



**Cannock
Chase
National
Landscape**

**Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership
AGM and meeting of the Joint Committee
Friday 19th July 2024 at 10.00 AM**

**To be held in the Main Conference Room, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Wolseley
Centre, ST17 0WT**

Members of the public are welcome to attend in person.

No	Time	Item	Item for	Page
1	10.00	Election of Chair and Vice Chair <i>This item to be overseen by John Rowe, Honorary Secretary of the Joint Committee</i>	DECISION	2
2	10.05	Welcome and introductions		2
3	10.05	Apologies for absence		2
4	10.10	Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2024	APPROVAL	3
5	10.15	Public questions		9
6	10.25	Finance report <i>(a) To note the final outturn position for 2023/24.</i> <i>(b) To approve the revised net revenue budget for 2024/24, and note progress</i> <i>(c) To note progress on spend on the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme</i> Report of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee	INFORMATION DECISION INFORMATION	10
7	10.35	AONB Management Plan review <i>To note progress with the review, and discuss the emerging issues and areas of updated and new work for the new Plan</i> Report of the AONB Team Leader	DISCUSSION	19
8	11.40	Update on National Landscape team activities <i>To receive a brief update of key activities</i> Verbal report of the National Landscape Team	INFORMATION	43
9	11.50	Annual Review 2023-24 <i>To report to members the achievements of the AONB and seek approval to publish, with any amendments</i> Report of the AONB Communications Officer	DECISION	44
10	12.00	Date, time and venue of next meetings <i>Monday 9 December 2024, 2-4 pm (Wolseley Centre)</i> <i>Monday 10 March 2025, 2-4 pm, (Wolseley Centre)</i>		46

Item 4	Minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2024
Item for:	Approval
Author:	Ian Marshall, Team Leader
Financial implications:	None
Recommendations:	The Committee approves the minutes of the meeting and considers any matters arising.

**Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership
Meeting of the Joint Committee
Monday 18th March 2024 at 14.30 HRS**

Held at the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Wolseley Centre, ST17 0WT

(Draft) Minutes

Attendees

Voting Members present

Cllr Victoria Wilson (Chair)	(VW)
Cllr Tony Pearce	(TP)
Cllr Andrea Muckley	(AM)
Cllr Kath Perry	(KP)

Representing

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

Officers

Ian Marshall	(IM)	National Landscape Team
Richard Harris	(RH)	National Landscape Team
Samantha Hall	(SH)	National Landscape Team
Colin Manning	(CMa)	National Landscape Team
Karen Davies	(KD)	National Landscape Team
Sarah Bentley	(SB)	Staffordshire County Council
Catherine Mann	(CM)	Staffordshire County Council
James Parker	(JP)	Lichfield District Council

Advisers

June Jukes	(JJ)	Friends of Cannock Chase
Doug Smith	(DS)	British Horse Society
Sarah Burgess	(SB)	CPRE Staffordshire
George Sharp	(GS)	Cannock Chase SAC Partnership
Cherry Doyle	(CD)	Independent
Louise Rose	(LR)	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles
Gez Hill	(GH)	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles
Jackie Wyke	(JW)	Independent
Antony Jones	(AJ)	Independent
Glen Probert	(GP)	Independent
Tony Thomas	(TT)	Cemex
Matthew Shorland	(MS)	Cemex

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1 Councillor Wilson opened proceedings and welcomed everyone to the meeting of the National Landscape Partnership Joint Committee.

2. Apologies for absence

- 2.1 Apologies for absence were received from: Cllr Michael Wilcox (Lichfield District Council), Liz Garbutt (National Landscape Team), Nikki Mihajlovic (Staffordshire County Council), Roger Broadbent (West Midland Bird Club), Paddy Harrop (Forestry England), Mary Cope (Beaudesert Park Farm / NFU), Frances Beatty (CLA), Lauren Lymer (Lichfield District Council), Hayley Mival (National Trust).

3. Draft minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2023

- 3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th July 2022 were submitted. The following matters arising were noted (numbers refer to those in previous minutes):

2.2. IM has written to organisations that haven't attended Joint Committee for a while and is awaiting replies.

7.3. The accessibility audit and guide have been signed off and shared with partners. The guide is available on the National Landscape website.

10. No planning update is available for this meeting due to Liz Garbutt, Landscape Planning Officer, being absent from work. IM has submitted a response on behalf of the Joint Committee to the Cannock Chase Local Plan consultation.

3.3 **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the previous meeting are approved.

4. Public Questions

- 4.1 3 questions were received.

- 4.2 Q1. Throughout Cannock Chase AONB the land at the sides of the roads, the lay-bys, and the car parks are now disgraced by large quantities of litter and refuse. This is hardly in keeping with the designation of AONB and its conservation and enhancement. It is my understanding that the appropriate authorities have a duty to ensure that the land is kept clear of litter and refuse under Section 89 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. If this is so, how will the Joint Committee work with these appropriate authorities who are responsible for Cannock Chase AONB so that they discharge their duties not only once, but on a regular basis in order to prevent the build up of litter and refuse?

- 4.3 IM advised that

- Authorities ('duty bodies') who must keep land clear of litter and refuse (as far as is practicable) are: litter authorities (district councils and county councils); crown authorities, educational institutions, SoS, Network rail and rail operators, water companies.
- Applies to their 'relevant' land (or land for which they are responsible), and highways

- ‘Relevant land’ is open to the air and land which is under their direct control to which the public are entitled or permitted to have access.
 - Encouraged to adopt suitable monitoring systems to identify sources and causes of problems, and take corrective action.
 - Allocate land into zones and manage accordingly with cleansing schedules to achieve grades of cleanliness.
 - All duty bodies in an area should consult together and develop an integrated approach to zoning.
- 4.4 Currently on the Chase litter is tackled by authorities as follows:
- Streetscene departments: litter is picked both sides of road verges for 1 metre or to the boundary hedge. This is carried out twice yearly, plus in response to concerns raised by the public.
 - Cannock Chase Country Park: car parks are checked and litter picked weekly. Paths on the wider Chase are picked ad hoc with volunteers.
 - Cannock Chase Forest: Forest Centre and car parks checked and cleaned daily. Side tracks and wider open areas once a week. Other trails and facilities once a month.
 - Communications and education: Picking up and taking home litter is encouraged through: Cannock Chase code, Future Guardians Programme, interpretation and campaigns.
- 4.5 Joint Committee commented that: prevention is better than cure, and that more could be done to work with schools about this as well as encouraging local fast food outlets to encourage their customers to take their litter home. Members also asked if greater clarity could be provided for the public as to where issues (such as, littering and other crime) could be reported.
- 4.6 Q2. In particular to find out more about the restoration programme on the Cemex land having recently visited this part of the Chase and observed some of the activity. More precisely to ask what are the long term aims and objectives of the restoration, what habitats or species are being targeted, the timescale for the project and how are they controlling the livestock without permanent fencing? Finally what monitoring if any is being undertaken?
- 4.7 This question was dealt with by the presentation to Joint Committee by Matthew Shorland, Cemex.
- 4.8 Q3. Please can I submit the following question about deer numbers as the perception is that fallow deer numbers in the country park are increasing and it is common to see relatively large herds around Brocton village. "Are deer numbers increasing on a year-by-year basis and is there an increase in reported road traffic accidents involving deer?"
- 4.9 RH advised that: deer numbers recorded on the Chase are as follows:

Year	Total	Fallow	Red	Muntjac
Nov 2022	1,217	1,035	144	38
April 2022	1,010	899	111	

2019	665	627	25	13
2018	796	678	79	39

- 4.10 Deer Vehicle Collisions fluctuate from 119 – 176 from 2015 – 2022, and average around 150 a year. They will fluctuate due to a number of factors; there is some indication of a reduction over the last couple of years. This may be due to action taken by SCC to increase road safety through the use of deterrent devices at collision hotspots to deter deer from crossing, and awareness campaigns to drivers, rather than a decline in the deer population.
- 4.11 To answer whether there are too many deer, we need to understand what impact the deer are having. A deer activity/impact survey was carried out in 2019 and in 2022 to enable comparison. Across 35 plots across Cannock Chase in 2022 Moderate, Moderate to High or High impacts were recorded at 25 plots; Low or Low to Moderate impacts were recorded at 10 plots. Twenty-four of the sites showed an increase in deer activity in 2022, ten were recorded as similar and one was surveyed for the first time giving a baseline score. Impacts can be positive or negative for different habitats. In 2022 of the 35 sites across Cannock Chase sixteen sites showed an increase in impact, fourteen showed no change, four showed a decrease, one was a new baseline site added.

5. **Finance Report – Revenue Budget 2023/24**

5.1 In the absence of Nikki Mihajlovic, Ian Marshall advised:

- The current forecast outturn position when compared to budget is a breakeven position. This after additional funding has been received from the National Landscapes Association of a £3,000 contribution to the National Landscape re-brand, and £41,200 from Defra for Access for All fund, as well as taking account of a £5,000 transfer from the AONB reserve to fund the website hosting costs along with a further transfer of £11,354 to fund the budget shortfall.
- The Farming in Protected Landscape Programme budget is predicting an underspend of £90,000 which will have to be repaid to Defra.
- The balance on the AONB Reserve at the end of 2023/24 is predicted to be £55,944 (down from £70,448) after accounting for proposed transfers to balance the core budget.

5.2 **RESOLVED:**

That progress on the current net revenue budget for 2023/24 and its current forecast outturn position is noted.

6. **Partner presentation - Cemex**

- 6.1 Matthew Shorland, Cemex, gave a presentation to the Committee about the restoration and aftercare of the Rugeley Quarry and adjoining land. The slide presentation accompanies these minutes.
- 6.2 102 hectares of the quarry is being restored to create species-rich heathland, with smaller areas of mixed deciduous woodland, acid grassland, lowland fen/mire and ponds. The restoration and aftercare is monitored by Staffordshire County Council and

Natural England. A further programme of heathland restoration is taking place on 50 hectares of adjoining land and Bevin's Birches. Grazing by cattle (fenceless grazing) has been introduced on the adjoining land, and has been well received by the public. The RSPB has been providing Cemex with biodiversity advice since 2009. Locally, the RSPB developed the conservation management plan for Bevin's Birches.

