

# Cannock Chase National Landscape an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## Cannock Chase National Landscape Team Business Plan 2026-2027



**Cannock  
Chase**  
National  
Landscape

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## Introduction

This Business Plan sets out the priorities for the Cannock Chase National Landscape Team for 2026/27, showing how we will deliver our part of the [AONB Management Plan 2025-2030](#) and respond proactively to the challenges and opportunities affecting the National Landscape.

The priorities that we have included will need to be flexible to adapt to changing circumstances and external influences. Many activities depend on collaborative working with partners, organisations and community groups and may be subject to change, often at short notice.

## Our functions

Our primary purpose is to *‘conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the National Landscape’*.

In pursuing this primary purpose, we must also take account of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment. Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met in so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.

## AONB Management Plan

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, the five local authorities that comprise the Joint Committee of Cannock Chase National Landscape adopted the latest edition of our AONB Management Plan. This statutory document sets out our shared ambitions for the future of Cannock Chase for the period 2025-2030, and was developed through research and insight, collaborative work with our partners, the Government’s outcomes and targets for England’s protected landscapes, as well as public consultation. As such it blends national and local priorities.

We want Cannock Chase to be ***“a wild and beautiful place, distinctive, thriving, resilient and welcoming”***. To deliver our vision over the lifetime of the Management Plan we will focus on four integrated strategic aims under the themes of nature, climate, people and place. The themes reinforce the Government’s ambitions for Protected Landscapes in England to be distinctive cultural landscapes that support the nation’s health and wellbeing, tackle climate change and restore nature.

<p><b>Nature</b> <b>Strategic aim:</b>  A nature-rich, healthy National Landscape, with a thriving and connected network of habitats that is alive with wildlife, both within and beyond its borders.</p>	<p><b>Climate</b> <b>Strategic aim:</b>  A resilient National Landscape, adapted to cope with the impacts of climate change and net zero.</p>
<p><b>People</b> <b>Strategic aim:</b>  An inclusive National Landscape, providing a quality experience in which people from all backgrounds and abilities value Cannock Chase as an important part of their lives and are empowered to care for it.</p>	<p><b>Place</b> <b>Strategic aim:</b>  A welcoming National Landscape, whose local character, distinctiveness and sense of place are sustained and enhanced, providing multiple benefits for all.</p>

Our Business Plan is structured around these themes and the numbered actions included in the AONB Management Plan. As well as delivering these activities we will strive to be effective, offer value for money, and provide an excellent level of service through our governance. Wherever appropriate, we will seek to align our priorities with those of our partners to deliver long-lasting environmental improvements.

## Resources

The financial resources available for 2026/27 are as follows:

<b>Core revenue</b>	<b>£221,952</b>
<b>Revenue uplift</b>	<b>£74,380</b>
<b>Core capital</b>	<b>£391,176</b>
<b>Access capital</b>	<b>£115,786</b>
<b>Farming in Protected Landscapes programme</b>	<b>£556,763</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>£1,360,057</u></b>

### *Core 26/27 Revenue funding*

Our core revenue funding comes from a central Government grant (Defra) (75% - £172,750) and matched contributions from our five constituent local authorities (25% - £49,200).

For 2026/27 Defra has allocated a one-off RDEL uplift of £74,380 in addition to our RDEL core grant. This amount does not have to be matched by a corresponding increase in local authority contributions, and is to spent in line our funded RDEL activities (Appendix 1).

The allocation of the core revenue funding, including the uplift, is as follows:

- £217,220 (staff and associated costs, partnership running costs, print and publicity, volunteer costs, national liaison, annual conference, monitoring and community involvement)
- £10,000 (Sustainable Development Fund)
- £69,110 (National Landscape projects)

Our total core revenue funding for 2026/27, with the uplift, is **£296,332**

Appendix 1 describes the Funded Activities which Defra expects National Landscapes (AONBs) to carry out to comply with their obligations, and Appendix 2 indicative outcomes, milestones and indicative performance measures. Appendix 3 summaries the purpose of the Sustainable Development Fund.

### *Capital funding - Core*

In addition to our core grant-in-aid funding, Defra has allocated Cannock Chase National Landscape a capital uplift of **£391,176** for 2026/27 to be spent on activities that contribute towards:

- Innovation, investing-to-save, and income generation.
- Delivery of 30by30 (protecting 30% of nature on land by 2030), including a contribution of £240,000 to specifically support a land purchase.

The funding criteria for the capital uplift are set out in Appendix 4.

## ***Capital funding – Access***

For 2026/27, Defra has allocated Cannock Chase National Landscape **£115,786** for improvements to access. This grant used to be run separately as part of Defra’s Access for All programme, but with the closure of that programme, funding for access now forms part of our grant funding settlement. The funding criteria for our access allocation are set out in Appendix 5.

## ***Externally funded programme***

Cannock Chase National Landscape also receives additional Defra agricultural funding for the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) – £556,763 for 2026/27. This money is separate from all other Defra grant funding that we receive.

Appendix 6 summarises the FiPL programme.

## ***Collaboration***

Wherever possible we aim to invest beyond the resources provided by national and local government by collaborating with our partners and seeking additional funds from a wide variety of sources. The National Landscape Team is small (currently down to 2.5FTE employees), does not own land or any other assets, nor does it have powers to compel others to deliver the outcomes it is seeking from the Management Plan. As always, therefore, working in partnership to deliver change is at the heart of our work.

