel should appoint a Chair from among its membership at the first meeting.
7. The secretariat will be provided by officers from the AONB.
8. The Panel membership should be available to the public, if requested.
9. One-off guidance and advice from other organisations for specific applications may be sought when necessary. Such organisations will not be required to attend the full duration of Panel meetings.

## Organisation of meetings

10. Panels will meet on a regular basis to consider applications. The schedule of meetings will be determined by AONB officers.
11. Meetings should be considered quorate where at least 50% +1 of the membership is present.
12. All members of the panel should have equal voting powers and decisions should be taken by a majority of those present. In the event of no clear conclusion the Chair should have a second and casting vote.
13. Where it is considered (by officer or panel member) that a member has a conflict of interest in a matter under discussion, that member must be excluded from that part of the meeting (they will have to leave the meeting or disconnect from a video link), they

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<sup>1</sup> The Seven Principles of Public Life, Committee on Standards in Public Life, May 1995.

will have no vote on such applications and the conflict of interest noted in the minutes. Panel members will have a responsibility to declare an interest in any application under discussion.

14. All applications and matters discussed at grants panel meetings should be treated in the strictest confidence, though it should also be noted that all communication in relation to the Fund is on the public record and subject to Freedom of Information legislation.

### **Administration**

15. All meetings should be scheduled where possible to suit the majority of members, meetings can be called at a minimum of 5 working days' notice.
16. The agenda, supporting papers and report should be issued at least one (1) week before the date of a meeting, by email.
17. Panels can choose to meet virtually and also decide by correspondence by local agreement.
18. All administration of the panel including minute taking will be the responsibility of the AONB officers. This includes reasons for decisions made at the meeting.
19. Decisions of the panel including the reasons for those decisions should be issued in writing to applicants within two (2) weeks of the date at which it was agreed.
20. Minutes of the panel meeting should be circulated to members within two (2) weeks of a meeting. They shall include:
  - Attendance
  - Matters arising from previous meetings (e.g. progress on deferred applications)
  - A decision record for each application
  - Financial information (committed and spent funds)

### **Conflicts of interest**

21. All members of the panel will be required to adhere to the Nolan Principles of conduct in public office. Panel members will be expected to declare any pecuniary interest or other conflict of interest in projects being assessed. Where there is such a conflict of interest, the panel member must withdraw from the meeting while the rest of the panel deliberate on those matters.
22. Panel members may apply to the fund but, will not be involved in assessing their own applications nor may they lobby other panel members for support. Where it is considered (by officer or panel member) that a member has a potentially compromising interest in a matter under discussion, that member should be excluded from that part of the meeting, must abstain from voting on the application, and the conflict of interest noted in the minutes.

## **Appeals**

23. Appeals on decisions made on applications should be made to Cannock Chase AONB officers in the first instance.
24. Applicants can only query a funding decision if they think that the panel has:
  - made a mistake with the application
  - made a processing error
  - got the law wrong
25. Applicants must set out to the AONB the reason for their appeal under one (or more) of these 3 criteria. Information on how to appeal should be included in the written decision from the Panel as a matter of course.
26. Applicants can make an appeal against a decision, directed to the Community Foundation. Where an appeal is received, the Foundation's published procedures will be followed.

## **Complaints**

27. Complaints (separate to appeals on applications) should be directed to the Community Foundation for Staffordshire. Where a complaint is received, the Foundation's published procedures will be followed.
28. Should an applicant think their complaint is not being dealt with adequately, the AONB can refer the complaint to the Local Authority Ombudsmen for further investigation.

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6. The total value of grants awarded is £205,000.
7. By the end of March 2023 the programme will have delivered the following outcomes:
  - 94 ha land managed for regenerative farming
  - 487 metres hedgerow planted, 66 hedgerow trees planted
  - 105 wildlife boxes installed
  - 514 ha habitat improvements
  - 3 historic structures conserved
  - 4 farm businesses supported.
8. The nature of farming on the Chase means that most applications have been concentrated around the fringes with most in the south east where there is a network of holdings with smaller fields and hedged boundaries.