6.3 IJ asked if the experience of Cemex has any implications for the restoration of the Chase? MS responded that Staffordshire Wildlife Trust are using the same grazier. JW mentioned the Moors Gorse grazing trial, and that her impression that cattle are reduced the incidence of ASB in the area. Cllr Pearce asked if Cemex had assessed their carbon footprint? MS replied that globally Cemex is committed to be net zero by 2050.

6.4 Councillor Wilson (VW) thanked Matthew for his presentation.

6.5 **RESOLVED:**

That the update on the aftercare and restoration of land at Rugeley Quarry is noted.

7. **AONB Management Plan review 2025-30**

7.1 Ian Marshall presented a paper informing Members about the need to begin the review process for a new AONB Management Plan, and setting out the stages involved. The review will be undertaken by the National Landscape Team on behalf of the local authorities, in consultation with partner organisations, and local stakeholders.

7.2 The new AONB Management Plan will need to embed new targets for Protected Landscapes included in the recently published Targets and Outcomes Framework. Together with strengthened duties to further the purposes of AONBs, the new targets are seen by Government as significant levers in helping Protected Landscapes do more for nature, climate, people and place.

7.3 **RESOLVED:**

(1) That the review of the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2025-30 is authorised.

(2) That the strengthened duties towards AONBs and the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework are noted.

8. **AONB Business Plan 2023-25 end-year one review**

8.1 Ian Marshall updated Members about the progress that has been achieved against year 1 (2023/24) of our current Business Plan, as well as indicative priorities for year 2 (2024/25).

8.2 Progress overall is favourable, with 72% of year 1 activities having been delivered or in progress and on track. Some in-year variations have impacted on our ability to deliver the Plan. A wide range of indicative priorities for year 2 are planned against all of the AONB Management Plan themes.

8.3 **RESOLVED:**

(1) Progress against year 1 of our Business Plan is noted.

(2) Indicative priorities for year 2 of our Business Plan are noted.

9. **Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme**

- 9.1 Colin Manning and Karen Davies presented a paper updating Members about the local achievements of the first 3 years of the programme, and plans for year 4.
- 9.2 By the end of February 2024, some 38 grants totalling £503,000 had been awarded. These had delivered a wide range of outputs against all four of the programme's aims: nature, climate, access and people. The total budget for the 4th year of the programme is £555,264. The priorities for this final year of the programme include continuing engagement with equine landowners, establishing new relationships with farmers, and supporting regenerative farming.
- 9.3 The FiPL programme has enabled the National Landscape to develop trusted relationships with local farmers and landowners, and to deliver a range of environmental outcomes that support the aims of our Management Plan. It has been well received locally, but has proven difficult to spend all of our allocation. At the current time there is no information available for the future of the FiPL programme post 31st March 2025.
- 9.4 VW informed the Committee that Colin will be leaving his role in June, and thanked him for all his hard work delivering the FiPL programme.

- 9.5 **RESOLVED:**
That the report is noted.

10. **National Landscape re-brand**

- 10.1 Samantha Hall updated Members on progress to implement the National Landscapes re-brand. Using a £3,000 contribution from the National Landscapes Association, a designer has been appointed to undertake artwork and design for our welcome leaflet, banners, souvenir guide and walking trail leaflets. Work to re-shape our website will begin after April.
- 10.2 **RESOLVED:**
That the report is noted.

11. **Conferences**

- 11.1 Samantha Hall updated Members about preparations for Cannock Chase Annual Conference taking place on 25th April and the National Landscapes Association Annual Conference held over 2nd 5th July.
- 11.2 **RESOLVED:**
That the report is noted.

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

- 12.1 The date and venue of the AGM and July meeting of the Joint Committee is to be confirmed.

Item 5**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 6 Finance report – Revenue Budget 2024/25

Item for: Approving and Noting

Author: Nikki Mihajlovic, Senior Finance Business Partner

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

Recommendations:

1. That the final outturn position for 2023/24 for the Core, Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), AONB Projects, Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme and the closing balance held on the AONB reserve are noted.
2. That the revised net revenue budget is approved and progress on the current net revenue budget for 2024/25 and its current forecast outturn position are noted.
3. That progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme is noted.

Background

1. The net revenue budget for 2024/25 was approved by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 6 December 2023. In the absence at that time of any announcement from Defra about our core grant settlement, this grant allocation was kept unchanged at the 2023/24 funding level. To balance the budget and take account of pay inflation and other known costs the Joint Committee agreed the use of £13,240 from the AONB reserve. The five local authorities within Cannock Chase National Landscape financial contributions for 2024/25 remain unchanged from 2023/24 funding levels.
2. Defra has now confirmed the funding settlement for Cannock Chase for 2024/25 is £172,752.39 for Core costs, plus additional one-off funding of £42,288.10 for capital and £42,288.10 for revenue along with confirmation of further funding of £70,748.87 for the third year of the Access for All Fund. This now means the funding from Defra for 2024/25 totals £328,077.46.
3. This paper presents progress on the net revenue budget for 2024/25, and its current forecast outturn position. The recommendations represent an effective way to continue to carry forward the implementation of the Management Plan for the Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership.

Final Outturn 2023/24

4. The detailed final net revenue outturn for 2023/24 for Core, Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), and AONB Projects is set out in Appendix 1 and is compared to the £238,730 approved budget for the year. The final net revenue spend was £273,771 compared to budget resulting in an overspend of £35,041. Additional Contributions were received from Defra towards the overspend against Access for All of £42,100, National Landscapes of £3,000 towards the National Landscapes rebrand costs and £426 increased contributions from Local Authorities to offset the core overspend. After taking account of these contributions, this resulted in an overspend of £6,292 which has been transferred from the AONB reserve, to give rise to a breakeven outturn

position. The original planned contribution from the AONB reserve was £16,780 at the start of the financial year.

5. The individual projects, totalling £9,436 for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) including the £1,000 administration fee, are set out in Appendix 2. This shows an underspend of £564 against the original budget allocated of £10,000.
6. The individual projects, totalling £55,488 for the AONB Projects are set out in Appendix 3. The projects show an overspend of £40,952 when compared to the original budget of £14,536. An additional contribution not originally budgeted was received from Defra for Access for All of £41,100. After taking account of this, this left a slight underspend against the AONB projects of £614 against the original budget allocated of £15,150.
7. The detailed net position for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme is set out in Appendix 4 and is compared to the original budget of £411,431. The final spend against the programme was £340,938, which resulted in an underspend against the grant of £70,493, which will have to be repaid. This is due to reduction in costs originally anticipated for the project.

Revenue Budget update 2024/25

8. The net revenue budget for 2024/25 £235,190 was approved by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 6 December 2023. In the absence at that time of any announcement from Defra about our core grant settlement, this grant allocation was kept unchanged at the 2023/24 funding level. To balance the budget and take account of pay inflation and other known costs the Joint Committee agreed the use of £13,240 from the AONB reserve. The five local authorities within Cannock Chase National Landscape financial contributions for 2024/25 remain unchanged from 2023/24 funding levels.
9. Defra has now confirmed the funding settlement for Cannock Chase for 2024/25 is £172,752.39 for Core costs, plus additional one-off funding of £42,288.10 for capital and £42,288.10 for revenue along with confirmation of further funding of £70,748.87 for the third year of the Access for All Fund. The funding from Defra for 2024/25 totals £328,077.46, which is an increase of £155,300.
10. The revised net revenue budget for 2024/25 after reflecting the increase in funding from Defra now stands at £390,520. It should be noted that the budget still includes a contribution of £13,240 from the AONB reserve to balance the budget.
11. The current forecast outturn position when compared to budget is breakeven, as set out in Appendix 5.
12. The level of funding for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) £10,000 remains unchanged from the previous year allocation. AONB Projects original budget £15,150 has increased by £42,290, to give a revised budget of £57,440.
13. The individual projects against the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 6, with projects approved or committed amounting to £3,761, including £1,000 administration fee deduction, which leaves a balance of £6,239 unallocated.

14. The individual projects against the AONB Projects and Access for All for 2024/25 are set out in Appendix 7.
15. AONB with projects approved or committed amounting to £23,050 in total, which leaves a balance of £34,390 unallocated.
16. Access for All with projects approved or committed amounting to £8,500, which leaves a balance of £62,250 unallocated.

Reserve

17. The balance on the Cannock Chase AONB Reserve at the end of the financial year 2023/24 stood at £69,401, after transfers in of sales income, SDF administration fees, interest accrued and a transfer out to balance the shortfall against the core budget. The reserve currently stands at £57,161 for 2024/25 after assuming the transfer of admin fees into the reserve and the contribution from reserve to the core budget of £13,240. A summary of the Reserve is set out in Appendix 8.
18. 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.
19. These priorities are reviewed annually in December of each year.

Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme

20. 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 four-year programme (ending 31 March 2025) and is provided by Defra and is additional funding on top of the annual core grant that the AONB receives.
21. A summary of the budget position for the programme is set out in Appendix 9. The budget for 2024/25 is £555,264 and the predicted outturn for the programme at the end of the financial year is a breakeven position.

Equalities Implications

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

Legal Implications

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

Resource and Value for Money Implications

24. 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

25. 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

26. The following recommendations are made to the Joint Committee:
 - (1) That the final outturn position for 2023/24 for the Core, Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), AONB Projects, Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme and the closing balance held on the AONB reserve are noted.
 - (2) That progress on the current net revenue budget for 2024/25 and its current forecast outturn position are noted.
 - (3) That progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme is noted.

