



Members of the Conservation Board for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are hereby summoned to an ordinary meeting of The Chilterns Conservation Board on

Tuesday 12th September 2023 at 10.00am at

Benson Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson OX10 6LZ

The online session will be available from 9.45am.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declaration of interest in any of the agenda items
3. Notice of urgent business
4. Approve minutes of the ordinary meeting and annual general meeting held 13th June 2023
5. Matters arising
6. Public Question Time
7. Chairman's Update - Verbal
8. Chief Executive Officer's Update - Verbal
9. Funding Strategy Update
10. Head of Landscape update
11. Finance
12. Rebranding of AONBs
13. EDI update
14. Management Plan review
15. Meeting dates 2024
16. Any urgent business
17. Next meeting: 12th December 2023
18. Introduction to Mend the Gap, by Ruth Staples-Rolfe, Programme Manager

Dr Elaine King, Chief Executive Officer

Proposed meeting dates 2023 / 2024

Planning Committee Meetings	Executive Committee Meetings	Board Meetings
Wed 18 th October @ 10am Chinnor	Tue 14 th November @ 10am Chinnor	Tue 12 th December 2023 @ 10am High Wycombe
Thu 25 th January 2024 @ 2pm Location tbc	Thu 29 th February 2024 @10am Chinnor	Thu 14 th March 2024 @ 10am Location tbc
Thu 25 th April 2024 @ 10am Location tbc	Thu 16 th May 2024 @ 10am Chinnor	Thu 20 th June 2024 @5pm Location tbc
Thu 25 th July 2024 @ 5pm Location tbc	Thu 15 th August 2024 @ 2pm Chinnor	Thu 19 th September @ 2pm Location tbc
Thu 17 th October 2024 @ 2pm Location tbc	Thu 7 th November 2024 @ 2pm Chinnor	Thu 12 th December @ 10am Location tbc



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CONSERVATION BOARD FOR THE
CHILTERN'S AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY**

**Held at the Paralympic Room, The Gateway Offices, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury,
Buckinghamshire HP19 8FF (Buckinghamshire Council Offices) on Tuesday 13th
June 2023 at 10.00am.**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Appointed by Local Authorities

Cllr David Bartholomew
Cllr Paula Hiscocks
Cllr Steve Jarvis
Cllr Jane MacBean
Cllr Richard Newcombe
Cllr Philip Spicer

Appointing Body

Oxfordshire County Council
Hertfordshire County Council
North Hertfordshire District Council
Buckinghamshire Council
Buckinghamshire Council
Central Bedfordshire Council

Appointed by the Secretary of State

Colin Courtney
Paul Mainds
Joe Stewart
Elizabeth Wilson

Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils

Cllr John Griffin
Cllr John Harfield
Cllr Sue Rowland
Cllr Sir Hector Sants

Oxfordshire
Bedfordshire
Oxfordshire
Buckinghamshire

CCB Staff

Andrew Brock-Doyle
Deirdre Hansen
Graham Hurst
Elaine King
Eloise Small
Matt Thomson
Annette Weiss

Head of Operations
Clerk to the Board
Finance Officer (S151 Officer)
Chief Executive Officer
Administration Officer
Head of Strategy & Planning
Head of Engagement & Partnerships

Other

Sarah Wright

National Trails Project Officer

The Chairman welcomed those present in person and online. All those present introduced themselves.

22/23.62 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from *Cllr Robert Carington, Buckinghamshire Council, *Cllr Lynn Lloyd, South Oxfordshire District Council, Geeta Ludhra, Secretary of State appointee, Cllr Robert Roche, Luton Borough Council, *John Shaw, Secretary of State appointee, Cllr Sally Symington, Dacorum Borough Council, Cllr Jon Tankard, Three Rivers District Council, Ian Waller, Secretary of State appointee and Cllr Gareth Williams, Buckinghamshire Council. (*Those * listened in on the meeting online*)

Tom Beeston, CEO Chiltern Society and Simon Kearey, Chairman Chiltern Society.

22/23.63 Declarations of Interest

No declaration of interest in any agenda item was made.

22/23.64 Notice of Urgent Business

The Chair notified the meeting he had some words of thanks to offer at the end of the meeting.

22/23.65 Minutes of the Board Meeting 14th March 2023.

The minutes of the Board meeting 14th March 2023 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

22/23.66 Matters Arising

All items covered on the agenda.

22/23.67 Public Question Time.

No public present.

22/23.68 Chair's Update

The Chair, Paul Mains, reported on his activities since his last update 13th March and highlighted the following:

1. Great to see the new Head of Operations, Andrew Brock-Doyle, who joined us in April. A further senior team member – Head of Landscape - will join us in July.
2. Improving our connections with Local Authorities (LA), this had been discussed at the previous Board meeting. Following discussion with some of the LA Board members a better approach would be rather than invite LAs to meet us, we should go out to them, targeting appropriate officers, leaders and CEO's as far as practical aiming for the autumn.
3. No update yet on the two new Secretary of State appointees. Three suitable names had been put forward by the panel to the Secretary of State. He will keep chasing Defra for details of the appointments.
4. The Natural England Boundary Review work is continuing. He attends monthly meetings, and it is promising to see the progress being made.
5. He undertook to write to the Secretary of State highlighting the point that we and the Cotswolds AONB do the same work as National Park Authorities (excluding Planning decisions) but have received a flat settlement and it is much less than National Parks. The letter has been delayed and will be sent after the AGM, which has the benefit of including the name of a new Chair.

6. There is disappointment that there has no reply to the email of 6th April regarding Governance to Sion McKeever, Deputy Director, Access, Landscapes, Peatland and Soil at Defra. The CEO, Elaine King, The Head of Strategy and Planning, Matt Thomson and the Deputy Chair, John Nicholls, had all contributed to this email.
7. Following the May Executive Committee meeting, a meeting on the generation of the 25 year vision work and governance was held 31st May. The Clerk, Deirdre Hansen, and the Deputy Chair, John Nicholls will prepare notes for discussion at the July Executive Committee meeting on the different roles, relationships, and schemes of delegation between Board and Officers. Action DH and JN. The outcome will be put to the Board at a future meeting.
8. He thanked Board members and staff with whom he has worked with in the last two and a quarter years. We have faced some big challenges and made big changes, there is always more to do, progress is being made. Thanks, in particular to the CEO, Elaine King and the Deputy Chair John Nicholls.

1. The Board NOTED the update.

22/23.69 Chief Executive's Update

The CEO, Elaine King, had issued a report following her update for the Board meeting 14th March 2023.

She highlighted the following:

1. The changes to the staff team, with the Head of Landscape joining 18th July, are working well and she is enjoying working with Andy Brock-Doyle, Head of Operations.
2. Summer is here and a lot of activities are going on in the projects e.g., Citizen Science events, have a look at the website <https://www.chilternsaonb.org/whats-on/events/>
3. EDI is a key part of our work. The Head of Engagement & Partnerships will give more information later in the meeting minute 22/23.73 Board members were encouraged to take part in the EDI training 26th June or 5th July.
4. 25 Year Vision work and Governance work is being done, but timing is important ensuring the multiple workstreams fit together and the groups communicate. Keeping the momentum going with limited resources is a challenge.
5. Management Plan: as noted at an earlier meeting it will be a light touch roll-over of the current Plan this time. AONBs are waiting for Natural England guidance for new Management Plans.
6. Natural England's Boundary Review and Enhanced Management and Governance Arrangements project: the staff team are contributing to this work. Specific targets and outcomes will come to us from Defra, but no additional funding which means we may have to draw on reserves to be able to deliver our key work. She has asked for additional funding from Defra and NE.
7. Funding: most LAs have been proactive following her letter in January seeking the full 20% contribution to Defra's 80%/ Conversations are continuing with them and also potential and existing funders. She is working on strategies to increase funding.
8. She is being invited to contribute at strategic conferences including a conference organised by Julian Glover - "Future Countryside" on the 6th of June.
9. Members asked questions and discussed the report.

The CEO was thanked.

1. The Board NOTED the report.

22/23.70 a. Business Plan

The Head of Operations, Andrew Brock-Doyle, had provided a report outlining the work done for the Business Plan 2023-24.

- A review of 2022-23
- A new approach to business planning
- An outline Business Plan including a 3-year plan.
- A draft Delivery Plan.

The Executive Committee at its meeting in May had asked for a Business Plan to be affordable and realistic. 2023/24 is a hybrid year whilst we are looking to increase robustness in linkages between the Business Plan, the Finance Plan and the Resources Plan all of which come down from the Management Plan. An update to be given to the Executive Committee in July with a presentation to the Board in September. It was noted that resources are limited. The question was raised if an ambitious integrated Business Plan could be presented, but also a Plan showing the effect of a 30% increase and decrease in output.

A clear plan identifying actions for this year and next year was presented to the Board.

1. The Board NOTED the report and PROVIDED feedback on the actions being undertaken this year to improve the robustness of the Business Plan.

b. Operational Effectiveness.

The Head of Operations, Andrew Brock-Doyle, had provided a report including timelines on the current work being undertaken to increase operational effectiveness within the CCB.

The first step to improve robustness in the CCB's operations had been to appoint the Head of Operations, who had joined in April. He also line manages the Managers of the Mend the Gap programme and the Chalk Cherries and Chairs project.

