



Chilterns National Landscape

Members of the Conservation Board for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are hereby summoned to an Annual General Meeting of The Chilterns Conservation Board on

Thursday 19th June 2025 at 9.30am at

Sarratt Village Hall, The Green, Sarratt, Rickmansworth WD3 6AS

The online session will be available from 9.15am

AGENDA

1. Standing Items

- 1.1 Election of Chair and Deputy Chair (AGM item)
- 1.2 Apologies for absence
- 1.3 Declarations of interest in any of the agenda items
- 1.4 Notice of urgent business
- 1.5 Approval of minutes of the previous meeting (27.03.25)
- 1.6 Matters arising
- 1.7 Consideration of motions submitted by members
- 1.8 Public Questions
- 1.9 Appointment of Committee Members

Resolution to adjourn the meeting

Presentation to the Board: *HAM role for lunch?* by Dr Wendy Morrison, Heritage and Archaeology Manager at the Chilterns National Landscape

Meeting reconvenes

Chair's announcements

2. Items for Decision

- 2.1 Finance Report
- 2.2 2025/26 Budget
- 2.3 Reserves Policy and Financial Approvals
- 2.4 Delivery Plan
- 2.5 Management Plan
- 2.6 Nature Recovery Plan
- 2.7 HR policies

3. Items for Noting / Information

- 3.1 Chief Executive Officer's Update

4. Minutes & Recommendations of Committees

4.1 Executive Committee draft minutes (07.05.25)

4.2 Planning Committee draft minutes (17.04.25)

- 5. Any urgent business
- 6. Handover to new Chair
- 7. Next meeting: Thursday 25th September 2025, 10am, Gateway Offices, Buckinghamshire Council, Aylesbury.

Future meeting dates 2025

Planning Committee	Executive Committee	Board
Thursday 23 rd October @10am Location Chinnor Offices	Tuesday 9 th September @10am Location tbc Thursday 13 th November @10am Location tbc	Thursday 25 th September @10am Gateway Offices, Buckinghamshire Council, Aylesbury Thursday 11 th December @10am Gateway Offices, Buckinghamshire Council, Aylesbury

Dr Elaine King, Chief Executive Officer

Summary of Actions Required

Agenda number	Agenda item	Actions required
1.	Standing Items	
1.1	Election of Chair and Deputy Chair (AGM item)	
1.2	Apologies for absence	
1.3	Declaration of interest in any of the agenda items	
1.4	Notice of urgent business	
1.5	Approval of minutes of the previous meeting (27.03.25)	APPROVE
1.6	Matters arising	
1.7	Consideration of motions submitted by members	
1.8	Public Questions	
1.9	Appointment of Committee Members	
2.	Items for Decision	
2.1	Finance Report	APPROVE
2.2	2025/26 Budget	APPROVE
2.3	Financial Approvals	APPROVE
2.4	Delivery Plan	APPROVE
2.5	Management Plan	APPROVE
2.6	Nature Recovery Plan	APPROVE
2.7	HR policies	APPROVE
3.	Items for Noting / Information	
3.1	Chief Executive Officer's Update	NOTE
4.	Minutes & Recommendations of Minutes	
4.1	Executive Committee meeting draft minutes (07.05.25)	NOTE
4.2	Planning Committee draft minutes (17.04.25)	NOTE
5.	Any urgent business	
6.	Handover to new Chair	
7.	Next meeting: 25 th September 2025. Location Gateway Offices, Buckinghamshire Council, Aylesbury	

Item 1.1**Election of Chair and Deputy Chair**

Author: Matt Thomson, Deputy Monitoring Officer

Purpose of Report: To elect the new Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board.

Election of Chair and Deputy Chair

1. In combination, our Establishment Order and the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 determine that the Board should elect from its members a Chair and Deputy Chair. Both roles are elected for a period of not more than one year, but with eligibility for re-election. The Constitution's current Code of Governance determines that these elections are held at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Board.
2. The current Chair, John Nicholls, has indicated his intention not to stand for re-election this year as his tenure as a Board member comes to an end in September 2025, having been extended by Defra as an exception to their usual rules.
3. There have been several requests during the last few months for members to put their names forward as candidates for these roles. The current position is that one name has been received for each role, as follows:
 - a) Chair: Cllr Louise Price (local authority appointee, Three Rivers District Council)
 - b) Deputy Chair: Cllr Sir Hector Sants (parish council appointee, Buckinghamshire parishes; current Board Deputy Chair).
4. Both candidates are supported by the existing Chair, and recommended to the Board by the Chief Executive Officer.
5. Board members may accept these recommendations, or they may volunteer or nominate alternatives at the meeting. All nominations, including those recommended above, will require a formal nomination and seconding from the membership, and a vote held, either to determine the Board's preference or to confirm the recommendations.
6. Continuing the practice established in 2024, the meeting will continue with John Nicholls in the chair. The role will then be handed over towards the end of the meeting (item 6), with the incoming Chair (or Deputy in his/her absence) proposing a vote of thanks and closing the meeting.

Chair and Deputy Chair roles – for information

7. The main duty of the Chair is to preside at meetings of the Board, and the main duty of the Deputy Chair is to deputise for and support the Chair.
8. Both positions have a role in supporting officers, especially with the preparation of the agenda for meetings, and representing the Board with external stakeholders.
9. The Constitution's current Code of Governance includes some particular requirements and delegations of authority to the Chair and Deputy Chair. For example:
 - a) The Chair is required to be a member of the Executive Committee (not necessarily the Committee's Chair, but that can be beneficial).
 - b) The Chair assists with the identification and selection of members of standing Committees.

- c) The Deputy Chair is required to be a member of the Human Resources Advisory Group.
 - d) The Chair (or Deputy in their absence) has various responsibilities in terms of determining whether and when to hold extraordinary meetings, etc., and to be consulted by officers on a variety of matters of urgency that cannot wait until a Board meeting can be held.
10. The Chair and Deputy Chair are entitled to claim special allowances in support of the additional responsibilities of their positions.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Board ELECTS a Chair of the Board for 2024/25, as set out in paras 3-5 above.**
- 2. That the Board ELECTS a Deputy Chair of the Board for 2024/25, as set out in paras 3-5 above.**

Board Meeting

Thursday 27th March 2025

Chilterns National Landscape

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CONSERVATION BOARD FOR THE
CHILTERN AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
Held at Buckinghamshire Council Offices, The Jubilee Room,
The Gateway Offices, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP19 8FF
on Thursday 27th March 2025 at 10.00am.**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Appointed by Local Authorities

Cllr Louise Price
Cllr Richard Newcombe
Cllr Sally Symington
Cllr David Bartholomew
Cllr Philip Spicer
Cllr Patricia Birchley

Appointing Body

Three Rivers District Council
Buckinghamshire Council
Dacorum Borough Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Central Bedfordshire Council
Buckinghamshire Council

Appointed by the Secretary of State

Colin Courtney
John Nicholls (Chair)
Simon Mortimer

Secretary of State
Secretary of State
Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils

Cllr John Harfield
Cllr Charles Hussey
Cllr Sue Rowland
Cllr Hector Sants

Bedfordshire Parish Councils
Buckinghamshire Parish Council
Oxfordshire Parish Councils
Buckinghamshire Parish Council

CCB Staff

Lorna Coldwell
Graham Hurst
Elaine King
Eloise Small
Kathryn Foster
Jenny Caprio

Clerk to the Board
Finance Officer (S151 Officer)
Chief Executive Officer
Administration Officer
Senior Finance Manager
Monitoring Officer

Other

Peter Phippen
Tom Beeston

The Chiltern Society
The Chiltern Society

No members of the public were present.

24/25.45 Standing Items

45.1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:

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*Cllr John Griffin – Oxfordshire Parish Council, *Gemma Harper – Secretary of State, *Cllr James Norman – South Oxfordshire District Council, *Matt Thomson – Head of Strategy & Planning; Deputy Monitoring Officer, *Annette Weiss – Head of Engagement and Partnerships, *Cllr Paula Hiscocks – Hertfordshire County Council, *Paul Mainds – Secretary of State, *Andrew Brock-Doyle – Head of Operations, Geeta Ludhra – Secretary of State, John Shaw – Secretary of State, Cllr Greg Smith – Buckinghamshire Council, Cllr Robert Roche – Luton Borough Council, Joe Stewart – Secretary of State.

*(Those * listened in on the meeting online)*

45.2 Declarations of Interest in any of the agenda items

None.

45.3 Chair's Announcements

The Chair said it is expected to bring the Nature Recovery Strategy and proposed amendments to the scheme of delegation element of the Constitution to the June Board meeting.

45.4 Notice of Urgent Business

There was no urgent business, with relevant items being covered in the agenda.

45.5 Approval of Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12.12.24 were approved as a true record and signed.

45.6 Matters Arising

The inclusion in the Risk Register of improving the diversity of the Board Members was questioned. Elaine King, the CEO, clarified that we are recognising the risks of not ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to become a Board Member, regardless of ethnicity, sex, age, etc. The briefing note that is being drafted to circulate to Local Authorities after the upcoming elections in May is intended to help diversify the Board, identify further what the organisation is and does, and the skill sets that are required for Board Members, particularly where gaps have already been identified.

45.7 Considerations of motions submitted by members

No motions submitted.

45.8 Public Question Time.

No public present.

24/25.46 Items for Decision

46.1 2025/26 Budget

The Senior Finance Manager, Kathryn Foster, had circulated a budget envelope that was first presented to the Executive Committee in February. Following feedback, amendments were made. Defra has since confirmed a flat settlement of £513k for 2025/26. The draft budget indicates a deficit of £97k for 2025/26, with a proposal to use current year surplus to part fund the shortfall, leaving an overall deficit of £22k. If all Local Authorities were to pay their full contributions, this figure would fall by around £21k. There are substantial increases in costs for 2025/26 including increases to

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employer National Insurance contributions, inflationary increases and insurance costs having risen this year. The level of reserves is currently healthy and using reserves as proposed, to lower the 2025/26 deficit, is within the means of the organisation. The Executive Committee will be considering a Reserves Policy at the May meeting. Other insurance providers were noted to be considered for a potentially more reasonable quotation.

- 1. The Board NOTED and APPROVED in principle using the current year's surplus to part fund the 2025/26 deficit with the balance of the deficit to be funded from reserves**
- 2. The Board NOTED the final consideration of the budget will be presented at the Executive Committee meeting in May**

46.2 Financial Approvals

Kathryn Foster, Senior Finance Manager, had provided a paper outlining interim changes to the Financial Approvals. Following some points that need clarification, it was agreed to withdraw the paper for further amendments.

- 1. The Board AGREED for the paper to be withdrawn to be discussed at the Executive Committee meeting in May.**

46.3 Executive Committee functions

The Chair, John Nicholls, had circulated a paper requesting opinions from Board Members regarding the current practice of referring budget and delivery progress reports from the Executive Committee to the Board. This is not required in the Constitution, which only requires the Board to set policy, budgets, and the scope of project activity. Therefore, to reduce the length of Board meeting agendas, it is proposed that the Executive Committee monitor these reports quarterly and only to refer them to the Board on an exception basis. This approach would allow the Board to focus more on strategic issues.

- 1. The Board APPROVED the recommendations in the paper: that the Executive Committee should monitor budget and delivery reports, as prescribed in the Constitution, reporting to the Board only on an exception basis where there is a Constitutional requirement or where it considers an issue needs Board consideration. Board papers will contain a link to these reports**
- 2. The Board invited the Executive Committee to make further recommendations on topics where this principle could be applied**

46.4 Board Operations and Succession Planning

Following the elections in May 2025 for some Local Authorities and Parish Councils, the Board will lose at least two Local Authority members who are not standing for re-election. Further to this, at least five of the eight Secretary of State appointees are either standing down or have reached the end of their term. Whilst the recruitment process for Secretary of State Board Members is expected to commence in March, it is likely to be a lengthy process. This leaves an immediate practical problem as a lot of expertise will be leaving at one time and raises the issue of how to manage this whilst waiting for new appointees, particularly in terms of quoracy for Committees. Defra ministers are not

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agreeable to prolonging any terms, and therefore co-option to fill the gaps in the interim period is suggested.

There is no statutory limit on how many can be co-opted to the Board itself, although the Constitution specifies two, but they are required to be non-voting members. Further, a new Chair will be needed at the June meeting. Board Members are encouraged to speak with the current Chair if they would like more information on the role. The briefing note being drafted for Local Authorities will assist with helping potential new candidates to understand the time commitment involved along with information on key responsibilities and opportunities to get involved. Cllr Sants is willing to continue as Vice-Chair but welcomes a discussion with anyone who may wish to assume the role.

- 1. The Board APPROVED the recommendation in the paper authorising conversations to identify which Board Members would be willing to be co-opted on a temporary basis until appointees are in place**

46.5 HR Policies

Andy Brock-Doyle, Head of Operations, reported that a further eight policies will be taken to the June Board meeting for approval. The policies for approval are:

- Health and Safety Statement of Intent, Arrangement and Roles and Responsibilities
- Confidentiality
- Equity, Equality, Inclusion and Diversity
- Annual Leave
- Performance Management
- Reward and Remuneration
- Travel and Subsistence
- Flexitime and Time off in Lieu

The work of the Head of Operations, the HR Advisor, the HRAG Chair, Paul Mainds, and the rest of the HRAG in completing these policies and the upcoming policies was commended. It was recognised that they must be living documents and used going forward, updated when necessary with any changes to legislation or similar.

- 1. The Board APPROVED the seven policies and HR statement, and recognition of the need to ensure the policies are kept up to date and integrated with all staff, who will receive training where appropriate**
- 2. The Board NOTED the additional policies will be brought to the June Board meeting for approval**

46.6 Management Plan Review

An update on the latest position regarding the refreshed Management Plan was given by Gemma Harper, Chair of the Task and Finish Group, and Matt Thomson, Head of Strategy & Planning. Thanks were given to the Officers and others involved in working on the refresh. The responses to the consultation, which ended in February, are being analysed and the depth and breadth of the responses has meant a requirement to spend more time finalising the document.

Natural England has confirmed that there are no financial or legal implications to a revised timeline to defer approval until the June Board meeting. This will also allow

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greater alignment with the boundary review and the Nature Recovery Plan. A project plan will be shared with Board Members as soon as possible.

The discussion highlighted that Local Authority Board Members were unaware of their role in securing a response from Local Authorities to the consultation and, ultimately endorsement of the final Plan. All members reflected on this and committed to ensuring clearer and more effective communication moving forward. Cllr Sants suggested that as the lack of engagement between Board members and Local Authorities seems to be a recurring issue, along with other issues relating to engagement with Local Authorities, a group could be tasked with formulating an engagement strategy for each Local Authority.

- 1. The Board APPROVED the recommendation for the Plan to be approved at the June Board meeting**
- 2. The Board APPROVED the suggestion of forming a group to develop an engagement strategy for Local Authorities**

46.7 Chalk Streams Planning Guidance

Matt Thomson, Head of Strategy & Planning, had circulated the draft Chilterns Chalk Streams Planning Guidance which had been recommended to the Board by the Planning Committee for adoption. Whilst specifically for the Chilterns, the document could easily be expanded beyond as would apply to any chalk stream.

- 1. The Board APPROVED the guidance without changes and AUTHORISED Officers to make any final design or proofing amendments prior to publication and DELEGATED to Officers to incorporate the newly expanded Chalk Streams definition to the web portal and new document when future funding allows**

24/25.47 Items for Noting/Information

47.1 Quarter 3 Finance Report

The Senior Finance Manager, Kathryn Foster, had provided the accounts for four months of the year, ending 31st December 2024.

- Core profit was £62k for the nine month period compared to a budgeted surplus of £30k. The forecasted out-turn for the full year anticipates this surplus to be maintained at £63k, with a full year budget out-turn of £10k.
- Project income is £2.68m, costs are £1.87m and “profit” on projects is £808k overall. This represents income received in advance of expenditure, particularly for projects including the Chess Smarter Water Catchment project, FiPL and Access for All funding.

- 1. The Board NOTED the Chilterns Conservation Board annual accounts for the year ending 31st December 2024.**

47.2 Quarter 3 Delivery Report

Overall Progress

The Head of Operation, Andy Brock-Doyle, provided a comprehensive paper that was taken as read.