## **Strategic priorities for 2026/27**

Each year we identify a number of strategic projects to help us target resources and make the most of partnership working and any external funding opportunities. Our priorities for 2026/27 are as follows (darker coloured rows on the Business Plan activities):

### *Outcomes for Nature*

- Assess, with landowners, potential sites that can count for 30by30, and support management measures (Action No. 1).
- Prepare species action plans for 5 Champion species (Action No. 4).
- Support the National Heathland Conference taking place on Cannock Chase 8-10 September 2026 (Action No.8).
- Discuss with key partner landowners, the potential for establishing a ‘super National Nature Reserve’ (Action No. 9).

### *Outcomes for Climate*

- Explore opportunities for expanding EV charging facilities across the Chase (Action No. 15).
- Promote Hednesford Train station as a gateway to Cannock Chase (Action No. 16).
- Support landowners to develop flood management schemes that contribute to flood mitigation (Action No. 19).

### *Outcomes for People*

- Publish a Recreation Management Strategy (Action No. 22).
- Progress the installation of a first tranche of road gateway signs on primary routes into the National Landscape (Action No. 33).

- With partners, identify priority locations for improving the PRoW network where it intersects with highways. (Action No. 33).
- Launch the Cannock Chase Charitable Fund (Action No. 40).

*Outcomes for Place*

- Assess the feasibility and costs of introducing an area-wide mandatory 40mph speed limit across the National Landscape (Action No. 48).
- Develop a full application to National Grid for a powerline undergrounding scheme (Action No. 50).
- Deliver environmental outcomes through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (multiple actions for Nature, Climate, People and Place).
- Publish a Fixed Point Photography Condition Monitoring Study 2004 – 2024.

In addition, two organisational strategic priorities have been identified for 2026/27:

*Local Government Reorganisation*

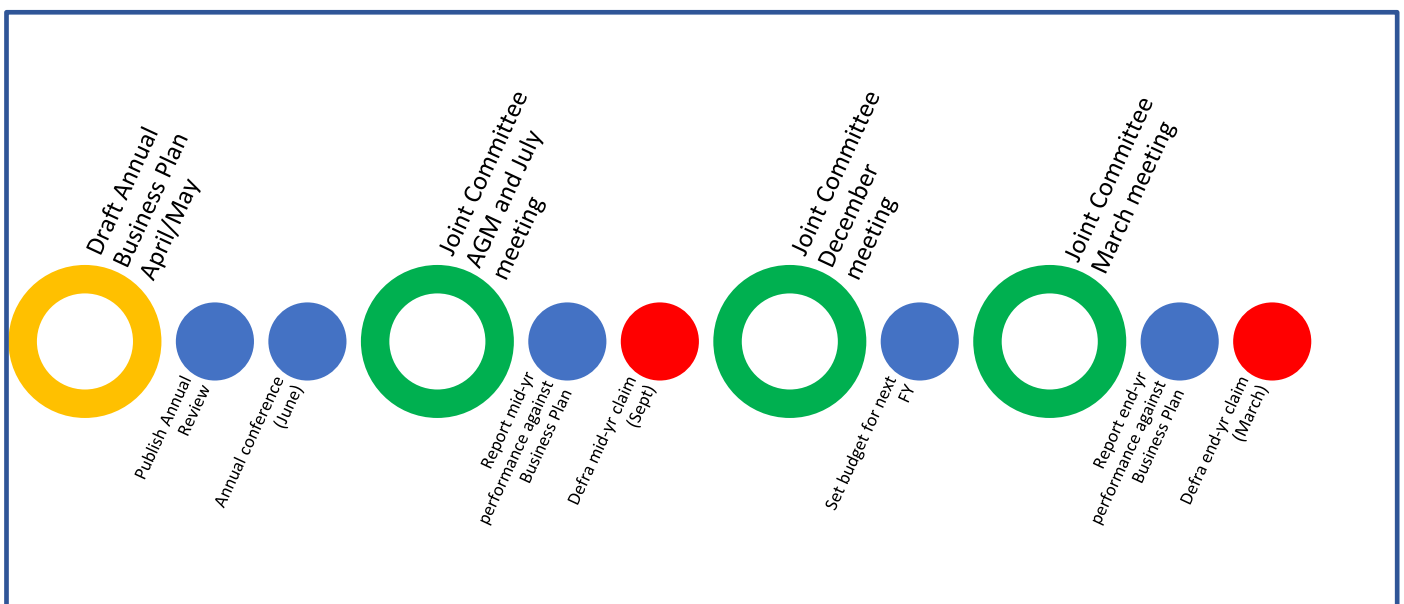
- Plan for Local Government in Staffordshire, to ensure that responsibilities and resourcing for the National Landscape are highlighted and will be transferred to the new authorities in an effective and timely manner.

*Organisational and financial resilience*

- Work with the National Landscapes Association to submit a £250,000 / 18 mths bid for development funding to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for Chase Landscape Connections in order to leverage further resources so that we can deliver at scale for nature recovery, improve our heritage, encourage greater inclusion, and improve the quality of our visitor experience.

**Monitoring and reporting performance**

The diagram below sets out our annual timeline for governance. Performance against our Business Plan will be reported to Defra twice yearly – at mid-year (September) and end-year (December) claims.