The four key area in the first quarter's work have been:

- a. The Business Plan as mentioned in 22/23.71a
- b. Chalk Cherries and Chairs programme- Return to Green. Even though there have been problems with the programme management, the programme contains some good plans. Discussions have been held with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and resourcing agreed. Historical reporting has been submitted. Financial reporting is being progressed, due to be submitted this summer. It is acknowledged that the programme is overly complex and simplification is required. Returning the programme to green has been a team effort and the whole team were thanked for their contributions.
- c. Programme/Project approach- the aim is developing an effective Programme/Project management approach in the CCB. How we identify suitable projects, and manage and strategically deliver programmes. Applying Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) principals. The MSP approach is being used with the Mend the Gap Programme and is being integrated going forward with the Not Bourne Yesterday funding application. Going forward this approach will be adapted to existing Programme/Projects.

- d. Operational effectiveness- discovery stage. Key elements emerging are:
- Robust financial information for project managers to assist in the effective management of their projects
 - A consistent project management approach and toolkit.
 - Identifying how strategy is linked to operational delivery and making it more effective.
 - Having platforms of communication and ways of working which are consistent and sympathetic.
 - Easy access to information and the effective management of that information.
- 2. The Board APPROVED the approach and timeline to ensure effective management of the Chalk Cherries and Chairs Programme.**
- 3. The Board APPROVED the approach and timeline to introduce best practice Programme Management in the CCB.**
- 4. The Board APPROVED the approach and timeline around identifying and addressing key operational issues within the CCB.**

22/23.71 Finance – Annual Accounts 2022/23 and AGAR 2022/23

The Finance Officer, Graham Hurst, had provided the Annual Accounts consisting of a combined Profit and Loss Account and a Balance Sheet for the year to 31st March 2023 as well as the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2022/23.

Annual Accounts:

1. The overall combined outturn for the year is a deficit of £453,696. Core activities showed a surplus of £8,112 and Projects a deficit of £461,808.
2. The project deficit is mainly made up of the March expenditure on the Green Recovery Challenge Fund project (this has now been received) and 18 months historical claims of the Chalk Cherries and Chairs project. Progress is being made in bringing the CCC claims up to date and all project deficits will be covered by outstanding funding claims.
3. The AGAR is required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. It is prepared under local government accounting principles which do not recognise deferred income and therefore income is recognised when funds are received rather than earned, hence the deficit on Projects.
4. The external auditors report can only be completed once the sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR have been approved by the Board.
5. The internal auditors have not yet commenced the internal audit. Once completed their report will be made available to the Board. An extension claim will be submitted to the external auditors.
6. The completed AGAR will be published on the CCB website.
7. The AGAR shows overall funds carried forward of £4,180,479, separately itemised in the Balance Sheet. The cash reserves mainly arise from the prepayment of the Mend the Gap funds of which still £3,605,621 remains.

The Finance Officer was thanked for his work.

Tuesday 13th June 2023

- 1. The Board APPROVED the CCB's Annual Accounts for 31 March 2023.**
- 2. The Board APPROVED the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 and the Accounting Statements 2022/23 and they were SIGEND.**

22/223.72 Planning Matters

The Head of Strategy & Planning, Matt Thomson, had issued a report summarising key discussions held at the Planning Committee meeting 12th April with updates where appropriate.

He was asked on progress on the Real-Time system. Progress has been slow, but he is working with the Chair of the Planning Committee on a delivery plan. It will be on Teams. It is the intention that by the July Planning Committee meeting there will be material online for members to view.

The Chair of the Planning Committee, Sue Rowland, and the Head of Strategy & Planning, Matt Thomson, were thanked for their work.

- 1. The Board NOTED the update on planning matters.**

22/23.73 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion update

The Head of Engagement & Partnerships, Annette Weiss, presented a report on the update of the EDI work. Noting the following:

1. A half day EDI training for staff and Board members will take place 26th June and 5th July led by Dr Anjana Khatwa. Board members were encouraged to attend.
2. Two 'Skills into Practice' workshops focussing on EDI are being offered to staff.
3. Defra Access Funding: the £227,000 has been spent through issuing grants to various organisations and reports submitted to Defra. One project has been delayed with Defra approval.
4. The reports were favourably received by Defra and focus is now on planning for the Access Funding in 2024/25 (no funding is available in this financial year).
5. She is seeking more resources which would allow us to be more ambitious, making the most of the opportunities.
6. A Gantt chart was provided for key activities and milestones over the next 12 months.

The Head of Engagement & Partnerships, Annette Weiss, was thanked for her work.

- 1. The Board NOTED the update on EDI.**

22/23.74 Updating the CCB's Constitution.

a. Updating the Contact Standing Orders

The Clerk, Deirdre Hansen, presented updated Contract Standing Orders to comply with legislation.

The Clerk to ensure all staff are provided with a copy of the updated Contract Standing Orders and are given training in the use of these Standing Orders.

- 1. The Board APPROVED the updated Contract Standing Orders.**

b. Update on CCB Policies and Procedures

The Head of Operations, Andrew Brock-Doyle, presented a framework for the scheme of policies which included a timetable for review, listing the organisational lead responsible and type. It is acknowledged that there are gaps and the work is not yet complete, but a timetable for progress was presented.

Board members offered feedback and comment.

- 2. The Board NOTED and OFFERED feedback on the framework of the Scheme of Policies**
- 3. The Board NOTED and OFFERED feedback on when and how the policies will be approved.**
- 4. The Board NOTED and OFFERED feedback on the scope and timeline of the work on policies going forward.**

22/23.75 Urgent Business

1. The Chair informed the meeting that for several Board Members this was their last meeting. Elizabeth Wilson, Lynn Lloyd and Ian Waller are leaving the Board after many years of service.
 - Elizabeth Wilson was thanked for Chairing and Vice Chairing the Planning Committee for many years. Her contributions and time are very much valued. Elizabeth had enjoyed her time with the CCB and it had been a pleasure to work with the wonderful staff. Elizabeth was presented with a small token of thanks.
 - Lynn Lloyd was thanked for her contributions to the Planning and Executive Committees and her participation in the HRAG. Lynn had been involved with the CCB since the Chinnor cement works. She has enjoyed her involvement with the Board, the staff and the community groups.
 - Ian Waller was thanked for Chairing the FiPL Committee. He has agreed to continue to be involved with FiPL and Chair the Committee.

The Chair hoped that all will continue to stay in touch and that their paths continue to cross.

Small tokens of thanks will be forwarded to Lynn and Ian.

2. The Chair informed the meeting that he would not be standing as Chair at the AGM. He thanked the Board, the CEO and staff, it had been a pleasure to work with them. In particular thanks to John Nicholls, Vice-Chair for his support.

22/23.76 Presentation by Sarah Wright, Project Officer for the Ridgeway National Trail on the Ridgeway 50th Anniversary.

The Ridgeway National Trail starting at Avebury and finishing at Ivinghoe Beacon goes through the Chilterns and the North Wessex Downs AONB.

She was thanked for her presentation, noting that the Ridgeway is an important pleasure of the area.

Next Meeting: 12th September 2023 Venue TBC.

Future Meeting dates 2023.

Board Meetings	Executive Committee	Planning Committee
12 th September 2023	11 th July 2023	<i>26th July 2023 note change</i>
12 th December 2023	14 th November 2023	<i>18th October 2023 note change</i>
Location TBC	Location Chinnor	Location Chinnor

The Chairman.....

Date.....



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CONSERVATION BOARD
FOR THE CHILTERNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY**

**Held at the Paralympic Room, The Gateway Offices, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury,
Buckinghamshire HP19 8FF (Buckinghamshire Council Offices) on Tuesday 13th
June 2023 following the Ordinary Meeting at 10.00am.**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Appointed by Local Authorities

Cllr David Bartholomew
Cllr Paula Hiscocks
Cllr Steve Jarvis
Cllr Jane MacBean
Cllr Richard Newcombe
Cllr Philip Spicer

Appointing Body

Oxfordshire County Council
Hertfordshire County Council
North Hertfordshire District Council
Buckinghamshire Council
Buckinghamshire Council
Central Bedfordshire Council

Appointed by the Secretary of State

Colin Courtney
Paul Mains
Joe Stewart
Elizabeth Wilson

Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils

Cllr John Griffin
Cllr John Harfield
Cllr Sue Rowland
Cllr Sir Hector Sants

Oxfordshire
Bedfordshire
Oxfordshire
Buckinghamshire

CCB Staff

Andrew Brock-Doyle
Deirdre Hansen
Graham Hurst
Elaine King
Eloise Small
Matt Thomson
Annette Weiss

Head of Operations
Clerk to the Board
Finance Officer (S151 Officer)
Chief Executive Officer
Administration Officer
Head of Strategy & Planning
Head of Engagement & Partnerships

Other

Sarah Wright

National Trails Project Officer

Tuesday 13th June 2023

The CEO, Elaine King opened the AGM. She thanked the outgoing Chair, Paul Mainds, for all his support and help during a busy and sometimes challenging two years. He will be missed.

1. Election of Chairman

There had been one nomination for the post. Colin Courtney was proposed and seconded for the post of Chairman of the CCB for the year 2023/24.

The Board RESOLVED that Colin Courtney be elected Chairman of the Board for the ensuing year.

Colin Courtney took the CHAIR.