The Delivery Plan that was approved for this year was split into five workstreams containing 28 delivery areas and a total of 102 delivery lines. Between October and

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December 2024:

- 49 delivery lines reported as progressing on track
- 29 delivery lines reported as being slightly delayed
- 12 delivery lines reported as being significantly delayed
- 12 delivery lines have been postponed for reconsidering in financial year 2025/26

1. The Board NOTED the Quarter 3 update

47.3 Annual Business Planning

The Head of Operations, Andy Brock-Doyle had circulated a paper setting out the progress on annual planning for financial year 2025/26 including identifying priorities and the proposed way forward to developing a delivery plan. A key area of focus is capacity, which has for some time been identified as an organisational risk.

1. The Board NOTED the update

47.4 Funding Strategy Update

The CEO, Elaine King, updated the Board on progress with delivering the Funding Strategy. She emphasised the challenges of a flat cash settlement for financial year 2025/26, and the need to ensure that the Chilterns National Landscape is not disadvantaged for the subsequent three year settlement., especially as, unlike National Parks and National Landscapes hosted by Local Authorities, Conservation Boards must pay VAT. The lack of visibility of core funding until the start of the new financial year, and then only one year's funding, demonstrates the challenges of setting a budget and managing staff expectations.

1. The Board NOTED the update

47.5 Chief Executive Officer's Update

Elaine King, Chief Executive Officer, had provided a comprehensive paper detailing key recent work. This was taken as read. A key focus continues to be business planning and developing budgets for future years, plus strategic work including the Management Plan, Natural England's Boundary Review, supporting Defra in preparing to recruit new Secretary of State appointed Board members, developing a Nature Recovery Plan, exploring new funding opportunities, finalising our new HR policies, managing risk, and collaborating with the National Landscapes Association (NLA) and other National Landscapes. Also, the Senior Leadership Team is meeting more frequently with Senior Managers and Team Leads as has been implementing the recommendations from the Staff Engagement Survey in September 2024. A new lease has also been agreed for the office. She thanked the entire team for their hard work.

24/25.48 Minutes and Recommendations of Committees

48.1.1 Executive Committee Draft minutes (24.02.25)

John Griffin had sent apologies for the meeting which are not noted.

48.1.2 Planning Committee Draft minutes (23.01.25)

1. The Board NOTED the draft Committee minutes

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48.3 Any Urgent Business
None.

48.4 Next Meeting
The next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 19th June 2025, time and location TBC.
This will include the AGM.

Future meeting dates:

Planning Committee Meetings	Executive Committee Meetings	Board Meetings
Thursday 17 th April, 10am Chinnor offices	Thursday 7 th May, 10am Chinnor offices	Thursday 19 th June, TBC
Thursday 23 rd October, 10am Chinnor offices	Tuesday 9 th September, 10am Chinnor Village Centre	Thursday 25 th September 10am, Gateway Aylesbury Centre
	Thursday 13 th November, 10am Chinnor Village Centre	Thursday 11 th December, 10am Gateway Aylesbury Centre

The meeting was closed at 12.20.

Following the meeting, a presentation was given on the Heritage Lottery funded Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Project which finished in November 2024: Reporting on its success, legacy and lessons learned. Staff members that presented were Anna Foster, Fran Crowther, and Nick Marriner.

The Chairman.....

Date.....

Item 1.9 Appointment of Committee members

Author: Matt Thomson, Deputy Monitoring Officer

Purpose of Report: To appoint members to the Board's standing committees:
Executive Committee and Planning Committee, and inform
members of opportunities to participate in other groupings

Background

1. The discharge of the Board's functions through standing and other committees is governed by the CCB's [Establishment Order](#) (mostly [article 17](#)), with reference to a multitude of provisions selected from various Local Government Acts, refined by the current Code of Governance (section 2.2.2 of the Constitution). As has been noted, some parts of the Code are not internally consistent, and other parts are inconsistent with the legislation – a key justification for the ongoing review of the Constitution. As a result, the Board must always refer to the legislation before making decisions in the context of the Code.
2. A key element is paragraph 2.9 of the Code, which sets out how membership of the standing committees will be determined ("usually") at the AGM.
3. The Code refers to a process of "voting for membership" of committees and asks members "wishing to stand for election" to notify their preference to the "chairman" (unclear whether this is the Board or Committee chairman) not less than 14 days before the AGM. The actual process described in para 2.9 is, however, one of selection (by the "chairman") rather than election by the Board.
4. The experience of agreeing Committee membership at an AGM in June has been noted previously as being hampered by changes in local authority and parish council membership following local government elections in May, and by the recruitment and appointment of new Secretary of State members, which is often also undertaken at this time of year. In addition, this year (2025) officers have been focused on other matters, including the completion of the Management Plan Review. As a result, a request was not issued to members in May seeking volunteers to join the standing committees.
5. It is therefore proposed to continue with the existing membership (and Chairs and Deputy Chairs) of the standing committees, as set out below, until the September Board meeting as a temporary measure, including any additional members appointed by the Board at the meeting (see below). Working with the committee Chairs, officers will, between June and September, seek new volunteers to serve on the committees, and align that process with drafting proposed amendments to the Constitution to resolve the issues discussed above, also for approval in September.
6. Consideration may be given to holding the AGM for future years in September. The Deputy Monitoring Officer will examine any constraints on this option and bring recommendations to the Board when it considers the meeting calendar for 2026 at its December meeting.

Constraints on Committee membership

7. The law, including our Establishment Order, places some constraints on the size and composition of the Board's committees.
8. All committees must comprise at least one member from each nominating group (Local Authority, Secretary of State or Parish Council) – this is also the basis for meetings being quorate. The total size of committees is only limited by the total number of members of the Board: traditionally we have sought nine Board members on each committee. This is the minimum number allowed by the current Code of Governance (although not by legislation)

since paragraph 2.14 of the Code determines that one third of members must be present for a meeting to be quorate. As legislation requires at least one member from each of the nominating groups (i.e. a total of three), the minimum size for a committee must be at least three times three, i.e. nine.

9. Critically, however, the law requires that the Board's committees comprise members selected from the different nominating groups in the same proportion (to the nearest whole number) as the proportions required for the Board as a whole. For both the Executive Committee and the Planning Committee, both of which have nine Board members, that is determined as set out in the table below.

Nominating group	CROW Act requirement (sch.13, para 3(2))	CROW Act number (assuming 27 Board members)	Specification for Board members in Establishment Order	Composition if applied to committee of 9 members
Local Authorities	At least 40%	Min 10.8	13 ¹	4.3 → 4
Secretary of State	Whatever is left	Max 10.8	8	2.7 → 3
Parish Councils	At least 20%	Min 5.4	6	2.0 → 2

10. Technically, it is unlawful for the Board to appoint a different proportion of members to its committees, although it has done so in the past.
11. The principle is derived from the fact that the Conservation Board takes on duties and functions that are (largely) otherwise the prerogative of the directly democratically elected local authorities who originally chose to establish the Board. This is why the local authorities have a privileged position in terms of representation on the Board – to maintain an accountable link to the electorate. A committee's authority to make decisions on behalf of the Board is in part derived from this.
12. The Code of Governance currently suggests that positions on committees may be filled by volunteers from other nominating groups if the above composition cannot be achieved. This is not lawful. Your officers' advice is that unfilled positions be left vacant (vacancies are not unlawful), and that the Board seeks and encourages members from under-represented nominating groups to step forward.
13. Unselected volunteers from over-represented nominating groups could attend meetings and provide advice as non-voting observers, especially if this would help to address a gap in skills, diversity or geographical distribution of members, similar to the "co-option" onto the Board and its committees of individuals who are not Board members. Parish Council appointees Cllrs Sue Rowland and Charles Hussey currently hold this status with the Executive Committee.

Executive Committee

14. See para 2.24 of the Code of Governance (section 2.2.2 of the Constitution).
15. In summary, Executive Committee (ExCo):
16. Regulates and controls the Board's finances, including budgets, accounts, insurance, etc;

¹ This is derived from the number of local authorities, prior to Buckinghamshire Council becoming unitary. At that time, it was determined that Bucks Council should continue to appoint 5 members, rather than amend the balance of Board members, e.g. by bringing the number of SoS appointees up to the statutory maximum of 10, or reducing the overall size of the Board.

- a) Monitors and reviews the implementation of the Board's policy and strategy, e.g. in the Management Plan and operational plans, making recommendations to the Board;
 - b) Prepares employment policies, including health and safety, and oversees all human resources matters (with the assistance of the HR Advisory Group);
 - c) Provides members for the Appeals Sub-Committee (see below);
17. Considers other matters of an organisational or administrative nature referred to it by the Board.
18. ExCo meets four times a year, usually at the CCB office in Chinnor. In 2025 meetings are in February, May, September and November.
19. **The current membership of ExCo is:**
 - Local Authority (requirement: 4)
 - Cllr Philip Spicer
 - Cllr Louise Price
 - **Two vacancies** (one long-term, one following Richard Newcombe's departure from the Board)
 - Secretary of State (requirement: 3)
 - Paul Mainds (until September 2025)
 - John Nicholls (Deputy Chair, until September 2025)
 - **One vacancy** (following Geeta Ludhra's departure from the Board)
 - Parish Council (requirement: 2)
 - Cllr John Griffin
 - Cllr Sir Hector Sants (Chair)
20. In addition, Parish Council members Cllr Charles Hussey and Cllr Sue Rowlands attend the committee as non-voting observers.
21. The committee may co-opt up to four non-voting members who are not members of the Board to assist with optimising skills and experience or the balance of the committee. ExCo currently has no co-opted members.
22. The Chair and Deputy Chair are elected by the committee from its membership, usually at the first committee meeting after the AGM.
23. We would be very grateful for current Executive Committee members to maintain their membership at least until the September Board meeting (i.e. attending the ExCo meeting on 9 September). Any member who wishes to resign from the committee is requested to notify the Chairs of the committee and of the Board, cc'ing the admin team (office@chilterns.org.uk).
24. Volunteers would be welcome to fill the above vacancies (and any arising before or at the Board meeting), even if only on a temporary basis to September, noting the restrictions on appointing groups. Volunteers may make themselves known to the Board and/or committee chair in advance of the meeting, or to the Board meeting itself. Appointment to the committee will be made following proposal, seconding and a simple majority vote. If the number of volunteers exceeds the number of vacancies, then appointment will be made on the basis of a vote.

Planning Committee

25. See para 2.27 of the Code of Governance, subject to a “working re-definition” approved by the Board in December 2022 (embedding this in the Constitution is a work in progress).

26. In summary, Planning Committee (PlanCo):

- a) Oversees all representations on behalf of the Board in relation to (a) national and local planning policy; planning applications and enforcement; policies of statutory bodies; transport planning and projects; infrastructure proposals; and any other proposals or policies relevant to physical development, all within the AONB and/or its setting. (In practice, preparation and submission of most such representations is delegated to officers, having regard to established Board policies and priorities, endorsed retrospectively by PlanCo.)
- b) Developing CCB’s own planning policies, including the planning input to the Management Plan, for recommendation for the Board’s approval.

27. PlanCo meets three times a year, usually at the CCB office in Chinnor. In 2025 meetings are in January, April, and October.

28. The current membership of PlanCo is:

Local Authority (requirement: 4)

- Cllr Robert Carington
- Cllr Louise Price (Deputy Chair)
- Cllr Heather Wallace

29. Cllr Paula Hiscocks (tbc if Herts CC confirms the appointment)

Secretary of State (requirement: 3)

- Simon Mortimer
- Joe Stewart
- **One vacancy** (following Colin Courtney’s departure from the Board)

Parish Council (requirement: 2)

- Cllr Charles Hussey
- Cllr Sue Rowland (Chair)

30. The committee may co-opt up to four non-voting members who are not members of the Board to assist with optimising skills and experience or the balance of the committee. PlanCo currently benefits from two co-opted members (Paul Hayes and Chris Hannington).

31. The Chair and Deputy Chair are elected by the committee from its membership, usually at the first committee meeting after the AGM.

32. We would be very grateful for current Planning Committee members to maintain their membership at least until the September Board meeting (noting that there are no committee meetings scheduled for this period). Any member who wishes to resign from the committee is requested to notify the chairs of the committee and of the Board, cc’ing the admin team (office@chilterns.org.uk) and the Head of Strategy & Planning (mthomson@chilterns.org.uk).

33. Volunteers would be welcome to fill the above vacancies (and any arising before or at the Board meeting), even if only on a temporary basis to September, noting the restrictions on appointing groups. Volunteers may make themselves known to the Board and/or committee chair in advance of the meeting, or to the Board meeting itself. Appointment to the committee will be made following proposal, seconding and a simple majority vote. If the

number of volunteers exceeds the number of vacancies, then appointment will be made on the basis of a vote.

Other groupings: sub-committees, advisory groups, task and finish groups

34. In addition to the standing committees, the Board or its committees can convene sub-committees, and a variety of different non-statutory groups (panels, working parties, task and finish groups, etc.). The current membership of these groups is attached for information in the annex to this paper.
35. The Appeals Sub-Committee is not listed in the annex. This Sub-Committee is convened on an as-needed basis from members of the Executive Committee (or, if the matter at appeal concerns an ExCo decision, then from members not sitting on that committee) in accordance with paragraph 2.26 of the Code of Governance.
36. Unlike standing committees, these groups are not formally appointed by the Board or at the AGM, and appointments are made according to different procedures depending on how the group was convened. However, most of the listed groups are permanently seeking additional volunteers, and if members are interested in joining one or more of these groups, then they are encouraged to contact the chairman of the group and/or the chairman of the convening committee.

Recommendations

1. That the Board **APPROVES** the membership of Executive Committee as set out in paragraph 18, subject to any resignations notified to the Board and any appointments made at the Board meeting, where moved, seconded and agreed by a simple majority vote (para 23).
2. That the Board **APPROVES** the membership of Planning Committee as set out in paragraph 27, subject to any resignations notified to the Board and any appointments made at the Board meeting, where moved, seconded and agreed by a simple majority vote (para 31).
3. That the Board **NOTES** that the membership of both committees shall be reviewed in advance of the September Board meeting when new local authority and Secretary of State appointed members are confirmed.

Annex: Other groupings

In addition to the standing committees, the Board or its committees can convene sub-committees, and a variety of different non-statutory groups (panels, working parties, task and finish groups (TFG), etc.). The current membership of these groups is given here for information.

These groups are not formally appointed at the AGM, so there is no request or requirement for expressions of interest to be made to the Board Chair. However, most of the listed groups are permanently seeking additional volunteers, and if members are interested in joining one or more of these groups, then they are encouraged to contact the chair of the group and/or the chair of the Board or convening committee as appropriate.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion TFG

Convened by the Board.

- John Shaw (co-opted – to be confirmed)
- (At least one vacancy, following Geeta Ludhra's departure from the Board)

Finance Advisory Group

Convened by Executive Committee.

- Cllr Hector Sants
- (One vacancy, following Richard Newcombe's departure from the Board, although Richard may be co-opted onto the FAG)

Governance Review TFG

Convened by the Board.

- John Nicholls (Chair)
- Charles Hussey
- Richard Newcombe (co-opted – to be confirmed)
- Lynn Lloyd (co-opted)

Human Resources Advisory Group (HRAG)

HRAG is convened by Executive Committee. Its membership is selected by the Chair of Executive Committee in consultation with the CEO.

- Paul Mains (Chair)
- John Nicholls
- Robert Roche
- Sue Rowland
- (Former members: Colin Courtney, Geeta Ludhra)

Local Authority Engagement Working Group

Convened by Executive Committee.

- Cllr Richard Newcombe (co-opted – chair)
- Cllr Hector Sants
- Gemma Harper
- Cllr Louise Price
- John Nicholls

Management Plan Review TFG

Convened by the Board.

- Gemma Harper (Chair)
- Simon Mortimer
- Hector Sants
- Joe Stewart

Vision TFG

Convened by the Board.

