



COTSWOLDS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2013-18

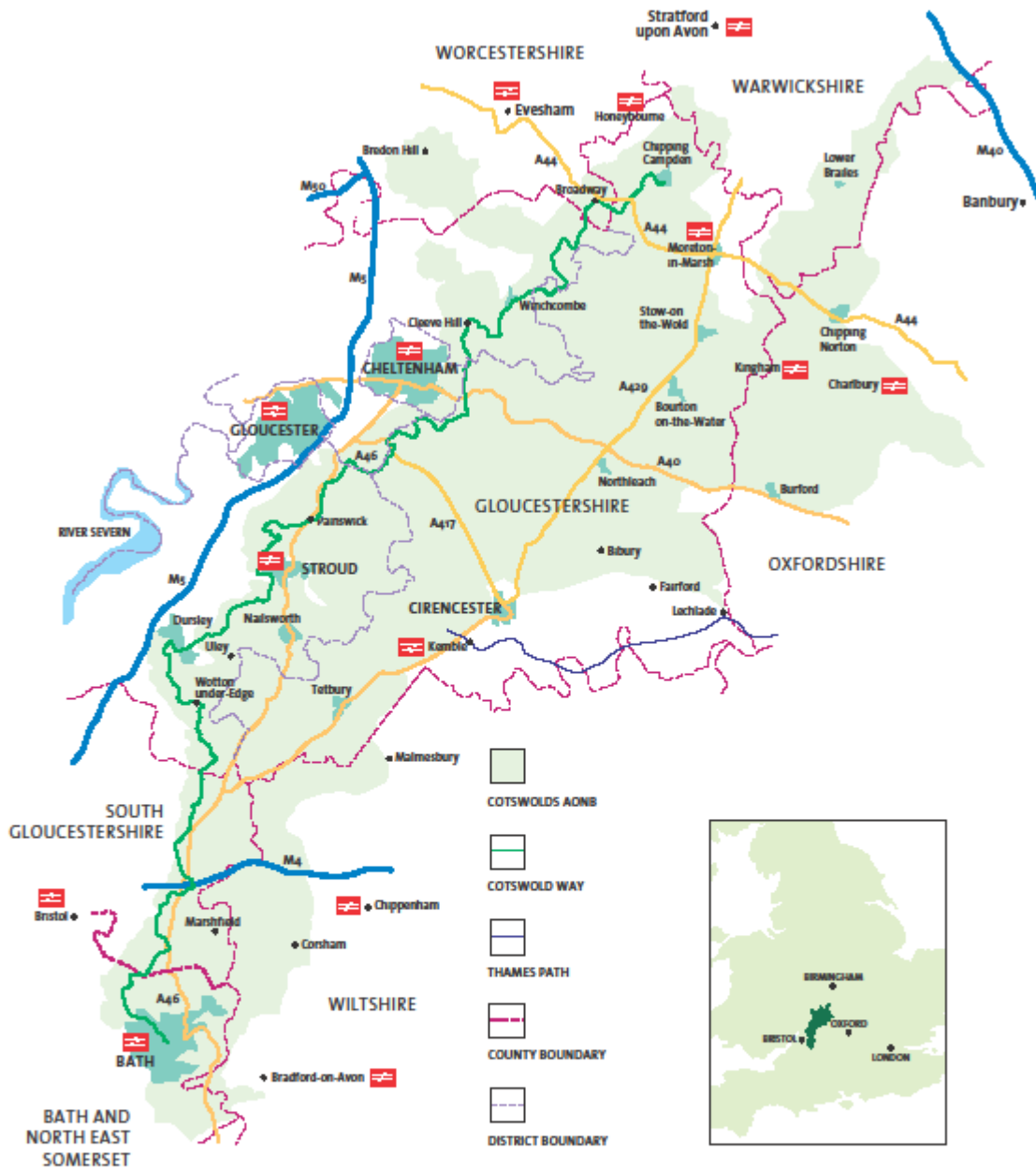
2nd CONSULTATION DRAFT

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COTSWOLDS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2013-18
 SECOND CONSULTATION DRAFT



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Foreword

To be added in final version

Our vision for the Cotswolds in 20 years is:

A landscape

- ***with remarkable visual unity yet scenic diversity***
- ***rich in wildlife and heritage***
- ***home to vibrant communities supported by a sustainable economy,***
- ***where there is a warm welcome and high quality experience for everyone seeking inspiration, tranquillity and being active outdoors.***

Introduction

THE COTSWOLDS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2013-18

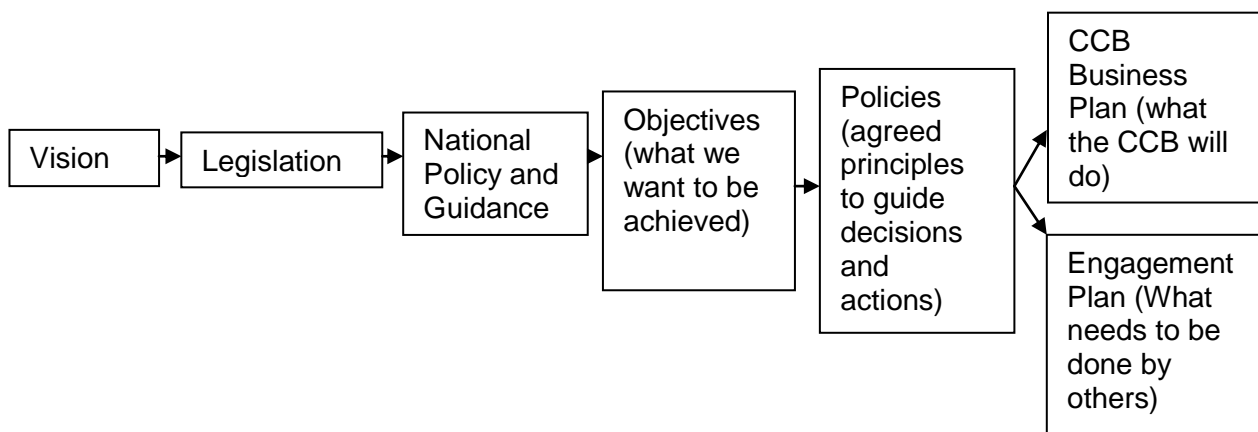
The Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2013-18 has two closely interrelated functions.

Firstly, it sets out the Cotswolds Conservation Board's ("the Board") policies for the management of the Cotswolds AONB and for the carrying out of its functions in relation to it.¹ The actions the Board itself will take to deliver the Plan's objectives are set out in the Board's three year rolling business plan.

Secondly, it guides the engagement of public bodies, landowners, businesses and individuals in the management of the AONB. The actions the Board would encourage others to take individually or in partnership with others, including the Board are set out in the engagement plan.

This statutory plan has significant weight in influencing the wide range of future decisions that will affect the AONB. It will operate alongside other statutory plans and programmes and a wide range of other national and local initiatives. The Board will seek formal recognition of the Plan as a "material consideration" in Core Strategies/Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans.

The Management Plan is structured along a simple 'Golden Thread' that builds on the Vision, based on its statutory purpose and arrived at by consultation.



Implementation of the plan will be monitored and evaluated by the Board and an assessment of its achievements will be provided as part of its annual reports.

¹ Section 89, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as amended by the NERC Act 2006

PROTECTED LANDSCAPES: AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

AONBs and National Parks were brought into being by the same legislation in 1949 and have the same status and level of protection. AONBs are particularly special landscapes whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them.

The statutory purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty.²

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 confirmed the significance of AONBs. Section 85 places a statutory (legal) duty on all relevant authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty when discharging any function in relation to, or affecting land within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) designates the UK's AONBs as Category V – Protected Landscape/seascape – ‘a protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value’.

More information on AONBs and their status and protection can be found on the following organisations websites:

- Cotswolds Conservation Board (www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk),
- Defra (www.defra.gov.uk),
- Natural England (www.naturalengland.org.uk), and the
- National Association for AONBs (www.aonb.org.uk).

The Cotswolds Conservation Board was established by Parliament in 2004.

The Board has two statutory purposes³:

- a) to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB; and
- b) to increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB.

In fulfilling these roles, the Board has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of people living in the AONB.

Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a statutory duty on the Conservation Board to produce a five yearly management plan for the AONB. This is the third such document.

² Section 82, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

³ Section 87, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as amended by the NERC Act 2006.

WHAT MAKES THE COTSWOLDS SPECIAL TODAY? (STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE)

The area is a rich mosaic of historical, social, economic, cultural, geological, geomorphological⁴ and ecological features.

- The unifying character is the limestone geology – its visible presence as natural outcrops, its use as a building material and through the plant and animal communities it supports
- The Cotswold escarpment, including views to and from it
- The high wolds – an elevated landscape with large open landscapes, commons, ‘big’ skies and long distance views
- River valleys, the majority forming the headwaters of the Thames with high quality water
- Dry-stone walls, which give the AONB its essential character in many areas
- Internationally important flower-rich limestone grasslands
- Internationally important ancient broadleaved woodland, particularly along the crest of the escarpment
- Variations in the colour of the stone from one part of the AONB to another which add a vital element of local distinctiveness
- The tranquillity⁵ of the area
- Well managed arable and livestock farms
- Distinctive settlements, architectural quality and integrity
- Accessible landscape for quiet recreation.

THE BENEFITS OF MANAGING THE COTSWOLDS AONB

The Cotswolds AONB delivers multiple benefits for society:

- Scenic beauty
- Cultural heritage
- Green infrastructure⁶

⁴ Geomorphology is the physical features of an area, strongly influenced by geology.

⁵ Tranquillity is very difficult to define but is essentially the absence of inappropriate noise, development, visual clutter and pollution, “a feeling of being away from it all”.

- Economic development through rural businesses and tourism
- Ecosystem services⁷
 - Healthy lifestyle recreational opportunities for all –“an inspirational breathing space away from it all”
 - Climate change mitigation and adaptation measures
 - Water supplies for an extensive area of Southern England
 - Sustainable food and wood products, and markets
 - Renewable energy generation

PLAN STRUCTURE AND CONSULTATION

Sustainable development, vibrant rural communities and resilience are supported by this Cotswolds AONB Management Plan. It is a plan to conserve and enhance the natural environment and a plan to develop a greater understanding and enjoyment of one of the country's best loved landscapes. It is also a plan for a landscape and environment that provides for a high quality of life, attracts entrepreneurs and new enterprises, contributes significantly to the local economy, develops local skills and creates job opportunities.

The Vision is taken forward through a series of objectives informed by relevant legislation, national policies and guidance which are linked to the Board's statutory purposes and duty. These are followed by a series of Themes. Each thematic section contains a short description of its different aspects, followed by its special qualities. Key issues with respect to each theme are identified. These are used to develop objectives and policies in response, together with headline indicators of the current condition where available. All these in turn lead to the actions encouraged in the Engagement Plan. Actions the Board intends to take are set out in detail in the Board's three year rolling business plan.⁸

This Plan has been produced with a full and comprehensive documented programme of public involvement and consultation. It is also supported by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), a Habitats Regulation Assessment as required by the European Habitats Directive and an Equalities Assessment⁹

⁶ Green Infrastructure (GI) is a term used to describe networks of natural spaces and corridors. The GI network includes open spaces, parks and gardens, allotments, woodlands, street trees, green roofs, fields, hedges, lakes, ponds, playing field, as well as footpaths, cycleways and waterways.

⁷ For definition of ecosystems services see 'Securing a healthy natural environment – An action plan for embedding an ecosystems approach', DEFRA, 2007 http://www.Defra.gov.uk/wildlifecountryside/natres/pdf/eco_actionplan.pdf

⁸ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=ccb>

⁹ All documents are available on the Boards website www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

Conserving and Enhancing

Introduction

The purpose of the designation of the Cotswolds AONB and the primary purpose of the Cotswolds Conservation Board is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. The objectives and thematic policies in this section contribute to the achievement of this purpose. Conserving and enhancing the characteristic Cotswolds environment provides a wide range of benefits that are beyond monetary value and become of ever greater importance as the surrounding urban population grows and impacts of change in the wider world accelerate. These benefits include:

- An internationally important, large-scale managed landscape;
- High quality food and wood products produced close to local markets;
- Wildlife, geological and cultural resources, many of international importance, which are fragile, irreplaceable within a lifetime and, in the case of geological and archaeological sites and the extensive historic built environment, finite;
- Helping to meet the water needs of southern England and providing local flood risk management;
- Capturing and storing CO₂ from the atmosphere (carbon sequestration) through its woods and vegetation cover;
- A tranquil resource with distinct restorative benefits, sense of place for relaxation and escape in natural surroundings, contributing to the health and well-being of the wider population.