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

Cannock Chase AONB Core & Project Costs

Outturn for 2023/2024

	Budget	Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£
Core Budget			
Salaries	189,450	165,692	-23,758
Training Expenses	1,510	1,212	-298
Travel and Subsistence	700	1,002	302
Staff and Associated Costs	191,660	167,905	-23,755
Office Equipment	1,400	4,293	2,893
Annual Audit	0	0	0
Volunteer Costs	500	0	-500
National Liaison	3,160	2,928	-232
Print & Publicity	4,140	23,015	18,875
AONB Website	0	0	0
Annual Conference	2,000	1,706	-294
Core Activity (including monitoring, community involvement, etc)	1,720	0	-1,720
Partnership Running Costs	9,000	9,000	0
Core Budget Subtotal	213,580	208,847	-4,733
Sustainable Development Fund	10,000	9,436	-564
AONB Projects	15,150	14,388	-762
New Projects to be developed - Access for All	0	41,100	41,100
SDF/AONB Projects Subtotal	25,150	64,924	39,774
Total Budget/Initial Forecast Outturn	238,730	273,771	35,041
New Projects to be developed - Access for All	0	0	0
Outturn as at 31 March 2023	238,730	273,771	35,041
Funded By:			
DEFRA Grant			
Core	-147,600	-147,602	-2
Sustainable Development Fund	-10,000	-10,000	0
AONB Projects	-15,150	-15,150	0
Additional Projects Allocation - Access for All	0	-42,100	-42,100
DEFRA Grant Subtotal	-172,750	-214,852	-42,102
Local Authority Contributions			
Lichfield District Council	-2,460	-2,503	-43
South Staffordshire District Council	-2,460	-2,503	-43
Cannock Chase District Council	-9,840	-10,010	-170
Stafford Borough Council	-9,840	-10,010	-170
Staffordshire County Council	-24,600	-24,600	0
Local Authority Contributions Subtotal	-49,200	-49,626	-426
Sales and Donations	0	0	0
Membership Fee Income	0	0	0
National Landscapes	0	-3,000	-3,000
Website Development Contribution from Reserve	0	0	0
Funding from(+)/to reserve(-)	-16,780	-6,292	10,488
Total Funding	-238,730	-273,771	-35,041

Appendix 2

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee**Sustainable Development Fund****Outturn for 2023/24**

	Budget £	Outturn £	Variation £
Approved Projects			
West Midlands Ringing Group - Nightjar thermal drone	3,706	3,705	-1
John Bamford Primary School - wildlife garden	3,500	3,500	0
West Hill Primary School - bat, bird and wildlife boxes	486	486	0
Beaudesert Park Farm - improved learning opportunities	1,308	0	-1,308
Enhancements to Visitor Provision	0	618	618
West Midland Bird Group	0	127	127
Unallocated Spend	0	0	0
Approved Projects Total	9,000	8,436	-564
Admin Fees	1,000	1,000	0
SDF Funding Transfer to AONB Projects	0	0	0

Appendix 3

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee**AONB Projects****Outturn for 2023/2024**

	Budget £	Outturn £	Variation £
Approved Projects:			
Future Guardians of Cannock Chase	1,610	1,610	0
Museum of Cannock Chase display	188	188	0
Brindley Heath, Milford Common, RAF Hednesford Trails	290	0	-290
Walking Cannock Chase promoted routes	500	0	-500
Dark Skies - CPRE Stargazing Event 21/02/2024	606	556	-50
Cannock Chase Charitable Fund - Legal Oversight	1,500	1,500	0
AONB Adder Land Owner Training Day	500	500	0
Stream Corridor & Aquatic Intertebrate Survey	5,250	6,200	950
Deer Impact & Activity Survey	3,257	3,506	249
Corten Steel Great War Hut Panel Costs	335	0	-335
Deer Management Strategy Artwork Production	500	0	-500
22/23 Project Accrual Variation	0	328	328
National Landscape Rebrand Implementation	0	0	0
Access for All - Year 2	0	41,100	41,100
Approved Projects Total	14,536	55,488	40,952
Currently Unallocated	614	0	-614
Re-allocation of Funds to SDF Projects	0	0	0
Additional DEFRA Funding	0	0	0
National Landscapes Association	0	0	0
Access for All - Year 2	0	-41,100	-41,100
TOTAL	15,150	14,388	-762

Appendix 4

Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant

Outturn for 2023/2024

	Budget £	Outturn £	Variation £
Farming in Protected Landscapes Expenditure:			
Programme Administration	41,540	25,952	-15,588
Programme Advice & Guidance	70,630	51,904	-18,726
Project Spend	299,261	263,082	-36,179
Total Budget/Initial Forecast Outturn	411,431	340,938	-70,493
Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant	-411,431	-340,938	70,493
Total Funding	0	0	0

Appendix 5

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

Cannock Chase AONB Core & Project Costs

Forecast for 2024/2025

	Budget £	2024 Actuals £	Predicted Outturn £	Variation £
Core Budget				
Salaries	196,960	43,317	196,960	0
Consultancy Costs	5,000	0	5,000	0
Training Expenses	1,510	2,125	1,510	0
Travel and Subsistence	700	113	700	0
Staff and Associated Costs	204,170	45,554	204,170	0
Office Equipment	1,400	-1,005	1,400	0
Annual Audit	0	0	0	0
Volunteer Costs	500	18	500	0
National Liaison	3,160	0	3,160	0
Print & Publicity	25,750	174	25,750	0
AONB Website	0	0	0	0
Annual Conference	2,000	-1,239	2,000	0
Core Activity (including monitoring, community involvement, etc)	6,350	11,304	6,350	0
Partnership Running Costs	9,000	0	9,000	0
Core Budget Subtotal	252,330	54,807	252,330	0
Sustainable Development Fund	10,000	-3,500	10,000	0
AONB Projects	57,440	-16,389	57,440	0
Access 4 All	70,750	0	70,750	0
SDF/AONB Projects Subtotal	67,440	-19,889	67,440	0
Total Budget/Initial Forecast Outturn	390,520	34,918	390,520	0
Funded By:				
DEFRA Grant				
Core	-189,890	900	-189,890	0
Sustainable Development Fund	-10,000	0	-10,000	0
AONB Projects	-57,440	0	-57,440	0
Access 4 All	-70,750	0	-70,750	0
DEFRA Grant Subtotal	-328,080	900	-328,080	0
Local Authority Contributions				
Lichfield District Council	-2,460	0	-2,460	0
South Staffordshire District Council	-2,460	0	-2,460	0
Cannock Chase District Council	-9,840	0	-9,840	0
Stafford Borough Council	-9,840	0	-9,840	0
Staffordshire County Council	-24,600	0	-24,600	0
Local Authority Contributions Subtotal	-49,200	0	-49,200	0
Funding from(+)/to reserve(-)	-13,240	0	-13,240	0
Total Funding	-390,520	900	-390,520	0

Appendix 6

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

Sustainable Development Fund

Budget Update for 2024/25

	Budget	Spent or Committed to Date	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
Approved Projects				
Accruals for 2023/24 Invoices still outstanding	0	-3,500	0	0
Pye Green Academy - sensory garden	2,761	0	2,761	0
Unallocated Spend	6,239	0	6,239	0
Approved Projects Total	9,000	-3,500	9,000	0
Admin Fees	1,000	0	1,000	0
SDF Funding Transfer to AONB Projects	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	10,000	-3,500	10,000	0

Appendix 7

Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee

AONB & Access For All Projects

Budget Update for 2024/2025

	Budget	Spent or Committed to Date	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
Approved Projects:				
AONB Projects:				
Accruals for 2023/24 Invoices Still Outstanding	0	-16,389	0	0
Stream corridor & aquatic invertebrate survey - phase 2	6,950	0	6,950	0
Check the Chase - IT tablets and licences	6,100	0	6,100	0
Management Plan - SEA and HRA	10,000	0	10,000	0
Currently Unallocated - AONB	34,390	0	34,390	0
AONB Approved Projects Total	57,440	-16,389	57,440	0
Access for All - Year 3 Projects				
Purchase of replacement tramper	8,500	0	8,500	0
Currently Unallocated - Access for All	62,250	0	62,250	0
Access For All Approved Projects Total	70,750	0	70,750	0
TOTAL	128,190	-16,389	128,190	0

Cannock Chase AONB Reserve

Financial Year	Opening Balance	Income/Sales	Membership Fees	Visitor Survey Work	Website Development	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	644				1,000	1,026	2,026	1,372		70,448
2023/2024	70,448	1,051				1,000	0	1,000	3,195	-6,292	69,401
2024/2025	69,401					1,000	0	1,000		-13,240	57,161
		16,569	7,673	27,409	0	44,744	-37,214	7,530	7,297	-19,532	57,161

Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant

Forecast for 2024/2025

	Budget	2024 Actuals	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
Farming in Protected Landscapes Expenditure:				
Programme Administration	36,437	25,157	36,437	0
Programme Advice & Guidance	72,874	0	72,874	0
Project Spend	445,953	29,000	445,953	0
Total Budget/Initial Forecast Outturn	555,264	54,157	555,264	0
Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant	-555,264	-70,493	-555,264	0
Total Funding	0	-16,337	0	0

- Formal notification of the intention to review the Management Plan was sent to Natural England on 8 April 2024 and copied to relevant constituent local authorities.
- Evidence and insight has been gathered for an updated State of the AONB report.
- Progress against the Implementation Action Plan in the current AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024 (extended to 2025) has been collated and assessed.
- Local views on key issues and priorities for Cannock Chase have been collated through an online questionnaire.

6. In addition, nationally:

- Further draft guidance has been provided to support Protected Landscapes in developing Management Plans.
- New and updated baseline evidence has been issued to all Protected Landscapes to support the Protected Landscapes Outcomes and Targets Framework (PLTOF).

Emerging key issues and areas of updated and new work for the new Plan

7. A number of key issues are highlighted as needing to be addressed in the review of the Management Plan. These are based on a combination of what the evidence and insight is telling us; people's perceptions, concerns and priorities; what has been achieved in the current Management Plan and any remaining or ongoing tasks and gaps and; new requirements, imperatives and policy agendas.
8. This list is not exhaustive and topics inter-relate and overlap. They are divided into (A) some over-arching, general principles for the new Plan, and (B) specific topic recommendations.