- Hector Sants (Chair)
- Joe Stewart
- John Nicholls
- Robert Carington

Item 2.1 Finance Report – 2024-25

Author: Kathryn Foster, Senior Finance Manager

Purpose: To present the Annual accounts for 31 March 2025 and the Annual Governance and Accountability (AGAR) return for the financial year 2024-25

Annual accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025

1. The CCB Annual accounts for 31 March 2025 are attached and consist of a Combined Core and Projects Profit and Loss Account (**Appendix 1**) together with Balance Sheet (**Appendix 2**).
2. Overall, The CCB had a combined deficit of **£328,200**. This comprised a Core Surplus of **£109,500** and a Project deficit of **£437,700**.
3. The Core result exceeded even our forecast expectations (**£75k surplus**; original Core budget was a £10k surplus) but note it reflects a year when we not only received Defra Capital monies of £114k but also an additional Defra Core Grant of £114k. For information, an analysis of Actuals versus Budget and Forecast is included in Appendix 3. The main variances to forecast which drive the improved performance are additional interest income +£24k along with savings on marketing costs + £9k (costs shifted into 25/26 for the Management Plan and Nature Recovery Plan).
4. The Project deficit reflects project spend from reserves, in particular the Mend the Gap programme (Net Spend £596k for 24/25). Note a full breakdown of current project reserves is included in our balance sheet in Appendix 2.
5. The AGAR is required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and is subject to audit once it has been approved by the Board and subsequently published on the CCB's website. The Accounting Statement of the AGAR is prepared under local government accounting principles which do not recognise deferred income and therefore income is recognised when funds are received.
6. The external auditor's report can only be completed once sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR have been approved by the Board. These accompany this paper (Appendix 4). The external auditor's report will be made available at a subsequent board meeting (work will be carried out in August/September). The internal auditors have not yet commenced their audit (work to commence 23rd June) and a copy of their report will also be made available to the Board once the audit is complete.
7. The AGAR shows that the Board has overall funds carried forward of **£4,375,351**. These are separately itemised on the CCB balance sheet. Note this figure excludes the Pension reserve. The CCB has **£5,176,522** cash reserves mainly arising from Project reserves received in advance, such as Mend the Gap, which has reserves of £2,728,773 as at 31 March 2025.
8. Appendix 2 includes an analysis of the CCB's reserve position as at 31 March 2025. The CCB has project reserves of £3.638m and General/Unrestricted reserves of £737k.

Recommendations

1. The Board **APPROVES** the CCB Annual accounts for 31 March 2025
2. The Board **APPROVES** and signs the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2024-25

Profit and Loss

Chilterns Conservation Board

For the year ended 31 March 2025

Appendix 1

Account	Core	Projects	Total
Turnover			
Access Grant	0	256,531	256,531
Advertising Income	7,792	0	7,792
Defra Capital Grant	95,934	18,315	114,249
Defra Core Grant	628,145	1,101,882	1,730,027
Donations Received	60	50	110
Interest Income	50,176	68,816	118,991
Internal Fee Income	211,371	73,862	285,233
Local Authority Contribution	127,442	46,287	173,730
Other Revenue	15,105	20,000	35,105
Project Income	16,356	1,688,570	1,704,926
Sale of merchandise	484	362	846
Total Turnover	1,152,865	3,274,675	4,427,540
Gross Profit	1,152,865	3,274,675	4,427,540
Administrative Costs			
Access grant expenditure	0	256,531	256,531
Advertising & Marketing	10,022	9,528	19,550
Bank Fees	184	1	185
Board Meetings	1,161	0	1,161
CCB Core Contribution	0	32,138	32,138
CCB recharges	0	222,125	222,125
Chess SWC Landowner Grant	0	220,547	220,547
Cleaning	3,196	0	3,196
Consulting	70,508	71,777	142,285
Defra Capital Spend	95,934	18,315	114,249
Employers National Insurance	55,778	34,056	89,834
Equipment and materials (activity)	0	12,105	12,105
Equipment and materials (capital)	0	12,279	12,279
Evaluation	0	31,638	31,638
Event costs	2,164	43,846	46,009
Finance costs	12,443	0	12,443
FiPL Grant Year 3 23/24	0	77,174	77,174
FiPL Grant Year 4 24/25	0	966,031	966,031
Full Cost Recovery (NLHF Projects)	0	3,335	3,335
General Expenses	2,360	695,238	697,597
HLF New Staff Costs	0	97,456	97,456
HLF Training for staff	0	395	395
HLF Travel for staff	0	1,474	1,474
Insurance	16,036	0	16,036
Irrecoverable VAT	0	22,513	22,513
IT Software and Consumables	9,315	3,615	12,930
IT support and maintenance	9,175	1,600	10,775
Legal Expenses	7,755	0	7,755
Light, Power, Heating	4,180	0	4,180
Magazine costs	16,848	0	16,848
Medical Insurance	3,410	1,701	5,111
Members Allowances	9,657	0	9,657
Nature Recovery	0	86,805	86,805
New building work (NLHF)	0	4,574	4,574
Other costs (activity) NLHF	0	26,449	26,449
Other costs (capital) NLHF	0	3,327	3,327
Other costs NLHF	0	4,662	4,662
Pensions Costs	109,447	73,464	182,911
Postage, Freight & Courier	(264)	418	154
Printing & Stationery	1,528	2,768	4,296
Professional fees (activity)	0	204,574	204,574
Professional fees (capital)	0	5,992	5,992
Project donations	13,157	0	13,157
Publicity and promotion	0	(1,214)	(1,214)
Rates and Water rates	7,324	0	7,324
Recruitment	3,245	2,296	5,542
Rent	18,825	2,000	20,825
Repair and conservation work	0	12,754	12,754
Repairs & Maintenance	4,484	0	4,484
Research and survey expenditure	0	53,907	53,907
Salaries	528,939	353,527	882,466
Staff expenses	180	1,000	1,180
Staff Training	11,668	10,482	22,149
Subscriptions	6,202	92	6,294
Telephone & Internet	3,508	2,469	5,976
Training for volunteers	0	9,538	9,538
Travel and expenses for volunteers	0	31	31
Travel Expenses	3,893	8,908	12,801
Website running costs	1,104	8,135	9,239
Total Administrative Costs	1,043,365	3,712,375	4,755,740
Surplus/(Deficit)	109,500	(437,700)	(328,200)

Balance Sheet

Chilterns Conservation Board

As at 31 March 2025

Appendix 2

Account	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2024
Current Assets		
Total Cash at bank and in hand	5,176,522	5,186,839
Accounts Receivable	267,189	166,292
Prepayments & Accrued income	18,809	470
Inventory	1,000	1,000
Total Current Assets	5,463,520	5,354,601
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		
Accounts Payable	802,254	516,158
Accruals & Deferred Income	280,330	133,014
Credit card	852	901
Payroll Creditors	4,734	979
Total Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	1,088,171	651,052
Net Current Assets (Liabilities)	4,375,349	4,703,549
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	4,375,349	4,703,549
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year		
Pension Scheme Liability	(1,102,000)	(534,000)
Total Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(1,102,000)	(534,000)
Net Assets	5,477,349	5,237,549
Capital and Reserves		
Project Reserves		
Beacons of the Past: Earmarked Reserves	24,095	34,679
CCC Forward Plan	61,357	0
Central Chilterns Conservation Agriculture	86,976	100,000
Chalk Cherries Chairs: Earmarked Reserves	0	(99,361)
Chalk Scapes: Earmarked Reserves	0	(6,844)
Chalk Streams Earmarked Reserve	168,951	164,798
CHAP	18,611	(54,945)
Chess Smarter Water Catchment Earmarked Reserves	169,936	193,024
Commons: Earmarked Reserves	21,837	21,837
Earmarked Reserves: Small Projects	2,900	56,219
Farm Advice: Earmarked Reserves	9,901	9,901
FIPL Earmarked Reserve	180,295	248,733
Green Recovery Fund	0	(35,770)
HS2 AP Reserve	(18,128)	0
Mend the Gap: Earmarked Reserves	2,728,773	3,324,850
Nature Calling Reserve	19,131	0
Not Bourne Yesterday Reserve	(25,061)	0
New Shoots Reserve	(10,633)	0
North Chilterns Farm Cluster	21,876	0
Red Kites Earmarked Reserve	5,859	5,859
Tracking the Impact (Rebel Restoration) Reserve	97,047	0
Younghusband Legacy Fund	74,505	76,505
Pension Reserve	1,102,000	534,000
Unrestricted Reserves		
Current Year Earnings	(328,200)	523,071
General Reserve	0	100,000
Revenue Reserve	834,199	(252,751)
Development Reserve	231,123	293,744
Total Capital and Reserves	5,477,349	5,237,549

Analysis of Reserves

Project Reserves	3,638,227	4,039,485
Current Year Core Surplus/Loss	109,500	(23,301)
Revenue Reserve	396,500	293,621
General	-	100,000
Development Reserve	231,123	293,744
	737,122	664,064
Total Reserves/AGAR	4,375,349	4,703,549
Minimum Reserves per policy	388,000	
24/25 Core Surplus to Fund 25/26	118,000	
	506,000	

CORE Budget Variance
Chilterns Conservation Board
For the year ended 31 March 2025

APPENDIX 3

Account	2025 ACTUALS	2025 BUDGET	Variance v Budget	2025 Forecast	Variance v Forecast
Trading Income					
Advertising Income	7,792	7,020	772	7,792	(0)
Defra Capital Grant	95,934	-	95,934	86,135	9,799
Defra Core Grant	628,145	628,140	5	628,144	1
Donations Received	60	-	60	60	0
Interest Income	50,176	12,408	37,768	26,166	24,010
Internal Fee Income	211,371	117,432	93,939	223,318	(11,947)
Local Authority Contribution	127,442	120,826	6,616	126,054	1,388
Other Revenue	15,105	-	15,105	-	15,105
Project Income	16,356	-	16,356	32,350	(15,994)
Sale of merchandise	484	269	215	255	229
Total Trading Income	1,152,865	886,095	266,770	1,130,274	22,591
Gross Profit	1,152,865	886,095	266,770	1,130,274	22,591
Operating Expenses					
Advertising & Marketing	10,022	302	(9,720)	19,329	9,307
Bank Fees	184	206	22	114	(70)
Board Meetings	1,161	1,200	39	1,461	300
Cleaning	3,196	2,390	(806)	3,113	(83)
Consulting	70,508	51,640	(18,868)	76,935	6,427
Defra Capital Spend	95,934	-	(95,934)	86,135	(9,799)
Employers National Insurance	55,778	41,979	(13,799)	56,205	427
Event costs	2,164	3,650	1,486	3,452	1,288
Finance costs	12,443	5,665	(6,778)	5,870	(6,573)
General Expenses	2,360	4,451	2,091	4,001	1,641
Insurance	16,036	10,794	(5,242)	15,651	(385)
IT Software and Consumables	9,315	11,386	2,071	8,437	(878)
IT support and maintenance	9,175	5,064	(4,111)	8,026	(1,149)
Legal Expenses	7,755	10,500	2,745	15,755	8,000
Light, Power, Heating	4,180	7,866	3,686	5,459	1,279
Magazine costs	16,848	16,750	(98)	13,638	(3,210)
Medical Insurance	3,410	2,510	(900)	3,835	425
Members Allowances	9,657	12,638	2,981	11,038	1,381
Nature Recovery	-	2,000	2,000	-	0
Office Equipment	-	220	220	-	0
Pensions Costs	109,447	80,506	(28,941)	111,573	2,126
Postage, Freight & Courier	-	264	264	987	1,251
Printing & Stationery	1,528	1,545	17	2,195	667
Project donations	13,157	-	(13,157)	10,000	(3,157)
Rates and Water rates	7,324	8,200	876	8,165	841
Recruitment	3,245	3,500	255	3,245	(0)
Rent	18,825	18,500	(325)	18,500	(325)
Repairs & Maintenance	4,484	5,437	953	4,402	(82)
Salaries	528,939	533,617	4,678	530,438	1,499
Staff expenses	180	979	799	993	813
Staff Training	11,668	13,019	1,352	12,946	1,279
Subscriptions	6,202	7,015	814	5,729	(473)
Telephone & Internet	3,508	4,156	648	3,425	(83)
Travel Expenses	3,893	3,834	(59)	3,405	(488)
Website running costs	1,104	4,116	3,012	616	(488)
Total Operating Expenses	1,043,365	876,094	(167,271)	1,055,073	11,708
Net Profit	109,500	10,001	99,499	75,201	34,299

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

Chilterns Conservation Board

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

19/06/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair	SIGNATURE REQUIRED
Clerk	SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

Chilterns Conservation Board

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	4,180,479	4,703,551	<i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	0	0	<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts	3,830,055	4,427,540	<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs	-1,254,669	-1,272,976	<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments	-2,052,314	-3,482,764	<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward	4,703,551	4,375,351	<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	5,186,841	5,176,522	<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.</i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	85,344	154,495	<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
10. Total borrowings	0	0	<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				<i>The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

19/06/2025

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

19/06/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Item 2.2**Budget 2025/26****Author:**

Kathryn Foster, Senior Finance Manager

Purpose of Report:

To set out the FINAL 2025-26 Core Budget

1. 2025-26 Final Budget – Overview

£'000s	2023/24 (Final)	2024/25 (Final)	2025/26 Budget Envelope (Mar 25)	2025/26 Final Budget (May 25)
Income	798	1,152	805	981
Costs	(821)	(1,043)	(902)	(1,099)
Surplus / (Deficit) in year	(23)	109	(97)	(118)
FINAL 24 / 25 surplus			75	109
Total 24/25 & 25/26 (Deficit)/Surplus			(22)	(9)

- Following the budget envelope presented to the Board on 27th March 2025, officers have continued work to review and refine the detailed budget for 2025/26. A detailed budget is included in **Appendix A**.
- Our overall position is a budget deficit of **£118k** for the year. As agreed at the Board meeting on 27th March, we propose to fund this from the current (24/25) year surplus. Our 2024/25 accounts are now showing a surplus of **£109k** which is much improved on our forecast surplus in March of **£75k**. This moves our overall position for the two years to a deficit of **£9k** (previously a net deficit of £22k) and relieves pressure on reserves to fund the deficit.
- We are continuing to assess the guidance from Defra on the use of Capital (CDEL) funds. There are two elements to the fund – **innovation, invest to save and income generation** and contributing to **30by30 nature recovery targets**. Whilst we have been allocated a substantial sum of CDEL funds (**£348k**), there is still some uncertainty on interpreting the criteria and therefore how we might be permitted to use the funds to support our work, with the key requirement being that activities must be capital spend, and not revenue.
- Despite the uncertainties, we have concluded (based on advice from Defra) that some of the CDEL funds can be used for the planned organisational transformation work and to fund some other Core activities. Details are scoped out below.

2. Income

- The budget assumes **£129k** local authority contributions for 2025/26. This is in line with current contributions and incorporates increases for those authorities who we are confident are accommodating uplifts in line with our Defra grant and thus maintaining the required 80:20 ratio of contributions between Defra and local

authorities. Note that if we received all the contributions due from all local authorities, we could receive a further **£30k** of income in 2025/26 which would make a significant contribution to our budget shortfalls. Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council continue to contribute below the amount required.

- Project recharge income is **£158k** - this reflects ad hoc recharges of Core staff to projects and other core recharges, for example overheads.
- Interest income is **£25k** – this is a conservative estimate (actual interest for 2024/25 is £48k) but the budget figure reflects declining interest rates and reducing project cash balances held (we have held significant funds in advance in 24/25, not least Thames Water monies).
- Project income is **£46.5k** – this represents HS2 Additional Projects income of £14k (Landscape Connectivity project and advice to the HS2 Review Group) and FDRI income (£22.5k). Our FDRI contract with CEH is described more fully in the Funding update. The work is agreed in principle, but subject to a final contract.
- Defra Capital (CDEL) funding of **£80k** – our initial assessment of the CDEL criteria is that we will be able to draw on the CDEL funding to deliver some elements of our organisational transformation work, under the 'Innovation & Invest to Save' criterion. Having recently secured confirmation from Defra that the criterion is met at least for some of the work, we will be starting elements of the project.
- The total cost of the Transformation work is £80k, so the worst-case scenario is needing to use £80k of the £231k of Development Reserves, though we are confident that at least some will be eligible for CDEL funding.
- **CDEL Core income £40k**– we have also assumed that we will be able to utilise some of the CDEL funds against our Core activities in Strategy & Planning and Landscapes.