## Corporate risk register

The National Landscape Partnership prepares a corporate risk register which is reviewed annually, and incorporated within the Business Plan (Appendix 7). This serves as a central repository for capturing and evaluating the key strategic risks we face, their likelihood, potential impact and corresponding countermeasures. Maintaining a comprehensive risk register helps us to proactively manage uncertainties, support our decision-making processes, mitigate potential harm to our operations, and ensure business continuity. Local Government Re-organisation has been added to the register.

## Business Plan activities

Business Plan activities are arranged by the four strategic aims for Nature, Climate, People and Place as set out in our AONB Management Plan. The table below shows the agreed Management Plan actions (and numbers) in the first column, priority activities in the second column, indicative resources in the third column, and then our proposed measures of success in the final column.

Rows marked in darker colours and with bold font are identified as our strategic priorities for 2026/27 as highlighted on pages 5 and 6 above.

The AONB Management Plan includes 60 actions in total. Where an action is not included in our Business Plan this either means that other partners are leading or developing it, rather than the National Landscape Team, that the action is completed or is scheduled later in the lifetime of the Management Plan. We keep an overview of delivery against all 60 actions in the Plan, and report our performance annually.

Organisational objectives are considered separately, and follow-on from the Business Plan activities.

Management Plan Action	Priority activities for 2026-27	Resources	Proposed measures of success
<b>Priorities for Nature</b>			
<b>1. Secure long-term protection for nature conservation and favourable management of protected sites through legal or other effective means.</b>	<b>Work with partner landowners to improve the state of readiness of sites that could count to meeting 30by30 criteria.</b>	<b>CCNL Core capital, CCNL Core revenue, FiPL programme</b>	<b>Sites assessed against 30by30 criteria.  Improvements identified for purpose, protection and management for potential 30by30 sites.</b>
2. Re-introduce livestock grazing to key sites to support sustainable management.	Support partners with grazing management.	FiPL programme, CCNL Core capital	Hectares of habitat under grazing management.
3. Deliver programmes for the restoration and creation of priority and other locally important habitats (outside SSSI)	Support partner landowners and farmers to deliver nature recovery	FiPL programme, CCNL Core capital	Hectares of priority habitats restored / created.

Management Plan Action	Priority activities for 2026-27	Resources	Proposed measures of success
<b>4. Publish Species Action Plans for 10 Champion Species for the National Landscape, and deliver targeted action where required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Small pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly</li> <li>○ Adder</li> <li>○ Nightjar</li> <li>○ Solitary wasp species of bare ground (TBC)</li> <li>○ Ancient oak trees</li> <li>○ White-clawed crayfish</li> <li>○ Otter</li> <li>○ Common redstart</li> <li>○ Welsh Clearwing</li> <li>○ Brown hare</li> </ul>	<b>With stakeholders, prepare species action plans for 5 Champion species (adder, small pearl-bordered fritillary, nightjar, white-clawed crayfish and ancient oak trees)</b>	<b>CCNL Core capital, CCNL Core revenue, FiPL programme</b>	<b>Action Plans agreed.</b>  <b>Measures for recovery of Champion species supported.</b>
	Support conservation measures for other threatened/keynote species, including beaver, pine marten and red wood ant.	FiPL programme, CCNL Core capital	Number of species and projects supported.
<b>5. Monitor invasive species and deliver-collaborative and targeted management to address them where required.</b>	<b>With partner landowners, target species and support control measures.</b>	FiPL programme, CCNL Core capital	Number of control projects delivered.
<b>6. Draw up and deliver a strategy and action plan for monitoring and managing the deer population in the Chase as well as engaging and informing the public about the need to manage the deer population.</b>	<b>Carry out census of deer population.</b>	CCNL Core revenue, partner contributions.	Deer census completed.
<b>7. Increase awareness and appreciation of Local Geological Sites within the National Landscape amongst land managers and the public and identify ways to coordinate their monitoring and management.</b>	<b>Support Staffordshire County Council to improve the condition of Milford Quarry SSSI.</b>	CCNL Core capital, SCC	Works carried out.
<b>8. Support the Purple Horizons Nature Recovery Project to connect Cannock Chase with Sutton Park to deliver greater resilience for nature.</b>	<b>Support the National Heathland Conference September 2026, taking place on Cannock Chase.</b>	CCNL Core revenue	<b>Successful Conference and Cannock Chase and work of CCNL Partnership showcased.</b>
<b>9. Explore the potential and feasibility to establish a 'super National Nature Reserve' to protect wildlife and help tackle climate change by restoring and improving priority habitats.</b>	<b>Discuss with partner landowners, the potential to establish a super NNR.</b>	CCNL Core revenue	<b>Scoping exercise completed and next steps established.</b>

