



# Cannock Chase National Landscape

**Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership  
AGM and meeting of the Joint Committee  
6<sup>th</sup> July 2026 at 14.00 HRS  
To be held at the Rising Brook Church, Burton Square, Stafford, ST17 9LT**

Members of the public are welcome to attend in person.

No.	Time	Item	Item for	Page
1	14:00	<b>Election of Chair and Vice Chair</b> This item to be overseen by John Rowe, Honorary Secretary of the Joint Committee	DECISION	<a href="#">3</a>
2	14:05	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>		<a href="#">3</a>
3	14:10	<b>Apologies and any Substitutes</b>		<a href="#">3</a>
4	14:10	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, and matters arising</b>	APPROVAL	<a href="#">4</a>
5	14:15	<b>Public questions</b>		<a href="#">12</a>
6	14:20	<b>Finance report – Cannock Chase National Landscape budget 2026/27</b> <i>(a) To note final outturn positions for 2025/26</i> <i>(b) To note changes to the 2026/27 budget</i> <i>(c) To note the current 2026/27 budget forecast outturn position for the National Landscape budget</i> <i>(d) To note the current 2026/27 budget forecast position for the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme</i> Report of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee	(a) INFORMATION (b) INFORMATION (c) INFORMATION (d) INFORMATION	<a href="#">13</a>
7	14:35	<b>Chase Road</b> <i>To seek Member's views on options for Chase Road, and for the preparation of a formal response to the public consultation to be delegated to the Team Leader</i> Presentation by George Sharp, Cannock Chase SAC Partnership	DISCUSSION	<a href="#">22</a>
8	14:50	<b>Business Plan 2026-2027</b> <i>To approve the Business Plan for the National Landscape Team for 2026/27, with any amendments</i> Report of the Team Leader	DECISION	<a href="#">23</a>
9	15:00	<b>Annual Conference 2026</b> <i>To report to members the evaluation and feedback from the Annual Conference 2026</i>	INFORMATION	<a href="#">25</a>

		Report of the Communications Officer		
10	15:10	<p><b>Annual Review 2025-26</b>  <i>To report to members the achievements of the National Landscape and seek approval to publish, with any amendments</i></p> <p>Report of the Communications Officer</p>	DECISION	<a href="#">27</a>
11	15:20	<p><b>AONB Management Plan Progress Report 2025-26</b>  <i>To approve the progress report for year one of the Cannock Chase National Landscape AONB Management Plan 2025-2030</i></p> <p>Report of the Team Leader</p>	DECISION	<a href="#">29</a>
12	15:30	<p><b>Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme 5-year Review</b>  <i>To report to members the achievements of the FiPL programme 2021-26 and seek approval to publish the Review, with any amendments</i></p> <p>Report of the Farming in Protected Landscapes Officers</p>	DECISION	<a href="#">33</a>
		<p><b>Exclusion of the Public and Press</b>  The Chairman to move:  " That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the local Government Act 1972 (as amended) indicated below"</p> <p><b>Part Two</b>  (All reports in this section are exempt)</p>		

**Item 1 Election of Chair and Vice Chair****Item for:** Decision

This item to be overseen by John Rowe, Honorary Secretary of the Joint Committee.

**Item 2 Welcome and introductions****Item 3 Apologies and any substitutes**

<b>Item 4</b>	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026</b>
<b>Item for:</b>	Approval
<b>Author:</b>	Ian Marshall, Team Leader
<b>Financial implications:</b>	None
<b>Recommendations:</b>	The Committee approves the minutes of the meeting and considers any matters arising.

**Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership  
Meeting of the Joint Committee  
Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 14:00 HRS**

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

(Draft) Minutes

**Attendees**

**Voting Members present**

Cllr Tony Pearce (Chair)	(TP)
Cllr Daniel Cecil	(DC)
Cllr Janice Silvester Hall	(JSH)
Cllr Garry Samuels	(GS)

**Representing**

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

**Officers**

Ian Marshall	(IM)	National Landscape Team
Samantha Hall	(SH)	National Landscape Team
Richard Harris	(RH)	National Landscape Team
Karen Davies	(KD)	National Landscape Team
Claire Geoghegan	(CG)	National Landscape Team
Peter Hearn	(PH)	Staffordshire County Council
Catherine Mann	(CM)	Staffordshire County Council
Gez Hill	(GH)	Cannock Chase Council
Paul Rigby	(PR)	South Staffordshire Council

**Advisers**

Antony Jones	(AJ)	Staffordshire Parish Councils Association and Trustee of Staffordshire and Shropshire Community Foundation
George Sharp	(GSh)	Cannock Chase SAC Partnership
Doug Smith	(DS)	British Horse Society
Jackie Wyke	(JW)	Independent
Kezia Taylerson	(KT)	Historic England
Jeff Sims	(JS)	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
Steve Hopkins	(SH)	Staffordshire CPRE

**Also in attendance for Item 6**

Jon Sheaff	(JS)	Arkwood landscape consultants
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## 1. Welcome and introductions

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

## 2. Apologies for absence and Substitutes

- 2.1 Apologies were received from:

Councillor Hayley Coles, Staffordshire County Council (Councillor Daniel Cecil substituting)

Councillor Tony Johnson, Cannock Chase Council (Councillor Garry Samuels substituting)

Cherry Doyle, independent

Frances Beatty, CLA

Alex Lane, Lichfield District Council

Sarah Bentley, Staffordshire County Council

Chris Evans, West Midlands Bird Club

Wendy Bannerman, British Horse Society

Trevor Warburton, Friends of Cannock Chase

John Broad, Staffordshire County Council

## 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2025, and matters arising

### Minutes

- 3.1 **RESOLVED that:**  
*The minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2025 were approved.*

### Matters arising

AONB boundary and Hednesford Hills

- 3.2 IM reported that Natural England had confirmed that the request from Cannock Chase AONB Partnership was logged in 2005 and appeared on the register of potential landscape designation cases along with all other requests received around that time. With the change from Countryside Commission to Natural England then happening in 2006, however, the priorities and budgets changed and the work was taken no further.
- 3.3 Natural England also confirmed that any previous lists of potential designation cases, including boundary revisions, have been superseded by the [All England Strategic Mapping project 2022](#), and that any future project would be considered following a country-wide assessment of potential. However, there is currently no appetite for future designation cases, with Defra prioritising existing protected landscapes to empower them to become greener, wilder and more accessible, rather than designating more Protected Landscapes or refining boundaries.
- 3.4 TP commented that members might like to contact their MPs if they wish to take this further.

