

# Cannock Chase National Landscape

Guide for highways improvement  
and management



SLOW



**Cannock  
Chase**  
National  
Landscape



**Staffordshire**  
County Council



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# Introduction and background

Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of England's National Landscapes and has been protected since 1958 for the natural beauty of its heaths, forests and historic parklands, presenting an unspoilt wilderness that contrasts with the surrounding conurbations of the West Midlands. Recreation is not an objective of AONB designation, but the demand for recreation is met in so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty, and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses on the Chase.

Cannock Chase is the smallest National Landscape in mainland England, covering just 69 sq kms. The towns of Stafford, Rugeley, Burntwood, Cannock, Hednesford and Penkridge lie on its periphery, connected by a busy main road network that also cuts across the area. A network of minor roads criss-cross parts of the interior of the Chase, though some areas are poorly served by roads. As most visitors arrive on the Chase by private vehicle, the highway is an important initial point of contact between the public and the National Landscape. The appearance of entry points into the protected area and landscapes viewed from the highway network are part of the visitor experience and have a major influence on the public's perception and attitude towards the area.

Cannock Chase AONB published a Highways Design Guide in 2005 which highlighted key aspects of highway management that could help enhance the visitor experience and the landscape, biodiversity and cultural associations of the AONB. The theme of highway enhancement and the desire to reduce the impact of traffic on the natural beauty of the AONB remains an action in the latest edition of the AONB Management Plan 2025-2030<sup>1</sup>. Building on the original work, this updated guide includes recommendations and aspirations for delivering enhancements where opportunities arise through planned maintenance and where feasible through targeted improvements.

There is a tendency for highways to suburbanise and standardise the landscape. The guide includes a set of key principles intended to inform and inspire all those involved in making alterations to the highway, highway infrastructure, and in verge management in the National Landscape, so as to conserve and enhance the area whilst ensuring a safe and convenient road network for all users and modes of transport. The guide has been prepared jointly by the Cannock Chase National Landscape Team and Staffordshire County Council (the Highway Authority for the area).

1. Cannock Chase National Landscape Joint Committee, AONB Management Plan 2025-2030, (1st April 2025)



# Types of roads within the National Landscape

There are four primary routes (A34, A460, A513, A51) within or on the boundary of the National Landscape. Of these the A460 cuts directly through the centre of the designated area, while the others tend towards the edges. Key attractors such as Milford, Shugborough Park and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's Wolseley Centre are located along the A513. One secondary route (B5012) crosses the National Landscape near Shoal Hill. Several C roads provide transport connections across and on the perimeter of the area. These include Penkridge Bank Road and Chase Road. These routes are often straight and are heavily used by commuters and commercial traffic travelling at speed, as well as by visitors. Penkridge Bank is the most prone to use by commuter traffic and also takes much of the visitor traffic.



Advisory 40 mph signage

In addition, outside village centres there are approximately 20 miles of unclassified roads. The main concentration of these is a network of narrow winding lanes, often with hedge banks, around Gentleshaw and Cannock Wood in the south-east corner of the National Landscape that contribute to the intimate character of the area. Elsewhere unclassified roads provide connections between settlements as well as access to Cannock Chase Visitor Centre on Marquis's Drive, Cannock Chase Forest and car parks across the area.

Speed restrictions in the National Landscape generally comply with the UK Government Highway Code. Outside settlements most roads are derestricted, except at some junction approaches where statutory 40 mph limits are in force. An advisory speed limit of 40 mph operates across the main body of the Chase to reduce the risk of deer collisions and respect the tranquil quality of the area.

Marquis's Drive and Camp Road are metalled rights of way. Traffic calming is installed on Camp Road.



Camp Road traffic calming



# Table 1 Highways in the National Landscape

| Road                                                                | Direction       | Length within the National Landscape (miles) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <b>A Roads</b>                                                      |                 |                                              |
| A460                                                                | SW - NE         | 2.8                                          |
| A51                                                                 | E-W             | 0.3 (on northern boundary)                   |
| A513                                                                | E-W             | 4.1                                          |
| A34                                                                 | N-S             | 3.3 (on western boundary)                    |
| A34                                                                 | N-S             | 0.3                                          |
| <b>Total</b>                                                        |                 | <b>8.8</b>                                   |
| <b>B roads</b>                                                      |                 |                                              |
| B5012 Cannock Road                                                  | NW-SE           | 0.7                                          |
| <b>C roads</b>                                                      |                 |                                              |
| Penkridge Bank Rd/ Broadhurst Green Rd                              | SE-NW           | 4.4                                          |
| Camp Rd / Broadhurst Green                                          | N-S             | 3.2                                          |
| Brocton Rd, Milford to Sawpit Lane                                  | NE-SW           | 1.7                                          |
| Holdiford Road / Tixall Road                                        | N-S             | 1.8 (on NW boundary)                         |
| Brereton Road / Rawsley Road                                        | NE-SW           | 3                                            |
| <b>Total</b>                                                        |                 | <b>14.1</b>                                  |
| <b>Unclassified roads outside villages</b>                          |                 |                                              |
| Birches Valley / Brindley Road                                      | SW-NE           | 2.8                                          |
| Marquis's Drive / Brindley Heath Road                               | N-S             | 1.7                                          |
| Kingsley Wood / Stafford Brook Road and others west of Etching hill |                 | 3.2                                          |
| Upper Longdon to Rugeley                                            |                 | 2.5                                          |
| Upper Longdon to Gentleshaw                                         | N-S             | 2.6 part on eastern boundary                 |
| Cannock Wood / Gentleshaw area                                      | Complex network | 5                                            |
| Cocksparrow Lane and Shoal Hill area                                |                 | 3 (partly on western boundary)               |
| <b>Total</b>                                                        |                 | <b>20.8</b>                                  |
| <b>Metalled Rights of Way</b>                                       |                 |                                              |
| Chase Road                                                          |                 | 1.6                                          |
| Marquis's Drive                                                     |                 | 0.3                                          |
| <b>Total</b>                                                        |                 | <b>1.9</b>                                   |

A map of road status in the National Landscape is included in Appendix 1



# Responsibilities

The Highway Authority (Staffordshire County Council) has a duty to create a safe and efficient highway network, and this needs to be reconciled with the statutory requirement of the National Landscape to ensure that the natural beauty of the area is conserved. This guide has been prepared with the aim of ensuring that highway management and improvements are sympathetic to and enhance the natural beauty of Cannock Chase National Landscape. Natural beauty encompasses landscape quality, scenic quality, perceptual qualities (like tranquillity and wildness), natural and cultural heritage. Key to this is the desire to:

- **Ensure that highway improvements and management reinforce the local landscape character and avoid harm to wildlife and archaeology.**
- **Create a welcoming and safe experience for visitors and a positive first impression of Cannock Chase and all it offers, including vehicle users, cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians.**
- **Enhance the 'sense of place' and local distinctiveness of Cannock Chase whilst creating a safe and legible environment for all users.**



View of Brindley Heath from Brindley Road

# Status of the guide

This guide is one of a number of technical documents and strategies produced by the National Landscape Partnership that support the AONB Management Plan 2025-2030. The Management Plan itself represents local authority policy for managing the National Landscape and for carrying out local authority functions in relation to that policy.