A. General principles for the new Plan

9. **Ambition.** The scale of ambition of the new Plan needs to be raised to meet the pressures facing the National Landscape, the expectations of local communities to see the Chase actively protected and managed, and the greater expectations from Government for Protected Landscapes to do more for nature, climate, people and place. This needs to be reflected in the targets and actions that further our core purpose to 'conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area', as well as meeting the demand for recreation and taking account of the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries, and the economic and social needs of local communities.
10. **Target setting.** The new Management Plan must incorporate nationally agreed new targets for nature, climate, people and place set out in Defra's Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF) published in 2024. The targets are for the geographic area of the Protected Landscape, with shared responsibility amongst partners for their delivery. In addition, it is a requirement for the new Plan to have a 'climate adaptation plan' embedded within it, or linked with it, by 2028.
11. **Acting jointly.** Management Plan review and delivery is a shared task. Further and improved collaboration between partners, focused around a set of shared outcomes, will be necessary to address the multiplicity, complexity and scale of challenges and opportunities facing the National Landscape. The strengthened duty on 'relevant authorities' to seek to further the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes' will require partners to be more accountable for the policies and actions in the new

Management Plan in respect of their own actions, decisions and operations. This will also need to be reflected in reporting their contributions to the outcomes of the Management Plan to Defra as well as sharing their achievements in National Landscape Annual Reviews and conferences.

12. **Integration.** The new Plan should seek to identify opportunities available through other relevant plans, policies and programmes to help deliver the agenda for the National Landscape.
13. **Plan context.** The current Plan includes statements about the AONB, its designation and special qualities. These accurately articulate what constitutes the natural beauty of the Chase and what needs to be conserved and enhanced, and should be retained in the revised plan. The section on the public benefits is also still relevant, but needs amending to recognise the contribution that the Chase makes to mitigating the impacts of climate change. The threats and opportunities that the current plan anticipated when it was written in 2018/19 need amending to accurately reflect the current forces for change and new imperatives. For example, the Commonwealth Games have taken place and High Speed 2 has now been cancelled. Climate change, nature recovery, environmental quality, land management, growth and development, tourism and recreation, health and wellbeing, and diversity and inclusion will all need to be taken into account in the new Plan.
14. **Vision.** A new 20-year vision for the AONB was written for the current Plan, to inspire and unite everyone with a common goal: *‘By 2039, the landscapes, habitats and heritage of Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be in good condition through positive management, with standards and facilities befitting their national and international importance. There will be high levels of connectivity between the AONB and its surrounds through its landscapes, habitats, heritage and cultural landscapes and communities. The natural benefits of the AONB will have a positive impact on those who experience and enjoy the Chase whether from local communities or further afield and these communities will in turn care for, feel pride in and celebrate the AONB’.* The wording of the vision will need to be reviewed to ensure that it adequately reflects the unique character and special qualities of the Chase, and our collective aspirations for it.
15. **Strategic themes, policies and objectives.** The current Management Plan is structured around five themes: Landscape character and planning, Wildlife and nature, Historic environment and culture, Experience and enjoyment and, Communities and business. The Government has changed its policy emphasis for Protected Landscapes to deliver more for nature, climate, people and place, and will, in future, monitor the performance of Management Plans against these themes. It seems sensible, therefore, to re-align the structure of the new Management Plan and its policies, objectives and actions around this new framework. This will ensure that the National Landscape Partnership can track its progress against national targets and goals. The wording of current policies and objectives that are still relevant will, therefore, need to be reviewed and integrated within this new framework, and complemented with new imperatives and opportunities. The new mandatory targets for Protected Landscapes (as set out in the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework) will also need to be embedded in the policies and objectives.
16. **Delivery plan.** The Implementation Action Plan included within the current Management Plan will require amendment and revision based on the new policies and

objectives agreed during the review. The end product will be a five-year programme of activity that sets out the work of the National Landscape Partnership over the five year period April 2025 – March 2030.

17. **Monitoring and reporting.** It is recommended that the new Plan revisits and updates the current monitoring framework to ensure that it is robust, consistent and achievable for:

- Condition monitoring – to understand the condition of each of the special qualities and identify any trends and causes.
- Performance monitoring - to measure progress and delivery towards the Plan’s outcomes and targets, in a format that aligns with Defra reporting requirements in the government’s Environmental Improvement Plan.

B. Specific topic recommendations that the new Plan should address (these are in addition to those that are still relevant in the current Plan)

18. **Nature**

- Setting out our contribution to deliver the government’s commitment to protect at least 30% of land for nature by 2030, including the protection and effective management of existing, restored and new wildlife rich habitats.
- Including targets to bring into favourable condition SSSIs as well as all existing priority habitats outside SSSI
- The importance of clean air, clean and plentiful water and healthy soils to nature recovery should be included, as well as being the foundation for the ecosystem services that benefit those living in and around the National Landscape, and those visiting or working on it.

19. **Climate**

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adopting a pathway for the National Landscape to reach net zero through land use targets to capture and store carbon, including increasing tree canopy and woodland cover.
- Producing a climate change adaptation plan for the National Landscape by 2028, including SMART actions and objectives to minimise and manage the impacts of climate change on the area’s special qualities.
- Understanding the contribution of the Chase’s peatlands to net zero targets, including mapping their extent and depth, and assessing their condition.

20. **People**

- Greater attention to public enjoyment and a visitor economy that is more in harmony with the National Landscape and the conservation of its special qualities.
- Improving the visitor welcome and experience to a standard befitting one of England’s finest landscapes.
- More emphasis on changing people’s perceptions and behaviours; raising awareness of the importance and fragility of the National Landscape; and everyone’s responsibility in helping to look after it.
- Stronger and co-ordinated action to address anti-social behaviours, and wildlife and heritage crime.
- Removing barriers so that people can have the choice whether or not to engage with the National Landscape.
- Improvements to physical and virtual accessibility (a landscape for everyone).

21. Place

- Include a commitment to develop and implement new projects to understand, enjoy and care for the Chase's historic environment.
- Ensuring a legacy from the outcomes and trusted relationships the National Landscape has built up with farmers and land managers through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme after it ends on 31 March 2025.
- Promoting nature friendly farming.
- Greater attention to the cumulative impacts of surrounding development on the National Landscape.
 - Rolling out the rebranding of the National Landscape.

Questions for discussion at Joint Committee around the merging key issues and areas of updated and new work for the new Plan

22. Members are asked to consider and discuss the following questions:

1. Do you agree with the general principles that are proposed for the new Plan?
2. Do you agree with the (additional) specific topic recommendations that the new Plan should address?
3. Are there new ways of thinking and doing things to improve our future readiness and resilience to deal with the challenges and pressures facing the National Landscape? How ambitious and/or radical should we be?
4. Who will be the alliances, people and voices that will bring about change and deliver our aspirations?

Next steps in the review process

23. The scoping stage of the review process will continue with the following next steps:

- Final amendments to the updated State of the AONB report.
- Discuss the key issues and main areas requiring update or new work with Task and Finish Groups, and key landowners.
- Finalise the form and scale of the review.
- Scope the framework for a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA)/Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA).

Appendix 1.

Summary of condition of the National Landscape

Taken overall, the character and quality of the Cannock Chase National Landscape is considered to be relatively stable, and continues to be of high importance. The condition and trends of some of the special features is sometimes difficult to ascertain due to lack of consistent and regularly collected monitoring data.

Landscape quality

- In comparison to the surrounding countryside, the majority of the National Landscape comprises semi-natural vegetation. Ten habitats of principal importance cover 34 % of the designated area. Much of the land around these habitats is conifer plantation, and together they create an extensive and contiguous area of uninterrupted and intact semi-natural vegetation across the heart of the Chase. Hedgerows, hedgerow trees and small pockets of unimproved grassland provide ecological connectivity between this core and the fringing farmland and wider countryside.
- The Chase has the highest proportion of woodland cover for any English National Landscape (54%). Nearly 75% of the woodland area is being actively managed, mainly by Forestry England. The recently revised Forest Design Plan provides the opportunity to carefully manage and minimise any impacts on the landscape.
- Around 24% of Cannock Chase is farmland – the lowest proportion for any National Landscape in England. The majority of this area is permanent grassland. The total number of all livestock has dropped significantly over the five year period between 2016 to 2021. Since 2008 there has been a downward trend in the recorded farm labour workforce. The total area of land in the National Landscape under agri-environment schemes has fallen from 31.6% in 2018 to 24.3% in 2023. Structural change in agriculture may have a significant impact on the special qualities of the National Landscape.
- A low resident population, small numbers of businesses, and strong protective policies for the National Landscape mean that development pressure within the designated area has generally been low. Only 3% of the National Landscape is built-up, mainly confined to the periphery of the boundary. There is an ongoing need, however, to ensure that development is sensitive to the character of the local landscape. The National Landscape Team has produced a Design Guide, and a Views and Setting Guide to encourage high quality design that respects the area's distinctive character, and protect views.
- Between 1956 and 2022, the extent of built-up land within a 10km radius of the National Landscape increased by 365%, from 3,789 hectares to 13,866 hectares. In several places development has come right up to the boundary, threatening to disrupt landscape connectivity between the National Landscape and the surrounding countryside. A further estimated 42,529 new dwellings planned to be built within 15km of Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation over the period 2019-40 will have significant impacts on the special qualities of the National Landscape through additional visitor numbers, volume of traffic, noise, light and air pollution.

Scenic quality

- There were no noticeable changes to the appearance and condition of the landscape at 37 viewpoints (61%); whilst 22 viewpoints (36%) showed signs of deterioration and only 1 showed improvement. Growth of planted / self-sown trees was the main reason for the deterioration in appearance and condition of the landscape.

Relative wildness and tranquillity

- Compared with surrounding conurbations, Cannock Chase is still an oasis of tranquillity. The most tranquil areas are in the heathland and forest core, away from the major visitor hubs, honeypots, roads and proximity to surrounding settlements. The small area of built-up land and very low overall population density compared with the surrounding settlements, retains the area's feel of wildness and tranquillity.
- The continued expansion of built-up land in surrounding areas together with the increase in traffic and light spillage, threatens to gradually erode tranquillity within the National Landscape.
- Cannock Chase has the highest average levels of light pollution when compared to all the other National Landscapes in England. However, large parts remain relatively dark for people to enjoy night skies. A Good Lighting Guide has been produced to help reduce pollution from artificial light.