## Public questions – Etching Hill

- 3.5 JS updated the Committee that Staffordshire Wildlife Trust is preparing a Higher Tier Stewardship agreement for heathland restoration on the Hill, but this excludes the summit and the area of the rock exposure.

## Governance

- 3.6 TP commented that Defra had appointed consultants to review the governance arrangements for National Landscapes and National Parks. IM had inputted comments via an interview and workshop. The deadline for the report is believed to be the end of March.

## 4. Public questions

- 4.1 No public questions were received.

## 5. Finance report

- 5.1 In the absence of John Broad, IM advised the following:

### **Revenue Budget Update 2025/26**

- The current forecast outturn position for the Core budget is a breakeven position.
- Currently £6,078 of the Sustainable Development Fund is unallocated, and this will offset an overspend against AONB Projects.

### **Access for All Fund and Capital Uplift**

- A nominal amount of £11 of the Access for All and £16,647 of the Capital Uplift projects budget remain unallocated. The underspend against the Capital Uplift budget has already been returned to Defra.

### **Farming in Protected Landscape**

- The current forecast position is a breakeven position.

### **AONB Reserves**

- It is anticipated that the balance on the reserve at the end of 2025/26 will be £91,430, up from £84,300 at the beginning of the financial year..

- 5.2 JSH asked the reasons for not spending all of the Capital Uplift. IM explained that this was due to a combination of undercapacity of the Team; stretched resources of partners and; tight criteria for what constitutes capital expenditure.

### **2026/27 Cannock Chase National Landscape Net Revenue Budget**

- 5.2 IM reported that Defra has confirmed that the 2026/27 core grant is to remain at 2025/26 levels. Due to inflationary uplift, this will mean balancing the net revenue budget through a combination of reducing Core Activity expenditure by £2,420 and drawing down £2,420 from the AONB Reserve.
- 5.3 TP expressed his concern about the constant reductions in the core budget, and its impacts on project delivery. In view of the healthy balance of AONB Reserves, he

proposed that the balance was fully met from the AONB Reserves. This proposal was approved by Members.

5.4 **RESOLVED that:**

*(1) Progress on the current net revenue position for 2025-26 and the current forecast outturn position is noted.*

*(2) Progress on spend of the Access for All and Capital Uplift projects for 2025/26 is noted.*

*(3) Progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme for 2025/26 is noted.*

*(4) The 2026/27 net revenue budget is approved with the adjustment that the budget is balance by drawing down £4,840 from AONB Reserves.*

6. **National Landscape Gateway Markers**

6.1 Jon Sheaff of Arkwood landscape consultants updated the Committee on progress to prepare a strategy and design options for new road gateway markers in the National Landscape.

6.2 There are currently gateway markers at 8 entry points around the Chase. They are made of timber which has oxidised and is difficult to read; cloaked in vegetation and inconsistent. They create a poor quality welcome and first impression of the designated area.

6.3 The brief is to create a strong and positive arrival, that reflects the identity of the Chase; reinforces the National Landscape's brand; and delivers road safety. Gateway signs from other protected areas and sites were researched.

6.4 Five preliminary design options were prepared, using varying combinations of corten steel, powder coated steel and timber. Stakeholder engagement and feedback has identified a clear preference: corten steel with powder coated detailing. This option picks up the rolling hills of the Chase and birds from the National Landscape branding.

6.5 Assuming 15 locations (primary and secondary gateway locations) and 2 signs per location, a total indicative cost for the manufacture, supply and installation of the signs is £135,000.

6.6 The following questions were asked:

- DS asked if a deer symbol could be added to the bottom of the sign? JS explained that the bottom of the sign has been left empty to allow for the growth of vegetation. IM pointed out that the deer was dropped from the new re-brand.
- JSH asked how these signs fitted in with others on the Chase? IM explained that they are just one of a number of signs on the Chase that we looking at replacing including brown tourist signs, car park signs, interpretation signs etc.
- TP asked whether the signs could include 40mph speed restriction signs? IM explained that the intent is for the signs to focus on creating a sense of arrival, and not be confused with different purposes.
- JSH asked about the longevity of the signs? JS explained that the Corten steel is intended to weather and will have a lifespan of 25-30 years compared with 15-20 years for wooden signs.

- JW asked how vandal proof the signs are? JS responded that the signs could be sprayed in anti-vandal paint.
- CG asked how reflective the powder coated steel would be? JS responded that they would be visible but not reflective.
- GS asked about the lettering. JS responded that the letter stands proud of the corten steel and doesn't discolour.
- TP concluded that we are not at the end of the process and that we have an option that has emerged as the most popular. This option was supported by Members.

6.7 **RESOLVED that:**

***Members support the preferred option (corten steel with powder coated detailing).***

7. **Deer management**

7.1 RH explained how the main landowners on the Chase have come together and agreed a management framework that promotes the welfare and sound management of wild deer. Although a characteristic feature of the Chase, wild deer populations will expand rapidly without any natural control, to the detriment of the environment and the health of the animals themselves. In large numbers deer can also damage trees and crops. A large number are also killed on roads each year.

7.2 The framework seeks to achieve a healthy deer population that is in balance with the local environment.

7.3 The following questions were asked:

- TP clarified that the framework is being co-ordinated by the National Landscape, but that deer management will be carried out by the landowners.
- JSH asked how effective is the relationship between landowners. RH responded that all of the main players are committed, and that he will subsequently engage with others as well. The aim is to re-establish the Deer Management Group that fell out of use a few years ago.
- GS and DS asked about muntjac numbers and if they are problematic. RH explained that muntjac are considered non-native and are present in low numbers. Fallow deer are present in high numbers and are causing the most damage.
- CG pointed out that FiPL funding has supported farmers on the edge of the Chase who were suffering from deer damage.
- JS confirmed that Staffordshire Wildlife Trust has signed up to the framework. Its aims are science-based and will improve the health of the deer.