3. Expenditure

- The CCB's largest cost is its staff. A 3% inflationary pay rise for all staff who joined CCB before 1 October 2024 has been included in this budget. This adds a cost of approximately **£14k**.
- Staff costs outlined represent Core (non-project) staff only and are net of any costs directly recharged to projects. Where appropriate the project recharges income includes staff recharges.
- The budget includes the increased Employer's National Insurance contribution, effective 1 April 2025. This adds approximately **£15k** to Core staff costs.
- New roles included in the budget include:
 - **Additional admin resource 0.4 FTE £16k**. This reflects ongoing capacity challenges in this area, particularly with our Senior Admin Officer being required to spend significant time on several key projects including FIPL.
 - The other new role included in our budget for 25/26 is a **part time Planning Officer**. We have been unsuccessful in recruiting to this role, but it remains a requirement of **£32k equivalent annual cost**. We have now included an assumption to reflect likely delay in recruitment of two months so the cost in the 25/26 budget is £27k.
 - **Senior Programme Manager** – this is an essential new role being considered in light of work being conducted on workload and organisational priorities. It is included in the budget to give it visibility, though recognising

that approval will only be possible once we have greater certainty on future funding. For now, we have assumed recruitment halfway through the year at a cost of **£40k**.

- **Transformation work costs of £80k** have now been included in the budget. This includes continuing our Operational transformation works in IT, Information Management and HR.
- Design and printing costs for our Management and Nature Recovery Plans are included - total cost **£14.5k**.
- We have also included **£5k** for work on our Climate Adaptation plan.
- We have budgeted to continue with consulting costs for Health & Safety **£6k**, Planning **£36k** and HR **£13k**.
- We have made the decision not to produce Outstanding Chilterns magazine in 2025/26, and our budget income and costs have been reduced accordingly. We have retained some costs to potentially produce an enhanced annual review and do some much-needed updates to our website - **circa £5k**.
- Our insurance costs have increased significantly year on year following a large increase at renewal in September 2024. This is a combination of increased costs of management liability insurance and extra premium on our commercial insurance to ensure our water-focussed projects are adequately covered, brought about in part due to our existing insurers changing the scope of what they would insure.
- We are in the process of agreeing to continue our lease on the office in Chinnor. The rent for the next five years has increased by **£5k** per annum from September 2025 and this is factored into the budget.

4. **Budgets 2026- 2029**

- We expect to be advised in June/July on a three-year grant settlement from Defra for 2026/27 onwards. Until there is clarity on this, it is not appropriate to commence any cost restructure.
- Once we are advised on the three-year settlement, we will develop a new three-year business plan for 2026/27- 2028/29 including cost restructuring as appropriate.
- Our budget for 2025/26 includes a number of one-off costs which will not recur in 2026/27 – Staff costs of £64k (eg Retirement of Conservation & Landscapes Officer, Heritage & Archaeology Manager self-funding, North Chilterns Engagement & Partnership Officer contract ending) and other costs £22k (one off legal contract review and Nature Recovery and Management plan costs) Offset against this is a proposed new Senior Programme Manager role which will have an ongoing cost of £80k. We are also considering several other staff restructure proposals (including FTE reductions), and this could create savings of circa £30k.

Recommendation

1. **To APPROVE the 2025/26 budget (£118k deficit in 2025/26 offset by £109k surplus in 2024/25). The balance of £9k to be funded from historic reserves.**
2. **To APPROVE use of reserves towards the organisational Transformation work that are not deemed to be eligible for Defra CDEL funding. This would**

be to a maximum of £80k. Note as at 31 March 2025 our available Development Reserves are £231k.

BUDGET FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026 **Chilterns Conservation Board** **Profit and Loss**

	24/25 Full Year Actuals	Full Year 23/24 Actuals	FINAL Budget 25/26
Income			
Advertising Income	7,792	8,166	-
DEFRA CORE	628,145	513,896	513,896
DEFRA Capital Grant	95,934	-	-
Donations Received	60	-	-
Interest Income	50,176	18,792	25,000
Local Authority Contribution	127,442	124,448	129,666
Project Income	31,461	19,760	34,500
Fee Income from Project recharges	211,371	112,979	158,081
Sale of merchandise	484	235	-
CDEL - Innovation/Invest to Save Income	-	-	80,000
CDEL - Core Income	-	-	40,000
Total Income	1,152,865	798,276	981,143
Costs			
Advertising & Marketing costs	10,022	496	19,070
Bank Fees	184	150	150
Board Meetings	1,161	828	1,850
Cleaning	3,196	3,305	2,852
Computer and IT Equipment	0	3,850	-
Consulting	70,508	42,425	59,895
Defra Capital Spend	95,934	-	-
Employers National Insurance	55,778	41,139	76,063
Event costs	2,164	866	2,955
Finance costs	12,443	5,880	7,082
General Expenses	2,360	7,074	1,604
Insurance	16,036	15,944	23,000
IT Software and Consumables	9,315	7,594	11,733
IT support and maintenance	9,175	7,456	8,695
Legal Expenses	7,755	20,000	7,000
Light, Power, Heating	4,180	7,739	4,054
Magazine costs	16,848	16,506	-
Medical Insurance	3,410	5,146	3,348
Members Allowances	9,657	6,356	9,813
Nature Recovery	0	5,000	-
Office Equipment	0	312	-
Pensions Costs	109,447	77,893	120,624
Postage, Freight & Courier	(264)	475	750
Printing & Stationery	1,528	1,344	3,576
Rates and Water rates	7,324	6,127	7,485
Recruitment	3,245	2,909	500
Rent	18,825	20,500	21,975
Repairs & Maintenance	4,484	3,052	6,776
Research & Survey Expenditure	0	5,000	-
Salaries	528,939	458,943	592,033
Staff expenses	180	640	450
Staff Training	11,668	5,907	12,000
Subscriptions	6,202	5,898	4,724
Transformation Projects	0	-	80,000
Telephone & Internet	3,507	3,182	3,793
Travel Expenses	3,892	2,479	4,298
Website running costs	1,104	2,163	1,488
Project Donations	13,157	27,000	-
Total Administrative Costs	1,043,364	821,576	1,099,636
Operating Surplus/ (Deficit)	109,500	(23,300)	(118,493)
24/25 Surplus			109,500
Net Deficit 24/25 + 25/26			(8,993)

Item 2.3 Reserves Policy and Financial Approvals

Author: Kathryn Foster, Senior Finance Manager

Purpose of Report: To seek Board approval for proposed amendments to the CCB's reserves policy and changes to Financial Approvals

Summary of Proposals

At the Executive Committee meeting on 7th May papers were presented outlining an amended Reserves Policy and changes to Financial Approvals.

The reserves policy paper sets out revisions to the current limited reserves policy included in the financial regulations. It proposes criteria to determine a minimum level of General Reserves which will be reviewed at a least once a year. The balance of Unrestricted Reserves over and above this minimum will be assigned to the Development Reserve and available for use for Core Projects, subject to Executive Committee approval.

The Financial Approvals paper outlines modifications to approval levels to reflect inflation and to improve efficiency. It also adds the Senior Finance Manager as a signatory and aligns Purchase Order and Payment approval limits.

The Executive Committee has considered the papers and recommends them to the Board for approval.

For information, links to the full papers consider by the Executive Committee are below:

[2.1 Reserves Policy.docx](#)

[2.3 Financial Approvals.docx](#)

Recommendations

1. To **APPROVE** the proposed Reserves Policy and changes to Financial Approvals, effective for the new financial year (ie from 1 April 2025) as recommended by the Executive Committee.
2. To **NOTE** that the changes will be incorporated into the CCB's updated Financial Regulations as part of wider improvements to the Constitution.

Item 2.4 **FY25-26 Delivery Plan**

Author: Andy Brock-Doyle, Head of Operations

Purpose of Report: To bring the high-level Delivery Plan to the Board's attention and to identify the key changes that have been made to the Delivery Plan for FY25-26.

Summary: This paper updates the delivery model that was adopted last year and presents the Delivery Plan for FY25-26. This has been developed in conjunction with the budget and resourcing plan and in line with the CNL fundraising strate

Background

The Delivery Plan presented here is a slightly updated version of the Delivery Plan provided to Defra in May (a requirement for our funding), as it incorporates a few minor changes that have been made since then, which reflects evolving organisational plans.

The Delivery Plan differs from the one presented last year. It includes the same level of detail in terms of the workstreams against which the organisation operates, and the specific work areas and delivery lines under each workstream. It also includes high-level descriptions. However, it does not include detailed annual outcomes and quarterly outputs against each delivery line.

The reason for amending the Delivery Plan this year is two-fold:

- a) It responds to the request by Members to reduce the amount of documentation presented to the Board
- b) The Annual Planning process this year has been significantly delayed and, as a result, whilst the Delivery Plan has been agreed internally, staff are still in the process of adding additional detail on outcomes and outputs.

The delays in the Annual Planning process have been due to two factors:

- a. The late announcement and lack of clarity around funding from Defra which has taken up, and continues to take up, significant management time to address.
- b. The organisation has undertaken a much more in-depth resource planning exercise to address staff capacity alongside developing the Delivery Plan. Limited staff capacity is one of the most prominent risks in the CCB's Risk Register. It was also flagged as a concern by some staff in the annual staff engagement survey. The prioritisation exercise conducted this year has clearly pinpointed where these capacity challenges are and the Senior Leadership Team is in the process of addressing them. This has had, and continues to have, an impact on the Delivery Plan.

CNL Delivery Model

The CNL Delivery Model that was introduced last year has been retained (see Diagram 1). This includes at the highest level five key workstreams against which the organisation is intending to deliver and report. These are:

1. Increasing Strategic Alignment
2. Improving Operational Effectiveness
3. Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Beauty of the National Landscape
4. Increasing the Understanding and Enjoyment of the National Landscape's Special Qualities (this also includes fostering economic and social wellbeing)
5. Inspiring Communications

The organisation has also largely retained the same work areas within each workstream (see Diagram 2). Three key changes have been made to improve understanding of the Delivery Model. These are:

- Aligning work areas in Workstream 2 more closely to standard functional areas in an organisation e.g. HR, finance etc (last year they were aligned to operating model elements e.g. processes, systems) to make ownership for each area clearer
- Splitting Education out into its own work area under Workstream 4 (work here was previously under Workstream 3 as it was reported under the project it was part of)
- Splitting out Strategic and Operational Communications in Workstream 2.

Keeping to this model and making these changes further strengthens consideration of programmatic outcomes against the Management Plan rather than reporting against individual projects and having limited ability to understand the overall contributions of project work against a specific area such as Access and EDI.

Given capacity constraints, there are two work areas where there is limited / no work planned for FY25-26. These are under Landscape Character / Natural Beauty and Health & Wellbeing. Note that this does not mean no work will be conducted in these areas – for example planning work addresses landscape character and natural beauty – just that there are no specific pieces of work allocated to them.

The FY25-26 Delivery Plan is attached as a separate document.

Recommendation:

- 1. To APPROVE the Delivery Model and Plan.**

Diagram 1: CNL Delivery Model (Workstreams)

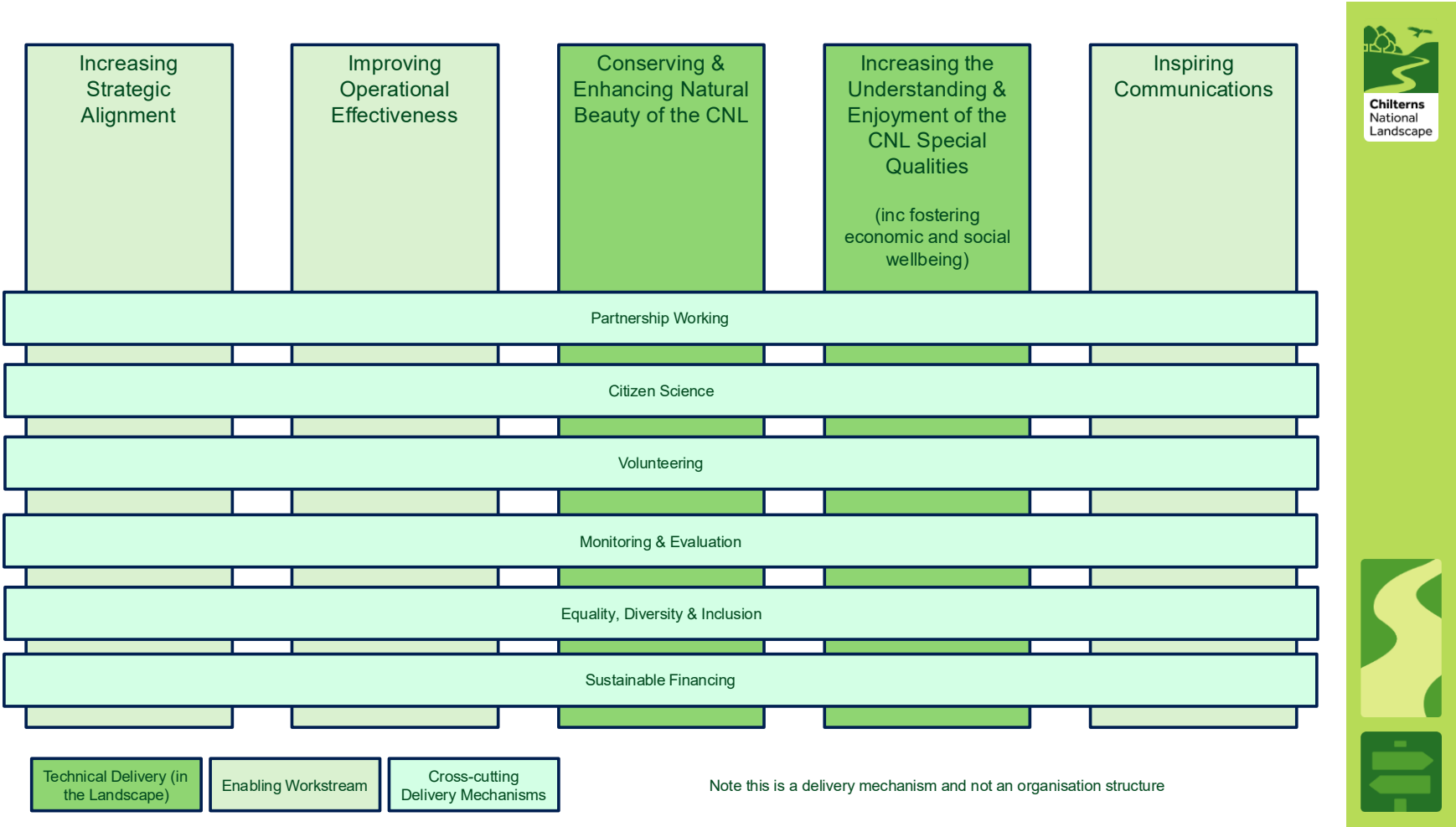
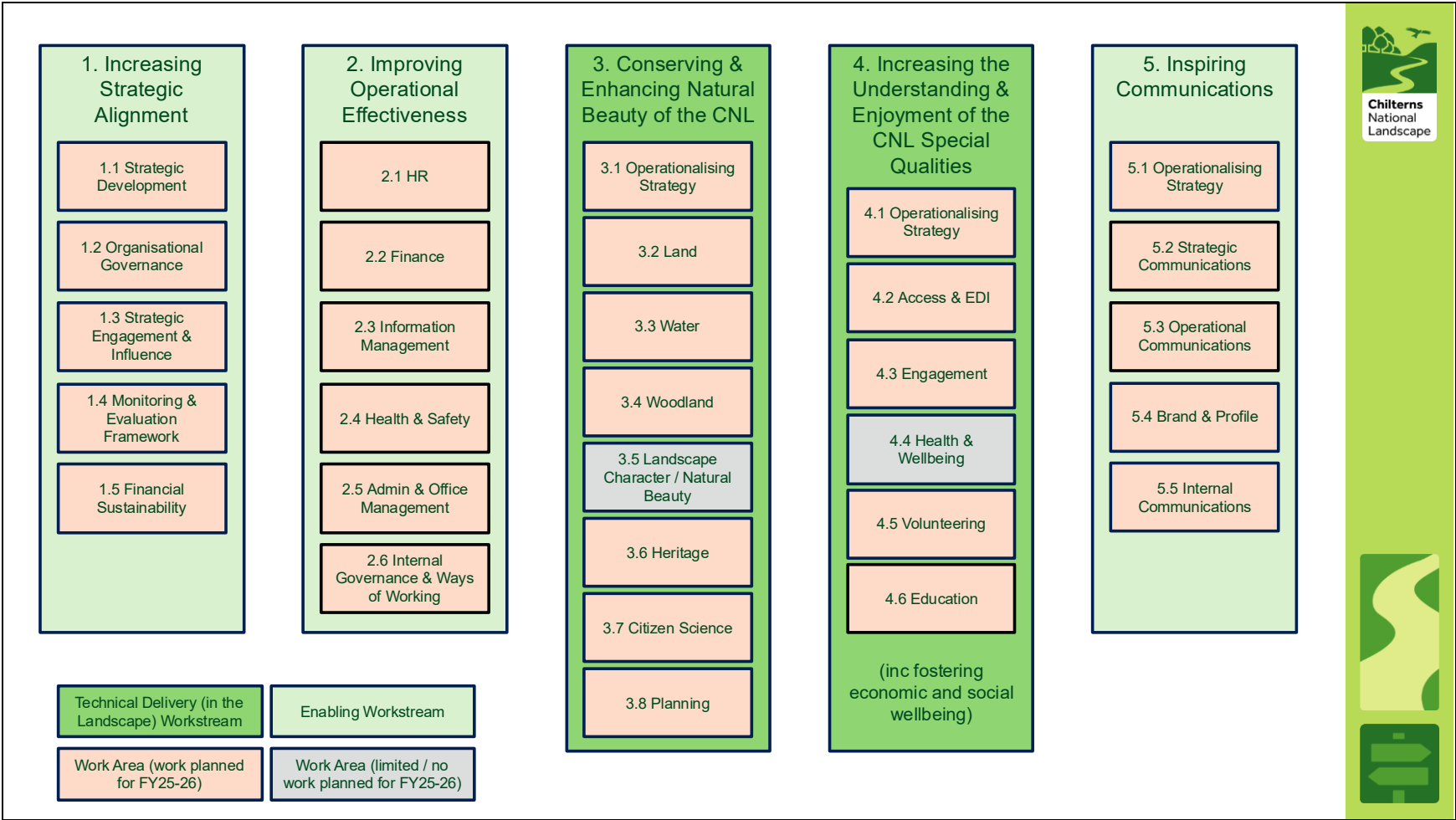


Diagram 2: CNL Delivery Model (Work Areas)



High Level Delivery Plan (May 2025)

The plan below is a high level overview of a detailed excel Delivery Plan for the organisation that was developed as a part of Annual Planning for the organisation between Jan-May 2025 with a focus on priorities for and capacity within the organisation.

