Members of the Chilterns Conservation Board for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are hereby summoned to a meeting of the full Chilterns Conservation Board on

20th February 2019 at 10.00 am

Wendover Memorial Hall, Wharf Road, Wendover, Bucks, HP22 6HF

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting 17 October 2018
4. Matters Arising
5. Public Question Time
6. Board Review including Reports from Executive and Planning Committees
9. Safeguarding Policy
10. HS2 Landscape and Biodiversity Connectivity Project
11. Any other business

Lunch

Visit: Wendover Woods

Future Meetings:

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Wendover Memorial Hall
Wharf Road
Wendover
Bucks HP22 6HF

*Wendover Memorial Hall is located in Wharf Road just by the local schools in the centre of Wendover*
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERNS CONSERVATION BOARD HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 17th October 2018 at Naphill Village Hall, Main Road, Naphill HP14 4SX
commencing at 10.00 am

MEMBERS PRESENT

Appointed by Local Authorities
- Cllr David Collins
- Cllr Paul Duckett
- Cllr. Lynn Lloyd
- Cllr. Charles Mathew
- Cllr. Richard Newcombe
- Cllr Ian Reay

Appointing Body
- Dacorum Borough Council
- Central Beds Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Aylesbury Vale District Council
- Hertfordshire County Council

Appointed by the Secretary of State
- Colin Courtney
- Alison Doggett
- Elaine King
- John Nicholls
- Ray Payne
- Helen Tuffs
- Ian Waller
- Elizabeth Wilson

Appointing Body
- Secretary of State
- Secretary of State
- Secretary of State
- Secretary of State
- Secretary of State
- Secretary of State
- Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils
- Cllr Alison Balfour-Lynn
- Cllr Susan Biggs
- Cllr John Griffin
- Cllr Charles Hussey

Appointing Body
- Hertfordshire
- Oxfordshire
- Oxfordshire
- Buckinghamshire

CCB Officers
- Kath Daly
- Sue Holden
- Graham Hurst
- Wendy Morrison
- Lucy Murfett
- Ed Peveler
- Claire Readey
- Annette Venters
- Donna Webb

Job Title
- Countryside Officer
- Chief Officer
- Finance Officer
- Chilterns Hillforts Project Manager
- Planning Officer
- Hillforts Landscape Heritage Officer
- Fundraising and Development Manager
- People & Society Officer
- Administration Officer

Other:
- Deirdre Hansen
- Les Mosco

1 member of the public present.

Clerk to the Board
Trustee Chiltern Society
The Chairman welcomed Elaine King to her first Board meeting and congratulated her on her Secretary of State appointment to the Board. She was asked to introduce herself to the Board members.

18/19.13 Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Bill Bendyshe Brown, Buckinghamshire County Council, Cllr Heather Kenison, Three Rivers District Council, Cllr Hugh McCarthy, Wycombe District Council and Cllr Nick Rose, Chiltern District Council.

Absent without apologies:
Cllr David Barnard, North Hertfordshire District Council and Cllr Luisa Sullivan, South Buckinghamshire District Council and Cllr Clive Thomas, Buckinghamshire Parish Councils.

18/19.14 Declarations of Interest
No declarations of interest were declared.

The Chairman informed the Board that Sir John Johnson, the CCB’s first Chairman, had died. He had been the instigator of the CCB and had served the CCB as Chairman for 9 years until 2010.

18/19.15 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting and the Board Meeting 20th of June 2018.
The minutes of the AGM and the Board Meeting of 20th June 2018 were signed by the Chairman as a true record after the following amendments were made in both sets of minutes:
1. The date of the meeting had been 20th June not 21st.
2. Cllrs Charles Mathew and Richard Newcombe had been omitted from the members present list.

And in the Board Meeting minutes the date of the next Executive Committee meeting was amended from 22nd January to 23rd of January.

18/19.16 Matters Arising.
1. The Chief Officer reported that the Food and Drinks Festival 2nd LEADER bid had been unsuccessful.
2. She also mentioned that the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs project was submitted in August with a secure funding plan.

18/19.17 Public Question Time.
No public questions.

18/19.18 Board Review October 2018.
a. The Chief Officer introduced Wendy Morrison and Ed Peveler to the Board both had joined the Board 6 months ago.
b. Reports from the Executive Committee, the Planning Committee, Landscape and Conservation, People and Society and Development and Communications had been received. There was opportunity to ask questions.
c. The Chalk Streams Project Officer was congratulated in securing £50,000 from Thames Water to fund a Chalk Streams and Water Efficiency Awareness programme.
d. The Planning Officer was commended on her representations at the Wycombe District Council Local Plan Examinations in September.

1. The Board NOTED the review October 2018.

18/19.19 Board Members for Chiltern Woodlands Project and Chilterns Chalk Streams project.
It was explained that the CCB can place Board members on the Chilterns Woodlands Project Board and the Chilterns Chalk Stream Project Steering Group.
The Chief Officer invited members to volunteer to sit on these committees. Elaine King, Ray Payne and John Nicholls volunteered to represent the CCB on these committees. It will be arranged outside the meeting, who will sit on which committee.

1. The Board NOTED the volunteers to represent the CCB on the Chiltern Woodlands Project and Chilterns Chalk Streams project.

18/19.20 Chalkscapes- North Chilterns Community Landscape initiative.
The Countryside Officer updated the Board on the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) stage 1 bid for a proposal to develop a major community and landscape initiative in the North of the Chilterns.

The proposals for the £2.4m North Chilterns Community and Landscape Initiative were developed and submitted by a partnership led by the CCB. The initiative focuses on the chalk landscapes, wildlife and heritage around Luton and Dunstable. The combined growth in the area has created a great need and there are opportunities to engage local communities more in the AONB.

The outcome of the stage 1 bid will be known in December, if successful HLF will provide a grant to support detailed project development.

1. The Board NOTED the progress towards development of a major community and conservation initiative in the North Chilterns.

18/19.21 Review of National Parks and AONBs
The Chief Officer reported on her meeting with Julian Glover, Chair of the Review, and other AONB Lead Officers and the National Association and on the meeting she and Cheryl Gillan MP had had with Julian Glover before the call for evidence.

The Chief Officer presented general points and CCB specific points to be included in the call for evidence for the Review of AONB’s and National Parks. The meeting discussed these extensively and offered advice. The points had already been discussed at the last Executive Committee meeting.

1. The Board DISCUSSED and GAVE advice on the CCB’s response to the Review of AONB’s and National Parks.

18/19.22 AONB Management Plan 2019-2024
The Chief Officer presented an update on the results of the informal consultation on the first draft of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-2024.

The second draft for formal consultation is due to be sent to partners, stakeholders and the public by the end of October, with the final document to be completed by the end of the year.

The Chief Officer thanked the team who had worked hard on the production of this Plan.

Members congratulated the team on their work, discussed the second draft and offered additional amendments. Members noted the importance of Local Authority engagement and Local Authority members were encouraged to involve their Local Authorities. The Chief Officer asked members to send her any further edits immediately after the meeting. It is intended that the third and final draft will be presented at the next Board meeting in February 2019 for agreement and publication in April 2019.

The Chairman thanked members for their debate and discussion.

1. The Board NOTED the results of the informal consultation phase and PROPOSED additional amendments to draft two.
18/19.23 External Annual Audit Report.
The Finance Officer had reported on the completion of the external audit 2017-18 and the points raised by the new external auditors.

1. The auditor has certified that the review of the annual return had been completed and the responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 have been discharged.
2. The auditor had noted some, mainly technical, inaccuracies in the Annual Governance and Accounting Return (AGAR).
   a. A £600 error, already noted at the June board meeting
   b. The CCB has consistently prepared its accounts on an “accrual” basis which the AGAR does not permit.
   c. Actual bank balances do not agree with the bank balances shown on the AGAR due to accrued bank interest as noted in b above.

It was noted that the accrual basis used ensures that the accounts are a suitable management tool for the CCB, but that Local Government accounting rules are not ideal for CCB purposes.

It was agreed that in future two sets of accounts will be prepared at year end, the AGAR and a set of accounts prepared on an “accruals” basis.

Actions agreed:
1. The 2018-19 AGAR comparative figures will be amended to reflect the auditor’s comments.
2. The notice of conclusion of the audit and the auditor’s report will be published on the CCB website as required by law.

   1. The Board APPROVED and ACCEPTED the auditor’s report.
   2. The Board APPROVED and AGREED the actions noted.

18/19.24 Any other Business.
1. The Fundraising and Development Manager gave a brief presentation on Corporate Support Opportunities and asked members to share any business contacts who could be approached.
2. It was highlighted how the Ridgeway National Trail’s initiatives connect well with the CCB’s initiatives.
3. The Chief Officer gave notice that she had informed the Chairman of her intention to step down in August 2019.
   The Chairman remarked that Sue as Chief Officer has demonstrated vigour and has significantly altered the prospects of the Board since her appointment. We now have a much broader range of projects and substantially greater external sources of income than when she joined, enabling us to leverage the DEFRA and LA funding.
   The Chairman commented that the previous recruitment Committee of the Chairman, Vice Chair and Ray Payne will move the process of recruiting a new Chief Officer forward.

18/19.25 Meeting Dates 2018-19

The Board NOTED the following meeting dates

Full Board:
20\textsuperscript{th} February 2019
26\textsuperscript{th} June 2019 (and AGM)
16\textsuperscript{th} October 2019

Executive Committee:
22\textsuperscript{nd} January 2019
Planning Committee:
21st November 2018

The Chilterns Hillforts Project Manager and the Hillforts Landscape Heritage Officer gave a presentation on the Beacons of the Past Hillforts Project.

The project is on track and on schedule.

Lunch would be followed by a visit to West Wycombe Hillfort
Item 6

**Board Review January 2019**

1. **Highlights**

1.1 The Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund was successful and a £2m grant has been awarded to support delivery of this £2.8m, 5 year scheme in the Central Chilterns. Recruitment for the Scheme Manager and other delivery staff is underway.

1.2 We have been offered a £120,700 grant from the HS2 BLEF fund towards a 3 year programme to boost the visitor economy in the central Chilterns. A new project officer to deliver a programme of activity.

1.3 Ceri Groves has been appointed as Chalk Streams Education and Engagement Officer (part time, 18 month fixed term contract). The post is funded by Thames Water, and reports to Allen Beechey, Chalk Streams Project Officer.

2. **Report from Executive Committee, 22nd January 2019**

2.1 Executive Committee discussed the Business Plan 2019-20 and agreed its presentation to DEFRA and the Board. Members asked for a more detailed discussion on the communications plan for the AONB Management Plan launch and a discussion on the plan for a new partnership approach, at the May meeting.

2.2 Executive Committee recommended adoption by the Board of the 2019-20 Budget which sees total income and expenditure in 2019-20 expected to rise to £1.3 million due to additional funded project work.

2.3 Executive Committee discussed a new Safeguarding Policy and subject to various amendments, agreed the policy. The policy is on the Board agenda for members to note.

2.4 Executive Committee discussed the Risk Register and suggested amendments.

2.5 The Chief Officer gave verbal updates on the Landscapes Review, the call for National Park status, the AONB Management Plan.

2.6 The Countryside Officer gave a comprehensive presentation of the Countryside & Conservation functional area, with slides of the overview of the current activity and priorities in relation to the natural environment. She was thanked for her presentation, which showed the scale of work and the focus of activities the CCB is involved in.

2.7 The Chair updated the committee on Chief Officer recruitment. Recruitment consultants will begin their search on 28th January and will hope to longlist and hold preliminary interviews late March. The Board panel of Ian Reay, Ray Payne and Helen Tuffs will interview shortlisted candidates mid-April.
3. **Report from Planning Committee, 21st November 2018**

3.1 We held a workshop to discuss the second consultation version of the AONB Management Plan. The Planning Officer summarised the key findings from the first consultation. Members gave their views to help shape the final version, and we worked on the wording, particularly around small-scale affordable housing and protecting public transport and community facilities in the AONB. Members agreed to help promote responses from local authorities, organisations and the public.

3.2 The other main item was affordable housing in the Chilterns AONB. A guest speaker, Fiona Mullins of Community First Oxfordshire, presented to Committee and answered questions about some new models of delivery being developed and trialled elsewhere, like Community-Led Housing. The Planning Officer gave a round-up of policy approaches to affordable housing in other AONBs and National Parks. Committee recommended that initiatives to promote affordable housing in the Chilterns AONB could usefully be added to the draft Management Plan actions, and should be explored with partners in more detail, subject to resourcing.

3.3 Committee approved the 37 formal representations on planning applications and 2 appeal representations made by the Board since the last meeting. A notable good result reported was the appeal dismissal at Kennylands Road in Sonning Common in the AONB setting. Committee also approved the 9 recent consultation responses (6 development plan documents, 1 CIL consultations and 2 infrastructure consultations - Heathrow Airport and Luton Airport expansion). The Planning Officer reported back on AONB matters discussed at the Bucks Minerals and Waste Local Plan examination and Wycombe Local Plan examination, for both of which the Inspector’s Reports are pending.

4. **Landscape and Conservation**

4.1 Our stage 1 HLF bid for the North Chilterns Community Landscape Initiative (‘Chalkscapes’) was unsuccessful. Feedback from HLF is that they are not able to support every good application and the project was rejected due to insufficient funds.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund (formerly Heritage Lottery Fund) has just launched its new Strategic Framework for 2019 – 2024 and advice will be sought regarding submitting a revised Chalkscapes bid to the new scheme.

4.2 Nick Marriner and Neil Jackson are working with farmers, Natural England and other partners to encourage and support farmer-led working (‘Farmland clusters’) in the Oxfordshire Chilterns.

4.3 Proposals have been developed for a £500,000 Landscapes and Biodiversity Connections Project in the HS2 corridor (see separate agenda item), led by CCB, to be funded through the HS2 Review Group.

4.4 The Chalk Streams Project is partnering with the River Chess Association and Thames Water on a pilot ‘Smarter Water Catchment Scheme’ on the R Chess. This is one of 6 Thames Water Smarter Catchment pilots aiming to improve the water environment. The
current work focuses on evidence gathering and identification of issues.

4.5 **Beacons of the Past – Hillforts in the Chilterns Landscape HLF Project**

The project continues full speed ahead, with the following major highlights:

1. Eight outreach and volunteer training events since 01 October 2018, and 15 scheduled for the Feb- May period

2. LiDAR data capture begun and 36% acquired already, with excellent data quality

3. Online portal for Citizen Science in development

4. Recruitment for Archaeological Reconstruction Artists has begun – 147 views on advert page in first 3 days.

5. Social Media hit for the project at over 1200 views; Appearance on Radio Berkshire resulted in 12 new volunteers with 2 days; Over 380 volunteers are now on the recruited register.

5. **People and Society**

5.1 We have been offered a £120,700 grant from the HS2 BLEF fund towards a 3 year programme to boost the visitor economy in the central Chilterns. This is half of what we requested and it is subject to conditions including achieving similar outputs. A revised project plan will be submitted end March and we are actively seeking additional resources. The aim of the project is to maintain a strong visitor economy during HS2 construction, attracting visitors to the area and increasing footfall and visitor spend despite the disruption. We will employ a project officer to deliver a programme of activity. There will be a strong focus on festivals and events as a powerful hook for bringing people to an area and building a positive image.

5.2 The programme of activity showcasing Chilterns arts and crafts (funded by the Radcliffe Trust) is well underway. Five ‘Meet the Maker’ art and craft videos have been produced and will be launched on 26th February. Some more ‘Meet the Maker’ craft walks have been devised as part of the May Chilterns Walking Festival, and new content is being prepared to be added to the Visit Chilterns website.

5.3 The next Chilterns Walking Festival will take place from 18th May to 2nd June and an excellent variety of walks has been submitted by walk leaders and the programme will go live mid-March. There is a stronger focus this time on walks involving Chilterns businesses, from B&Bs and farmshops providing teas/lunches to behind-the-scenes tours. Volunteers are providing considerable input to both the administration and promotion of the Festival. We are receiving requests for community activity to be promoted as part of the Walking Festival which we welcome e.g. a Henley-on-Thames Walking Festival link with our autumn Festival. Leader funding ceases October 2019 so the CCB is actively seeking new funding.

5.4 The CCB is developing the concept of a web/app-based Chilterns Explorer Pass. The purpose is to encourage more people to explore, enjoy and engage with the Chilterns in a way which is fun, interactive and provides an incentive for getting involved. People will be
encouraged to visit the Chilterns and participate in all types of outdoor activities, from ‘free-range exploration’ to visiting countryside attractions or organised events. Participation will be rewarded by receiving a point/stamp for each qualifying activity and there will be an incentive scheme in place, such as a certificate if you achieve 20 points. The Pass will be aimed at families initially as we are keen to increase engagement of this audience.

5.5 The CCB is partnering with Hobbs of Henley once again to deliver five ‘Wildlife on the Move’ cruises over the summer, with the assistance of CCB volunteer guides. We are planning to train up some new guides to be able to deliver these popular events in the future and ensure their sustainability.

6. Development and Communications

6.1 Work is underway to secure support for the following:

- Walking Festival to remain sustainable beyond September 2019
- Match funding for ‘Open for Business’ – BLEF tourism bid
- Hillforts match-funding

6.2 Since January, 29 trusts and foundations have been approached to request support for the Walking Festival and/or Hillforts project. 3 rejections have been received so far, one of which has rejected due to our lack of status as a charitable body.

A corporate mailshot has been prepared and companies are currently being identified to approach to support the Walking Festival.

Annette and I met the local Big Lottery Fund: Awards for All grant manager in January to test support for the Walking Festival project and received positive feedback about the concepts, in particular in respect of broadening audiences – such as dementia walks, access walks etc. Walks with a heritage focus were also encouraged.

6.3 Local and district councils affected by the HS2 route have been approached to support the ‘Open for Business’ BLEF bid. We are planning a corporate approach for February.

6.5 In the next period, we will focus on developing and supporting the North Chilterns ‘Chalkscapes’ project and working up a Dementia Walks pilot proposal as a test for a larger health and wellbeing project.

6.6 Management Plan Consultation. We received 122 responses to the formal consultation (increase of 144% from previous Management Plan consultation 50 vs 122). We received positive engagement and support from Parish Councils and partner organisations.

We also saw press articles and interest from the following Wycombe Sound Radio, Hiya Bucks article, Mix96 online article, Bucks Herald online article, Henley Standard online article. And we had support from MPs on social media including tweets from Ed Vaizey to his 39,000 followers.

6.7 Work is underway to produce this years’ Outstanding Chilterns magazine. Specialists involved in all project areas will be coming together to contribute with articles as well as
input from local producers and friends of the Chilterns. A review of advertisers and
distribution areas is also underway.

6.8 Website development is a priority for Q1 and Q2. The Communications Officer is working
with the team to establish a list of requirements for the new website in order to produce a
brief and will be approaching website developers to respond.

It has been agreed the Chiltern Tourism Network (www.visitchilterns.co.uk) will be merged
with the AONB website to create a seamless user experience providing clear & easy to
navigate visitor information.

6.9 By utilising time given by regular volunteers, the Communications Officer has increased the
number news stories and updates on the website, as well as increased social media and a
Photography Competition which ran throughout October. These combined efforts have seen
a sharp increase in page views on the website Year on Year - For the period from Oct-Dec
17 vs. Oct-Dec 18 there was an increase of over 100,000 (an increase of 264%) and an
increase of social followers by 5% (twitter) and 16% (Facebook) in Q3 & Q4.
Item 7  

**AONB Management Plan 2019-24**

Author:  
Sue Holden, Chief Officer

Summary:  
The authors of the Management Plan have concluded their revisions to the Management Plan 2019-24 following two consultations, the second of which ended 31 December 2018. This cover paper summaries all significant amendments made between the previous Management Plan and the new one.

Purpose of Report:  

To seek Board approval and adoption for the AONB Management Plan 2019-24 and to seek delegated authority for final amendments.

1. **Introduction**

1.1 The process to review the AONB Management Plan began early in 2018 with an online survey to which 1500 people responded. Significant work by staff, workshops with partners and two consultations have gathered input to and views on revisions to the plan. Consultation concluded on 31 December 2018 and staff have considered all the representations and made final revisions to the plan.

1.2 It is a duty for the Conservation Board to report on significant differences between the previous Management Plan and the new one. The changes summarised below, by the authors of each thematic section, include those reported to the Board in October 2018 after the interim consultation so that this paper is a summary of all significant changes made. We also highlight some of the key issues raised during consultation.

1.3 The draft Management Plan is attached to this paper.

2. **Completion Process**

2.1 We are seeking approval of the Management Plan for adoption by the CCB. We are also seeking delegated authority for final amendments which will result from editing and design.

2.2 In March, the plan will be professionally edited and proof-read and professionally designed. We hope that printed copies of the plan will be available in May. The online version of the plan will be designed to fit with a new website which we hope will be built later this year.

2.3 Some maps and diagrams have been included with the final text. The designers will add lots of good quality pictures in line with the creative brief we have given them and will design various other elements such as the current status indicator bars.

2.4 When complete, the Plan will be sent to the Secretary of State and Local Authorities.
3. **Introduction, Vision and General Policies**

3.1 Issues raised

- Whether the plan should be ambitious or realistic. The plan describes what is needed to conserve and enhance the AONB and therefore, in the face of significant change and opportunities, its policies have to be ambitious. Future action planning will of course have to be realistic.
- The majority of respondents said they supported the proposed policies calling for a review of status/designation and for greater partnership working. Some respondents were unable to answer the National Park question until more discussion has taken place.
- The right balance between national interests and local community interests.
- Adequate coverage of natural capital, climate change and central government policies such as the 25 Year Environment Plan.

3.2 Summary of differences between previous and new Management Plan

- The new Management Plan places greater focus on the national importance of the Chilterns and on the many people, in and around the AONB, who can enjoy its natural beauty and recreational opportunities.
- The previous management plan had no general policies and moved from vision and introduction into thematic chapters. In the light of current extraordinary forces for change and opportunities, a new set of four general policies has been included. Appendix 1 to this paper provides statistics from the second consultation on the level of support for General Policies 1-3 and the Vision.
- A short inspiring vision and a set of principles the CCB will be advocating.
- A new policy (GP1) calling for a review of our status and consideration of enhanced status which most partners and respondents have support. It also provides more flexibility should the Glover Review recommend new models of protected landscapes.
- A new policy (GP2) on the boundary review already requested from Natural England.
- A new policy (GP3) on an ambition to establish a strong partnership working right across the Chilterns.
- A new policy (GP4) on ecosystem services which covers the broad range of environmental issues, from climate change to air and light pollution, to reflect the natural capital approach being promoted by the government’s 25 Year Environment Plan and other major policies.
- Some of the reference material about the AONB has been shortened. The concept this time, learning from other AONB plans, is for the management plan to be more visually engaging, with more maps and photographs, designed for most users to access online.
• The special qualities of the AONB which were scattered throughout the previous plan are brought forward into a concise one-page list for greater focus and ease of use.

4. **Nature**

4.1 100% of respondents supported the objectives set out in the Nature section and 91% agreed that the policies deliver the objectives.

**Issues raised**

• Suggestions made to strengthen reference to legislative and policy context, including references to net environmental gain.

• Several suggestions regarding approach to different habitats within the policies and suggestion for more detail regarding key species.

• Several requests to strengthen focus on climate change adaptation and mitigation.

• Several respondents felt that the objectives and policies were good but there was a need for more focus on implementation.

• Some asking for greater recognition of the role played by farmers and landowner, whilst others suggesting stronger statements around the failure of existing conservation measures and the need for farmers and others to do much more.

• Several comments regarding NP9 (‘no loss of existing semi-natural habitat’).

4.2 **Summary of differences between previous and new Management Plan**

• More trend data included as part of context.

• References to policy context and legislative framework updated.

• More emphasis on net environmental gain.

• More focus on best practice management of chalk habitats.