Natural heritage

- A significant proportion (31%) of the National Landscape is protected for biodiversity, including internationally important areas of lowland heathland. A large proportion of the protected area (89%) is owned by public and charitable bodies who are delivering a wide variety of conservation projects on their land to sustain and enhance nature. Both public and private land managers have benefitted from the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, and there is concern about the support that will be available after the programme ends in March 2025.
- 6.25% of the total number of SSSI features in the National Landscape are assessed to be in favourable condition. 75% are in unfavourable – recovering condition. None of the 16 SSSI features in the National Landscape is considered to have actions on track to achieve favourable condition. Deposition / concentration levels of ammonia and nitrogen exceed the critical load range for dry heath habitat, threatening its ecological status.
- The ecological status of 5 out of 7 water bodies that intersect with Cannock Chase National Landscape is rated poor or bad. Only one watercourse is rated good. Only one water body has improved since 2019.
- The National Landscape includes six protected sites for geodiversity, of which three have a positive conservation condition.
- The status of key plant and animal species is mixed and unclear. Consistent long-term monitoring is not in place for some species.
 - Between 1992 – 2022, breeding numbers of 10 bird species have increased, declined for 15 species, and shown no significant changes for 12 species.
 - White-clawed crayfish have been recorded from 9 out of 27 watercourses on the Chase in 2023 (down from 11 in 2014)
 - At least 9 bat species have been recorded on the Chase (out of 12 species for the whole of Staffordshire).
 - Cannock Chase is the last remaining population in Staffordshire for small pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly, but numbers of sightings have declined over the last 20 years to a few individuals in the Sherbrook, and the species is assessed as being vulnerable to extinction.
 - In 2017 3 out of 6 keynote heathland plant species were recorded as present on the Chase.

Cultural heritage

- Around 6% of the number of heritage assets within the National Landscape are nationally significant and protected. The remaining 94% are 'non-designated' and have no formal protection, but contribute greatly to local character, sense of place and natural beauty of the National Landscape.
- There are currently no heritage assets in the National Landscape on the national 'Heritage at Risk Register' maintained by Historic England, although a number are known to be vulnerable to neglect, decay and inappropriate use and management.
- The heritage of Cannock Chase National Landscape is rich and diverse, with nearly 1,300 recorded heritage assets. The proportion of the area/number of heritage assets that is under long-term positive management is relatively low (2% in 2018). During the Plan period a number of projects have started (through funding from HS2 and the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme) that are helping to conserve and enhance heritage assets.

Additional qualities (these apply to public understanding and enjoyment of natural beauty, and climate change considerations).

- The population of the National Landscape is around 9,000 people, the vast majority of which (96%) consider themselves to be White British. It has a generally high age profile, and low levels of multiple deprivation. In 2021, 19.3% of the population of the National Landscape had physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expecting to last 12 months or more.
- Many residents and visitors value the Chase and make use of the opportunities it provides for outdoor exercise and contact with nature. Some people, however, experience unintentional barriers to engagement, leading to exclusion or feeling unwelcome.
- 430 businesses are registered within the National Landscape. 52% of the resident population is in employment. 2019 figures show that tourism spend in 2019 generated £47 million. There are few examples of businesses taking advantage of their unique location and relationship with the National Landscape.
- Community involvement in the National Landscape is significant. In 2022, over 600 volunteers contributed 47,400 hours engaged on a range of activities helping to keep Cannock Chase special and provide a visitor welcome (24.6 FTE equivalent).
- An estimated 3 million visits are made to the National Landscape every year (excluding visits to the main attractions). Visitor numbers are increasing, and expected to rise by 15% over the next decade. Visitors (and residents) enjoy the extensive areas of accessible greenspace and rights of way. The SAC Partnership Detailed Implementation Plans for car parks and site users set out a framework to meet and provide for increasing recreational demand that enhances the experience for people and nature.
- The combination of statutory and permissive access gives the public some 3,531 hectares to explore and enjoy (51.5% of the National Landscape), as well 157kms of Public Rights of Way, canal towpaths, sections of long-distance recreational trails, designated cycle trails and easy-access trails for disabled people.
- In 2023 nearly 500 issues were reported about the Public Rights of Way in the National Landscape.
- The total annual CO² emissions from residents, visitors travelling to/from and whilst inside the AONB, and industry is estimated at 237,254 tCO² per year. Residents emit more than half (56%) of this total.
- Carbon sequestration targets for the National Landscape to be net zero by 2034 include planting 10ha of new woodland each year.

- 1,340,124 tonnes of carbon is stored in all of the land use types and habitats on Cannock Chase.
- Woodland (coniferous, deciduous and mixed woodlands) has the largest carbon store of any land use type/habitat on Cannock Chase (62% of all the carbon stored).
- Cannock Chase has small areas of peatland deposits that could contribute to net zero targets, but their extent, depth and condition is unknown.
- The estimated extent of the canopy cover of trees outside woodland is 168 ha.

Appendix 2.

Summary of the key forces for change affecting the natural beauty and special qualities of Cannock Chase (taken from the updated State of the AONB report 2024)

Climate change

The latest UK climate projections (2022)¹ show an increased chance of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers along with an increase in the frequency and intensity of extremes. These changes are predicted to:

- Reduce the amount of carbon stored in the soil due to changes in the vegetation cover.
- Change soil temperatures and moisture levels, making farm planning difficult.
- Increase the threat of soil erosion and further loss of soil fertility.
- Increase the risk of flooding, wildfires and problem pests and diseases, and
- Further reduce water tables.

These impacts will likely alter the character of historic and designed landscapes, change species distribution and composition of habitats, threaten above and below ground archaeology, and damage the fabric of historic buildings. Additionally, the measures we take to mitigate and adapt to climate change, for example, tree planting, restoration of peatlands, and adapting forestry and agricultural practices may also have profound effects on the character of the landscape, habitats and species, as well as soil, air and water quality.

The UK Government passed laws in 2019 to end its contribution to global warming by 2050². This means the UK will be required to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by that date. In 2022, Cannock Chase National Landscape established a baseline of greenhouse gas emissions and adopted a pathway to reach net zero by 2034³.

As published in the Third National Adaptation Programme⁴, all Protected Landscapes will be required to have a climate adaptation management plan produced, embedded in, or linked with, their statutory management plans by 2028. This will include ‘smart’ actions and objectives designed to adapt to climate change. The Government’s Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework⁵ includes 3 climate change targets for protected landscapes:

- Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels.
- Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat by 2050.
- Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area by 2050 (from 2022 baseline).

Nature recovery

The fourth UK State of Nature Report published in 2023⁶ lays bare the stark fact that the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, and that nature is still declining. To stop the decline and facilitate nature recovery, concerted action is required to:

- Improve the quality of protected sites.
- Protect more, bigger, better and joined up places for wildlife.

¹ UK Climate Projections: Headline Findings. Met Office, August 2022

² The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019

³ A greenhouse gas emissions assessment and target scenario for the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Small World Consulting, 2022

⁴ The third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3). Defra, 2023

⁵ Policy paper. Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework. Defra, 2024

⁶ State of Nature 2023 – report on the UK’s current biodiversity. State of nature partnership. 2023

- Reduce pollution, and
- Adopt targeted species recovery action.

Fortunately, Cannock Chase National Landscape still supports extensive areas of high value for nature, as well as other land with potential to be improved for nature. Ambitions for more, bigger and better managed and connected areas for nature will increase resilience to climate change impacts. A number of existing and planned large-scale landscape restoration projects on the Chase will be positive drivers for habitats and wildlife. These include heathland restoration works on Cannock Chase Country Park, Gentleshaw Common and Shoal Hill Common; the restoration of wood-pasture on the Shugborough Estate being carried out by the National Trust; forestry management in Cannock Chase Forest; as well as the numerous landscape and habitat improvements delivered on farms across the Chase through the Government's Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (2021-25).

The Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023⁷ views protected landscapes as key to halting and reversing the decline in species abundance and contributing to the international commitment to protect 30% of land for nature by 2030 (30by30)⁸. The Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework includes 5 targets for thriving plants and wildlife targets for Protected Landscapes:

- Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline).
- Bring 80% of SSSIs into favourable condition by 2042.
- 60% of SSSIs assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028.
- Continuing favourable management of all existing priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042.
- Ensuring at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030.

Co-ordinated action for nature recovery on areas of particular importance will also be driven through the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Staffordshire. In the West Midlands, the Purple Horizons landscape-scale recovery project is aiming to restore fragmented blocks of heathland between Cannock Chase and Sutton Park in Birmingham.

New diseases and invasive species are continually arriving on Cannock Chase due to changing climatic conditions and human activities. The number of established non-native species on the Chase is unknown, and the impacts have not been properly assessed.

Environmental quality

Clean air, clean and plentiful water, and healthy soils are fundamental to nature recovery, as well as being the foundation for the ecosystem services that benefit those living in and around the National Landscape, and those visiting or working in it. The wide range of threats to environmental quality include:

- Population growth and the rising demand for housing increasing the amount of agricultural and rural land being built on. Once soil is lost, its ability to deliver its

⁷ Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. First Revision of the 25 Year Environment Plan. Defra, 2023.

⁸ Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. UN Convention on Biological Diversity, 2022

functions is very difficult to retrieve. Development seals up soils, preventing them from accumulating organic matter in addition to providing other important ecosystem services, such as, water storage.

- Increasing traffic adding to air pollutants. The switch to electric vehicles and more active travel could, however, reduce overall emissions of air pollutants from road vehicles travelling through Cannock Chase or visiting the National Landscape.
- Changes to the types of crops grown which can present a risk to soil health and water quality. For example, maize is subject to high rates of erosion due to its shallow roots.
- Agriculture is a major source of local contributions to air pollutants affecting the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (nitrogen, ammonia and nitrogen oxides). Agricultural practices can also have significant effects on water quality. For example, nitrogen and phosphate-rich fertilisers and animal manure are the primary sources of nutrient pollution of surface water and groundwater, and
- The recharge zone for the Cannock Chase aquifer is estimated to cover 70 km² of which some 40% is under plantation. The main ecohydrological impacts of these plantations are likely to be through interception of precipitation, increased transpiration, and consequently changes to the recharge of the aquifer.

The Government's Environmental Improvement Plan sets out actions to drive improvements for clean air; clean and plentiful water, and improved soil health to meet new national targets.