Objectives

CEO1: *By 2018 organisations and individuals responsible for land management and development management will have demonstrably conserved and enhanced the special qualities of the Cotswold landscape.*

CEO2: *By 2018 viable farming and forestry remain the primary means by which the distinctive landscapes of the Cotswolds are managed.*

CEO3: *By 2016 national and local agencies have put in place policies and guidance to implement the sustainable provision and use of natural resources in the Cotswolds AONB.*

CEO4: *By 2018 relevant organisations have demonstrably better identified, recorded and promoted, the distinctive historic and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds AONB, which is better understood by residents and visitors.*

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CEO5: *By 2014 relevant organisations have commenced landscape scale restoration and the re-linking and management of habitats to improve the resilience of the Cotswold landscape, habitats and water environment to the effects of climate change.*

CEO6: *By 2014 national and local development and transport agencies have put in place policies, guidance and decisions to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB, maintain local distinctiveness, provide services and support a buoyant rural economy.*

Understanding and Enjoying

Introduction

The Conservation Board's second purpose is "increasing the understanding and enjoyment by the public of the special qualities of the area of outstanding natural beauty".¹⁰ The objectives and policies in this section contribute to the achievement of this purpose.

This purpose has taken on increasing relevance over the last few years as more people seek to explore and enjoy the Cotswolds landscape. The Government's commitment, through its Natural Environment White Paper¹¹, to have 'by 2020 significantly more people engaged in biodiversity issues, aware of its value and taking positive action', is an example of one aspect of delivering this purpose which helps to make the connection with conserving and enhancing the AONB.

The Cotswolds countryside has long been valued for its wealth of opportunities for outdoor recreation and quiet enjoyment. These opportunities provide the means to explore and discover the richness of the natural beauty and historic interest of the AONB while at the same time contributing to physical and mental health and wellbeing. The publically accessible open space includes public footpaths and bridleways, commons, woodlands, designed landscapes, canals and waterways, and green spaces associated with settlements, such as village greens. Together these form the extensive "green infrastructure" of the Cotswolds which provide significant economic, social and health benefits.¹²

Objectives

UEO1: *By 2018 residents and visitors demonstrably value the natural beauty, historic character and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds and understand the need to invest in and sensitively manage the special qualities of the area.*

UEO2: *By 2018 relevant organisations make the Cotswolds a landscape available for all to explore and enjoy and which is demonstrably regarded by residents and visitors as a place for positive, high quality experiences.*

UEO3: *By 2018 providers of opportunities to improve health through recreation and better housing conditions in the Cotswolds AONB are demonstrably successful.*

UEO4: *By 2016 the public demonstrably increase significantly support, commitment and participation in conserving and enhancing the AONB by volunteering and involvement with relevant organisations.*

UEO5: *By 2016: the Cotswolds is widely recognised and valued as a sustainable visitor destination, where local communities benefit, businesses prosper and the environment is sustained through the co-ordinated delivery of quality and enriching visitor experiences.*

¹⁰ Section 87, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

¹¹ "Natural Choice – securing the value of nature" Defra (2011)

¹² "Benefits of green infrastructure." Report to Defra and CLG. Forest Research, (2010)

Fostering Economic and Social Well-being

In delivering its two purposes the Board has a statutory duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of people living in the AONB.

Addressing this duty informs the overall strategic approach to the management of the Cotswolds AONB. This section of the Plan identifies the key social and economic management issues relevant to the AONB as a whole. It examines the likely impacts on the AONB from a variety of forces and identifies objectives for the management of these. The Board seeks to deliver its duty through the achievement of its two purposes rather than as a separate strand of activity.

Securing the resilience of the Cotswolds economy and the quality of life in the light of demographic changes and economic conditions.

Key Issues

The UK population is projected to exceed 70million by 2027¹³. Much of the increase in population in rural areas is the result of migration for lifestyle reasons, including retirement. The scale of development required to provide housing, employment and services to this expanding and ageing population will be considerable and the pressure to develop land and introduce other urban land uses within and around the AONB will become significant. The AONB is surrounded by the towns and cities of Banbury, Bath, Cheltenham, Chippenham, Cirencester, Evesham, Gloucester, Keynsham, Oxford, Stroud, Swindon, and Yate all of which are expected to accommodate significant housing and employment development in the next 20 years.

The increasing demand for more reliable journey times between employment centres will lead to pressure for road widening and other 'improvement' schemes on major roads in the AONB. This could be mitigated by increasing fuel prices producing changing working patterns with more working from home and less lengthy daily commuting; this would be assisted where high speed broadband is available and improvements to rail networks by electrification and increased capacity.

Unless effectively managed, all of these pressures will work cumulatively to impact adversely on the landscape character, tranquillity and economy of the area. The Board's role is to ensure that the conservation and enhancement of the landscape is incorporated into strategies, plans and decisions of other agencies and bodies which address these issues in a coherent and consistent way. Public bodies have a duty under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act to "have regard to" the purpose of designation of the Cotswolds AONB when undertaking their functions.¹⁴

The successful development of the rural economy has an important role in securing resources to manage the AONB. The high quality environment is a strong factor in attracting inward investment and tourism to create employment opportunities both locally and in surrounding

¹³ Office for National Statistics, (2012).

¹⁴ Guidance on how public bodies can comply with this duty is set out in "Duties on relevant authorities to have regard to the purposes of National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads" Defra (2005), <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/protected/npaonb-duties-guide.pdf> and "England's statutory landscape designations: a practical guide to your duty of regard" Natural England NE 243 (2010)

towns and cities. The AONB is an attractive location to entrepreneurs and for associated workforces.

The appropriate management of the AONB also provides opportunities for people to enjoy healthy active lifestyles through access, participation and enjoyment of space and tranquillity.¹⁵

Demonstrating the relevance of protected landscape management in the wider environmental, social and economic context.

The context in which designated landscapes sit is now considerably different from when the concept was enshrined in statute in 1949¹⁶. At that time the main threats to natural beauty were suburbanisation, lack of high quality public access, and quarrying. Whilst these issues still remain of concern, new challenges and opportunities present themselves to increase the relevance of the concept beyond the original purpose of designation.

Designated landscapes are now additionally recognised as important resources to;

- Stimulate the rural economy
- Contribute to people's health and wellbeing
- Provide examples of landscape scale biodiversity initiatives
- Provide green infrastructure, water and food
- Address climate change issues
- Provide havens of tranquillity of value to residents and surrounding urban populations

The ability of nationally designated landscapes, particularly AONBs and National Parks, to fully deliver these benefits to society is often constrained by the fragmented administrative arrangements in which they are situated. The AONB Management Plan is the mechanism by which:

- these benefits can be brought to the attention of national and local policy makers and decision takers
- a consistent and comprehensive approach to the management of the AONB to deliver these benefits can be communicated to delivery organisations
- the AONB is managed as a whole since local residents and visitors who see the landscape and attractions as "the Cotswolds" and wildlife habitats do not recognise the administrative boundaries that fragment the area; and
- a unified approach can be taken to the provision of high quality access to natural environments, providing greater understanding and social and economic benefits through tourism.

¹⁵ See Understanding and Enjoying section for more details

¹⁶ National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

Objectives

ESO1: *By 2015 the Board has understood the potential impacts of economic and demographic changes on the quality of life and the economy of the AONB, and by 2017 the Board has a response in place.*

ESO2: *By 2018 national and local agencies recognise the value and relevance of the AONB as a valuable source of “ecosystem services”, economic and health benefits.*

Policies to guide decisions and actions to secure these objectives are identified in subsequent thematic sections of the Plan.

Climate Change and Globalisation

Global warming is “*unequivocal*”. This is the finding of the most recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)¹⁷. The report also states that “*most of the observed increase in globally averaged temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations*”.

As the largest designated landscape in southern England, the Cotswolds AONB can play a part in the national response to climate change. Through the policies in this Management Plan, the partnerships involved can develop a comprehensive approach to mitigate and adapt to climate change within, and to some extent, around the AONB. This is particularly the case with the provision of water supplies and control of flooding, soil management, species and habitat adaptation, tourism provision and renewable energy generation.

Future climate scenarios for the Cotswolds AONB¹⁸

The UK Climate Impacts Programme has summarised headline messages from its latest climate modelling scenarios.¹⁹ In the area covering the Cotswolds, taking the central estimate for regional projections under the medium emissions scenario, the Cotswolds are likely to experience increasingly warmer, drier summers and milder wetter winters. The area is also likely to see increase in extreme weather events.

Climate change will potentially impact on all aspects of the Cotswolds AONB. The Board has published the results of a study of the potential impacts of both climate change and globalisation on farming and forestry, and the rural economy in the Cotswolds AONB.²⁰ The Board has also published a Climate Change Strategy for the Cotswolds AONB, which has been used to inform this Management Plan.²¹

Addressing climate change in the Cotswolds AONB – Mitigation

Future climate change scenarios are heavily dependent on current and future level of global greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing the carbon footprint by achieving reductions in greenhouse gas emissions will potentially reduce the degree and impact of climate change. Government Policy is to reduce carbon emissions by 34% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050²². The 2009 Renewable Energy Directive sets a target for the UK to obtain 15% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020.²³ The Board has issued Position Statements on renewable energy generation in the Cotswolds AONB²⁴ and Energy Crops²⁵ in the Cotswolds AONB.

¹⁷ ‘IPCC Fourth Assessment Report: Climate Change’, (2007).

¹⁸ Further detail is provided in the “Climate Change Strategy for the Cotswolds AONB” published by CCB (2012) <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/userfiles/file/climate-change/climate-change-strategy-adopted-june-2012.pdf>

¹⁹ UKCP09 Climate Change projections (2009)

²⁰ “The Future of Farming and Forestry in the Cotswolds AONB” CCB (2009)
<http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=climatechange>

²¹ “Climate Change Strategy for the Cotswolds AONB” published by CCB (2012)
<http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/userfiles/file/climate-change/climate-change-strategy-adopted-june-2012.pdf>

²² Climate Change Act 2008

²³ EU Directive 2009/28/EC

²⁴ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=positionstatements>

All organisations in the Cotswolds have their part to play in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. This can be achieved through increasing energy efficiency; using appropriate forms of renewable energy; reducing car use and using public transport more and purchasing locally produced food and services.

Addressing climate change in the Cotswolds AONB – Adaptation

Although there is still the opportunity to reduce the more extreme effects of climate change through mitigation measures, significant impacts will occur because past greenhouse gas emissions have already raised carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere and will continue to do so. A further increase appears unavoidable even under the most optimistic of scenarios. For the Cotswolds AONB, this will potentially pose a threat to the natural beauty of the area.

The Board therefore has set out in the Climate Change Strategy how it and partner organisations involved in managing the AONB can help the AONB to adapt to the impacts of climate change in a way that helps to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB.

Threats to the special qualities of the Cotswolds AONB arising from globalisation

The UK economy is increasingly being impacted by being exposed to global markets. European agricultural support mechanisms are moving away from supporting prices. Pressures on global resources are arising from the global impacts of climate change, affecting agricultural productivity and causing population movements, increasing global population; and increasing consumption particularly in India, China and Brazil.

This increasing demand is causing commodity prices to rise worldwide, and there will be increasing pressure to intensify food production in the UK as surpluses become a thing of the past. Acting alone the Board can have negligible impacts on such global forces. The Farming and Forestry²⁶ study illustrates the spectrum of potential opportunities and challenges arising from globalisation. Impacts may include:

- Increasing pressure to intensify production and introduce new crops
- Greater emphasis on long term planning and spreading risk, resulting in some instances to more diversified rural enterprises
- Pressure from population movements

The impact of such intensification of agriculture on the character of the Cotswolds could be negative if not managed with the conservation and enhancement of the area in mind. Intensification can lead to loss of biodiversity and historic environment features.