• More focus on broadening engagement with nature in the Chilterns.

• Some of the context and policies have been reworded to ensure a more consistent approach to different habitats, and to expand the habitats referred to.

• Key facts section on grassland and bare ground, and waterbodies and wetlands revised.

• References to climate change reviewed and strengthened through.

• Key actions added.
5. **Historic Environment**

5.1 94% of respondents supported the objectives set out in the Historic Environment section and 84% agreed that the policies deliver the objectives (16% undecided).

Issues raised

- Of the comments received from the public, several made suggestions beyond the current remit and powers of CCB (particularly with respect to planning control, e.g. "planning controls have to be much stricter").

- Several suggestions were made about greater communication with the public regarding heritage events and resources.

- Comments received from Local Government partners were on the whole very positive about both the text and policies. Points of concern lay with policies regarding encouraging landowners of sites with heritage assets to protect them better, and work with planning departments and developers to encourage more sensitive development. This partly reflects a lack of clarity over the fact that these are policies to be put into action with partners, i.e. local planning authorities and Historic England.

- It was important that not just the archaeological heritage of the Chilterns but also vernacular building, cultural heritage and tradition, politics, and the place of the Chilterns in the work of writers and artists, was acknowledged as critical to its character.

5.2 Summary of differences between previous and new Management Plan

- Whilst increased research, communication, and development of heritage resources were aspects already covered by the Strategic Objectives/Policies/Key Partnership Actions, these were clarified further.

- Several Objective/Policies/Actions were rewritten to make clearer that these were to be carried out in partnership with other authorities and groups.

- The commencement of two large HLF funded projects, Beacons of the Past and Chalk, Cherries, and Chairs, provides significant opportunity and resources both for direct delivery of Historic Environment policies, and coordination of delivery with partners.

- A greater focus on the setting of heritage assets, even going beyond the boundaries of the AONB, was noted.

6. **Land, Woodland and Water**

6.1 98% of respondents supported the objectives set out in the Land, Woodland & Water section and 84% agreed that the policies deliver the objectives (13% undecided).

Issues raised

- Greater emphasis on woodland management rather than forestry. Emphasise the need to plant more trees and their benefits – carbon capture, improving water quality, etc.

- Clarify the aim for ‘no loss’ of ancient woodland, ‘no net loss’ of other woodland
• Work towards influencing future Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS)
• Strategic level vs detail of ‘how’ – some require much more detail including recommendations for tree species in different locations
• Request for bolder policy to eliminate Invasive non-native species (INNS)
• Some (including CLA) still understand this to be the CCB’s plan with an expectation that the CCB will deliver all the outcomes – rather than that the plan is for all stakeholders. Requests for more detailed and comprehensive actions and clarity as to how the policies will be achieved.
• Increased collaborative working has been welcomed;
• Key stakeholder feedback (including EA) that a lot more needs to be done for the water environment. Request for greater protection of water resources, the aquifer and chalk streams (WFD status);
• Don’t forget orchards and commons.

6.2 Summary of differences between previous and new Management Plan

• 2 chapters of the previous plan – ‘Farming, forestry and other land management’ and ‘Water Environment’ - have been combined into one - ‘Land, Woodland and Water’; some water related policies and actions are included in the Nature and Development chapters.
• The combined chapter is significantly shorter. 10 broad aims have reduced to 6 strategic objectives, 29 policies to 21, 36 actions to 7.
• While maintaining a strategic stance, the chapter also seeks to identify tangible aims, such as restoring hedgerow length, replacing hedgerow trees, eliminating INNS.

7. Understanding and Enjoyment

7.1 94% of respondents supported the objectives set out in the Understanding & Enjoyment section and 84% agreed that the policies deliver the objectives (14% undecided).

Issues raised

• Key stakeholder feedback questioned the impacts on the landscape of attracting more countryside users. More data or evidence needed to underpin and support the aim of ‘attracting more people to the Chilterns’ and clarity required on what we mean by ‘many more’ (how many is ‘many more’, what is the carrying capacity of the landscape etc).
• More focus and stronger policies needed on non-car-based transport, with particular mention of safer cycle routes, transport options for local communities and recreational routes.
• People engagement was welcomed, but there was a desire for more focus on educating young people, including outreach activities with schools.
7.2 Summary of differences between previous and new Management Plan

- We do not currently have the data required on visitor numbers, impacts and carrying capacity. A new policy and key action have been added in around securing commitment to undertake this research and the development of a visitor management strategy.

- The policy on non-car-based travel (EP7) has been expanded and strengthened.

- The relevant policy (EP5) has been re-worded and strengthened to include giving young people opportunities to learn and experience the Chilterns through formal education as well as informally.

- A specific aim of inspiring young people to build a lasting interest in the Chilterns has been added to (EO4).

- More emphasis on the need for visitor management and additional/improved access provision in order to accommodate greater use of the Chilterns countryside in a sustainable way.

8. Economic and Social

8.1 87% of respondents support the objectives set out in the Social & Economic Wellbeing section and 79% agree that the policies deliver the objectives (19% undecided).

Issues raised

- Insufficient focus on the communities of the Chilterns – those living and working in the AONB – and the specific issues they face, for example poor rural transport provision.

8.2 Summary of differences between previous and new Management Plan

- An additional section ‘Supporting Communities of the Chilterns’ has been added in to the Context and several policies have been strengthened in particular policy SP5 on retaining community facilities and services.

9. Development

9.1 91% of respondents supported the objectives set out in the Development section and 77% agreed that the policies deliver the objectives (16% undecided).

Staff held two workshops in December 2018 to discuss the second consultation draft in detail, one with CCB Planning Committee and one with Chilterns AONB Planning Forum made up of planning officers, statutory bodies and NGO stakeholders.

Issues raised

- Nearly all the members of the public who responded either expressed support for these policies or wanted them stronger eg. stop development/ stop HS2/ prevent inappropriate development/ change planning laws
Some local authorities liked the approach, others wanted weaker policies or no policies in this section. A number criticised the plan for overstating the status of the management plan and being inconsistent with local plans. Its policies were seen as drafted like local plan development management policies, and too negative about development.

Whether to support small-scale housebuilding in the AONB or restrict to small-scale affordable housing

Suggestions made for extra subjects to cover eg what is major development, or projects eg impact of HS2 or Oxford-Cambridge expressway

Suggestion to add green infrastructure

Concerns from some parish councils about more visitors exacerbating existing problems like parking in picturesque villages

9.2 Changes proposed as a result of the consultation

Clarified the lower planning status of the AONB Management Plan compared with local plans and NPPF. The intention is that the plan adds value to existing policies, shows the big picture and fulfils a co-ordinating role across our 13 local authorities. Setting down a policy framework which enables local plans to accommodate a set amount of development is not what the management plan is for. The ultimate balancing exercise for planning decisions rest with the local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate. The role of the AONB management plan is to explain how to conserve and enhance the AONB.

Added supporting text to each policy for consistency with other chapters

Removed emotive or negative language about the impacts of development, and added wording on pressures faced by local authorities

Altered introductory word in policy DP2 from ‘refuse’ to ‘reject’ so that it reads less like a development management policy, and so that it is not only planning application focussed but also useful as a guide for plan-making and pre-application advice.

AONB enhancement, heritage and historic landscape added to DP2

Added explanation of types of development likely to be compatible with an AONB location and less compatible

Added new policy wording on green infrastructure and net gain

Added policy for major infrastructure proposals to avoid, mitigate and compensate to achieve a net gain for the AONB

Added wording on Oxford-Cambridge expressway and policy on HS2 design

Added research on house price premium in the Chilterns AONB and amended policy
• Added advice on major development including explanation that some schemes, although smaller than the general thresholds for major development in the NPPF, can nevertheless constitute major development in the AONB. As an indication of development likely to be major, added the protocol for when to consult CCB

• Clarified what the setting of the AONB is, adding a definition and explaining that it is not a geographic area that can be mapped

• New policy wording on light pollution, water abstraction from chalk streams, retaining community facilities and public transport

• Added wording on energy efficiency and water conservation to the supporting text of the design policy

• Added action exploring the scope for joint development plan documents for the AONB

9.3 Summary of differences between previous and new Management Plan

• To help members of the public the chapter now provides a summary of planning arrangements in the AONB, explaining the responsibilities of the local planning authorities and the advisory role of the Board.

• Development policies now grouped into three themes that match the strategic objectives: conserve, enhance, restore

• The previous plan contained a number of policies on different types of development in the Chilterns (eg housing, waste, quarries, the brickmaking industry, agricultural buildings, utilities). These have been brought together into one main policy DP2 about the standards that all development must achieve in the Chilterns in order to conserve and enhance natural beauty. The contents of DP2 has been informed by the work on a model planning policy for the AONB carried out with planning officers through the Chilterns AONB planning forum.

• More emphasis added on the cumulative effects of development, and also on indirect as well as direct effects of development e.g. chalk streams, air quality, recreation pressure.

• New policy and guidance on major development in the AONB, a subject that was entirely missing from the development chapter of the last plan

• New steer given below DP6 about the types of uses most/least compatible with conserving and enhancing the AONB

• More emphasis on achieving net gain for the Chilterns AONB through on-site and off-site planning gain, using the various existing mechanisms and new ones being explored by DEFRA. To implement this, the plan identifies an action to work with partners to develop AONB enhancement projects that could be funded by development, including major
growth in the setting of the AONB.

- New detailed policies on preventing and reversing light pollution, learning from dark skies work carried out nationally and in other AONBs

10. **Implementation and Monitoring**

A number of respondents questioned whose responsibility it is to delivery the Management Plan. It is for those with a duty of care for the AONB to consider how to deliver the plan and the CCB will play a lead role in this. It is also advice for all those who have a role in caring for the AONB.

An explanation of the ingredients required for successful implementation of the Management Plan and a proposed monitoring framework was added to draft two for formal consultation.

This section is currently very top level, partly because we intend to discuss indicators with partners and partly because further work is needed to understand exactly which data sets will be available for the next five years, and whether we should buy more or different data.

11. **Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment**

The Board has undertaken screening on the requirement to carry out 1) Strategic Environmental Assessment, and 2) Habitats Regulations Assessment, for the review of the AONB Management Plan. The statutory bodies have agreed the conclusions in CCB’s screening reports that SEA and Appropriate Assessment are unnecessary in this case. The two screening reports and the responses from statutory consultees are available online on the Management Plan Review webpage.

12. **Recommendations**

1. To approve and adopt the revised draft of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-24.

2. To delegate to the Chief Officer the power to undertake any final minor amendments to the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-24.

3. To authorise the Chief Officer to send the adopted version of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-24 to the DEFRA Secretary of State.
Appendix 1

Management Plan 2019-2024 Formal Consultation Results and Stats

Top line results:

- 93 formal responses received
- 34 of the 93 chose to submit a word document rather than completing the online form

RESULTS OF THE GENERAL POLICIES

*The above charts are based on the 59 individuals who completed the online form*
Draft Management Plan 2019-2024

Caring for the Chilterns for ever, and for everyone.
Ministerial Foreword

I am fortunate that England’s Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are part of my Ministerial responsibilities. Whether it be rolling hills, sweeping coastline or a tranquil village, spending time in an AONB can stir the heart and lift the spirit.

This is a pivotal moment for all AONBs. The Government has set its ambition in the 25 Year Environment Plan which states clearly the importance of natural beauty as part of our green future, while AONBs retain the highest status of protection for landscape through national planning policy. Leaving the EU brings with it an opportunity to develop a better system for supporting our farmers and land managers, who play such a vital role as stewards of the landscape. And the Review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty led by Julian Glover - the first of its kind for generations - will make recommendations to make sure our designated landscapes can flourish in the years ahead.

In my visits to AONBs around the country, I have been struck by the passion of many people - farmers, volunteers, and hard-working staff - for the beautiful places they live and work. In this spirit I am delighted to welcome publication of this Statutory Management Plan for The Chilterns AONB. It is significant that this plan will be delivered in partnership by those who value The Chilterns AONB. I would like to thank all those involved in preparation of this document and wish you the best of success in bringing it to fruition.

Lord Gardiner of Kimble
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Chairman’s Foreword

The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is nationally protected as one of the finest landscapes in the UK and is a truly ‘living landscape’: its unique offering of ancient woodland, chalk streams, farmland, chalk downland and cultural heritage is shaped not just by natural processes but also generations of human activity.

All organisations responsible for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are required to create a Management Plan every five years, and this Plan for 2019-2024 presents a vision and provides policies to help guide the work of those who help care for this special place. We have worked closely with partners and the public in developing this Plan, and we hope a renewed partnership approach will help ensure that everyone who can play a role in caring for the Chilterns will be able to contribute to achieving its aspirations.

The Chilterns Conservation Board has achieved a great deal in the last five years, from advising on local plans and planning matters to developing multi-year, strategic projects which have attracted millions of pounds in funding and which benefit landscape restoration, nature conservation and communities in our area. We continue to work with key partners to create programmes which promote the widespread benefits the Chilterns offers, including health and wellbeing opportunities for the millions of people who live nearby.

However, despite this good-news, pressures and threats remain. Our natural resources – fragile chalk streams, chalk grasslands, ancient woodlands and the wildlife they support – are under unprecedented pressure from development, infrastructure, pests, diseases and climate change. As I write this Foreword, the impacts of Brexit, the Glover Review and local authority restructuring are not yet known. The work we collectively undertake to care for our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty must continue despite this uncertainty.

Our country needs green spaces and the powerful benefits of nature now, more than ever. I commend this ambitious Plan to all those who will help care for the Chilterns AONB in the future.

Ian Reay
Chairman
Chilterns Conservation Board
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1. Introduction

What is the Chilterns AONB Management Plan?

The Chilterns AONB Management Plan is a plan which describes how best to conserve, enhance and enjoy the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It sets out the vision, policies and actions for the management of the Chilterns AONB for the period 2019-2024. Its creation is led by the Chilterns Conservation Board with input from partners and the public, but it’s a plan for everyone who cares about the Chilterns. It is the only plan which guides the management of the AONB as a whole.

This Management Plan is a legal requirement under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.¹

Who is responsible for preparing the Management Plan?

The Chilterns Conservation Board is responsible for preparing and publishing the AONB Management Plan for the AONB.² Following consultation with local communities, public bodies, partners and agencies with an interest in the area, the Management Plan is adopted by the Chilterns Conservation Board. The Board promotes its implementation by a wide range of organisations, including local authorities, government agencies, community groups and land managers.

Who is the Management Plan for?

This Management Plan helps all those with a responsibility for the AONB care for it, for current and future generations. The plan provides guidance and policies for everyone with an interest in, or responsibility for, the AONB. That includes all those organisations and individuals who manage or have an influence over land in the area, as well as those who live, work and enjoy leisure time there.

¹ Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
² Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
The Structure of the Management Plan

The Chilterns is a landscape of remarkable beauty and distinctive character with a unique interaction of geological, ecological and cultural heritage features. Together, these create a place of natural beauty. The Chilterns is special because of the steep chalk escarpment with areas of flower rich downland, chalk streams, extensive tracts of ancient woodlands, historic commons, tranquil valleys, a network of ancient routes, villages with their brick and flint houses, a rich history of settlement and archaeology. The significant qualities are summarised later in this document. Together, these qualities make the Chilterns an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Designation of the Chilterns as an AONB was in 1965, with an extension in 1990. It now extends over 833km² of mainly privately-owned land. The Chilterns is a home and a workplace for over 80,000 people and some 1.6 million people live within 8km of the AONB.

What is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty?

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a designation for an area of land that is of national importance for its natural beauty. The origins of AONBs are in the National Parks and Access to the
Countryside Act of 1949, as is the National Park designation. In June 2000, the Government confirmed that AONBs have the same level of landscape quality and share the same level of protection as National Parks.

The single and only purpose of AONB designation is ‘to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area’\(^3\). All public bodies have a legal duty to ‘have regard’ to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an AONB\(^4\).

**What is natural beauty?**

The term ‘natural beauty’ is enshrined in the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. Over the years, qualification and amendment to the legislation has made it clear that natural beauty is not just the look of the landscape, but includes the landform and geology, the plants and animals, the landscape features and the rich history of human settlement over the centuries\(^5\). In 2006 legislation clarified that land is not prevented from being treated as of natural beauty by the fact that it is used for agriculture, woodlands or as a park; or because its physiographical features are partly the product of human intervention in the landscape\(^6\).

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**Global and national context of the Chilterns AONB**

The Chilterns AONB is one of 46 AONBs, covering just under one fifth of the UK. The distinctive character and natural beauty of AONBs make them some of the most special and cherished places in the UK. AONBs are living, working landscapes that contribute some £16bn every year to the national economy. Over two thirds of England’s population live within half an hour’s drive of an AONB; and around 150 million people visit the English AONBs every year, spending in excess of £2bn.\(^7\)

AONBs are part of the global network of protected landscapes. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources has six management categories covering all types of protected areas. Our AONBs and National Parks fall into Category V – landscapes managed mainly for conservation and recreation.

European, national and local policies and plans already provide a considerable level of protection for the natural and scenic beauty of the AONB. In addition, the strategies and plans prepared by a wide range of partner organisations deal with many other issues that affect the area. These include the management of transport, tourism, recreation, geodiversity and biodiversity. The AONB Management Plan will influence key policies, plans and processes affecting the area. This would cover, for example, Development Plans, Neighbourhood Development Plans, Transport Plans and Green Infrastructure Strategies.

The Conservation Board is an active member of the National Association for AONBs and through this works with other AONBs across the country\(^8\).

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\(^3\) Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000: Section 82  
\(^4\) Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000: Section 85  
\(^6\) Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006: Section 99  
\(^7\) NAAONB, *What Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty can offer the LEPs*. Fairford, Glos: National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty 2017  
\(^8\) For more information: Web: [www.landscapesforlife.org.uk](http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk) Twitter: @naaonb @AONBFamily
The Chilterns Conservation Board

The Chilterns Conservation Board was established by Parliamentary Order in 2004. It is one of only two Conservation Boards (the other is for the Cotswolds) set up so far under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000\(^9\).

The Conservation Board is an independent statutory body and has two statutory purposes\(^{10}\):

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

In fulfilling these purposes, the Conservation Board has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities. Where there is a conflict between conserving the special qualities of the Chilterns and its use or enjoyment, we must give greater weight to its conservation and enhancement (the Sandford Principle).

Who is the Chilterns Conservation Board?

There are 27 Board Members: one from each of the 13 local authorities in the AONB, eight appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and six elected by parish and town councils in the AONB. The current local authorities who created the CCB are Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Wycombe District Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Chiltern District Council, South Bucks District Council, Three Rivers District Council, Luton Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Dacorum Borough Council and North Herts District Council.

The Conservation Board has a small staff team based in Chinnor in Oxfordshire. Volunteers, who lead guided walks, give talks, help at events and carry out project work, support the staff.

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\(^9\) Section 86 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

\(^{10}\) Section 87, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as amended by the NERC Act 2006
2. The Significance of the Chilterns

Special Qualities

The Chilterns is significant, nationally and internationally, because of its Special Qualities that are rare and considered so important they require protection. In summary, these special qualities are:

❖ A dramatic chalk escarpment, a globally rare landscape type which gives rise to rare ecology and distinctive cultural heritage

❖ Panoramic views from and across the escarpment interwoven with intimate dip slope valleys and rolling fields

❖ Nationally important concentrations of chalk grassland, extremely diverse in flora and fauna and home to some scarce and threatened species. Once extensive, the chalk grassland now only covers 1% of the AONB mostly in small fragments. Many specialist plants and animals are associated with chalk grassland. Species for which the AONB is particularly important include Chiltern gentian, wild candytuft, pasque flower, silver-spotted skipper and glow-worm

❖ One of the most wooded landscapes in England, with 23% woodland cover concentrated in the central and southern areas; 56% of the woodland is Ancient, a particularly rich, distinctive and prominent feature, including the Chilterns Beech Wood Special Area of Conservation; significant box, juniper and beech yew woods; many veteran trees and relict wood pasture

❖ Nine precious chalk streams, a globally scarce habitat and home to some of the UK’s most endangered species; associated UK BAP priority species include: otter, water vole, reed bunting and brown trout; numerous chalk springs occur along the base of the escarpment

❖ Significant ancient hedgerows, hedgerow and field trees, orchards and parkland weaving across farmland that covers approximately 60% of the Chilterns

❖ A dense network of 2000km of rights of way; two National Trails, the Ridgeway and Thames Path; notable regional routes such as the Chiltern Way and the Chilterns Cycleway

❖ Over 2000 ha of common land, heaths and greens, rich in wildlife and cultural heritage; 3700 ha of Open Access land

❖ Numerous ancient routeways and sunken lanes including the Icknield Way, considered by many to be the oldest road in Britain

❖ Distinctive buildings made from local brick, flint and clay tiles; many attractive villages, popular places to live in and visit; many notable individual buildings and follies including stately homes, monuments and mausoleums; a wealth of medieval churches, many built from flint

❖ An industrial heritage around wood-working, furniture-making, chalk quarrying, brick making, and food production with windmills and watercress beds

❖ An extensive and diverse archaeological landscape including ancient parish boundaries, medieval field patterns and iron-age hillforts; extensive remnants of woodland heritage including sawpits, charcoal hearths and wood banks

❖ Relative tranquillity and peace on the doorstep of ten million people, one of the most accessible protected landscapes in Europe; relatively dark skies, of great value to human and wildlife health; unspoilt countryside, secret corners and a surprising sense of remoteness.
Natural Character Area Profiles

Natural England has produced National Character Areas profile documents for each of the 159 NCAs in England. NCAs describe natural and cultural features that shape the landscape, key drivers for change and a broad analysis of the area’s characteristics and ecosystem services. NCA 110 Chilterns covers most of the AONB with the exception of small areas at the foot of the escarpment.

The Chilterns NCA profile sets out 4 Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) around management of the wooded landscape; management of those areas where natural and cultural heritage are particularly rich e.g. downland; conservation of the water environment; and enhancement of local distinctiveness and green infrastructure.

The Landscape Character

Landscape character assessment (LCA) is a tool to help understand what the landscape is like today, how it has come to be like that, and how it may change in the future. It is the process of identifying and describing variation in character of the landscape. LCA documents identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive by mapping and describing character types and areas.

There is no single Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for the Chilterns AONB. A number of county and district-based LCAs cover the whole of the AONB. These have been undertaken using similar (but not identical) specifications.

A summary of these assessments gives us four broad types of landscape in the Chilterns:

**Scarp Foothills and Vale Fringes**
Gently undulating chalk slopes with chalk springs between the base of the scarp and the clay vale to the west. Mainly managed within intensive agriculture with large fields and relatively few hedgerows, this landscape forms a narrow band only a few fields wide, towards the north of the AONB, but widens as it approaches the Thames in the south.

**Chalk Scarp**
The ‘spine’ of the Chilterns is the chalk Scarp that runs roughly north-east to south-west along the western side of the AONB. A spectacular ridge rises high above the vale to the west and dominates views over a wide area.

Combes and prominent hills, often locations for chalk figures, monuments, burial mounds or hillforts, form a deeply convoluted steep scarp edge which supports a mosaic of chalk grassland, woodland and scrub.
Plateau and Dip-slope
A large proportion of the AONB is covered by plateau and dip-slope as the land gradually falls away to the east and Greater London. Though less visible and striking than the scarp, this landscape forms a key part of the classic Chilterns landscape.

The topography is complex, with areas of plateau dissected by long, narrow, often dry valleys. Extensive woodlands and arable fields interspersed with commons, villages, scattered farmsteads (often dating from medieval times) and designed parklands characterise the plateau. Commons, heaths and greens would once have been far more extensive. Many Chilterns commons are wooded or former wood pasture, with areas of heathland, acid grassland, ponds and other open habitats. Grazed fields can still be found on the steeper valley sides and valley bottoms where settlements often formed around water sources or stretched out along the valley roads.