The more detailed Delivery Plan includes this information as well as information on:

- leads for each work area and activity
- prioritisation of each activity
- dependencies for each activity to be undertaken
- deadlines for activity completion
- organisational capacity requirements including days of effort for all staff
- an identification of types of cost the activity will occur undertaking this activity (note this is not the full budget but acted as a basis to ensure the budget was robust)
- identification of potential income generating opportunity, and
- identification of potential suitability for CDEL funding

The organisation will continue to report to the Executive Committee against the annual outcomes and quarterly outputs in the detailed Delivery Plan

Workstream 1: Strategic Alignment			
Work Area	Activity	High Level Description	Deadline
1.1 Strategic Development	1.1.1 Management Plan	Complete refresh of the Management Plan	Jun 25
	1.1.2 Levelling Up and Regeneration Act	Understand how LURA will work going forward and how the CNL team should utilise it with stakeholders	Mar 26
	1.1.3 Nature Recovery Plan	Complete and sign off the Nature Recovery Plan	Jun 25
	1.1.4 Climate Adaptation Plan	Draft a Climate Adaptation Plan	Mar 26
1.2 Organisational Governance	1.2.1 Constitution	Finalise drafting of and approve updated Constitution	Mar 26
	1.2.2 Board & Committee Operational Improvement	Improve effectiveness / efficiency of Board and Committee operations	Mar 26
1.3 Strategic Engagement & Influence	1.3.1 Government Engagement	Understand and influence the development of government strategy and policy at a local, regional and national level	Mar 26
	1.3.2 National Landscape Association / Protected Landscapes	Work closely with the NLA and PLP on emerging issues and agree common positions	Mar 26

	Partnership Engagement		
	1.3.3 Strategic Partner Engagement	Engage with other non-governmental and protected landscape partners on strategic issues outside of project work	Ongoing throughout the year
1.4 Monitoring & Evaluation Framework	1.4.1 Nature Recovery Monitoring Indicators	Ensure that the CNL Citizen Science and monitoring programmes align to Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF) monitoring requirements	Mar 26
1.5 Financial Sustainability	1.5.1 Income Diversity	Improve overall financial sustainability including diversification of income	Mar 26
	1.5.2 Core Funding	Develop inward investment case for Local Authorities and engage with the National Landscape Association and Defra on Conservation Board allocations	Aug 25
	1.5.3 Nature Recovery Funding	Work with partners on the submission of a National Lottery Landscape Connections proposal and review / resubmit the Landscape Recovery bid	Mar 26
	1.5.4 Land Programme Funding	Identify and secure funding for continued farmer cluster work	Dec 25
	1.5.5 Water Programme Funding	Identify and pursue funding opportunities under AMP 8 with water companies	Dec 25
	1.5.6 Heritage Funding	Ensure heritage funding for following years is based on a sustainable model	Dec 25

Workstream 2: Operational Effectiveness

Work Area	Activity	High Level Description	Deadline
2.1 HR	2.1.1 Personnel Files	Establish and populate new personnel filing structure	Jun 25
	2.1.2 HR Policies	Complete HR policy review and sign off including ensuring input from staff	Sep 25
	2.1.3 Staff Handbook	Update the Staff Handbook and bring into line with revised HR policies and contract terms and conditions	Sep 25
	2.1.4 HR Processes	Develop / update required processes and templates to support revised policies and improve ways of working	Dec 25
	2.1.5 HR Policy Requirements	Put in place all other requirements identified in agreed HR policies to ensure organisational compliance with policies	Dec 25
	2.1.6 HR System	Establish and embed new HR system within the organisation (tbc)	Mar 26
	2.1.7 Staff Engagement	Address outcomes of the staff engagement survey and embed focus groups and pulse survey	Ongoing throughout the year
	2.1.8 Staff Wellbeing	Clarify operational strategy around mental health and put in place key elements to address this in the organisation	Ongoing throughout the year
	2.1.9 Organisational Development	Understand organisation capacity and capability constraints and review	Sep 25

		organisation structure to ensure effectiveness in delivery	
2.2 Finance	2.2.1 Annual Budgeting & Forecasting	Embed improvements in annual and budgeting and forecasting and work with projects to properly establish budgets in the finance system	Jun 25 / Mar 26
	2.2.2 Budget Management & Tracking	Embed effective budget management and tracking across the organisation with identified budget owners	Mar 26
	2.2.3 Capital Budget	Clarify ability to use CDEL and put in place mechanism to agree, review and track expenditure in line with funding requirements	Ongoing throughout the year
	2.2.4 Financial Policies & Regulations	Review and simplify financial regulations for the organisation as detailed in the Constitution including approvals, approval workflows and sign off thresholds	Mar 26
	2.2.5 Financial Processes & Procedures	Develop and put in place required operational financial processes and procedures in line with financial policies and regulations	Mar 26
	2.2.6 Financial Optimisation	Clarify financial position of the organisation and ensure income is optimised	Sep 25
2.3 IT and Information Management	2.3.1 Information Management Framework	Develop and embed a clear and consistent filing system, processes, procedures and ways of working	Sep 25
	2.3.2 Information Management Transition	Transition information from the F Drive, in Teams and in local folders into new filing structure on Sharepoint	Mar 26
	2.3.3 Information Governance & Compliance	Ensure the organisation is compliant with all data protection requirements including GDPR and Cyber Essentials	Dec 25
2.4 Health & Safety	2.4.1 Risk Assessment	Embed new ways of working with Risk Assessor to ensure consistent recording and addressing of risk across the organisation	Sep 25
	2.4.2 Health & Safety Policies, Processes & Procedures (General)	Review and put in place updated policies, processes and procedures being developed in partnership with Risk Fluent	Dec 25
	2.4.3 Health & Safety Policies, Processes & Procedures (Field)	Review and put in place updated policies, processes and procedures being developed in partnership with Risk Fluent in relation to field work	Dec 25
2.5 Admin & Office Management	2.5.1 Office Environment	Continue to improve the office environment to create a more productive, welcoming and inspiring workspace	Jun 25
2.6 Internal Governance & Ways of Working	2.6.1 Partnership Working	Clarify partnership – organisation relationships and ways of working	Sep 25
	2.6.2 Contract Management	Develop a standardised set of commercial contracts for the organisation	Dec 25
	2.6.3 Management Effectiveness	Improve Senior Leadership Team operations and embed ways of working	Ongoing throughout the year



		between the SLT and Team Leads / Managers	
	2.6.4 New Work & New Funding	Develop detail around the process and templates for undertaking new work and embed across the organisation	Dec 25
	2.6.5 Collaborative Working	Improve collaborative working across the organisation	Mar 26
	2.6.6 Programme Governance & Legacy Planning	Continue to embed Managing Successful Programmes principles and undertake legacy planning for the Mend the Gap programme	Mar 26
Workstream 3: Conserve & Enhance			
Work Area	Activity	High Level Description	Deadline
3.1 Operationalising Strategy	3.1.1 Wildlife Rich Habitats and Canopy & Woodland Targets	Apportion Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework 1 (Wildlife Rich Habitats) and 8 (Woodland Cover) for CNL and confirm with Defra	Jul 25
	3.1.2 Nature Recovery Delivery Plan	Develop overall plan for the delivery of the Nature Recovery Plan and support partner development of Local Nature Recovery Strategy plans	Oct 25
	3.1.3 Local Nature Recovery Strategies	Clarify internal support to deliver Local Nature Recovery Strategies	Mar 26
	3.1.4 Farming Strategy	Clarify ambition, approach and ways of working around farmer clusters	Mar 26
	3.1.5 Farming in Protected Landscapes Changes	Understand changes to FiPL and clarify requirements in moving from delivering grants to delivery of other priorities	Mar 26
	3.1.6 Scaling Citizen Science	Undertake feasibility study to assess scaling up Tracking the Impact across the CNL	Mar 26
	3.1.7 Citizen Science Strategy	Develop strategy / approach paper on Citizen Science	Mar 26
	3.1.8 Capability Retention	Understand organisation requirement and ensure transfer of skills and knowledge around Landscape Character / Natural Beauty	Dec 25
3.2 Land	3.2.1 Farming in Protected Landscapes	Deliver full year of FiPL grant programme	Ongoing throughout the year
	3.2.2 Central Chilterns Farming Cluster	Work with other organisations to deliver nature recovery through farmers and landowners in the Central Chilterns area and monitor impact of that work	Ongoing throughout the year
	3.2.3 Christmas Common Framing Cluster	Work with other organisations to deliver nature recovery through farmers and landowners in the Christmas Common area and monitor impact of that work	Ongoing throughout the year
	3.2.5 Chess Farming Cluster	Work with other organisations to deliver nature recovery through farmers and landowners in the Chess Catchment area and monitor impact of that work	Ongoing throughout the year

	3.2.6 South Chilterns Farming Cluster	Work with other organisations to deliver nature recovery through farmers and landowners in the South Chilterns area and monitor impact of that work	Ongoing throughout the year
	3.2.7 Mend the Gap Chalk Grasslands	Deliver enhancement and mitigation work focused on chalk grasslands through the Mend the Gap programme	Ongoing throughout the year
	3.2.8 HS2 Landscape and Biodiversity Connectivity Project	Deliver Landscape and Biodiversity Connectivity Project and participate on the HS2 Panel Review Group	Ongoing throughout the year
3.3 Water	3.3.1 Chilterns Chalk Streams Project	Deliver programme of work agreed by the for Chilterns Chalk Stream Project partnership	Ongoing throughout the year
	3.3.2 Mending the Misbourne	Secure funding for and establish Mending the Misbourne programme of work	Ongoing throughout the year
	3.3.3 Smarter Water Catchment	Deliver agreed Smarter Water Catchment programme	Mar 26
	3.3.4 Mend the Gap Wetlands	Deliver large scale water focused enhancement projects and small grants within the Mend the Gap programme	Ongoing throughout the year
	3.3.5 Not Bourne Yesterday Water Projects	Deliver water projects within the Not Bourne Yesterday agreed programme of work	Ongoing throughout the year
	3.3.6 Flood & Drought Research Infrastructure	Champion the importance of the Chess Catchment for studying future flood and drought to scientists and local stakeholders	Ongoing throughout the year
3.4 Woodland	3.4.1 Deer Management	Develop deer management plan for CNL with partners linked to food production	Mar 26
3.5 Landscape Character / Natural Beauty	No planned work in this area this year		
3.6 Heritage	3.6.1 Field Schools	Run heritage field schools	Ongoing throughout the year
	3.6.2 Heritage Outreach	Deliver talks, training and taster sessions on archaeology	Ongoing throughout the year
	3.6.3 Heritage Projects	Deliver and support partners to deliver archaeological projects and capital work on the ground	Ongoing throughout the year
	3.6.4 Not Bourne Yesterday Heritage Projects	Deliver heritage projects within the Not Bourne Yesterday agreed programme of work	Ongoing throughout the year
3.7 Citizen Science	3.7.1 Tracking the Impact	Deliver Tracking the Impact citizen science programme and showcase citizen science	Ongoing throughout the year
	3.7.2 Chess Citizen Science	Deliver Chess citizen science programme	Mar 26
3.8 Planning	3.8.1 Planning Strategy & Rationalisation	Produce strategy paper on approach to planning and rationalise the planning function to be more of a critical friend to Local Authorities	Mar 26

	3.8.2 Planning Advice	Produce and publish advice to Local Authorities and stakeholders	Ongoing throughout the year
	3.8.3 Planning Consultations	Respond to planning consultations as required	Ongoing throughout the year
	3.8.4 Internal Planning Advice	Provide planning advice to internal colleagues and strategic external partners	Ongoing throughout the year
Workstream 4: Understand & Enjoy			
Work Area	Activity	High Level Description	Deadline
4.1 Operationalise Strategy	4.1.1 EDI Ambition Statement	Update and embed EDI ambition statement in projects and with partners	Sep 25
	4.1.2 EDI and Youth Engagement Strategy and Opportunity Development	Clarify strategy around EDI and youth engagement and secure opportunities across the Chilterns	Oct 25
	4.1.3 Volunteering Strategy & Approach	Develop organisational strategy and approach to volunteering focused on Citizen Science	Mar 26
	4.1.4 Links between People and Nature Recovery	Communicate and embed links between Nature Recovery and People	Ongoing throughout the year
	4.1.5 Access Targets	Understand data requirements and collection methods for PLTOF 8 (Access) targets	Mar 26
	4.1.6 Landscape Signage	Develop strategy to update National Landscape signage	Mar 26
4.2 Access and EDI	4.2.1 Access for All	Allocate Defra access grants and support development of Access for All projects	Ongoing throughout the year
	4.2.2 Access & EDI Project Support	Support projects to address and improve access	Ongoing throughout the year
	4.2.3 Walking Festival	Deliver the Chilterns Walking Festival and clarify its future	Dec 25
	4.2.4 Mend the Gap Access and EDI Projects	Deliver identified Access and EDI projects through the Mend the Gap programme	Ongoing throughout the year
4.3 Engagement	4.3.1 Nature Calling	Deliver Nature Calling project and identify legacy work	Dec 25
	4.3.2 North Chilterns Engagement	Identify legacy activity and develop strategic priorities to address following Nature Calling	Mar 26
	4.3.3 North Chilterns Partnership	Support development of the North Chilterns Partnership	Ongoing throughout the year
	4.3.4 Not Bourne Yesterday Engagement	Undertake engagement across the programme area to develop the delivery phase of the programme	Ongoing throughout the year
	4.3.5 Mend the Gap Public Engagement	Engage with community hubs and increase community awareness	Ongoing throughout the year



4.4 Health & Wellbeing	No planned work in this area this year		
4.5 Volunteering	4.5.1 Volunteer Management	Establish a contract management system for volunteers	Mar 26
4.6 Education	4.6.1 Education Programme	Deliver Chilterns Chalk Stream Project education programme	Ongoing throughout the year
Workstream 5: Communications			
Work Area	Activity	High Level Description	Deadline
5.1 Operationalising Strategy	5.1.1 Activation Plans	Create activation plan templates for prioritised audiences	Jun 25
	5.1.2 Crisis Communication Plans	Draw up crisis communications plans for the organisation	Mar 26
	5.1.3 Contact Management	Sort contact management data and embed new ways of working	Mar 26
	5.1.4 Image Library	Develop effective processes and procedures around image storage and use and transition images to newly structured image library	Mar 26
5.2 Strategic Communications	5.2.1 Management Plan	Design, print, publish and communicate the CNL Management Plan	Jul 25
	5.2.2 Nature Recovery Plan	Design, print, publish and communicate the CNL Nature Recovery Plan	Dec 25
	5.2.3 Boundary Review	Undertake communications around the Boundary Review	Jun 25
	5.2.4 Annual Review	Develop, design, print, publish and distribute Annual Review document	Jun 25
	5.2.5 Other Strategic Communications	Respond to strategic news and information as required	Jun 25
5.3 Operational Communications	5.3.1 CNL Newsletter, Social Media and Blogs	Plan / produce content and publish CNL information through key media channels	Ongoing throughout the year
	5.3.2 CNL Website	Produce content and manage / update CNL website as required	Ongoing throughout the year
	5.3.3 Project Communications & Support	Undertake communications as part of project, programme and partnership delivery and provide support to projects from the core communications team	Ongoing throughout the year
5.4 Brand & Profile	5.4.1 CNL Brand	Agree and embed mission and values both internally and externally and measure the impact of narrative and brand delivered through activation plans	Mar 26
	5.4.2 Brand Guidelines	Develop and embed brand guidelines for projects, programmes and partnerships	Dec 25
5.5 Internal Communications	5.5.1 Internal Communications Platform	Design, develop and set up an effective internal communications platform for the organisation	Mar 26
	5.5.2 Internal Messaging	Develop and deliver improved internal communications messaging for staff	Mar 26

Correct as of 07 June 2025

Item 2.5**Management Plan**

Author: Matt Thomson, Head of Strategy & Planning

Purpose of Report: To seek the Board's approval for the amendments to the Management Plan arising from its review, and for other materials related to the approval and publication of the Plan.