²⁵ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=positionstatements>

²⁶“The Future of Farming and Forestry in the Cotswolds AONB” CCB (2009)
<http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=climatechange>

Climate Change and Globalisation Objective

CEO1: *By 2016 the Board has developed a comprehensive programme of measures to assist with mitigating the effects of and adapting to the local consequences of climate change and globalisation which relevant organisations are implementing.*

Climate Change Policy

CCP1: *Mitigation and adaptation measures as set out in the Cotswolds Climate Change Strategy are taken to develop resilience to the impact of climate change.*

Globalisation Policy

GP1: *Identified measures are taken to adapt the local economy to the impact of globalisation.*

Significant Achievement 2008-13

Climate Change Strategy published 2012.

Climate Change Advisory Service funded by National Grid provides 50 farm and rural business owners with guidance and advice to undertake climate change measures.

Achieving Objective CEO1 will also contribute significantly in securing the objectives to comply with the duty of the Board to foster the social and economic well being of people living in the AONB.

Landscape

The landscape of the Cotswolds is the result of millions of years of natural evolutionary and climatic processes and thousands of years of human settlement and use. It is a rich mosaic of historical, social, economic, cultural, geological, geomorphological²⁷ and ecological features.

Landscape Character

The Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) was published in 2004,²⁸ The LCA identifies the following 8 principal elements that occur across the AONB that either singly or in combination contributes to the unique character and quality of the Cotswold landscape, within nineteen distinct landscape character types:

- Drystone walls
- Ancient semi-natural woodland and veteran trees
- Permanent pasture including unimproved calcareous grassland
- Archaeological sites and their settings and remnant historic landscapes
- Vernacular stone buildings and their settings
- Settlement patterns and their relationship to landscape
- Parkland and historic designed landscapes
- Hedges

To provide a spatial dimension for this plan, Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for each landscape character type have been produced by the Board.²⁹ These set out detailed guidance for the conservation and enhancement of the distinctive characteristics identified in the landscape character types.

Natural England is reviewing all of its Natural Character Areas profiles (NCAs). The Cotswolds NCA³⁰ is particularly relevant to the AONB although it is not contiguous with the AONB boundary. There will therefore need to be close alignment between the NCA “Statements of Environmental Opportunity” and the Management Plan³¹.

Significant Achievements 2008-13

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines published for each Landscape Character Area are used in planning and land management decisions.

7km of dry stone walls restored through £1million National Grid grant package linked to Wormington to Sapperton gas pipeline.

Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2008-13 and accompanying suite of landscape guidance wins Landscape Institute Award 2010.

²⁷ Geomorphology is the physical features of an area, strongly influenced by geology.

²⁸ http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/landscape_character_assessment/index.htm

²⁹ Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for all landscape character types are available on the Board's website at www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk.

³⁰ Due for publication late September 2012

³¹ Other NCAs including part of the AONB are Severn and Avon Vales; Dunsmore and Feldon; Northamptonshire Uplands; Upper Thames Clay Vales; Avon Vale; and Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges

KEY ISSUES

- Changes in agriculture and forestry will inevitably have an impact on the appearance of the landscape in the future, particularly as a result of climate change and global market influences, with some changes being seasonal and others incremental
- It is important to protect the scenic beauty of the escarpment and other skylines from both inappropriate developments and inappropriate landscape management
- The surroundings of the AONB are also important to its landscape and scenic beauty. Views out of the AONB and into it from surrounding areas can be very significant in this regard. The Board has published a Position Statement on development in the setting of the Cotswolds AONB³²
- Sustainable development can enhance the natural beauty of the landscape and meet social and economic needs
- Tranquillity is under pressure from increasing noise, light and traffic. The Board has published a position statement on tranquillity in the Cotswolds AONB³³
- The loss of traditional skills is a significant issue for the future management of the landscape
- The coherence of the landscape can be harmed by numerous small scale incremental changes, some of which are not regulated by planning legislation or other controls

Landscape Objective

CEO1: *By 2018 organisations and individuals responsible for land management and development management will have demonstrably conserved and enhanced the special qualities of the Cotswold landscape.*

Landscape Policies

LP1: *The key characteristics, principal elements, and special qualities (including tranquillity), which form the natural beauty of the Cotswolds landscape are conserved and where possible enhanced.*

LP2: *Development proposals³⁴ and changes in land use and management take account of guidance and advice published by the Board.³⁵*

³² <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=positionstatements>

³³ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=positionstatements>

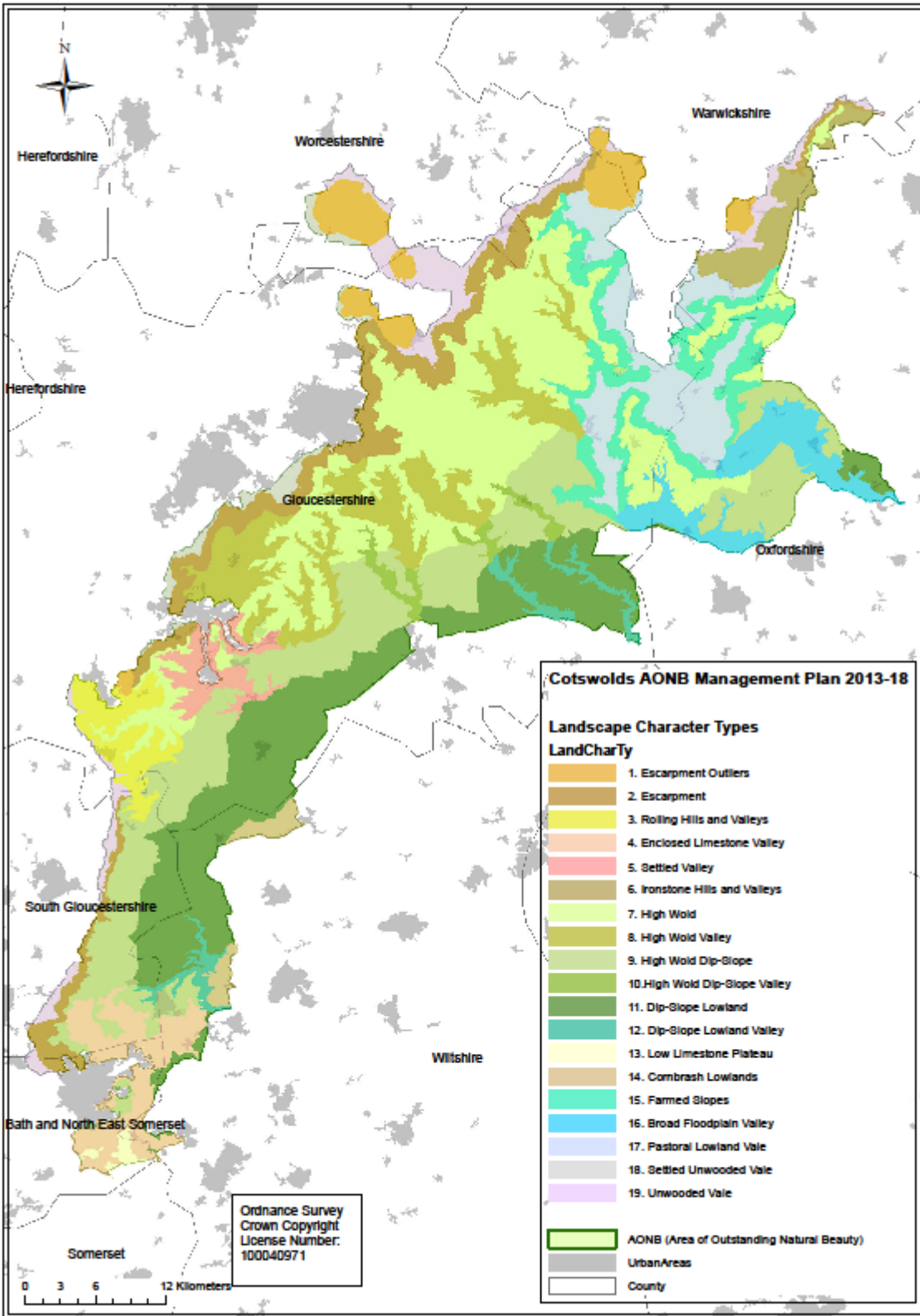
³⁴ See 'Development and Transport' section for further consideration of 'development'.

³⁵ This includes the LCA, the landscape strategy and guidelines, and position statements

HEADLINE CONDITION INDICATORS LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Changes identified in analysis of fixed point photography for each of the 19 landscape character types identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). Viewpoints are revisited by the Conservation Board at least five year intervals.

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Rural Land Management

Farming has been the principal influence on the development of the Cotswolds landscape. Farm incomes are volatile depending on global influences. By area, 10% of the Cotswolds AONB is woodland and 86% is farmland, of which 44% is grassland.

The type and location of woodland cover in the Cotswolds is an essential element of its landscape character. Woodland cover varies greatly but its location, particularly along the escarpment, in the enclosed limestone valleys, and in significant blocks within the dip slope landscape, makes it an important feature.

Special qualities

- A mix of pasture, arable cultivation and woodland, with subtle differences in the balance between these elements from one part of the AONB to another
- Well drained thin, shallow calcareous soils which are light and easily worked, suitable for growing cereals and oil seeds
- Large estates with long-term and sustained positive management within the AONB
- Large commons along the crest of the scarp
- Small/medium-scale historic field patterns defined by dry-stone walls and hedges
- The iconic Cotswold Lion breed of sheep
- Well maintained and sensitively managed farmland, boundaries and farm buildings, including traditional barns and stone walls
- Ancient woodland, especially beech, is a particularly distinctive and prominent feature of the scarp and enclosed limestone valleys. Part of this woodland is included within the Cotswold Beech Woodland Special Area of Conservation, which indicates that it is of European importance
- Parkland, including wood pasture, often associated with the large estates
- Veteran and potential veteran trees

Significant Achievement 2008-13

21 Higher Level Stewardship applications approved generating over £400,000 p.a. in landowner income.

Ancient Woodlands Project brings into management 1270ha of ancient woodland.

Woodland planting guidance based on landscape character is published and used for woodland creation schemes.

KEY ISSUES

- The Cotswold's agricultural economy has undergone a pronounced resurgence in the last few years with higher incomes in all sectors. However in the Cotswolds all sectors face the uncertainty caused by reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and potential diseases.
- Some farmers and landowners in the Cotswolds are dependent upon diversification and equestrian options to sustain the economics of their farming businesses, particularly in the light of commodity price volatility.
- Changes in farming patterns linked to changes in the economics of particular crops or traditional farming practices can potentially lead to changes in landscape character.
- The arable sector specifically has seen significant consolidation of businesses with combinations of Farm Business Tenancies, share farming and seasonal cropping licences used to extend some arable businesses to cover 1500acres or more.
- The splitting up of farms can result in clusters of equestrian related uses which may be unsympathetic to the landscape. The Board has issued guidance on the keeping of horses and ponies in the AONB ³⁶
- There is a limited revival in interest in rural skills necessary to maintain the landscape and associated habitats largely sustained by environmental payment schemes.
- Farmers markets³⁷ and campaigns such as 'Taste of the West'³⁸ and 'Buy Local' encourage consumers to purchase locally sourced food with high environmental standards and understand how food is produced.
- Many woodlands are either under-managed or not managed at all. This is due to many factors but especially to the loss of appropriate markets for woodland products. Woodlands have the potential to directly help implement renewable energy policies, by providing wood for fuel as an alternative to fossil fuels.
- Some recent shelter-belt and woodland planting does not take proper account of its landscape setting and in particular its effects on traditional open views across the Cotswolds as seen from many roads where most people view the open landscape.
- The Board has published guidelines for tree planting for each of the landscape character types identified in the AONB Landscape Character Assessment.³⁹ Appropriately located tree planting can produce health benefits, but the priority is woodland management.
- Increasing prevalence of tree pests and diseases resulting from climate change and importation of diseased material.