By following this guidance relevant authorities, such as local authorities, statutory undertakers and other organisations with an influence on highways and highway verges will fulfil their statutory duty under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 to "seek to further the purpose conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area" when discharging their functions.<sup>2</sup> The duty is an active duty, not passive, which means that relevant authorities should seek to both avoid harm and positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty and special qualities of the area, using the AONB Management Plan to inform and guide their work.

The key principles and recommendations set out in this guide do not change any safety, technical or environmental standards or other obligations that exist. The guide should be read in conjunction with - highway design standards where these apply, the Traffic Signs Manual<sup>3</sup>, British Standards, Good Practice Guidance and Natural England's advice on wildlife legislation.

# Environmental considerations

Environmental factors must be fully considered when planning highway improvements and maintenance. Impacts on the biodiversity, landscape, archaeology and natural beauty of the area will need to be assessed and mitigated on a site-by-site basis, as well as contributing to enhancement. Specialist professional advice should be sought at an early stage to ensure environmental issues are fully considered and resolved. Cannock Chase supports protected plants and animals for which separate consents may be required under wildlife legislation prior to work commencing. Works that may directly or indirectly affect Sites of Special Scientific Interest and/or the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) require specific consents and may require a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). Appropriate timing of any ecological surveys will need to be factored in to work programmes. Maps 2 and 3 appended show the Natural Environment Designated Areas and Historic Environment Designated Areas respectively.

2. Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, 2023, pt. 12, s. 245. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/55/section/245>  
3. Traffic Signs Manual. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-signs-manual>



## Deer and deer collisions

Deer movement around the National Landscape can be a challenge to landowners and road users. Vehicle collisions may kill the deer instantly though often the animal has to be humanely destroyed due to fatal injury. The collision can also seriously damage the vehicle involved and risks personal injury to driver and passenger. Collisions usually occur after dark and require out of hours attendance for rangers and the emergency services.

**Table 2: Vehicle collisions with deer between 2015-20 on the five main roads through the Chase**

|                     | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|---------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Penkridge Bank Road | 40   | 32   | 30   | 25   | 14   | 29   |
| Camp Road           | 10   | 13   | 9    | 9    | 11   | 12   |
| A513                | 13   | 17   | 14   | 18   | 23   | 21   |
| A460                | 12   | 7    | 4    | 5    | 2    | 9    |
| A34                 | 20   | 20   | 14   | 15   | 13   | 16   |

Staffordshire County Council, in collaboration with other major landowners, employs a variety of deer deterrents alongside the highway to reduce the risk of vehicle collisions. These generally involve reflectors to scatter light from headlights and discourage the deer from entering the road. Figures in Table 2 appear to indicate some success in reducing deer casualties up until 2019. Higher fatalities in 2020 have potentially been influenced by the heavier than usual traffic and traffic speed during the pandemic.



Example of deer deterrent

## Landscape character/character of the road network

Every landscape has its own definable character: a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of natural and cultural elements in the landscape (such as tree cover, hedges, field patterns, settlement pattern and road networks, buildings, etc.) that makes one landscape different from another. This interplay between natural forces and human activity creates local distinctiveness.

The Cannock Chase AONB Review of AONB Landscape Character Framework<sup>4</sup> describes the area's varied landscape character. As our highways are a fundamental component of communications, this variety is reflected in the road network.

For example, around Upper Longdon and in some pockets close to Cannock Wood, the roads through the ancient, farmed landscapes have an intimate hedge-lined character and wind through the landform following topography and creating a more confined environment. This contrasts strongly with the heathland core of the Chase where more recent human influence has resulted in straight roads often with wider verges. Several roads on Cannock Chase, such as Penkridge Bank Road and Camp Road, follow the course of roads that served the Great War and Second World War Camps and are a reminder of the Chase's varied history. The roads across the heathland core offer expansive views across open heath, contrasting with densely wooded forest plantations that limit views and provide enclosure.

4. Ashmead Price for Cannock Chase AONB (2017) Cannock Chase AONB Review of AONB Landscape Character Framework





Sunken lane at Upper Longdon

Local character and adjacent land use also influence the varied road edge treatments encountered. In parts of the National Landscape the character of the road network is influenced by the adjacent historic parkland. This is particularly noticeable around Tixall and the Shugborough Estate where stone boundary walling, park railings, historic road bridges and granite kerbs are seen alongside the highway.



A513 Shugborough Estate boundary: Stone wall, granite road kerb



Farmland around Etchinghill



Bridge, Meadow Lane, Little Haywood – brick and stone detailing



Low stone boundary wall, Brocton

Straight roads tend to encourage faster driving speeds. There is an increasing volume of recreational traffic at the major visitor attractions and fast commuter traffic, particularly along the Penkridge Bank, Birches Valley and Chase roads. Increasing traffic levels on narrow winding minor roads is eroding verges. These factors adversely affect the natural beauty and tranquillity of the area. The highways infrastructure itself, also impacts on the visual appeal of the area.



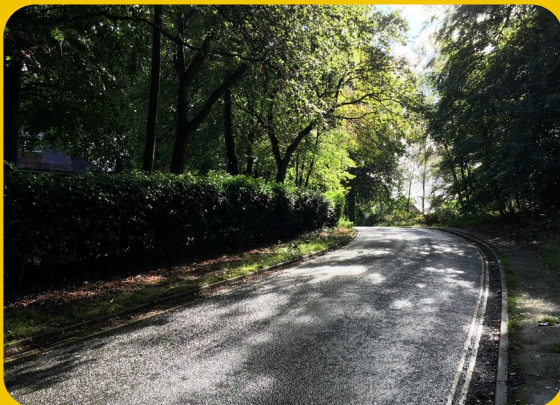
Penkridge Bank Road, an example of a long straight road





Damaged verge, Brindly Heath Road

Ad hoc parking is damaging road verges and sensitive habitat, and the cars themselves are an intrusion into the scenic quality of the area and sense of peace and tranquillity. Narrow, paler double yellow lines, as advised for Conservation Areas, are used to discourage parking in discrete areas near Cannock Chase Forest at Slitting Mill and on Birches Valley Road.



