



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	Cabinet 12th September 2023
Subject	Endorsement of the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023 – 2025.
Wards affected	All wards within the Cotswolds National Landscape
Accountable member	Cllr Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services Email: juliet.layton@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Charlie Jackson, Assistant Director – Planning and Sustainability Email: democratic@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Sophia Price, Heritage and Design Manager Email: democratic@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To seek the Council's support for the Cotswolds National Landscape (Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty - AONB) Management Plan 2023 – 2025.
Annexes	Annex A – Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan 2023-2025
Recommendation(s)	<p><i>That Cabinet resolves to:</i></p> <p><i>1) Note the content and aspirations of the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023–2025 and recognise its importance in supporting and informing the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• part of the evidence base for the review of the Local Plan;</i><i>• part of the evidence base for the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans;</i><i>• part of the evidence base for the preparation and implementation of relevant Council strategies, policies and projects;</i><i>• the determination of planning applications (where compatible with relevant Local Plan and national policy) by acting as a material consideration; and</i><i>• the development and delivery of the Council's services and activities.</i>



Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	N/A
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 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 legally is still 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 2023 -2025 in February 2023. The Plan is a statutory plan, under the provisions of section 89(1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000¹ (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.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>



- 2.2 Although the Board is the body responsible for preparing and publishing the Management Plan and will play an important role in its delivery, the policies of the Management Plan are also intended to guide the work of other stakeholders, such as the Council, in delivering the Management Plan's vision and outcomes.
- 2.3 Previous management plans (2008-2013 and 2013-2018) were endorsed by Cotswold District Council.
- 2.4 The plan runs for two years rather than the usual five. This is because significant national and local policy developments for protected landscapes are anticipated during this period, particularly with reference to climate action and the implementation of the Glover review on protected landscapes².

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 The management plan sets out a clear vision (chapter 2) 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 this 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 3 cross-cutting themes: 1) Climate change – mitigation and adaptation; 2) Natural and Cultural Capital; and 3) Working Together.

And under two other themes –

- **CONSERVING AND ENHANCING.** Influencing and delivering for landscape, nature and climate. This includes: Landscape; Geology; Local Distinctiveness; Tranquillity; Dark Skies; Historic environment and cultural heritage; Biodiversity and nature recovery; Rural land management; and Development and transport



- **INCREASING UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYMENT.** Ensuring access, learning and wellbeing opportunities are for everyone. This includes: Health and wellbeing; Access and recreation; and Sustainable tourism

3.4 A number of the policies are quite aspirational in nature and therefore may not be compatible with current Cotswold District Local Plan policies. Examples include management plan policy CC1 (climate change) which states that “All developments, should have a net zero operational carbon balance and 100% energy provided by low carbon sources. Alternatives to fossil fuel energy sources should be used” as well as policy CE7 (biodiversity). The Board hopes that these aspirational policies will aid in developing and evidencing new local plan policies. If the Management Plan is used as a material consideration in planning decisions, its policies would not over-ride those in the existing Cotswold District Local Plan when determining planning applications. However, they will help influence and shape the Council’s Local Plan Partial Update and the ambition to be “green to the core”.

3.5 The previous management plan (2018-2023) was not endorsed by the Council partly because of its emphasis on the Cotswolds becoming a National Park. The current management plan does not refer to that however it highlights the need for all stakeholders to work together to ensure that the proposals in the Glover Landscape Review, that were prioritised by the Government³ are delivered – for example nature recovery and access to nature and the countryside.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The alternative option is not to note and recognise the importance of the Management Plan. This could be seen as a sign that the Council is not committed to meeting its duty under the CROW Act s.85 to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape (AONB).

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response>



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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 use of the Plan will assist in addressing these.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

(END)