³⁶ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/userfiles/file/publications/keeping-horses-leaflet-web-version.pdf>

³⁷ <http://www.localfoods.org.uk/home>

³⁸ <http://www.tasteofthewest.co.uk>

³⁹ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/files/uploads/Woodland-text.pdf>

Rural Land Management Objective

CEO2: *By 2018 viable farming and forestry remain the primary means by which the distinctive landscapes of the Cotswolds are maintained.*

Rural Land Management Policies

RLMP1: *Sustainable farming and forestry which contributes to maintaining the special qualities of the AONB within a buoyant rural economy remain the principal land uses within the Cotswolds.*

RLMP2: *Rural land management which conserves and enhances natural resources including biodiversity, landscape character, the historic environment and aids public enjoyment of the Cotswolds AONB is supported and rewarded.*

RLMP3: *Woodland, parkland, hedgerow, urban and veteran trees are managed to maintain their landscape, ecological and cultural value.*

RLMP4: *Skills required to care for the landscape and its special qualities are increased, with opportunities to acquire and develop such skills made available to all.*

Achieving Objective CEO2 will contribute significantly in securing the objectives to comply with the duty of the Board to foster the social and economic well being of people living in the AONB.

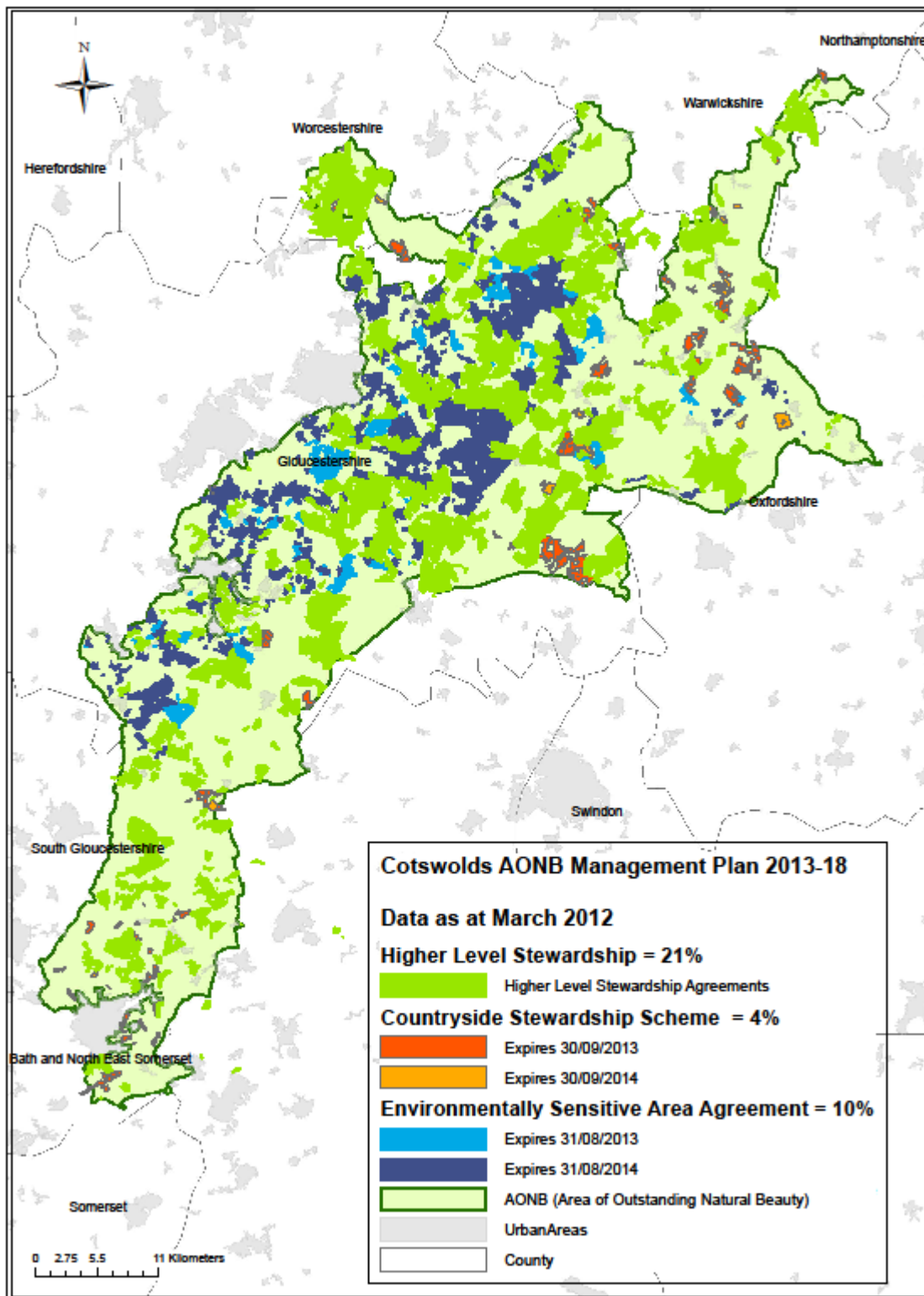
HEADLINE CONDITION INDICATORS FARMED LANDSCAPE

- % of land managed under agri-environment schemes
- % woodland on farms
- Changes in farmland type (permanent pasture/rough grazing/arable land, etc)
- Changes in farm numbers and sizes
- Changes in stock numbers

WOODLAND LANDSCAPE

- % of AONB which is woodland
- % of woodland under management for public benefit
- % established eligible National Inventory of Woodland and Trees stock in the Cotswolds AONB covered by a Woodland Grant Scheme management agreement
- % of ancient woodland sites covered by a Woodland Grant Scheme agreement

COTSWOLDS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2013-18
 SECOND CONSULTATION DRAFT



Natural Resources

The principle of conserving natural resources within the Cotswolds AONB, using them in the most sustainable way, and enhancing their contribution to the needs of society is fundamental in the future management of the area. Human activity requires the management of noise, light and atmospheric pollution, and dealing with waste creation and disposal.

Alongside energy efficiency, renewable energy sources are now seen by Government as a priority for reducing carbon emissions by at least 34% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050⁴⁰ and to maintain reliable energy supplies.⁴¹

Special qualities

The following resources are considered particularly distinctive to the Cotswolds AONB:

High-quality building stone – seams of high-quality limestone occur within the AONB and have been quarried extensively for building for centuries. It is important to maintain supplies of high-quality building stone to ensure that repairs and new buildings can be constructed in a way that is in keeping with their distinctive surroundings, particularly within the Cotswolds area itself, but also at important locations elsewhere.

Water supply and flood management –The rivers throughout the area are largely fed by flow from deep in the limestone aquifers. Some of the waters from the aquifers are of a very high quality, which sustain a diverse ecosystem within the rivers. The aquifers are also a very important source of drinking water for extensive areas outside the AONB. The objectives of the Water Framework Directive⁴² and the Floods Directive⁴³ are important in this regard.

Significant Achievement 2008-13

Over 15MW of renewable energy generation capacity approved by local planning authorities.

KEY ISSUES

- The unsustainable exploitation of natural resources in the AONB can result in harm to the natural beauty of the area, both directly, for example by quarrying and through the predicted effects of climate change on soils and water.
- The National Policy Planning Framework requires that as far as is practical, landbanks of non-energy minerals should be provided outside protected landscapes. Minerals planning authorities must balance meeting the demand for minerals with safeguarding the nationally important landscape. To ensure continued supplies of suitable high-quality building stone and in recognition of the basic principle that those minerals can only be

⁴⁰ Climate Change Act 2008

⁴¹ Annual Energy Statement DECC (2011)

⁴² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:2000L0060:20090625:EN:PDF>

⁴³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:288:0027:0034:EN:PDF>

worked where they occur, existing quarries within the AONB must continue to operate effectively, but aggregate production should be a by-product, not the primary purpose of such quarries.

- The presence of a significant number of urban areas close to the AONB can result in pressure to import waste into the AONB, particularly to former quarry locations. The Board has adopted a Position Statement on Minerals and Waste Planning.⁴⁴
- The Board encourages householders, businesses and community groups to use energy efficiency and conservation measures to reduce demand for energy. The Board has issued guidance on this subject.⁴⁵
- The Board has issued guidance on renewable energy technologies it considers may be suitable for the Cotswolds AONB⁴⁶ and has issued a Position Statement on renewable energy generation in the Cotswolds AONB⁴⁷ in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Statements for Energy⁴⁸.
- Cotswold rivers often suffer from natural 'low flows' as levels in the aquifers drop during drought periods and concentrate pollutants. The management of flows from the AONB is an important part of flood control measures in the Severn Vale, Bristol Avon, Upper Thames and Oxfordshire.
- The conservation and management of soils are an increasingly important issues for the AONB, especially where soils are thin, vulnerable and susceptible to erosion.

Natural Resources Objective

CEO3: By 2016 national and local agencies have put in place policies and guidance to implement the sustainable provision and use of natural resources in the Cotswolds AONB.

Natural Resources Policies

NRP1: Natural resources are used sustainably so as to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB, support the local economy, and that their contribution and understanding of their importance is developed.

⁴⁴ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=positionstatements>

⁴⁵ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=positionstatements>

⁴⁶ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=positionstatements>

⁴⁷ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=positionstatements>

⁴⁸ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=positionstatements>

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/meeting_energy/consents_planning/nps_en_infra/nps_en_infra.aspx

NRP2: Carbon emissions within the AONB are reduced through reducing energy consumption, applying energy conservation measures, encouraging more sustainable patterns of development, and utilising renewable energy generation technologies that are of an appropriate type and scale for their siting.

NRP3: Less waste is produced through waste minimisation and recycling of waste materials generated by residents and visitors, construction and redevelopment, agriculture and tourism providers. Any residual waste is disposed of locally where there is no harm to the distinctive characteristics of the AONB.

NRP4: Soils are managed sustainably in accordance with best practice to minimise erosion and water pollution and maximise resilience to drought.

NRP5: Water resources are conserved and their quality enhanced, and measures are taken to reduce low flows and flooding by appropriate management and use.

HEADLINE CONDITION INDICATORS

NATURAL RESOURCES AND SERVICES

- Renewable energy capacity permitted/constructed
- Number and area of Soil Management Plans

WATER QUALITY

- % length of rivers achieving “Good” ecological condition.

Historic Environment

Shaped by more than 5,000 years of human activity, the Cotswolds AONB contains a wealth of archaeological sites and historic buildings set within a distinctive historic landscape. The AONB as a whole is a highly significant historic asset. The AONB designation recognises the importance of this heritage and reinforces the need to protect and manage characteristic features.

Special qualities

- The Cotswolds is particularly rich in terms of both quality and density of archaeological and historical sites of all periods including one of the most important groups of Neolithic chambered cairns in the country, and a major group of Roman villas,
- During the Middle Ages and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the area was predominantly a pastoral and sporting landscape. This is reflected in its market towns, estate villages and houses, set within a historic landscape of field systems, commons, drove roads and woodland. Wealth derived from the wool trade in particular provided the resources to develop churches, farmsteads and houses of high quality.
- The great estates of Blenheim to the east and Badminton in the south-west dominated parts of the area in the eighteenth century. There are also a number of important historic designed landscapes, often associated with smaller country houses. Two World Heritage sites, Blenheim Palace and the City of Bath, adjoin the AONB.
- The decline of the pastoral economy and the comparative absence of industrialisation led to the survival into the late nineteenth century of an unusually high proportion of relatively unaltered seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century buildings. As a result, the Cotswolds came to be recognised as the quintessential pre-industrial English landscape. This notion was strongly expressed through the Arts and Crafts movement in the late nineteenth century and continues today in the cultural life of the AONB.

In 2003 the Cotswolds AONB Partnership published a study 'Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change'.⁴⁹ The aim of the study was to assist understanding of what it is that makes the Cotswolds AONB different from other parts of the country, with particular reference to the built environment. The study categorised local distinctiveness of the built environment of the Cotswolds in terms of the key themes of settlement, boundaries, roofs and walls.