7.4 **RESOLVED that:**

***The framework for deer management on Cannock Chase is approved.***

8. **Historic Environment Strategy**

8.1 IM reported on the feedback from the public consultation of the Draft Historic Environment Strategy which ran for 7.5 weeks between 11 Dec 2025 to 30 Jan 2026.

8.2 41 responses were received, generating 168 separate comments. Very strong support for the Strategy was expressed, requiring only minor changes to the Strategy.

- 8.3 IM reported an oversight in the Strategy in relation to crimes against the historic environment, and sought approval to include a new objective to protect sites and buildings from crime and anti-social behaviour and accompanying new project to set up a Heritage Watch Scheme.
- 8.4 CM also requested that the Strategy was amended so that it joined up with investment plans to create a new National Landscape Discovery Centre at Marquis Drive:
1. Page 13 – Enjoying – could we add an additional key action under objective 7: 7.3 – *Develop new exhibitions and interpretive / education opportunities through a new National Landscape discovery centre and by enhancing existing facilities.*
  2. Page 27 – project 27 – revise text to ...This could form part of an ‘immersive’ experience at a renewed *National Landscape Discovery Centre at Marquis Drive...*
  3. Page 28 – project 32 – revise text to ...This could be celebrated with the creation of a virtual *and / or* physical education hub *at the National Landscape Discovery Centre* that will engage...
- 8.5 JSH asked why the SAC Partnership had been removed from the list of potential partners helping to deliver projects? GS explained that the SAC Working Group felt that this was an over-reach of the role of the SAC Partnership to mitigate the impacts of visitors on the SAC.

- 8.6 **RESOLVED that:**  
***The Historic Environment Strategy, with the amendments described, is approved.***

## **9. Application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund Development Stage Programme**

- 9.1 IM described the new NHLF strategic fund ‘Landscape Connections’ which has earmarked £150 million investment for 20 long-term projects in protected landscapes.
- 9.2 The National Landscapes Association and NLHF recognise that smaller National Landscape teams have limited capacity and are disadvantaged when it comes to applying for large-scale bids which are very resource hungry. The National Landscapes Association is therefore offering support to aid capacity within smaller National Landscapes.
- 9.3 Following a successful bid for development funding for the Gower National Landscape, Cannock Chase is now being offered the opportunity to take part in a funding application. This would comprise an application for up to £250,000 over an 18 months period. The National Landscapes Association would recruit, employ and host new officers. The officers would be based locally to work alongside National Landscape staff. No match funding is required; all costs are covered by the grant. At the end of the development stage a portfolio of projects would be ready for investment for heritage, nature recovery and community engagement.
- 9.4 **RESOLVED that:**  
***The Cannock Chase National Landscape should participate as a delivery partner in the Connecting Cannock development stage proposal to be submitted to the National Lottery Development Fund by the National Landscapes Association.***

## 10. Cannock Chase National Landscape Conference

10.1 SH updated the Committee about the plans for this year's National Landscape Annual Conference as follows:

- Date: Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June
- Time: 10.30am – 3.30pm (registration and networking from 09.45am)
- Venue: Aquarius Ballroom, Hednesford. Free car parking is adjacent to the venue, which is fully accessible.
- Refreshments: Coffees/teas and a light lunch will be provided.
- Booking: The conference is free to attend, and delegates will be required to book using an online system. Booking will be open from 1<sup>st</sup> May, and numbers of delegates will be limited to 100.
- Exhibitions: Partners will be invited to bring exhibitions and any materials that they wish to disseminate.
- Conference theme: The theme for this year's Conference is **Recreation management**.

10.2 **RESOLVED that:**  
*The report is noted.*

## 11. Business Plan 2025-2026 – progress report

11.1 IM presented a summary of the National Landscape Team's performance against its current Business Plan. The picture overall is positive, with significant progress having been achieved against the majority (67%) of the Priority Activities (34/49). Activities have been delivered across all 4 Strategic Aims. Most progress has been achieved against the Nature Strategic Aim, and least against Climate.

11.2 Activities have been delivered through a combination of staff resources, partner support, and funding provided by our core budget and Defra's Capital Uplift, Access for All Fund and Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme.

11.3 Little or no progress has been made against 20% of the Priority Activities (10/49), with a further 8% (not able to be progressed). Our ability to deliver has been checked in some instances by a combination of:

- Stretched resources of the CCNL Team and some of our partners
- Limitations that Defra has set on how we can spend this year's capital uplift (specifically, what counts as capital expenditure). Consequently, we are having to deliver more activities ourselves, which will mean they will take longer to achieve; whilst others have had to be put on hold until an alternative means of delivery can be found.

11.4 **RESOLVED that:**  
*The report is noted.*

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

12.1 The dates and venues of the next meetings of the Joint Committee are still to be confirmed:

- July 2026 TBC (Meeting and AGM)
- December 2026 TBC (Meeting)
- March 2027 TBC (Meeting)

**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 –Cannock Chase National Landscape Budget 2026/27**

**Item for:** Noting

**Author:** John Broad, Senior Finance Business Partner

**Financial implications:** The Cannock Chase National Landscapes 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 2025/26 final outturn positions for Core expenditure, Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), National Landscapes Projects, Access For All and Capital Uplift Projects, the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme and the closing balance held on the Cannock Chase National Landscapes reserve are all noted.
  2. That the 2026/27 Cannock Chase National Landscape budget including an additional one-off Defra Core revenue grant of £74,380, plus a further £240,000 of 30by30 bid capital project top up funding secured from Defra is noted.
  3. That the current 2026/27 budget forecast outturn position for the National Landscape budget is noted.
  4. That the current 2026/27 budget forecast position for the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme is noted.

### **Background**

1. The budget for Cannock Chase National Landscape for 2026/27 was approved by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2026. The Joint Committee agreed, at that time, to balance the budget and meet a funding shortfall by drawing down £4,840 from the Cannock Chase National Landscape reserve. It was also confirmed that the 2026/27 financial contributions from the five local authorities within Cannock Chase National Landscape were to remain unchanged from previous 2025/26 funding levels.
2. Defra has now confirmed its grant funding settlement for 2026/27. This paper therefore provides an update on the budget position for 2026/27. It also reports the final outturn position for 2025/26. 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 2025/26**

3. The final outturn for the 2025/26 Cannock Chase National Landscape budget is set out in *Appendix 1*. The outturn figure of £462,111 compares with the budget of £472,265, resulting in an underspend of £10,154. The underspend comprises £7,155 on National Landscapes projects and £2,999 on Access for All projects.
4. Individual approved projects for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) (including the £1,000 administration fee), and National Landscape Projects are set out in *Appendix 2*. The outturn position for the SDF shows an underspend of £6,896 against the original

budget allocation of £10,000. This underspend is however offsetting nominal overspends against Capital Uplift Projects of £6,651 and the Core budget of £245. The outturn position for the National Landscape projects shows an underspend of £7,155, which will be paid back to Defra.