<b>Management Plan Action</b>	<b>Priority activities for 2026-27</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Proposed measures of success</b>
11. Monitor licences for the abstraction of water from surface waters and aquifers to ensure that volumes of water abstracted are sustainable and do not impact negatively on wetland habitats	Input to Severn Trent Water's baseline picture of water resources and abstraction in the Staffordshire Trent Valley.	CCNL staff time	Issues for CCNL highlighted in reports.
12. Develop buffer zones around watercourses to protect the water environment and sensitive wetland habitats.	Support landowners and land managers to protect and improve habitat quality within and alongside watercourses.	FiPL programme	Number of projects delivered, number of farmers supported, length of watercourse improved.
14. Raise awareness of the negative, nutrient-enriching, impacts of dog fouling on sensitive ecological sites, including the SAC.	Support the SAC with dog campaigns.	CCNL staff time	Number of media posts.
<b>Priorities for Climate</b>			
<b>15. Provide information and additional facilities, such as secure bicycle parking and EV charging points to encourage visitors to arrive by more sustainable means of transport</b>	<b>Explore opportunities for expanding EV charging facilities across the Chase.</b>	<b>CCNL staff time, SCC LTP.</b>	<b>Number of projects identified for investment.</b>
<b>16. Work with relevant bodies to improve nearby bus and rail services, and design and provide safe, connected cycle and pedestrian routes into the National Landscape.</b>	<b>Promote Hednesford Train station as a gateway to Cannock Chase.</b>	<b>CCNL staff time, CCNL Access capital, SCC LTP</b>	<b>Scheme progressed.</b>
17. Increase tree canopy and woodland cover.	Support partner landowners and farmers to increase tree and woodland cover.	FiPL programme, CCNL Core capital	Numbers of trees planted, hectares planted, length of hedgerows planted/improved.
18. Improve understanding about the extent, depth and condition of our peatlands, and use that information to improve their protection and restoration.	Support partner landowners and farmers with measures to improve/restore peatlands.	CCNL Core capital, FiPL programme	Number of projects, hectares restored.
<b>19. Develop and deliver landscape-scale natural flood management projects in the Trent and Sow catchments.</b>	<b>Support landowners to develop flood management schemes that contribute to flood mitigation.</b>	<b>FiPL programme, SCC Environmental Action Plan</b>	<b>Hectares of project developed.</b>

Management Plan Action	Priority activities for 2026-27	Resources	Proposed measures of success
<b>Priorities for People</b>			
<b>22. Prepare a Recreation Management Strategy for the National Landscape, building on the foundations set out in the SAC Detailed Implementation Plans.</b>	<b>Develop the Strategy with partners and stakeholders.</b>	<b>CCNL Core revenue</b>	<b>A common and strategic approach to the management of recreation on the Chase.</b>
23. Educate organisers of events and group visits to the National Landscape, and in particular the SAC, to be aware of its national importance and the wealth of wildlife and sensitive habitats in the area, their role in conserving it, and the need to seek any necessary permissions before visiting.	Liaise with partners and respond to enquiries as they arise.	CCNL staff time, CCNL Access capital, FiPL programme	Event organisers informed.
24. Improve the quality, consistency and availability of information and interpretation about the special qualities of the National Landscape, including their significance and conservation requirements.	Work with landowners, partners, and communities to develop/refresh interpretation as opportunities arise.	CCNL Access capital, FiPL programme	Number of interpretation panels installed/updated.
27. Use appropriate and proportionate responses and enforcement to deter illegal activities on the National Landscape such as wildlife and heritage crime, and anti-social behaviour.	Support partners to respond to issues as they arise.  Explore with Staffordshire Police and Historic England a possible Heritage Watch scheme for the National Landscape.	CCNL staff time	Number of cases supported.  Value of Heritage Watch scheme assessed.
29. Maintain the public rights of way and permissive routes so that they are usable and navigable.	Support landowners with investment priorities.	CCNL Access capital, FiPL programme	Length of PRoW improved.
30. Increase the provision of easy access trails and accessible information, interpretation and signage to maximise inclusivity.	Support landowners to improve the surfaces of key trails.	CCNL Access capital, FiPL programme	Length of trails improved. Number of interventions realised.
	Work with landowners, partners, and communities to develop/refresh interpretation materials as opportunities arise.	CCNL Access capital, FiPL programme	Number of interpretation panels installed/updated.
32. Create and promote circular routes from main car parks and gateway train stations to improve the visitor welcome and experience and	Explore opportunity for developing circular walking and cycling route from Hednesford Train station.	CCNL staff time, CCNL Access capital	Number of gateway points / car parks improved.
	Support SAC Partnership's car park improvements.		

Management Plan Action	Priority activities for 2026-27	Resources	Proposed measures of success
protect sensitive ecological sites.			
<b>33. Develop and deliver an investment programme of improvements to key infrastructure, for example, the main gateways to the National Landscape, signage and waymarking, key car park improvements and easy access trails.</b>	<b>Progress first tranche of road gateway signs on primary routes into the National Landscape.</b>	<b>CCNL Access capital</b>	<b>Number of installations progressed.</b>
	<b>With partners, identify priority locations for improving the PRow network.</b>	<b>CCNL Access capital, SCC LTP, SCC PRow</b>	<b>Number of schemes identified.</b>
34. Develop a new National Landscape discovery centre with enhanced visitor facilities at Cannock Chase Country Park.	Support Staffordshire County Council with the development of feasibility study and options appraisal.	CCNL staff time	Consensus reached for preferred option.
35. Develop and promote activity and wellbeing programmes suitable for different groups, based on key visitor sites.	Support community-led projects that enable people to benefit from improved mental and physical health through engagement with the special qualities of the National Landscape.	Sustainable Development Fund	Number of projects supported. Projected number of participants.
39. Enable communities to deliver projects that enhance their local area and the National Landscape through advice, support and funding.	Support community-led projects.	Sustainable Development Fund	Number of projects supported. Outputs achieved.
<b>40. Establish a Cannock Chase Charitable Fund for voluntary and business giving, that can then be used to grant-aid community works.</b>	<b>Agree MoU with Staffordshire and Shropshire Community Foundation, and launch Charitable Fund.</b>	<b>CCNL staff time, CCNL Core revenue</b>	<b>MoU signed. Fund launched. Panel set up.</b>
42. Promote a unified and distinctive identity for the National Landscape by adopting the Cannock Chase National Landscape brand and key messages.	With partners, promote and use the brand as opportunities arise	CCNL staff time, CCNL Core revenue, FiPL programme	Consistent approach to messaging, imagery and branding.
<b>Priorities for Place</b>			
45. Promote the benefits of nature-friendly and regenerative farming, and support farmers and smallholders to take-up the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes.	Support landowners and land managers to transition to nature-friendly and regenerative farming practices.	FiPL programme	Number of projects delivered, number of farmers supported, hectares improved.
46. Support rural non-farming and non-woodland landowners to help conserve	Provide support and advice as opportunities arise	CCNL staff time, FiPL programme	Number of cases of advice provided.

