

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET 08 MAY 2025.
Subject	ENDORSEMENT OF THE COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025 – 2030.
Wards affected	All wards within the Cotswolds National Landscape
Accountable member	Cllr Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning Email: Juliet.Layton@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Geraldine LeCointe, Assistant Director – Planning Email: Geraldine.LeCointe@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Sophia Price, Heritage and Design Manager Email: Sophia.price@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To seek the Council's endorsement of the Cotswolds National Landscape (Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty - AONB) Management Plan 2025 – 2030.
Annexes	Annex A - CNL Management Plan 2025 -2030
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: Endorse the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030 for use as: • part of the evidence base for the review of the Local Plan; • part of the evidence base for the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans; • part of the evidence base for the preparation and implementation of relevant Council strategies, policies and projects; • as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications (where compatible with relevant Local Plan and national policy); and



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

	• to inform the development and delivery of the Council's services and activities.
Corporate priorities	• Respond to the climate crisis • Provide socially rented homes • Make our local plan green to the core • Support health and wellbeing • Enable a vibrant economy
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	The Cotswolds National Landscape Board (Cotswolds Conservation Board) have undertaken extensive consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, including Cotswold District Council, in the preparation of the management plan.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan ([CNL-Management-Plan-2025-2030-FINAL](#)) is a key mechanism for conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) as well as increasing the understanding and enjoyment of the National Landscape's special qualities. The CNL was previously and is still legally referred to as the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Beauty.
- 1.2 The new Management Plan and its vision place increased emphasis on the climate and ecological emergencies as well as access to nature and the countryside. The evidence within the Plan and the policies will assist in decision making and the preparation of Council policies and projects.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Cotswolds National Landscape Board adopted the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025 -2030¹ in February 2025. The Plan is a statutory plan, under the provisions of section 89(1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000² (CROW). If the CNL Board (the Board) was not charged with the requirement to produce a Management Plan the local authorities would collectively have to draft, consult and publish a plan.
- 2.2 While the Board is responsible for preparing and publishing the Management Plan and will have a significant role in its implementation, the policies outlined in the Management Plan are also designed to guide the efforts of other stakeholders, such as the Council, in achieving the vision and outcomes of the Management Plan.
- 2.3 Previous management plans (2008-2013; 2013-2018 and 2023-2025) were endorsed by Cotswold District Council.
- 2.4 It is a legal requirement for 'relevant authorities', including District Councils, to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL. This legal requirement is known as the 'seek to further' duty. Contributing to the

¹ <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/planning/cotswolds-aonb-management-plan/>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>

outcomes, policies, and targets of the Management Plan is an important aspect of fulfilling this duty.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 The management plan sets out a clear vision for the CNL, underpinned by three key issues –
- the Climate Emergency;
 - Nature’s decline and the Ecological Crisis;
 - health and societal change.
- 3.2 From the vision and the three key issues a series of policies have been developed to deliver the desired outcomes. Some of these policies will be delivered by the Board themselves and some are put forward to encourage others to deliver on the vision.
- 3.3 The policies are set out under the following themes and priorities –
- The climate emergency - Informing, encouraging, and guiding efforts to ensure that the Cotswolds plays its part in both mitigating climate change whilst also adapting to its impacts.
 - Working together - Striving to ensure that all activities undertaken within the CNL and its setting conserve and enhance natural beauty and, in particular, the CNL’s special qualities.
 - Conserving and enhancing - Encouraging and supporting the recovery of nature across the Cotswolds - so that populations of wild species can flourish and successfully adapt to climate change by moving through the landscape.
 - Increasing understanding and enjoyment - Broadening engagement and improving access in the CNL so that a wider range of people can access the mental, physical and emotional benefits this brings.
- 3.4 Some of the policies in the Management Plan are intentionally aspirational and may not align fully with the current policies in the Cotswold District Local Plan. For example, Management Plan policy CE8.5 (Nature Recovery and Biodiversity) states that “development proposals should provide a net gain in biodiversity of at least 20%,” whereas the current mandatory requirement is 10%.

The Board hopes that these forward-looking policies will support the development and justification of new policies in future versions of the Local Plan. If the Management Plan is endorsed as a material consideration in planning decisions, its policies will not override those in the existing Cotswold District Local Plan when determining planning applications. However, they can play an important role in informing and shaping any future updates or reviews of the Local Plan—particularly in supporting the ambition to be “green to the core.”

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The alternative option is not to endorse the Management Plan. This could be seen as a sign that the Council is not committed to meeting its legal duty to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape (AONB).

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 As set out in the body of the report

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 No risks identified

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 No issues identified.

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Management Plan places considerable emphasis on the climate and ecological emergencies and endorsement of the Plan will assist in addressing these.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None