5. The outturn positions for Access For All Projects and Capital Uplift Projects are set out in *Appendix 3*. The underspend of £2,999 for Access for All projects will have to be paid back to Defra. The overspend of £6,651 against Capital Uplift projects is offset by the underspend against the SDF.
6. The outturn position for the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Grant is set out in *Appendix 4*. The underspend of £59,833 will have to be returned to Defra.

### **Budget update 2026/27**

7. A proposed budget of £491,332 for the National Landscape for 2026/27 was approved by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2026, based on a predicted 'flat line' Defra grant settlement, local authority partner contributions remaining unchanged from 2025/26 funding levels, and the draw-down of £4,840 from the AONB reserve to meet the funding shortfall.
8. Defra has since confirmed the following grant funding settlement for the National Landscape for 2026/27:
  - Core revenue funding of £172,750.
  - One-off revenue Core Grant uplift of £74,380
  - Capital Uplift projects funding of £391,176.
  - Access capital funding of £115,786.
9. With contributions from local authority partners, the National Landscape budget for 2026/27 totals £803,292. Of this, £296,330 is revenue funding and £506,962 is capital funding. The one-off revenue uplift Core Grant of £74,380 means that there is no longer the need to draw-down from the AONB Reserve to balance this year's budget.
10. The current forecast outturn position when compared to the £803,292 budget is, at this early stage of the year, expected to breakeven, as set out in *Appendix 5*. This includes the following budget allocations:
  - Core budget £217,220 (increased from 2025/26 with the one-off revenue uplift)
  - Sustainable Development Fund £10,000 (unchanged from 2025/26)
  - National Landscapes projects £69,110 (increased from 2025/26 with the one-off revenue uplift)
  - Access projects £115,786 (unchanged from 2025/26)
  - Capital Uplift projects £391,176 (increased from 2025/26 with the successful £240,000 grant funding bid to specifically support a land purchase to help deliver the 30by30 project).

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

11. Since July 2020, Cannock Chase National Landscape has been delivering the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme in collaboration with farmers and land

managers. This funding, provided by Defra, is additional funding on top of the annual core and capital funding that the National Landscape receives. Defra has confirmed a grant allocation of £556,763 for the National Landscape for 2026/27, and, at this early stage of the year, it is predicted to breakeven at the end of the financial year as shown in *Appendix 6*. This includes £5,000 administration fee deduction.

### **Reserve**

12. The closing balance on the Cannock Chase National Landscape Reserve at the end of the financial year 2025/26 stood at £94,751, an increase of £10,451 from 2024/25, after transfers in of sales income, administration fees (for the SDF and Farming in Protected Landscapes programme) and interest accrued. A summary of the reserve is set out in *Appendix 7*.
13. 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.
14. These priorities are reviewed annually in December of each year.

### **Equalities Implications**

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

### **Legal Implications**

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

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

17. 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**

18. 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

1. That the 2025/26 final outturn positions for the Core expenditure, Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), National Landscapes Projects, Access For All and Capital Uplift Projects, the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme and the closing balance currently held on the Cannock Chase National Landscapes reserve are all noted.
2. That the 2026/27 Cannock Chase National Landscapes budget has been being uplifted to £803,292 following confirmation of an additional one-off Core revenue grant allocation of £74,380, plus £240,000 in additional capital project grant funding for the 30by30 project from Defra, are noted.
3. That the current 2026/27 budget forecast outturn position for the Core, Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), National Landscapes, Access, and Capital Uplift Projects are noted
4. That the current 2026/27 budget forecast position progress on spend for the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme is noted.

## Cannock Chase National Landscapes Joint Committee

## Cannock Chase National Landscapes Core &amp; Project Costs

## Financial Outturn for 2025/2026

	Budget	Outturn 2025/26	Variation
	£	£	£
<b>Core Budget</b>			
Salaries	169,150	171,776	2,626
Training Expenses	1,510	741	-769
Travel and Subsistence	700	1,042	342
<b>Staff and Associated Costs</b>	171,360	173,559	2,199
Office Equipment	1,400	2,576	1,176
Volunteer Costs	500	155	-345
National Liaison	3,160	3,075	-85
Print & Publicity	4,140	5,956	1,816
Consultancy	0	1,440	1,440
Annual Conference	2,000	1,429	-571
Core Activity (including monitoring, community involvement, etc)	5,240	230	-5,010
Partnership Running Costs	9,000	9,000	0
Misc Sales	0	-375	-375
<b>Core Budget Subtotal</b>	<b>196,800</b>	<b>197,045</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>Revenue Projects:</b>			
Sustainable Development Fund	10,000	3,104	-6,896
National Landscapes Projects	15,150	7,995	-7,155
<b>Revenue Projects Subtotal</b>	<b>25,150</b>	<b>11,099</b>	<b>-14,051</b>
<b>Capital Projects:</b>			
Access for All Projects	115,786	112,787	-2,999
Capital Uplift Projects	134,529	141,180	6,651
<b>Capital Projects Subtotal</b>	<b>250,315</b>	<b>253,967</b>	<b>3,652</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>472,265</b>	<b>462,111</b>	<b>-10,154</b>
<b>Funded By:</b>			
<b>DEFRA Grant</b>			
Core	-147,600	-147,600	0
Sustainable Development Fund	-10,000	-3,349	6,651
National Landscapes Projects	-15,150	-7,995	7,155
<b>DEFRA Revenue Grant Subtotal</b>	<b>-172,750</b>	<b>-158,944</b>	<b>13,806</b>
<b>Local Authority Contributions</b>			
Lichfield District Council	-2,460	-2,460	0
South Staffordshire District Council	-2,460	-2,460	0
Cannock Chase District Council	-9,840	-9,840	0
Stafford Borough Council	-9,840	-9,840	0
Staffordshire County Council	-24,600	-24,600	0
<b>Local Authority Contributions Subtotal</b>	<b>-49,200</b>	<b>-49,200</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Revenue Funding</b>	<b>-221,950</b>	<b>-208,144</b>	<b>13,806</b>
<b>DEFRA Capital Grant</b>			
Access for All Projects	-115,786	-112,787	2,999
Capital Uplift Projects	-134,529	-141,180	-6,651
<b>DEFRA Capital Grant Subtotal</b>	<b>-250,315</b>	<b>-253,967</b>	<b>-3,652</b>
<b>Funding from(+)/to reserve(-)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-472,265</b>	<b>-462,111</b>	<b>10,154</b>