He thanked the members for electing him.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from *Cllr Robert Carington, Buckinghamshire Council, *Cllr Lynn Lloyd, South Oxfordshire District Council, Geeta Ludhra, Secretary of State appointee, Cllr Robert Roche, Luton Borough Council, *John Shaw, Secretary of State appointee, Cllr Sally Symington, Dacorum Borough Council, Cllr Jon Tankard, Three Rivers District Council, Ian Waller, Secretary of State appointee and Cllr Gareth Williams, Buckinghamshire Council. (*Those * listened in on the meeting online*)

Tom Beeston, CEO Chiltern Society and Simon Kearey, Chairman Chiltern Society.

3. Election of Deputy Chairman

There had been one nomination for the post. John Nicholls was proposed and seconded.

The Board RESOLVED that John Nicholls be elected Deputy Chairman of the Board for the ensuing year.

He thanked the members for electing him.

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

5. Minutes of the meeting 14th June 2022

The minutes had been approved as true record and signed at the board meeting 6th September 2022.

6. Election/ Appointment of Members to the Executive Committee

The Board RESOLVED that the following members were appointed to the Executive Committee:

Secretary of State Representatives
Colin Courtney
Paul Mainds
John Nicholls

Local Authority Representatives
Cllr Richard Newcombe
Cllr Philip Spicer

Parish Council Representatives
Cllr John Griffin
Cllr Charles Hussey
Cllr Sue Rowland
Cllr Sir Hector Sants

7. Election/Appointment of members to the Planning Committee

The Board RESOLVED that the following members were appointed to the Planning Committee:

Secretary of State Representatives
John Nicholls

Local Authority Representatives
Cllr Paula Hiscocks
Cllr Jane MacBean (to be confirmed)
Cllr Sally Symington
Cllr Jon Tankard

Parish Council Representatives
Cllr Charles Hussey
Cllr Sue Rowland
Cllr Adrian Watkins

One vacancy remaining.

8. Variation to the Code of Governance.

The Clerk, Deirdre Hansen, asked the Board to approve a variation to the Code of Governance agreed 21 April 2021. This will allow for additions or variations to be made at appropriate times, not limiting variations to the Code of Governance to the Annual General Meeting. The CCB's Code of Governance 2 b) "any motion to add or vary this Code of Governance shall be made, proposed and seconded at an Annual General Meeting of the Board". It is proposed to vary 2b) of the Code of Governance to state, "any motion to add or vary this Code of Governance shall be made, proposed and seconded at a full meeting of the Board".

1. The Board APPROVED the variation of 2 b) of the CCB's Code of Governance allowing additions and variations to be made at Full Board Meetings.

9. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting June 2024 TBC

The Chairman.....

Date.....

Item 10**Head of Landscape Update**

Author: Kate Heppell, Head of Landscape

Purpose of Report: To ask the Board to note the work commencing on a strategy for Nature Recovery, Climate Adaptation and Green Finance

Background

1. The appointment of a Head of Landscape was made in response to the need for a member of staff to lead strategic thinking and action relating to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.
2. The Head of Landscape joined the team in July 2023, and, in addition to the overall responsibilities around nature, climate strategy and green finance, line manages six members of staff on the landscape team.
3. The document outlines the drivers to produce a Nature Recovery and Climate Strategy for the Chilterns Conservation Board, as well as a brief introduction to Green Finance drivers.
4. The document gives an initial overview of preliminary tasks required to produce each strategy.

Recommendation

1. To note and offer feedback on the activities being taken to develop a strategy for Nature Recovery, Climate and Green Finance.

10 Head of Landscape Update, Tues 12 September 2023

This paper outlines the policy drivers and a draft plan for strategic areas of work to be overseen by the Head of Landscape over the next couple of years in response to two inter-related global crises that are affecting the Chilterns AONB: a rapid decline in biodiversity and climate change. The close links between these two issues, and urgency of both, create an imperative that nature recovery and climate change actions should be planned in tandem, and ecological restoration should be delivered at scale¹ for the benefit of both wildlife and people.

'Green Finance' describes the broad range of environmentally-friendly funding and environment-oriented financial products being developed to achieve sustainable development priorities such as future landscape-scale ecosystem service and nature recovery targets.

This report also includes initial thoughts on developing a green finance strategy for the CCB.

1.0 Development and delivery of Nature Recovery Strategy

There are currently three critical policy drivers for Nature Recovery in AONBs: (i) [Colchester Declaration](#); (ii) [Global Biodiversity Framework](#) "30 x 30" target; and (iii) the governments [Environmental Improvement Plan 2023](#).

In July 2019 AONBs signed The Colchester Declaration led by the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) to establish targets for nature recovery across the AONB family. The Declaration contained a pledge for AONBs to prepare a Nature Recovery Plan, with an embedded ecosystems services approach, by 2024. Biodiversity targets for wildlife-rich habitats in AONBs, as expressed in the Declaration, are captured in Table 1.

Table 1 Targets for nature recovery in AONBs from Colchester Declaration

Target	Timeline
200,000 ha of SSSI in AONBs in favourable condition	2030
36,000 ha of new woodland in AONBs planted or allowed to regenerate following 'right tree in right place'	2030
100,000 ha of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites created/restored in AONBs	2030
Remove 30 species relevant to AONBs from threatened list	2030

The UK has signed up to the "30 x 30" target adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity in Montreal 2022, which aims to "*Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed...*".

Whilst the 34 English AONBs comprise 15% of England by area, they contain a disproportionately high area of England's SSSIs (28%), woodland (24%) and Priority Habitats (17%). English AONBs overall potential contribution to the 30 x 30 target is currently being explored by NAAONB. The expectation is that each AONB will create area-based targets for their contribution to the overall 30x30 target. In July

¹ [Making Space for Nature](#). Lawton, 2010.

we started working with NAAONB on a deep-dive of Chilterns data (one of six AONBs chosen) to explore what 30x30 might mean for us. The results will be available by the end of October 2023.

The first revision of the government's 25 Year Environmental Plan, 'Environmental Improvement Plan 2023' (EIP2023) sets out the national plan to halt biodiversity decline. The targets expressed in EIP2023 are captured in Table 2. However, Defra is currently (i) updating Protected Landscapes Management Plan guidance; and (ii) agreeing a new outcomes framework for Protected Landscapes which sets contributions to national environment and climate commitments to be embedded in these management plans. At the time of writing this guidance is delayed with an anticipated release for the draft management plan guidance of September 2023.

Table 2 National (England) targets for nature recovery from Environmental Improvement Plan 2023

Target	Timeline
Restore or create in excess of 140,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitats outside protected sites*	2028
Restore or create in excess of 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitats outside protected sites*	2042
Increase tree canopy and woodland cover by 0.26% of land area (34,000 ha)**	2028
Increase tree canopy and woodland cover to 16.5% of total land area**	2050
50% of SSSIs on track to achieve favourable condition	2028

*Protected sites defined as SSSIs/SACS; **includes tree canopy cover provided by non-woodland trees

Development of the Chilterns Nature Recovery Plan will be taking place while local authorities are also developing their statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategies, and operationalizing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This provides the opportunity for close working between the organizations to ensure that priorities identified in the Chilterns AONB Nature Recovery Plan are reflected in Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

The 18-month workplan under development for Nature Recovery will include the following steps:

- Calculate targets for the Chilterns AONB based on Chilterns as a proportion of total AONB area
- Discuss implications of these Chilterns AONB targets with our partners (including local authority LNRS teams) and NAAONB, and adjust where appropriate (e.g. on basis of landscape character and geology)
- Create a Nature Recovery Plan designed to meet these adjusted targets
- Develop indicators (also considering AONB KPIs and Defra reporting requirements) by which successful nature recovery can be measured
- Consult on the Nature Recovery Plan
- Publish the Nature Recovery Plan as supporting documentation to the next Chilterns AONB Management Plan (to be delivered by end of March 2025)

It is anticipated that the work will require staff time and a budget for mapping and GIS, workshops to explore partner's views, and to cover design and printing costs for the plan.

Two additional pieces of work should be undertaken in parallel to support the Nature Recovery Plan: (1) Development of woodland partnerships and strategy for the Chilterns; and (2) Development of a

Kate Heppell, 01/09/23

strategy for working with farming communities including farmer clusters. Progress with these two aspects will be reported at the December Board Meeting.

2.0 Green Finance

In the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023, the government has set a target to raise at least £500M per year in private finance to support nature's recovery from 2023 to 2027, and at least £1 billion per year from 2028 to 2030. This 'green finance' is described as an economic model that works for nature.

Future funding mechanisms available to AONBs are likely to be blends of private and public money potentially with pipelines leading from government funding for development phases of projects to private investment to deliver ecosystem services and nature-based solutions. Work that cannot be covered by a return on investment would still be funded by alternative means (such as National Lottery Heritage Fund funding) but green finance markets might become critical to funding strategies in certain areas (e.g. carbon credits, biodiversity net gain).

Over the next year, CCB should upskill its staff in the emerging area of green finance, determine where to position itself in the relevant markets and gain experience through a few small-scale endeavors, keeping in mind that green finance is a focus due to the need to deliver landscape-scale biodiversity improvements.