River Valleys
The Chilterns contains a series of larger river valleys that cut through the scarp and dip-slope. Arterial valleys run north-west to south-east and, in places, create dramatic ‘wind gaps’ where they cut through the scarp, as at Tring and Wendover.

Often asymmetrical in shape these valleys contain the internationally rare, aquifer-fed chalk streams. As natural corridors through the Chiltern Hills, there is a long history of travel from ancient drovers routes, turnpikes and canals to modern day road and rail links. A number of large historic houses presiding over estates and parkland, are scattered throughout the valleys while settlements have grown up associated with the water supply, woodland industry, farming trade and transport links to London.

There is a more detailed description in two separate documents – Landscape Character and Chronology, available on the AONB website.
This map highlights the location of the main landscape character areas

**Landscape Character**

- Chalk Scarp
- Plateau and Dipslope
- River Valleys
- Scarp foothills and Vale fringes
- Chilterns AONB Boundary

[Map of landscape character areas]
3. The State of the Chilterns

The Chilterns AONB faces unprecedented pressure. From housing and transport to increasing traffic, there are impacts on the natural beauty and special qualities of the Chilterns. Ash dieback is likely to have a devastating effect on the landscape; squirrels, deer and Glis glis (edible dormouse) ensure very few young trees survive and the chalk aquifer, which we use for drinking water, is at an all-time low. This section provides a series of headlines to create a snapshot of the state of the Chilterns and summarises key issues affecting the AONB. Tackling these issues requires action at many levels, from local to national and international. This Management Plan outlines what is needed and creates an agenda for action.

Headline Indicators

1. Environmental land management – scheme coverage and take up

35% (17,956 ha) of the farmland\textsuperscript{11} in the AONB is in Environmental Stewardship (ES). This puts the Chilterns in the bottom 10% of all AONBs in England for ES take up.\textsuperscript{12} ES provides funding to farmers and other land managers to deliver environmental management on their land. Take up has fallen from a high of over 30,000 ha in 2014. The figures do not yet include take up of the new Countryside Stewardship Scheme that began in 2016.

\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
CURRENT STATUS & POOR & TREND - DECLINING \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

2. Woodland management

64% of the woodland in the AONB is in active management\textsuperscript{13}. This puts the Chilterns in the top 40% of all AONBs in England for woodland management. Woodland management is important to create the conditions in which wildlife can thrive.

\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
CURRENT STATUS & FAIR & TREND - STABLE \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

3. Sites of Special Scientific Interest

There are 64 SSSIs in the AONB, totalling 3213 ha. Of this, 98.8% is assessed as in favourable or ‘unfavourable recovering’ condition. Of the 997 ha in unfavourable recovering condition, over 70% is calcareous or neutral grassland.\textsuperscript{14}

\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
CURRENT STATUS & GOOD & TREND - STABLE \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{11} ‘Farmland’ refers to Utilisable Agricultural Area (UAA)

\textsuperscript{12} © Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2017.

\textsuperscript{13} © Forestry Commission copyright [2017]; © Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2017

\textsuperscript{14} © Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2017.
4. **Priority Habitat extent and condition**

Natural England mapping shows 15,927 ha of priority habitat\(^\text{15}\) in the Chilterns AONB\(^\text{16}\) (see table and map below). These figures do not include linear priority habitats such as the rivers, hedgerows and arable field margins. Many of the priority habitats in the Chilterns, as elsewhere, are likely to be under recorded due to the small and scattered nature of the parcels. Datasets on condition are currently only available for priority habitat within SSSIs and/or Higher-Level Stewardship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority habitat</th>
<th>Area (hectares)</th>
<th>% of priority habitat in the Chilterns AONB</th>
<th>% of priority habitat across all AONBs in England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deciduous woodland</td>
<td>14,046</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowland calcareous grassland</td>
<td>1,303</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowland heathland</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional orchard</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowland meadows</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floodplain grazing marsh</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowland dry acid grassland</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowland fen</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple moor grass and rush pastures</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,927</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CURRENT STATUS (EXTENT)** | **n/a** | **TREND - UNKNOWN** | ?
**CURRENT STATUS (CONDITION)** | **UNKNOWN** | **TREND - UNKNOWN** | ?

\(^{15}\) Habitats of principal importance under section 41 of the Natural Resources and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) are referred to as Priority Habitats

5. Chalk Streams

There are 9 chalk streams in the AONB. None is currently assessed as achieving good ecological status or potential\(^\text{17}\). Of the 9, 2 are assessed as in bad condition, 4 in poor condition and 5 in moderate condition. This indicates a decline since the 2009 assessment, in line with the national

\(^{17}\) [http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/]
The issues behind the poor and declining state of these rivers are numerous and complex and include impacts of pollution, development, channel modification, invasive species, abstraction, droughts and climate change.

CURRENT STATUS: POOR  TRENDS DECLINING

[Insert photos of R Chess 2008 and 2018]

6. Historic Environment
The condition of most designated heritage assets in the Chilterns has remained largely stable over the past decade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heritage Asset type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Number at risk(^{18})</th>
<th>% at risk</th>
<th>Average % at risk across AONBs in England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listed building (Grade I)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed building (Grade II(*))</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed building (Grade II)</td>
<td>2026</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Monument</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Parks and Garden</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the vast majority of known archaeological sites are neither scheduled nor protected and there are significant gaps in our knowledge, particularly in the wooded areas of the Chilterns.

CURRENT STATUS: FAIR  TREND: STABLE

7. Health Walks
The Chilterns has some of the most popular health walks programmes of any protected landscape in the country. There has been a 45% increase in health walk footfall in the last 5 years, with 64,000 health walk attendances in 2016 – 2017 across the AONB.

CURRENT STATUS: GOOD  TREND: INCREASING

8. Visits to countryside sites
Visitor numbers to formal countryside attractions have increased over recent years, in some cases substantially. For example: Wendover Woods - 13% increase in visitors (2013 – 2017); and College Lake 16% increase (2013 – 2016).

CURRENT STATUS: GOOD  TREND: INCREASING

\(^{18}\) At risk figures Oct 2016 data Historic England
Forces for Change

The following is a summary of the main forces for change relevant to the Chilterns landscape.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Key Issues</th>
<th>Predicted Trends and impacts without intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>• Decline in traditional land management (e.g. mixed farming, crop rotation, grazing, woodland management, orchards, watercress beds and exercise of common rights),</td>
<td>↓ Declines in abundance and range of flora and fora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Change of land use including increase in area of land used primarily for recreation (e.g. golf, liveries, and new businesses such as paintballing)</td>
<td>↓ Reductions in habitat connectivity and resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Impacts of housing and infrastructure development</td>
<td>↓ Increasing impacts of pests and diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Declines in diversity within habitats</td>
<td>↓ Loss of species diversity within semi-natural habitats including ancient woodlands and chalk grassland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Nutrification</td>
<td>↓ Loss of hedgerow trees particularly ash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Impacts of systemic pesticides</td>
<td>↓ Scrubbing up of grassland sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Impacts of non-native invasive pests and diseases</td>
<td>↓ Declines in characteristic species and habitats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Climate change; increasing climatic variation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Visitor impacts on sensitive sites and habitats, especially along the escarpment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unprotected sites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Habitat fragmentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage</td>
<td>• Development pressures</td>
<td>↓ Loss of historic landscape character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Changes in land management</td>
<td>↓ Decline in condition of wider setting of monuments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unprotected sites and landscapes; site specific focus of designation</td>
<td>↔ Condition of designated assets largely stable but a few at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Heritage of the Chilterns less recognised and understood than other protected landscapes</td>
<td>↑ Increased archaeological understanding through housing and infrastructure development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Limited resources</td>
<td>↓ Initiatives developed in isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>• Changes in land management practices</td>
<td>↓ Less commercial need to manage landscape features such as hedgerows and trees; loss of historic field patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Global markets contributing to demise of local industry for example furniture making</td>
<td>↓ Declines in soil health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Growing markets in wood fuel and local products</td>
<td>↓ Sheep grazing of chalk grassland is currently uneconomic leading to declining biodiversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Low take up and reduced resourcing of environmental schemes e.g. Countryside Stewardship</td>
<td>↓ Under managed woodlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brexit</strong> - opportunities for influence and change alongside uncertainty for land managers and farmers</td>
<td>Decreasing number of holdings, increase in larger holding, more contractors, land sold off for amenity, changes in area of land farmed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on rural workers of high cost of housing</td>
<td>Farm diversification resulting from growth in marketing of local products and tourism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer people employed in land management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subdivision of woodlands into small plots</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentally unsustainable levels of abstraction from chalk aquifer leading to chronic low flows and shortening of river habitats</td>
<td>Water quality decline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstraction for River Thames at level of no more capacity</td>
<td>Further degradation of chalk streams, streams and rivers running dry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High levels of water usage</td>
<td>Failure to reach required Water Framework Directive status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modifications to water courses</td>
<td>Loss of key landscape features</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor ecological condition of chalk streams</td>
<td>Impact on ecology and loss of associated wildlife</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution, diffuse and non-diffuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-native invasive pests and diseases</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of climate change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Settlement and development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly desirable area, commutable to London</td>
<td>Erosion of character</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unprecedented housing and infrastructure growth within and in setting of the AONB</td>
<td>Increased noise, air/light pollution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of HS2</td>
<td>Habitat severance, degradation/loss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport expansion and increased over-flying</td>
<td>Less enjoyable to visit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford-Cambridge growth corridor</td>
<td>New building designs not locally distinctive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creeping suburbanisation and gentrification</td>
<td>Housing even less affordable for local community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of affordable housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population in and around the Chilterns is increasing rapidly</td>
<td>Gradually increasing profile for the area and the opportunities it presents to increase health and wellbeing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some large urban populations on the edge of the Chilterns with relatively high incidence of health issues compared to the AONB. This provides major opportunities for enhancing health and wellbeing through outdoor activity</td>
<td>Increased number of visitors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public understanding of the benefits provided by the Chilterns is low</td>
<td>Risk of negative impacts of additional visitors to sensitive habitats and sites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low levels of engagement with some audiences e.g. urban young people, Black and ethnic minority communities.</td>
<td>Risk of anti-social behaviour - e.g. fly tipping, vandalism, wildlife crime.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declining public sector funding</td>
<td>Continued lack of engagement with under-represented audiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gradual decline in maintenance of rights of way and countryside access infrastructure unless public funding is maintained, or new funding secured</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. The Future of the Chilterns

Vision

Our vision is that the Chilterns will be cared for, for ever and for everyone. A place where people are inspired by its distinctive natural beauty, space and tranquillity, to enjoy and care for the landscape. A place where natural beauty and cultural heritage is celebrated and enhanced. A place which gives space for nature to flourish and which provides us with the ingredients for healthy living, such as clean water, healthy soils and thriving wildlife. A place where communities live, work and breathe. A haven for people and wildlife.

To achieve this vision, the Chiltern Conservation Board advocates that:

1. All the special qualities, and the natural resources, of the Chilterns will be protected for ever for everyone, current and future generations.
2. The wildlife and natural beauty of the Chilterns have an intrinsic value which will be preserved and restored.
3. The landscape is designated for the nation and will be protected by the nation.
4. To ensure its future care, more people need to understand the value of the Chilterns as a unique and special landscape, of national and international significance.
5. The Chilterns provides a valuable resource for the enjoyment, health and wellbeing of a significant proportion of the country’s population.
6. The landscape is a place where many people live and work, where community facilities must be retained to foster sustainable, vibrant communities.
7. Viable, sustainable and diverse farming, forestry and rural economy sectors are essential to conserve and enhance the wildlife and natural beauty of the Chilterns and public benefits of land management are supported by public funding.
8. As one of the most accessible protected landscapes in Europe, more people should use the Chilterns for quiet recreation, especially the 1.6 million people who live within 8km of the boundary and the adjacent urban populations with carefully managed access to ensure the special qualities are protected.
9. Those who live in or near, make a living from, visit and love the Chilterns are encouraged to help care for it.
10. Given the Chilterns is already more developed than most protected landscapes and given the potential benefit of the landscape to millions, there should be no major development in the AONB. Only the most essential development should take place and where it takes place, there should be no adverse impact on landscape, special qualities or access, and it should deliver an environmental net gain.
Securing the Chilterns for Future Generations

The Defra 25 Year Environment Plan states “that the suite of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty designated since the 1949 Act has been among the outstanding environmental achievements of the past 100 years.” This statement sets the stage for the strategic actions below.

This Management Plan supports the Government’s wish, expressed in the Environment Plan\(^\text{14}\), to help the natural world regain and retain good health. The Government aims to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first\(^\text{19}\).

In particular, this Management Plan contributes to what the Environment Plan describes as a “once-in-a lifetime chance to reform our agriculture and fisheries management, how we restore nature, and how we care for our land, our rivers and our seas.” It also contributes to the achievement of the aim to “set gold standards in protecting and growing natural capital”. And it endorses the overarching principle described by the Secretary of State that “Respecting nature’s intrinsic value, and the value of all life, is critical to our mission.”

To achieve the above, there is a need to pursue four critical ambitions to secure the conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns. These are set out below as General Policies.

### National Park Status and Boundary Review

There are calls for the Chilterns to be a National Park. National parks are extensive tracts of country designated because of their natural beauty and the opportunities they afford for open-air recreation, having regard both to their character and to their position in relation to centres of population\(^\text{20}\). There are two tests for an area to become a National Park – for natural beauty and recreational opportunity – and the Chilterns more than meets these tests.

There is great need to raise the profile of the Chilterns as a landscape of national, even international, significance. Though the Conservation Board gives a voice to the Chilterns, it does not have the authority and resources it needs to deliver the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Chilterns and promote public enjoyment.

| General Policy 1 | Explore the case for and against the Chilterns having enhanced status or being designated as National Park, to ensure the delivery of this Management Plan’s ambitions. |

In 2013 we applied to Natural England for a review of the boundary of the Chilterns AONB to consider adding areas of the chalk landscape that were missed from the designation. Natural England has limited resources for boundary reviews, so our application is still pending.

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20. National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, Section 5(2)
**General Policy 2** Review the boundary of the protected area to cover the wider area of the Chilterns landscape that merits it.

**A renewed approach to partnership working**

There are a significant number of organisations, and individuals within them, who are dedicated to caring for the Chilterns.

*Case Study: the Chiltern Society is the largest charity operating across all the Chilterns. It has 7000 members and over 500 volunteers working on 20 conservation sites, rights of ways maintenance, planning campaigning, chalk stream monitoring, and heritage sites. Pictured here are volunteers maintaining Whiteleaf Cross, a significant heritage site near Princes Risborough.*

Whilst preparing for the review of the AONB Management Plan, key partners and stakeholders stated that there is a need for a strong strategic partnership across the Chilterns. This is because collaborative working will ensure more is achieved and that stakeholders will take a consistent approach to the conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns.

Feedback from partners, especially local authorities, is that partnership working on cross-cutting subjects such as health and wellbeing initiatives should be a top priority. There needs to be more partnership working with local organisations, local authorities, charities and government agencies on delivery of the Management Plan.

**General Policy 3** Establish a strong partnership to deliver the Vision for the Chilterns through a collective commitment to work together in the best interests of the area, its environment, communities, economy and visitors.

**Benefitting people and nature – an ecosystems approach**

A healthy natural environment underpins the health and wellbeing of society and the economy. The natural resources – or ‘Natural Capital’ – of the Chilterns includes its trees and woodland, chalk streams, aquifer and other water bodies, farmland and grassland, soils, landscape and cultural
assets. The benefits or services that we get from these natural resources are known as Ecosystem Services. Ecosystem Services can be broken down into four types:

The AONB can support the wider ecological network of surrounding areas so that they can all become more resilient.

**Ecosystem Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provisioning services</th>
<th>The products obtained from nature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biomass energy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food provision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genetic diversity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibre provision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water availability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulating services</th>
<th>The benefits obtained from the regulation of natural processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pollination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulating air quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulating climate and carbon storage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulating soil erosion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulating soil quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulating water flow and flooding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulating water quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulating disease and pests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural services</th>
<th>The non-material benefits people obtain from nature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health and wellbeing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and tourism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of history and cultural heritage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of place and inspiration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tranquillity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific and education values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting services</th>
<th>The services that are necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity and geodiversity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrient cycling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary production such as photosynthesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil formation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water cycling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Obvious benefits or services provided by nature in the Chilterns include the food we eat, the water we drink and the plant materials we use. We get flint and timber for construction, wood for fuel and locally distinctive foods like cheese and beer. There are also many less visible benefits, such as climate regulation and natural flood defences provided by woodlands and grasslands, billions of tonnes of carbon stored by woodlands and soils, or pollination of crops by insects. Millions of people depend upon the chalk aquifer of Chilterns for water supply. Even less visible are cultural benefits such as the inspiration we take from wildlife and the natural environment.

The policies and objectives for the management of the Chilterns must conserve and enhance our natural capital and the benefits which society receives from this natural capital. In doing so, they will also contribute to delivering the aims of the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan. The plan calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first. One of its key goals is to use resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently.

Climate change is expected to have a major but unpredictable influence on the natural beauty and natural capital of the Chilterns. It is likely that the long-term changes will alter the species composition of woodlands and the type of crops grown by farmers leading to alteration to the landscape.

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21 The Government, A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment, HMSO, 2018
The Chilterns can make a significant contribution to helping mitigate climate change in ways that are compatible with conserving and enhancing its natural beauty. These include: carbon capture and storage in Chilterns woodlands and soils, storage and provision of water from the chalk aquifer, resilient ecological networks to allow species movement in response to climate change, local food and wood products, and the Chilterns as ‘staycation’ destination. As the climate changes and people try to reduce their carbon footprint, more people may decide to holiday in the UK rather than to go abroad, making the Chilterns even more valuable in a national context as sustainable alternative for short and long visits, an outstanding landscape accessible by public transport and on the doorstep of millions in the south east.

**General Policy 4**

Support projects and proposals that have a positive impact on the ability of the Chilterns to contribute sustainable ecosystem services by:

a) sustainably managing land and water environments

b) protecting and providing more, better and joined up natural habitats across the AONB and with adjacent areas, enhancing networks through the landscape

c) protecting and conserving water resources and improving water quality

d) improving the Chilterns’ resilience to, and mitigation of, climate change

e) increasing the ability to store carbon through new tree planting, wetland restoration or other means

f) conserving and improving soil structure and quality

g) reducing litter and environmental pollution, especially air pollution

h) managing and mitigating the risk of flooding

i) supporting the sustainable production and local use of food, forestry and raw materials

j) improving opportunities for peoples’ health and wellbeing, including provision of high-quality green infrastructure close to where people live

k) stimulating sustainable tourism and economic activity

l) delivering high-quality sustainable design that protects the local distinctiveness of the Chilterns

m) managing or controlling non-native invasive species
5. Nature

Context

The Chilterns is home to a wonderful variety of wildlife, including many protected and notable species. The AONB is particularly important for its chalk grassland, chalk streams, ancient woodlands (especially beech) and arable habitats. Fine-grained variations in soils, topography and past management have given rise over millennia to rich habitat mosaics. These include box woodland and juniper scrub, scarp slope and dip-slope chalk streams, wayside verges and disused quarries. Wood pasture and veteran trees, heathland and acid grassland (habitats often associated with common land) add to the mix.

The characteristic habitats we associate with the Chilterns are often a by-product of traditional management – grazing, woodland management, quarrying and so on – over many millennia. Farmers, woodland owners, and other land managers have played a crucial part over the centuries in shaping habitats for wildlife.

The chalk escarpment is a crucial stepping-stone for species moving between the southern central chalk landscapes and suitable habitats further northeast. Such movement is in response to climate change and other pressures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grassland, heathland and bare ground</th>
<th>Trees and woodland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The Chilterns supports important concentrations of species rich grassland including chalk grassland, neutral grassland and acid grassland</td>
<td>- The Chilterns is one of the most heavily wooded areas in England, famous for its extensive beech woods and ancient woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Remnant heathland is also found in the Chilterns, often on common land</td>
<td>- Ancient woodlands are home to many rare and threatened species but today cover only 2% of England. In the Chilterns, this figure is 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quarries/ former quarries provide areas of bare ground which is important habitat for a number of wildlife species</td>
<td>- Priority habitats found in the Chilterns include lowland beech and yew, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wood-pasture and parkland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Chalk grassland is an internationally rare, fragile and wildlife-rich habitat that has developed over many hundreds – or even thousands of years of livestock grazing, on vegetation growing on nutrient poor chalky soil</td>
<td>- The Chilterns has a rich heritage of parkland, wood pasture and common land often with high concentrations of veteran trees and associated deadwood invertebrates and fungi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Populations of many chalk specialist species are found here including wild candytuft, pasque flower, silver-spotted skipper and glow-worm.</td>
<td>- Box woodland is also a feature with the largest native Box woodland in the UK found near Great Kimble in Buckinghamshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Left unmanaged species-rich grassland and heathland will quickly scrub up and eventually return to scrub and woodland</td>
<td>- Active management of woodlands across the Chilterns is needed to let in light and create habitat mosaics including younger trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Livestock grazing remains the best way to manage chalk grassland and land owners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
should be supported and strongly encouraged to put appropriate management in place

- Chalk scrub is often of high wildlife value – the best management creates habitat mosaics, including small areas of scrub and longer grassland as well as short turf
- Juniper and Box scrub habitats are of particular interest in the Chilterns
- Many of our grassland and heathland sites are popular with visitors. Without appropriate management high visitor pressure causes significant problems on some sites. Uncontrolled dogs can cause problems around grazing livestock and can jeopardise long term site management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water bodies and wetlands</th>
<th>Farmland habitats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Rivers and wetlands are scarce but precious habitats in the Chilterns</td>
<td>- Farmland is the main land use in the Chilterns, covering over 60% of the AONB; it provides a wide range of habitats for wildlife and maintains the character of the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Chalk streams are a globally scarce habitat – nine of the c300 chalk streams in the world are found here</td>
<td>- Farming has created a mosaic of arable and grassland habitats, stitched together by hedgerows and interspersed with woodland, commons and downland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- They are home to some of the UK’s most endangered species including water vole, otter and brown trout</td>
<td>- Species-rich ancient hedgerows and hedgerow trees provide important wildlife habitat and corridors and characteristic features in some parts of the Chilterns landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Chalk streams are groundwater-fed, shallow, fast flowing watercourses with a gravel bed and low banks. Flows depend on groundwater levels in the underlying chalk aquifer</td>
<td>- Hedgerows need the right management to sustain their value for wildlife. Farmers and other land managers play an important role planting and restoring hedgerows; with the declines in livestock farming, the function of many hedges as barriers to movement of stock has gone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Winterbournes – the upper reaches of streams that are dry in the summer months are an important component of chalk streams habitat, supporting unique plants and animals</td>
<td>- Farmers also have a crucial role to play in protecting and maintaining soil health, to support soil invertebrates, fungi and microbes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- As well as supporting our chalk streams, the chalk aquifer underlying the Chilterns supplies water to millions of people in the south east</td>
<td>- Over the post war period, introduction of modern farming techniques and changes in holding size and field size – for example removal of hedgerows to create large fields have impacted significantly on wildlife associated with farmland. Much of this change was concentrated in the early post war period, yet declines in biodiversity continue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Besides the main chalk streams, which flow in valleys cutting through the Chilterns, there are numerous chalk springs at the foot of the scarp</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Low flows are the key issue affecting the area’s chalk streams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pollution is also a significant concern, especially from urban and sewage effluent, as well as diffuse pollution. Pollution becomes more concentrated at times of low flow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• All our chalk streams have been heavily modified for example due to milling, agriculture and urban development. These activities have fragmented habitats, degraded natural river channels and interrupted natural processes

• The spread of non-native invasive species such as Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and North American mink have had an impact on the ecology of Chilterns chalk streams

• The major river of the Chiltehs is the River Thames, which forms the boundary between the North Wessex Downs and the Chiltehs

• Other wetland habitats include lakes, gravel and mineral extraction pits, reservoirs, canals, ponds and temporary waterbodies. Although manmade, the small number of lakes and reservoirs of the Chiltehs provide important wildlife habitat

• There are many ponds, especially on farmland and common land, created to water livestock or from small scale mineral extraction. They provide habitat for a variety of specialist wildlife e.g. newts and starfruit. The number and ecological condition of ponds in the Chiltehs has significantly declined over many years

• The area was once a stronghold for rare arable plants and farmland birds. Arable margins on thin chalk soils are ideal for many rare arable plants and populations of farmland birds include lapwing yellowhammer and skylark. Many of these species have been in decline for some years

In England, many of our rarest and most threatened habitats and species are listed under Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 as being of principal importance for conservation. In his landmark report ‘Making Space for Nature’ in 2010 Professor Lawton concluded that “There is compelling evidence that England’s collection of wildlife sites is generally too small and too isolated, leading to declines in many of England’s characteristic species.” 22 His recommendations for ‘more, bigger, better, more joined up spaces for wildlife’ underlined the need for conservation action at a landscape scale (see box and diagram below).