### **Learning points and priorities for years 3 and 4 (2023-25)**

9. This is the first time there has been a dedicated officer within the AONB Team engaging with farmers and landowners and offering support to develop and deliver projects. It has taken time to develop relationships with the farming community and promote the programme but this is now showing results.
10. The relationship building phase of the programme has led to fewer projects being developed so far than anticipated, with a projected underspend of £59,000 at the end of March 2023. Many of those delivering projects have never applied to a Defra environmental programme before.
11. Priorities for the next 2 years are to develop a wider geographical spread of projects, continue to engage with those who have previously not applied to environmental programmes and start to develop collaborative networks.

### **Further information**

12. 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-involved/farming-in-protected-landscapes/](http://www.cannock-chase.co.uk/get-involved/farming-in-protected-landscapes/) The locations of approved projects is shown in Appendix 1.

### **Access for All**

#### **Background**

13. Access for All is a three year funding programme which will improve access to green and blue spaces across the country. It is part of Defra's commitment to make targeted access improvements in our protected landscapes, national trails, forests and the wider countryside to help bring the benefits of spending time in nature to everyone.
14. Funding will pay for infrastructure improvements to make protected landscapes more accessible for people of all ages, abilities and needs such as: new gates; walking routes;

inclusive cycles, E-trikes, bikes or wheelchairs; volunteer equipment and accessible visitor facilities. The additional funding is for capital spend only, and can include both physical and digital infrastructure improvements.

15. The Access for All programme was developed in response to the Landscapes Review which called on the government to open up our national landscapes to a more diverse audience. The programme also delivers on commitments in the 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environmental Improvement Plan to encourage more people to spend time in nature to benefit their health and wellbeing.
16. The programme was publicly announced in Defra's Environmental Improvement Plan, published in February 2023

### **Programme management**

17. The programme is administered and delivered locally through the AONB team. There is no call for applications: rather the Team identifies and procures projects that will support activities that help to deliver the Experience and Enjoyment Theme of our AONB Management Plan 2019-24 as well our aspirations to make Cannock Chase more relevant, inclusive and diverse.

### **Progress year 1 (2022-23)**

18. Funding this year is delivering the following outcomes:
  - *Improved access for mobility-impaired people* (95 metres of re-surfacing works to the Toc-H trail linking Cannock Chase Visitor Centre to Brindley Heath viewing platform. Contribution towards the Cannock Chase Wayfinding Project aiming to increase the emotional and physical connection of local people from Hednesford North Ward to the Chase, funded by Sports England and led by TogetherActive)
  - *Destination access audit and guide for Cannock Chase* (making Cannock Chase more welcoming to disabled people by collating all existing access provision into a single guide available to download and read on the AONB website, and recommendations for improvements for future investment)
  - *Information/exploratory videos for walking trails* (helping disabled people to plan their visits by being able to view informative videos for 7 walking trails at Milford Common (3 trails), Brindley Heath (3 trails) and RAF Hednesford trail)
  - *Improved waymarking signage* (improving navigational signage to by replacing posts across 6 AONB promoted walking routes)
  - *'Features of Cannock Chase' Field Studies Council publication series* (a fold-out guide to raise awareness of the conservation value and special features of Cannock Chase, in accessible formats)
  - *Great War Hut interpretation panel* (telling the story of the re-constructed barrack hut and the Great War army training camps on Cannock Chase. Contribution to the refresh of the Chase Heritage Trail led by Cannock Chase Council and Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles)
  - *Inclusive and adaptive bikes* (supporting Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles to purchase an additional 7 inclusive and adaptive bikes that will be available for disabled groups to use at Cannock Chase Visitor Centre)