The workplan under development will include the following steps:

- Gain knowledge through joining and participating in various networks discussing green finance ([Ecosystem Knowledge Network](#), [Green Finance Institute](#) and NAAONB green finance group)
- Visit current innovators in green finance to understand how they have positioned themselves in the market (e.g. [South Downs National Park](#))
- Identify key trial project to take forward with green finance funding, potentially working in partnership with those with first-hand experience

3.0 Climate Strategy

The 2019 Colchester Declaration contained a statement on the need for AONB management plans to include meaningful measures around climate change mitigation and adaptation including measurable targets to support Net Zero. The UK government has set a national target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) to NetZero by 2050, and The National Parks are setting more ambitious targets to achieve NetZero by 2045. CCB should investigate what NetZero means for its own operations and for the Chilterns AONB. This information can be used to improve our own organization's understanding of policy and issues around NetZero, and then to help us work with our partners (businesses, public sector organizations and charities alike) to establish a path towards NetZero in the Chilterns.

3.1 CCB NetZero ambition and analysis

Urgency of action aside, from a practical perspective, involvement in evolving carbon markets will require CCB to have their own NetZero ambition and strategy. We will need to consider all aspects of CCB business to develop a strategy with science-based targets that prioritize emissions reductions over carbon offsetting; the first step being to quantify emissions arising from CCB activities.

Next steps will be to:

- Obtain agreement for consultancy work on a CCB 'NetZero by 2050' Strategy including budget for report
- Write brief and commission work on CCB 'NetZero by 2050' Strategy

3.2 Understanding NetZero across the Chilterns AONB and the need for a Chilterns AONB climate strategy

As part of the government's NetZero target, it is anticipated that each AONB will be required to complete a Carbon Adaption Plan, potentially as part of the next round of Management Plans. Currently, no guidelines are available as to what these plans might involve.

In 2022 NAAONB published a [Framework for Climate Action](#) in AONBs which offers some guidelines and a [toolkit](#) for AONB teams and their communities. Since then, Protected Landscapes Partnership (partnership of National Parks, NAAONB, National Trails UK and Natural England) have obtained limited funding for a carbon-based audit for some AONBs to start in March 2024. This audit will be comparable to the [NetZero Cotswolds](#) work. If the Chilterns are chosen as an evaluated AONB then this could form the basis of a future climate strategy, together with a previous soil carbon audit of the Chilterns that was carried out by Cranfield University in 2022. NAAONB are planning a series of workshops in January 2024 to help with preparedness for climate adaptation plans.

The current ambition is to:

- Publish the Climate Adaptation Plan as supporting documentation to the next Chilterns AONB Management Plan (to be delivered by end of March 2025)

Item 12	<u>National AONB Rebranding</u>
Author:	Vicki Pearce, Communications Manager, Elaine King CEO and Matt Thomson Head of Strategy & Planning
Summary:	To present the background work and new brand identity for the family of national landscapes.
Purpose of Report:	That the Board considers the decision to implement a new logo, in line with the national rebrand led by the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB).

BACKGROUND

1. Since 2021, following the proposal of the Glover Landscapes Review to rename AONBs as 'National Landscapes', the NAAONB has been working with Defra on a comprehensive and coordinated rebranding of all AONB landscapes, and their teams (including AONB partnerships and Conservation Boards), to coincide with the launch of the new name. The rebranding will also extend to rebranding the NAAONB and its relaunch as the National Landscapes Association.
2. In January 2022, the Government responded to the Review's proposals and, in April 2022, the CCB published its [response](#). On rebranding, we said that any rebranding must be representative of, and linked with, a transformative step change for AONBs in terms of their strengthened purposes, powers and resources (Proposal 24 in the Landscapes Review) and should not take place until the future status and governance of these areas is fully understood and agreed. The current proposals are being made in advance of these issues being resolved.
3. Stage 1 of the rebranding programme is almost complete, with the majority of AONB logos now designed. The NAAONB would like AONB teams to present them to their Board for approval.
4. Defra has confirmed funding of £242k for stage 2 of the rebrand project. However, at this stage it is not clear what funds will be allocated to each AONB to implement the rebrand.
5. The NAAONB is now exploring a proposed launch for the rebrand and has published a recommended timescale and ambitious approach.

PROGRESS AND INFORMATION

6. In the early stages of the rebranding exercise, there was widespread scepticism about the plans: the timing and expense were not accepted by all AONB teams, and there was a question over whether rebranding AONBs separately from National Parks was consistent with the Glover Review's objectives.
7. In mid-2022, a brand agency (Nice and Serious) was appointed and has since been developing a new brand strategy and identities for each AONB. This process has been funded by Defra.
8. The objective is to roll out new branding across the whole AONB family, with funding from Defra to support implementation and a national launch. It is proposed

that the launch takes place before March 2024 with a recommended launch date of 21st November 2023 (before the General Election).

NEXT STEPS

9. Proposed logos are currently confidential, so at the Board meeting, we will show members a short presentation which include the proposed logo for the Chilterns National Landscape. This logo – representative of a red kite – is based on information about the Chilterns AONB provided early on in the process. Determining whether this is appropriate branding for the AONB warrants consideration of the following factors:
 - The red kite is an iconic species for the Chilterns. It is used by many local organisations and businesses. Red kites are currently subject to some local controversy, and their range is rapidly expanding beyond the Chilterns. Other iconic species could be referenced, such as a beech tree.
 - Many existing and proposed National Landscape logos also use a single iconic animal or plant species: these are appealing and recognisable but may not be representative of the landscape as a whole.
 - While many proposed logos are a single iconic entity, several are more complex, showing a number of features in context.
 - Many proposed logos are an evolution of the AONB's existing branding. The current and previous Chilterns AONB logos have been based on landscape form, and featured abstracted versions of the distinctive shape of the Chilterns scarp.

10. The implementation of the new branding will be accompanied by a comprehensive set of assets including:
 - a. A Brand identity for each National Landscape
 - b. Branding guidelines that will support each AONB to implement the brand, including guidance on how to use the brand, fonts to use and a range of templates for design platforms
 - c. A licence to use the design font Effra that will be available for all AONBs to download
 - d. A presentation that articulates why we are making the change and what it is – it will be designed for all National Landscapes teams to use to communicate to their internal teams and external partners
 - e. Initial Trademarking of the National Landscapes brand, name and Association logo. Full Trademarking will be delivered in phase 2.

11. In addition to the deliverables above each AONB will receive a document outlining the process for the implementation. This will include:
 - f. What Defra is funding in the next phase
 - g. Plans for a launch campaign that all National Landscapes will be able to use and which will tell our new collective story
 - h. A brand implementation fund that will be offered to each National Landscapes to begin the process of implementation
 - i. A clear process for project governance going forward supported by a continuation of the existing steering group
 - j. Clarity on central resources that the National Association will make available to support implementation
 - k. Process for funding and delivering trademarks for each National Landscape brand on behalf of each individual National Landscape.

12. Members may recall that the Cotswolds Conservation Board has already rebranded the description of the Cotswolds AONB and their Conservation Board both as the “Cotswolds National Landscape”. There is merit in retaining a distinction between the organisation and the landscape it represents.
13. Legally, the designation will remain an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the organisation will remain, technically, “the Conservation Board for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty”. There will be an indefinite transition period until legislation and policy catches up with the rebranding, during which time we all will need to assist our stakeholders with any confusion that may arise.
14. The following is a summary of officers’ views of the positives and negatives of either (a) resisting the current rebranding exercise, or (b) aligning with the project, subject to some conditions being met. It should be noted that some other AONB teams have continued to express varying degrees of concern about the timing, expense and appropriateness of the rebranding, but most are (currently) aligning with the exercise.

(a) If we don’t rebrand

Pros

- People continue to recognise our brand (assumes they currently do)
- Gives us time to prepare for rebranding at the same time as the boundary extension
- Potentially reduces confusion as we rebranded only five years ago and already have two brands in the public domain

Cons

- Risk of damage to relationships with other AONBs and the National Association
- A subsequent rebrand would be out of step with other AONBs. This could weaken our impact and we might lose the funding that DEFRA has made available for the implementation of the rebrand.

(b) If we do rebrand

Pros

- Gives us time to rebrand before we formally extend our boundary, and use the new branding as part of engaging with new stakeholders
- We will receive Defra funding to implement the rebranding, plus brand guidelines and tone of voice
- Results in us working collaboratively with the National Association and other AONBs
- Coincides with the CCB’s planned changes to governance arrangements and possible changes that may arise from the Management Plan review and 25-year vision project

Cons

- Current proposed logo for the Chilterns National Landscape needs re-consideration, possibly as an evolution of the current/former logos
- Need to be clear on financial implications and that Defra funding covers our costs, including staff time
- Rebranding AONBs and not National Parks continues to create separation and an impression that the two designations are different, contrary to the recommendations of the Glover Landscapes Review

- Rebranding needs to take place alongside a paradigm shift in the way AONBs are funded – i.e. a new funding formula, plus improved purposes, powers and resources, as recommended in the Landscapes Review

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To approve the Officers' current recommendation that the Board supports the rebranding exercise, with caution/caveats, but:
 - a) seeks changes to the branding/logo proposed for the Chilterns AONB to be more of an evolution of our previous and existing brand**
 - b) seeks to align the timing of our rebranding with existing programmed workstreams, including enhancing our governance, reviewing our vision and/or the AONB boundary extension, using the rebranding to assist with stakeholder engagement**
 - c) retains the Board's identity as the "Chilterns Conservation Board" while the designated area becomes the "Chilterns National Landscape".**
2. To approve the recommendation that the Board writes to the NAAONB and Defra to seek more information about the extent (and timing) of support available to implement the rebranding and reiterate our position that rebranding should have been contingent upon resolution of the Glover Landscapes Review's proposal 24 to enhance the purposes, powers and resources of AONBs and narrow the gap between AONBs and National Parks.
3. That the Board provides further observations on the content of this paper.

