

Let's make a commitment to caring for the Chilterns



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, to engage and benefit people, and sets out key areas for partnership action. The Chilterns AONB Management Plan is top-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
- 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 coordinated 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. For example, the maintenance of Rights of Way by local authorities, low flow alleviation work by water companies and undergrounding of power lines by utility companies.
5. Strengthened relationships with parish councils, community organisations and non-governmental organisations 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.
8. Expertise and support from statutory agencies including Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and Historic England.
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 that attract additional sources of funding, such as the LEADER funding for the Chilterns Walking Festival and HLF funding for Beacons of the Past.
11. An effective partnership forum that 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, and so on.
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 that 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 in 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 that we consider essential for long term trend monitoring and that we 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.



1. FARMLAND MANAGEMENT

Environmental Land Management Scheme

- Area of overall take up and of specific options
- % of Utilisable Agricultural Area in ELMS
- Predecessor scheme, area of take up

2. WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

Area of woodland

- % woodland under active and positive management

3. PRIORITY HABITAT

Area of priority habitats

4. SITES OF SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

- % SSSI units in favourable condition
- Condition of SSSI units by broad habitat
- % geological SSSI units

5. WATERBODIES

- % of waterbodies in good ecological status (Water Framework Directive)
- Kilometres of watercourse improved or enhanced

6. HERITAGE ASSETS

Scheduled Monuments; Listed buildings (Grade 1/ 11* / 11); Registered Parks and Gardens

- % at risk
- % in improved condition

7. LAND ENHANCED

Area of land in positive conservation management

8. VOLUNTEERING

- % change in number of volunteers/volunteer days

Theme Indicators

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

CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF NATURAL BEAUTY

We will explore options to measure:

- Landscape change (e.g. fixed-point photography/volunteer survey)
- Invasive non-native species – spread and number/impact of management schemes (e.g. for deer and grey squirrels)
- Percentage change in key species groups and character species – presence, range, abundance
- Number of non-designated heritage sites identified and mapped
- River fly monitoring as measure of pollution incidents
- Length of hedgerow restored per year
- Number of hedgerow trees planted per year
- Length of field margin managed per year
- Net biodiversity gain
- Investment of developer contributions in the AONB and its setting
- Number of major planning applications in the AONB per year
- Air quality
- Tranquillity/noise

ENJOYMENT AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE CHILTERN

We will explore options to measure:

- Quality of rights of way and accessibility – survey of walk leaders and footpath monitors
- Website hits/leaflet downloads
- Leisure use of the Chilterns – new visitor survey, including survey of ‘non-users’
- Number of members of conservation groups in the Chilterns (BBOWT, Chiltern Society, National Trust, Woodland Trust etc.)
- Perceptions of the value of the AONB
- Increased number of rights of way, perhaps as permissive or equivalent
- Additional Access Land and Local Green Space designation

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELLBEING

We will explore options to measure:

- Participation in health walks
- Growth of population with AONB and within 5km of AONB
- Number/value of visitors/tourists
- Numbers employed in tourism
- Number of rural exceptions sites and community-led housing schemes to meet local needs
- Number of young people engaged
- Number of community groups engaged

SUMMARY

In summary, the objectives and policies outlined in this Management Plan will help drive a coordinated effort to enhance the natural capital and special beauty of the Chilterns AONB over the next five years.

The Management Plan will form the focus of the CCB's efforts to grow and nurture the Chilterns AONB. It will inspire and guide those with a stake in the Chilterns to actively take part in its conservation. From local authorities and members of government to business owners and the surrounding communities, all can plan a role in the future of this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.





*Nurture the Chilterns
Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty*

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to the many people who have been involved in the development of the Management Plan. Particular thanks go to Paul Tiplady, Helen Tuffs, Fiona Fyfe and the staff team of the CCB.

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Designed by Blooberry Design Ltd.

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