Double yellow lines, Slitting Mill

It is important to ensure that the character of the roads and locally distinctive edge treatments, such as grass, stone setts, walls, hedges and other boundary treatments is conserved and enhanced to reflect local character encountered in different parts of the National Landscape.

Most of the roads within the interior of the National Landscape are rural in character and cross forest, woodland, heathland or farmland where the absence of lighting enhances the tranquillity of the area. Elsewhere, light spillage from surrounding conurbations like Rugeley and Cannock as well as within the designated area in settlements such as Brocton, Cannock Wood and along Kingsley Wood Road and Haywood Hill between Burntwood and Cannock Wood detrimentally impacts on the National Landscape by reducing the quality of dark skies.

## Sense of place

Cannock Chase is a beautiful wilderness in Staffordshire in the heart of the West Midlands, and one of England's finest landscapes.



Timber posts and yellow lining, Birches Valley Road

Its heaths, forests and historic parklands contrast with the surrounding built-up conurbations. A major appeal of Cannock Chase is the opportunity that it provides for people to enjoy the open air and the peace and tranquillity. This is made possible by an extensive network of rides and paths and the large areas of land over which people can roam on foot. The highway network can present a barrier to the safe movement of walkers, horse riders and cyclists, particularly where public rights of way intersect with main roads and close to car parks. It also fragments the landscape and poses a risk to the safe movement of fauna.



Penkridge Bank Road, right of way crossing



The high population of the surrounding conurbations places high recreational demands within the National Landscape and strains on the visitor infrastructure as well as the special qualities of the designated area itself. The high pressure of use also results in the disturbance of wildlife and protected habitats including Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) that are integral to the character and special qualities of the National Landscape.

The Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Partnership has prepared visitor management and car parking strategies for conserving and enhancing the Special Area of Conservation. These Detailed Implementation Plans<sup>5</sup> set out a means to provide for future recreational use without compromising nature conservation, archaeological, geological and historic interests. This includes proposals for modifications to car parking provision. Emerging detailed proposals will be consulted on and phased to minimise disruption.

Signage advertising the boundary of the National Landscape has been installed intermittently over a number of years without a strategic approach, adopting branding and logos current at the time. Selected road entries benefit from 'gateway' features consisting of large, weathered, routed timber panels, some with associated rumble strips. These include Milford Common (A513), Penkridge Bank Road, Broadhurst Green Road and Brereton Lane (Upper Longdon). These often incorporate a routed deer logo, though several have recently been supplemented with high visibility deer images to alert road users to deer hazards. Some settlements, such as Upper Longdon and Rawnsley also have metal AONB entrance signs. Most other road entries however have low key signage consisting of low timber posts with an historic logo, and these are easily missed. In the main there is no sense of arrival in this nationally designated landscape.



Gateway at Milford. Speed limit is more dominant than sense of arrival in the National Landscape



Historic boundary signage



Broadhurst Green Road gateway



Rawnsley gateway

5. Cannock Chase SAC Partnership Detailed Implementation Plans: [Site User Plan](#), and [Car Parking Plan](#)



# Key principles

The following six key principles should be followed when considering highways design and management to help reinforce the sense of place of the National Landscape.



## Principle 1

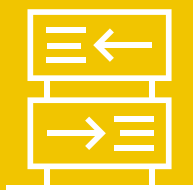
### **Manage the character of the National Landscape and local distinctiveness:**

Manage verges and other roadside features in ways that are sympathetic to the character of the Chase, enhance local distinctiveness, and retain and conserve historic roadside features and views. Use materials and styles characteristic of the local area.



## Principle 2

**Enhance network entrances:** Enhance main gateways to raise awareness that people are entering a special place - taking opportunities to incorporate the new Cannock Chase National Landscape brand.



## Principle 3

### **Manage motor vehicle movement within the National Landscape:**

Use a clear signage strategy to guide visitors along certain routes to the key visitor attractions, supplemented by information available from the visitor centres/hubs.



## Principle 4

### **Reduce visual clutter from signage:**

Keep road signage and other street furniture to a minimum - reducing sign-clutter and avoiding duplication and repetition of signs.



## Principle 5

**Reconsider the approach to road safety on minor roads:** For example, by removing white lines, and other road markings to reinforce the sense that this is somewhere special.



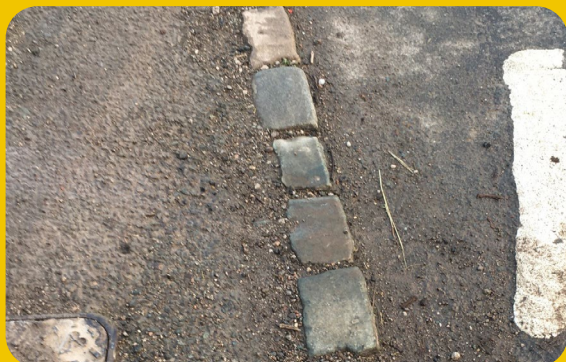
## Principle 6

**Promote opportunities for sustainable travel** in order to reduce the number of cars and vehicle movements in the National Landscape.



# Detailed recommendations

## Principle 1: Manage the character of the National Landscape and local distinctiveness



Granite sett kerb A513

### Kerbs

Kerbs and footways are essentially an 'urban' feature and should not normally be introduced into the rural parts of the National Landscape and country roads. Where present, stone setts and stone kerbs should be retained to reinforce the rural character and historical connections. Where new kerbs are necessary, they should be as low as possible and use 'natural' looking materials such as local stone or textured concrete.

### Boundaries

Boundary hedgerows and trees contribute to the character and natural beauty of the National Landscape and their removal should be resisted. The Hedgerow Regulations 1997<sup>6</sup> protect most countryside hedges, and landowners should check with the planning authority if permission is required before removing any hedges.

Roadside hedgerows should preferably be maintained using traditional methods, such as hedge laying, rather than flailing, to improve both their appearance and biodiversity. Where opportunities arise management should encourage establishment of new and replacement hedgerow trees. Cutting should not take place when nesting birds are present (there is a hedgerow cutting and trimming ban from 1 March to 31 August inclusive, although some birds may nest outside this time<sup>7</sup>). Where works to hedgerows and trees need to take place during the nesting season, an environmental scoping assessment should be carried out with an

ecological watching brief conducted throughout the duration of the works.

Hedgerows on highway boundaries are generally the property of the adjacent landowner who is responsible for carrying out maintenance, though in some cases landowners maintain hedges on behalf of the Highway Authority. The Highway Authority and National Landscape should work with local landowners and Parish Councils to encourage maintenance of boundary hedgerows and reinstate those that have become gappy or have been removed.

Local distinctiveness can be enhanced if traditional estate fencing is reinstated along historic estate parkland boundaries. The first option should always be to repair existing.

### Verges

Large mature trees make an important contribution to biodiversity, mitigating the effects of climate change and filtering pollution. They are also a key component of the landscape and natural beauty of the area. Large mature trees within verges should only be removed on safety grounds and, if removal is required, replacement planting should be undertaken nearby to mitigate for their loss. It may be appropriate to remove shrubs where they obstruct circulation (vehicular or pedestrian).

A key feature of the heathland core of the Chase is the interplay of roadside views limited by woodland, providing enclosure and intrigue, and intermittent glimpses across the semi-natural open heathland landscapes. Management of verges should enhance this experience by reducing visual clutter and offering opportunities for views towards the heathland and the wider landscape. There may be potential to enhance views of significant historic buildings that reinforce the identity of the area.



View of open heath

6. The Hedgerow Regulations 1997

7. The Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024



View of plantation woodland

To reinforce local distinctiveness verge management regimes should encourage indigenous flora such as, heather and acid grassland. Currently highway verges are cut once or twice per year in rural areas, dependant on road class and local safety requirements. Removing grass cutting arisings helps to promote species diversity, as can reducing frequency of grass cutting. Verge management needs to ensure signage does not become obscured during the growing season, and that uncut areas are not colonised with species that would cause long term maintenance issues. The National Landscape will work with the Highway Authority, parish councils and community groups to identify and propose areas where changes in grass management could enhance species diversity.

Indiscriminate roadside parking causes issues for highway safety, damages sensitive wildlife habitats and is visually intrusive, detracting from the natural beauty of the National Landscape.

The National Landscape and Staffordshire County Council, together with the SAC Partnership will explore options with adjacent landowners to reduce damage from ad hoc parking and reinstate ditches and bunds to discourage a re-occurrence. Along other verges where unauthorised parking is a problem, and subject to any necessary permissions being obtained, installing low suitably landscaped bunds is supported as a less visually intrusive method of discouraging parking than high kerbs and bollards, and is more practical in terms of maintenance. Limiting the risk of displacement parking by installing a landscaped ditch and low bund should also be considered. Proposals for bunds will need to consider any impacts on drainage and avoid potential flooding of the carriageway.



Ditch to discourage vehicular access



Bund at Milford Common provides visually unobtrusive means of restricting vehicular access

Temporary posts may be needed to prevent damage initially but should be removed after establishment.

Any signage used to discourage parking should be carefully located, balancing the need for clear messaging whilst avoiding excessive visual intrusion.

Double yellow lines and parking restriction signage have an urban association and should generally be resisted. The National Landscape and Staffordshire County Council are reluctant to introduce parking restrictions due to the practicalities of enforcement and to avoid urbanisation. If necessary, however, the use of parking restrictions and sensitive double yellow lining may need to be considered in some areas where parking causes safety issues on the highway, or damages sensitive adjacent habitats and cannot be resolved by other means.



### Cast iron mileposts and milestones

These traditional markers need to be preserved in a specific way to maintain their unique appearance and to cope with the inherent weather conditions. Staffordshire County Council has produced a guidance note **Historic Structures and Areas: Practical Conservation and Design (2015)**<sup>8</sup> containing advice on the restoration and repair of historic structures within the roadside environment. The locations of mile markers, boundary markers and finger posts in the National Landscape are indicated in Appendix 1 (Map 5).



Finger post, Brocton



Milepost at Wolseley Bridge

### Street furniture and lighting

Street furniture should be appropriate to the character of the National Landscape and generally unobtrusive. Highway furniture would be limited to street lighting, road signage including rights of way signs, as well as bus stops and salt bins. Otherwise street furniture such as, seating, bollards and litter bins is likely to be the remit of adjacent landowners or Parish and District Councils. Signage for promoted routes and rights of way should be sensitive to local character and avoid unnecessary clutter.

Visitors may not be aware of the speed of some roads therefore road crossings and appropriate warning signage may be helpful.



Road-side timber orientation post

An agreed family of street furniture could help to promote the identity of Cannock Chase National Landscape and this could be explored with major landowners and Parish Councils. For example this could be used at highway entrances to car parks to consistently promote the identity of the protected landscape.

Cannock Chase is the most light polluted of all National Landscapes in England and Wales. Any proposed new lighting should be in keeping with the character of the local environment and ensure that light fittings are designed to minimise light spill and light pollution and follow recommended best practice to ensure that effects on wildlife are strictly minimised. Guidance on reducing light pollution and supporting Dark Skies is available in the National Landscape's Good Lighting Guide<sup>9</sup>.

New street lighting in the rural parts of the National Landscapes should be resisted unless there is an over-riding recorded safety issue.

Bus stops could provide an opportunity for a better visitor welcome. Interpretation panels could help orientate visitors and include key messages about the National Landscape.

8. Staffordshire County Council, 2015, Historic Structures and Areas: Practical Conservation and Design  
9. Cannock Chase AONB, 2023, Light Pollution and Dark Skies in the Cannock Chase AONB - A Good Lighting Guide



## Principle 2: Enhance network entrances

### National Landscape boundary definition/ gateways/welcome points

Boundary markers should be placed at each road entry point to the National Landscape, and on major entry points gateway signage replaced or installed. Associated traffic calming features, such as, raised markings or a rumble strip approaching or at the gateway entry point can also help to raise visitor's awareness of arrival in a nationally important landscape and reduce driver speeds. Tired signage should be replaced, and gateway signage should incorporate the latest branding.