To achieve clean air the Government plans to cut overall air pollution by tackling key sources of emissions, and incentivising farmers to reduce ammonia emissions. The National Air Quality Strategy 2023⁹ provides a strategic framework for local authorities and other partners to improve air quality. It includes national emission reduction commitments for overall UK emissions of 5 damaging air pollutants:

- fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5})
- ammonia (NH₃)
- nitrogen oxides (NO_x)
- sulphur dioxide (SO₂), and
- non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOCs)

To improve water quality and supply, the Government plans to upgrade wastewater treatment works, restore 400 miles of river through landscape recovery and new woodlands, and ensure water companies deliver a 50% reduction on leakages by 2050. The Water Environment Regulations 2017¹⁰ set out requirements to prevent the deterioration of surface and groundwater aquatic ecosystems; protect, enhance and restore water bodies to 'good' status; and achieve compliance with standards and objectives for protected areas. Local planning authorities must, in exercising their functions, have regard to River Basin Management Plans. These plans contain the main issues for the water environment and the actions needed to tackle them. Cannock Chase is covered by the Humber River Basin District river basin management plan¹¹.

For soils, the Environmental Improvement Plan includes a new target to bring at least 40% of England's agricultural soil into sustainable management by 2028 through new farming schemes and increase that to 60% by 2030. The Plan also commits to several factors that will establish

⁹ Policy paper. Air quality strategy: framework for local authority delivery, Defra 2023

¹⁰ The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017

¹¹ Policy paper. Humber river basin district river basin management plan 2017

comprehensive baseline data including to “establish a soil health indicator under the 25 Year Environment Plan Outcome Indicator Framework”.

The Staffordshire Local Transport Plan for Staffordshire¹² is being updated in 2024, and will include priorities to promote sustainable travel, eradicate carbon emissions from local road traffic, and promote clean air.

Land management

Woodland and farmland cover over 75% of the National Landscape. Forestry and agricultural practices have a major bearing, therefore, on the natural beauty and special qualities of the Chase, as well as the quality of air, water and soil health.

Since the preparation of the last Management Plan, the UK has left the European Union, and the transition to a new environmental land management scheme is ongoing. The new system will move away from subsidies to farmers, to centre on support that rewards farmers and land managers for sustainable farming practices that improve the environment and animal health and welfare, and reduce carbon emissions. The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (2021-25) is part of the Government’s Agricultural Transition Plan, offering funding for farmers and land managers in National Landscapes and National Parks to deliver projects that achieve outcomes for nature, climate, people and place. At the time of writing, the future of the programme is uncertain after 2025.

National targets to expand forestry and woodland cover, combined with local changes to silvicultural systems and choice of species to increase resilience to disease and the effects of climate change, will affect the appearance of the landscape and impact on natural and cultural heritage.

The Environment Act includes a legally binding target to increase the combined canopy of woodlands and trees outside woodlands in England to 16.5% by 2050. The Government has also committed to protecting 30% of our land area by 2030 for nature, with tree planting and effective woodland management being a key initiative in the creation of more wildlife-rich habitat. Locally, Cannock Chase needs to plant 10 ha of new woodland each year (alongside other land use carbon sequestration measures) if it is to reach its target of being net zero by 2034. Tree planting and woodland management for wildlife will also form a key component of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Staffordshire. The Forest of Mercia (which covers South Staffordshire and the Black Country) will continue to work with private and public landowners to fund woodland creation projects that help deliver the government’s commitment to increase tree planting.

Cannock Chase Forest covers over 35% of the National Landscape and provides a wide variety of ecosystem services through timber production, carbon sequestration and storage, and the diverse range of habitats and recreational opportunities it supports. A new ten-year Forest Design Plan 2024-34¹³ is in preparation that will set out management objectives for the area.

Growth and development

Despite being a National Landscape, Cannock Chase is not immune from development pressure. The demand for small-scale new build, conversion, renovation of existing structures and other minor development within the designated area can change the character of the landscape and negatively impact on landscape quality, biodiversity and heritage.

¹² Staffordshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – Strategy Plan, Staffordshire County Council 2011

¹³ Cannock Chase Forest Plan 2024-2034. Forestry England 2024

The spread of built-up land around the National Landscape since its designation in 1958 has been extensive and has brought development hard up to the designated boundary in several places. Significant new areas of housing continue to be built close to the National Landscape, and further areas are being allocated in Local Plans. Cumulatively, the continuing spread of urbanisation threatens to sever the protected area from its rural hinterland, erode its character and setting, and reduce tranquillity (for example, from light spillage into the area, increasing volumes of traffic and traffic noise).

Urban expansion around the Chase also risks weakening its historic connections with surrounding settlements and communities, diminishing its sense of place and identity. The increasing population will swell the demand for recreation within the protected landscape, with consequences for the conservation of the area's special qualities and the provision and management of visitor infrastructure.

National and local planning policies have largely protected the National Landscape from development, but little noticeable account is taken about cumulative impacts. In 2012 tranquillity gained recognition in national planning policy for the first time¹⁴. The Government now encourages local authorities to identify and protect areas that are valued by the public for their tranquillity. Artificial light was made a statutory nuisance in 2005¹⁵. Local authorities have a duty to take reasonably practicable steps to investigate complaints of 'artificial light emitted from premises so as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance'. The Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006¹⁶ apply to environmental noise, mainly from transport. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends exposure levels from road traffic noise of <53 dBL. before the onset of community nuisance¹⁷.

The Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) occupies the core of the National Landscape and requires that action must be taken to prevent or mitigate any negative impacts of development on the designated features and species. The SAC Partnership has adopted an action plan of measures^{18 19} which will continue during the period of the new AONB Management Plan.

The National Landscape Partnership has published technical guidance for local planning authorities, developers and their clients to inform and help maintain the quality and distinctiveness of the National Landscape's landscape character, and enhance its setting:

- Design Guide²⁰
- Views and Setting Guide²¹
- Good Lighting Guide²²
- Highways Design Guide²³

¹⁴ National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2012

¹⁵ Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, section 102

¹⁶ The Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006

¹⁷ Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region. World Health Organisation, 2018

¹⁸ The Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Strategic Access Management & Monitoring Measures Detailed Implementation Plan: Site User Infrastructure, Education and Engagement. Footprint Ecology, 2020

¹⁹ The Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Strategic Access Management & Monitoring Measures Detailed Implementation Plan: Car Parking. Footprint Ecology, 2020

²⁰ Cannock Chase AONB Design Guide, FPCR, 2020

²¹ Cannock Chase AONB Views and Setting Guide. LUC, 2020

²² Light Pollution and Dark Skies in the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding natural Beauty: A Good Lighting Guide. Cannock Chase AONB, 2023

²³ Cannock Chase AONB Highway Design Guide. ARUP and Latham Architects, 2005

The announcement in October 2023 of the cancellation of the leg of HS2 north of Birmingham has removed the anticipated impacts on the views, landscape character and habitat connectivity on the National Landscape where the route of the new line was due to be constructed on a viaduct across the Trent-Sow Valley between Great Haywood and Tixall. Attention is now focused on removing and making good construction sites and compounds as well as concluding the package of environmental enhancement measures.

Tourism and recreation

The forecast growth in population in surrounding areas over the next 20 years will increase visitor pressures on the National Landscape as well as volume of traffic, and both will need to be managed. Large number of visitors can exacerbate issues that have a negative impact on biodiversity and heritage, such as, erosion along popular access routes, wildlife disturbance, erosion of archaeological features, litter, wildfires, and aiding the spread of pests and diseases, for example, phytophthora. Travel to and around the National Landscape has a high carbon footprint, so developing sustainable travel options will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Changes in recreational activities will also impact on the area's special qualities. For example, night-time cycling reduces tranquillity and disturbs wildlife. Technological innovation, such as, improvements to the performance capabilities of e-bikes increases the length of time people will cycle for and the type of terrain they can tackle. Climate change is affecting recreational behaviours, patterns and impacts, for example, lengthening the visitor season and increasing the risk of wildfires.

The quality of the visitor welcome and experience will have a lasting impression on people's perceptions about the National Landscape which will, in turn, influence their willingness to help look after it. Visitor spend in the National Landscape brings economic benefits to local businesses, and increasing numbers of visitors may provide opportunities for the tourism sector, but pressures will need to be managed. The National Landscape has developed a business toolkit to encourage local businesses to make more of their location and association with one of England's finest landscapes.

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan 2018²⁴ recognises the contribution that Cannock Chase makes to the overall visitor appeal of Staffordshire, and has a long-term interest in strengthening the visitor economy.

The Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Partnership is working to use statutory planning processes and specific site and visitor management measures to secure appropriate mitigation for the impacts on the Cannock Chase SAC from development plan policies and proposals. These include measures for car parks as well as education and engagement. The Cannock Chase Code was introduced in 2022 and adopted by the major public landowners, local authorities and emergency services to promote responsible behaviours and encourage walkers, cyclists and horse riders to keep to designated paths and trails and safeguard sensitive places for wildlife and heritage.

Health and wellbeing

Cannock Chase is a regionally significant amenity for large numbers of people, providing opportunities for outdoor exercise and contact with nature. The National Landscape also provides an important focus for community involvement in the conservation and enhancement

²⁴ Strategic Economic Plan. Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Enterprise Partnership, 2018

of its natural beauty. In turn, volunteers provide invaluable support to a range of organisations, helping to deliver a wide range of activities that contribute to the vision and objectives for the conservation and enhancement of the area.

The evidence is overwhelming that a thriving, wildlife-rich environment benefits our physical and mental health²⁵. The Government wants to increase our connection with the environment, and the Environmental Improvement Plan includes the following commitments:

- Everyone should live within 15 minutes' walk of a green or blue space
- Conserving and enhancing landscapes and the historic and natural environment for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

Staffordshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy²⁶ sets out key priorities and actions to improve health and wellbeing in the county. It seeks to encourage more physical activity and encourage active travel. The Chase is a resource that can help the NHS, through the Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, to deliver social prescribing to connect patients to activities that improve their health and wellbeing.

Locally, Cannock Chase Council's 'Cannock Chase Can App' hosts a variety of wellness challenges to improve health and wellbeing. The new Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Staffordshire offers opportunities to join up with local health care plans.