Background

1. This paper concludes the formal stages of the review of the current Management Plan for the Chilterns National Landscape. The paper is lengthy and complex, and relates to multiple sizeable appendices: the weight of these items is necessary, given the significance of the Management Plan to the work of the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) and to the Chilterns National Landscape itself.
2. Preparation of a Management Plan (technically "a plan which formulates [the Board's] policy for the management of their area of outstanding natural beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it") is a requirement of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CROW Act), along with the requirement to review the Plan every five years. In the Chilterns, these requirements fall to the CCB. Further information is given in the Appendix 1 to this paper.
3. The statutory requirements for the review are given in [s.89\(10\) of the CROW Act](#). These are, in summary, that the CCB should determine whether it would be expedient to amend the Plan, make any amendments that it considers appropriate, and publish a report on the review specifying the amendments made.
4. The determination as to whether it would be expedient to amend the Plan has been made through extensive discussion with the Board, beginning with an overall approach agreed by Executive Committee in November 2022, endorsed by the Board with refinements in September 2023. Since then we have informally referred to the review as a 'limited refresh' of the current Plan. Further details are given in Appendix 1, including the approach taken by officers working with the task and finish group (TFG) chaired by Gemma Harper, engagement with stakeholders, including a formal consultation between December 2024 and February 2025, and screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations.
5. The above has led to the '**Schedule of Amendments**' which is now before the Board for its approval (Appendix 2). This Schedule is the "report on the review specifying the amendments made" required by the CROW Act, and is in effect a list of instructions to amend the current Plan, creating the new Plan for 2025-2030. The Schedule relates to the substantive parts of the Plan – which are mostly text – and is therefore rather dense.
6. The Schedule is the formal output of the review process, and will form the definitive record of the amendments approved by the Board. To assist the Board with understanding of the outcome of these amendments, officers have produced an **illustrative 'clean' version of the text** of the Plan as proposed to be amended (see Appendix 3). If there is any discrepancy between this illustrative clean version and the Schedule of Amendments, the Schedule should be taken as definitive. The illustrative clean version is also rather dense. Again, the final version of the Plan (following the 'design stage') will include illustrations etc., some, but not all, of which are indicated in the Schedule and the illustrative clean version of the Plan.
7. Members' particular attention is drawn to the section below on **Chapter 1**, the introduction to the Plan, which may be seen as a special case.
8. The Schedule of Amendments will become the representation of the 'refreshed' Management Plan as soon as it is approved by the Board, and will be published on our website as soon after the Board meeting as possible. Alongside the definitive approved Schedule, we will also publish:

- a) A 'Report of the Review' outlining how the review was undertaken. This report will be based on Appendix 1 to this paper.
 - b) The illustrative clean version of the Plan (caveated).
 - c) The screening reports for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations (HRA).
9. SEA and HRA are required for plans and programmes that would have a significant impact on the environment. The relevant legislation requires us to first check the content of the Plan to see whether it would have such an impact requiring full assessments to be carried out. Both screening reports conclude that full assessments are not necessary (the same conclusion as had been reached for the current 2019-2024 Plan). Statutory consultations with Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England have confirmed those conclusions. The TFG has seen both screening reports, and officers have decided not to include the reports with the Board papers in line with members' request to keep papers to the minimum necessary. Members interested in viewing the reports are invited to contact the Head of Strategy & Planning.
10. Following the Board's approval of the Schedule of Amendments, there will be a '**design stage**', where the revised text will be embellished and enhanced with illustrative material (some, but not all, of which is referred to in the Schedule). This paper therefore recommends that the Board authorises officers to proceed with this 'design stage'. Additional outcomes of the design may include summary versions of the Plan (and/or parts of the Plan) and additional explanatory or illustrative material that may be used on our website and/or in social media, etc.

Special note: Chapter 1 – Introduction

11. Significant attention has been paid in the Review to revising the Plan's Introduction, because of the need to carefully set out the context for the Plan, including the re-branding of AONBs as National Landscapes, the strengthened s.85 duty, the introduction of the Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOFs) and the review's increased emphasis on nature recovery, climate adaptation and EDI. However, separately officers have been working on more concise and more widely applicable descriptions of the Chilterns, the National Landscape and the Conservation Board, with a view to creating consistent 'boilerplate' text for use on the website and to assist officers and Board members when briefing partners, funders and new Board members.
12. In its response to the proposed changes consultation, and in discussions since, Natural England has indicated that Defra has drafted a standard foreword for all Protected Landscape management plans, which may cover much of the same ground as the Introduction as proposed to be amended, and may also present a difference of emphasis that might be interpreted as disagreement. That foreword is not yet published, but it may be possible to use text from the current draft 1 to inform the content and structure of the Introduction, if Defra and/or Natural England are willing to share the draft (although it is unlikely that Defra's foreword will include reference to our status as a Conservation Board).
13. Furthermore, in its final meeting on 11 June 2025, prior to this Board meeting, the Management Plan Review TFG offered some thoughts to officers in relation to the following issues, which could be addressed at least partly through further amendments to the Introduction:
- Setting the tone of the Plan in relation to the current political context.
 - Emphasising more strongly the social and economic value of the Chilterns.
 - Relating the Plan to resources and partnership working, including emphasising the CCB's role as a convenor, facilitator and catalyst, and not solely delivery.
14. Getting the Introduction right will have a significant impact on how the Plan is appreciated by stakeholders, but is not itself a part of the Plan's vision, objectives or policies. It is therefore recommended below that the Introduction be finalised in the 'design stage' after

approval of the rest of the Plan, following further discussions with Natural England. The text included in the Schedule does give a good indication of what needs to be included, subject to the above.

Reading the Schedule of Amendments

15. In the Schedule:

- a) Illustrative material including infographics, photographs, case studies etc included within the 2019-2024 Plan are excluded from this Schedule. Indications are given of the nature and location of some illustrative material in the Schedule where appropriate (as notes in square brackets). New or updated materials of this nature will be added during the 'design stage' after formal approval.
- b) Text to be added is underlined.
- c) Text to be deleted is ~~struck through~~.
- d) Notes for information are **highlighted in blue and in [square brackets]** – these do not form part of the Plan, but any instructions contained within such notes (e.g. "delete whole section") do constitute formal amendments.
- e) To facilitate accessibility and reduce the length of the Schedule, larger sections of text are simply described in notes as deleted (without showing struck through text in full), with the amended text shown underlined in its entirety.
- f) No distinction is made here between the 'proposed changes' approved by the Board in December, and published for consultation in December-February, and consequent changes proposed to be made in response to the outcomes of that consultation, nor other subsequent changes identified by officers.
- g) Column 1 ("Ch") gives the existing chapter number, and column 2 ("P") gives the existing page number, both relating to the 2019-2024 Plan (available [here](#)).

Design Stage

16. Following approval of the Schedule of Amendments, officers will begin work on designing the final version of the Plan for publication. There is no statutory timescale for publishing the final version of the Plan, but expectations are that it should be published as soon as is reasonably practicable. The TFG have asked for officers to indicate timescales for this process, but this will be dependent on a number of issues still to be resolved and on the resources available. By way of an indication, the current Plan was approved by the Board in February 2019, and the final version published in October that year, i.e. 8 months later. We would hope for swifter progress this time: the Communications Team are fully briefed and a designer has already been sourced and appointed.

17. The design stage will include:

- a) Consideration of the inclusion of the proposed Defra foreword (if available);
- b) Redrafting of the Introduction in relation to that foreword and/or issues discussed above (paras 11-14);
- c) Addition of a contents page, glossary, abbreviations, acknowledgements and any other appendices;
- d) Re-use, redesign and/or creation of illustrative material, including maps, infographics, photographs and case studies throughout the Plan, including the front and back covers;
- e) Final proof reading, corrections, updates and insertion of necessary references and links to external materials, etc.
- f) Numbering of sections and paragraphs in the text.

18. The above will be subject to the limitation that it should not alter the interpretation or applicability of the vision, objectives or policies of the Plan, but to enhance its

accessibility and interest, and clarify its status and context. Final sign-off for changes will be sought from the Board chair, alongside the CEO.

19. Consideration is also being given to:

- a) The format in which the Plan will be published, which will inevitably principally be in electronic form (as a PDF), with a limited print run. More accessible interactive electronic versions will also be considered.
- b) Production of a summary (plain English) version, including potentially summaries of the key thematic chapters.
- c) Production of other materials (including audio-visuals and infographics) for use on the website and in social media.

Next steps

20. **Publication and communications:** The Communications Team has been working with the CEO and Head of Strategy & Planning on a comms strategy for the Plan (beyond immediate publication of the Amendments and design of the final Plan). We will keep the Board informed of this strategy and plans for its implementation going forward.
21. **Endorsement:** Following approval, and necessarily in advance of the production of the designed version of the Plan, officers will continue with the process of seeking the endorsement of the Plan by the area's local authorities, and from Natural England. The support of the Board's local authority-appointed members will be greatly appreciated in this endeavour.
22. Officers will also seek endorsement from other key public, private and voluntary sector partners.
23. **Delivery Plan:** The Board has committed to producing a rolling 3-year delivery plan setting out how CCB will either deliver itself or encourage partners to deliver the objectives and policies of the Management Plan.
24. **Lessons learned:** A key output of the review process will be a report of lessons learned, which officers have already been considering to feed into the next Plan review. The TFG have requested that a report of lessons learned by brought to the Board as soon as is practicable; we will aim to do this for the December Board meeting.
25. **Review:** The Plan approved by the Board through this paper will cover the period April 2025 to March 2030, by which time the CROW Act expects that the Board will have approved a new or reviewed Plan. Current advice is that reviewing a Management Plan should take 18 months, but the reality is that preparing evidence and fully engaging partners will probably require 36 months (3 years), meaning that the next review should aim to begin in April 2027. The Board can of course choose to review the Plan sooner than required by the Act.

Recommendations

1. That the Board **APPROVES** the Schedule of Amendments attached as Appendix 2, subject to any additional, precisely worded, amendments approved at the Board meeting.
2. That the Board **AUTHORISES** officers to continue working with Natural England on Chapter 1 (Introduction) in the context of the proposed standard Defra foreword
3. That the Board **AUTHORISES** officers to proceed with the Design Stage, applying the approved Amendments and enhancing the text with illustrative material to produce a new Plan for publication, and to make any necessary further corrections, updates and/or cosmetic changes that do not alter the meaning of the Plan's vision, objectives or policies, subject to sign-off by the Board chair and CEO.

2.5 Appendix 1: Report of the Review (initial draft)

1. The Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) is required under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to prepare a management plan which formulates its policy for the management of the landscape and its functions in relation to it, and to review that plan every five years.
2. The current “Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-2024” was approved by the Board in February 2019, and its fully designed version published in October that year.

“Light-Touch Review” – extending the Plan to 2025

3. In July 2022, then Defra minister the Rt Hon Lord Benyon, wrote to all Protected Landscapes advising that those who were required by s.89 of the CROW Act to review their Management Plans during 2023 and 2024 would have the option to delay the publication of their reviewed Plan by up to one year, following a process described as a “light-touch review”.
4. The option to delay publication of the Plan was offered in the context of a range of areas affected by ongoing reforms affecting Protected Landscapes, including:
 - a) The proposed introduction of what is now the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOFs – planned for January 2023);
 - b) Publication of new guidance on the preparation and review of Management Plans (planned for Spring 2023);
 - c) Uncertainty around other reforms relating to and going beyond the outcomes of the Glover Landscapes Review.
5. The delay would give Protected Landscapes the opportunity to digest and incorporate these reforms. For the Chilterns, this would also enable the next review to take greater account of other significant projects, including the review of the area’s boundaries and a Natural England project to explore ‘enhanced management and governance arrangements’ for the area, both of which had been announced in 2021.
6. The CCB undertook the “light-touch review”, which was approved by the Board and confirmed by Natural England as meeting the requirements of Lord Benyon’s letter, both in March 2024, extending the application of the existing Plan to the end of March 2025. (See the [“Light-Touch Review” statement](#).)
7. Work could therefore continue on a more complete review of the Plan for the period 2025-2030, although it should be noted that:
 - a) The PLTOFs were introduced a year later than planned in January 2024, but much of the detail of their implementation was not resolved until Spring 2025.
 - b) New guidance on the preparation and review of Management Plans was not published in Spring 2023, and remains unpublished at the time of writing (Summer 2025).
 - c) Uncertainty about other reforms, including the recommendations of the Glover Landscapes Review was not resolved (although government had published its response to the review in January 2022).
 - d) Further uncertainty was added in December 2023 when the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act was passed, including strengthening the duty under s.85 of the CROW Act, promising guidance and regulations to support this unexpected development (the guidance was not issued until December 2024) and enhancing the role and status of Management Plans (unpublished at Summer 2025).

Management Plan ‘Refresh’ – reviewing the Plan for 2025-2030

8. In the context of the above ongoing uncertainty, and of Natural England’s ongoing review of the boundaries of the Chilterns National Landscape, the CCB, advised by its Management Plan Task and Finish Group (TFG) chaired by Board member Gemma Harper, continued the review of the Plan in accordance with the “Light-Touch Review” statement.
9. The Board determined that the review should take the form of a ‘refresh’ of the current plan, with changes limited to factual updates, reflections of amended legislation and guidance (especially references to the new PLTOFs), and enhanced references to priority areas of activity, including nature recovery, climate adaptation, and diversity and inclusion.
10. This approach was intended to save CCB’s and its partners resources for a comprehensive new plan, including a new long-term vision, when there was greater clarity (a) about the future extent of the National Landscape arising from Natural England’s boundary review, and (b) about the status of and processes for preparing Management Plans resulting from various reforms (still incomplete).
11. In December 2024, the Board approved a schedule of proposed changes to the Plan, which were subsequently published for public consultation, ending on 3rd February.
12. Responses to the public consultation were received from:
 - Three individuals, two of whom (including a Board member) offering general support for the Plan.
 - Three charities (Butterfly Conservation, Canal & River Trust and CPRE Oxfordshire).
 - Ten responses from ‘relevant authorities’ as defined by s.85 of the CROW Act (i.e. key delivery partners), as follows:
 - Three parish councils: Chalfont St Peter, Ellesborough and Swyncombe.
 - Five responses from four local authorities: Hertfordshire County (two different teams), Luton Borough Council, Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council
 - Forestry Commission
 - Natural England
13. The Board determined that the quality, in terms of breadth and depth, of the responses received to the consultation justified seeking additional time to work on amendments to the Plan, and sought Natural England’s support for deferring approval of the amended Plan from March 2025 to June that year. Natural England’s support was secured.
14. The additional time also enabled:
 - a) Further alignment of the content of the Management Plan with the CCB’s emerging Nature Recovery Plan;
 - b) Incorporation of additional understanding of and updates to other policy contexts (e.g. the s.85 duty);
 - c) Inclusion of enhanced detail in the Management Plan on the PLTOFs, including apportionment of targets/indicators to the Chilterns;
 - d) Further engagement with consultation respondents;
 - e) Engagement with the statutory consultees (local authorities) including those that had not responded during the consultation period;
 - f) Deeper engagement with the Management Plan TFG and other Board members.
15. The outcome of these activities is the Schedule of Amendments presented for approval to the Board on 19 June 2025.