Gateway entrance, Upper Longdon



Entry with rumble strip. Deer signage detracts from the gateway feature

Opportunities should be explored for creating focal points on major traffic entries to the National Landscape. Major roundabouts within or immediately outside the area also have potential to act as local landmarks and orientation features. Consideration could be given to placing sculpture and/or planting that evokes the character of the area or celebrates cultural heritage on larger traffic islands.

Pottal Pool roundabout on the A34 is an example of an important orientation point with potential for such an enhancement at a major gateway.

## Principle 3: Manage motor vehicle movement within the National Landscape

In liaison with the Highway Authority, a clear signage strategy should be established to guide visitors along certain routes to the key visitor attractions, supplemented by information available from the visitor centres/hubs.

### Route management

Signage should relate to road hierarchy and encourage through-traffic and visitors arriving by motor vehicle towards using the busiest routes (A roads and Penkridge Bank). This will help to preserve the safe and quiet character of the more minor routes that walkers, cyclists and equestrians may wish to use.

Brown tourism signs are generally funded by the applicant, and these are not plotted or mapped on any inventory. An audit of these signs is needed to ensure their locations are informed by road hierarchy and the signage strategy, and updated with the latest branding.



Signage Wolseley Bridge



Brown tourist signage



## Principle 4: Reduce visual clutter from signage

### Direction signs

A signs audit should be regularly undertaken to identify opportunities to remove outdated and superfluous signs or to amalgamate signage onto fewer posts where possible and safe. Proposed removal of signs would need to be subject to a safety assessment. Circumstances where removal could be considered include:

- Where flag-type signs are used, several destinations can be incorporated onto one flag by using coloured panels.
- Use of map-type signs on the approaches to junctions, especially staggered junctions to clarify directions.
- Signs indicating traffic height and width restrictions can be incorporated into direction signs, to allow the former to be removed.

Where possible, direction signs on minor roads within the National Landscape should be restricted to a single signpost at the junction.

Where new signs are required, these should be added to existing poles where possible, and mounted as low as practicable for the location in order to avoid breaking the skyline.

Direction signs to 'rights of way' and visitor car parks should be standardised throughout the National Landscape and, where possible, should feature the latest branding.

The deer is a potent symbol of the identity of the Chase that has been used alongside standard road signs in more open locations such as Chase Road to remind drivers to take care and observe speed limits. However, there is an over proliferation of deer signage that detracts from the landscape and becomes over familiar. Unnecessary permanent deer signage should be removed and replaced with the use of temporary signage at the times of season of greatest risk of deer collisions and removed for the rest of the year. Deer signage should be carefully placed so as not to obscure permanent signage or detract from signs that contribute to the sense of place.

## Principle 5: Reconsider the approach to road safety on minor roads

### Speed limit

Lower speed limits across the National Landscape would help to reduce traffic collisions with wildlife and enhance the sense of place and tranquillity. Opportunities to consider reducing the mandatory speed limit in the area would be welcomed. Evidence from the New Forest National Park indicates that this is the most effective way of reducing animal deaths.<sup>10</sup>

### Road markings

White centre lines and road edge markings should be used sparingly within the Chase as their absence in rural areas elsewhere has been shown to reduce traffic speeds. Where roads are surfaced-dressed or prepared for other highway improvements, therefore, permanent removal of white highway markings could be considered, subject to a road safety audit. This approach has been successfully used in rural locations in other protected landscapes and National Parks where lower speeds are desirable, and it would help reinforce Cannock Chase as a place that is different, wild and tranquil. Roads where this could be trialled include Camp Road, Birches Valley Road and Brindley Heath Road. Carriageway edge markings should only be used where there is a recorded problem with edge definition leading to injury accidents.

## Principle 6: Promote opportunities for sustainable travel

The National Landscape will work with the Highway Authority to develop and promote alternative travel into the area, in order to help reduce emissions and work towards a sustainable carbon neutral future. The Highway Authority's priorities for walking and cycling investment are set out in Staffordshire's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)<sup>11</sup>. Enhanced facilities for cycling and walking from home would also support Public Health England's ambitions for encouraging Active Travel<sup>12</sup> to improve health and wellbeing.

Subject to the availability of funding, opportunities will be taken to work with partners to improve existing links and/or increase the number of links from the surrounding areas to the network of recreational cycle routes and facilities on the Chase, so people can walk or cycle from home. This may include supporting development of cycle lanes or partially off-road cycle routes such as the Brereton and Ravenhill Way and the Cannock Chase Heritage Trail, as well as canal towpaths.

<sup>10</sup> New Forest National Park – Safety on the Roads

<sup>11</sup> Local Cycling and walking Infrastructure Plan 2021 – Staffordshire County Council

<sup>12</sup> Active Travel – a briefing for local authorities

# Working towards improvements

The recommendations set out in the guide may be secured through a variety of mechanisms. Working with partners, the National Landscape will seek opportunities to share survey information, explore the potential for delivering some recommendations with the support of volunteers, and look to secure funding to be able to deliver other enhancements. Key activity and potential partners are set out in the Summary of Activities.