Inclusion and diversity

Inequalities exist within the National Landscape and amongst the surrounding communities²⁷. Some people and communities experience unintentional barriers to engagement with the protected landscape which lead to exclusion or feelings of being unwelcome. Such groups include lower income households, people with underlying health conditions, young people and ethnic minorities. The barriers to engagement may include physical obstructions, lack of knowledge, lack of confidence, fear of abuse, inability to access transport, and underlying socio-economic circumstances.

A proactive approach is required to remove the barriers and reach out to these communities to provide greater awareness and opportunities. The Government's aim is for more people, from all backgrounds, to engage with and spend time in green spaces to help improve their health and wellbeing. The **Landscapes Review of England's National Parks and AONBs**²⁸, included several proposals relating to public engagement with protected landscapes, including 'A night under the stars in a national landscape for every child' and 'Landscapes that cater for and improve the nation's health and wellbeing'.

Opportunities for farmers and landowners to improve accessibility have been available through Defra's Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme (2021-25). The design of the new Environmental Land Management Scheme could provide further opportunities for public enjoyment and understanding of the countryside, as well as benefitting the wildlife and landscapes that people come to enjoy.

In 2022 the Government launched Access for All – a 3 year funding programme aiming to improve access to green and blue spaces across England. This included £7.76 million for

²⁵ A narrative review of reviews of nature exposure and human health and well-being in the UK. NEER030. Natural England, 2024

²⁶ Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2027, Staffordshire County Council

²⁷ Cannock Chase AONB Inclusion and Diversity Study. A Meredith Associates and The Research Solution, 2022

²⁸ Landscapes Review. Final Report. 2019

infrastructure improvements to make Protected Landscapes more accessible for people of all ages and abilities. The programme is due to finish on 31 March 2025.

The Government's Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework includes the following access target for protected landscapes:

- Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme.

Locally, the National Landscape is committed to removing barriers to engagement, and making Cannock Chase more welcoming, relevant and inclusive. An accessibility audit for 21 sites within the National Landscape was carried out in 2023, and included over 1,000 recommendations to improve their accessibility. An accompanying Destination Access Guide was published in 2023 to help disabled people and their families and carers better plan for their visits²⁹.

²⁹ Cannock Chase National Landscape Access Audit and Guide. Direct Access, 2023

Appendix 3.

Summary of public perceptions of key issues and priorities for the National Landscape

The online survey ran from 7 May 2024 until 19 June 2024. It was promoted to everyone on the National Landscape Partnership, in our enewsletter and on social media.

Who took part?

We had 217 responses.

The majority of respondents (60%) described themselves as local residents. 23% were recreational users, and 6% visitors to the area. 50% of the respondents are aged between 45 and 65 years. 31% are aged over 65 years. 19% are under 45 years. 6 people considered themselves to be a member of a minority ethnic community, and 40 people responded that they have health issues or disability that limits their daily activities.

The findings

Q1. We asked “when you think of Cannock Chase National Landscape, what features or activities are important to you?”

The 5 most important features or activities for people are (in ascending order):

1. Seeing wildlife (88%)
2. Peace and tranquillity (86%)
3. Great views and wide open spaces (84%)
4. Opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding (79%)
5. Forests (78%)

The 5 least important features or activities for people are (in descending order):

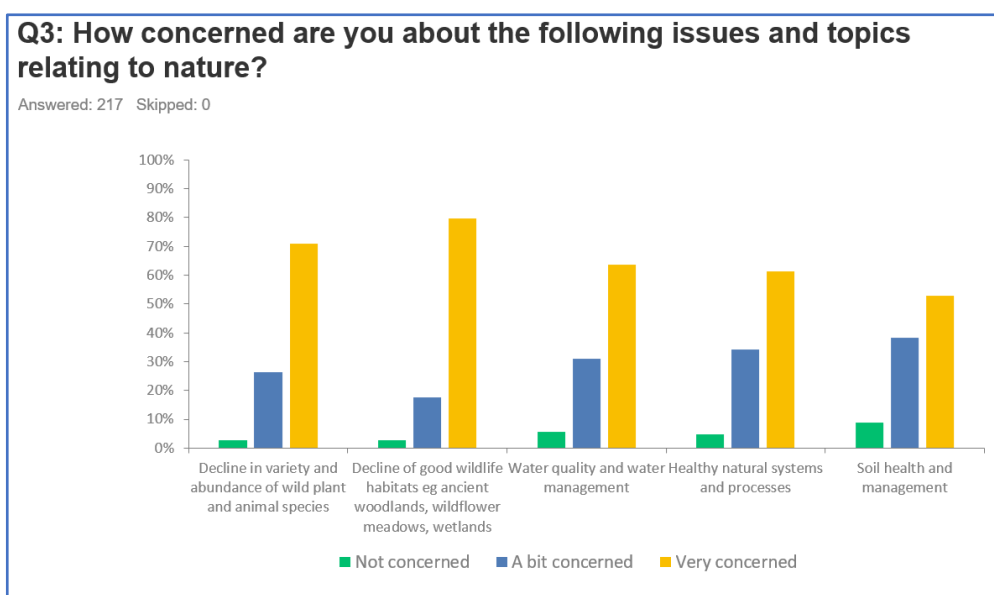
1. Meeting people / social (23%)
2. Timber production (16%)
3. Volunteering (12%)
4. Other (11%)
5. Food production (5%)

Q2. We then asked people “What one thing do you MOST value about Cannock Chase?”

The top 4 answers are:

1. Nature/wildlife
2. Recreation (walking, horse riding, cycling)
3. Beauty, peace and tranquillity
4. Open space / green space

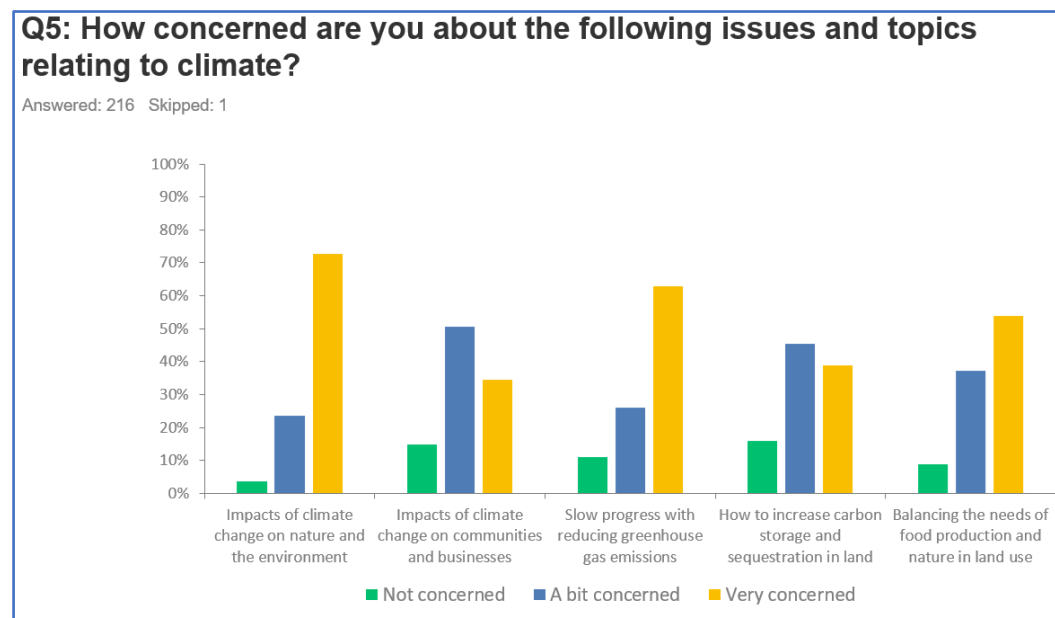
Q3. We asked people how concerned they are about 5 issues relating to nature



Q4. The most frequently raised issues/concerns in relation to nature are:

1. Numbers of visitors and the impacts they have
2. More should be done to protect nature
3. Protection and management of deer

Q5. We asked people how concerned they are about 5 issues relating to climate



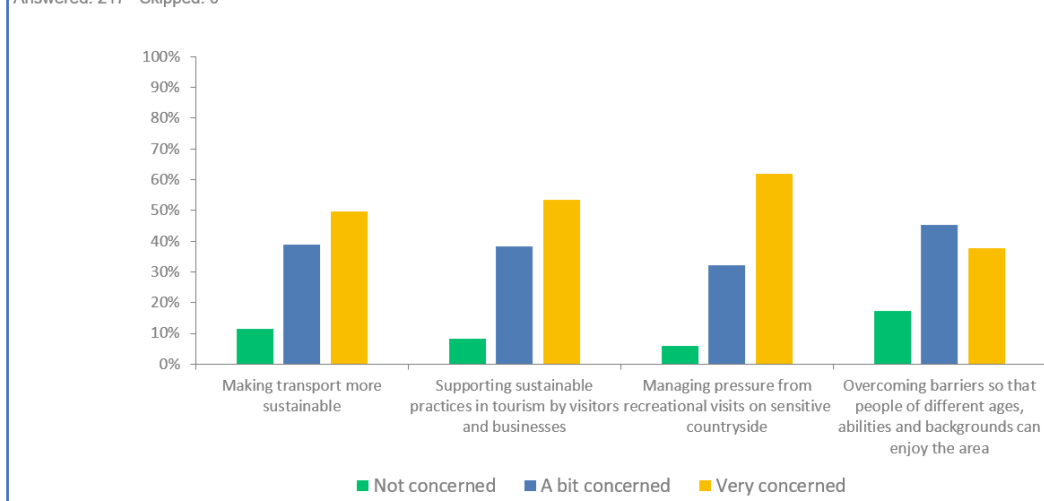
Q6. The most frequently raised issues/concerns in relation to climate are:

1. More action is needed
2. A global issue / not relevant or a priority for Cannock Chase
3. Maintaining forests and trees to capture and store carbon

Q7. We asked people how concerned they are about 4 issues relating to people

Q7: How concerned are you about the following issues and topics relating to people?