Rebuilding Nature – the ‘Lawton Principles’

The essence of what needs to be done to enhance the resilience and coherence of England’s ecological network can be summarised in four words: more, bigger, better and joined........ We need to: (i) Improve the quality of current sites by better habitat management (ii) Increase the size of current wildlife sites (iii) Enhance connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors, or through ‘stepping stones’ (iv) Create new sites (v) Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites. 22

The Government’s Biodiversity 2020 Strategy stated the ambition that ‘By 2020, we will see an overall improvement in the status of our wildlife and will have prevented further human-induced extinctions of known threatened species.’ So far, not enough has been done to achieve this, either in the Chilterns or nationally. The Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan contains ambitions for nature and the aim of becoming the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

There is an urgent need do more to translate these ambitions into reality both at a local and a national level. This Management Plan sets out a framework for joint action to progress these ambitions in the Chilterns.

**Long term trends**

The Chilterns saw major losses in area of characteristic habitats and landscape features over the course of the 20th century including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Habitat Type</th>
<th>Lost Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chalk grassland</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commons, greens and heaths</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient woodland</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


More recent trends

Much of the best wildlife habitat that survives in the Chilterns lies within designated sites, and nature reserves. Many wildlife species continue to decline in both abundance and range.

Species with specialist habitat requirements have been hardest hit; however, as elsewhere in the country, many formerly abundant species of the wider countryside have also declined over recent decades. The UK State of Nature Report 2016 found that 56% of UK species have declined since 1970.

In the Chilterns, looking at woodland and farmland birds, over the past 10 years Corn Bunting, Nightingale and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker have all but disappeared 25. Many others, such as Lapwing, Yellowhammer, Great Spotted Woodpecker and Spotted Flycatcher are declining. Whilst some generalist woodland species remain relatively stable, the overall trends for farmland and specialist woodland birds continue downwards. This reflects a long-term reduction in woodland management as a whole across the Chilterns.

Plant species – particularly specialist chalk loving plants – are also under pressure. The flora in the Chilterns, particularly the northern Chilterns, is regarded as being one of the top three richest and most important chalk floras in the UK. However, of the 60+ rarer species within the area, 10 are now thought to be extinct as naturally occurring species. Many others are now restricted to a single site.

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25 TVERC Bird Indices in the Chilterns report 2017 (BTO data)
As a final example, looking at our 9 chalk streams, not one is currently assessed as being in Good Ecological Status/ Potential according to the latest Environment Agency assessment\textsuperscript{26}. With only 300 chalk rivers in the world we have a particular responsibility for these precious water bodies.

These examples underline the need for a more concerted wildlife conservation effort in the Chilterns.

Despite the dedication and hard work of many people and organisations over many years – not least farmers and land managers, volunteers and community groups, NGOs and statutory agencies – we are still losing wildlife from the Chilterns. These declines are due to a range of factors, many of which are listed below. More effective action is needed, for example, landscape scale conservation initiatives that go beyond existing wildlife sites, if we are to halt and reverse these declines.

Key Issues

Habitat degradation takes many forms including direct loss of habitat, decline in habitat quality, fragmentation and increased isolation of habitat, increased leisure and recreational use. In many cases, the hardest hit species and species groups are those requiring habitat mosaics rather than single habitats.

Changes in land management practices

Traditional land management practices (such as grazing of chalk downland, crop rotation, small scale chalk quarrying, and hedge laying) created conditions that supported a more varied and dynamic mosaic of habitats than those produced by many modern farming and forestry practices, which in turn are driven by national and global markets.\textsuperscript{27}

Extensive grazing was traditionally used across many wetlands, commons, wood pasture, parkland as well as grassland habitats. The decline in traditional grazing is a key driver for the decline of species and habitats.

Management of wildlife habitat

There is a need for better management of many existing wildlife sites, and areas of semi-natural habitat. Local Sites, in particular, together with roadside verges, hedgerows and river corridors are a crucial component of ecological networks in the Chilterns. However, management support, resources and advice are often lacking.

Environmental and ecological change including climate change, loss of pollinators and impacts of pests, diseases and invasive non-native species (INNS)

Long-standing ecological impacts caused by grey squirrels, deer, \textit{Glis glis} (edible dormouse), American mink, Phytophthora, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed continue to be a significant concern, along with new threats including Chalara dieback of Ash, Acute Oak Decline and Oak Processionary Moth.

Increased climatic variation is already affecting important habitats, for example beech woodlands and chalk streams. Severe droughts and excessive water abstraction reduce the functioning length of chalk streams. This severely degrades their ecology. Small, isolated wildlife sites are less able to adapt to the impacts of climate change. 80% of British wild plants and 90% of the world’s crops are dependent upon insect pollination and over 250 UK pollinators are in danger of extinction. Insect

\textsuperscript{26} The State of England’s Chalk Streams, WWF Report, Nov 2014

\textsuperscript{27} Dolman et al, what does traditional management really mean? \textit{British Wildlife}, 29(2), 113 – 119 (December 2017)
populations are impacted by a range of factors including habitat fragmentation, loss of flower rich grassland, increased use of machinery and increased use of pesticides.

**Habitat fragmentation**

Housing and transport infrastructure and changes in land use continue to leave a legacy of habitat fragmentation. Examples include:

- severed hedgerows;
- culverted chalk streams; and lack of buffer zone along the rivers
- small, isolated islands of chalk grassland; and
- ancient woodland or traditional orchard habitat isolated within intensively managed arable land.

The 25 Year Environment Plan contains ambitious proposals for net environmental gain in relation to impacts of development, and the need to minimise impact of development on and provide net gains for biodiversity is enshrined in government policy (National Planning Policy Framework).

Effective delivery mechanisms are needed to secure net gain at the point where development impacts on the AONB or its setting

Wildlife habitats need to be big enough and sufficiently well connected for wildlife to thrive and species need corridors to move through the landscape in response to a changing environment.

**Impacts of people and dogs**

Whilst we want to encourage many more people to visit and enjoy the Chilterns, their actions can damage many of the area’s semi-natural habitats. This needs careful management. There are direct impacts, for example impacts of dogs including disturbance to ground nesting birds, impacts on livestock, effects of flea treatment unintentionally washed off pets on pollinators and aquatic species. In addition, there are indirect impacts, for example, when high visitor numbers in the more popular sites make it harder to carry out appropriate management.

**Strategic Objectives**

Diverse communities of wildlife species survive in small pockets and islands. The wider countryside is not as wildlife rich as it was 50 or even 20 years ago. Together we can change this by prioritising and investing in the natural environment as never before – and in the people and organisations that care for it – to deliver ‘more, bigger, better, more joined up spaces for nature.’

| NO1 | Ensure that spaces for wildlife are expanded and are well connected, well managed, and diverse. |

‘There is compelling evidence that England’s collection of wildlife sites are generally too small and too isolated, leading to declines in many of England’s characteristic species. With climate change, the situation is likely to get worse. This is bad news for wildlife but also bad news for us, because the damage to nature also means our natural environment is less able to provide the many services upon which we depend. We need more space for nature’

Professor John Lawton
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO2</th>
<th>Increase the range and abundance of populations of key wildlife species(^28).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO3</td>
<td>Minimise development impacts on the AONB and its setting and where, they are unavoidable, provide net environmental gains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO4</td>
<td>Ensure that chalk habitat management in the Chilterns is widely considered an exemplar of best practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NO5</td>
<td>Enable people to understand and be inspired by the natural environment of the Chilterns; ensuring that policies and decisions in the Chilterns recognise its value to society, and for its own sake.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NO6</td>
<td>Secure greater protection for Chalk Streams as a globally rare habitat.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NO7</td>
<td>Encourage people from different organisations, communities and backgrounds, to work together to ‘make space for nature’ in the Chilterns.</td>
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</table>

**Policies**

To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NP1</th>
<th>Create large, more joined up, functional habitat networks, reconnect surviving pockets of habitat, and develop landscape-scale conservation initiatives.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We know that to achieve real change we need to be ambitious, collaborative and focused on reversing declines in wildlife at a landscape or catchment scale. The rationale – as set out in the Lawton Report – is well understood. We now need strong collaboration, leadership and resources to make it happen. Funding needs to be targeted firstly at supporting management of good quality existing habitat and secondly at re-creation of habitat in target areas e.g. Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and Conservation Target Areas to support the delivery of the Nature Recovery Network.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explore options for creation of more ‘wilded’ landscapes, linking core areas (e.g. priority habitat, designated sites, ancient woodland) with the wider countryside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP2</td>
<td>Promote and support landowner and farmer-led initiatives that prioritise nature and deliver wildlife conservation and enhancement at a landscape/catchment scale.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farmers and other land managers are key to sustaining landscape-scale conservation initiatives over the long term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP3</td>
<td>Look for and promote opportunities for restoring natural processes.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To help nature recover, we need to help natural processes re-establish themselves. This could for example include restoration of natural chalk stream flow, natural flood management or introduction of extensive grazing across different habitats. It could also</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{28}\) Including species characteristic of the Chilterns, species for which the Chilterns is important, and rare, notable and protected impact species found in the Chilterns, and keystone species.
include reintroduction of key species, such as pine marten, to the Chilterns to achieve better ecological balance, and action to support populations of pollinator species.

NP4 | **End environmentally unsustainable abstraction from Chilterns chalk streams to restore their ecology and improve their resilience to climate change.**  
Low water flows are the key issue affecting the area’s chalk streams. Too much water has been abstracted from the Chilterns aquifer over recent decades. This, together with prolonged periods of low rainfall and an increasing frequency of droughts, has reduced the functioning length of chalk streams and severely degraded their ecology. Physical degradation of the rivers and their riparian corridors can further amplify the impact.  
*See also Land, Woodland & Water (LP13, LP21, Key Action 5), Development (DP4)*

NP5 | **Protect important, under-represented habitats and natural features through new designations and sensitive management.**  
We need to protect important habitats through nature conservation designations, including Local Sites (LS) as well as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Local Sites are an important component of our ecological networks; their identification, monitoring and management is a high priority. There is a strong case for more Chilterns habitat, for example Chilterns chalk streams, to be included in the national suite of SSSIs.

O2 Key species thriving

NP6 | **Halt and then reverse declines in rare, protected and characteristic wildlife species.**  
This needs to be based on solid scientific evidence and understanding of species population ecology. Effective monitoring and record keeping are crucial. Record centres need to be properly valued and supported to achieve this.  
We should focus on species at the edge of their range and develop initiatives to encourage expansion and favourable management of the habitat required by these species. We should also focus on helping ‘keystone’ species thrive – species which play a critical role in maintaining the structure and composition of an ecological community e.g. earthworms.

NP7 | **Control and, where possible, eradicate invasive non-native pests and diseases in the Chilterns, and develop strategies to reduce their impact.**  
Damaging impacts of deer, grey squirrel, *Glis glis* (edible dormouse) and mink need to be addressed, alongside a concerted effort to manage impacts of, amongst others, ash die back, Acute Oak Decline, Oak Processionary Moth, Phytophthora, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed.  
Collaborative action to reduce grey squirrel damage is identified as a particular priority.  
We need to play our part in preventing the further spread and introduction of invasive non-natives, including supporting schemes to promote good bio-security.  
*See also Land, Woodland & Water (LO4, LP17, LP18, Key Action 1)*
| NP8 | Ensure delivery mechanisms are in place to secure net gains for biodiversity in the AONB and its setting  
Planning policies and decisions must contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment including minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. The 25 Year Environment Plan takes this further setting out ambitions for net environmental gains. To secure these objectives for the Chilterns effective mechanisms need to be developed and implemented. |
| NP9 | Protect and enhance important wildlife habitats  
Our key wildlife habitats are the core of our ecological networks. They include species-rich grassland and disturbed/bare ground, ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, beech woodland, chalk streams, arable field margins, hedgerows, wayside verges, traditional orchards, and habitats associated with common land. The conservation of existing semi-natural habitat and ancient woodland, including restoration of PAWS (plantation on ancient woodland sites), is high priority. |
| NP10 | Improve ecological condition, resilience and diversity of important wildlife habitats  
We need best practice management of all important wildlife habitats. This means, for example, grazing of all chalk grassland or woodland management to enhance species and structural diversity.  
In the past traditional management would have inadvertently helped to create the conditions in which nature could thrive. For example, small scale extraction of brick clay created dips and hollows that today are ponds. We now need to test and develop new ways of sustaining the diversity within our habitats that is so characteristic of the Chilterns. For example, we need glades in woodland, bare chalk in chalk grassland and flourishing ground flora at the base of our hedgerows.  
Our woods and trees are an amazing resource for people, wildlife and landscape – but they face many threats. There are difficult choices about management for long term resilience and we need to work together to develop a clear strategy. We need regeneration, restoration and active management of our woodland and trees to preserve the wooded landscape, for which the AONB is renowned.  
There are also places where we need less active management – for example we need to leave dead wood in our woodlands to provide homes for beetles or fungi.  
We need to learn from our history of land management whilst developing new and contemporary ways of allowing nature to flourish. |
| NP11 | Engage many more, and a greater variety of, local groups, communities and volunteers and young people in activity to support wildlife, farming and land management and the local environment. |

29 ‘Important wildlife habitats’ used throughout to indicate semi-natural wildlife habitats.
There are many diverse communities within and close to the Chilterns but the demographic profile of those who get involved in wildlife conservation is relatively narrow. We need everyone to feel they have stake in the natural environment. People need inspiration to play their part if we are to make the progress we seek. Communities can get involved in many different ways including buying local food and products, as well as wildlife monitoring and practical conservation activity.

We should support and promote citizen science initiatives as a means to broaden engagement, recruit volunteers and support environmental recording. At the same time, we need to support and sustain the interest of local amateur naturalists who make a huge contribution to our knowledge of the local area.

We need to engage younger generations through schools and outdoor activity programmes to encourage them to develop a long-term interest and involvement.

**NP12**  
**Help visitors to discover and enjoy wildlife in the Chilterns while not harming or disturbing it.**

There are many wonderful wildlife spectacles and fascinating species to be found in the Chilterns. Part of our mission is to inspire many more people with a sense of wonder in the natural world and the confidence to venture out into the countryside to enjoy the health benefits of green and beautiful, wildlife-rich spaces.

At the same time, some of our most precious habitats are particularly sensitive to impacts of visitors and their dogs. There needs to be a carefully planned and strategic approach to managing visitors, targeting areas with the capacity and infrastructure to accommodate additional use in order to protect the more sensitive sites from damage. This means better mapping of habitat sensitivity and current hotspots to support development of a strategy. Where there is a conflict between access and nature conservation, legislation requires that the natural environment be given priority\(^\text{30}\).

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**NP13**  
**Create opportunities for farmers and other land managers, land agents, research institutes and nature conservationists to share learning on best practice wildlife conservation relevant to the Chilterns.**

Opportunities for networking and learning are important in themselves and they help to develop wider thinking and a landscape scale approach.

**NP14**  
**Create partnerships within and across sectors to drive forward better networking, decision making and action for wildlife.**

Significant change will only come through far more joined up working both within the nature conservation sector and, importantly, across sectors.

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\(^{30}\) Section 87(1), Countryside and Rights of Way 2000
Evidence based land management for the benefit of wildlife, landscape and society

NP15 Maximise ‘win-win’ opportunities where restoration or expansion of wildlife habitats can at the same time provide benefits to society and respect or strengthen landscape character.

To do this we need a good understanding of the key components of the ‘natural capital’ of the area. This includes understanding the benefits that flow from good land management – for example, in terms of management of flood risk and provision of clean water and ways to enhance those benefits. This understanding needs to inform decisions about investment in the natural environment. We also need a good understanding of landscape character and how past management has shaped the landscape we see today.

NP16 Manage land to enhance the resilience of key habitats and species to the impacts of climate change.

Climatic variation and extreme weather events are already affecting our wildlife communities. We need to monitor and understand likely changes and their impacts on key species and habitats. This will help farmers and other land managers to make good decisions regarding future management. Well-connected habitat networks are crucial to allow species movement through the landscape in response to a changing climate.

NP17 Ensure that all those who make decisions that impact on Chilterns wildlife are doing so, and are able to do so, on the basis of robust, up-to-date and readily available ecological information.

This underlines the importance of support for local record centres but also other sources of information such as remote sensing data.

Key actions

1. Develop and secure support for a Chilterns Natural Environment Delivery Plan with ambitious 5 year and 25 year targets, the plan to include:
   a. landowner engagement plan (including support for farmer led initiatives and networking opportunities for land managers)
   b. baseline mapping – including priority habitat condition and natural capital
   c. assessment of resources, especially volunteers, to inform a more coordinated approach
   d. strategies for control and/or eradication of non-native pests and diseases
   e. proposals for reintroductions of key species including pine martins
   f. a suite of projects and site-specific enhancement proposals with landowner support, including flagship biodiversity and green infrastructure initiatives for investment from developer contributions, grant funding and other sources

2. Create an ‘Agenda for Chilterns Wildlife’ – a set of shared priorities to drive increased engagement and co-ordinated action for wildlife across the Chilterns. Secure support for this agenda across sectors including health, education, research and economic development.
3. Create a visitor management initiative to assess which areas are robust for recreational pressure and which are likely to be vulnerable, and to promote recommendations for future management and promotion.

4. Secure commitment to ending unsustainable abstraction from Chilterns chalk streams/chalk aquifers.

5. Develop and deliver landscape scale conservation initiatives including the 5 year Chalk Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme in the central Chilterns, and Chalkscapes in the North Chilterns.
6. Historic Environment

Context

Everything you see in the Chilterns AONB has been influenced by thousands of years of human activity. Traces of each successive generation are left as a legacy; written on the landscape as archaeological sites, monuments, buildings, route ways and patterns of land use. These tell rich stories of cultural heritage and history.

Parish and private records, folk memory, and artefacts attest to the relatively recent lives and work, culture and customs, beliefs and politics of locals. These range from the Bodgers with their workshops, lathes, and saw pits hidden in the Chilterns beech woods, to the country houses of notable figures of British history, whose designed gardens and estates have become nationally important sites. The Chilterns has proved the inspiration for renowned artists, poets and novelists.

Some 45% of the Chilterns landscape has preserved its character from before the beginning of the 18th century, and as such can rightfully be regarded as precious, fragile, ancient countryside, with high potential for yielding evidence of the medieval period and earlier. Prominent throughout the Chilterns are the historic towns and villages with their buildings and churches in characteristic vernacular styles, and the immediately recognisable materials of flint, brick, and timber. Across the AONB, over 2000 buildings, dating from the 12th to the 20th centuries, have been judged worthy of protection through being listed, and the 94 Conservation Areas ensure whole villages retain their historic character, allowing visitors to step back in time.

The ancient woodlands (making up 13% of the AONB), commons, and downland that surround these settlements and characterise the Chilterns landscape are all considered to have high historic value and are dense with archaeological and historic sites. The AONB as a whole contains over 100 Scheduled Monuments, and many more sites which are undesignated (recorded in local Historic Environment Records), or that are yet to be found. The earliest settlers in the region left their mark through field systems, surviving from the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and early medieval periods. These are joined by displays of their wealth and

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power, and their ritual and funerary practices, through monuments such as the 20 known hillforts, the kilometres of linear earthworks known as Grim’s Ditch, and hundreds of burial barrows.

The natural and historic landscapes of the Chilterns have provided home and inspiration for some of Britain’s greatest artists and writers, including John Milton, Wilfred Owen, John and Paul Nash, Roald Dahl and Enid Blyton. At the same time the nation’s politics has regularly been framed in the Chilterns, home to Prime Ministers including Edmund Burke and Benjamin Disraeli, and Chequers the country house of the PM since 1921.

In summary, the region’s historic environment and cultural heritage underpin the essential nature of the Chilterns.

**Key Issues**

The Chilterns AONB faces significant threats to its historic environment in the next five years. Archaeology is a finite asset, and many sites in the Chilterns are highly sensitive, surviving only as subtle earthworks or fragile deposits of finds. The region faces unprecedented demands for development, for housing and infrastructure, which have direct impacts on the archaeology beneath them, but also on the broader landscape around them from which these developments can be seen or heard. The setting of the Chilterns’ historic landscape is at great risk from development both within and beyond the borders of the AONB. Whilst Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings are protected to some degree, we may lose the valuable context within which they were constructed. Numerous undesignated or unknown sites are at even greater risk, lacking statutory protections.

**Development Pressures**

The Chilterns faces ever-increasing pressure from development projects to archaeology, its landscape and its character. These developments will enable increased understanding of the Chilterns Historic Environment, through the archaeological assessment and mitigation required through the planning process. However, there are also dangers, from the destruction of sites of national importance, to the alteration of the character, cultural heritage and spirit of places. The construction of HS2 will erase a section of Grim’s Ditch, a Scheduled Monument. Unsympathetic design choices, inappropriate locations for development, unsuitable materials, and lack of knowledge and time in the planning process are all risks to the historic environment of the Chilterns.

**Changes in Land Management**

The decline of traditional agriculture and industry has led to changes in land and woodland management. The future of funding, provided to farmers for protecting heritage assets, is uncertain. Access to sites can be a challenge for protecting heritage. Site owners need to balance the many benefits of the public being able to visit such places against potential damage such as site erosion caused by high footfall, vandalism, fly-tipping or illegal metal detecting.

> [INSERT: Ivinghoe Beacon hillfort, Bucks., showing chalk scarring]

**Sites and Landscapes Unprotected**

The condition of the Chilterns’ designated assets, that is the Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, and Scheduled Monuments, has remained largely stable in the recent past. This is due to statutory protections and proactive management from property owners. Only two Listed Buildings

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35 Cf. [https://www.chilternsaonb.org/Products/34/20/Famous-People-of-the-Chilterns-booklet.html](https://www.chilternsaonb.org/Products/34/20/Famous-People-of-the-Chilterns-booklet.html)
are designated ‘At Risk’ by Historic England, along with eight Scheduled Monuments. However, the approach to designation takes a site specific, rather than landscape scale approach to protection. This means the wider setting of monuments, often integral to their character, and perhaps beyond the bounds of the AONB, is not protected.

Furthermore, the vast majority of known archaeological sites are not ‘Scheduled’; they are “undesignated heritage assets”. They lack statutory protection and are therefore at increased risk. Indeed, there are significant gaps in our knowledge, particularly in the woodland areas of the Chilterns. It is striking that the Chilterns has relatively few Scheduled Monuments (113), compared for instance to the North Wessex Downs AONB (478) or to the Cotswolds AONB (442).

Lack of Understanding and Engagement

The heritage of the Chilterns as a single area is less well recognised and understood than is the case for some other protected landscapes, making protection and presentation of sites and heritage more difficult. Limited resources are also a problem for many agencies involved in tourism and heritage promotion. Many bodies are involved in heritage in the Chilterns, so improved communication and coordination of their activities is vital.