## Summary of Activities

| Key Principle                                                                     | Activity                                                                                                                                                                                             | Potential Delivery Partners                          | Indicative Timescale |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>1 Manage the character of the National Landscape and local distinctiveness</b> | Resist removal of roadside trees and hedges and encourage good management. Plant replacements to mitigate for any losses.                                                                            | National Landscape/ landowners                       | Ongoing              |
|                                                                                   | Verge management: encourage indigenous flora on highway verges to reinforce character and enhance biodiversity.                                                                                      | National Landscape/SCC Highways, Parish Councils etc | Ongoing              |
|                                                                                   | Regularly inspect historical milestones and mileposts, and restore and repair as appropriate.                                                                                                        | National Landscape/SCC Highways                      | Ongoing              |
|                                                                                   | Restore verges degraded by roadside parking, and reinstate ditches and bunds as deterrents to re-occurrence (supports SAC Partnership strategies).                                                   | SAC Partnership / Landowners/ National Landscape     | Medium term          |
|                                                                                   | Explore opportunities for an agreed family of street furniture to promote the identity of the National Landscape on the highway and at car park entrances (supports SAC Partnership strategies).     | National Landscape/ landowners / SAC Partnership     | Medium term          |
| <b>2 Enhance network entrances</b>                                                | Replace gateway signage at the main entry points to provide a sense of arrival in the National Landscape (also features in SAC Partnership strategies).                                              | SAC Partnership / National Landscape                 | Medium term          |
|                                                                                   | Create focal points on major traffic entries to the National Landscape.                                                                                                                              | SAC Partnership / National Landscape / SCC Highways  | Medium/ Long term    |
| <b>3 Manage motor vehicle movement within the National Landscape</b>              | Carry out regular signage audits to assess need and to keep signage to the minimum required.                                                                                                         | National Landscape / SCC Highways                    | Medium term          |
|                                                                                   | Develop a road signage strategy that guides visitors along certain routes and promotes a hierarchy of roads and quiet lanes in the National Landscape (also features in SAC Partnership strategies). | National Landscape / SCC Highways / SAC Partnership  | Long term            |
|                                                                                   | Carry out an audit of the brown tourism signs and reappraise their need and information.                                                                                                             | National Landscape/ Visitor attractions              | Ongoing              |
| <b>4 Reduce visual clutter from signage</b>                                       | Using data from signage audit, where opportunities arise, combine signage and reduce visual clutter.                                                                                                 | National Landscape / SCC Highways                    | Long term            |
| <b>5 Reconsider the approach to road safety on minor roads</b>                    | With the Highway Authority explore approaches to reducing speed in the National Landscape, including the feasibility and costs of a mandatory 40 mph speed limit.                                    | National Landscape/ SCC Highways                     | Long term            |
| <b>6 Promote opportunities for sustainable travel</b>                             | Work with the Highway Authority and other partners to promote and develop opportunities for sustainable transport to the National Landscape (also features in SAC Partnership strategies).           | National Landscape / SCC Highways / SAC Partnership  | Long term            |