Item 13 **Update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)****Author:** Annette Weiss, Head of Engagement & Partnerships**Summary:** To update the Board on EDI progress**Update since last Board meeting**

- 27 Staff and 8 Board members attended a half-day introductory EDI training led by Dr Anjana Khatwa (held on 26 June and 5 July). In addition, two 'Skills into Practice' staff workshops focusing on EDI engagement took place and were well attended by staff, generating lots of discussion and sharing across projects, and benefiting from Anjana's guidance. Anjana will provide some follow-up sessions, helping staff take forward their EDI work, for example co-producing a monitoring and evaluation framework and piloting new co-design projects. There was demand for further training on disability awareness, focusing on the full spectrum of physical and mental health disabilities, including hidden disabilities and neurodiversity. This will be offered to staff and Board members, along with other training opportunities, following the Widening the Welcome workshop (below).
- We are holding a Widening the Welcome workshop on 25 September 9.30-1pm at Missenden Abbey, involving partners, stakeholders and community groups with an interest in improving Chilterns accessibility and making the countryside more inclusive. It will be aimed at those involved in countryside access provision in the Chilterns, and the leisure and tourism sector. The purpose of the workshop is to share learning, and to capture ideas on projects and priorities for the 2024/25 Defra Access funding (£261,480). It is a chance to look at future opportunities and collaborations across the Chilterns. This could potentially provide the seed funding for bigger project(s). [See here](#) for details of the Defra Access fund and the workshop ([booking here](#)). Professor Gurch Randhawa, who led the University of Bedfordshire research on engagement with Luton's diverse communities (barriers/enablers to accessing greenspace) will be speaking at the workshop and launching this important piece of work which we can then promote in earnest.
- We continue to deliver EDI engagement through our projects, partnerships, festivals and communications. We have been supporting and raising awareness of diverse groups such as the Salaam Seekers Muslim Women's group ([see blog](#)). The Chalk Cherries and Chairs project has set up a Diverse Engagement working group helping to help design and deliver inclusive and diverse engagement through the project. And Mend the Gap is looking at supporting and developing a number of EDI projects, from improving the accessibility of walks and greenspaces in the MtG area to connecting with underrepresented young audiences in Reading.
- The Chilterns was one of 6 AONBs selected for inclusion in the NAAONB Arts in the Landscape project, Nature Calling. The bid was submitted to the Arts Council in June and, if successful, is expected to commence in November. It will focus on engaging with diverse audiences in the Luton area through arts co-creation activities.
- EDI will underpin new emerging areas of work including the engagement/partnership elements of the parallel governance work, and the new Communications strategy which is in development (an Audiences mapping workshop will shortly be taking place identifying priority audiences we would like to reach).

Recommendation

- 1. That the Board NOTES the update on EDI.**

Item 14**Management Plan review****Author:**

Matt Thomson, Head of Strategy & Planning

Summary:

Developments since November, when Executive Committee determined CCB's approach to reviewing the Management Plan, have led officers to recommend a revised approach, taking advantage of an offer made by Defra minister Lord Benyon to delay publication of amended plans by up to a year.

Purpose of Report:

To seek approval for the revised approach, including a draft work programme included in the report, and set up a Management Plan Review Task and Finish Group to oversee the review process.

Background

1. Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CRoW Act) requires that AONB Conservation Boards publish "a plan which formulates their policy for the management of their area of outstanding natural beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it" (an AONB Management Plan) and review the Plan at least every five years. This makes it necessary to review the current Chilterns AONB Management Plan, which was approved in February 2019 and published in October of the same year, during 2024.
2. In November 2022, Executive Committee resolved to approve the principle of reviewing the current Plan on the basis that the most expedient approach – in the context of the ongoing boundary review and wider changes to the context in which the Board operates – would be to roll the existing Plan's policy content forward, and to undertake a more comprehensive review as soon as the future extent of the AONB was more certain.
3. That resolution was made as an alternative to an offer made by the Defra minister Lord Benyon to allow AONB partnerships (which includes Conservation Boards) to delay the publication of their reviewed Management Plan by up to a year, subject to certain conditions. That offer had been tabled to enable AONB partnerships to take into account new guidance on Management Plan preparation and new outcome-focused targets, both of which were intended to be published by Defra early in 2023.
4. Since November, officers have been discussing the Management Plan Review with colleagues in Natural England (NE), and a number of issues have been clarified about the review process and the offer made by Lord Benyon. These include:
 - a. NE have clarified that the date by which Defra expects CCB to complete the review of our Management Plan is April 2024, not October 2024. This means that a significant amount of work will need to be undertaken in this financial year. Current expectations are that this can be delivered within existing capacity, further to Executive Committee's resolution in July concerning the resourcing of the Board's strategic and governance work programmes.

- b. The expectation of the Benyon option is less onerous than previously understood: the suggested “light-touch review” paper is now understood to be intended to focus on our objectives for amending/updating the plan (what needs to be amended in the Plan, and how we propose to amend it), rather than summarising the amended objectives, policies and actions themselves.
5. In the light of this correspondence, and the ongoing delay with Defra producing the revised guidance and targets, Natural England is now strongly advising AONB teams to follow the option outlined by Lord Benyon. Officers now **recommend that the Board follows the option to publish a “light-touch review” as proposed by Lord Benyon, by April 2024.** The remainder of this paper sets out proposals for how this may be taken forward.

Suggested nature of the “light-touch review”

6. Officers continue to recommend that, as resolved by Executive Committee in November 2022, it is not expedient to undertake a comprehensive review of the strategic and policy content of the Management Plan in advance of the completion of Natural England’s review of the potential to extend the area covered by the Chilterns AONB. Since the requirement in the CROW Act for reviewing a Management Plan is to determine “whether it would be expedient to amend the plan and what (if any) amendments would be appropriate” (section 89(10)), it is appropriate for CCB to decide to roll some or all of the Plan forward without change.
7. At this stage, officers also recommend that the current Vision, expressed in the Plan on p.23, should be retained, for the purposes of the “light-touch review” document. This vision will be revisited through the next comprehensive review of the Plan, as soon as the proposed new boundaries of the AONB are more certain. That does not mean that we should not carry on working, internally and with our partners, on the new 25-year vision through the TFG chaired by Sir Hector Sants. Indeed, that vision work is essential for engaging with and enthusing new and existing stakeholders as we progress with enhancing our governance as well as progressing the AONB Extension project.
8. Lord Benyon’s letter, consistent with the existing guidance on preparing and reviewing Management Plans, notes that a light-touch review that is “pitched as a continuation/extension of the current plan” reduces the need for AONB teams to consult extensively. The fewer (or less significant) the changes the Board decides to pursue at this stage, therefore, the better, in terms of the resources needed to progress the review.
9. In the context of the above, Officers consider that the following matters may need to be explored in terms of potential amendments to the Plan, the implementation of which will need to be described – in terms of principles or parameters – in the light-touch review paper. These matters may need to be revisited when Defra’s revised guidance and/or targets are published.
 - a. Factual updates, e.g. with regard to evidence (e.g. ‘state of the Chilterns’ indicators) and progress with projects described in the Plan.
 - b. It is recognised by users of the Plan that it is currently light on highlighting some headline issues, including addressing Climate Change and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), and embedding the NAAONB’s Colchester

Declaration more clearly into the Plan. That is not to say that the Plan's existing suite of objectives, policies and actions are inconsistent with those issues. Natural England has confirmed that we can achieve a balance between increasing the priority placed on these issues and avoiding needing to substantively change the Plan's policy content, by preparing and publishing supplementary position statements alongside the Plan (this aligns with existing work programmes). The review paper will need to signpost these position statements, and relatively minor changes to the Plan may be necessary to cement this.

- c. We are already aware that Defra's proposed new guidance and targets are likely to consolidate a requirement for AONB teams to prepare and deliver Climate Action Plans as well as Nature Recovery Plans. The current expectation is that these will be more detailed delivery plans supplementary to objectives, policies and actions in the Management Plan (although they could be included within Management Plans). Again, the review paper will need to signpost these plans (or their future preparation), with relatively minor amendments to the Plan to support them.
- d. Officers' understanding is that Defra's new guidance will strengthen the existing guidance on preparing and reviewing Management Plans in terms of Plans focusing on delivery and action, with a clear expectation on which organisations are expected to deliver which actions, and by when. Our current Management Plan tends to rely on "policies" that CCB can do little more than hope will be implemented by stakeholders, and "key actions" for CCB itself to deliver (often through partnership projects). At the same time, reflections on the current Plan's content suggests that there are inconsistencies in how that content has been categorised as "objectives", "policies" and "key actions". It may be appropriate as part of this review to seek to rationalise these elements, and identify which stakeholders are responsible for their delivery, and by when. (This will also be of value in reviewing CCB's own Business Plan/Budget/Delivery Plan for 2024/25.)