## Cannock Chase National Landscapes Joint Committee

## Sustainable Development Fund &amp; National Landscapes Projects

## Financial Outturn for 2025/2026

	Budget	Outturn 2025/26	Variation
	£	£	£
<b>Approved Sustainability Development Fund (SDF) Projects</b>			
Friends Of Hednesford Park & Cannock Mental Health Hub	500	500	0
Redstart nest box scheme	870	837	-33
Cannock Chase Bat Surveys	785	0	-785
Replacement bat boxes for Brocton Quarry / Old Acre Lane	767	767	0
Uncommitted	6,078	0	-6,078
<b>Approved Projects Total</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>2,104</b>	<b>-6,896</b>
<b>Admin Fees</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>SDF Funding Transfer to National Landscapes Core</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>SDF Funding Transfer to National Landscapes Capital Uplift Projects</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,651</b>	<b>6,651</b>
<b>Total Sustainability Development Fund Expenditure</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Approved Projects:</b>			
<b>National Landscapes Projects:</b>			
White-clawed crayfish survey traps	830	830	0
Red Wood Ant feasibility study	2,000	2,000	0
Research & development for place attachment project with young people.	3,000	3,000	0
Adder land manager workshop 19 February 2026	700	795	95
Contribution to peat survey	1,542	0	-1,542
Parabolic detectors for identifying birds	1,044	870	-174
Bat detectors	476	0	-476
Dark skies event 25 February 2026	500	500	0
Deer census and impact study	5,057	0	-5,057
<b>National Landscapes Approved Projects Total</b>	<b>15,150</b>	<b>7,995</b>	<b>-7,155</b>

## Appendix 3

## Cannock Chase National Landscapes Joint Committee

## Access For All and Capital Uplift

## Financial Outturn for 2025/2026

	Budget	Outturn 2025/26	Variation
	£	£	£
<b>Access for All Projects:</b>			
Upgrade pedestrian bridge (Wolseley Centre, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust)	8,527	8,527	0
Upgrade steps (Milford Common)	12,880	12,880	0
Bird box viewing screen	140	0	-140
Wall map (Cannock Chase Visitor Centre)	695	425	-270
Spotting scope and binoculars for guided walks	510	0	-510
Installation of interpretation panels X4 (Hednesford Hills), X1 Hazelslade LNR	14,500	14,500	0
Installation of X5 interpretation panels (Beaudesert Hall)	10,835	10,826	-9
Upgrade car park entrance signs (Cannock Chase Country Park)	8,850	8,850	0
National Landscape road gateway markers design strategy and options	18,840	18,840	0
Surface enhancements (Toc-H trail)	2,248	2,248	0
Accessible demonstration beds, Arcadia Forest Garden	7,055	7,055	0
Signage and interpretation, Arcadia, Forest Garden	5,000	5,000	0
Viewing bench in Forest Garden (Shugborough Estate)	6,500	6,500	0
Creation of upgraded and more accessible National Landscape website	13,500	13,500	0
Participants medals for Future Guardians of Cannock Chase	1,500	1,480	-20
Walking booklet re-print	1,795	2,156	361
Military history leaflet - artwork and design	700	0	-700
Military history leaflet	1,200	0	-1,200
Illustration for military history leaflet	500	0	-500
Uncommitted	11	0	-11
<b>Access For All Approved Projects Total</b>	<b>115,786</b>	<b>112,787</b>	<b>-2,999</b>
<b>Capital Uplift Projects:</b>			
Surface enhancements (RAF Hednesford Trail)	12,730	12,730	0
Purchase of trail cameras for beavers	1,459	1,459	0
Purchase of equipment to rip and re-grade paths to improve the access experience and resilience to extreme weather events (Cannock Chase Country Park)	0	0	0
Heathland creation, RAF Hednesford, Cannock Chase Country Park	6,870	6,870	0
Purchase of equipment for heathland management	14,780	14,780	0
Purchase of equipment to manage heathland and ancient semi-natural woodland	48,888	54,450	5,562
Purchase of water bowser and wheel clamp for livestock grazing	0	0	0
Heathland creation, Stile Cop SBI	1,200	1,200	0
Heathland creation for adders, New Hayes tip SBI	1,080	1,080	0
Climate action weather technology, Arcadia, Forest Garden	3,822	3,822	0
Trial installation of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) pods	29,200	29,200	0
Trial Eco Churches project	10,000	10,000	0
Website hosting and maintenance for 3 yrs	4,500	4,500	0
Brocton Coppice	0	1,090	1,090
<b>Capital Uplift Projects</b>	<b>134,529</b>	<b>141,181</b>	<b>6,651</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>250,315</b>	<b>253,968</b>	<b>3,653</b>

## Appendix 4

## Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant

## Financial Outturn for 2025/2026

	Budget	Outturn 2025/26	Variation
	£	£	£
<b>Farming in Protected Landscapes Expenditure:</b>			
Programme Advice & Guidance	65,625	65,625	0
Programme Administration	41,545	41,545	0
Admin Fee	5,000	5,000	0
Project Spend	440,720	380,887	-59,833
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>552,890</b>	<b>493,057</b>	<b>-59,833</b>