# Appendices

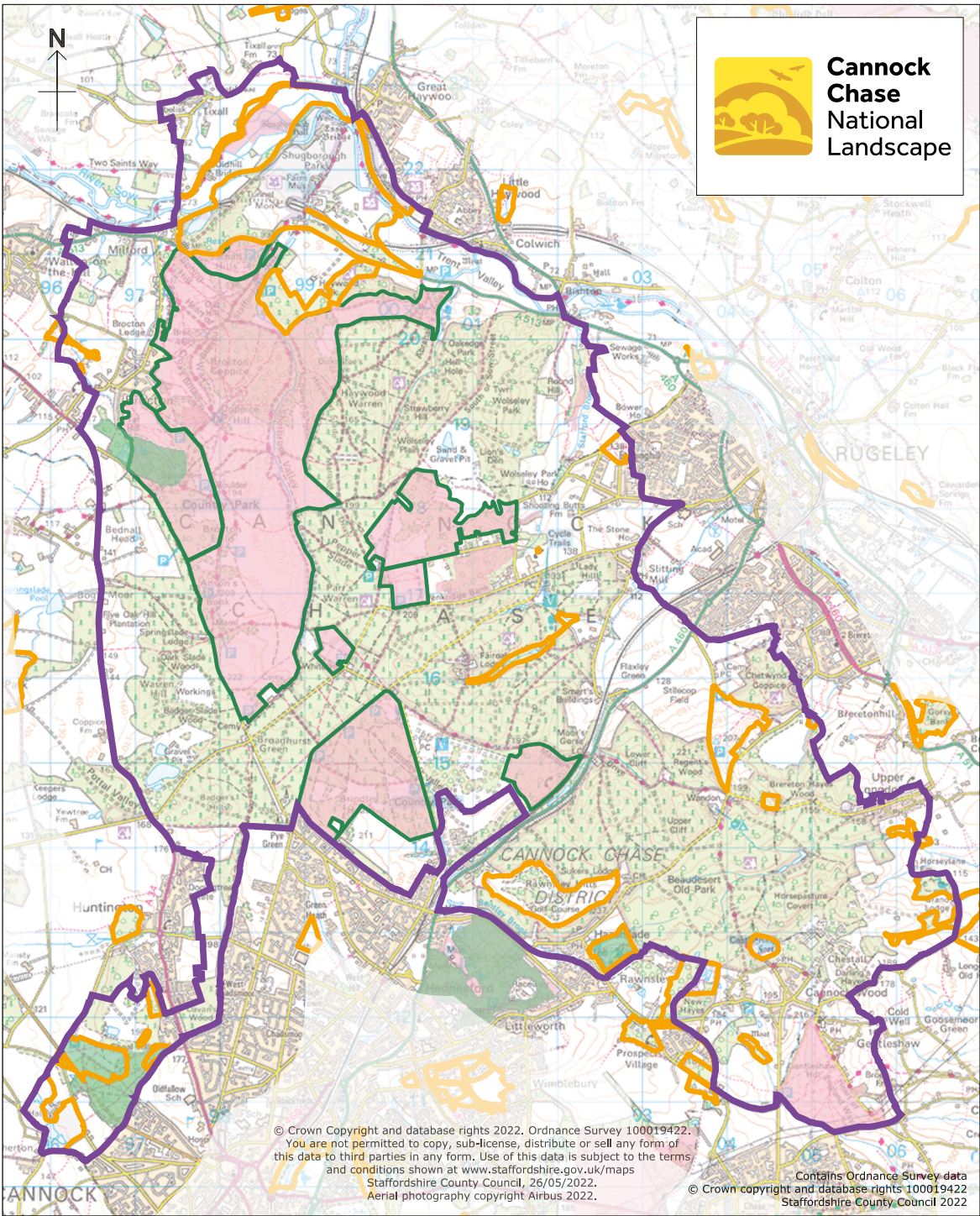
## Appendix 1. Maps

**Map 1: Cannock Chase National Landscape - Road Status**





Map 2: Cannock Chase National Landscape - Natural Environment Designated Areas

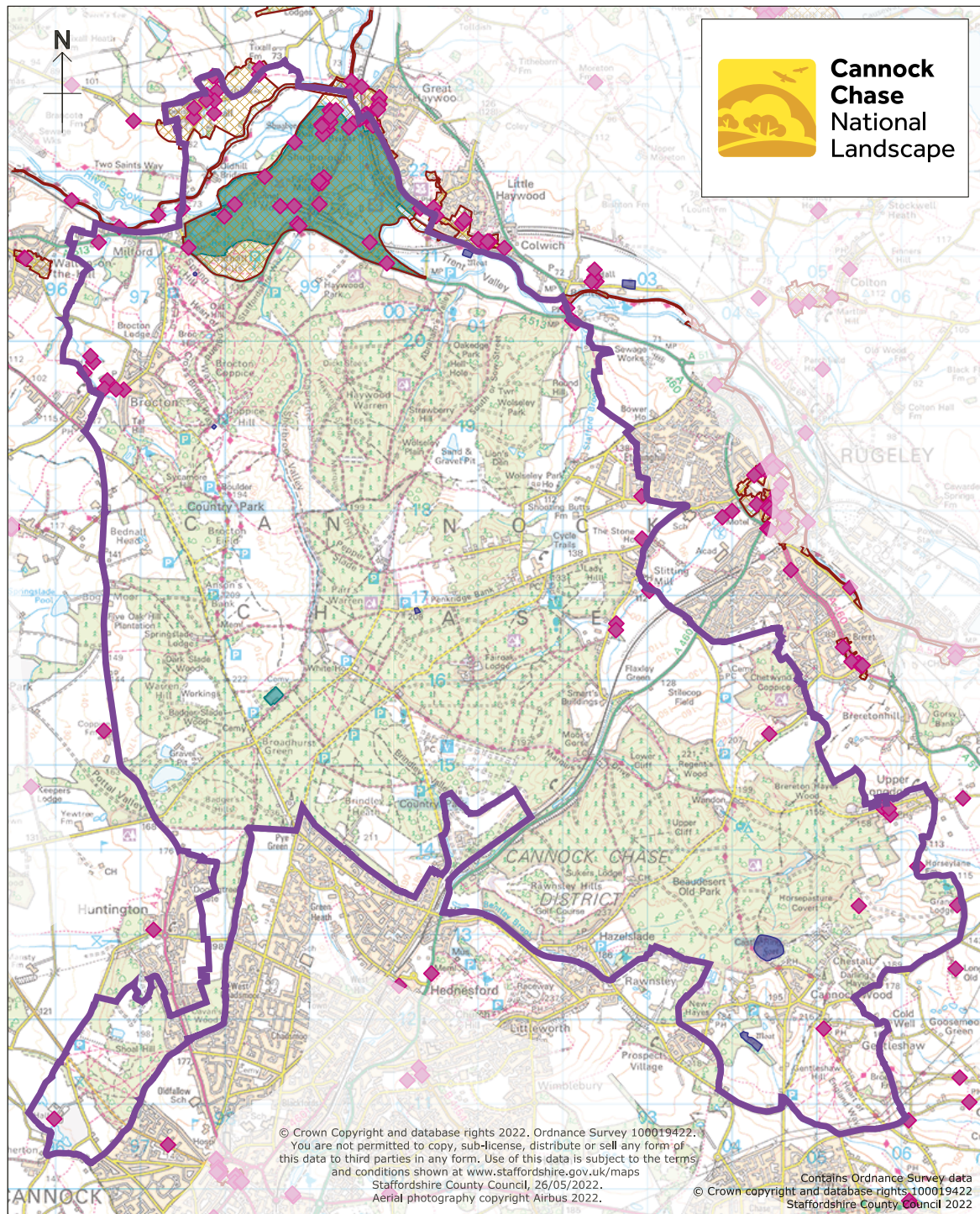


-  Local Nature Reserves
  -  SAC - Special Areas of Conservation
  -  SBI - Sites of Biological Importance
  -  SSSI - Sites of Scientific Interest
  -  Cannock Chase National Landscape
- Scale: 1:60000