Next Steps

10. This section sets out outline milestones for delivering the light-touch review in line with the option set out in Lord Benyon's letter. Most work will be undertaken by officers, but it is suggested that the Board establishes a Task and Finish Group to help oversee the review between Board and Executive Committee meetings.
11. There are strong relationships between the Review process and other ongoing strategic workstreams, especially the AONB Extension project, and those related to enhancing the governance of both CCB and the AONB, and engaging with our stakeholders. This TFG will need to work closely with these workstreams, including engaging with the existing 25-Year Vision and Governance Review TFGs.
12. This timing assumes that Defra shortly publishes its new Management Plan guidance and outcome-focused targets.
13. Lord Benyon's letter indicated that AONB teams may be able to seek an additional time extension for publishing an amended Management Plan, on a case-by-case basis, but that the review of all relevant Plans must be completed by the end of December 2025. There is a strong case for CCB to focus on

completing this review process leading to the roll-forward of the current plan quickly, in order to optimise opportunities for working on the new Vision and Management Plan for the anticipated extended AONB designation during 2025.

Date	Activity
12 Sep 2023	Board agrees approach in principle. Board sets up Management Plan Review TFG.
By end of Sep 2023	CEO issues notification (CROW s.90) of intention to review the Management Plan to NE, our host LAs and Defra Secretary of State
Oct 2023	MPR TFG initial meeting to initiate officer activity on preparing the light-touch review
Oct/Nov 2023	Officers undertake review assessment, and prepare draft light-touch review paper. Opportunity for initial officer engagement with LA officers. (14 Nov: Brief progress report to Exec Cttee)
12 Dec 2023	Draft light-touch review paper presented to Board.
Jan/Feb 2024	Officers revise light-touch review paper following Board, liaising with TFG. Engagement with LAs and other stakeholders as necessary (determined by TFG) – might need to be formal consultation with prescribed bodies under CROW s.90.
Mar 2024	Board approves final light-touch review paper. CEO submits approved light-touch review paper to NE, LAs and Defra SoS (CROW s.90)
Apr 2024-Mar 2025	MPR TFG and officers develop programme to make the amendments to the Management Plan envisaged in the light-touch review, including appropriate engagement.
Mar 2025	Publish amended Management Plan by this date.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board:

- 1. ENDORSES the revised approach to delivering a light-touch review of the Management Plan outlined in this paper, including the draft timescales under para 12.**
- 2. CONVENES a Task and Finish Group to oversee the Management Plan Review in line with this approach.**

Board Meeting update September 2023

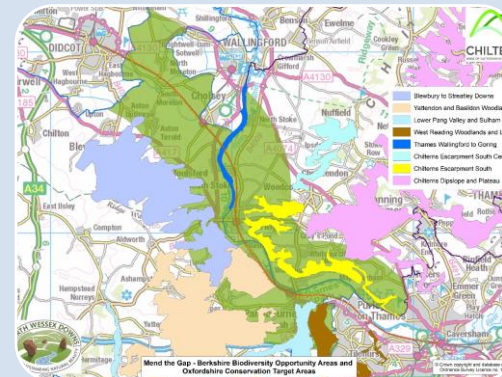
Ruth Staples-Rolfe

Programme Manager

Mend the Gap



Aim to...



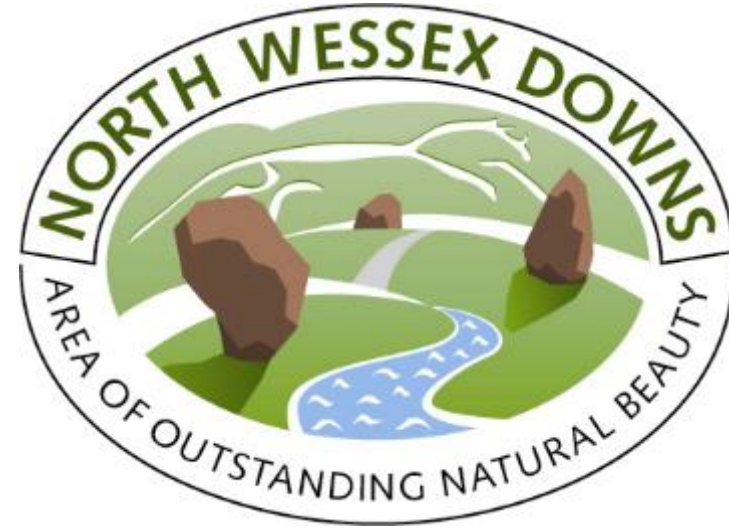
a brief project overview

an update on the different projects that are in the pipeline

Visit a mitigation site and enhancement project



Pre 2019



Restoring Landscapes and Biodiversity after Rail Electrification

Lucy Murfett, Planning Officer, CCB

Henry Oliver, Director, North Wessex Downs AONB

Ian Haslam, Chairman, Railway Action Group

[The devastating environmental damage by electrification in the Goring Gap by Network Rail on Vimeo](#)

Network Rail fund for mitigating Great Western Rail Electrification and enhancing the landscape

Mitigation

15K and
over

15K and
under

Open for more proposals

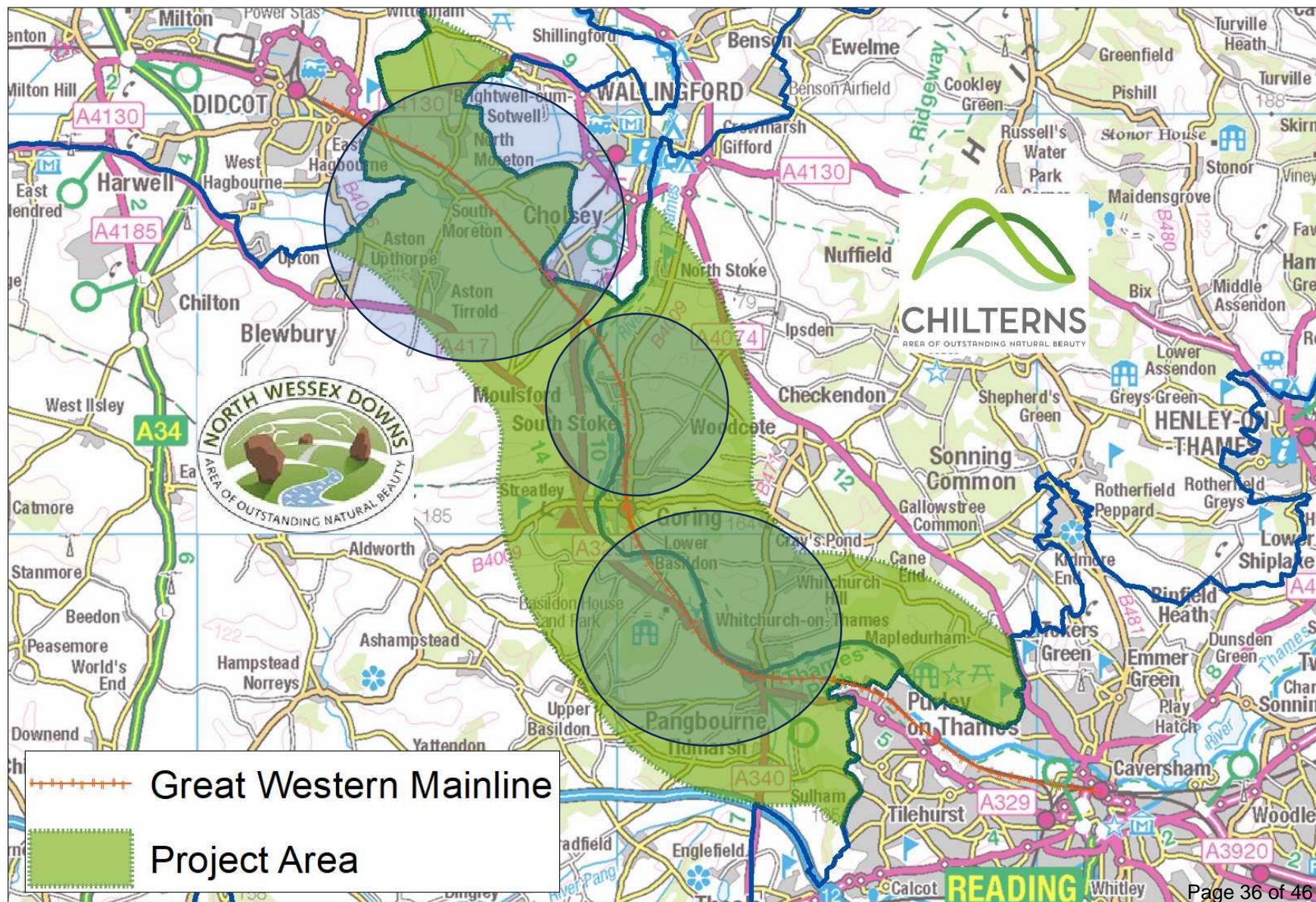
Farming, Advisory Wildlife Group Southeast (FWAG SE) Mitigation planting