Historic assets are an irreplaceable resource. They deliver wide social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits. Change is inevitable and so in the face of mounting threats, careful management is needed. Through holistic, landscape scale approaches to planning, land use, and development, and through collaboration and coordination between partners, we can preserve the rich legacy of the past for the benefit of future generations.

Strategic Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HO1</th>
<th>Better protect the Chilterns historic environment, both formally designated and unprotected heritage assets.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HO2</td>
<td>Seek new discoveries of unknown heritage assets and improve understanding of those already identified. To reveal, in greater detail, the significance of the historic environment and cultural heritage of the Chilterns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HO3</td>
<td>Increase the knowledge and enjoyment of Chilterns heritage and culture by local residents, visitors and the wider public; and bring a love of heritage to wider parts of society.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policies

To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:

| HP1      | Encourage owners of designated heritage assets to create Conservation Management Plans and manage or restore assets appropriately. |

O1 Protect
The ongoing protection of heritage assets is largely in the hands of landowners, farmers, and other land managers. Partnerships will develop mutual understanding and consultation between landowners, Conservation Officers and Historic England.

HP2  **Encourage and facilitate work to improve the condition of assets in order to remove them from At Risk status and explore the designation of new assets through work with local Historic Environment Records and Historic England.**

The work of projects such as Beacons of the Past and Chalk, Cherries & Chairs will present opportunities for coordinating improvement of known assets. The ‘Beacons of the Past’ LiDAR survey of the Chilterns will discover hundreds if not thousands of currently undesignated heritage assets, whose significance and protection will be discussed with landowners, local Historic Environment Records, and Historic England.

HP3  **Encourage the use of the Chilterns Building Design Guide and the Chilterns Historic Landscape Characterisation Project by developers and planners. Encourage sensitive restoration prioritising local and in-character materials.**

Active promotion of the Chilterns Building Design Guide and of the Chilterns HLC dataset and documentation through the CCB website, will assist individuals, communities, and planners with conserving the special character of Chilterns buildings and landscape.

HP4  **Work towards the coordination of groups with an interest in or responsibility for the historic environment of the Chilterns.**

There are multiple community groups across the Chilterns with interests in the historic environment, including the Chiltern Society and local history and archaeology societies, which are of great value to the AONB for their work in protecting and learning more about its history. CCB is able to provide coordination, skills training, data, and expertise to groups in order to assist in their activities.

HP5  **Help communities to create robust Neighbourhood Plans which take heritage assets into account.**

Expertise, information, and advice from CCB, will assist in signposting Neighbourhood Plan authors towards resources for creating robust Plans, with the historic environment assets and their setting crucial elements to be considered.

HP6  **Improve knowledge of heritage assets through facilitating research and investigation.**

The Beacons of the Past project and Chalk, Cherries & Chairs project, will greatly enhance knowledge of heritage assets throughout the Chilterns, with hundreds if not thousands of new sites expected to be discovered. Partners and the public will be involved in these discoveries through ‘Citizen Science’ and ‘Open Data’ approaches. County Historic Environment Records will be closely involved in the investigation of these sites.

HP7  **Identify and record the cultural history of Chilterns inhabitants and settlements to preserve memory for future generations.**
Memory and understanding of ‘how things used to be’ can quickly disappear with each
generation. Modern recording methods, including utilising GIS technology alongside video,
audio, photographic, and written sources allow the capture of precious cultural history.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HP8</th>
<th>Improve the sharing of heritage information of the Chilterns, signposting individuals to appropriate sources such as local Historic Environment Records and History Centres.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication to all audiences of the results of research into the historic environment is essential, from academic communities to the general public. The Beacons of the Past project will start initiatives covering this whole spectrum, from the organisation of academic conferences based on the findings of the LiDAR survey, through to the provision of Key Stage 1 learning materials, historic interpretation panels at popular visitor sites such as Ivinghoe Beacon, and archaeology-themed guided walks. A revamped ‘History’ section of the Chilterns AONB website will provide visitors with accessible information, as well as guidance on where to learn more and what other resources are available to them.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>HP9</th>
<th>Encourage initiatives to highlight the importance of the Chilterns to political history (Disraeli to William Penn), artistic history and literary history (John Milton to Roald Dahl), as well as the industrial history of the area.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Partnership projects will provide opportunities for greater understanding of the Chilterns’ rich cultural and industrial heritage. Improved web resources will make it easier for visitors to find an engaging day out in the Chilterns focused on history, art, or literature, whilst our understanding of the industrial history of the AONB will be greatly enhanced through the study of its traditional crafts.</td>
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<tr>
<th>HP10</th>
<th>Improve public understanding of the historic environment of the Chilterns, through projects, events, information, and campaigns.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A far greater focus than ever before is being brought on to the history and archaeology of the Chilterns through funding won by the CCB for large projects. These present fantastic opportunities to build momentum across the AONB for engaging with its historic environment.</td>
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<tr>
<th>HP11</th>
<th>Create e-learning resources concerning history and archaeology for primary and secondary school curricula.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Following a programme of engagement with school history and geography teachers to hear their opinions on the types of resources they would like, lesson plans and activities will be made available online and artefact handling collections will be offered on loan to schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Actions**

1. Implement the ‘Beacons of the Past’ Project, working closely with other bodies to learn more about Chilterns archaeology, increase data sharing, communicate the narrative of Chilterns prehistory to the public, develop heritage walks, work to remove Scheduled sites from the At
Risk register, and empower local groups to conduct further research and more effectively protect heritage assets.

2. Implement the ‘Chalk Cherries and Chairs’ Landscape Partnership Scheme, engaging the public in cultural heritage projects (e.g. Woodlanders, Cherry Orchards, Routes to the Past, Grim’s Ditch) and traditional skills training; providing resources for the creation of Neighbourhood Plans and supporting landowners managing heritage assets.

3. Make the Chilterns Historic Landscape Characterisation project data accessible online for communities, local history societies, schools and decision makers.

4. Offer new history and cultural trails at Walking Festivals and integrate information on public transport links with heritage routes.

5. Make the Building Design Guide available to Parish Councils.
7. Land, Woodland and Water

Context

Through the centuries, human influence has shaped the Chiltern’s landscape. Stock and arable farming, firewood and timber production have created the mosaic of fields and woodlands, interlinked with hedgerows dotted with hedgerow trees. Even the courses of many of the area’s characteristic chalk streams have been modified by human intervention. Such changes were for a variety of purposes, such as milling, water cress growing, agriculture, urban development and landscaping. Overlaying all this is a network of ancient rights of way. These may have originated as paths for farm workers or extraction tracks for timber. Some developed as paths for drovers or trade routes for commodities on their way to London. Often, years of use have left incised tracks and sunken lanes cutting across the chalk escarpment and winding down the steep valley sides.

In the 21st century, modern technology and world markets affect every part of our lives. Stock farming (sheep, beef, dairy) declines while the current economics of arable farming leads to fewer people farming larger areas. It is uneconomic to graze chalk grassland yet, without grazing, our species rich chalk grassland is lost to scrub. More intensive stock management, sometimes associated with equine, alpaca and deer enterprises, can lead to the introduction of numerous paddocks and other infrastructure that degrades traditional field patterns.

There is now no need for hedgerows to keep stock in as farmers rely on fencing. An annual flail keeps surviving hedges in check but each year their quality deteriorates.

In the past, many commons would have been grazed and wooded areas managed through the exercise of common rights. Most of these rights are no longer exercised, though over half of the wooded areas have Management Plans.

Orchards were once widespread across the Chilterns. During Victorian times, extensive cherry orchards attracted visitors to the Chilterns during blossom time and cherry pickers would travel from London to help with the harvest. Today, many of these orchards are gone though there is a resurgence in interest of traditional fruit varieties (apple, cherry and pear) with community orchards and a small number of commercial enterprises.

The demise of the Chilterns furniture industry led to a reduction in the harvesting of timber. However, the recent trend for wood burning stoves and wood-fuel heating systems has recharged the management of small woodlands. At the same time, very few quality timber trees reach maturity. This is due to both the rapid increases in deer and grey squirrel numbers, and the constant spread of new diseases. Further, there is a trend to split some large estate woodlands into small wood lots and sell them. The result can be inconsistent management, pressure for fencing, access roads and buildings. Fragmented management means that the control of pests and diseases becomes even more difficult.

The porous chalk rock of the Chilterns Hills forms part of the most significant aquifer in the south east of England. Water levels within the aquifer supplying the internationally important Chiltern chalk streams, normally fluctuate with the changing seasons. Groundwater recharge occurs with the steady seepage of rainwater through farm and woodlands in the winter months. However, utility companies extract drinking water for millions of people – residents of the Chilterns and far beyond. The Chilterns has one of the highest levels of water use per head of population in the UK. In addition, the chalk streams are particularly vulnerable to impacts of new development. Not only do flows suffer, when abstraction is increased to supply the increased demand for drinking water, but
also there is an increased flood risk. Rainwater runs off quickly from paved surfaces, collects pollutants from the drainage system and, with increasing numbers of extreme weather events, can lead to flash flooding and poor water quality. Unpredictable and extreme weather conditions, a result of climate change, also reduce the effectiveness of groundwater recharge from farm and woodland. Heavy rain fall runs quickly off valley sides and can carry silt from arable fields into the chalk streams if field margins or other measures aren’t present to arrest the flow. Poor recharge and unsustainable abstraction combine to impact rivers and, in particular, their headwaters (winterbournes). Effectively, this means that the length of chalk stream habitat within the Chilterns is declining.

Currently, the underlying groundwater and all nine chalk streams that flow through the AONB are failing to attain the Water Framework Directive (WFD) objective of Good Ecological Status (GES) or Potential (GES/P). This failure is primarily due to over-abstraction of groundwater and low flows in chalk streams.

At the same time as the global influences set out above push towards irrevocable change to the Chilterns we love, many farmers and woodland owners do protect the land they work on and look after the wildlife it supports. Utility companies use natural resources and understand how complex and delicately balanced our natural systems are. Many organisations and an increasing army of members of the public, volunteer to protect reserves, habitats and the countryside they enjoy.

Farming, forestry, utility companies abstracting our drinking water all depend on the natural capital resources provided by the Chilterns. We all have a duty to protect and, where degraded, improve these resources – our soils (sometimes prone to erosion on steep valley sides), our chalk aquifer and chalk streams (vulnerable to over-abstraction, diffuse pollution of nutrients, pesticides and silt), our air (that benefits from ammonia and carbon uptake by trees and grassland) and the diverse range of plant and animal life these resources support.

The map above highlights Woodland cover across the AONB.
After leaving the European Union and, therefore, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the UK Government is committed to guaranteeing the same level of total funding to agriculture until 2022. An ‘agricultural transition’ period in England will help farmers prepare for new trading relationships and a new environmental land management system. We hope this Management Plan will influence government thinking and the allocation of funds that will assist land managers and foresters protect and enhance the Chilterns landscape.

**Strategic Objectives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LO1</th>
<th>Protect and, where degraded, improve the Chiltern’s natural capital resources – soils, water, clean air, plant and animal life.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LO2</td>
<td>Ensure that the Chilterns remain a functional, working landscape with viable, sustainable and diverse farming, forestry and rural economy sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO3</td>
<td>Safeguard the Chilterns landscape by maintaining and enhancing all landscape features (such as hedges and trees), important wildlife habitats and cultural heritage at all times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO4</td>
<td>Increase resilience to and effective management of pests, diseases, non-native invasive species and climate change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LO5</td>
<td>Achieve Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives for the Chilterns water environment – rivers, their valleys, wetlands and other riparian habitats</td>
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<tr>
<td>LO6</td>
<td>Ensure that those who work in the landscape, local and national policy makers, and the public, understand the link between environmentally sustainable farming, forestry, rural economy sectors and a healthy Chilterns AONB.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Policies**

To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LP1</th>
<th>Make agreed best practice advice (farming, forestry and other land management) accessible to all.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Best practice will ensure healthy soils, well managed chalk streams, clean water and unpolluted air – vital for farming, forestry, wildlife, local communities and visitors. Best practice advice can also help existing landowners and new entrants to the farming and forestry sectors appreciate how they can look after the landscape features under their control including hedgerows, hedgerow and in-field trees, pollard willows alongside chalk streams.</td>
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| LP2 | Publicise and promote appropriate land-based skill training and advances in new technology across the AONB. |
Both traditional rural skills and modern technology have their place in securing a healthy Chilterns landscape – from hedge laying to GPS guided farming operations which avoid compaction, damage to soils and over use of fertilizers and pesticides.

**LP3** Promote the production and processing of local produce, including venison, traditional orchard fruit juice and wood-fuel.

Local produce can reinforce a sense of place for visitors and residents alike. However, successful marketing can also benefit the environment. For example, venison sales can help support deer management, fruit juicing can encourage interest in and viability of traditional and community orchards, wood-fuel harvesting can help re-structure woodland affected by Ash dieback.

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### O2 Maintain and enhancing landscape

**LP4** Ensure landowners and land managers continue or re-introduce favourable grazing management on all areas of Chilterns chalk grassland

We need grazing animals to maintain the important mosaics of grassland and scrub, particularly found on the chalk escarpment and steep valley sides. Unfortunately, for many farmers, this is currently uneconomic. Support (both financial and non-financial) and collaboration between farmers and other groups managing land, should be encouraged.

[Case study, grazing at Blows Down]

**LP5** Ensure that more landowners sensitively manage more hedgerows.

We have over 4,000 km of hedgerow in the Chilterns. Between 2006 and 2008, 330 hedges were surveyed and only 38% where in good condition. Consequently, 62% (approximately 2,500km or just over 1,500 miles) of our Chilterns hedgerows need attention. We could reduce nutrient enrichment, buffer them from cultivation and allow hedges to become wider and taller. Further, an average Chilterns hedge may need laying or coppicing every 40 years. This means that across the Chilterns, we need to rejuvenate at least 100km (62 miles) of hedge every year.

Maintaining our hedge network will protect vital connections for wildlife (wildlife corridors), protect the linking fabric of our countryside and, particularly when rejuvenating old hedgerows, will preserve ancient field patterns that are still discernible today.

Consideration should be given to remove fencing, particularly barbed wire, where it is no longer required for stock control. Concerns have been raised over injuries to wildlife, particularly deer, and to walkers on footpaths.

[insert Photo – hedge laying course]

**LP6** Encourage landowners and local communities to plant over 500 new hedgerow trees across the Chilterns per year.

Some 44,000 standard trees grow in Chilterns hedges but most of these are over mature. Many will succumb to old age or diseases, such as Ash Dieback or Sudden Oak Decline, in the coming years. Even without the rapid spread of pests and diseases, based on an average mature age of 100 years (looking at a range of trees from the relatively short-lived cherry to longer lived oak), we will need to plant 440 new trees per year to maintain...
hedgerow tree numbers. Replanting 500 hedgerow trees a year is a minimum; to keep up with disease pressure, we should be aiming for nearer 1,000. Detailed proposals will need to be developed by those living and working within the AONB.

[insert Photo – hedgerow trees]

**LP7** Link and buffer valued habitats – including grasslands, woodlands, rivers and streams – by a network of field margins (both grass and annually cultivated unsown arable margins as appropriate), new tree and woodland planting and low intensity grassland areas.

Farmland, woodland, orchards, commons, streams, golf courses, public open space, even road verges can all provide important links to connect wildlife habitats.

**LP8** Ensure there is no net loss of woodland and no loss of irreplaceable ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees within the AONB.

The Chilterns is renowned for its woodland, which covers 23.74% of the AONB. Much of this contains important wildlife and archaeology. 56% is classed as ancient woodland, which has been in constant woodland management for over 400 years. It is important that no woodland is lost to building works or infrastructure. Indeed, we should seek opportunities to increase the woodland area. This is in line with government policy, but resources will be needed if the total area of woodland is to increase.

[Map – woodland cover]

**LP9** Manage woodlands to achieve a greater diversity of tree species and varied age structure to ensure economic sustainability, enhance biodiversity and make them more resilient to disease and climate change.

It is important that statutory agencies and advisers work together with woodland owners and managers. They can provide advice, training and support identifying the most appropriate tree species and on-going woodland management to achieve this policy. Species selection tools, such as Forest Research’s Ecological Site Classification, can help plan site appropriate planting which will help connect wildlife habitats and replace trees lost to disease.

**LP10** Restore Planted Ancient Woodlands (PAWS) returning them to predominantly broadleaf species and implement sensitive long-term management.

On-going support and advice need to be maintained and management plans for these important sites are recommended. Restoration, particularly of non-native conifer plantations, will offer significant wildlife, landscape and cultural heritage benefits.

**LP11** Manage glades, other open areas and woodland edges to provide a varied habitat for woodland birds, butterflies and plants.

Partnerships between woodland owners, statutory agencies, local wildlife and volunteer groups will help achieve this policy.

**LP12** Maintain and enhance traditional Chilterns orchards and encourage their use.
Orchards were once scattered across the Chilterns, valuable for their fruit crops and providing useful grazing between the trees. Many of the remnant orchards contain veteran fruit trees some of which may be ‘forgotten’ varieties once grown in specific localities within the Chilterns.

### LP13 Protect and sensitively manage historic and cultural features.

These features include ancient parish boundary hedges and field patterns, medieval Strip Lynchets, woodland boundary banks, saw pits and traditional orchards.

*A woodland saw pit*

### LP14 Restore chalk stream flows through reduction of abstraction to environmentally sustainable levels.

The ongoing work of the Environment Agency’s ‘Restoring Sustainable Abstraction’ programme together with an abstraction licencing scheme that provides appropriate protection of the water environment, will be essential for the long-term health of the area’s chalk streams.

*See also Nature (NP4, Key action 5), Development (DP4)*

### LP15 Support a catchment-based approach to the enhancement and sustainable management of the Chilterns water environment.

This will include natural flood management (through farming, woodland planting and management practices) and help reconnect rivers with their flood plains.

### LP16 Enhance and restore the natural form, function and connectivity of chalk streams and associated habitats.

Encourage and support the development and delivery of projects where statutory agencies, water companies, landowners and other stakeholders work together to recreate more natural, wildlife rich chalk streams.

### LP17 Encourage management that conserves and enhances the characteristic river valley landscape.

Smaller and irregular field patterns, wet meadows, woodland carr and pollard willows often characterise river valleys within the AONB.

### LP18 Raise awareness of pest, diseases and non-native invasive species along with the need for improved biosecurity.
Up to date training and advice on the best methods and continued action to reduce, and where possible eliminate, the threats posed by pests, diseases and invasive non-native species is vital. Care must be taken to source pest and disease-free trees for planting, possibly from seed grown on in UK nurseries.

See also Nature (NP7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LP19</th>
<th>Control and manage native pests and, where possible, seek to eradicate non-native invasive species, coordinated at a landscape scale.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Species include both native and introduced deer, Grey squirrel, Edible Dormouse (<em>Glis glis</em>), American mink, Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed, Signal crayfish and Demon shrimp (an example of an emerging threat that could devastate all our chalk streams if action is not taken).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Statutory agencies will need to support landowner collaboration and partnership groups (similar to the ‘Farmer Cluster’ model) if this policy is to succeed.</td>
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<td>See also Nature (NP7)</td>
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<tr>
<th>LP20</th>
<th>Make relevant, informative and interesting information about farming, forestry and the rural economy readily available to all residents and visitors to the AONB.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Chilterns is a working environment. It is important for visitors and residents to understand the processes that shape the environment they enjoy and the wider environmental benefits that are provided. These benefits include carbon capture and flood water management provided by both grassland and woods.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is also important for the farming and forestry sectors to appreciate both the challenges and opportunities provided by working within a much loved and visited nationally protected landscape.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LP21</th>
<th>Promote public awareness and understanding of the link between water demand, abstraction and chalk stream flows and support measures to reduce demand and increase water use efficiency.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very few people are likely to understand how their use of water might affect a Chilterns chalk stream. Utility companies need to continue work to reduce leakage in the public water supply system, but members of the public can also do a lot to reduce wastage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See also Nature (NP4, Key action 5), Development (DP4)
Key Actions

1) Support existing and develop new collaborative projects. For example, both the Chiltern Woodlands Project and Chilterns Chalk Streams Project already manage projects and provide advice across the AONB and, during the life of this management plan, the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership will deliver many partnership projects in the central Chilterns area.

   See also Nature (NP7)

2) Secure existing and seek new funding from government agencies, local government and from other sources such as lottery fund distributors and charitable trusts.
3) Work with government and local stakeholders to design new environmental land management measures that offer pragmatic solutions to protect and enhance the natural capital, landscape and wildlife of the Chilterns.

4) Develop and deliver schemes that achieve Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives for the water environment. 
   See also Nature (NP4, Key action 5), Development (DP4)

5) Work collaboratively with local advisers, land agencies, representative organisations to encourage landowner, farmer and forester uptake of existing and future environmental land management measures.

6) Encourage even greater volunteer activity to strengthen the many existing groups and the valuable work they do and support new initiatives.

7) Work with stakeholders and seek funding to establish a freely accessible website (E-hub) to promote good practice (including, for example, management advice for chalk streams, woodland, sustainable farming, biosecurity measures), publicise training and technical innovation to local businesses; provide information to the public and promote the Chilterns AONB.

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Check Clean Dry campaign [http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/)

Forestry Commission’s ‘Keep It Clean’ campaign [https://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/beeh-a6tek3](https://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/beeh-a6tek3)
8. Enjoyment and Understanding

Context

The Chilterns has long been a place for leisure and recreation. Since the time of 'Metroland', good public transport allows Londoners to take the train straight out of the city and into the countryside. And very many people do just that. This ease of access and the wide range of opportunities on offer make the Chilterns particularly valuable as both a local and a regional recreational resource. It is a place for physical activity and an escape from busy and pressured lives. It is a landscape ideal for walking, cycling, horse-riding and an array of outdoor activities. There is an extensive rights of way network, two National Trails and dozens of promoted routes. The Chilterns provides an accessible natural health service, with health walks and green gym activities on offer. Organised events and endurance challenges have become increasingly popular over the last few years and new initiatives have developed such as Park Runs. There has been a notable increase in road cycling over the last few years, though walking is still by far the most popular activity.

Today, people are working longer hours, spending less time outdoors and leading lives that are more sedentary. This is taking its toll on their health and happiness. The need for a beautiful and tranquil environment to recharge the batteries is greater than ever. The Chilterns already attracts a large numbers of local leisure users and this is increasing with new housing growth. However, visitor numbers are unevenly spread, with visitor pressure concentrated on some of the most sensitive chalk downland sites. Overall, the Chilterns has the capacity to accommodate greater use. It can benefit a much greater proportion of the 1.6 million people who live within 8km of the Chilterns, in particular the least active.

The challenge is to manage visits and countryside services well, to ensure the protection of the most popular and vulnerable countryside sites and habitats. It will require the development and adoption of a Chilterns-wide visitor management initiative which will enable the Chilterns to accommodate more visitors without damaging the AONB. It is an ambitious vision which will need to be adequately resourced and require new sources of funding. There will need to be multi-partner support extending beyond the AONB to link with surrounding urban communities, greenspaces and new growth areas. Public engagement will be an important part of the vision, attracting greater support for the AONB and more volunteers and stewards to help care for the AONB in the future.

Strategic Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EO1</th>
<th>Secure national recognition and greater resources for the wealth of accessible recreational opportunities the Chilterns countryside offers to residents and visitors.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EO2</td>
<td>Ensure more high-quality opportunities for outdoor recreation, life-long learning and volunteering for all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EO3</td>
<td>Ensure more people can enjoy healthier and happier lives by enjoying the Chilterns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"I know a land where the wild flowers grow Near, near at hand if by train you go, Metroland, Metroland". George R. Sims (1914)
EO4  Make more people aware of what makes the Chilterns special and encourage them to help care for it and contribute to its protection. Inspire young people to build a lasting interest in the Chilterns.