## Cannock Chase National Landscapes Joint Committee

## Cannock Chase National Landscapes Core &amp; Project Costs

Forecast 2026/2027

	Budget	Actual 26/27 (to-date)	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
<b>Core Budget</b>				
Salaries	189,570	30,200	189,570	0
Training Expenses	1,510	-390	1,510	0
Travel and Subsistence	700	229	700	0
<b>Staff and Associated Costs</b>	<b>191,780</b>	<b>30,040</b>	<b>191,780</b>	<b>0</b>
Office Equipment	1,400	155	1,400	0
Volunteer Costs	500	0	500	0
National Liaison	3,160	3,200	3,160	0
Print & Publicity	4,140	380	4,140	0
Annual Conference	2,000	0	2,000	0
Core Activity (including monitoring, community involvement, etc)	5,240	1,831	5,240	0
Partnership Running Costs	9,000	0	9,000	0
<b>Core Budget Subtotal</b>	<b>217,220</b>	<b>35,605</b>	<b>217,220</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Revenue Projects:</b>				
Sustainable Development Fund	10,000	0	10,000	0
National Landscapes Projects	69,110	0	69,110	0
<b>Revenue Projects Subtotal</b>	<b>79,110</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>79,110</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Capital Projects:</b>				
Access Projects	115,786	0	115,786	0
Capital Uplift Projects	391,176	0	391,176	0
<b>Capital Projects Subtotal</b>	<b>506,962</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>506,962</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>803,292</b>	<b>35,605</b>	<b>803,292</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Funded By:</b>				
<b>DEFRA Grant</b>				
Core	-147,600	0	-147,600	0
Core Revenue Uplift (26/27 only)	-74,380	0	-74,380	0
Sustainable Development Fund	-10,000	0	-10,000	0
National Landscapes Projects	-15,150	0	-15,150	0
<b>DEFRA Revenue Grant Subtotal</b>	<b>-247,130</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-247,130</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Local Authority Contributions</b>				
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
<b>Local Authority Contributions Subtotal</b>	<b>-49,200</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-49,200</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Revenue Funding</b>	<b>-296,330</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-296,330</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>DEFRA Capital Grant</b>				
Access for All Projects	-115,786	0	-115,786	0
Capital Uplift Projects (including 30by30 grant funding)	-391,176	0	-391,176	0
<b>DEFRA Capital Grant Subtotal</b>	<b>-506,962</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-506,962</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>National Landscapes Reserve</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-450</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-803,292</b>	<b>-450</b>	<b>-803,292</b>	<b>0</b>

## Cannock Chase National Landscapes Joint Committee

## Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant

## Forecast 2026/2027

	Budget	Actual 26/27 (to-date)	Predicted Outturn	Variation
	£	£	£	£
<b>Farming in Protected Landscapes Expenditure:</b>				
Programme Advice & Guidance	65,624	16,207	65,624	0
Programme Administration	41,544	158	41,544	0
Admin Fee	5,000	0	5,000	0
Project Spend	444,595	0	444,595	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>556,763</b>	<b>16,365</b>	<b>556,763</b>	<b>0</b>

## Appendix 7

## Cannock Chase National Landscapes 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	1,539				6,156	3,712	9,868	3,492	0	84,300
2025/2026	84,300	905				6,000		6,000	3,546		94,751
2026/2027	94,751					6,000		6,000			100,751
		19,014	7,673	27,409	0	61,900	-33,502	28,398	14,335	-6,292	100,751

**Item 7****Chase Road****Item for:**

Discussion

**Author:**

Presentation by George Sharp, Cannock Chase SAC Partnership

**Financial implications:**

None

**Recommendations:**

The Committee is invited to give their views on the options for Chase Road, and is requested to delegate the preparation of a formal response to the public consultation to the Team Leader.

## Item 8 **Business Plan 2026-2027**

**Item for:** Decision

**Author:** Ian Marshall, Team Leader

**Financial implications:** Business Plan activities are funded through core and capital funding provided by Defra, local authority contributions, and any externally funded programmes.

**Recommendations:** To approve the Business Plan for 2026/27 with any amendments agreed at the meeting.

### Context

1. The [AONB Management Plan 2025-2030](#) for Cannock Chase National Landscape was approved by the Joint Committee at the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025, and adopted from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. The Plan is for the National Landscape and sets out all the relevant outcomes to be delivered by 2030 by the key organisations within the area.
2. As one of the delivery organisations, the National Landscape Team sets out how it will deliver its part of the Management Plan in its annual Business Plan. The preparation, delivery and monitoring of a Business Plan is now a requirement for Defra funding for National Landscapes.

### Proposed Business Plan 2026-2027

3. The proposed Business Plan for 2026/27 (Year 2 of our Management Plan) is issued separately. It includes 38 actions from the AONB Management Plan, broken down as follows for each of the four Strategic Aims:
  - Nature - 12 actions
  - Climate - 5 actions
  - People - 13 actions
  - Place - 8 actions
4. Some of these are unchanged from the FY2025/26 Business Plan as they are ongoing medium or long-term activities. Some have been updated to reflect new opportunities that have arisen for joint working or to take forward project developmental work undertaken in the previous year.
5. A shortlist of 14 actions have been identified as strategic priorities to help us target the allocation of our in-year resources and make the most of partnership working and any external funding opportunities. In addition, two organisational strategic priorities have been identified for 2026/27: planning for Local Government Re-organisation in Staffordshire, and; working with the National Landscapes Association to submit a bid for development funding to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

### Resources

6. Total available resources for the National Landscape for 2026/27 are £1.34 million, comprising:

- Core revenue funding (Defra + local authority contributions).
  - One-off revenue uplift from Defra for delivering AONB core activities.
  - Capital funding for access improvements.
  - Capital funding for activities that support 30by30 , or which has income generating or cost saving potential.
  - Revenue and capital funding for the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.
7. This is an increase IRO £314,000 on FY2025/26 resources due to a one-off revenue uplift of £74,380 and a one-off capital top-up of £240,000 towards a land purchase to protect land for nature and help deliver 30by30 (agenda item No. 13).
8. The spend criteria terms for the different funding allocations are set out in the appendices to the Business Plan. The Business Plan indicates the most appropriate funding allocation(s) to support the delivery of each action.

### **Monitoring and reporting**

9. The Team's performance against our Business Plan will be reported to Defra twice yearly – in September (mid-year claim) and March (end-year claim), and to the Joint Committee at its December and March meetings.

### **Risk register**

10. Appendix 7 of the Business Plan includes our register of corporate risks. After the implementation of countermeasures, the highest residual risks remain associated with the resources of the National Landscape Team, which remains under-capacity. An underlying budget shortfall is still being met by freezing recruitment into the vacant position of Landscape Planning Officer. Consequently, the National Landscape is unable to routinely advise local planning authorities on the impacts of proposed developments on the protected area, placing its special qualities at risk of harm from inappropriate development.
11. Local Government Re-organisation has been added to the risk register for its potential to disrupt business continuity, placing decision-making, staff and budgets at risk.