## Cannock Chase National Landscape Natural Environment Designated Areas



**Map 3: Cannock Chase National Landscape - Historic Environment Designated Areas**

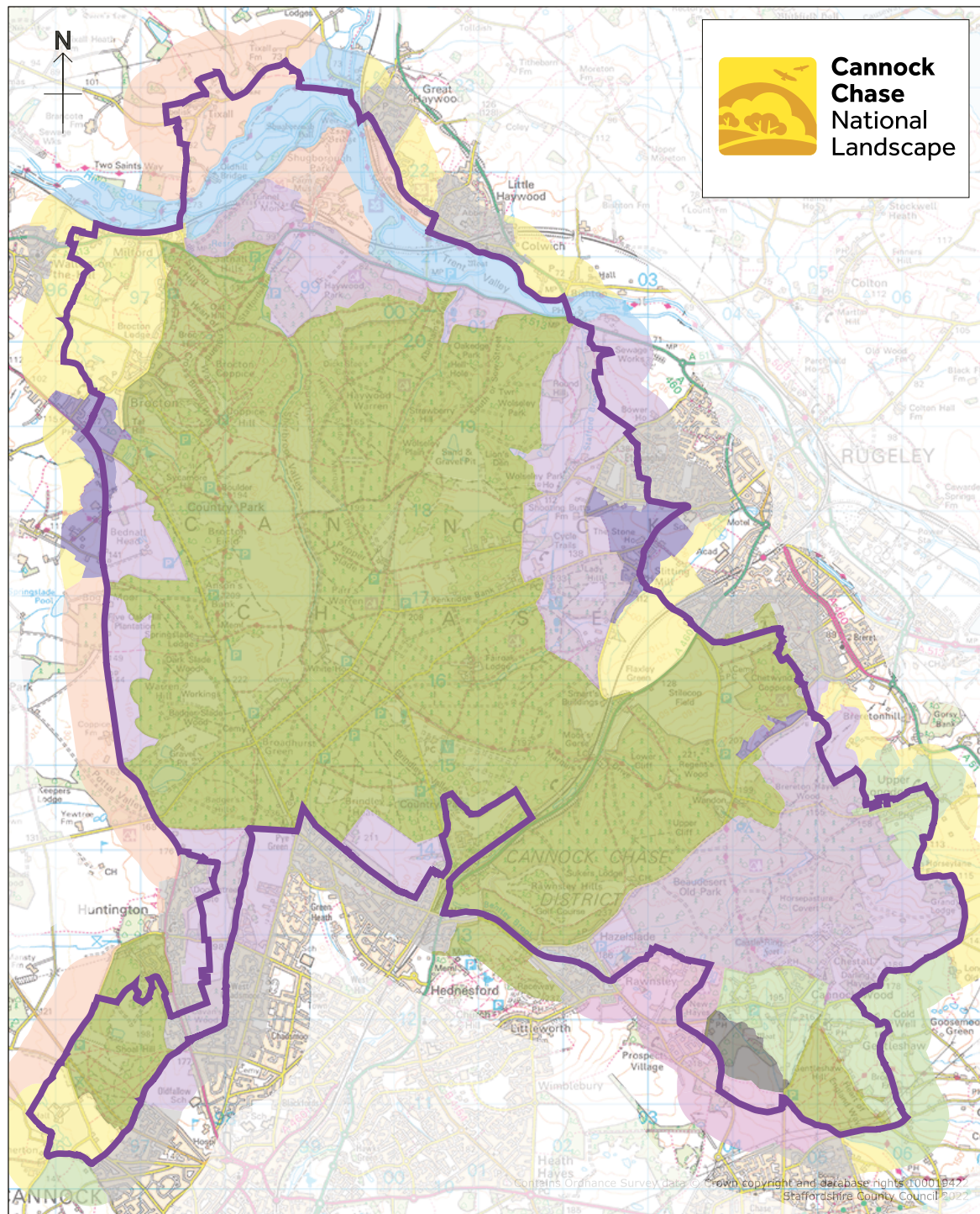


- ◆ Listed Buildings
  - ▨ Conservation Areas
  - Registered Parks and Gardens
  - Scheduled Monuments
  - ▭ Cannock Chase National Landscape
- Scale: 1:60000

## Cannock Chase National Landscape Historic Environment Designated Areas



### Map 4: Cannock Chase National Landscape - Landscape Character



-  Coalfield Farmlands
  Settled Heathlands
-  Forest Heathlands
  Settled Plateau Farmlands
-  Planned Coalfield Farmlands
  Urban
-  River Meadowlands
  Cannock Chase National Landscape
-  Sandstone Estatelands
-  Sandstone Hills & Heaths
-  Settled Farmlands

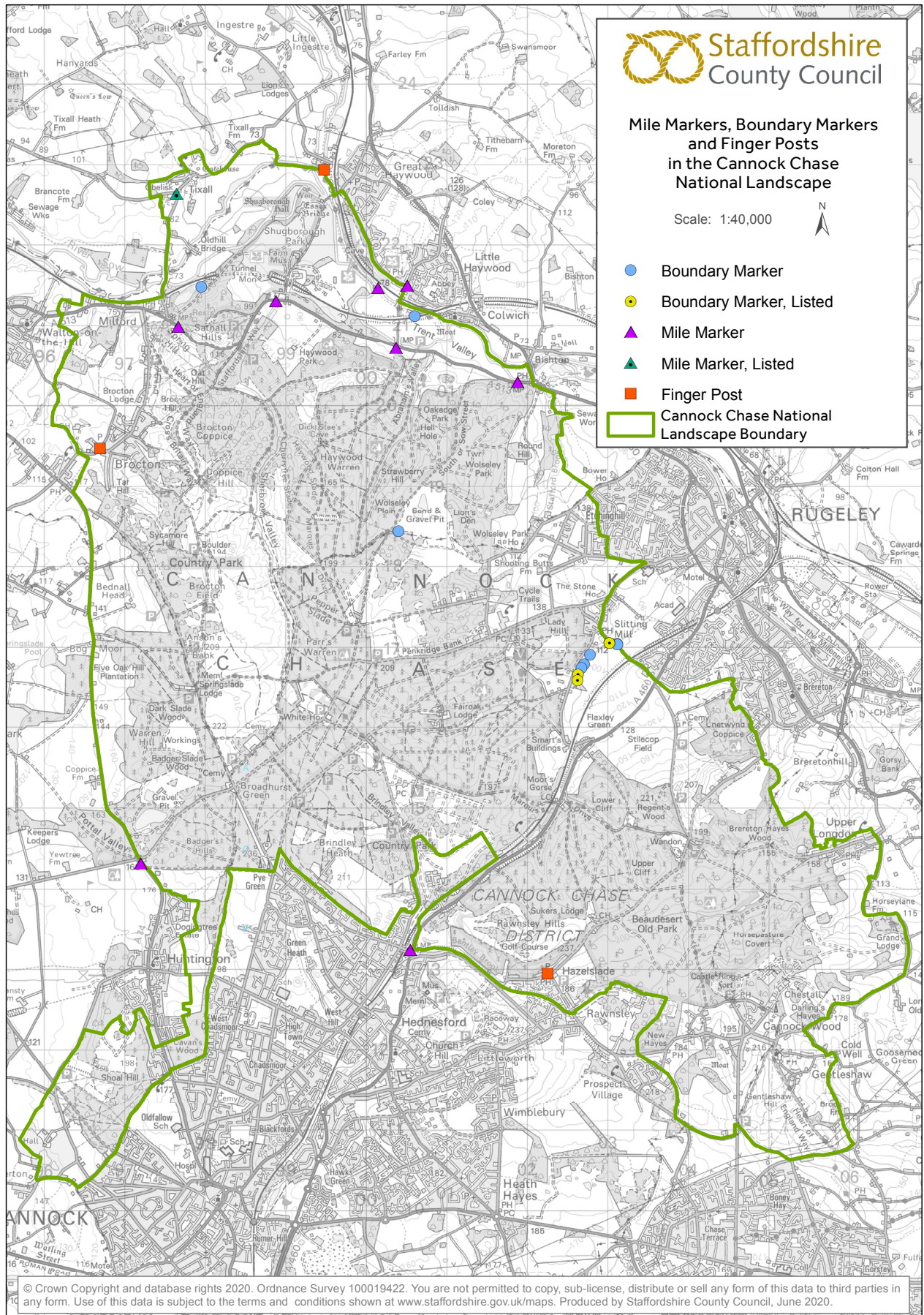
# Cannock Chase National Landscape Landscape Character Areas

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at [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/maps](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/maps), Staffordshire County Council, 26/05/2022.

Scale: 1:60000



**Map 5: Cannock Chase National Landscape - Boundary Markers and Finger posts**



## **Appendix 2. Principal environmental legislation on Cannock Chase**

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Planning (Listed building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023

The Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024





Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



Lichfield  
District Council



South Staffordshire Council



Stafford  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Staffordshire  
County Council

**Cannock Chase National Landscape is supported by:**

Defra, Cannock Chase District Council, Lichfield District Council, South Staffordshire District Council, Stafford Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council, Forestry Commission England, Natural England, Historic England, National Trust, RSPB, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, British Horse Society, Cemex UK Operations Ltd, Country Land and Business Association, CPRE, Friends of Cannock Chase, Hanson Aggregates, National Farmers Union, Ramblers, Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, Walton Chasers, West Midland Bird Club.



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