EO5  Encourage greater use of the Chilterns countryside by those from surrounding urban communities who currently have little connection with the AONB.

Policies

To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:

**O1 National recognition**

**EP1**  Secure greater support and funding for a well-maintained, high quality and better-connected rights of way network for walking, cycling and riding.

The recreational opportunities in the Chilterns rely on a high-quality rights of way network; it is one of the main ways to explore the AONB. Local Authorities have faced funding and staff cuts over the last few years, making it much more challenging to maintain standards and develop new opportunities. New funding opportunities should be sought, for example, planning gain could be secured through new developments. A new Environmental Land Management scheme could reward farmers and landowners to improve access, improving rights of way and creating new and better access to Open Access land.

**EP2**  Encourage greater use of the National Trails and regional promoted routes and maximise their contribution to the local economy.

The Chilterns has some iconic long-distance promoted routes. This includes two National Trails (the Ridgeway and the Thames Path) and regional routes such as the Chiltern Way and Chilterns Cycleway. Links routes to settlements should be developed and promoted.

**O2 High quality recreation opportunities**

**EP3**  Support initiatives to improve the accessibility of rights of way and countryside sites.

The Chilterns has benefited from widespread stile-removals, new ‘access for all’ trails and other initiatives to improve physical accessibility which makes it one of the leading accessible landscapes. Accessibility should be further improved to provide more and better opportunities for everyone to enjoy the countryside. Priorities include improved access for those with limited mobility, new or improved access links between the AONB and urban areas, more multi-user routes, better bridleway connectivity and provision of facilities on appropriate sites e.g. waymarked trails, information boards, cycle and car parking.

**EP4**  Expand opportunities for volunteering and lifelong learning and ensure it is better coordinated across the Chilterns.

Volunteers are more important than ever to countryside organisations and they are a critical resource to help care for the Chilterns. Volunteering can bring multiple health
benefits; it can increase people’s skills and confidence and it can decrease health inequalities and isolation.

**EP5** Ensure all young people in the Chilterns and surrounding towns have opportunities to experience and learn about the Chilterns informally and through formal education.

Many young people from urban areas have never experienced the Chilterns countryside, even though it is on their doorstep. There is potential to nurture greater exploration and understanding at an early stage which will build a lasting interest. This can be done through events at countryside sites, Forest Schools, outreach to schools, getting young people involved in conservation projects or outdoor activities.

**EP6** Broaden public engagement activity to attract new audiences and increase understanding and enjoyment of the AONB, in particular targeting urban communities.

Many residents from towns adjoining the Chilterns do not visit and enjoy the special landscape they have on their doorstep. Awareness of the AONB as a protected landscape is low, especially outside the AONB. Events can attract new and diverse audiences and stimulate an interest in the Chilterns.

**EP7** Encourage better provision and take-up of car-free visitor experiences to access and explore the Chilterns.

Opportunities should be sought to reduce car use by visitors and residents by offering good alternatives and promoting their use. This should include:

- Safe, attractive and accessible infrastructure for walking and cycling in and around the Chilterns
- Promoting integrated public transport and Active Travel Plans to and across the AONB
- Lobbying for more and safer cycling routes
- Encouraging additional bike hire and cycle parking

**EP8** Promote greater understanding of the Chilterns landscape and respect for other users, through communication and education.

People need to be aware of the potential effects their activities can have on both sensitive habitats and on other recreational users. Although some anti-social behaviour will always occur, education can go a long way to minimising the problems. It can also stimulate an interest in the landscape around them and encourage people to take practical steps to help care for the Chilterns, from reducing water use to following the Countryside Code

**EP9** Raise the profile and visibility of the Chilterns through high quality information, interpretation and appropriate AONB gateway signage.

Awareness of the Chilterns as a protected landscape is low, even within the AONB. People are often unaware they are in the AONB as there is little on the ground to welcome you and provide a sense of place. Raising the profile of the Chilterns is crucial to attracting support
for the area and ensuring its future. There are many ways this can be achieved, for example through information boards, interpretation, AONB gateway signs/artworks, signage, leaflets and digital communications.

**EP10 Increase the sustainable use of the Chilterns for recreation and physical activity.**

The number of people living in or close to the Chilterns is increasing. However, there are still large numbers of people who do not make use of the Chilterns countryside, often they are not aware of the opportunities on their doorstep or how to access them. There is potential for more people to enjoy and benefit from countryside recreation within the AONB. However there needs to be a visitor management initiative to ensure visitor use is sustainable.

**EP11 Develop and secure support for a visitor management strategy for the Chilterns**

Increased recreational use of the Chilterns countryside must be managed in order to protect vulnerable sites. It requires a visitor management strategy which links in with the surrounding urban and growth areas. A key aim of the strategy will be to address the uneven spread of visitor pressure in the Chilterns. The first step will be to secure commitment and resource from partners to gather and commission data and research that will contribute to the development of the Strategy.

**EP12 Ensure the Chilterns benefits from new and improved access and green space provision linked to new built development.**

There are a lot of major new housing and infrastructure developments on the edge of the Chilterns that will affect countryside access and the rights of way network. It is essential to maintain and enhance the connectivity and character of the rights of way network.

**Key Actions**

1) Seek funding to develop and deliver a new large-scale Chilterns public engagement programme, with a particular focus on urban audiences.

2) Develop a visitor management initiative to provide new and improved access whilst protecting the most vulnerable sites. To include:
   - An assessment of carrying capacity, identifying which areas are potentially robust to recreational pressure and which are likely to be vulnerable
   - Identify priority sites for new greenspace and new access links, to create recreational space close to where people live
   - Enhanced walking and cycling routes from town centres to the countryside to encourage more non-car-based visiting to the Chilterns

3) Expand and develop the Chilterns Walking Festival and make it sustainable once Leader funding has stopped (October 2019).

4) Coordinate a review and analysis of data relating to leisure use of the Chilterns, with a view to commissioning (and getting funded) a new Chilterns Leisure Visitor Survey. This will include a survey of non-users, especially those from urban areas surrounding the Chilterns.
9. Social and economic wellbeing

Context

The Chilterns has a fantastic array of natural and social assets, which makes it such an attractive place to live, work and visit. Communities and businesses both within and beyond the AONB enjoy many benefits from the landscape. This includes tangible benefits from its natural resources such as clean water, fresh air and wood for fuel (Ecosystems Services). But it provides wider benefits too. It is a place for relaxation, exploration and inspiration, offering a rich cultural heritage, contact with nature, a sense of place and numerous opportunities for leisure, recreation and learning. However, there is low awareness of the Chilterns and the benefits the AONB provides to society and as a visitor destination. Its value is not fully realised, in particular its contribution to peoples’ health and wellbeing. In addition, communities and businesses do not always recognise and value the importance of being located in the Chilterns or the part they can play as custodians of this heritage.

But we can change this by measuring and demonstrating the value of the Chilterns, building the brand and profile of the area, and securing support and investment for the AONB. By doing this, we can bring even greater benefits to the communities and businesses in and around the Chilterns, and more resources to help protect the Chilterns for the future.

Supporting Communities of the Chilterns

The Chilterns is a living and working landscape, shaped, worked and enjoyed by people living in and around the AONB: 80,000 people live within the AONB and a further 1.6 million live within 8km. There are specific issues affecting communities of the Chilterns that this Management Plan seeks to influence:

- The economy of the Chilterns is doing well and is above the national average. However, forestry and farming activities such as planting and managing woodlands to produce timber and grazing livestock on the hills are in decline. Policies to ensure that the Chilterns remain a functional, working landscape with a viable rural economy sectors are set out in chapter 7

- The management of the landscape needs a range of skills that are in short supply, for example foresters and flint workers. Policies to encourage land-based skills training are included in chapter 7

- House prices in the Chilterns are well above the national average. Policies to support housing for local people are included in chapter 10

- More people than ever are experiencing social isolation and mental health issues. Contributory factors include the closure of village shops, pubs and community facilities, more people commuting outside the area and major new developments. There are many ways to address this, including promoting opportunities for volunteering, organising Festivals and community events and encouraging activity through health walks and other programmes. Policies are included below and in chapter 8

- Better access links between rural and urban areas are needed and improved public and community transport options to assist local people gain access to facilities and services. Policies are included below and in chapter 8
Strategic Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SO1</th>
<th>Increase the economic and social wellbeing of local communities and businesses by supporting the development of the visitor economy and improving community facilities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SO2</td>
<td>Ensure that the AONB is recognised and valued by residents, visitors and the health sector for the contribution it makes to peoples’ physical and mental health, offering connection with nature and a wide variety of recreational opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO3</td>
<td>Ensure that the natural capital of the Chilterns and its contribution to society is understood and valued by all decision makers and used to lever in funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO4</td>
<td>Ensure that businesses and communities in and around the AONB value its specialness, support Chilterns initiatives and help raise the profile of the area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policies

To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SP1</th>
<th>Develop the visitor economy and increase its economic impact.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Chilterns is a popular destination for local leisure but awareness of the Chilterns outside the local area is low. There is great potential to attract more visitors, expand the short break market and raise the profile of the Chilterns. The Chilterns has some incredible tourism assets. More could be done to connect them, celebrate them and position them at the heart of the visitor offer.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SP2</th>
<th>Seek the coordination of visitor development and promotion across the Chilterns and secure dedicated resources.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism promotion is largely based on local authority boundaries. Consequently, there is very limited Chilterns-wide tourism promotion other than by the Chilterns Conservation Board and Chilterns Tourism Network. Additional resources would help to develop and promote sustainable visiting.</td>
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<tr>
<th>SP3</th>
<th>Promote historic market towns as gateways to the countryside.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Many of our market towns are appealing visitor destinations. In addition, they have a special role as gateways to the Chilterns. They are easy to get to by public transport and provide visitor facilities such as car parking, pubs, shops, cafes. Market towns provide easy access to the Chilterns countryside, with lots of walks and rides on offer.</td>
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<tr>
<th>SP4</th>
<th>Support rural diversification that adds value to the local economy.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Only through diversification can many small to medium size farms in the Chilterns remain viable. It can provide important visitor facilities, such as farm accommodation. This is in short supply in the Chilterns. What is approved needs to be sympathetic to its setting and the wider landscape.</td>
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</table>
SP5  Retain and promote community facilities, including shops, pubs, public and community transport, and encourage them where there are gaps in provision.

Many villages in the Chilterns have lost their shop or pub over the years or seen a decline in community facilities and services. Others are under threat. These amenities are often the life-blood of the community and affect both local people and visitors. We must support and promote community facilities to help them survive. Some villages have been able to step in and buy the pub/shop threatened with closure and run it as a community business.

SP6  Promote local food, drink and craft products.

The last few years have seen many new, high quality, artisan food and drink producers starting up. These range from Chilterns beer and wine to cheese and charcuterie producers. People are increasingly interested in knowing where their food comes from, but awareness of Chilterns produce is low. There is huge potential in promoting the Chilterns’ rich diversity of food, drink and craft products. This can be through festivals and events, promotional activity and business engagement. By promoting the Chilterns food, drink and crafts heritage, it is also a way of keeping cultural traditional alive, for example Chilterns Apple Days or cherry pie festivals.

SP7  Encourage greater use of the AONB landscape to improve levels of physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The continued decline in physical activity is a key factor in the deepening health crisis. Yet there is recognition of the significant benefits to physical and mental wellbeing of spending time in a natural environment and taking exercise. There has been a growth in health and wellbeing programmes based on outdoor activity such as Health Walks and Green Gyms.

SP8  Expand opportunities for volunteering and lifelong learning and ensure it is better coordinated across the Chilterns.

Provide opportunities for local people and visitors to learn about the Chilterns and to help care for its environment and heritage. Volunteering can bring multiple health benefits; it can increase people’s skills and confidence; and it can decrease health inequalities and isolation. There is great potential to attract a wider range of volunteers to reflect the diversity of communities within and close to the Chilterns.

SP9  Ensure that the value of the natural capital assets of the AONB is better understood and promoted, used to underpin investment and growth strategies and used to secure net gain for the Chilterns.

The Chilterns provides multiple benefits to people in addition to the productive capacity of the land. It can support biodiversity, lock up carbon, help ensure clean supplies of water as well as providing places for leisure, recreation, health and wellbeing. There is a poor appreciation of the benefits people derive from the AONB. In particular, the benefit for populations living outside the AONB enjoy is often over-looked. As more land is built on, the need to understand, value and promote the benefits becomes more important.
## O4 Business and community support

### SP10  Ensure businesses and communities both in and around the AONB, recognise the value of being located in the Chilterns and endorse the Chilterns brand.

A Chilterns location can benefit businesses and communities. This is especially so for businesses with a connection to the visitor economy. However, the Chilterns does not have a strong brand. There is low awareness of the AONB and its value as a protected landscape. Businesses and communities can play an important role in creating a stronger identify and sense of place for the Chilterns.

### SP11  Investigate income generation opportunities including visitor-giving schemes.

Visitor Giving is a way of offering visitors and residents the opportunity to give a little something back to looking after the places they love. It is a way of providing a mechanism for collecting those small contributions that can add up to a significant amount.

### SP12  Promote the Chilterns at key visitor entry points.

There are some major visitor gateways in or near the Chilterns including railway stations and termini such as London Marylebone. There are many smaller gateways too, including the market towns of the Chilterns. Yet people visiting or passing through the Chilterns are often unaware that they are in a special protected landscape and of the wealth of recreational opportunities they can enjoy. High quality information, interpretation and appropriate signage would help people access and enjoy the Chilterns.

### Key Actions

1. Develop a partnership approach to access health and outdoor activity funds.
2. Explore and access alternative sources of funding to deliver more outdoor activity programmes and benefit more people (including personal health budgets, social or green prescribing and spending commitments by Sport England to encourage physical activity).
3. Seek funding for a range of Chilterns visitor projects based on the priority themes of Food & Drink, Arts & Culture, History & Heritage.
4. Support and promote a rolling programme of Chilterns Festivals throughout the year, including the Walking Festival, Food & Drink Festival, Heritage Festival.
5. Work with the business sector to encourage greater investment and support for Chilterns initiatives.
10. Development

Context

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are outstanding landscapes whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so precious that it is in the nation’s interest to safeguard them. Special planning controls apply in the AONB. The planning system protects AONBs in order to conserve and enhance their natural beauty. In this chapter, we set out policies for development in the Chilterns AONB to help look after it for current and future generations and ensure that anything that is built genuinely enhances the AONB.

Housing allocations and development decisions in AONBs are the responsibility of local planning authorities through their planning policy and development management functions. The Chilterns AONB is split across thirteen local authorities each with planning responsibilities. Local authorities have a legal duty to have regard to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. They also have the power to take all such action as appears to them expedient to accomplish this.

Conservation Boards are well placed to work with local planning authorities in an advisory role, we bring understanding of local landscape character, sensitivities and capacity for accommodating change. We comment as consultees on all emerging plans and major planning applications and we prepare guidance for householders, architects and developers. We bring together those who make plans and determine planning applications in the Chilterns to encourage cross-boundary thinking and co-operation over the AONB.

In the AONB the planning priorities are conservation and enhancement of landscape and scenic beauty, and the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage (National Planning Policy Framework para 172). Whilst nationally there is a need for development, there is also a need to protect the most special places, the finest and most beautiful parts of the countryside. This is particularly true for the Chilterns, an irreplaceable green lung for London and the South East.

[Insert Photo & caption: Enjoying the Ridgeway National Trail. In parts of the Chilterns, there are stretches where you don’t see a building for miles, this rare experience in the busy south-east is something to treasure and safeguard]

The term ‘natural beauty’ covers a wide range of elements, including landform and geology, plants and animals, landscape features, and the rich history of human settlement over the ages. Put together these elements make the area distinctive. How the landscape looks is therefore only part of what must be considered in order to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Planners must assess impacts on natural beauty which are both direct, like loss of habitat for construction or a proposed new building of unsympathetic design, and indirect, like a new development affecting traffic levels, air quality, chalk streams and tranquillity in the AONB.

Pressure for development

The Chilterns is a highly desirable area in which to live, within easy commuting distance of London. Pressures for development have increased significantly since the last AONB Management Plan was prepared. Research has shown a four-fold increase in the number of new homes granted planning

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37 3 counties, 2 unitaries, 7 districts and 1 borough council. This will change with the creation of a unitary authority for Buckinghamshire. To find your local planning authority click here

38 The legal duty is set out at Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

39 The power to take action is in Section 84(4) of same act

40 See box in this Plan’s Introduction ‘what is natural beauty?’
permission each year in the Chilterns AONB\footnote{Independent Review of Housing in England's AONBs (2017) shows the number of homes permitted in the Chilterns AONB rose from an average of 82 per year before 2012, to over 386 per year during 2015-17 (the 386 figure is an undercount because the 2015-17 figures exclude smaller sites of less than 10 units).}. Local authorities face pressures when preparing their local plans and some with a shortage of alternatives are proposing significant housing allocations in the AONB in draft local plans and neighbourhood plans. Government policy confirms that the presence of AONBs can restrict development in order to help achieve sustainable development\footnote{National Planning Policy Framework para 11 and footnote 6 make it clear that the requirement for local plans to meet objectively assessed needs does not apply in AONBs (for plan-making provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other development unless 'the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area' with footnote 6 identifying AONBs as one such restriction.} and that “the scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited”\footnote{National Planning Policy Framework para 172}.

The Chilterns Conservation Board has a Planning Committee and employs a Planning Officer to provide specialist AONB planning advice on both development plans and planning applications. A protocol is in place with local planning authorities setting out when to consult the Board, including on all applications for:

- Major housing development (for example 10 dwellings or more or 0.5 hectare or more) or employment and similar development (1,000 square metres or 1 hectare or more)
- Telecommunications masts
- Extraction of brickearth and development related to the local brick making industry
- Waste activities
- Floodlighting or other intrusive lighting
- Equestrian development, particularly larger in scale and in prominent locations
- Large scale agricultural or employment development
- Single, large isolated dwellings (new or replacement)
- Land operations that involve significant cut or fill or alterations to landform
- Noisy or intrusive recreation proposals
- Gypsy and traveller accommodation
- New visitor facilities
- Airport development likely to lead to overflying of the AONB
- Renewable energy\footnote{The Board has produced a Position Statement on Renewable Energy} developments, particularly for major energy generation

Other smaller proposals including those in prominent locations or likely to set a precedent, or involving the loss of a community facility, should also be referred to the Board for comment.

**Small-scale changes**

Small piecemeal changes to land and buildings can harm the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB. Gradually and incrementally these developments are changing the landscape. Cumulatively they bring an erosion of distinctiveness, heritage and character, and leave less space for nature across the AONB. As new owners buy land, they often place higher priority on leisure and private amenity than production or conservation. This has been partly behind the expansion of the area covered by pony paddocks, garden extensions and newly landscaped grounds. Often it is accompanied by the spread of fencing, screening of all kinds, new external lighting, trampolines, children’s play...
equipment and temporary buildings. The Board has prepared advice in the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and technical notes to help householders and landowners to make well-informed choices so that changes are appropriate to the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB. The advice covers all aspects of building renovation, extensions, appropriate materials, outbuildings, boundary treatments etc. Our series of Chilterns Landowners’ Guides include information on appropriate native species for new hedgerow and tree planting in the Chilterns, and advice for horse owners. We want to avoid detrimental changes like unsympathetic extensions or replacement windows, inappropriate fencing of open woodland, ornamental entrance gates, unnecessary lighting, domestic paraphernalia, and excessive private playgrounds and indoor pool houses. Electric gates, high fencing and CCTV over public rights of way make the area feel more exclusive, and people feel excluded. Without care and responsibility from landowners the Chilterns will become less enjoyable to visit, less distinctive and less special.

Many permitted development rights do not apply in AONBs. For example, the following need planning permission in the AONB: larger homes extensions, exterior cladding or pebble-dashing a home, loft conversions involving additions to roofs, larger outbuildings, swimming pools, barn conversions to dwellings. This enables local planning authorities to control the impacts of development on key elements of AONB landscape character, and manage the details involved in minor developments, conversions and changes of use. In recent years permitted development rights have been widened, reducing councils’ ability to control and secure appropriate forms of development. However, where permitted development rights threaten harm to the AONB, local planning authorities can invoke powers to remove them using Article 4 Directions.

Applying planning policies in the AONB

This AONB Management Plan is not part of the statutory development plan, but it may be a material consideration in planning application decisions and planning weight can be appropriately attached. This AONB Management Plan should be considered when developing local plans and neighbourhood plans within or affecting the Chilterns AONB. It provides evidence on the characteristics of the Chilterns and objectives for development in the Chilterns. It is the only plan for the whole AONB. It should be read along with government policy for the AONB set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, and policies in local authority development plans and communities’ neighbourhood plans.

Strategic Objectives

| DO1 | Ensure planning decisions put the conservation and enhancement of the AONB first. |
|     |                                                                                  |
| DO2 | Ensure that where development happens, it leaves the AONB better than it was before – richer in wildlife, quieter, darker at night, designed to have a low impact on the environment, and beautiful to look at and enjoy. |
| DO3 | Embrace opportunities to restore natural beauty on sites currently degraded by unsympathetic development, infrastructure or dereliction. |

45 These allow some types of development within certain thresholds without requiring planning permission, see GPDO as amended
Policies

To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:

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**DP1** Ensure planning decisions take full account of the importance of conserving and enhancing the AONB and the great weight given to its protection in the NPPF.

The purpose of designating an area of countryside as AONB is to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. That is the single and only purpose in law. An AONB must be treated differently from the wider countryside; it has the highest status of protection for its landscape and scenic beauty, equal to National Parks. Government policy is that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important in AONBs. This requirement applies to all sizes of planning proposal, large and small.

**DP2** Reject development in the AONB unless:

- it is a use appropriate to its location, and
- it is appropriate to local landscape character, and
- it supports local distinctiveness, and
- it respects heritage and historic landscapes, and
- it enhances natural beauty, and
- ecological and environmental impacts are acceptable, and
- there are no detrimental impacts on chalk streams, and
- there is no harm to tranquillity through the generation of noise, motion and light that spoil quiet enjoyment or disturb wildlife, and
- there are no negative cumulative effects including when considered with other plans and proposals.

This policy sets out what to consider in order to give great weight to conserving and enhancing the AONB. It applies to all development in the AONB, both minor and major.

A single planning proposal may affect only a small area of the AONB. However, a number of similar developments in the area, or incremental changes over time, or a series of new developments in sequential views along an important trail, can have a significant cumulative impact. The character of the AONB, its wildlife and people’s enjoyment could slowly diminish over time. We have further advice in a [Position Statement on the Cumulative Impacts of Development on the Chilterns AONB](#).

[Photo & caption: Keep dark skies and stars bright: light pollution from inappropriate large glazed building design [or search on-line]]

**DP3** Refuse planning permission for major development in the AONB unless there are exceptional circumstances and where there is a clear demonstration it is in the public interest.

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47 National Planning Policy Framework para 172
Government policy requires that planning applications for major developments in AONBs should be refused "other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest".  

Planning law establishes quantitative size thresholds to distinguish between major and minor development, but the NPPF explicitly states that these thresholds should not be used to identify major development in National Parks and AONBs. Here a more qualitative assessment is needed. Whether a proposal is major development in an AONB is a matter for the decision maker, normally the local planning authority or in the case of appeals, a planning inspector. Developments below the size of the usual thresholds for major development could constitute major development in the AONB, for example a single large house in a prominent location on the Chilterns escarpment. The protocol for when to consult to Board (see box on page 60) may be a useful indication of types of development more likely to major. 

In deciding whether a proposal constitutes major development in the AONB, the Board recommends that decision makers consider whether the proposal, by reason of its nature, scale and setting, has the potential to have a significant adverse impact on the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty, and on the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB (see introduction page 8). The potential for adverse impact will include the consideration of both the impact of cumulative development and the individual characteristics of each proposal and its context.  