Environmental Assessments

16. The production of plans and programmes with environmental impacts should be informed where appropriate by certain environmental assessments. Protected Landscapes Management Plans are subject to both Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations (HRA).
17. The Management Plan review was 'screened' against both requirements, and reports produced demonstrating that full assessments were not required under either SEA or HRA. The SEA screening report was checked and approved by statutory consultees Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England, and the HRA by Natural England.

2.5 Appendix 2 – Management Plan Refresh 2025-2030

Schedule of Amendments

For approval by the Board, 19 June 2025.

This is a draft Schedule of Amendments to the AONB Management Plan for the Chilterns National Landscape following the review of the 2019-2024 Plan (extended to 2025 by order of the Secretary of State for Defra) (see separate Report of the Review). This Schedule is prepared in accordance with section 89(10) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and when approved will form the statutory record of the amendments to the Plan arising from the Review.

In the Schedule:

- Illustrative material including infographics, photographs, case studies etc included within the 2019-2024 Plan are excluded from this Schedule. Indications are given of the nature and location of some illustrative material in the Schedule where appropriate (as notes in square brackets). New or updated materials of this nature will be added during the ‘design stage’ after formal approval.
- Text to be added is underlined.
- Text to be deleted is ~~struck through~~.
- Notes for information are **highlighted in blue and in [square brackets]** – these do not form part of the Plan, but any instructions contained within such notes (e.g. “delete whole section”) do constitute formal amendments.
- To facilitate accessibility and reduce the length of the Schedule, larger sections of text are simply described in notes as deleted (without showing struck through text in full), with the amended text shown underlined in its entirety.
- No distinction is made here between the ‘proposed changes’ approved by the Board in December, and published for consultation in December-February, and consequent changes proposed to be made in response to the outcomes of that consultation, nor other subsequent changes identified by officers.
- Column 1 (“Ch”) gives the existing chapter number, and column 2 (“P”) gives the existing page number, both relating to the 2019-2024 Plan (available [here](#)).

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
-	1	Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024 <u>Caring for the Chilterns forever & for everyone:</u> <u>The area of outstanding natural beauty management plan for the Chilterns National Landscape, 2025-2030</u>
-	3	Contents [add section contents with page numbers in design stage]
-	4-5	[delete both the Ministerial Foreword and Chairman’s Forewords; possibly replace with Defra’s standard foreword, if published during the design stage]

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
1	7	<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>About the Chilterns</p> <p>The Chilterns is a landscape of remarkable beauty and distinctive character with a unique interaction of geological, ecological and cultural heritage features. <u>The underlying chalk gives rise to a steep chalk escarpment and hillsides of velvety, flower-rich downland. Attractive villages with brick and flint cottages nestle in quiet valleys, while woodlands, commons and meadows are criss-crossed by ancient routes and peppered with historic hillforts and chalk figures. Water stored in the chalk emerges as springs that feed clear, sparkling chalk streams like the Chess and Misbourne.</u></p> <p><u>Designated in 1965 and extended in 1990, the Chilterns National Landscape covers over 838 km² (324 square miles) of mainly privately-owned countryside across Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire. With 1.6 million residents within 8km and 10 million within an hour, it's among Europe's most accessible protected landscapes, offering ample recreational opportunities and peaceful countryside sites perfect for relaxation, reflection, picnics and walks.</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p>[insert key image: boundary & county map]</p>
1	7	<p>[delete section titled "What is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty", including footnotes, and replace with the following]</p> <p><u>What is a National Landscape?</u></p> <p><u>A National Landscape, previously an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)' is a formal designation for an area of land that is of national importance for its natural beauty. National Landscapes have the same level of landscape quality and similar legal and policy protections as National Parks. However National Parks benefit from being their own planning authority.</u></p> <p><u>In policy and law, a National Landscape currently remains designated as an AONB. The sole purpose of AONB designation is 'to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area' (section 82 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000). All public bodies have a legal duty to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an AONB (section 85 of the CROW Act).</u></p> <p>[consider insertion of new subsection providing an explanation of the s.85 duty here, summarising and linking to Defra's published guidance (which clarifies that the duty must be complied with in "the issuing of licences and permits") – precise text needs agreement with Natural England – (design stage)]</p>

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
1	7	<p>[insert new section as follows; this replaces the former "Global and National Context of the Chilterns AONB" section previously included later in this chapter]</p> <p>Global and national context of the Chilterns National Landscape</p> <p><u>National Landscapes are part of the global network of protected landscapes. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has six management categories covering all types of protected areas. National Landscapes and National Parks fall into Category V: protected landscapes and seascapes, which are protected areas managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation. The IUCN published "Management Guidelines for IUCN Category V Protected Areas: Protected Landscapes/Seascapes" in 2002.</u></p> <p><u>There are 46 National Landscapes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland safeguarded in the national interest for their distinctive character and beauty.</u></p> <p><u>The work National Landscape teams do is important, not least because:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>National Landscapes cover just under one fifth of the UK</u> • <u>66% of people in England live within an hour of their nearest National Landscape</u> • <u>170 million people visit National Landscapes every year</u> <p><u>The Chilterns National Landscape is an active member of the National Landscapes Association, the organisation established to advocate, communicate and manage national programmes, to support the UK's network of National Landscapes, and help them be as effective as possible.</u></p> <p><u>To find out more about the National Landscapes Association visit: https://national-landscapes.org.uk/</u></p> <p><u>To find out more about the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) visit: https://iucn.org/</u></p> <p><u>In recognition of the international nature crisis, more than 100 countries, including the UK, have signed up to a global target (included in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, 2022) to protect 30% of the planet (lands, rivers, lakes, wetlands and sea) for nature by 2030. The '30by30' pledge aims to reverse biodiversity decline and increase resilience to climate change. National and local action must now follow the international commitment to prevent continued and irrecoverable declines in nature, and Defra is clear that National Landscapes will provide the backbone of 30by30 in England.</u></p>

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
1	7	<p>What is natural beauty?</p> <p><u>While the term 'natural beauty' is no longer directly referenced in the name 'National Landscape', these areas are still designated and managed in relation to this quality. It is the natural beauty of a designated National Landscape that is required to be conserved and enhanced.</u></p> <p><u>The understanding of the term 'natural beauty' is enshrined in the 1949 has evolved since it was first applied (but not defined) in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 ("the 1949 Act").</u></p> <p><u>Natural beauty is a subjective characteristic of a landscape and ultimately involves a value judgment in the designation process. Flora and fauna, geological and physiographical features obviously contribute to the perception of natural beauty, as does cultural heritage, including visible and concealed physical features (archaeology) as well as artistic and literary associations and traditions. It is now widely accepted that the beauty of all our most cherished landscapes is in part due to human intervention including agriculture, forestry and settlement. It has long been the practice to include such factors in the assessment of natural beauty. Section 99 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 clarified that land is not prevented from being treated as having outstanding natural beauty by the fact that its features are the product of human intervention in the landscape. 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 centuries³. 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 landscape⁴.</u></p> <p><u>Natural England defines six factors that contribute to the perception of Natural Beauty:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Landscape quality: A measure of the current physical state or condition of the landscape and its features.</u> • <u>Scenic quality: The extent to which the landscape appeals to the senses.</u> • <u>Relative wildness: The degree to which relatively wild character can be perceived contributes to a sense of place.</u> • <u>Relative tranquillity: The degree to which tranquillity can be perceived in the landscape relative to areas outside of the landscape (i.e. not absolute tranquillity).</u> • <u>Natural heritage features: The influence of flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features on the perception of the natural beauty of the area.</u> • <u>Cultural heritage: The influence of cultural heritage on the perception of natural beauty of the area, including physical heritage features and associations with traditions, people, artists, writers or events in history.</u> <p><u>The natural beauty of an area is often expressed in terms of certain 'special qualities' of the area (as in the next section). However, while the conservation and enhancement of those special qualities is sought through legislation and policy, including this Plan, the primary purpose of designation is to conserve and enhance the overall natural beauty of the whole area: once designated, the purpose applies to all parts of the National Landscape.</u></p> <p><u>[3. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: A guide for AONB Partnership members, Countryside Commission, CA24, November 2001, p.6.] [4. Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006: Section 99]</u></p>

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
1	8	<p><u>What is the Chilterns AONB Management Plan? What is a management plan and why is it important?</u></p> <p><u>All National Landscapes are required, under section 89 of the CROW Act, to prepare a plan, known as the Management Plan, which formulates their policy for the management of the landscape and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it.</u></p> <p><u>While the preparation of a management plan is a requirement in law, at the time of preparing this plan the delivery of the plan's objectives depends upon stakeholders' agreement to do so. However, under new section 90A of the CROW Act, introduced by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, the Secretary of State is now empowered to issue regulations requiring all public bodies to contribute to the plan's preparation, implementation and review.</u></p> <p><u>In most National Landscapes, local authorities prepare this plan but, in the Chilterns, it is prepared by the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) on behalf of, and in partnership with, local authorities, communities and other stakeholders. The plan usually runs for five years and is then reviewed to see if its content needs to be updated. This plan covers the period 2025-2030.</u></p> <p><u>The Management Plan is a guiding tool for all those who live, work, visit or have an interest in the future of the Chilterns, and is the only plan that guides the management of the whole of the Chilterns National Landscape. The plan contains a comprehensive summary of the key issues facing the area and is intended to influence and help coordinate across local authority boundaries other key strategies and activities affecting the area, including development plans, infrastructure plans and local nature recovery strategies.</u></p> <p><u>It must be emphasised that successful delivery of the vision and objectives set out in the Management Plan depends on resources being available to support action, and on the cooperation of public, private and voluntary sector partners, including most importantly the area's local authorities, all of whom are invited to endorse the Plan. For public sector partners, reference to the Plan will be a key indicator of compliance with their duty under s.85 of the CROW Act; partners in other sectors are also encouraged to refer to the Plan, especially in relation to applications for consents, licences and funding.</u></p> <p>The Chilterns AONB Management Plan sets out the vision, policies and actions for the management of the Chilterns region AONB for the period 2019-2024, and describes how best to conserve, enhance and enjoy the Chilterns. Its creation is led by the Chilterns Conservation Board and it is the only plan which guides the management of the AONB as a whole. It will influence key policies, plans and processes affecting the area, including development plans, neighbourhood development plans, transport plans and green infrastructure strategies.</p> <p>This Management Plan is a legal requirement under section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000⁵. [5. Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.]</p>
1	8	[delete whole section entitled "Who is responsible for preparing the Chilterns AONB Management Plan?", including footnotes]
1	8	[delete whole section entitled "Global and National Context of the Chilterns AONB", including footnotes; this is replaced by new "Global and National Context of the Chilterns National Landscape" section above]

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
1	9	<p>The Chilterns Conservation Board</p> <p><u>The Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) is an independent body created in 2004 by Parliamentary Order to manage the Chilterns National Landscape.</u></p> <p><u>In summary, the CCB's statutory purposes, under s.87 of the CRoW Act, are as follows:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>The CCB's key responsibility is to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Chilterns, i.e. the purpose of the designation.</u> <u>In addition, where doing so would not conflict with that key responsibility, the CCB will:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Promote the understanding and enjoyment of the Chilterns' special qualities.</u> <u>Seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities by working with local authorities and other relevant organisations.</u> <u>Consider the needs of agriculture, forestry, and the local economy.</u> <u>Ensure water resources, both surface and underground, are protected from pollution, especially in coordination with the Environment Agency and water companies.</u> <p><u>The CCB 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 2000⁹.</u></p> <p><u>The CCB is an independent statutory body and has two statutory purposes¹⁰:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>• To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB</u> <u>• To increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB</u> <p><u>In fulfilling these purposes, the CCB 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.</u></p> <p><u>[⁹ Section 86 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000]</u></p> <p><u>[¹⁰ Section 87, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as amended by the NERC Act 2006]</u></p>
1	9	<p>About the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) Board Members</p> <p><u>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.</u></p> <p><u>The Board has 27 members, who are independent and do not represent any other organisation.</u></p> <p><u>This comprises 13 local authority appointed members, six Parish Council elected members, and eight Secretary of State appointed members. All Board members will have expressed an interest in becoming a Board member for the Chilterns Conservation Board.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>• Members appointed by the Secretary of State must go through a formal application and selection process and are appointed for a period of three years, which can be extended twice by another three years, nine years maximum.</u> <u>• Parish Council members are elected by the parish councils in their appropriate county within the Chilterns National Landscape: two Buckinghamshire, two Oxfordshire, one Hertfordshire and one Bedfordshire. They can remain Board members as long as they are parish council members and are willing to remain Board members.</u> <u>• Local Authorities in the Chilterns National Landscape appoint their members usually in May – some do it annually, and some appoint them for years. There are five for Buckinghamshire Council, and one each for Oxfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Central Bedford Council, Luton Borough Council, Dacorum Borough Council, North Hertfordshire District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and Three Rivers District Council.</u> <p><u>The Chilterns Conservation Board and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) have no formal influence over who is appointed or elected to the Board.</u></p>
2	10-11	<p>2. The Significance of the Chilterns Special Qualities</p> <p><u>The Chilterns' special qualities are considered so important, nationally and internationally, that they require specific protection. The primary purpose of conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty depends on positively managing the integrity of the whole National Landscape, not just those parts of the landscape in which these special qualities are embodied.</u></p>

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <u>dip-slope</u> 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 4% <u>1.5%</u> of the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> mostly in small fragments. Species for which the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> 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% <u>24%</u> 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 <u>Biodiversity Action Plan</u> 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 2000ha <u>2,300 ha</u> of common land, heaths and greens, rich in wildlife and cultural heritage; 3700ha 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.
2	12	Landscape Character Map [map] This map highlights the location of the main landscape character areas.
2	12	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. LCAs 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 LCA for the Chilterns AONB <u>National Landscape</u> . A number of county and district-based LCAs cover the whole of the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> . These have been undertaken using similar (but not identical) specifications. These give us four broad types of landscape in the Chilterns <u>as follows</u> :
2	12	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 <u>National Landscape</u> , but widens as it approaches the Thames in the south.
2	12	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 <u>National Landscape</u> . 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.