Management Plan Action	Priority activities for 2026-27	Resources	Proposed measures of success
and enhance the special qualities of the National Landscape through advice, support and funding.			
47. Plan for future land use changes ensuring that opportunities are maximised to support and enhance the special qualities of the National Landscape, for example, on mineral sites.	Provide support and advice as opportunities arise.	CCNL staff time	Number of initiatives advised.
<b>48. Explore with relevant bodies, and put in place, practical steps to reduce traffic and highway management impacts through the National Landscape</b>	<b>Request the feasibility, process, costs and benefits of establishing an area-wide mandatory 40 mph zone across the National Landscape.</b>	<b>CCNL core revenue</b>	<b>Feasibility and next steps established.</b>
<b>50. Work with landowners to identify and deliver opportunities to put existing powerlines underground.</b>	<b>Submit an application for undergrounding schemes.</b>	<b>CCNL staff time, (Western Power)</b>	<b>Application submitted and approval received.</b>
52. Promote enjoyment of the National Landscape's night skies.	With CPRE Staffordshire organise Dark skies community events in February 2027	CCNL Core revenue	Number of events held. Number of participating children.
58. Deliver sustainable management regimes for heritage assets by providing support and guidance and seeking investment.	Support owners and managers of assets to develop and implement conservation and enhancement measures.	FiPL programme	Number of projects delivered.
59. Develop and deliver projects that celebrate the National Landscape's cultural heritage, connecting the Chase with surrounding towns and villages, and involving local communities in historic environment citizen science activities.	Work with landowners, partners and visitor hubs/centres to celebrate the National Landscape's cultural heritage, including through improved access and interpretation.	CCNL Access capital, FiPL programme, Sustainable Development Fund	Number of projects delivered.

## Organisational objectives – achieving excellence

Objective	Priority activities for 2026-27	Proposed measures of success
<b>Local Government Reorganisation</b>	<b>Plan for Local Government Reorganisation</b>	<b>Implications scoped and action plan prepared.</b>
<b>Organisational and financial resilience.</b>	<b>Work with the National Landscapes Association to submit a £250,000 / 18mth development-stage bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund</b>	<b>Application submitted and successful. Project launched and team recruited.</b>

Objective	Priority activities for 2026-27	Proposed measures of success
	<b>for Chase Landscape Connections to leverage further resources so that we can deliver at scale.</b>	
Ensure effective governance and management of the National Landscape Partnership.	Organise and support meetings of the Joint Committee, Officer Working Group and Task and Finish Groups.	Members and Partners involved in decision-making and feel well informed of progress and pressures.
	New Members, partners and staff are welcomed into the Partnership and familiarised with induction materials, e.g., Essential Guide to Cannock Chase.	New Members, staff and partners feel welcome and informed.
Maximising resources and using them efficiently and effectively.	Provide timely claims to Defra, with appropriate supporting information.	Maintain strong support within Defra for National Landscapes through clear communication of our delivery, and demonstration of our effectiveness and value for money.
Effective performance management	Capture and report partner progress against the delivery of the Management Plan.	The Partnership understands whether the outputs and outcomes in the Management Plan are being achieved, and identifies any areas that are of concern and require attention and remedial measures are put in place.
Foster collaboration across the National Landscape family to develop and share skills, knowledge and experience.	Contribute to the activities of the National Landscapes' Association including annual conference, Chairmen's conference and Lead Officer and Communication Officer and FiPL officer meetings as appropriate.	The National Landscape plays an active role in the wider National Landscape family activity, keeps informed, and learns from best practice.
Deliver high-quality services through a capable and motivated staff team.	Continue to support and develop our staff.	Staff feel fully supported, and are clear in their requirements and roles within the team and the wider National Landscape Partnership.
Communicate our value and impact to raise our profile and what we do.	Hold an Annual conference. Publish Annual Review. Publish e-newsletters. Promote our work on social media. Keep our website updated. Promote consistent use of branding throughout the National Landscape.	Our work is transparent and open to scrutiny. Members, partners, wider stakeholders and the public are informed about what we do and the positive outcomes we are achieving for the National Landscape.
Develop an approach to equality, diversity and inclusion that embeds good practice into our work and organisation.	Continue to seek to involve additional voices in our governance and activities.	Our governance structure and activities better represent society.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1. DEFRA-AONB (National Landscape) funded activities

*Taken from Annex 1 of the Defra Grant Funding Agreement, issued June 2026*

### 1. Background and purpose of the Grant

The purpose of the Grant is to enable the Grant Recipient, acting in accordance with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and other applicable legislation, to carry out activities that support the statutory purpose of the area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB, now known as a National Landscape) and the Grant Recipient's functions and duties in relation to it.

National Landscapes and National Parks are among England's most valued assets, covering around 25% of the country and containing around half of our most important land for nature. Established to ensure public access to the countryside and to conserve natural beauty, these protected landscapes play a critical role in addressing today's environmental, social and economic challenges.

The Environmental Improvement Plan (2025) recognises we must go further and faster in these protected landscapes if we are to meet our statutory environmental targets and the commitment to protect 30% of land for nature by 2030 (30by30).

These areas provide essential public benefits. Greener, wilder and more accessible National Landscapes and National Parks support nature recovery and climate resilience, protect communities from flooding, enable sustainable food production, and underpin a sustainable economy. They also contribute to improved public health and wellbeing by connecting people with nature.

The purpose of this grant is to support the Grant Recipient, working in partnership with local communities, land managers and public bodies, to deliver these outcomes. Activity funded through this agreement will contribute to locally agreed ambitions set out in statutory Management Plans and aligned with the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework.

This funding should complement and be used in conjunction with related funding, including but not limited to, the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.

### 2. Aims and objectives of the Funded Activities

The Funded Activities are intended to support the Grant Recipient to:

- fulfil its statutory responsibilities in relation to the AONB including under Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and any other relevant legislation.
- deliver outcomes aligned with the purposes of designation, including for nature, climate, people and place. This includes making progress against the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework, contributing to national priorities such as 30by30, and delivering locally agreed priorities as set out in the Management Plan.
- operate effectively, including by building financial resilience and fostering governance which creates the conditions for inclusion, innovation and collaboration.

### **3. Funded Activities**

The Funded Activities cover the practical delivery of the above objectives. These activities include, but are not limited to:

- activities undertaken by the Grant Recipient to support delivery of its purposes, functions and duties in relation to the AONB (National Landscape).
- the preparation, implementation, review and monitoring of the Management Plan and associated strategies.
- convening action towards, or directly delivering, outcomes for nature, climate, people and place.
- supporting communities within and around the designation, including through partnership working to enable inclusive, innovative and collaborative delivery of agreed priorities.
- activities to improve and maintain operational effectiveness of the National Landscape Partnership.
- activities specified in Annex 6 relating to capital investment in innovation, invest-to-save and income generating activities or 30by30 delivery, and Annex 7 relating to access improvements. Where activities involve capital expenditure, they must also comply with the requirements set out in Annex 6 (Capital Funding Criteria and Conditions).

The Grant Recipient should also seek to support local, community and national needs in strategic partnership with other groups including (but not limited to) other National Landscapes teams, National Park Authorities, and national collaborative initiatives such as the Protected Landscape Partnership and work with National Parks Partnerships and the National Landscapes Association to unlock private, philanthropic and commercial sources of income.

All activities must be delivered in line with the Grant Recipient's statutory duties, governance arrangements and applicable legislation.

Where the Funded Activities include capital expenditure or access capital funding, such activities shall be subject to the additional requirements set out in Annex 6 (Capital Funding Criteria and Conditions) and Annex 7 (Access Capital Funding).

## **Appendix 2. Outcomes, milestones and indicative performance measures**

*Taken from Annex 2 of the Defra Grant Funding Agreement, issued June 2026*

The outcomes and performance measures set out in this Annex are indicative and are intended to support assurance, monitoring and annual review. They are not intended to constitute contractual deliverables, service levels or performance targets, nor to restrict the Grant Recipient's exercise of its statutory discretion.

### **Performance Measures**

The Grant Recipient is expected to:

- fulfil its statutory purposes and duties.
- evidence that the organisation is operating effectively, including appropriate financial management, governance, transparency and assurance, in line with relevant guidance and regulations.
- make demonstrable progress towards agreed outcomes as set out in the relevant Management Plan or Business Plan and aligned to the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework.
- ensure effective partnership working, including participation in collaborative initiatives and engagement with local, regional and national partners.

### **Outcomes**

- The Grant Recipient continues to fulfil its statutory purposes and duties in relation to the designation.
- Progress towards agreed outcomes set out in the relevant Management Plan or Business Plan, with measurable progress towards outcomes for nature, climate, people and place, contributing to the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework and national priorities such as 30by30.
- An organisation that operates effectively, with appropriate financial management, governance, transparency and assurance, and that continues to strengthen its resilience over time.
- Strong and effective partnership working, including engagement with local communities and active participation in regional and national collaborative initiatives.

### **Appendix 3. Sustainable Development Fund – programme summary**

Cannock Chase National Landscape operates a grant fund, the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), to support projects delivered by local communities, organisations, businesses and individuals that help to conserve and enhance the special qualities of Cannock Chase.

Expressions of interest to the Fund are announced annually (sometimes biannually), and applications are assessed by an Assessment Panel drawn from the Joint Committee and representatives from the local community. The National Landscape Team carries out all administration for the Fund as well as providing the secretariat for meetings and the work of the Panel.

## Appendix 4. Capital uplift – funding criteria

*Taken from Annex 6 of the Defra Grant Funding Agreement, issued June 2026*

### Criteria 1: Innovation, invest-to-save and income generating activities stream:

An activity which can be considered capital expenditure as per the definition in section B, and meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Provides a direct contribution to furthering PL statutory purposes
- Activities projecting quantifiable cost savings
- Activities projecting quantifiable income generation or which help leverage other funding
- Upgrades of capital assets to avoid major defects / maintain operation / reduce carbon emissions and accelerate net zero progress
- Activities which seek to identify innovative new approaches and efficiencies

### Criteria 2: 30by30 delivery stream:

The objective of the 30by30 delivery stream is to enable more areas within Protected Landscapes to count for 30by30.

Activities which can be considered capital expenditure as per the definition in section B and should enable additional areas in Protected Landscapes to make demonstrable progress towards meeting the published [30by30 criteria](#):

- **Purpose:** The purposes or management objectives for this area must ensure the delivery of in-situ conservation outcomes.
- **Protection:** The conservation of this area must be secured for at least 20 years, through legal or other effective means.
- **Management:** The area's governance or ownership must have the ability to implement reasonable management actions to achieve in-situ conservation outcomes.
- **Management:** There must be a management plan or similar that is designed to deliver in-situ conservation outcomes.
- **Management:** Management measures are being implemented, with appropriate monitoring, evaluation and learning in place to assess progress and inform future management.
- **Management:** The area is achieving, or making progress towards, in-situ conservation outcomes, with reasonable confidence that these outcomes will be achieved.

The relevant landowner/manager should commit to the area in the proposal being formally recognised as a 30by30 Area when the 30by30 Assessment and Reporting Tool launches in 2026/27.

Alignment with other schemes e.g. that payment rates for capital works should, by default, be aligned with those set out in Defra schemes, including the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme – for transparency, accountability and consistency. There may be exceptional circumstances where a higher or lower rate is justified due to the specialised and/or bespoke nature of the project. However, any deviation will be the responsibility of the delivery partner to justify. Justification must be based on robust evidence against the exceptional circumstances and demonstrate value for money. Payment rates may be subject to spot checks as part of routine grant management.

## **Appendix 5. Access – funding criteria**

*Taken from Annex 7 of the Defra Grant Funding Agreement, issued June 2026*

### **1. Application of this Annex**

1.1 This Annex applies where the Grant includes funding allocated specifically for capital expenditure to improve access to and within the protected landscape (Access Capital Funding).

1.2 Access Capital Funding is subject to the requirements of Annex 6 (Capital Funding Criteria and Conditions) in addition to the provisions of this Annex.

### **2. Purpose of Access Capital Funding**

2.1 Access Capital Funding is provided to support capital investment that improves physical and digital access to protected landscapes for people of all ages, abilities and socio-economic backgrounds.

2.2 Funded activities must improve public access to and enjoyment of the protected landscape and serve the wider interests of the protected landscape and its communities.

### **3. Eligible Access Capital Expenditure**

3.1 Access Capital Funding may be used for capital expenditure that improves inclusive access, including (on a non-exhaustive basis):

- access infrastructure such as paths, gates, bridges, seating and rest areas;
- replacement of stiles with accessible gates;
- widening, resurfacing or upgrading of paths to support multi-user access;
- improvements to access to waterways for people with mobility impairments;
- accessible visitor facilities and viewpoints;
- provision or enhancement of physical or digital signage and visitor information;
- purchase or lease of access equipment, including trampers, mobility scooters, adapted cycles and associated storage or charging infrastructure;
- purchase of adapted tools or equipment to support inclusive volunteering.

3.2 Expenditure may include leases, licenses or other arrangements that create a right-of-use asset, where such arrangements meet the capital eligibility criteria set out in Annex 6.

### **4. Inclusive Design and Engagement**

4.1 In delivering Access Capital Funding, the Grant Recipient shall take a proportionate and inclusive approach that considers the needs of people with different access requirements.

4.2 Where reasonable and appropriate, the Grant Recipient should engage with disabled people and relevant access or disability representative groups when designing and prioritising access improvements.

4.3 Access interventions should, where practicable, be designed to be usable by all and should avoid unnecessary barriers or reliance on specialist access arrangements.

### **5. Value for Money, Sustainability and Collaboration**

5.1 Access capital investments must represent value for money and be designed with due regard to long-term sustainability, maintenance and environmental impact.

5.2 Where appropriate, Grant Recipients are encouraged to work collaboratively with other protected landscapes, local partners or national bodies to share resources, equipment or learning and to maximise benefit.

## 6. Maintenance and Ongoing Responsibility

6.1 The Grant Recipient is responsible for the ongoing maintenance, operation and replacement of any assets funded under this Annex for their expected useful life.

6.2 Assets must be maintained in a condition that continues to support safe and inclusive access.

## 7. Subsidy Control and Use of Funding

7.1 Where Access Capital Funding is used in collaboration with private or third-sector organisations, the Grant Recipient must ensure compliance with applicable subsidy control requirements.

7.2 Access Capital Funding must not be used to subsidise economic activity except where expressly permitted under the Grant Funding Agreement.

## **Appendix 6. Farming in Protected Landscapes - programme summary**

The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme is part of Defra's Agricultural Transition Plan. It offers funding to farmers and land managers in England's National Landscapes (AONB) and National Parks for projects that:

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

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

The programme opened in July 2021, and has been extended for a further 3 years until 31 March 2029.

The programme is administered and delivered locally through the National Landscape Team. Applicants with an eligible project are invited to complete an application form that is then presented to a Local Assessment Panel for determination. Programme management and reporting to Defra is undertaken by the Farming in Protected Landscapes Officers.

## Appendix 7. Corporate risk register

Topic	Risk event	Implications	Countermeasures	Remaining Risk
Local Government Re-organisation	Responsibilities for and operational requirements of the National Landscape are overlooked during the LGR process.	Engagement with local authority partners is distracted and business continuity is disrupted. Governance is not in place to provide the framework for decision-making. Funding for the National Landscape is threatened. Staff are distracted during the transition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan for LGR.</li> <li>React quickly and positively to proposed changes as they arise.</li> <li>Prepare new governance arrangements.</li> <li>Safeguard budgets and staff during the transition and restructuring process.</li> <li>Raise awareness about the National Landscape with the politicians and officers in the new administration.</li> </ul>	Medium
Statutory purpose	Failure to deliver targets and outcomes to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the National Landscape.	Diminished special qualities which define the National Landscape. Perception that the local authorities and partners are failing in their statutory duty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsibility for delivery of the Management Plan is shared amongst a range of partners, thus spreading the risk.</li> <li>Work with partners to address any shortfalls.</li> <li>Keep Defra informed.</li> </ul>	Medium
Partnership	Loss of partner support.	Impact on delivery of programme as Management Plan delivery hinges on positive relations and input from others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve partners in programme planning and delivery, governance meetings, and internal and external communications to create sense of 'ownership'.</li> <li>Increase partners' accountability through annual reporting requirement.</li> </ul>	Medium
Staffing	Loss of capacity due to long term ill health.	Insufficient capacity to deliver on all priorities. Increased stress on remaining staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk assessments in place including stress risk; staff support measures in place; resilience training available; absence management policy in place.</li> </ul>	Medium
	Failure / delay in recruiting new posts.	Impact on delivery of priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adverts widely promoted; temporary cover sought during the recruitment process to ensure continuity of service delivery.</li> </ul>	Low
Funding / finances	Loss of core funding for Team.	Potential impacts on staff posts which could have financial implications e.g. redundancy costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilisation of AONB Reserves to pay for redundancy costs.</li> </ul>	High

Topic	Risk event	Implications	Countermeasures	Remaining Risk
		Insufficient capacity to deliver on all priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approach local authority partners to increase contributions.</li> </ul>	
	Funding shortfall in budget.	Failure to match resources and workloads. Resources not available to deliver on all priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget always balanced for current financial year.</li> <li>Utilise AONB Reserves to meet funding shortfall (but this is only a temporary measure).</li> <li>Request increase in local authority contributions.</li> <li>Freeze recruitment.</li> </ul>	High
	Failure to secure wider funding for delivery.	Impact on ability to deliver on all priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of Cannock Chase Charitable Fund will, over time, broaden our funding base.</li> <li>Identify opportunities where we might strengthen our relationships with grants and trusts and corporate sponsors.</li> </ul>	Medium
	Financial mismanagement.	Loss of funds. Failure to comply with grant requirements. Penalties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Systems, procedures and training in place via host authority</li> </ul>	Low
External funding programmes	Failure to find projects.	Inability to fully spend funding allocations and having to return unspent monies to Defra. Loss of investment opportunity. Reputational risk for the National Landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programmes widely promoted with target audiences and partners.</li> </ul>	Medium
	Introduction of new programmes places strains on existing capacity.	Impact on staff to deliver existing priorities in addition to managing new programmes. Increased stresses on staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure additional capacity through the funding programme, if allowed.</li> <li>Re-align the Business Plan to accommodate new programmes.</li> <li>Keep Joint Committee informed to manage expectations.</li> </ul>	Medium
Volunteers	Inability to recruit/retain volunteers.	Impact on delivery of some priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer roles widely promoted.</li> <li>National Landscape activities communicated widely.</li> <li>Other volunteer platforms utilised.</li> </ul>	Medium

Topic	Risk event	Implications	Countermeasures	Remaining Risk
National Landscape road tourist signs and wooden gateway signs	Signs are damaged/fall into repair/become outdated.	Purposes of signage for navigation and information, and creating sense of arrival becomes diminished.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Condition and purpose of signs periodically reviewed, and replaced/repared as necessary.</li> </ul>	Low
Health and safety	Accident or incident involving staff, volunteers, visitors.	Breach of statutory duties, possible litigation and costs against the host authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health and safety policies, support and advice from host authority.</li> <li>Separate risk assessments in place for Great War Hut and Fixed Point Photography volunteers, and regularly reviewed.</li> </ul>	Low
Information and Data Management	Breach of the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Act and/or the Environmental Information Regulations. Non-compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations.	Unauthorised disclosure of personal and sensitive data, i.e. through an IT breach, website or human error, resulting in failure to meet statutory obligations, fines being imposed, loss of reputation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitive data is minimal for National Landscape work.</li> <li>Systems, procedures and training in place via host authority.</li> </ul>	Low
	Loss of data.	Impact on delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Backup systems in place to minimise risks.</li> </ul>	Low
Major incidents	Significant disruption due to major incident, such as, fire to premises and/or failure of ICT systems.	Impacts on National Landscape staff's operational ability, performance and effectiveness. Financial impacts due to loss of materials in store.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host authority procedures in place for business continuity to recover from major incidents. Office safety procedures in place to reduce risks; flexible working in place so that staff can work from home, different offices and touch-down centres; systems backed up.</li> </ul>	Medium
Reputation	Reputation of the National Landscape damaged through negative public perception, poor performance, decisions and behaviour.	Loss of confidence and trust in the National Landscape. Perceived as setting poor standards of leadership and stewardship. Use of public funds called into question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy of openness, transparency and accountability.</li> <li>Maintain joint working with partners and stakeholders with clearly defined targets and outcomes.</li> <li>Build on communication and involvement with local communities.</li> </ul>	Low

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