Significant Achievement 2008-13

Friends of the Cotswolds confirmed as preferred bidder for the Old Prison site, Northleach, safeguarding access to a Grade II* building and access to the Cotswolds Rural Life Collection.

⁴⁹ http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/local_distinctiveness_landscape_change/index.html

KEY ISSUES

- There is a need to promote better awareness of Historic Environment Records (HERs) held by local authorities as a key source (while acknowledging that these often record some types of heritage better than others, so other sources should also be used).
- Local authorities are encouraged to produce on-line local lists of non-designated heritage assets of local significance, thereby providing a degree of protection.
- The management of archaeological sites requires careful consideration. Agri-environment schemes should also seek greater opportunities to improve the management of historic sites.
- Careful planning and design are required to ensure that development pressure does not adversely affect the traditional character of villages and other settlements throughout the AONB.
- Features that give towns and villages their distinctive character need to be respected and accommodated by or protected from new development.

Historic Environment Objective

CEO4: *By 2018 relevant organisations have demonstrably better identified, recorded and promoted, the distinctive historic and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds AONB, and which is better understood by residents and visitors.*

Historic Environment Policies

HEP1: *The historic environment and cultural heritage of the AONB is conserved, managed and recorded.*

HEP2: *The significance of the high quality historic environment of the AONB is communicated to the public.*

HEP3: *Design guidance is used to inform decision making regarding the conservation and management of the historic environment.*

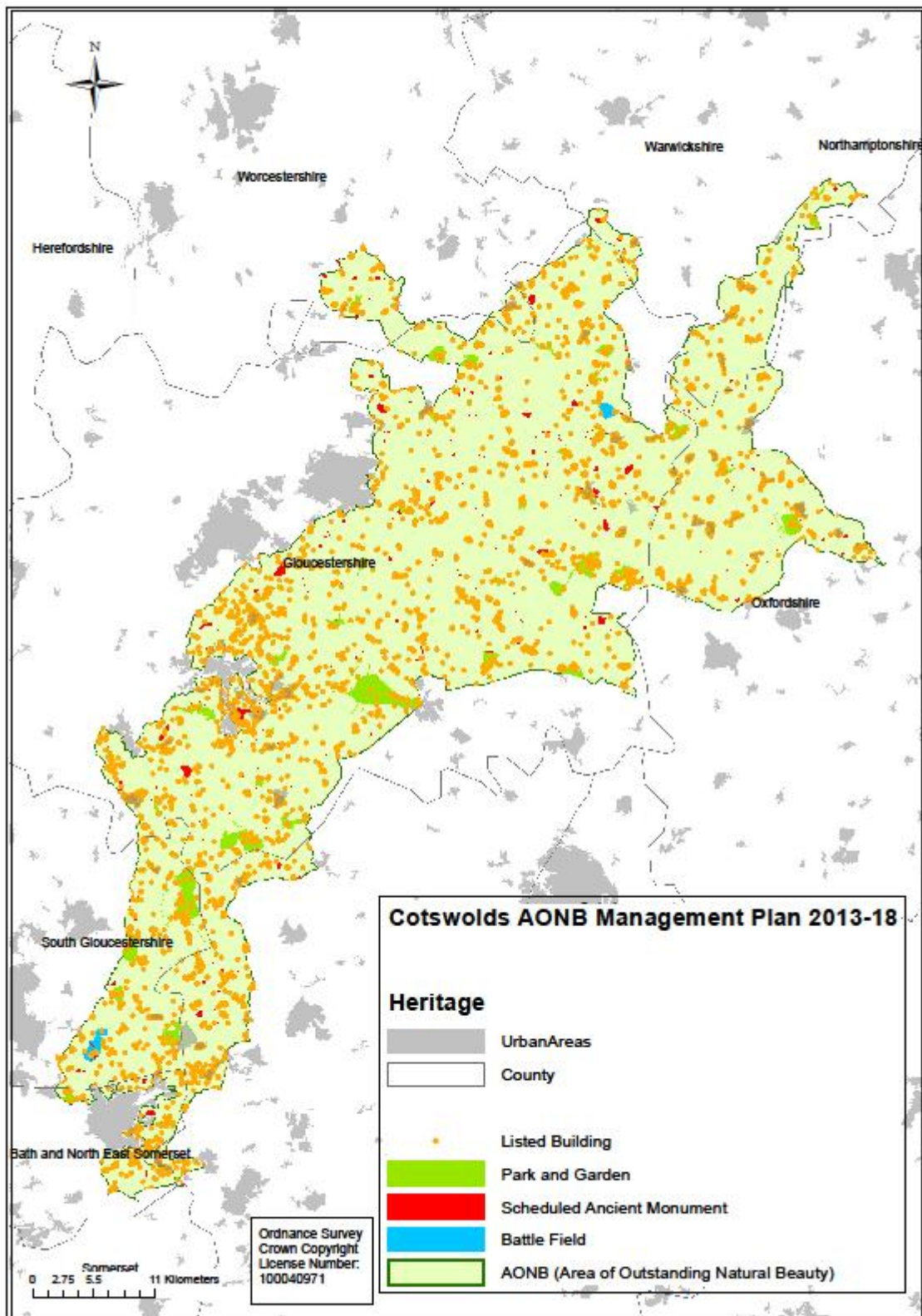
Achieving Objective CEO4 will contribute significantly in securing the objectives to comply with the duty of the Board to foster the social and economic well being of people living in the AONB.

HEADLINE CONDITION INDICATORS

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Area of land under agri-environment schemes for the management and protection of archaeological features
- % of heritage assets at risk
- Number of Local Authorities with Historic Environment Records available online.

COTSWOLDS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2013-18
SECOND CONSULTATION DRAFT



Biodiversity

Description

Geology and past land management practices have resulted in the Cotswolds supporting a range of distinctive features, habitats and their dependent flora and fauna. Many sites are the remnants of semi-natural communities resulting from low intensity land management practices. Of particular importance in the Cotswolds are unimproved grassland, ancient woodland, limestone streams and rivers and open farmland. Together they form the basis of two Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs).

The size of the Cotswolds AONB (2000 sqkms) and the survival of important habitats and species provide a large scale resource for the management of biodiversity, particularly in the light of the predicted effects of climate change. The north-south orientation, variations in altitude and aspect, connectivity and diversity of habitats and historical land management practices all provide opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and supporting adaption to climate change.

Special qualities

The Cotswolds exhibits a significant degree of retention of important habitats and species which are in decline elsewhere. The Cotswolds AONB contains many such sites designated for their biodiversity, including five Special Areas of Conservation, three National Nature Reserves, 89 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and a large number of local sites.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) includes lists of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The following habitats and species, many of which are included in those lists, are considered to be characteristic of the Cotswolds, and may represent a stronghold of that particular habitat or species.⁵⁰

Habitats:

- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- Lowland beech and yew woodland
- Wood pasture and parkland
- Lowland calcareous grasslands
- Rivers and ponds
- Arable field margins important for birds and plant species
- Hedgerows
- Traditional orchards
- Areas important for bats (batscapes)*

⁵⁰ As determined by the Biodiversity Theme workshop, October 2011.

(*) Habitat not on NERC Act list

Species:

- Farmland birds, such as skylark, linnet, corn bunting
- Pearl bordered fritillary
- Arable plants
- Juniper
- Cotswold pennycress
- Bats
- Dormouse
- Water vole
- Brown hare
- Otter
- Limestone grassland butterflies (including Marsh fritillary in the Cotswolds)
- Violet click beetle
- White clawed crayfish
- Bath asparagus (*Ornithogalum pyrenacium*)*
- Native brown trout

Significant Achievement 2008-13

Cotswolds Farmland Birds Project results in 31,000ha appropriately managed in 54 schemes.

Cotswolds Ecological Network Partnership founded with 50 members representing 29 organisations. Principles for collaboration & two Nature Improvement Areas agreed.

- Characteristic habitats and some species are in decline or have been lost because of a range of factors including notably changes in farming and forestry practices, climate change influences, lack of or inappropriate management, together with development pressures, including brownfield site development.
- Whilst the protection and management of important sites and species is an essential task, it is also important to move beyond a piecemeal site based approach and improve the quality of habitats in the wider landscape⁵¹.
- There is limited knowledge about the overall biodiversity resource of the AONB. This is because of the scale of the task and a lack of recorders.
- Access to areas that are rich in biodiversity adds to the quality of experience for those living in and visiting the Cotswolds. Interpretation which improves people's appreciation and enjoyment of biodiversity increases their understanding of the value of managing sites and the wider landscape.

⁵¹ Biodiversity 2020, Defra (2011)

(*) Species not on NERC Act list

Biodiversity Objective

CEO5: By 2014 relevant organisations have commenced landscape scale restoration and the re-linking and management of habitats to improve the resilience of the Cotswold landscape, habitats and water environment to the effects of climate change.

Biodiversity Policies

BP1: There is no further loss of characteristic habitats and species.

BP2: A linked large-scale landscape approach is taken to the conservation and expansion of coherent and resilient ecological networks within and adjoining the AONB.

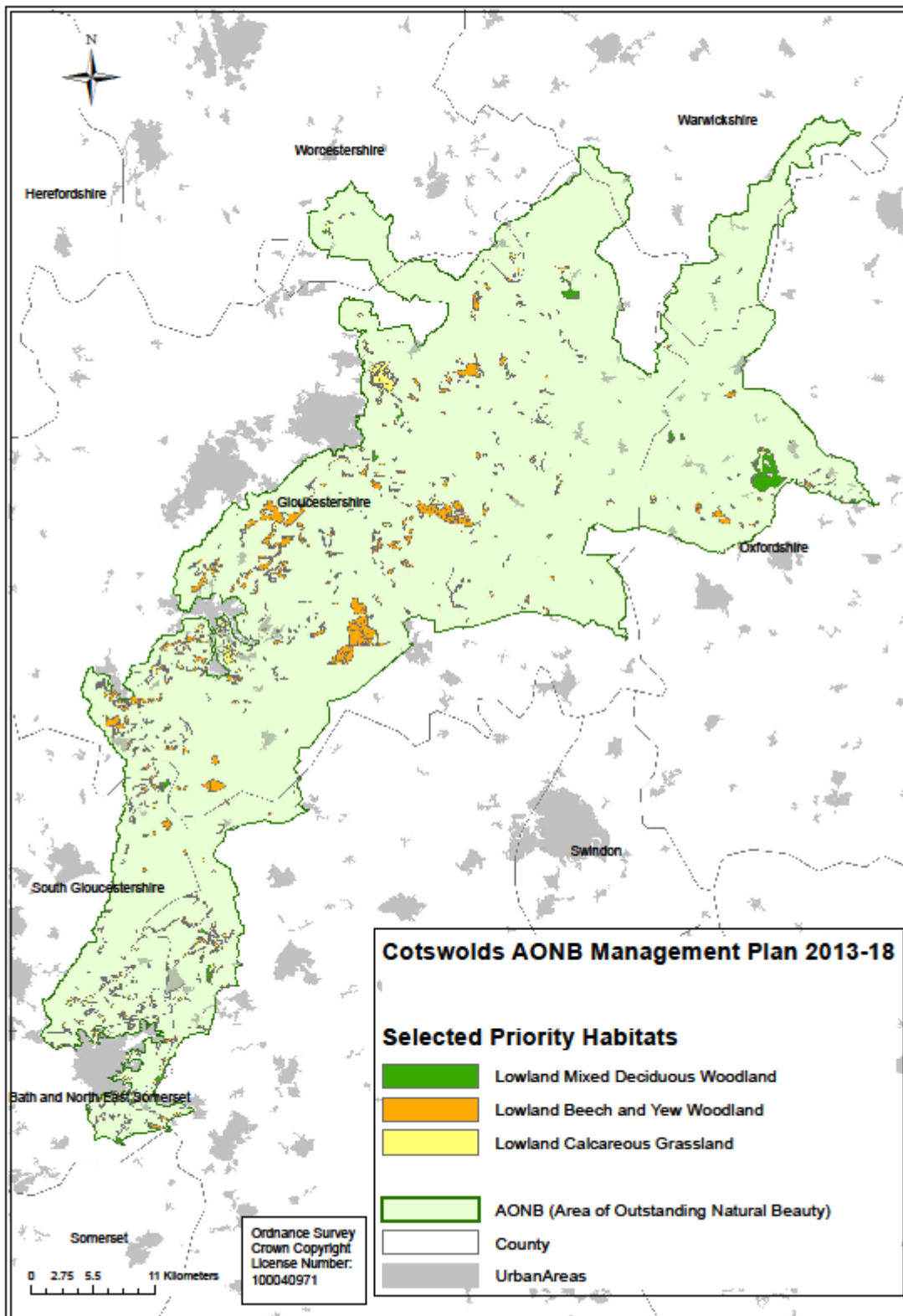
BP3: The biodiversity resource of the Cotswolds AONB is sufficiently understood to guide the successful conservation of the characteristic habitats and species.

BP4: Targeted action is taken for the recovery of characteristic species and enhancement of characteristic habitats.

HEADLINE CONDITION INDICATORS BIODIVERSITY

- % by area of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in “Favourable” condition
 - % by area of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in “Favourable and Unfavourable recovering” condition
- % of area of priority habitats which are managed under agri-environment schemes

COTSWOLDS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2013-18
SECOND CONSULTATION DRAFT



Development and Transport

Towns, villages and individual buildings and their settings form a vital element of the character of the Cotswolds, particularly because of the widespread use of limestone and the area's distinctive architecture. The planning and design of development both within the AONB and around it is of crucial importance in maintaining the landscape and scenic beauty of the area.

Accessibility to and through the Cotswolds has risen because of motorways and other high speed roads through, and close to, the AONB. This much enhanced road network has resulted in both positive and negative consequences. Negatively, much of traffic now uses the AONB as a "short cut" between surrounding motorways which serve the major cities. Positively, the routes provide accessibility for tourists, who contribute circa £1bn to the local economy.

Four railway lines serve the Cotswolds AONB area providing good access to all parts of the UK. All of these rail services are potentially more attractive to short-to-medium distance commuters as fuel costs rise.

With regard to public transport, perceptions of problems discouraging wider use include the frequency of services, long journey times, their reliability, uncoordinated connections between different modes of transport, people's access to the network, and standards of comfort and service.

Significant Achievements 2008-13

Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2008-13 endorsed by 14 local planning authorities as a material consideration strategic planning decision making.

Conservation Boards recognised as statutory consultee for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and National Planning Statements.

Comprehensive HGV weight limits introduced in the Gloucestershire part of AONB.

Position Statements issued on a range of planning and land management topics to provide detailed guidance, including Affordable Housing, Renewable Energy, Miscanthus, and Road verge Management

132 new affordable homes provided (Cotswold District Council).

Signage audit and sign rationalisation, Fosse Way (A429) (Gloucestershire County Council)

85% of significant planning applications determined in accordance with Board advice.

KEY ISSUES

- Within the context of the National Planning Policy Framework⁵², there is a need to manage development pressures and land uses changes both within and in the setting of the AONB with sensitivity in order to maintain a balance in promoting economic and social viability whilst retaining traditional Cotswolds character. The Board has issued Position Statements on Housing and Development⁵³; and Employment⁵⁴ in the Cotswolds AONB.
- The importance of providing affordable housing throughout the Cotswolds is recognised as vital to ensure that balanced communities can survive and prosper. The Board has issued a Position Statement on Affordable Housing in the AONB⁵⁵.
- Market towns and larger villages appear relatively thriving. However, there is considerable concern in smaller communities regarding loss of local facilities and services leading to social isolation. The Localism Act and provision for Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity for local people to actively engage in the development of their community.
- Nearly 1 in 8 of the households living in the Cotswolds AONB is without a car⁵⁶ and many other people do not have access to a car during the day. This means they are heavily dependent on the frequency and quality of public and/or community transport and on local shops and facilities which are vulnerable to closure.
- The AONB retains traditional agricultural buildings that have not, as yet, been converted for other uses. Conversions need to be carefully appraised so that the buildings' distinctive character and setting are retained and adverse impacts on important nature conservation interests, such as bats, are avoided.
- Noise and activity arising from developments in the countryside together with lighting can have an adverse impact on tranquil and dark sky areas. The Board has issued a Position Statement on Tranquillity and Dark Skies in the Cotswolds AONB⁵⁷.
- Equine-related activities provide valuable farm diversification opportunities. The Board has issued a Position Statement on the Keeping of Horses in the AONB⁵⁸.
- Tourism is an important element of the economy of the AONB. It is inevitable that there will be continuing need for new sustainable tourist-related developments within the

⁵² <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf>

⁵³ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/userfiles/file/consultations/housinganddevelopmentmarc07-revised-oct2010.pdf>

⁵⁴ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/userfiles/file/Publications/Employmentfinaldec07headed.doc>

⁵⁵ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/userfiles/file/publications/position%20statements/affordablehousingfinal.pdf>

⁵⁶ Census 2001, updated by estimate. CACI (2012)

⁵⁷ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=position>

⁵⁸ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/userfiles/file/Keeping%20of%20Horses%20position%20statement%20adopted%20Dec%202009.pdf>

COTSWOLDS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2013-18
SECOND CONSULTATION DRAFT

AONB during the life span of this Management Plan. The Board has published a Sustainable Tourism Strategy which deals with this issue in detail⁵⁹.

- Modern telecommunications, including access to high speed broadband, are vitally important to a successful rural economy. The Board has issued a Position Statement on Telecommunications in the Cotswolds AONB⁶⁰.
- The AONB and its surroundings may well attract proposals for developments of significant scale, such as wind turbines. These could have significant adverse effects on the AONB landscape. The Board has issued position statements on renewable energy⁶¹ and development outside the AONB⁶².
- Within the Cotswolds AONB there are various rural 'brownfield sites' (i.e. previously developed land and buildings), including ex-MOD properties and redundant airfields. Whilst the reuse of such sites may bring economic benefits, the impact on the character of the AONB by the reuse of these sites for large scale residential or industrial use needs to be carefully assessed.
- The Fosse Way (A429) and the A40 are long-established through-routes within the AONB. Major new roads, including the A417, have also been built through the AONB to serve long distance movement. Positive management including lower speed limits are required to deal with congestion on these routes, poor air quality and traffic 'rat-running' along minor roads and through villages to and from these routes. The Board's Transport Protocol and Highway Maintenance Guidance agreed with the highway authorities ensure that the impact, design and materials of schemes on the special features of the AONB are fully considered. The Board has issued a position statement⁶³ and guidance on road verge management.
- The use of minor roads, by lorries and other large vehicles causes problems for residents and visitors and can impact on the landscape. The highway authorities have introduced lorry routing schemes, including weight, width, height and length restrictions.
- The character of minor roads can be harmed by attempts to slow traffic by urban design approaches. The Board is encouraging highway authorities to undertake clutter audits and to remove unnecessary signage, and to use discretion as permitted by national guidance⁶⁴.
- Increasing traffic volumes mean that cycling and horse riding is not always safe on some roads. This is particularly evident on major through-routes, in congested villages and on minor roads that are used as 'rat runs' by residents, commercial traffic and visitors. Low cost speed reduction schemes may be appropriate in these circumstances.

⁵⁹ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=sustainable-tourism>

⁶⁰ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=position>

⁶¹ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=positionstatements>

⁶² <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/userfiles/file/consultations/setting-final-headed-6july-2010-revised-oct2010.pdf>

⁶³ <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/userfiles/file/General/MANAGEMENTOFROADSIDEVERGES.pdf>

⁶⁴ <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/signing-the-way/signing-the-way.pdf>

- Increasing demand for air transport is leading to expansion of controlled air space over the AONB, with a reduction of tranquillity caused by increased visual intrusion and noise.

Development and Transport Objective

CEO6: *By 2014 national and local development and transport agencies have put in place policies, guidance and decisions to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB, maintain local distinctiveness, provide services and support a buoyant rural economy.*

Development and Transport Policies

DTP1: *All Local Plan documents and planning decision-making processes will have regard to the statutory AONB Management Plan, and Position Statements, Landscape Strategies and guidance issued by the Board, and the following criteria in determining the acceptability of a proposed development in the Cotswolds AONB. Development will:*

- *Be compatible with the distinctive character of the location as described by the relevant landscape character assessment, strategy and guidelines;*
- *Incorporate designs and landscaping consistent with the above, respecting the local settlement pattern and building style;*
- *Be designed to respect local building styles and materials;*
- *Incorporate appropriate sustainability elements and designs;*
- *Have regard to the impact on tranquillity, including dark skies;*
- *Not have an adverse impact on the local community amenities and services and access to these;*
- *Protect, or where possible enhance, landscape and biodiversity;*
- *Be in accordance with a more sustainable pattern of development, reducing dependence on car travel.*

DTP2: *Only development meeting these criteria which supports the local economy, improves access to local services, and increases the opportunity for people to live and work in their local community will be promoted in Local Plans, unless required for some clearly identified national interest.*

DTP3: *The special qualities of the AONB are fully respected in the planning, design, provision and management of all types of transport⁶⁵ and associated infrastructure.*

⁶⁵ Transport includes walking, cycling and horse riding as well as road and rail transport.

DTP4: *Those involved in the care of the AONB have the opportunity to live within it by the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.*

DTP5: *The current level of local services and access to those services by all is maintained and where possible enhanced to support sustainable communities.*

DTP6: *Issues of importance for the management of the AONB landscape are fully reflected in strategies and plans produced by other agencies.*

DTP7: *Opportunities are taken to promote walking, cycling, public transport, pilot innovative schemes and provide an alternative to use of private car where possible.*

Achieving Objective CEO6 will contribute significantly in securing the objectives to comply with the duty of the Board to foster the social and economic well being of people living in the AONB.

HEADLINE CONDITION INDICATORS

DEVELOPMENT

- Number of affordable homes constructed/year
- % of Local Plans, Minerals Local Plans and Waste Local Plans with reference to AONB Management Plan in policy or supporting text
- Availability and scope of design guidance
- % of settlements with Parish Plans, Neighbourhood Plans or Village Design schemes

TRANQUILLITY AND DARK SKIES

- % of AONB recorded as 'most tranquil'
- % of AONB least affected by light pollution.

Awareness and Understanding

The Cotswolds is a well-known destination for visitors from the UK and overseas. The Cotswolds landscape has long provided inspiration for artists, craftworkers, writers and musicians, many of whom have made, and continue to make the area their home. The quintessentially English and picturesque towns and villages of the Cotswolds have frequently been used in film and TV productions, such as most recently Castle Combe for “War Horse” and Bibury for “Stardust”.

The accessibility and variety of the Cotswolds landscape provide many educational opportunities for schools and young people to learn more about nature and the countryside.

There are many organisations which share similar aims to the Board and which are involved in promoting and engaging people in their conservation and recreation work in the Cotswolds e.g. Wildlife Trusts, National Trust, Woodland Trust. These provide more opportunities to raise awareness of the Cotswolds and its special features.

Special qualities

- One of the best known landscapes in England
- A plethora of material on the Cotswolds exists in the form of books, travel guides, articles and websites.
- A wide range of information and interpretation material provided by the Conservation Board and other organisations.
- A network of visitor information centres

Significant Achievements 2008-13

“Escape to Cotswolds” visitor centre opened at Northleach, linked to interactive visitor websites.

50,000 copies of Cotswold Lion newspaper distributed twice a year.

Key issues:

- The provision of education and learning opportunities can help to reach new audiences and encourage a deeper understanding and awareness of the Cotswolds and the natural environment.
- With many conservation and other organisations operating across the Cotswolds AONB, often based on local authority administrative boundaries, there is a fragmented approach to the provision of information regarding the Cotswolds.

- The provision of information and interpretation in a variety of formats can help to increase the understanding and awareness of the Cotswolds. The growth and variety in electronic media will continue to present many opportunities for presenting information and in helping to reach new audiences.

Awareness and Understanding Objective

UEO1: By 2018 residents and visitors demonstrably value the natural beauty, historic character and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds and understand the need to invest in and sensitively manage the special qualities of the area.

Awareness and Understanding Policies

AU1: Awareness and appreciation of the special qualities of the AONB is encouraged for all who live, work in and visit the Cotswolds.

AU2: An understanding and appreciation of the purposes of the designation and the positive benefits of helping to conserve and enhance the AONB, is fostered in businesses, organisations, landowners and policymakers.

AU3: A coordinated and consistent approach to information and interpretation is achieved in partnership with others to provide opportunities for enjoying and experiencing the AONB.

Achieving Objective UEO1 will contribute significantly in securing the objectives to comply with the duty of the Board to foster the social and economic well being of people living in the AONB.

Exploring and Enjoying

The Cotswolds is one of the largest and most popular rural areas in England for outdoor recreation and enjoyment, particularly walking, cycling and horse riding.

The Cotswolds features a range of different landscape types, each offering their own opportunities for exploring and enjoying, such as limestone grassland, ancient woodlands, historic parks and gardens, river valleys and numerous picturesque villages.

Within the landscape are numerous settlements of distinctive traditional architecture. The Cotswolds has a rich cultural and historic landscape for exploring with many Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Medieval sites and features.

There is an extensive green infrastructure including a generally well signed and maintained public rights of way network, which enables easy access throughout the AONB, including the Cotswold Way and Thames Path National Trails, plus over 18 named long distance recreational routes. This rich network of rights of way and promoted routes provides a direct link between people and the landscape.

There are many countryside sites and viewpoints, particularly along the scarp edge, which offer facilities for the public such as car parks, picnic areas, toilets and interpretation boards. A range of information on walking, cycling and riding in the Cotswolds is available to help people discover different parts of the AONB, including the lesser-known areas. The existing high standard of the National Trails in particular provide good opportunities for access to the countryside for those of less mobility.

Significant Achievements 2008-13

Cotswold Way, managed by the Board since 2008, achieves 200,000 users/annum.

Castle Coombe Footpath Improvement scheme (Wiltshire Council and Castle Coombe PC)

Escape to the Cotswolds website launched summer 2011.

Cotswolds Discover combined “rover” bus and rail ticket launched 2012.

Publication highlighting the range of Promoted routes across the Cotswolds published in 2011.

Cotswold Way designated a pilot project for the future management of National Trails in 2012.

Special qualities

- Tranquil, generally high quality experience of attractive English lowland countryside
- Distinctive vernacular architecture
- Access particularly on foot is generally straightforward with adequate waymarking and maintenance

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- Large number of promoted routes including two National Trails
- Range of visitor attractions linked to countryside, heritage and recreational themes.

Key issues

- The Cotswolds attracts relatively low numbers of under-represented, hard to reach groups. In particular people from inner-city areas, ethnic minority groups, and young and less mobile people are infrequent users of the rural environment.
- The provision of public transport within the Cotswolds inhibits visiting much of the Cotswolds for recreation other than for those with access to a car.
- Overuse of some of the more popular countryside and recreational sites, combined with reduced funding for site management leads to degradation and erosion of key areas, including important sites for biodiversity.
- Reduced funding in countryside management can impact on ease of access.
- Quality of signing and maintenance of access is not consistent across the area.

Exploring and Enjoying Objective

UEO2: By 2018 relevant organisations make the Cotswolds a landscape available for all to explore and enjoy and which is demonstrably regarded by residents and visitors as a place for positive, high quality experiences.

Exploring and Enjoying Policies

***EE1:** Harder to reach groups are encouraged to access and enjoy the Cotswolds countryside.*

***EE2:** The cultural significance and heritage of the Cotswolds is widely recognised by all who live and work in or visit the area.*

***EE3:** There is greater use of more sustainable methods of travel to and around the Cotswolds for enjoyment and recreation.*

***EE4:** There is an improved coordinated approach to the management of public access and quiet recreational activities compatible with the conservation of the landscape.*

Achieving Objective UEO2 will contribute significantly in securing the objectives to comply with the duty of the Board to foster the social and economic well being of people living in the AONB.

HEADLINE CONDITION INDICATORS

NATURE & LOCATION OF INFORMAL RECREATION FACILITIES & PUBLIC ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES

- Total length of rights of way
- Total length of National Trails
- % registered common land
- % 'CROW ACT' access land
- % Section 15, CROW Act land⁶⁶
- Area of open space brought about by agri-environment schemes

⁶⁶ Land with certain rights of access granted prior to the CROW Act 2000.

Health and Well Being

Better health and wellbeing are two of the major social and economic benefits that can be secured through good management of the natural environment in both rural and urban settings⁶⁷.

Sedentary lifestyles are a major and growing concern, which are creating many major avoidable health problems such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.⁶⁸ Poor mental health affects millions of people, not only reducing wellbeing but is associated with poor physical health, health inequalities and lower productivity. The escalating costs of health care means there will be more emphasis on prevention, rather than cure, with people needing to become more engaged and interested in their own health.

There is increasing national⁶⁹ and local⁷⁰ encouragement and guidance to promote contact with the natural environment and informal recreation to improve health and wellbeing,

The Cotswolds has an ageing population with 23% of the resident population aged over 65 years. The Gloucestershire area of the Cotswolds experiences a higher number of excess winter deaths and road traffic incidents in comparison to the rest of that county. The energy efficiency of household dwellings (SAP score) indicates Gloucestershire may be below the England rate; this is an important contributory factor to excess winter deaths⁷¹.

Significant Achievements 2008-13

Cotswolds Natural Health Service promotion launched summer 2012.

Health and Wellbeing seminar held autumn 2011.

Special qualities

- Good practice and actions being taken locally to link access to the environment with health and well being e.g. partnership working between the Public Health and Well Being Board and the Local Nature Partnership in Gloucestershire.
- A variety of information exists to help people with limited mobility access and enjoy different parts of the AONB e.g. Walks on Wheels and Miles without Stiles walking routes.

⁶⁷ "Position Statement: Health & Wellbeing" Natural England (2008)

⁶⁸ Foresight Report: Tackling obesity. Future choices (Government Office for Science)
<http://www.foresight.gov.uk/OurWork/ActiveProject>

⁶⁹ "Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our strategy for public health in England" DHSS (2010)

⁷⁰ "Active Planning Toolkit", Gloucestershire NHS (2011)

⁷¹ "How Healthy is Gloucestershire?" Gloucestershire NHS (2011)

- The health of people in the Cotswolds is generally better than the national average with a higher life expectancy and higher percentages of healthy eating and physical activity⁷².

Key issues

- The Cotswolds could be better used for a variety of health and well being needs, particularly by the elderly and mobility- impaired people.
- Traditional Cotswold homes can have poor energy performance, resulting in cold temperatures in winter.
- Good opportunities to build new partnerships with the health sector and in particular the new public health boards under the auspices of local authorities during the lifetime of the Management Plan.

Health and Well Being Objective
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<i>UEO3: By 2018 providers of opportunities to improve health through recreation and better housing conditions in the Cotswolds AONB are demonstrably successful.</i>
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Health and Well Being Policies

<i>WB1: Opportunities are taken to contribute to residents and visitors health, well being and quality of life through use and improvement of recreational activities.</i>

<i>WB2: The energy efficiency of traditional Cotswold homes is improved to secure benefits for health.</i>

Achieving Objective UEO3 will contribute significantly in securing the objectives to comply with the duty of the Board to foster the social and economic well being of people living in the AONB.

⁷² "How Healthy is Gloucestershire?" Gloucestershire NHS (2011)

Participation

The management of the AONB provides opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in a wide range of volunteering and local community based activities. Such activity is known to increase an individuals own interests, personal skills or learning, which in return produces a feeling of self-worth and respect. People who volunteer in their community have a personal attachment to the area and want to make it a better place for themselves and for others.

There are 283 town and parish councils and meetings in the Cotswolds AONB. Elected members of such councils undertake significant local work for their community. The Localism Act⁷³ provides opportunities for local people to become involved in planning their local area through Neighbourhood Plans and other initiatives such as Community Right to Buy⁷⁴.

The Cotswolds Voluntary Warden Service has been established for over 45 years and provides opportunities for involvement in practical conservation tasks, running a guided walk programme and educational activity. Other organisations including the National Trust, the Woodland Trust, The Conservation Volunteers and the Wildlife Trusts offer opportunities for participation in a range of activities within the AONB.

The Conservation Board and other organisations have developed training schemes through which residents and visitors can learn and develop rural skills required for the management of the special features of the AONB, such as dry stone walls. Acquisition of such skills can lead to employment opportunities.

Significant Achievements 2008-13

Cotswold Wardens undertake 175,000 hours of activity with, 17,000 visitors on guided walks.

Over 600 trainees on Rural Skills programme.

Rural Skills website launched in 2011 offering rural skills and corporate training.

Hedge laying competition celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2012.

Dry stone walling competition celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2009.

Special qualities

- Long-standing level of active participation in caring for the Cotswolds.
- A parish warden network is providing valuable links between parish councils and voluntary wardens.

⁷³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>

⁷⁴ "A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act – an update" Defra (2011).

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/localismplainenglishupdate>

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- Many conservation organisations that have long-standing levels of participation in the management of nature reserves and the wider countryside in the Cotswolds.
- Growing recognition and interest in the value of learning and developing rural skills in the AONB.
- Two national trails monitored and maintained largely by volunteers.

Key issues

- Need to encourage and support the purpose of the AONB through residents' involvement in localism, including neighbourhood plans.
- Improved coverage by the parish warden network would increase active working with local communities to ensure rights of way are accessible and that liaison with landowners and occupiers produces positive outcomes.
- Need to work with a variety of agencies to provide opportunities in environmental work in the Cotswolds, recognising the positive impact this can make to people's quality of life and self esteem whilst delivering the purpose of the AONB.

Participation Objective

UEO4: *By 2016 the public demonstrably increase significantly support, commitment and participation in conserving and enhancing the AONB by volunteering and involvement with relevant organisations.*

Participation Policy

P1: *Active public participation in the management of the Cotswolds AONB is supported by the provision of community and voluntary activity including the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.*

Achieving Objective UEO4 will contribute significantly in securing the objectives to comply with the duty of the Board to foster the social and economic well being of people living in the AONB.

HEADLINE CONDITION INDICATORS

PARTICIPATION

- Numbers attending guided walk programme
- Numbers attending Rural Skills courses
- Cotswold Voluntary Wardens numbers and hours

Tourism

The Cotswolds remains a popular destination for both overseas and domestic visitors, attracting some 23million leisure visits every year. Valued at more than £900 million to the local economy⁷⁵, tourism is the number one industry in the Cotswolds AONB. National tourism policy⁷⁶ highlights the Cotswolds as being one of England's 'world famous and exceptional destinations' which has the ability to attract overseas visitors to England.

The Cotswolds AONB Sustainable Tourism Partnership was set up in 2010 to bring together tourism bodies and organisations, including private sector and local community representatives from across the Cotswolds with the aim of developing, delivering and monitoring progress with the Sustainable Tourism Strategy & Action Plan 2011-16.

With the full support of the partnership, the Sustainable Tourism Strategy formed the basis of the Board's successful application for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas in 2011. The Charter approach ensures that organisations, local people and businesses are working together to protect the area, whilst at the same time increasing opportunities for visitors to discover and enjoy its special qualities.

As part of its commitment to retaining the Charter after the initial five year period, the Board will continue to develop and strengthen its links with the tourism sector and business community.

Significant Achievements 2008-13

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism Charter awarded 2011.

Cotswolds AONB Sustainable Tourism Strategy adopted and published 2010/11.

50,000 guides/annum of Explore the Cotswolds Way by public transport leaflet issued.

Special Qualities

- The internationally renowned high quality and diverse landscape, villages, towns and buildings, with a wealth of accessible historical, natural and cultural sites, are the main attractions for visitors to the Cotswolds.
- The Cotswolds landscape and infrastructure offers a wide range of good quality walking, cycling and horse riding opportunities for quiet enjoyment by visitors.
- New sustainable tourism products have been developed and delivered between the Board and tourism organisations, for example the Cotswolds Discoverer scheme with train and bus operators.

⁷⁵ This figure has been derived from the Gloucestershire and West Oxfordshire Economic Impact of Tourism reports 2010.

⁷⁶ England A Strategic Framework for Tourism 2010-20

- Development of the “Our Land” sustainable tourism initiative is helping businesses and visitors to connect more closely with the AONB and its landscape.

Key issues

- Limited collaborative working between public sector tourism organisations across the Cotswolds.
- Heavy reliance among visitors on the use of private cars.
- Insufficient specific visitor focused information in a variety of formats about the AONB, its sense of place and distinctive features.
- Lack of up to date and accurate research data to improve understanding of visitor profiles, patterns and tourism trends across the Cotswolds to inform future development.

Tourism Objective

<i>UEO5: By 2016: the Cotswolds is widely recognised and valued as a sustainable visitor destination, where local communities benefit, businesses prosper and the environment is sustained through the co-ordinated delivery of quality and enriching visitor experiences.</i>

Tourism Policies

<i>TOR1: The tourism sector is aware of and understands the benefits to that sector of the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the AONB and the need to communicate this to visitors and residents.</i>

<i>TOR2: There is more collaborative working between public sector tourism organisations across the AONB, enabling greater overall efficiency and use of resources.</i>
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<i>TOR3: The impacts and patterns of tourism across the Cotswolds are understood and sustainably addressed.</i>
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Achieving Objective UEO5 will contribute significantly in securing the objectives to comply with the duty of the Board to foster the social and economic well being of people living in the AONB.

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Implementation

1. Delivery of the Management Plan

- 1.1 Implementation of the objectives and policies of this AONB Management Plan needs the support and involvement of many other organisations and individuals who have key parts to play in the future of the area. Many of these have been involved in drawing up the Plan.
- 1.2 The Board will contribute by providing leadership; facilitating discussion and co-operation; coordinating where appropriate, including formulating joint bids to secure necessary resources and by continuing to take direct action itself. The Cotswolds Voluntary Wardens will continue to act on behalf of the Board to undertake practical land management tasks, lead guided walks and interpret and inform residents and visitors of the special qualities of the Cotswolds.
- 1.3 It is important that strategies, plans and action programmes of key partners and other influential organisations within the Cotswolds should reflect the vision, objectives and policies of this Management Plan. This will include parish councils, rural landowners and managers, farmers, community and voluntary organisations, specialist interest groups, statutory agencies, businesses, and local authorities. Such organisations will contribute both individually and through a range of other partnerships, in particular through Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Nature Partnerships
- 1.4 For government, local authorities, other public bodies and other ‘relevant authorities’ active support for the implementation of this plan is the key to satisfying their general legal duty under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to “have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB”.

2 Engagement Plan

- 2.1 Key actions required by agencies, organisations groups and individuals working alone or in partnership to achieve the objectives of this Management Plan are identified in the Engagement Plan.
- 2.2 The Board will prepare a Business Plan showing clearly what tasks it will undertake in a rolling three year period. It is recognised that it is essential to fully involve partners in agreeing tasks, targets, and above all, responsibilities and resource allocations to secure their real commitment to Business Plan tasks that require their involvement.

Monitoring

3 Checking progress in implementing the Management Plan and the state of the AONB

3.1 In addition to monitoring the successful implementation of the Management Plan, the Board has an obligation to monitor the state (or condition) of the AONB. Both types of monitoring play important roles in identifying key issues and in assessing the continued relevance of Management Plan objectives and policies.

4 Monitoring progress

4.1 Implementation of the Management Plan will be monitored by reviewing progress on actions in the Engagement Plan and on the detailed tasks specified in the Board's Business Plan. The extent to which success criteria have been met will also be monitored. Regular annual reports are produced by the Board, setting out achievements.

5 Monitoring the state of the AONB

5.1 Monitoring the state of the AONB is a more long-term process. Good baseline information is required in respect of each of the special characteristics of the Cotswolds AONB. A relevant indicator that can be consistently measured over time should then be identified for each special characteristic. However information relating to the whole AONB can be difficult to assemble, particularly given the size and administrative complexity of the Cotswolds AONB.

5.2 The statutory agencies operating in the area, particularly Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency together with the local authorities, make positive contributions to efficient collation of data for monitoring as part of their general duty to conserve and enhance the AONB.

5.3 The final choice of indicators as set out under each section is influenced by factors including: practical considerations such as time, resources and availability of data; the need for meaningful indicators that focus on AONBs' primary concerns with landscape and the environment; and the need to ensure that indicators make practical contributions to baseline data on the state of the AONB, rather than act simply as performance indicators.

Evaluation

6 Learning and applying lessons

Monitoring and reviewing these indicators will provide a means of assessing and communicating change over time, and will thus inform reviews of this plan. The indicators will only be part of the analysis. Issues, changes and trends will need to be re-examined through appropriate research and information.

As part of the Management Plan review process, evaluation will be necessary to reflect on the lessons to be learned from the experience of operating the Management Plan and Action Plan. It will also highlight how external changes have, and are, affecting the state of the AONB itself.

Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2013-18 Engagement Plan

The Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2013-18 has two closely interrelated functions.

Firstly, it sets out the Board’s policies for the management of the Cotswolds AONB and for the carrying out of its functions in relation to it. The actions the Board itself will take to deliver the objectives of the Plan set out in the Board’s three year rolling business plan.

Secondly, it guides the engagement of public bodies, landowners, businesses and individuals in the management of the AONB. The actions the Board would encourage others to take individually or in partnership with others including the Board are set out in this engagement plan.

For public bodies, undertaking the actions suggested would demonstrate compliance with the requirement of Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 that “In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.”

Partner	Action
Defra	Review the “Section 85 duty” advice to make the reporting, monitoring and challenging process more robust.
	Review the funding formula for AONBs to ensure transparency, and fairness.
	Review existing Management Plan guidance and consider the necessity for and appropriateness of a 5 year review period and the scope of associated SEA, HRA and Equalities processes given the resource requirements involved in their preparation..
	Recognise the locally developed NIAs for the Cotswolds.
	Advise the Board of its other investments in the AONB – so that the Board can develop a wider picture of public sector investment in the landscape and environment.
	Recognise the work of the Board as a priority for investment to secure departmental objectives and as part of the wider Defra family.
	Champion Protected Landscapes and their value to the nation and economy across Government.
	Streamline the approval process for varying the route of the Cotswold Way National Trail.
DCLG	Publish a new Government Circular on Protected Landscapes, reinforcing the role and purpose of our protected landscape family

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DCMS	Support the development and implementation of a single Destination Management Plan for the whole Cotswolds, recognising the contribution of Cotswolds landscape to the rural economy via tourism.
	Support the establishment and operation of a Visitor Payback scheme for the whole Cotswolds.
	Facilitate the delivery of universal high speed broadband and improved mobile coverage throughout the Cotswolds AONB
Natural England	Review the appropriateness of the different protected landscape designations (scheduled for 2014) and consider whether the separation of NPs and AONBs is still relevant.
	Adopt the Board's Management Plan, landscape character assessment, position statements and landscape strategy and guidelines to guide the targeting of their investments in the Cotswolds and development of local policies such as NCAs.
	Delegate the delivery of Higher Level Stewardship and Entry Level Stewardship to the Board, thereby dovetailing the Board's landscape and biodiversity advice with a consistent delivery of agri-environment schemes across the whole AONB.
	Delegate responsibility for responding to non biodiversity related planning applications impacting on the Cotswolds.
	Advise the Board of its other investments in the AONB so that the Board can develop a wider picture of public sector investment in the landscape, biodiversity and historic environment.
	Recognise the locally developed NIAs for in the Cotswolds.
	Support the establishment of a Cotswolds AONB Geopark
	Provide funding of National Trails through NT Partnerships with three-year rolling streams, and provide cohesive national coordination for the long term.
English Heritage	Advise the Board of its investments in the AONB so that the Board can develop a wider picture of public sector investment in the landscape, biodiversity and historic environment.
	Adopt the Board's Management Plan, landscape character assessment, position statements and landscape strategy and guidelines to guide the targeting of their investments in the Cotswolds and development of local policies.
	Review whether the Conservation Board could provide a local management option for properties in care.
	Facilitate greater access to the Cotswolds AONB Historic Landscape Character Assessment and Historic Environment Records.
Forestry Commission	Target EWGS to meet Cotswolds woodland management objectives..
	Adopt the Board's Management Plan, landscape character assessment, position statements and landscape strategy and guidelines to guide the targeting of their investments in the Cotswolds and development of local policies.
	Require and scrutinise Environmental Impact Assessments for woodland creation schemes.
	Advise the Board of its other investments in the AONB so that the Board can develop a wider picture of public

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	sector investment in the landscape, biodiversity and historic environment.
	Consider the use of the Board as a delivery partner in the reconstituted Forest Service as proposed by the Independent Panel.
Environment Agency	Advise the Board of its investments in the AONB so that the Board can develop a wider picture of public sector investment in the landscape, biodiversity and historic environment.
	Adopt the Board's Management Plan, landscape character assessment, position statements and landscape strategy and guidelines to guide the targeting of their investments in the Cotswolds and development of local policies.
	Engage the Board in the preparation and delivery of River Basin Management Plans.
Health and Wellbeing Boards	Recognise and promote the Cotswolds AONB as a "Natural Health Service".
	Work with the Cotswolds Conservation Board to commission health walks and conservation activity as an adjunct or alternatives to normal prescription treatment, developing healthier and more active lifestyles and an associated reduction in NHS costs.
	Invest in programmes to stimulate greater physical activity and exercise amongst the 5 – 18 and 19 – 64 age categories, with the AONB as an ideal environment to encourage such activity.
LEPs	Commission additional research on the value of the AONB to the local economy; in influencing business leader decisions on personal and/or business locations and investment strategy; in overall consideration of the quality of life,
	Support the development of a Cotswolds Rural Skills Academy.
	Support the development and implementation of a single Destination Management Plan for the whole Cotswolds.
	Seek a high quality environmental gain from any investment strategy.
Local Authorities	Work collaboratively to adopt a specific AONB policy within Core Strategy/Local Plan with reference to conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the AONB, the recognition of the AONB Management Plan as a material consideration in planning decisions, and protection of the setting of the AONB.
	Adopt the Board's landscape character assessment, position statements and landscape strategy and guidelines to guide decision making in the Cotswolds.
	Recognise the work of the Board as a priority for investment.
	Adopt and implement the Board's guidance for the design and management of highways.
	Secure the provision of affordable housing to meet identified local needs.
	Consider use of Board as a delivery partner. Including exploring the devolution of RoW authority to the Board.
	Consider using the Board as an external adviser on landscape, biodiversity, heritage, forestry, agri-environment and countryside access issues and as a potential manager of countryside assets

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Town and Parish Councils	Use the AONB Management Plan and Landscape Strategy and Guidelines to inform Neighbourhood plans, Parish plans and Village Design Statements, taking account of the landscape within settlements and their wider landscape.
	Follow guidance in Road Verge Management Position Statement
	Engage with Cotswold Voluntary Wardens Parish Wardens to secure local conservation objectives..
	Utilise the AONB boundary markers and/or the incorporation of “within the Cotswolds AONB” text with village or town name entry signs to celebrate the fact that the settlement lies within the AONB.
Conservation Organisations	Use the AONB Management Plan, Landscape Strategy and guidelines and Position Statements to inform site based management plans
	Engage with AONB wide fora and working groups to develop and implement a consistent approach to site and landscape management.
	Continue to engage with the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens to secure local conservation objectives.
Landowners/rural businesses.	Consider and use the Board’s published guidance on the conservation and enhancement of the AONB, and dealing with the impacts of climate change, to inform investment, development, and land management decisions and actions.
Tourism providers	Participate in the Cotswolds Sustainable Tourism Group
	Participate and support the “Our Land” Project and visitor payback schemes
	Help deliver the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Landscapes
	Support the development and implementation of a single Destination Management Plan for the whole Cotswolds.
Geology Trusts	Support the establishment of a Cotswolds AONB Geopark.
LNPs	Support the development of the Cotswolds Scarp NIA and Cotswolds Rivers NIA.
	Take full regard of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and support its implementation, adding value to existing work wherever possible.
	Work through the Conservation Board to engage with spatial planning for the Cotswolds AONB.
	Support and work with a Cotswolds LNP.

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