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text						
2	12	<p>River Valleys</p> <p>The Chilterns contains a series of larger river valleys that cut through the scarp and <u>dip-slope</u>. Arterial valleys run north-west to south-east and, create dramatic 'wind gaps' where they cut through the scarp, as at Tring and Wendover</p> <p>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.</p>						
2	13	<p>Plateau and <u>Dip-slope</u></p> <p>A large proportion of the AONB National Landscape is covered by plateau and <u>dip-slope</u> 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.</p> <p>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.</p>						
2	13	<p>Further detail on the landscape character of the Chilterns, including a timeline of the area's formation, is available on the CCB website here: https://www.chilterns.org.uk/our-landscape/landscape-character/</p> <p>There is a more detailed description in two separate documents (https://www.chilterns.org.uk/our-landscape/landscape-character/ and https://www.chilterns.org.uk/our-landscape/landscape-character/timeline-of-the-chilterns/) available on the AONB website.</p>						
2	14-15	Timeline of the Chilterns [timeline infographic]						
2	14	Geology of the Chilterns Countryside [infographic]						
3	17	<p>3. The State of the Chilterns</p> <p>The Chilterns AONB National Landscape faces unprecedented pressure. From housing and transport infrastructure to climate change, there are many <u>impacts on challenges</u> to the natural beauty and special qualities of the Chilterns. <u>The effect of Ash Dieback is clearly visible in our ash-dominated woodlands</u> Ash dieback is likely to have having a devastating effect on the landscape; squirrels, deer and <i>Glis glis</i> (edible dormouse) ensure-mean that very few young trees survive and the chalk aquifer, which we <u>use rely on</u> for drinking water, is <u>at an all-time low under threat from pollution, over-abstraction and climate change.</u></p> <p>This section provides a snapshot of the state of the Chilterns framed in terms of the government's new Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOFs) and a number of local indicators, and summarises key issues affecting the AONB National Landscape. Tackling these issues requires <u>collaborative</u> action at many levels, from local to national and international. This Management Plan outlines what is needed and creates an agenda for action. <u>Further details on the targets and outcomes defined for nature are included in the Chilterns Nature Recovery Plan (see chapter 5), and a Climate Adaptation Management Plan will be published by the government's target date of 2028.</u></p>						
3	17	<p>Headline Indicators: Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework</p> <p><u>The Protected Landscapes Target and Outcomes Framework (PLTOFs) sets the ambition for Protected Landscapes to achieve those outcomes from the government's Environmental Improvement Plan which are considered as most relevant to National Landscapes' statutory purpose.</u></p> <p><u>The framework sets out ten targets which are expressed at national level. Some of the baseline data have yet to be released by the relevant authority. The Table below summarises the targets and the baseline data that the National Landscape has received at the time this Plan is published.</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>National PLTOF Target</u></th><th><u>Target Indicator</u></th><th><u>Chilterns Baseline Statistic</u></th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><u>1. Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline).</u></td><td><u>Extent of wildlife-rich habitat created or restored within Protected Landscapes, outside of protected sites</u></td><td><u>To be released by Natural England in July 2025</u></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>National PLTOF Target</u>	<u>Target Indicator</u>	<u>Chilterns Baseline Statistic</u>	<u>1. Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline).</u>	<u>Extent of wildlife-rich habitat created or restored within Protected Landscapes, outside of protected sites</u>	<u>To be released by Natural England in July 2025</u>
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Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text		
		<u>2. Bring 80% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042</u>	<u>Percentage of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes in favourable condition</u>	<u>CNL has 58.9% of SSSI features in favourable condition (cf. average of 41.3 % for all 34 NLs)</u> <u>(© Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2025.)</u>
		<u>3. For 60% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028</u>	<u>Percentage of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition</u>	<u>CNL has 29.4 % of actions 'on track' to achieve favourable condition (cf. average of 20.7 % for all 34 NLs)</u> <u>(© Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2025.)</u>
		<u>4. Continuing favourable management of all existing priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042</u>	<u>Extent of priority habitat within Protected Landscapes, outside of protected sites, in favourable management through agri-environment schemes</u>	<u>To be released by Defra in June 2025</u>
		<u>5. Ensuring at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030.</u>	<u>Percentage of land managers adopting nature-friendly farming on a percentage of their land</u>	<u>To be released by Defra in June 2025</u>
		<u>Mitigating and adapting to climate change targets</u>		
		<u>6. Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels.</u>	<u>Level of greenhouse gas emissions within Protected Landscapes</u>	<u>Estimated net annual greenhouse gas emissions from CNL were 613.6 kt CO₂e in 2022 compared to 1,072.8 kt CO₂e in 2005 (Data published by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, June 2024). Data for 1990 are not yet available for National Landscapes.</u>
		<u>7. Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat in Protected Landscapes by 2050.</u>	<u>Extent of peat under restoration in Protected Landscapes</u>	<u>Not of relevance to CNL due to landscape setting</u>
		<u>8. Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline).</u>	<u>Extent of tree canopy and woodland cover in Protected Landscapes</u>	<u>Total area of National Forest Inventory woodland in CNL is 19,423 ha.</u> <u>Total area of Trees Outside Woodland (including Orchards) is 4,043 ha.</u> <u>(© Forestry Commission copyright 2023. © Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2023.)</u> <u>Baseline figures to be supplied in 2025.</u>
		<u>Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment targets</u>		
		<u>9. Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme</u>		<u>A number of PLTOF access indicators are being measured by the Chilterns Conservation Board as part of the Defra Access for All and Farming in Protected Landscape programmes. Data capture commenced in 2022/23. These are providing a baseline for reporting in 2025. The metrics relate to access improvements delivered through these two programmes and include:</u> <u>Metres of accessible path</u>

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text		
				<u>Number of accessible toilets and rest stops</u> <u>Number of disability accessible parking spaces</u> <u>Number of accessible gates and gaps</u> <u>Number of visits and volunteer days facilitated by new equipment</u> <u>Number of schools engaged (primary and secondary)</u> <u>Number of volunteer days</u> <u>Number of accessible or easy access routes for which wayfinding has been created or improved</u>
		<u>10. Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes</u>	<u>Number and percentage of nationally designated heritage assets in Protected Landscapes to be deemed at risk</u>	<u>There are 3 Grade II* listed building, 9 scheduled monuments and 2 Grade II* Registered parks and Garden at risk (Grade II* and II respectively)</u> <u>(At risk figures May 2025 data, Historic England.)</u>
3	17	<u>Local Indicators</u> The objectives and policies of the Management Plan also relate to a number of local indicators that support and complement the PLTOFs as set out below. 1. Environmental Land Management (ELM scheme coverage and take up) 35% (17,956 ha) of the farmland ¹² 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. ¹³ 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 30,000ha in 2014. The figures do not yet include take up of the new Countryside Stewardship Scheme that began in 2016. 15,000 ha of land (18% of total area and 33% of farmed land) were included in agri-environment schemes (AES) in Chilterns National Landscape, including Countryside Stewardship (CS), Environmental Stewardship (ES) and the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) schemes in 2023. The details of ELM payment schemes have been gradually rolled out since 2021, so these figures are likely be in a state of flux and to change over the next few years. (© Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2023.) CURRENT STATUS – POOR TREND – DECLINING [¹² 'Farmland' refers to Utilisable Agricultural Area (UAA)] [¹³ © Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2017]		
3	17	2. Woodland Management 67% of the woodland in the AONB National Landscape is in active management (public and private combined) ¹⁴ . 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. (© Forestry Commission copyright 2023. © Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2023.) CURRENT STATUS – FAIR TREND – STABLE [¹⁴ © Forestry Commission copyright [2017]; © Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2017]		
3	17	3. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) There are 64 SSSIs in the AONB National Landscape, totalling 3,213ha. SSSIs are sub-divided into units characterised by features of special interest such as wildlife, geology or landform. Out of a total 163 SSSI features in the Chilterns National Landscape, 58.9% are in favourable condition and 27% of the SSSI features have 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition. A feature can only be on track to achieve favourable condition if it has an up-to-date condition assessment by Natural England and a management plan has begun to be implemented. Of this, 98.8 % is assessed as in favourable or 'unfavourable recovering' condition. Of the 997 739 ha in unfavourable recovering condition, over 70% is calcareous or neutral grassland. ¹⁵ (© Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2023.) CURRENT STATUS – GOOD TREND – STABLE [¹⁵ © Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2017]		
3	18	Priority Habitats [map]		

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text																																							
3	18	<p>4. Priority Habitat Extent and Condition</p> <p>Natural England mapping shows 15,927 <u>17,572</u> ha of priority habitat¹⁶ in the Chilterns AONB National Landscape ¹⁷ (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.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Priority habitat</th><th>Area (hectares)</th><th>% of priority habitat in the Chilterns AONB Priority Habitat as % of total land area</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Deciduous woodland</td><td>14,046 <u>14,151</u></td><td>88.2% <u>16.99</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>Lowland calcareous grassland</td><td>1,303 <u>1,309</u></td><td>8.2% <u>1.57</u></td></tr> <tr> <td><u>Good quality semi-improved grassland</u></td><td><u>493</u></td><td><u>0.59</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>Lowland heathland</td><td><u>289</u></td><td>1.8% <u>0.35</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>Traditional orchard</td><td>140 <u>142</u></td><td>0.9% <u>0.17</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>Lowland meadows (<u>dry</u>)</td><td><u>51</u></td><td>0.3% <u>0.06</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>Floodplain grazing marsh</td><td>39 <u>49</u></td><td>0.2% <u>0.06</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>Lowland dry acid grassland</td><td>37 <u>38</u></td><td>0.2% <u>0.04</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>Lowland fen</td><td>18 <u>17</u></td><td>0.1% <u>0.02</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>Purple moor grass and rush pastures</td><td><u>4</u></td><td>0.0% <u><0.01</u></td></tr> <tr> <td><u>No main habitat</u></td><td><u>1029</u></td><td><u>1.23</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>15,927 <u>17,572</u></td><td><u>21.1</u></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(© Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2023.) CURRENT STATUS (EXTENT) – n/a TREND – UNKNOWN CURRENT STATUS (CONDITION) – UNKNOWN TREND – UNKNOWN ¹⁶ Habitats of principal importance under section 41 of the Natural Resources and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) are referred to as Priority Habitats] ¹⁷ © Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2017]</p>	Priority habitat	Area (hectares)	% of priority habitat in the Chilterns AONB Priority Habitat as % of total land area	Deciduous woodland	14,046 <u>14,151</u>	88.2% <u>16.99</u>	Lowland calcareous grassland	1,303 <u>1,309</u>	8.2% <u>1.57</u>	<u>Good quality semi-improved grassland</u>	<u>493</u>	<u>0.59</u>	Lowland heathland	<u>289</u>	1.8% <u>0.35</u>	Traditional orchard	140 <u>142</u>	0.9% <u>0.17</u>	Lowland meadows (<u>dry</u>)	<u>51</u>	0.3% <u>0.06</u>	Floodplain grazing marsh	39 <u>49</u>	0.2% <u>0.06</u>	Lowland dry acid grassland	37 <u>38</u>	0.2% <u>0.04</u>	Lowland fen	18 <u>17</u>	0.1% <u>0.02</u>	Purple moor grass and rush pastures	<u>4</u>	0.0% <u><0.01</u>	<u>No main habitat</u>	<u>1029</u>	<u>1.23</u>	Total	15,927 <u>17,572</u>	<u>21.1</u>
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3	19	<p>5. Chalk Streams</p> <p>There are nine chalk streams in the AONB National Landscape. None are currently assessed as achieving good ecological status or potential¹⁸. Of the nine, none are assessed as in bad condition, four are in poor condition, four in moderate condition and one is both poor and moderate condition (this latter river is split into two assessments for the purpose of the Water Framework Directive. This indicates a decline since the 2009 assessment, in line with the national trend. 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.</p> <p>CURRENT STATUS – POOR TREND – DECLINING ¹⁸ http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/</p>																																							
3	19	<p>6. Historic Environment</p> <p>The condition of most designated heritage assets in the Chilterns has remained largely stable over the past decade.</p>																																							

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text											
			Heritage Asset type	Number	Number at risk¹⁹ (April 2024)	% at risk	Average % at risk across AONB National Landscapes in England						
			Listed building (Grade I)	47	0	0.0%	3.1%						
			Listed building (Grade II*)	119	3	2.5%	2.3%						
			Listed building (Grade II)	2045	0	0.0%	0.05%						
			Scheduled Monument	113	9	8.0%	11.9%						
			Registered Parks and Garden	18	2	11.1%	5.3%						
		<p>However, the vast majority of known heritage assets, including archaeological sites, are either 'non-designated heritage assets' (NDHAs) or are not formally designated or recognised, neither scheduled nor and therefore not protected and it. There are significant gaps in our knowledge, particularly in the wooded areas of the Chilterns.</p> <p>(At risk figures April 2024 data, Historic England.)</p> <p>CURRENT STATUS — FAIR</p> <p>TREND — STABLE</p> <p>[¹⁹ At risk figures Historic England]</p>											
3	19	<p>7. Health Walks</p> <p>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 five years, with 64,000 health walk attendances in 2016-2017 across the AONB National Landscape.</p> <p>CURRENT STATUS — GOOD</p> <p>TREND — INCREASING</p>											
3	19	<p>8. Visits to Countryside Sites</p> <p>Visitor numbers to formal countryside attractions have increased over recent years, in some cases substantially. For example, Wendover Woods, in Buckinghamshire saw a 13% increase in visitors (2013-2017) and College Lake, near Tring, in Hertfordshire saw a 16% increase (2013-2016).</p> <p>CURRENT STATUS — GOOD</p> <p>TREND — INCREASING</p>											
3	20-21	<p>Forces for Change</p> <p>The following is a summary of the main forces for change relevant to the Chilterns National Landscape.</p> <p>[Replace all arrows in column 3 with simple bullet points.]</p> <table><tr><th>Topic</th><th>Key Issues</th><th>Predicted Trends and Impacts without Intervention</th></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity</td><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">Decline in traditional land management (e.g. mixed farming, crop rotation, grazing, woodland management, orchards, watercress beds and exercise of common rights),Change of land use including increase in area of land used primarily for recreation (e.g. golf, liveries, and new businesses such as paintballing)Impacts of housing and infrastructure developmentDeclines in diversity within habitatsNutrient EutrophicationImpacts of systemic pesticidesImpacts of non-native invasive pests and diseases</td><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">Declines in abundance and range of flora and foraReductions in habitat connectivity and resilienceIncreasing impacts of pests and diseasesLoss of species diversity within semi-natural habitats including ancient woodlands and chalk grasslandLoss of hedgerow trees particularly ashScrubbing up of grassland sitesDeclines in characteristic species and habitats</td></tr></table>						Topic	Key Issues	Predicted Trends and Impacts without Intervention	Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Decline in traditional land management (e.g. mixed farming, crop rotation, grazing, woodland management, orchards, watercress beds and exercise of common rights),Change of land use including increase in area of land used primarily for recreation (e.g. golf, liveries, and new businesses such as paintballing)Impacts of housing and infrastructure developmentDeclines in diversity within habitatsNutrient EutrophicationImpacts of systemic pesticidesImpacts of non-native invasive pests and diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Declines in abundance and range of flora and foraReductions in habitat connectivity and resilienceIncreasing impacts of pests and diseasesLoss of species diversity within semi-natural habitats including ancient woodlands and chalk grasslandLoss of hedgerow trees particularly ashScrubbing up of grassland sitesDeclines in characteristic species and habitats
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Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change; increasing climatic variation Visitor impacts on sensitive sites and habitats, especially along the escarpment Unprotected sites Habitat fragmentation 	
		Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development pressures Changes in land management Unprotected sites and landscapes; site specific focus of designation Heritage of the Chilterns less recognised and understood than other protected landscapes Limited resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of historic landscape character Decline in condition of wider setting of monuments Condition of designated assets largely stable but a few at risk Increased archaeological understanding through housing and infrastructure development Initiatives developed in isolation
		Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in land management practices Global markets contributing to demise of local industry for example furniture making Growing markets in wood fuel and local products Low take up and reduced resourcing of environmental schemes (e.g. Countryside Stewardship) Brexit – opportunities for influence and change alongside uncertainty for land managers and farmers Impact on rural workers of high cost of housing Fewer people employed in land management Subdivision of woodlands into small plots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less-Reduced commercial need to manage landscape features such as hedgerows and trees; loss of historic field patterns Declines in soil health Sheep grazing of chalk grassland is currently uneconomic leading to declining biodiversity Under managed woodlands Decreasing number of holdings, increase in larger holding, more contractors, land sold off for amenity, changes in area of land farmed Farm diversification resulting from growth in marketing of local products and tourism
		Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmentally unsustainable levels of abstraction from chalk aquifer leading to chronic low flows and shortening of river habitats Abstraction for River Thames at level of no more capacity High levels of water usage Modifications to water courses Poor ecological condition of chalk streams Pollution, diffuse and non-diffuse Non-native invasive pests and diseases Impact of climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water quality decline Further degradation of chalk streams, streams and rivers running dry Failure to reach required Water Framework Directive status Loss of key landscape features Impact on ecology and loss of associated wildlife
		Settlement and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly desirable area, commutable to London Unprecedented housing and infrastructure growth within and in setting of the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> Construction of HS2 Airport expansion and increased over-flying Oxford-Cambridge growth corridor Creeping suburbanisation and gentrification Lack of affordable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erosion of character Increased noise, air/light pollution Habitat severance, degradation/loss Less enjoyable to visit New building designs not locally distinctive Housing even less affordable for local community
		Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population in and around the Chilterns is increasing rapidly Some large urban populations on the edge of the Chilterns with relatively high incidence of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gradually increasing profile for the area and the opportunities it presents to increase health and wellbeing Increased number of visitors

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		<p>health issues compared to the AONB National Landscape; this provides major opportunities for enhancing health and wellbeing through outdoor activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public understanding of the benefits provided by the Chilterns is low Low levels of engagement with some audiences (e.g. urban young people, Black and ethnic minority communities) Declining public sector funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of negative impacts of additional visitors to sensitive habitats and sites Risk of anti-social behaviour (e.g. fly tipping, vandalism, wildlife crime) