

SWDP 23: The Cotswolds and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)



- A. Development that would have a detrimental impact on the natural beauty⁽⁵⁰⁾ of an AONB (as shown on the Policies Map) will not be permitted.**
- B. Any development proposal within an AONB must conserve and enhance the special qualities of the landscape.**
- C. Development proposals should have regard to the most up-to-date approved AONB Management Plans.**

Reasoned Justification

1. The Cotswolds and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are nationally important landscapes which need to be conserved as indicated in the Framework⁽⁵¹⁾.
2. AONBs are designated under the same legislation as National Parks. The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act (2000) requires a local planning authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an AONB. The Act also requires the publication of AONB management plans. For the purposes of this Plan, these are produced by Cotswolds Conservation Board and the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership. The Local Planning Authority will take into account these management plans in their consideration of development proposals in the AONBs.
3. The nature of the topography is such that even small scale development can have a significant visual impact on the principal attributes of an AONB. Although the Plan includes several housing allocations at settlements within the AONBs further non-planned i.e. “windfall” development within the AONBs, particularly on land beyond a development

50 The term “natural beauty” is defined in the [Cotswolds AONB Management Plan](#) as including “landscape, flora and fauna, geological or physiographical features and heritage, including archaeology and settlement character.”

51 NPPF (2012) paragraph 115.

boundary will be rigorously assessed. Any windfall development within settlements will be rigorously assessed against the policies of the Plan and the relevant legislation. For development outwith but affecting an AONB, regard should be had to the purpose of conserving and enhancing its natural beauty.

4. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment demonstrates sufficient potential housing land capacity beyond the AONBs, so it is considered that there is no overriding justification for large-scale unallocated development in these protected landscapes.