Phase 1 Moulseford Viaduct to South Stoke – 990m so far

Phase 2 Goring to Purley Winter 2023

Phase 3 Moulseford Viaduct to Didcot – Winter 2024

A mixture of hedges, standards and scrub planting negotiated with the landowner



Mend The Gap Benefits will include



Enhancement of
arable and
wetland habitats



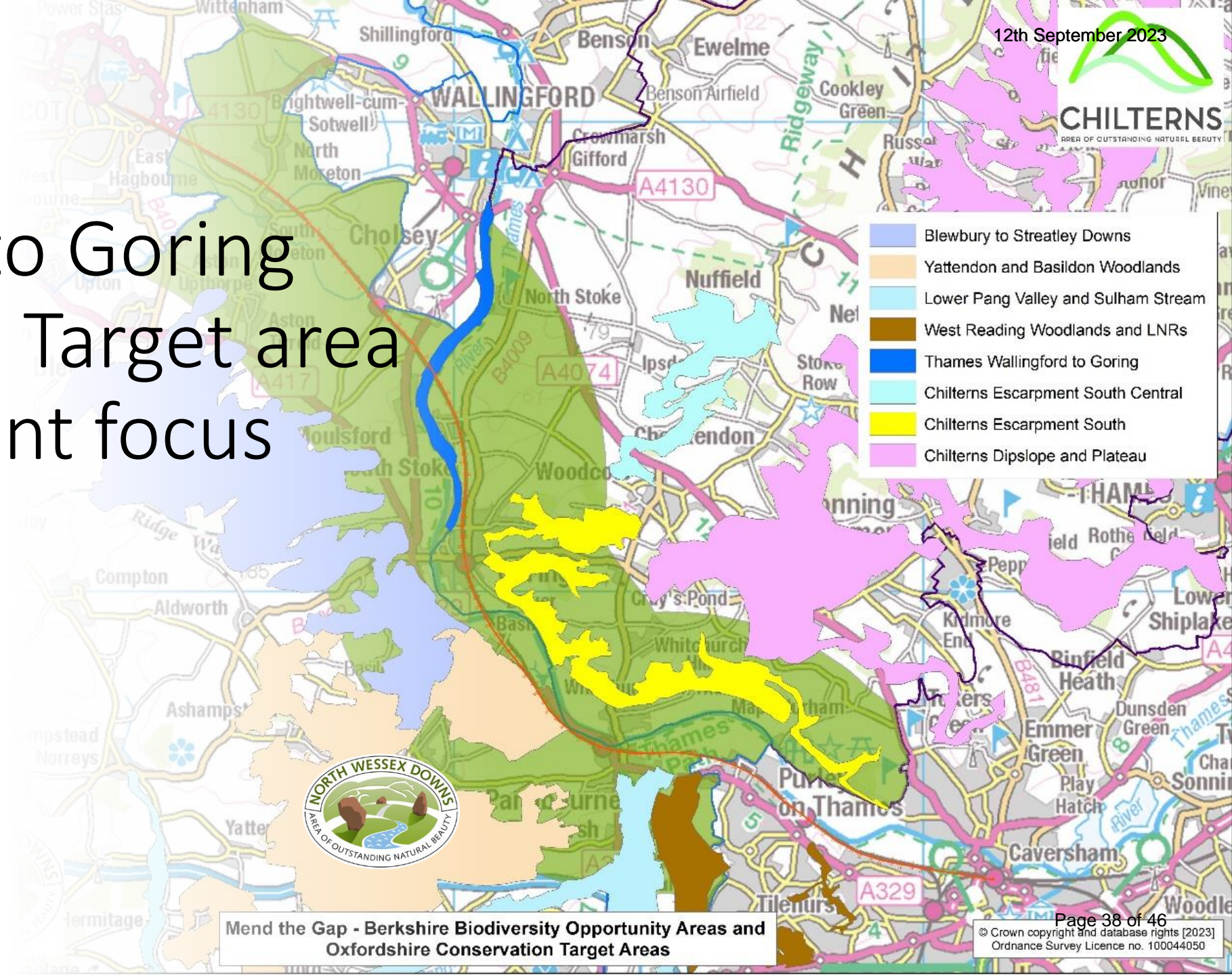
Enhancement of
the chalk habitats

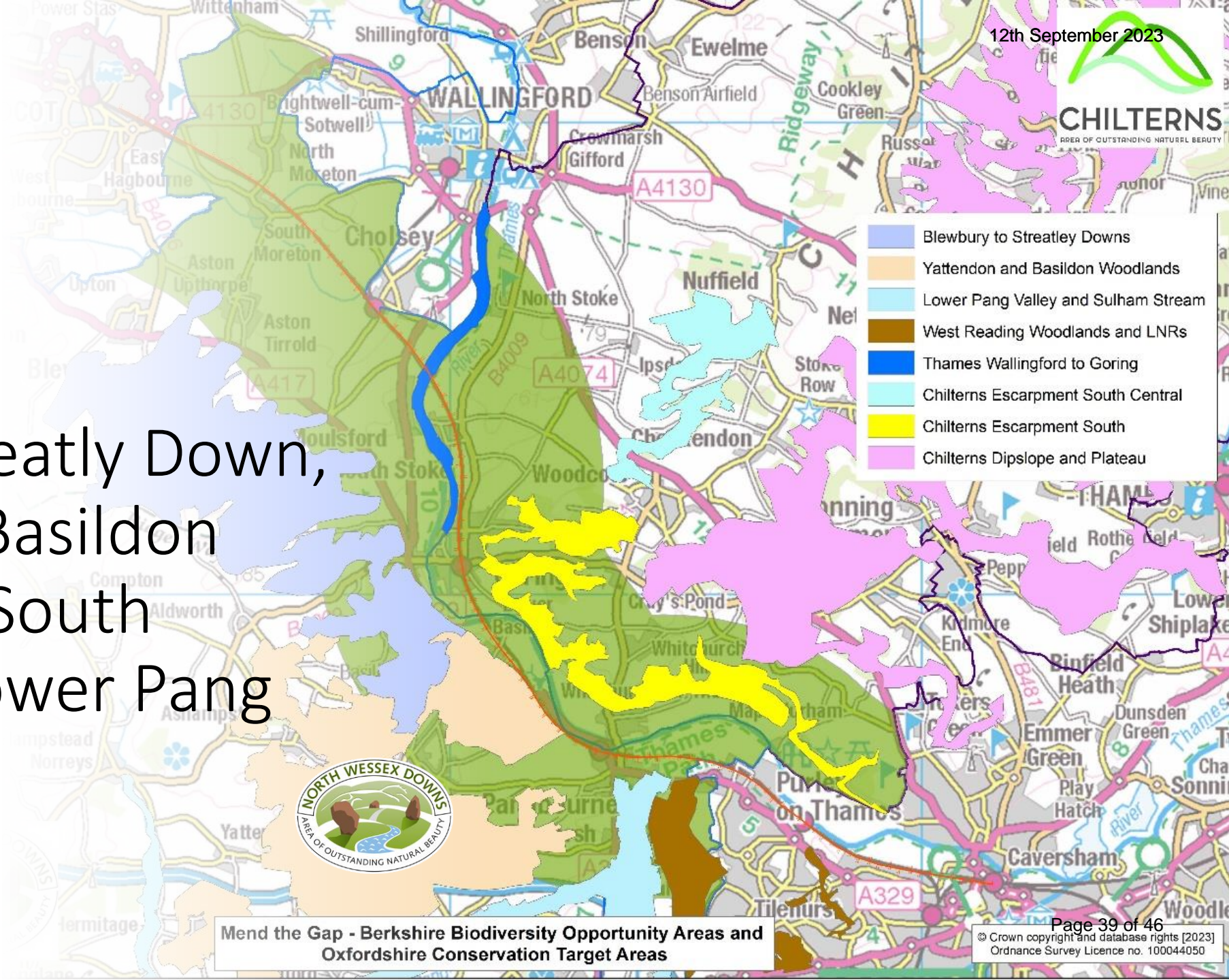
Access, Enjoyment and Understanding

Monitoring and evaluation



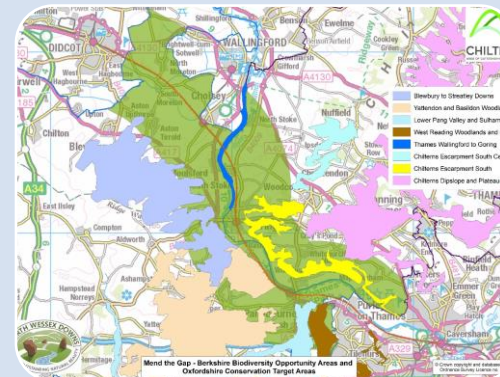
Wallingford to Goring conservation Target area and catchment focus





Blewbury to Streatly Down,
Yattendon and Basildon
woods and the South
Chilterns and Lower Pang
CTA focus

Aim to...



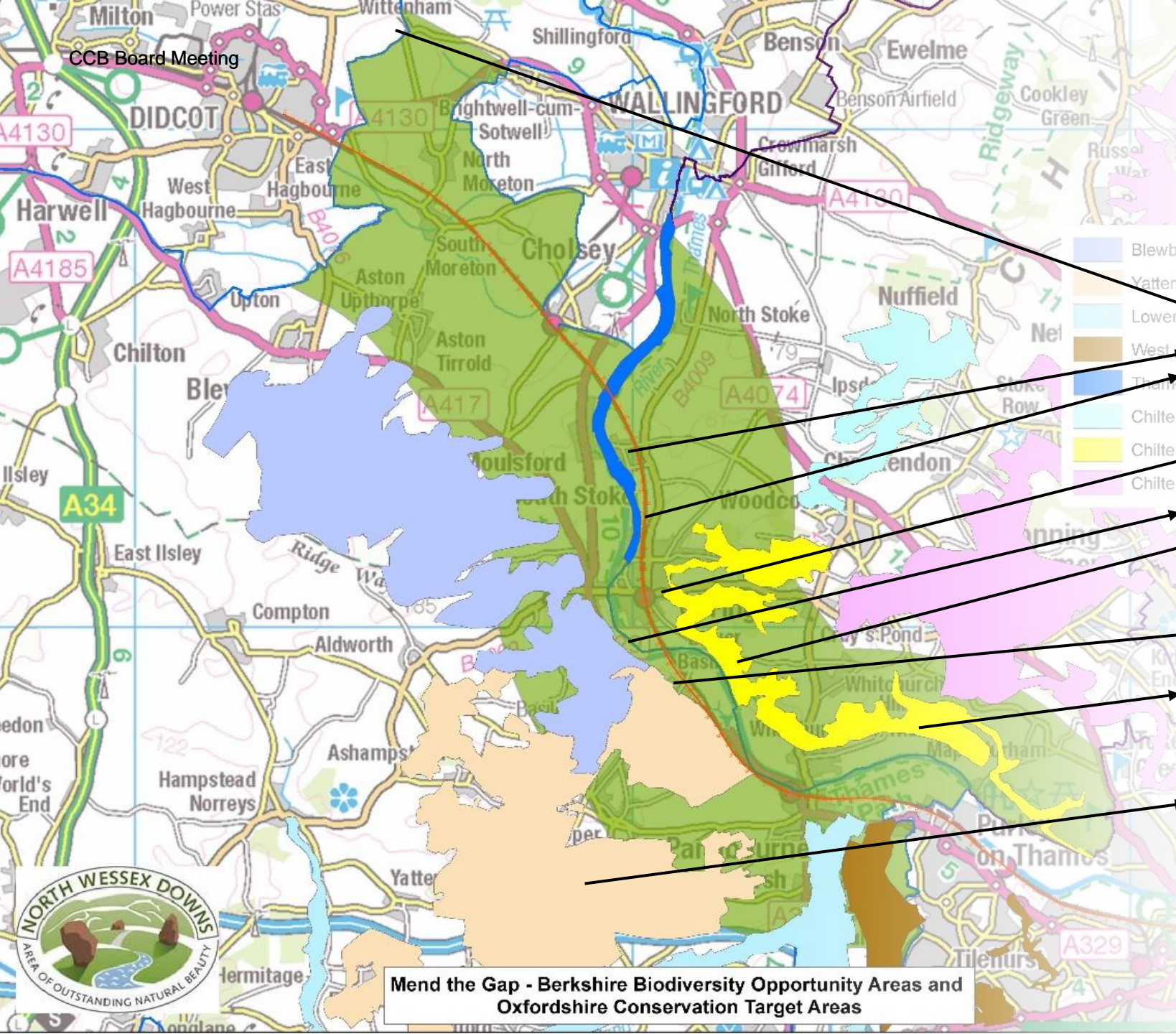
a brief project overview

an update on the different projects that are in the pipeline

Visit a mitigation site and enhancement project

So far we have...

(mainly small grants under 20K)



- Aspire and Earthtrust engagement project
- South Stoke Park
- Cleeve water Meadow
- Goring Gap Environmental Organisation
- Accessibility signage at the railway
- Youth Hostel feasibility study
- Copyhold Farm
- Otter Holt at lower Basildon
- Community Larder
- Experiential Tourism workshops
- Hidden Voices research with BBOWT
- Pang Community Wetland project



Mend the Gap - Berkshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and Oxfordshire Conservation Target Areas

The wetland and arable outcomes being developed



LWS Landowner support packages

Cholsey Marshes Walk and Wetland

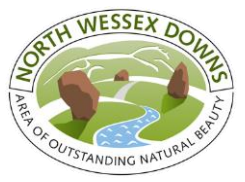
Withymead Walk and Wetland

Goring Walk and Wetland

Basildon Park Walk and Wetland

Sulham Brook Walk and Wetland

- Blewbury to Streatley Downs
- Yattendon and Basildon Woodlands
- Lower Pang Valley and Sulham Stream
- West Reading Woodlands and LNRs
- Thames Wallingford to Goring
- Chilterns Escarpment South Central
- Chilterns Escarpment South
- Chilterns Dipslope and Plateau



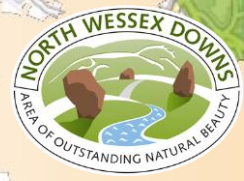
The Chalk and arable landscape outcomes being developed

Blewberry and Streatley CTA Arable plants project

Basildon and Yattendon CTA Grassland restoration

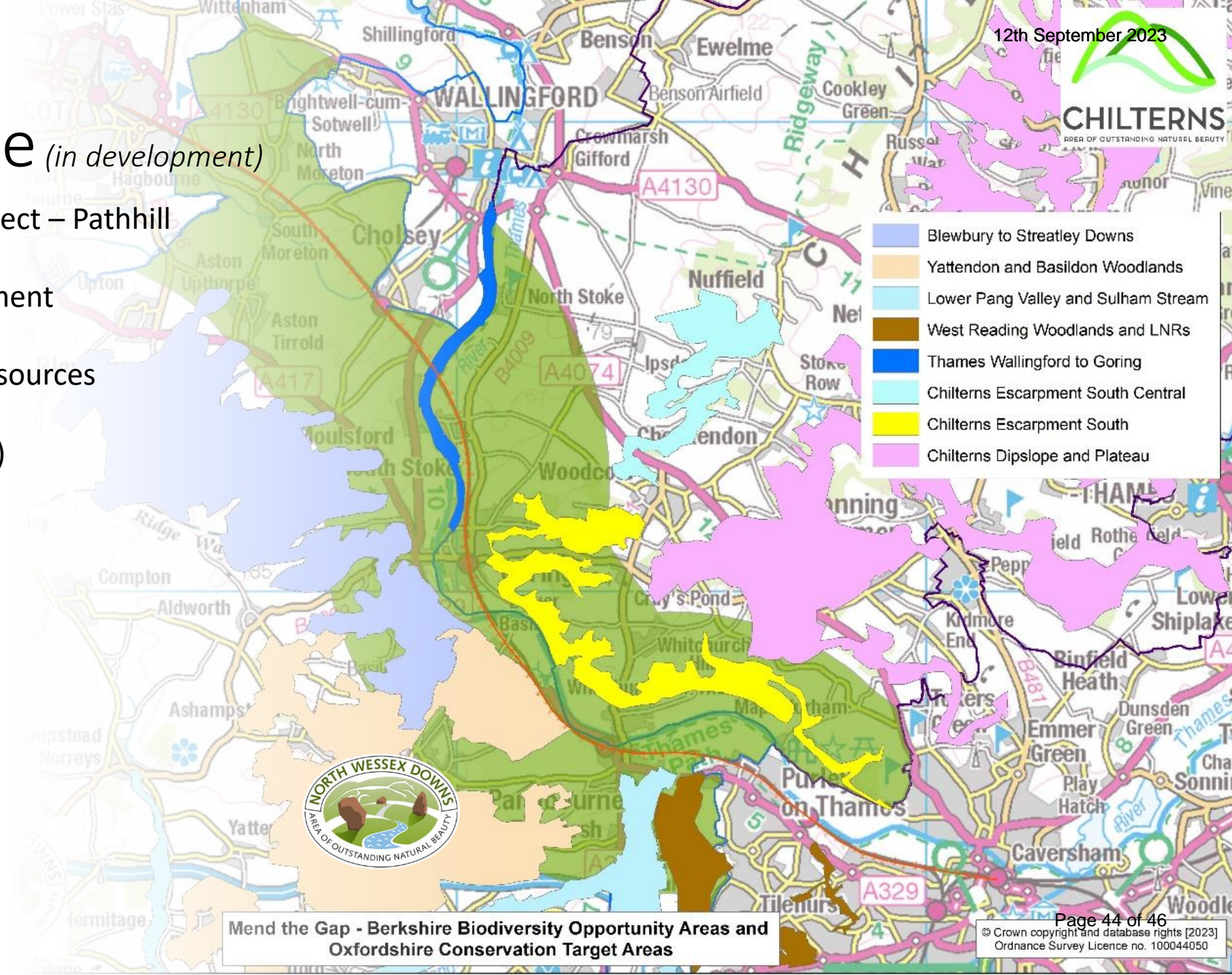
Southern Chilterns Escarpment CTA Landowner cluster

- Blewbury to Streatley Downs
- Yattendon and Basildon Woodlands
- Lower Pang Valley and Sulham Stream
- West Reading Woodlands and LNRs
- Thames Wallingford to Goring
- Chilterns Escarpment South Central
- Chilterns Escarpment South
- Chilterns Dipslope and Plateau



Programme wide *(in development)*

- Young Shoots Rural skills project – Pathhill outdoors
- Schools Landscape enhancement programme
- Communications plan and resources
- Accessibility officer (TBC)
- Forest Bathing research (TBC)
- Monitoring and evaluation



Mend the Gap - Berkshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and Oxfordshire Conservation Target Areas

15K and
over

15K and
under

Mitigation

Open for more proposals

Ruth Staples-Rolfe

Programme Manager

Mend the Gap

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<https://Mendthegap.uk>