If a proposal is major, the decision maker will need to assess against the considerations in the NPPF para 172: “a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy; b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated”. Major housing schemes are unlikely to be acceptable because the need could be met outside the Chilterns AONB, elsewhere in the housing market area. Similarly for large economic development, energy and other major proposals. If it is considered that exceptional circumstances exist and development would be in the public interest, all opportunities to conserve and enhance the special qualities should be sought, by following policies DP1 to DP15.  

DP4 In the setting of the AONB, take full account of whether proposals harm the AONB. For example, development of land visible in panoramic views from the Chilterns escarpment, or which generates traffic in or travelling across the AONB, or which increases water abstraction from the chalk aquifer, thereby reducing flow in chalk streams.  

A development outside the AONB boundary can cause harm to the AONB, even if it is some distance away. The local authority’s legal duty towards the AONB applies when a proposal affects land in the AONB, regardless of where that effect originates (inside or outside the AONB). We have produced special advice in a Position Statement on

48 National Planning Policy Framework para 172. Deciding whether a proposal is ‘major development’ is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.  

49 in Section 85 of the CRoW Act
Development Affecting the Setting of the Chilterns AONB. The setting of the AONB is not a geographic zone that can be mapped, nor does it cover a set distance from the AONB boundary. Tall structures like chimneys that break the skyline or large growth proposals even far away can have an impact on the AONB, and so fall within the setting. Adverse impacts are not only visual, a noisy development may impact adversely on the tranquillity of the AONB even if not visible from the AONB. We consider that the setting of the Chilterns AONB is the area within which development and land management proposals (by virtue of their nature, size, scale, siting, materials or design) may have an impact, either positive or negative, on the natural beauty and special qualities of the area.

[Photo & caption: A View to a Hill. This greenfield land at Alscot outside the AONB is in the setting of the AONB, because there is a clear view to the AONB at Whiteleaf Cross, and panoramic views back from the public viewpoint on the top of Whiteleaf Hill. This field, and the view, will be lost to development under plans for a 2,500 home urban extension of Princes Risborough.]

This “after” example from Chinnor (Former Garden Centre Site) shows how development can harm the view to the AONB. The edge of Chinnor is now very visible from the Thame Road, Emmington Road and the public footpaths in between. The density and the alignment with the houses tightly packed in a row, and lack of screening planting contribute to the negative effect on views towards the escarpment.

Outside the AONB, the Chilterns is surrounded by large settlements, many of which are planned to expand. For example, Aylesbury has been designated a Garden Town and will grow by at least another 13,500 homes. Growth is also being planned for Luton, Princes Risborough, High Wycombe, Hemel Hempstead and Chinnor, to name just a few. Some of these expansion plans include land within the AONB and many include land in its setting. The vast scale of the nearby Oxford to Cambridge growth corridor will change the strategic geography of the region, making it even more important that the Chilterns is protected to play its role in the health and wellbeing of that future population.

The Chilterns chalk aquifer serves as the major source for drinking water for the AONB and wider sub-region. Over-abstracting this resource has contributed to chronic low flows in Chilterns chalk streams\(^\text{50}\). Drying up is shortening their functioning length, for example one Chilterns chalk stream, the River Ver, no longer flows at all in the AONB. Current levels of abstraction are unsustainable and need to be reduced to restore chalk stream ecology, chalk stream natural function, and the value of chalk streams to landscape character. Development in the setting of the AONB and the future growth arc will require construction of new strategic water resources (e.g. reservoirs, water transfers and desalination plants) elsewhere in the SE of England, to avoid further serious harm to chalk streams and to help restore flows.

DP5 Require a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that meets the standards in the GLVIA\(^\text{51}\) latest edition for developments in the AONB or affecting its setting.

All but the smallest projects should be accompanied by a LVIA to ensure that impacts are assessed and understood. This must address effects on both the protected landscape as a resource in its own right (whether visible or not), and effects on views and visual amenity (as experienced by people). The LVIA should be prepared early enough to inform the

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\(^{50}\) See also Nature (Policy NP4) and Land, Woodland & Water (LP13, LP21, Key Action 5).

\(^{51}\) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, produced by the Landscape Institute
evolution of a project, so that it is landscape-led, demonstrably contributes to conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB, and fully respects and integrates the special qualities of the AONB into the planning, design, construction and management of the development, from the very beginning of the project’s inception. Visualisations and photomontages can help developers, decision makers and communities understand the effects of proposals. LVIA’s should include night time effects as well as day time, to identify any risk of light pollution.

DP6 Support sustainable farming and forestry, nature conservation and facilities for visitors appropriate to the special qualities of the AONB.

Planning policies and decisions should encourage the Chilterns’ role as a haven for wildlife, a place to experience history and enjoy the outdoors. Types of developments most likely to benefit from the AONB, and in return bring benefits to the AONB, are those that are most compatible with conserving and enhancing its character and supporting public appreciation. These include sustainable farming and forestry, tourism businesses (e.g. accommodation, food and drink, visitor attractions, health and adventure challenges), tourism-related businesses (e.g. retail, arts and crafts, diversified farm businesses), industry reliant on resources unique to the Chilterns (e.g. Chilterns brickworks), countryside trades and rural skills (e.g. woodcrafts, flint working), businesses which directly benefit the environment (e.g. nature conservation and vernacular building repair) or that showcase its beauty and history (e.g. the Chilterns as a film location).

Conversely, developments most likely to be disadvantaged from an AONB location include those with no particular reason to be in the area, especially those offering little or no benefit to conserving and enhancing the character of the AONB. These tend to detract from public appreciation and blur the distinction between the AONB and outside. These include large new greenfield housing estates, large industrial activities, distribution and haulage, waste processing, and businesses with extensive built footprints that develop and grow rapidly.

DP7 Only support development that is of the highest standards of design that respects the natural beauty of the Chilterns, the traditional character of Chilterns vernacular buildings, and reinforces a sense of place and local distinctiveness.

Require a Design and Access Statement to accompany every application, explaining how it complies with the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide.

The Chilterns has a distinctive vernacular architecture based on the consistent use of local materials: Chilterns brick, clay roof tiles and flint. Attractive villages like Ewelme, Turville, Hambledon and Aldbury are among our most popular visitor destinations. New development of all types needs to respect vernacular architecture, settlement character and the local landscape. This will require developers to do more than use standard designs.

New design must also exhibit the highest environmental standards in terms of energy and water conservation whilst complementing the character the AONB. Local natural resources should be used in new construction (local timber, locally made bricks and tiles, clunch and flint) to continue the vernacular materials tradition and support the last remaining local producers, recognising their vital importance for historic buildings repair.
The Board has published guidance on design and the use of building materials which has been adopted as supplementary planning document by most of our local planning authorities. It covers topics such as the setting of buildings, the design of vernacular features and the use of traditional local materials.

[Photo caption: Classic Chilterns vernacular architecture at Turville: small-scale cottages of local brick and flint with clay tile roofs]

[Photo & caption: The Board runs the Chilterns Building Design Awards with the Chiltern Society to encourage and recognise good design. This new build Winery at Hundred Hills Vineyard, South Oxfordshire won the latest awards]

Conserving and enhancing natural beauty does not simply mean screening development behind vegetation or using designs which clad a standard house type with local materials.

[Photo & caption: Poor ‘anywhere’ designs fail to keep the Chilterns special and distinctive (Chinnor or Stokenchurch photos).]

Photo & caption: Grand new build projects can also be insensitive to the AONB. Stark, white, huge and angular this replacement dwelling, here viewed from the Chilterns cycleway, dominates the landscape in its siting and design.

DP8 Keep skies dark at night by only using light where and when needed. All new lighting should be the minimum required and meet or exceed guidance52 for intrinsically dark zones. Avoid architectural designs that spill light out of large areas of glazing.

The Chilterns AONB has relatively dark skies for the South East, making it a place people can still experience the wonder of starry skies and good for wildlife. AONBs are intrinsically dark environments (Zone E1 in the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance) and planning conditions should be applied to restrict and control lighting. Light pollution of all types should be first prevented, by avoiding light where it is not needed, and where it is, by designing lighting to mitigate harm, through shading, height of fixings, beam orientation, LUX, colour temperature in Kelvin and the proposed hours of use. For example, downward pointing, shielded, operated on timer, and with a ‘warm white’ colour temperature of 2700-Kelvin maximum.

Traditional Chilterns vernacular buildings have small windows. Moderns designs with large areas of glazing should be avoided so that buildings do not appear as boxes of light in the countryside at night, and glinting glazing in the daytime.

DP9 Ensure that the design and implementation of High Speed 2 complies with the HS2 Detailed Design Principles prepared by the AONB Review Group.

This document sets out design principles which could reasonably be applied to HS2 works in the Chilterns AONB and its setting, and which aim to achieve an exemplar landscape design for the project.

DP10 Make sure that all development that is permitted in the AONB or affecting its setting delivers a net gain for the Chilterns by

52 Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance GN01: 2011 Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light
• on-site improvements for biodiversity, landscape, the rights of way network, AONB visitor facilities and/or
• financial contributions, secured through s106\textsuperscript{53}, CIL\textsuperscript{54}, or offsetting schemes, towards wider green infrastructure projects that enhance the AONB by meeting the aims of this AONB Management Plan.

For many decades, development has not contributed to achieving wider goals or improvements in the AONB. There has been little compensatory investment for AONB conservation and restoration projects, and lack of a mechanism for individual developments to contribute to projects or offset the incremental increases each bring like traffic, recreation pressure, path erosion, and habitat reduction and severance.

This is changing, the introduction of Community Infrastructure Levy and use of biodiversity accounting provide a way for developments to fund green infrastructure and biodiversity projects. Avoiding harm, reducing harm and compensating for it is likely to play an increasing role in the development sector, although its use is controversial. Delivering on-site enhancements should come first before off-site contributions are considered. The Government is moving to an environmental net gain principle for development, with mandatory biodiversity net gain in the short term, and longer-term plans for environmental net gain. The Board recommends environmental net gain in nationally protected landscapes should include funding projects that connect people to the natural environment, maintain and expand the rights of way network, and restore and enhance natural beauty of the AONB.

We propose that all development in and affecting the AONB should contribute through on-site conservation and enhancement of the AONB, and/or (depending on its scale and impacts) contribute financially to projects which assist with delivering AONB Management Plan aims. Large-scale housing and growth proposed near the AONB will mean extra near neighbours of the Chilterns. This investment could repair and connect habitats, strengthen the AONB’s capacity for accommodating additional visitors without damage, create new walking and cycling green infrastructure links into the AONB, and provide suitable alternatives to visiting the Special Areas of Conservation. We will work with partners to develop a menu of green infrastructure AONB projects to be funded by development (see page # in implementation section).

Where a local community need is shown, support the development of well-designed, small-scale homes within villages which are affordable\textsuperscript{55} for people who work within or have long-standing family connections to the Chilterns AONB.

The Chilterns is becoming increasingly expensive as a place to live. Research by Savills using Land Registry data shows that house prices in the Chilterns AONB attracted a premium of 75% above the average house price for the counties, and 162% above the UK average:

\textsuperscript{53} Section 106 agreements are legal agreements between a planning authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer, that ensure that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken (under section 106 of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act).

\textsuperscript{54} The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008 as a tool for local authorities in England and Wales to help deliver infrastructure to support development.

\textsuperscript{55} Affordable housing is housing for eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Distinction</th>
<th>Average Second-hand Sale Price, 12 months to April 2018</th>
<th>5 Year Growth</th>
<th>Premium above County(s) average</th>
<th>Premium above UK average</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chilterns</td>
<td>AONB</td>
<td>£718,629</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>162%</td>
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</table>

Source: Savills Research using Land Registry

Although many homes have been permitted in the AONB in recent years, very little of it has been affordable housing. Regrettably, there have been no Rural Exceptions Schemes\[^{56}\] in the Chilterns for several years. The stock of affordable homes has dwindled through the Right to Buy, and in some areas, by taking away restrictive covenants designed to prevent former council housing being re-sold later as holiday homes or second homes. Rural pubs, village shops and barns are being lost to residential conversion, while smaller homes and bungalows seem attractive propositions for redevelopment into luxury large replacement dwellings.

Part of the cultural heritage of the Chilterns is lost when families with long local connections move away. Outdoor work in farming, forestry, conservation land management, tourism and public services is typically low paid, making it hard for people with the skills the AONB needs to stay. Agricultural occupancy conditions have been removed, reducing the stock of tied accommodation that goes with a job.

We need new approaches to make sure the right kind of housing is being built. This does not mean proposing any extra housing development in the Chilterns, already 300-400 homes a year are approved in this AONB, the challenge is changing who they are for, so that homes are available and affordable for local people. Sensitively-designed conversions, infill, rural exceptions sites and community-led housing schemes in the villages of the AONB can benefit the AONB. They are best when of a small-scale and meeting local needs.

**DP12**  
Support sympathetic proposals that enhance the Chilterns as a place to visit, live, explore and enjoy. Protect existing visitor and community facilities, such as rural pubs, public transport, B&Bs, youth hostels, village shops and cafes. Support sensitively designed new visitor facilities.

Small-scale, carefully-sited and well-designed proposals that provide or enhance community facilities are likely to be welcome. Proposals that involve active travel into and across the Chilterns by walking, cycling, horse riding, bus and train, rather than private car are the most compatible with AONB designation purposes.

Existing facilities should be protected from loss or change of use, such as rural pubs, village shops, public transport and community buildings for communities and visitors. They are important assets and once lost are hard to replace.

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\[^{56}\] Rural Exceptions Schemes are small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be allowed for housing. They seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection.
### O3 Restore natural beauty

#### DP13 Support opportunities for enhancing the AONB by removing derelict or detracting developments and infrastructure.

There are some places in the AONB where buildings and structures like pylons, rail gantries, telecoms masts, television masts, waste sites, minerals sites, and farm infrastructure have scarred the beauty of the Chilterns. The removal of such unsightly buildings and structures, typically added in the period since 1900, could help restore beauty and rural character. Infrastructure providers should remove all redundant masts and equipment. We welcome continued investment in undergrounding overhead electricity lines in the AONB and recommend that that all new supplies should be undergrounded unless there are ecological or archaeological constraints to this.

#### DP14 Avoid new or upgraded infrastructure (roads, railways, airports, pylons, masts etc) which harm the AONB landscape, nature, air quality, tranquillity or the visitor experience. Fully assess impacts on the AONB, including increased recreation pressure, traffic, overflying and severance of ecological connectivity in the AONB. Avoid, mitigate and compensate to achieve a net gain for the AONB.

In recent years, growing traffic volumes, speeding and rat running through the AONB have brought more noise, motion, air pollution into the AONB. Wildlife-rich verges and ancient sunken lanes are being eroded and damaged by vehicles passing one another. Our most highly protected natural habitats in the Chilterns, the three Special Areas of Conservation, are all sensitive to air pollution and are all exceeding critical loads, which may lead to a loss of rare species. There are also safety risks for those wanting to enjoy the Chilterns on foot, bicycle and horseback.

Unsympathetic, over-engineered road schemes and excessive street lighting can further harm the AONB. We have produced design advice on sympathetic management of Chilterns Highways in guidance produced with the County Councils.

Railways offer sustainable travel options to the Chilterns but also involve noise and, in the case of rail electrification, visual intrusion to beautiful landscapes. A whole new railway, HS2, will be constructed through the Chilterns AONB at its widest point, bringing severance and major permanent impacts on the landscape. On its own, this is enough change for the Chilterns to accommodate for a century. However, other pressures continue, like airport expansion at Heathrow and Luton which could result in more aircraft over-flying the AONB and harm its tranquillity. The effects on the Chilterns AONB must be assessed in full and cumulatively with other projects early in the decision-making process.

Harm to nationally designated landscapes is not something that can be offset, it is not possible to create a landscape of this unique natural beauty elsewhere as a substitute. The mitigation hierarchy in environmental policy and best practice prioritises 1) the avoidance of harm; before 2) identifying all possible mitigation; and only then deals with 3) compensatory measures in relation to residual impacts. Compensation is a last resort.

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57 See Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Highways in the Chilterns

Large national projects like HS2 are triggering a requirement for major investment in landscape to compensate (in some way) for harm.

**DP15** Seek opportunities to remove or replace existing inappropriate external lighting to restore dark skies at night.

Householders and businesses can take simple steps to reduce light pollution, from angling existing lights downwards, to fitting timers, to replacing existing lighting with designs appropriate for intrinsically dark zones. Farms, businesses, community facilities, equestrian facilities and golf courses can also play an important role in reducing light pollution.

**Key Actions**

1) Work together to ensure all development plans covering the Chilterns conserve and enhance the AONB, for example by incorporating the Chilterns AONB model policy and exploring the scope for joint development plan documents for the AONB.

2) Apply the CRoW Act 2000 Section 85 duty and refer to it when making decisions on planning proposals in or affecting the Chilterns AONB.

3) Apply the advice in the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide to ensure high quality sympathetic development.

4) Encourage innovative mechanisms for rural affordable housing compatible with conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.

5) Work together to develop AONB enhancement projects that can be funded by development through s106 contributions, CIL and funding packages to compensate for the impacts of urban growth or infrastructure projects.
11. Implementation and Monitoring

The creation of a Management Plan for the Chilterns AONB is led by the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) on behalf of those who have a responsibility or duty for the Chilterns; and for those who have an interest in and commitment to caring for the Chilterns.

The CCB has gathered feedback and input from the public, partners and stakeholders to create this plan. The plan describes what is needed to continue to conserve and enhance the AONB and to engage and benefit people and sets out key areas for partnership action. The Management Plan is high-level and to implement the plan, the CCB will work with partners to agree and take forward detailed action plans.

These detailed action plans will take account of the new Environmental Land Management system once agreed and outcomes of the Glover Review of National Parks and AONBs.

Implementation

Implementation requires three key components to be secured:

- partnership working;
- capacity and expertise; and
- appropriate resourcing.

Many organisations have a remit to deliver elements of this Management Plan and all potential partners will be invited to work with the CCB to plan implementation.

To ensure this Management Plan is delivered, it is necessary for the following to be in place:

1. Secure funding from central government for the CCB to allow it to lead and facilitate the implementation and carry out core functions such as planning advice.

2. Commitment and funding from local authority partners who have a duty to care for the AONB and contribute to the CCB to ensure the duty is co-ordinated effectively across authorities.

3. Support from farmers, landowners, land agents and land managers for policies and actions to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB, for example, working to shared conservation objectives through farmland clusters.

4. Commitment from partner organisations to deliver the critical actions which fall within their remit e.g. the maintenance of Rights of Way by local authorities; low flow alleviation work by water companies and under grounding of power lines by utility companies.

5. Strengthened relationships with parish councils, community organisations and NGOs within and near the AONB.

6. A new Environmental Land Management system, replacing Common Agricultural Policy agri-environment schemes, which provides support for land and woodland management, targeting natural capital protection, nature’s recovery and access, providing public funding for public benefit.

7. Joint working to develop a menu of green infrastructure AONB enhancement projects that can be funded by development through Section 106 contributions, Community Infrastructure Levy and funding packages to offset the impacts of growth, recreation pressure and infrastructure projects in and around the Chilterns.

9. Commitment from partner organisations to pool resources and expertise on priority project work e.g. Thames Water and Affinity Water providing support to the Chalk Streams Project.

10. Design and development of initiatives which attract additional sources of funding e.g. LEADER funding for the Chilterns Walking Festival and HLF funding for Beacons of the Past.

11. An effective partnership forum which allows partners to collaborate effectively, agree key actions and share best practice from one another.

12. Contributions from many people who give their time freely, volunteering for conservation charities, maintaining footpaths and nature reserves, acting as walking festival walk guides etc.

13. Datasets for monitoring outcomes which are accurate, accessible, repeatable, up to date, and relevant to the geographic area of the AONB.

How will the delivery of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan be monitored?

This Management Plan sets out a series of policies and actions which, together, aim to

- conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns
- enhance public understanding and enjoyment of the special quality of the AONB

Effective long-term planning and decision-making requires evidence of the condition of the AONB together with an understanding of long-term changes and drivers for change.

In the 2008 – 2013 Management Plan the CCB set out a series of 20 Headline condition monitoring indicators, and the first State of the Chilterns Environment report was published in 2009. These condition monitoring indicators have been refined and adapted over the intervening years and reported against at intervals.

Gathering the evidence against these headline indicators is an ongoing challenge. Many of the indicators originally proposed cannot be assessed as datasets are no longer collected or costs of doing so have become prohibitive. There have also been changes the frequency of collection, making long term trend monitoring difficult.

Taking account of these challenges, our proposal for monitoring and evaluation over the period of the current plan is to create a two-tier set of monitoring indicators: core and theme indicators.

Core monitoring indicators

This is the set of indicators which we consider essential for long term trend monitoring and which we will aim to report on regularly (at least twice) over the course of the plan period (subject to data availability).

These are based largely on datasets provided to AONBs by Natural England or readily available from other sources. Fulfilling this reporting relies upon these partners or third parties providing the data.
Over the course of the plan period we will work with partners to develop a series of additional measures (including themed studies and indicators) to deepen our understanding and provide insight to inform delivery of the policy objectives of the Management Plan.

We hope to make greater use of aerial photography and remote sensing to monitor change.

**CORE MONITORING INDICATORS (data sourced primarily from Defra agencies supplemented with local data, where available)**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Farmland management</td>
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<td>- area of overall take up and of specific options</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- % of Utilisable Agricultural Area in ELMS</td>
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<td>- predecessor scheme, area of take up</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Woodland management</td>
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<td>Priority habitat</td>
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<td>Sites of scientific interest</td>
<td>% SSSI units in favourable condition</td>
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<td>- condition of SSSI units by broad habitat</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- % geological SSSI units</td>
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<td>Water bodies</td>
<td>% of water bodies in good ecological status (Water Framework Directive)</td>
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<td>Kilometres of watercourse improved or enhanced</td>
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<td>Heritage assets</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>% at risk;</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>% in improved condition</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Land enhanced</td>
<td>Area of land in positive conservation management</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Volunteering</td>
<td>% change in number of volunteers/ volunteer days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THEME INDICATORS

We will work with partners to devise measures in relation to each of the following themes:

1. **Conservation and enhancement of natural beauty**
   
   We will explore options to measure:
   
   o Landscape change e.g. fixed-point photography/ volunteer survey
   o Invasive non-native species – spread, and number/impact of management schemes e.g. for deer, grey squirrels
   o % change in key species groups and character species – presence, range, abundance
   o Number of non-designated heritage sites identified & mapped
   o River fly monitoring as measure of pollution incidents
   o Length of hedgerow restored per year
   o Number of hedgerow trees planted per year
   o Length of field margin managed per year
   o Net biodiversity gain
   o Investment of developer contributions in the AONB & its setting
   o Number of planning applications in the AONB per year (above agreed threshold)
   o Air quality
   o Tranquillity/noise

2. **Enjoyment and understanding of the special qualities of the Chilterns**
   
   We will explore options to measure:
   
   o Number of young people engaged
   o Number of community groups engaged
   o Quality of rights of way and accessibility – survey of walk leaders and footpath monitors
   o Web hits/ leaflet downloads
   o Leisure use of the Chilterns – new visitor survey, including survey of ‘non-users’
   o Number of members of conservation groups in the Chilterns (e.g. BBOWT, Chiltern Society, National Trust, Woodland Trust etc.)
   o Perceptions of the value of the AONB
   o Increased number of rights of way, perhaps as permissive or equivalent
   o Additional Access Land and Local Green Space designation

3. **Social and economic wellbeing**
   
   We will explore options to measure:
   
   o Participation in health walks
   o Growth of population with AONB and within 5km of AONB
   o Number / value of visitors/tourists.
   o Numbers employed in tourism
   o Number of rural exceptions sites and community-led housing schemes to meet local needs
Business Plan and Budget 2019-20

Author: Sue Holden, Chief Officer

Summary: The Chilterns Conservation Board Business Plan sets out the priorities for the staff team for the year 2019-20.

Purpose of Report: This paper introduces the Business Plan and Budget in 2019-20, which were approved by Executive Committee on 22 January 2019.

Background

The Chilterns Conservation Board Business Plan is produced to guide the staff team’s work for the coming year and for DEFRA as part of the claim for our core grant.

This year the plan takes as its starting point the new Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-24 objectives and these are referenced where relevant to show how activity is contributing to the Management Plan.

The plan consists of five functional activity tables with a suite of key performance indicators and, where known, a set of future years activity. The ‘Lead’ column shows the initials of members of staff or CCC (Chalk Cherries & Chairs).

Key changes

Eight priorities are highlighted for 2019-20 and a set of key activities, in functional areas, which the staff team will deliver.

2019-20 sees a significant step up in our project work, ensuring the CCB delivers greater impact, working collaboratively with partners. We are adding the Chalk Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme, a great step forward in landscape conservation. We will see an increase in activity from Beacons of the Past and from the new Thames Water Chalk Streams project. We are passionate about the North Chilterns Chalkscapes project which offers an amazing opportunity to Luton and its surrounds. We will resubmit this HLF bid because the need and potential for the project is so great.

We also have agreement, subject to clarification of detailed plans, to a grant from the HS2 Business and Local Economy Fund (BLEF), which will add another staff post and bring in a further £120,000.

External Environment

There are significant events in the external environment which have potential implications for the CCB. The government’s Landscapes Review, the design of post-Brexit land management support, an Agriculture Bill, an Environment Bill and local government reorganisation create potential change and potential opportunities. At the time of drafting the plan we are not in a position to assess all the implications, but it is crucial that we plan activities which position us for taking advantage of opportunities. Page 2 of the plan gives a summary of key external factors.
**Budget 2019-20**

Our total income and expenditure are expected to reach £1.3 million in 2019-20, due to project delivery. This gives a higher ‘return’ on our core grants from DEFRA and local authorities, an important argument for maintaining public sector investment.

Current DEFRA arrangements end 31 March 2020 and that the 2020/21 Budgeted Income has been prepared on the basis that public sector income will continue at the same level as 2019/20.

Core Income for 2019/20 is projected to be £547,515. This comprises public sector income together with external Income generated by the CCB from fees, sale of merchandise etc.

Core Expenditure is budgeted for 2019/20 at £550,070 compared to a 2018/19 expected outturn of £524,493. The largest contributors to increased costs being employment, recruitment costs, a new website (the cost of which was delayed from 2018/19), and monitoring and evidence, which we will increase to set a new baseline for the 2019-24 Management Plan.

The CCB is budgeting a 2019/20 core deficit of £2,555. Net project expenditure is budgeted as £21,750 resulting in a net deficit of £24,305. This net deficit should be viewed in context with the expected positive outturn for 2018/19 of £12,369. This is partly caused by the delay of certain core expenditure e.g. the website and the timing of project activity such as the Lidar survey.

The budget matches income and expenditure to the periods when it was earned or expended as this gives a more meaningful analysis of the CCB finances. Although the matching concept is a generally accepted accounting principle it is contrary to local authority accounting rules which accounts for income and expenditure when it is received or paid no matter what period it relates to.

The budget for 2019/20 together with the forecasts for 2020/21 show that the cumulative draw on reserves is estimated at £7,406. This partly reflects the contributions committed by the CCB to certain projects.

**Recommendation**

1. The Board are asked to note the CCB Business Plan and Budget 2019-20.
## Chiltern Conservation Board

### Budget 2019-20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>2018-19 Annual Budget</th>
<th>Projected to 31 March 2019</th>
<th>2019-20 Annual Budget</th>
<th>2020-21 Annual Budget</th>
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<td>Engagement budget</td>
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<td>£5,000</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Plan review</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm projects</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning Consultancy</td>
<td>£9,200</td>
<td>£9,200</td>
<td>£9,600</td>
<td>£9,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring and Evidence</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
<td>£10,000</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outstanding Chilterns mag.</td>
<td>£6,000</td>
<td>£6,000</td>
<td>£7,000</td>
<td>£7,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>£20,000</td>
<td>£15,000</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>£4,250</td>
<td>£4,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
<td>£3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>£3,500</td>
<td>£3,500</td>
<td>£3,525</td>
<td>£3,550</td>
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<tr>
<td>National AONB</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs centres &lt; £3000 budget</td>
<td>£11,710</td>
<td>£10,030</td>
<td>£14,300</td>
<td>£14,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Expenditure</strong></td>
<td>£551,386</td>
<td><strong>524,493</strong></td>
<td>£550,070</td>
<td>£524,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Net income / (expenditure)</strong></td>
<td>-£3,445</td>
<td><strong>£27,898</strong></td>
<td>-£2,555</td>
<td><strong>£23,280</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Project Net income / (expenditure)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>2019-20</th>
<th>2020-21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Net Income (Expenditure)</td>
<td>-£33,428</td>
<td>-£24,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total income</td>
<td>£998,403</td>
<td>£13,124,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total expenditure</td>
<td>£1,031,831</td>
<td>£133,6770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total net</td>
<td>-£33,428</td>
<td>-£24,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Budget surplus/(deficit)</td>
<td>£12,369</td>
<td>-£11,936</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chilterns Conservation Board Business Plan 2019-20

The Chilterns Conservation Board in 2019-20

The Chilterns Conservation Board aims to be an organisation which has significant IMPACT, with a high PROFILE, with sustainable RESOURCES and with effective PARTNERSHIPS to deliver our purposes.

In 2019, we aim to lay strong foundations for CCB to lead, inspire and influence delivery of the 2019 – 2024 AONB Management Plan objectives.

Key priorities 2019-2020

Partnership

1. Inspire, influence and encourage partners to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB through the launch and delivery of the new AONB Management Plan
2. Convene and lead a new Chilterns Partnership to engage partners, enable collaborative working, and increase collective decision making.

Protection

3. Actively pursue the opportunities for strengthening the status and protection of the Chilterns AONB through the Landscapes Review and through our application for a change of our status.
4. Strengthen our advocacy in relation to major infrastructure and housing development. Where development is approved, secure developer contributions to enhance the Chilterns and deliver net environmental gain.
5. Strengthen our influence on land management and engage with new Environmental Land Management Scheme design.
6. Assess and communicate effectively evidence on the State of the Chilterns, its natural capital and landscape.

Projects

7. Develop and deliver projects which contribute to Management Plan objectives, including Chalk Cherries and Chairs LPS, Chalk Streams Project, Beacons of the Past, Walking Festival, Chalkscapes; share benefits and learning from these projects.
8. Identify, develop and resource new opportunities to care for the AONB giving priority to increasing and broadening our engagement (e.g. more diverse/urban) and demonstrating the value of the AONB to society (e.g. projects which deliver volunteering/health and well-being).
The External Environment

The significant issues
- The need for land reform
- The state of nature and natural capital
- Housing and infrastructure pressure
- Society’s health and well-being
- Impacts of climate change

The significant events
- Environmental Land Management Scheme design (exiting CAP)
- Landscapes Review (and government response)
- Buckinghamshire Unitary Council (19 hubs, 5 planning units, councillor representation, financial contribution)
- Spending Review 2020-24
- Environment Bill & creation of new Environmental Protection body
- Agricultural Bill

CCB Response
- Launch Management Plan 2019-24
- Promote a new AONB Partnership approach
- Gather evidence to explain call for enhanced status
- Promote our contribution to Environmental Land Management
## Landscape & Conservation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Plan Objective</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>2019-20 Priority Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| N01, N02, N03, L01, L02, L03, L04 | NJ/CCC | **Strengthen influence on land management**  
- Establish new farmland and woodland clusters and land management advice programmes.  
- Identify and develop opportunities for landscape and biodiversity enhancement |
| N03, D02, L02, N01, N01, N02, N04, N07, H01, L03, E03, E04, E05 | LM/ KD/ NJ/ AB, NJ CCC/ KD/CR | **Make the case for & secure investment to enhance the AONB**  
- Make the case for and secure developer contributions to offset impacts of development and/or enhance the AONB including Ox-Cams Growth Arc, Luton and Heathrow airport expansion and UKPN/National Grid (LEI)  
- Assess and pursue options to influence delivery of Environmental and Management Scheme (ELMS) in the Chilterns.  
- Develop and secure Review Group sign off for proposals for HS2 Additional Projects investment (£3m fund). |
| N07, GP3, N01-N07, GP3, N05, H03, L08, S03, S02, S03, S04, E04 | KD/CCC, KD/NJ, KD/CCC KD | **Inform, plan and inspire collaborative action in the natural environment sector in the Chilterns**  
- Establish a Chilterns Natural Environment Advisory Group (part of new Chilterns partnership).  
- Create a Natural Environment Delivery Plan to direct effort and investment.  
- Work with partners to create a robust baseline to track environmental change and impact and create evidence base for National Park application.  
- Develop a new, engaging format for State of Environment reporting as basis for communications campaign. |
| N01, N02, N04, N07, H01, L03, E03, E04, E05 | KD/CR | **Develop and secure funding for the Chalkscapes initiative in the North Chilterns** |
| N01, N02, N04, N07, H01, L03, E03, E04, E05 | KD/CCC CR | **Chalk, Cherries and Chairs LPS**  
- Recruit delivery team, and deliver yr 1 programme (wildlife, history, community projects).  
- Continue to fundraise to expand scheme & create legacy funding |
| N06, L05, L06 | AB | **Chalk Streams Project** |
### Key performance Indicators

1. 2 new Farmer Clusters established (c. 12 landowners covering c 5,000 ha involved, 8 site specific plans written and agreed)
2. Land management advice provided to 15+ land managers.
3. Natural Environment Delivery Plan and baseline drafted
4. £1m + of Additional Projects funding allocated
5. Funding secured for Chalkscapes Initiative and Chalk, Cherries and Chairs LPS
6. Secure developer contributions from at least 2 new sources (e.g. Luton Airport, LEI, Network Rail)

### Future Years Activity to 2024

- 9 farmer clusters established and delivering environmental enhancement (subject to new funding)
- 90 landowners engaged within farmer clusters, with 45 site specific plans agreed and in delivery (subject to new funding)
- c 45,000 ha in active and positive conservation management (subject to new funding)
- £100,000 funding secured to offer support and advice to landowners
- £1m secured for habitat management across the AONB, with £50,000 income from partners for delivery of Natural Environment Delivery Plan.
- Funding secured for Chalkscapes Initiative and delivery underway;
- CCC scheme outputs and targets successfully delivered; sustainable legacy secured. Benefits and learning rolled out across AONB.
- Beacons of the Past successfully delivered, and legacy projects in place.
- AONB wide Tracking the Impact full coverage of 100 x1km squares for birds, butterflies & plants, and trends published (subject to new funding)
- LIDAR data used as springboard to engage 50+ parishes and local groups with the AONB
- Website developed to include best practice land management advice.
- Practical works on three hillforts to improve conservation, interpretation and access
- Securing £75k in supplemental funding to deliver community heritage projects tangential to the BotP deliverables
## Engagement, social and economic wellbeing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Plan Objective</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>2019-20 Priority Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EO1 – EO5 SO1 – SO4</td>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Research and develop Chilterns Explorer Passport – aim to launch in 2019, and through this project, engage a wider range of partners, secure sponsorship and build volunteer involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Promote Chilterns Local Produce and secure new funding to scale up with a ‘Food, Drink and Crafts’ project bid, link to Chalk, Cherries and Chairs and Visit Bucks activity. Conclude the Chilterns craft activity part-funded by the Radcliffe Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Deliver two Chilterns Walking Festivals in 2019. Secure funding to expand the Chilterns Walking Festivals and ensure their sustainability beyond Oct 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Commence delivery of the BLEF tourism project if funding successful, and apply for other funding if not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AV/CR</td>
<td>Launch pilot health and wellbeing project in Lane End with a view to developing and securing funding for a larger-scale project within 3 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Review visitor data and research additional sources, identify gaps and cost options for sourcing additional data. Lead a working group to assess data needs, and to collaborate on joint resourcing and commissioning of additional research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Oversee and coordinate the development and delivery of access projects through the HS2 Additional Projects Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Undertake preliminary thinking on a Chilterns visitor management initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Develop a public engagement project aimed at urban audiences (Reading and Luton)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key performance Indicators

1. Numbers of people engaged through the Chilterns Walking Festival – target 3,000 participants in 2019.
2. Chilterns Walking Festival Facebook followers 800 by end 2019
3. Number of partner organisations/walk leaders involved in the Walking Festivals – target 100 in 2019
4. Visit Chilterns/Chilterns AONB web stats (including walks downloaded)
5. Numbers of Chilterns Tourism Network Facebook followers
6. Numbers signing up to Chilterns Pass in 3 years – 5,000

### Future Years Activity to 2024

- Develop a visitor management initiative
- Develop a public engagement project aimed at urban audiences (Reading and Luton)
## Planning and development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Plan Objective</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>2019-20 Priority Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DO1 – DO3</td>
<td>LM</td>
<td>Influence all local plans affecting the Chilterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LM/MS</td>
<td>Intervene in all significant planning applications and infrastructure proposals that would harm the Chilterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LM/NJ</td>
<td>Make a positive impact on design of HS2 structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LM/NJ</td>
<td>Develop thinking and practice on funding from development for AONB conservation and enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LKM/VP</td>
<td>Develop communications and online tools to improve the standard of planning and design in the Chilterns and equip others to comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LM</td>
<td>Co-organise the Chilterns Buildings Design Awards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key performance Indicators

1) 40 x CCB responses on local plans and other consultations
2) 120 x CCB responses on planning applications
3) Chilterns Buildings Design Awards delivered
4) Interactive map of planning casework live on the CCB website

### Future Years Activity to 2024

- A mechanism in place for assessing, receiving and investing funds from development in AONB conservation and enhancement
- An initiative for encouraging well designed affordable homes for local communities
- Explore opportunities for Chilterns AONB policy documents from local government reorganisation in Bucks
- Use GIS to screen, manage, publicise and monitor planning casework.
- Deliver the assistance on neighbourhood planning via CCC Planning for the Future project
- Publish advice on lighting design (if additional funding secured)
# Resources and Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Plan Objective</th>
<th>Management Lead</th>
<th>2019-20 Priority Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fundraising &amp; Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>CR</td>
<td>1. Lead fundraising activities and secure funding for current and planned projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Identify and scope potential new project opportunities by working with staff team and partner organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Continue to undertake fundraising activities which contribute to income generation, including corporate fundraising, fundraising from trusts and foundations and promoting the Chilterns Champions/Ambassadors programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Develop the Chilterns AONB volunteering offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communications</strong></td>
<td>VP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>1. Create and deliver a communications programme which promotes the launch of the Management Plan and inspires and influences stakeholders to work in partnership to achieve its outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Develop and implement a new website for the CCB/AONB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Provide communications activities which respond to external events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Support and influence communications activities for existing projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Make communications more efficient and streamlined by continuing to invest in paid-for automation such as Mailchimp, SurveyMonkey and Hubspot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Key performance Indicators

### Fundraising
1. Fundraising target for current and planned projects:
2. Two new project opportunities identified and agreed for development
3. Income generation targets: 2 x corporate supporters
4. CCB volunteering: 2 new volunteers recruited. Plan scoped for AONB volunteering scheme.
5. Management Plan/partnership event planned and implemented

### Communications
1. Communications programme in place for 1. Management Plan, 2. External events comms and 3. Existing projects comms to appropriate audiences, including general public, stakeholders and partners, using the full range of communications activities including print, electronic and social media
2. Brand guidelines developed and shared
| 3. New website in place by end of year  
| 4. Hubspot continues to be tailored and developed to meet CCB communications needs |

**Future Years Activity to 2024**

- Match funding secured for North Chilterns project in time for bid submission
- Walking Festival sustained and expanded beyond 2019
- Ongoing pipeline of new projects for the AONB prepared with CCB leading new project development across the AONB, working strategically with partners
- Partnership approach to fundraising and new project development in place
- CCB acts as lead organisation for convening volunteering opportunities in the AONB
- New website in place, individual projects including 'Visit Chilterns' included
## Organisation and Governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Plan Objective</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>2019-20 Priority Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>SH</td>
<td>Publish and launch AONB Management Plan 2019-24 including a communications campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GP2</td>
<td>KD</td>
<td>Initiate a new partnership approach to lead implementation of the management plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GP1</td>
<td>SH</td>
<td>Engage with the Landscapes Review (and make case for change/strengthening of status of Chilterns and reviewing the case for National Park designation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>SH</td>
<td>Ensure effective recruitment and induction process for new Chief Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GP2</td>
<td>SH</td>
<td>Engage with national and regional AONB family activities such Landscapes Review and brexit/Environmental Land Management Scheme design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>Board</td>
<td>Review Statutory Requirements and Code of Governance document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>Board</td>
<td>Increase board engagement, networking and influencing of local and national government and external partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GP2</td>
<td>SH</td>
<td>Build local authority engagement and commitment in the light of local government change (propose new partnership and support agreement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>KD</td>
<td>Share learning with staff from Taking the Lead HLF/NAAONB project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key performance indicators

1. 100 partners agree to support implementation of the Management Plan
2. Agreement to a partnership action programme for next 2 years
3. Support four national campaigns and initiatives
4. Maintain local authority financial contribution (25% of core grant)

### Future Years Activity to 2024

Engage with Buckinghamshire unitary changes
Work with DEFRA on changes to governance structure (as required by above)
Campaign for change of status, national park consideration and boundary review
Work with NA and DEFRA on mechanisms to deliver a new ELMS
Item 9  

Safeguarding Policy

Author: Sue Holden, Chief Officer

Summary: The Chilterns Conservation Board should have a Safeguarding Policy in line with other public sector organisations.

Purpose of Report: To note the Chilterns Conservation Board Safeguarding Policy which has been approved by Executive Committee

Introduction

Safeguarding is an important objective in our work, but this has not previously been enshrined in policy as it is in many organisations particularly in the public sector.

Safeguarding means the protection of everyone, but especially children and at-risk adults, from any harm which might arise from our work. We involve volunteers, hold events and seek public engagement in our work and this is increasing with the expansion of our project work.

A policy has been drafted referencing policies of other organisations and the guidance from various bodies includes NCVO and the NHS.

The draft policy was discussed and amended by the Executive Committee. The full Policy is appended to this cover paper.

The Policy applies to board members when they are taking part in events and activities with the Chilterns Conservation Board.

Recommendation

1. The Board is asked to note the Safeguarding Policy.
Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused by contact with the Chilterns Conservation Board. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff or personnel associated with the Chilterns Conservation Board
- The design and implementation of Chilterns Conservation Board projects and activities

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples’ health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

The Chilterns Conservation Board also wishes to protect its staff from unfair allegations and to enable them to ensure that they do not find themselves in potentially compromising situations.

Scope

- All staff contracted by Chilterns Conservation Board and its projects
- Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or activities related to the Chilterns Conservation Board, including but not limited to: consultants; volunteers; contractors; board members; event attendees

This policy fits with and adds to the HR Policies and Health and Safety policies.

Policy Statement

The Chilterns Conservation Board believes that everyone we come into contact with has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Chilterns Conservation Board will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff or associated personnel.

This policy covers child safeguarding, adult safeguarding and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. Chilterns Conservation Board commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

Prevention

Chilterns Conservation Board will:

- Ensure all staff are familiar with and know their responsibilities within this policy
- Offer online training for those who work directly with children and at risk adults

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1 NHS ‘What is Safeguarding? Easy Read’ 2011
• Design and undertake its programmes and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from contact with the Chilterns Conservation Board. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated
• Implement safeguarding checks when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel, using Disclosure & Barring checks for roles which may have contact with children or adults at risk
• Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly by the line manager

Chilterns Conservation Board staff and associated personnel must not, in the course of their work:
• Touch or engage in inappropriate physical contact any anyone
• Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18
• Sexually abuse or exploit children or at risk adults
• Subject any person, child or at risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
• Engage in any exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking
• Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of our work
• Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of our work, since they are based on inherently unequal power in the relationship

Additionally, Chilterns Conservation Board staff and associated personnel are obliged to:
• Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy including the use of risk assessments for all activities and events involving children and at risk adults
• Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by a staff member or associated personnel to their manager, the HR Advisor or Chief Officer.
• Ensure that, where possible, staff and volunteers are not left alone with a child or vulnerable adult
• Obtain consent before photographing or filming children or vulnerable adults

Reporting

Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to their line manager. If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to their line manager, they may report to another senior staff member.

Chilterns Conservation Board will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

Response

Decisions about how a complaint will be handled will be made by the HR Advisor and Chief Officer. In the first instance safeguarding concerns will be investigated the HR Advisor or Chief Officer. If the initial investigation and review upholds the concern, the HR adviser and Chief Officer will decide the implications, taking any conclusion to the HR Panel of the Board.

Chilterns Conservation Board will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of policy.
If necessary, the Chilterns Conservation Board will pass information on to an appropriate agency such as social services.

**Confidentiality**

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only and should always be kept secure.
Glossary of Terms

Beneficiary of Assistance
Someone who directly receives goods or services from the organisation’s programme. Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that the organization serves and can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

Child
A person below the age of 18

Harm
Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual’s rights

Psychological harm
Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)
The term used by the humanitarian and development community to refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General’s Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)

Safeguarding
In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples’ health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect:

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our work and projects. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be survivor-centred and protect those accused until proven guilty.

Sexual abuse
The term ‘sexual abuse’ means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual exploitation
The term ‘sexual exploitation’ means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily,

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2 NHS ‘What is Safeguarding? Easy Read’ 2011
socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

**Survivor**

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term ‘survivor’ is often used in preference to ‘victim’ as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual’s choice how they wish to identify themselves.

**At risk adult**

Sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.
Item 10  **HS2 Landscape and Biodiversity Connectivity Project**  
**Author:** Kath Daly, Countryside Officer  
**Summary:** The Chilterns AONB HS2 Review Group has identified landscape and biodiversity connectivity enhancement as a high priority for the £3m Additional Projects Fund. CCB has offered to lead the delivery of this project.  
**Purpose of Report:** To seek approval to enter into a contract with Chiltern District Council for CCB to lead delivery of this project  

**Introduction**  
1. The HS2 AONB Review Group has identified Landscape and Biodiversity Connectivity as one of the priorities for spend from the Additional Projects fund.  
2. Proposals have been developed for a project to enhance landscape and ecological connectivity across the Misbourne Valley. This will involve working with farmers and other land managers to develop and deliver restoration and enhancement proposals.  
3. The project will prioritise the areas most affected by severance due to HS2 and seek opportunities to enhance ecological networks. An initial desk study has identified gaps in connectivity and therefore priority opportunity areas.  
4. A 5-year project proposal has been developed, to be led by CCB on behalf of the Review Group and to run concurrently alongside the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS). The proposal is for the project to be integrated into and managed as part of the LPS. The funding available through the Review Group will match fund the HLF (now renamed National Lottery Heritage Fund) grant and allow for additional investment in the HS2 corridor.  
5. It is proposed that up to £500,000 is made available from the Additional Project fund to cover the costs of this 5-year project. Landowners will be offered a tailored package which could include specialist advice, training, volunteer work parties, capital works (landscape/habitat enhancement) and habitat/species monitoring.  
6. The overall aim is to significantly increase the area of priority habitat in active/positive management by improving existing and creating more, connected sites.  
7. It is proposed that CCB be the delivery lead for this project, taking on responsibility for reporting under Heads of Terms agreed with the Chiltern District Council (the Administering body).  

**Recommendation**  
1. That the Board approves the proposal to enter a contract with Chiltern District Council to lead delivery of this project.