### **Recommendations**

12. To approve the Business Plan for 2026/27 with any amendments agreed at the meeting.

### **Issued separately:**

Cannock Chase National Landscape Team Business Plan 2026-2027

## **Item 9 Annual Conference 2026**

**Item for:** Information

**Author:** Samantha Hall, Communications Officer

**Financial implications:** Expenditure associated with holding the Annual Conference is met from the National Landscape core budget.

**Recommendations:** The Committee notes the evaluation and feedback from the Annual Conference 2026, and is invited to ask questions.

### **Context**

1. The National Landscape Annual Conference took place on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June at the Aquarius Ballroom in Hednesford. The conference theme was recreation management.
2. An annual conference is a requirement of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership Agreement and an expectation of Defra. It is also an integral delivery tool of the National Landscape's communication plans allowing the Partnership to celebrate its achievements and for partners and stakeholders to express their views and opinions on delivery against the AONB Management Plan and how the natural beauty of Cannock Chase should be conserved and enhanced.

### **Conference programme**

3. The conference began with a Review of the Year, celebrating the achievements of the Team and partners, followed by a short Q and A session with delegates about anything they have heard, or any other matters they wish to raise about the National Landscape. Paddy Harrop, Central Director of Forestry England and Co-Chair of the Outdoor Recreation Network set the scene for the importance of outdoor recreation. Ian Marshall then summarised recreation on Cannock Chase and the pressures this places on the National Landscape as well as recreation providers. Delegates were then asked a series of questions in a roundtable format.
4. Cannock Chase National Landscape Team was responsible for the programme content, promotion and event management. The conference was promoted through all partners and stakeholders, the website and direct to CCNL newsletter subscribers and on social media.

### **Evaluation and feedback**

5. 78 delegates booked onto the conference and 70 attended. 28% have responded to the survey with their feedback, as follows
  - 85% rated the event as excellent or very good, 15% rated the event as good
  - 100% agreed that the booking process was easy
  - Review of the Year presentations, 26% rated this part of the conference extremely useful, 53% very useful and 21% somewhat useful
  - Keynote address from Paddy Harrop was rated excellent or very good by 80% of delegates, 20% thought it was good.
  - 50% of delegates rated the mini exhibition, extremely or very useful whilst the remaining delegates thought it was somewhat useful.

- 85% rated the workshop as excellent, very good and good and 15% rated it fair.
- Conference facilities were rated 4.45/5 and refreshments rated 4.2/5

#### *Comments from the workshop*

- People enjoyed working with different people and organisations mixed up on the tables and having the opportunity to discuss the topics.
- Some delegates found the workshop confusing and not clear on what they were being asked to do.
- Some did not feel there was enough time available to answer all the questions, and felt rushed.
- Sharing information before the event may have helped.

#### *Improvement ideas for future years*

- Partners to share the platform for the review of the year.
- The updates seemed to be more of a list, hard to take in all the information.
- Bigger print on name badges.
- More partner exhibitions.

#### *Themes for future conferences*

- Species action plans, nature restoration and conservation
- Return to recreation management
- How to engage local communities better
- Long distance trails particularly the refurbishment of the Staffordshire Way
- Management of night-time activities, anti-social behaviour and crime
- Partnerships and collaboration.
- Education and engagement.

### **Recommendation**

6. The Committee notes the evaluation and feedback from the Annual Conference 2026, and is invited to ask questions.



**Issued separately**

Cannock Chase National Landscape Annual Review 2025-2026



5. A total of 27 partners were requested to provide updates, and 17 returns were received (a 63% return rate). Note: the total of 27 partners includes services within the same organisation. The updates were also used to inform the preparation of the Annual Review 2025/26 (see agenda item no. 10).

### Delivery Progress

6. The full AONB Management Plan Progress Report for 2025/26 is issued separately.
7. The Report includes a dashboard overview of the progress achieved against the actions which sit under each Strategic Aim and is repeated here:

Strategic aim	Number of actions	Little / no progress	Some progress	On course	Achieved	Info not available
Nature	14	0	2	9	1	2
Climate	7	3	0	4	0	0
People	21	4	2	14	0	1
Place	18	3	3	8	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>10 (17%)</b>	<b>7 (12%)</b>	<b>35 (58%)</b>	<b>2 (3%)</b>	<b>6 (10%)</b>

8. Substantive progress (achieved or on course) has been made against 37 (61%) of the 60 actions in the Management Plan, with some progress made against a further 7 actions (12%). Little or no progress was made against 10 (17%) of the actions. It was not possible to report progress against 6 (10%) of the actions due to lack of information.

### Indicators of Success

9. The AONB Management Plan identifies a suite of indicators to track and report progress against. Progress against these indicators up to 31 March 2026 is included in Appendix 1 to this paper.

### Digital reporting

10. The report to Joint Committee on 14 July 2025 included a proposal to explore the cost and feasibility of reporting and updating progress online via a 'Performance Reporting' section on the National Landscape website, in order to improve accessibility, transparency and accountability. Examples elsewhere include those developed by the [Peak District National Park](#) and [Yorkshire Dales National Park](#). Due to time and resource constraints it has not been possible to give this consideration.