Answered: 217 Skipped: 0



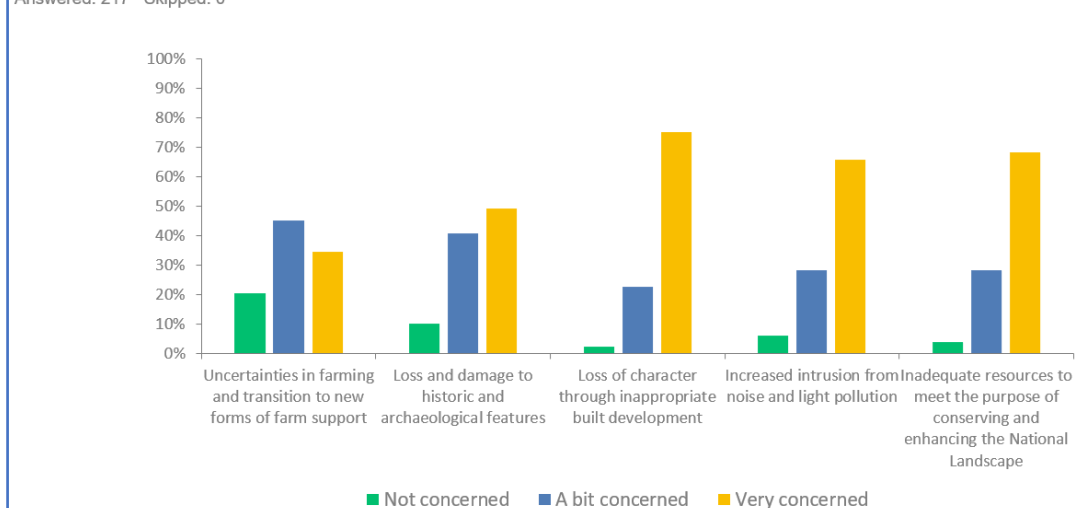
Q8. The most frequently raised issues/concerns in relation to people are:

1. Education to raise awareness of the importance and sensitivity of the Chase and change behaviours
2. Accessibility for all
3. Too many visitors/need to control visitor numbers

Q9. We asked people how concerned they are about 5 issues relating to place

Q9: How concerned are you about the following issues and topics relating to place?

Answered: 217 Skipped: 0



Q10. The most frequently raised issues/concerns in relation to people are:

1. Development pressure/encroachment
2. Support for farmers and sustainable land management
3. Need for more resources to look after the Chase

Q11. We asked people to prioritise a range of challenges facing the Chase.

The top 5 priorities (in ascending order) are:

1. Helping nature to thrive
2. Adapting to climate change
3. Improving environmental quality (soils, air and water)
4. Protecting the landscape from growth and development
5. Conserving heritage

The bottom 5 priorities (in descending order) are:

1. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
2. Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
3. Tackling intrusion from noise and light pollution
4. Supporting opportunities for including young people
5. Supporting volunteering opportunities

Q12. We asked people to think about the way things are done now on the Chase, and to tell us if there is anything that we could do differently.

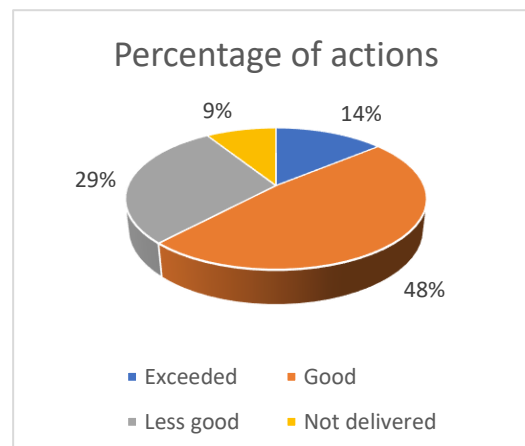
The 3 most frequently mentioned topics are:

1. Visitor management (eg, more wardens/rangers, litter collection, better signage, users keeping to designated routes)
2. Conservation / land management (eg, more trees, better tree management, more/less grazing, more nature)
3. Car parks (eg, removing parking on verges, reviewing parking charges, improving car park condition).

Appendix 4.

Summary of delivery of the Implementation Action Plan for the current AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 (extended to 2025)

Assessment of progress	Number of actions	Percentage
Exceeded	5	14%
Good	17	48%
Less good	10	29%
Not delivered	3	9%
Total	35	100



Significant progress is judged to have been made against the actions from the current Management Plan. Progress is underway to varying degrees of achievement on 90% of the actions (32 out of the 35). Approximately 66% of the actions (23) have been assessed as 'good' or having 'exceeded' what could be expected. Those actions that exceeded expectations largely did so because of additional funding that became available during the Plan period, for example, through the Government's Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (Actions A12 and A13) and Access for All fund (Action A5). Western Power funding made it possible to underground two powerlines (Action A15), whilst the efforts of the Chase Through Time volunteers delivered multiple historic environment projects (Action B9).

Progress is underway on a further 10 actions, but considered to be 'Less good'. The reasons are various and include:

- Competing priorities for resources and capacity within the National Landscape Team to progress some actions (for example, B1 – measures to reduce traffic impacts, B2 – influencing woodland owners and managers, B5 – the preparation of a deer management strategy, B6 - work on non-native invasive species)
- Reappraisal of what is required for the action and a decision taken to consider alternatives (for example, A4 - the need for a Cannock Chase Landscape Trust (CIO) and investigation of a replacement model in the form of a Charitable Fund)
- Challenges in bringing together partners to deliver co-ordinated action (for example, A6 – promoting and co-ordinating the recruitment of volunteers)
- New national initiatives, such as, the re-naming of AONBs as National Landscapes has had major implications for some actions (for example, A11 the development of social media)

Three actions have not been delivered:

- *B7: Develop a project to identify suitable heathland restoration areas on conifer plantations, acquiring land for compensation planting and planning a phased approach to delivery.* A feasibility study was undertaken, but the estimated costs of a potential large-scale restoration project were considered unaffordable. The review of the Cannock Chase Forest Plan presents opportunities for smaller-scale heathland restoration/creation projects to progress in the next Plan period.

- *B12: Work with facility providers and attractions within the AONB to encourage visitors to arrive by sustainable means of transport through provision of information, incentives such as discounts and the provision of facilities such as secure bicycle parking. No known measures have been implemented during the current Plan period. The new Plan will need to include activities, such as, sustainable travel, that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help to mitigate the impacts of climate change.*
- *B15: Report progress with the new Ground Water modelling being undertaken by the Environment Agency and PWS companies to ensure sustainable abstractions. No progress has been reported by partners. Natural England is planning to conduct a hydrological investigation in the Sherbrook Valley during 2024. The impact of groundwater supply and quality remain important considerations for the protection and conservation of the hydrological systems within the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC).*

Many of the actions are long-term and ongoing and remain relevant. They will, therefore, need to be taken forward and considered in the new Plan, alongside additional actions from new imperatives and initiatives.

Appendix 5

Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework

Protected Landscape targets that must be included in the new Management Plan

Thriving plants and wildlife targets (5 targets)

*Target 1. Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline).

Target 2. Bring 80% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042.

Target 3. For 60% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028.

Target 4. Continuing favourable management of all existing priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042.

Target 5. Ensuring at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030.

Mitigating and adapting to climate change targets (3 targets)

Target 6. Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels.

*Target 7. Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat in Protected Landscapes by 2050.

* Target 8. Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline).

Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environmental targets (2 targets)

Target 9. Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme.

Target 10. Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes

NB. Asterisked targets (1, 7 and 8) need to be apportioned (shared) to reflect the local circumstances of individual Protected Landscapes more accurately.

Item 8	Update on National Landscape team activities
Item for:	Information
Author:	Verbal report of the National Landscape Team
Financial implications:	Activities are funded through AONB core funding provided by Defra, together with any externally funded programmes, and the actions of partner organisations
Recommendations:	The Committee notes the report and is invited to ask questions.

Item 9 National Landscape Annual Review 2023-24

Item for: Decision

Author: Samantha Hall, Communications Officer

Financial implications: Provision for desktop publishing the Annual Review is allowed within the National Landscape budget.

Recommendations: The Committee approves the National Landscape Annual Review 2023-24 for publication, with any amendments.

Background

1. The production of an Annual Review summarising the year's achievements of the National Landscape Partnership is an essential component of the National Landscape's Communication Strategy. It provides an opportunity to:
 - Record formally the Partnership's successes in delivering our core purpose to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of Cannock Chase
 - Demonstrate our ability to deliver through examples of our work
 - Showcase what we are about, and why partners would want to work with us
 - Provide financial details of the Partnership and its ability to manage its financial affairs
 - Raise our profile nationally to Defra, that we offer value for money, and that we are contributing within the National Landscape family to the national agenda for protected landscapes.

Overview – National Landscape activities

2. The Annual Review for 2023-24 highlights a selection of the key activities we have delivered with our partners and volunteers under the themes Nature, Climate, People and Place:

3.

Nature

- Livestock grazing; Aquatic invertebrates; Long eared owls; Conserving adders; FiPL funding for white clawed crayfish; breeding success of Nightjar; Deer management; Cannock Chase used as a case study by National Landscapes Association.

Climate

- FiPL funded natural solutions including 5592m of hedgerow; Good Lighting Guide; CPRE Dark Skies event; Carbon stores.

People

- Volunteering; Farmer engagement; Horse riding survey; SAC Partnership Dog Awareness; Future Guardians Launch; Joint Committee new members; Sustainable Development Fund; Defra's Access for All fund; induction slide deck.

Place

- HS2; Monitoring Assets; FiPL; Rebranding to National Landscapes; National Landscapes Association Conference; Cannock Chase National Landscape Conference; Media coverage.

Overview – National Landscape finances

4. Financially our income and expenditure balanced at £0. The Defra grant included an additional allocation for a second year of funding from the Access for All Fund. An additional £3,000 was received from the National Landscapes Association to help with the re-brand to National Landscape.
5. The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme awarded £263,082 of grants for environmental outcomes.

Recommendation

6. The Committee approves the Annual Review for publication, with any amendments.

Appendices (issued separately)

Annual Review 2023-24

Item 10**Date, time and venue of next meeting**

Monday 9 December 2024, 2-4 pm (Wolseley Centre)

Monday 10 March 2025, 2-4 pm (Wolseley Centre)