## Learning points and priorities for future years

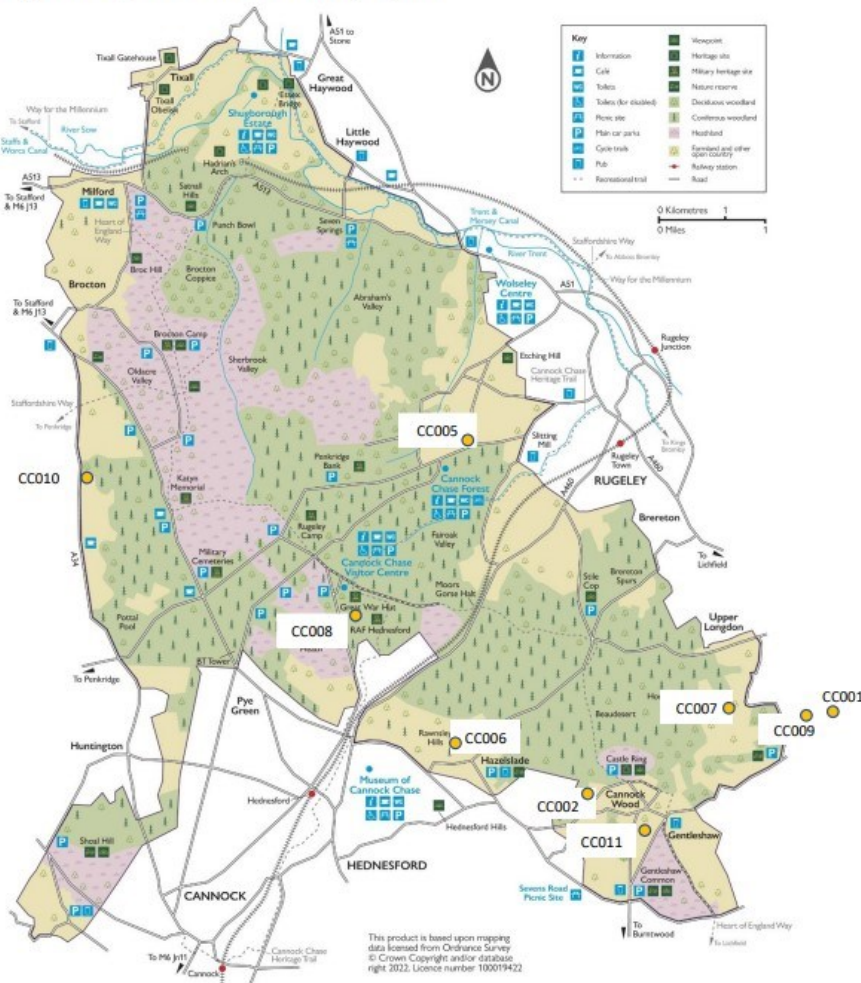
19. The availability of the Access for All Fund is timely, coming on the back of the inclusion and diversity study carried out on the Chase during 2022. It is enabling us to begin to deliver the study's recommendations and set us on the journey to becoming a more welcoming, accessible and diverse protected landscape.
20. Protected Landscapes were informed about the availability of the Fund well into the FY 2022/23, allowing little time to search, scope and develop projects. The lack of any funding from the Access for All Fund during its second year (2023/24) is unfortunate and risks losing the momentum established during 2022/23. However, the gap does allow plenty of time to identify new projects to fund in its third year (2024/25).

## Recommendations

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

## Appendix 1. Map showing locations of FiPL funded projects

Map showing locations of funded projects



## Item 11 **Future Guardians of Cannock Chase**

**Item for:** Information

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

**Financial implications:** The project has been jointly funded from the AONB core budget and SAC Partnership, over 2 financial years (21/22 and 22/23)

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

### **Background**

1. The Future Guardians of Cannock Chase programme aims to boost awareness amongst children and young people about the Chase and environmental issues. The hope is that today's youngsters will be tomorrow's Future Guardians of Cannock Chase.
2. Jointly funded by the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Partnerships, a range of resource materials have been developed in partnership with Staffordshire Libraries, Duke of Edinburgh, Staffordshire Scouts and Girl Guiding Staffordshire.