### Recommendations

11. To approve the Progress Report for Year 1 of the Cannock Chase National Landscape AONB Management Plan 2025-2030.

### Appendices

Progress against Indicators of Success up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

### Issued separately:

Cannock Chase National Landscape AONB Management Plan Progress Report 2025-26

## Appendix 1. Progress against Indicators of Success up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

Indicator	Status	Comments (where appropriate)
<p><b>* Mandatory national target for Protected Landscapes</b></p> <p><b>** Local contribution to a shared mandatory target</b></p> <p><b># Target under the Water Framework Directive</b></p>		
<b>Nature</b>		
<i>*Bring 80% of SSSIs within the National Landscape into favourable condition by 2042.</i>	<b>Some progress</b>	Increase from 6.3% in 24/25 to 18.8% in 25/26
<i>*For 60% of SSSIs within the National Landscape assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028.</i>	<b>Some progress</b>	Increase from 12.5% in 24/25 to 18.8% in 25/26
<i>Protect and manage for nature conservation 35% of the National Landscape by 2030, 40% by 2035, and 45% by 2040.</i>	<b>On course</b>	Although management is taking place, figures won't be available until land has been assessed against the 30by30 criteria.
<i>**Restore or create 250 hectares of wildlife-rich habitats outside protected sites by 2030.</i>	<b>On course</b>	Although management is taking place, figures need to be collected from partners
<i>Publish Species Actions Plans for all Champion species by 2028.</i>	<b>On course</b>	
<i>*Ensuring at least 65% to 85% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030.</i>	<b>Info not available</b>	Source of data unclear
<i># At least 80% of all watercourses achieve 'good ecological status' by 2030.</i>	<b>Info not available</b>	Data required from Environment Agency
<b>Climate</b>		
<i>**By 2026 assess the potential and opportunities to sequester and store carbon by increasing tree canopy and woodland cover, adopting regenerative agricultural practices on farmland, and restoring peatlands.</i>	<b>Little / no progress</b>	May be delayed into 2027
<i>**By 2026 map the extent, depth and condition of our peatlands.</i>	<b>Achieved</b>	
<i>*By 2028 publish a climate change adaptation plan.</i>	<b>Little / no progress</b>	Planned for 27/28
<b>People</b>		
<i>By 2026 publish a Recreation Management Strategy for the National Landscape.</i>	<b>Some progress</b>	May be delayed into 2027
<i>Deliver improvements to two formal car parks in accordance with the Cannock Chase SAC Detailed Implementation Plan.</i>	<b>Some progress</b>	
<i>**Identify two new easy access trails.</i>	<b>Little / no</b>	May follow-on from

	<b>progress</b>	Recreational Management Strategy
<i>By 2027 review all key road gateways and signage onto the Chase and begin a programme of improvements by 2028.</i>	<b>Some progress</b>	Investments may follow-on from Recreational Management Strategy
<i>By 2030 create a visitor welcome at all train gateway stations onto the Chase</i>	<b>Little / no progress</b>	
<i>By 2029 re-develop Cannock Chase Visitor Centre as a discovery centre for the National Landscape.</i>	<b>On course</b>	
<i>Increase number of volunteer hours by 10% by 2030 from a 2023 baseline.</i>	<b>Info not available</b>	Partner figures need to be systematically collected
<b>Place</b>		
<i>By 2030 put another 2km of existing power lines underground.</i>	<b>On course</b>	
<i>Every heritage asset<sup>1</sup> on the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record within the National Landscape is visited and assessed for their condition once every 5 years.</i>	<b>On course</b>	
<i>*No designated heritage assets feature on the national Heritage at Risk Register.</i>	<b>On course</b>	
<i>By 2026 publish an Historic Environment Strategy for the National Landscape</i>	<b>Achieved</b>	
<i>Deliver two major projects from the Historic Environment Strategy that celebrate and promote engagement with the historic environment.</i>	<b>Little / no progress</b>	Projects to follow-on from the Historic Environment Strategy

<sup>1</sup> Excluding sites that are no longer extant, find spots, standing buildings, places or veteran trees

## **Item 12 Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme 5 year Review, 2021-2026**

**Item for:** Decision

**Author:** Farming in Protected Landscapes Officers

**Financial implications:** Expenditure associated with the publication of the Review is met from the Farming in Protected Landscapes budget. The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme is funded by Defra, and is separate from Defra's core grant to the National Landscape.

**Recommendations:** For members to approve the publication of the Review, with any amendments determined at the meeting.

### **Context**

1. The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (FiPL) was introduced by government in 2021 and directs agricultural funds to farmers and landowners in England's National Landscapes and National Parks.
2. The innovative FiPL model blends national and local priorities and devolves decision-making to local experts, while funding farmers to deliver against national targets. It fills gaps not met by other farming funding programmes, especially for smaller landholders.
3. Contributions to nature recovery and climate resilience, sustainable businesses, social wellbeing and community building, heritage conservation and better access for people to enjoy the nation's landscapes all feature in programme delivery, coming together to make much more resilient rural places.
4. A Review report (issued separately) has been prepared to highlight the key achievements, with case studies, illustrating the impact of the programme in Cannock Chase National Landscape during the first five years of the programme (2021-26).

### **Achievements**

5. The programme has allocated more than £1.4 million to 80 projects spread across the National Landscape and beyond its boundary. FiPL projects have created and improved habitats for biodiversity, enhanced the landscape through hedgerow planting and restoration and tree planting, improved the aquatic environment, conserved historic features and archaeology, protected and encouraged wildlife, enabled improved public access, supported sustainable farming practices, raised awareness and understanding of the special qualities of the National Landscape, and improved collaboration and engagement.
6. The programme has proved popular with farmers and landowners for its flexible approach and local knowledge of fund officers. It has become an important tool for both Government to deliver its ambitions for agriculture and the environment and targets for 30by30 and the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework, and also for the National Landscape to delivery its local priorities set out in the AONB Management Plan.

### **Wider benefits of FiPL**

7. The FiPL programme has been a real game changer for the National Landscape, delivering benefits that go above and beyond its environmental outcomes:
  - Building trusted relationships with the farming and land-owning community
  - Support for the local economy
  - Collaboration with specialists and organisations
  - Creating local impacts
  - Sharing learning and good practice
  - Community wellbeing
  - Going the extra mile, to deliver non-funded activities

### **What next?**

8. If approved, the Review will be desktop published, integrating graphics and photographs to create a high quality, digital document (current layout and photographs are illustrative only, and may change). The finished document will be widely promoted and shared to celebrate the success of the FiPL programme.
9. The FiPL programme has been extended for a further 3 years until 31 March 2029. Cannock Chase National Landscape has received confirmation of its grant funding for FY 2026/27, and indicative allocations for 2027/28 and 2028/29.

### **Recommendations**

10. To approve the publication of the Review, with any amendments agreed at the meeting.

### **Issued separately**

Cannock Chase National Landscape. Farming in Protected Landscapes 2021-2026 Review

**Exclusion of the Public and Press**

The Chairman to move:

"That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the local Government Act 1972 (as amended) indicated below".

**Part Two**

(All reports in this section are exempt)