### **Future Guardians of Cannock Chase programme**

3. The programme has produced a range of freely available materials for children and young people to access and use with their families, library staff, guiding and scouting leaders and DofE instructors:
  - **Library resources pack** (target group KS2, ages 7-11 years), comprising:
    - 14 activity sheets
    - Illustrated map of Cannock Chase
  - **Duke of Edinburgh Guide** (target group ages 14-25 years), comprising:
    - Guide for DofE activities on Cannock Chase for leaders and participants
    - Ideas for expedition aims, physical activities, skills and volunteering opportunities
    - Accompanying slide pack for DofE leaders
  - **Staffordshire Scouts activity pack and challenge badge** (target group – Squirrels 4-6yrs, Beavers 6-8 yrs, Cub Scouts 8-10.5 yrs, Scouts 10.5-14 yrs, Explorers 14-18), comprising:
    - Leader pack
    - Activity Pack (including over 40 activities)
    - Challenge badge
  - **Girlguiding Staffordshire activity pack and challenge badge** (target group – Rainbows 4-7yrs, Brownies 7-10yrs, Guides 10-14yrs, Rangers 14-18yrs), comprising:
    - Leader pack
    - Activity Pack (including over 40 activities)
    - Challenge badge
4. The materials remind our youngsters that not only do they live in or close to a precious place but that they are responsible for its care. The resource content informs, explains and inspires about the special qualities that define the area and create its unique sense of place (natural heritage, cultural heritage, landscape character and scenic qualities,

tranquillity and wildness), its vulnerabilities, and how we can all get involved to look after it. This includes the core of the Chase designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and of international importance for wildlife. Topics include:

- Habitats and their associated wildlife
  - The Chase Through Time
  - Dark skies (and peace and tranquillity)
  - Our Chase, Our Future (covering the ecosystems services the Chase provides, the need to look after it, and the Cannock Chase code)
5. The resource materials are being finished off with the end user groups ready for a launch to coincide with Staffordshire Libraries Green Month in May. Materials will then be available for users to download from each of the end users' websites, as well as the Cannock Chase AONB website.

### **Potential reach of the programme**

6. The primary audience for this project are the children and young people living on and around Cannock Chase AONB and within the wider SAC 15km zone of influence. Its reach will also extend to parents, teachers, DoE instructors, library staff and guide and scout leaders.
7. An indication of the potential reach of the project can be gauged from the following numbers:
- ***Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme*** –the 1,400 participants that visit Cannock Chase AONB each year as part of their expedition section (mainly from Staffordshire, but also Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Dudley and Sandwell) will benefit by getting more out of their visit from improved knowledge about the special qualities of the Chase, ideas for expedition aims, as well as what the area offers in terms of facilities. DoE instructors will also learn more about the Chase and what it offers.
  - **Girlguiding and Scouts** - the combined 20,000+ members of will benefit from a new Future Guardians challenge pack and badge that will teach young people about the AONB and what makes it special and how they can help to protect it.
  - **Libraries** – the 16 libraries in the catchment comprising 500+ classes and families with young children that visit them each year will benefit from creative resource packs and activities for children and young people so that they see Cannock Chase as a vital resource for wellbeing, and learn how to look after it.

### **Outcomes and legacy**

8. The Future Guardians of Cannock Chase programme will deliver the following outcomes:
- Raised awareness and appreciation in children and young people of the special qualities of Cannock Chase; its fragility and benefits
  - Stronger emotional connections with the area and a greater sense of place and pride

- Enhanced knowledge and awareness of the desired environmentally friendly behaviours on the Chase
  - Greater willingness to take responsibility and help to look after the Chase with a knowledge of the Cannock Chase code of conduct
  - Improved health and wellbeing through encouraging children and young people to get outdoors and experience the Chase for themselves.
9. The project will leave a lasting legacy that will be sustained by the AONB Partnership and its partners through the delivery of the AONB Management Plan and incorporation into partners' business plans. Resource materials will be kept under review, and updated and refreshed at regular intervals as necessary.
10. The programme will deliver core educational objectives for both the Cannock Chase SAC and AONB Partnerships, as set out in the Cannock Chase Site User Detailed Implementation Plan (DiP) and AONB Management Plan. Pooling their resources and working together on this project has enabled the SAC and AONB Partnerships to obtain 'added value' than working independently. Money spent will have amplified impact and enable a greater reach with young children, with more positive long-term effects.

### **Recommendations**

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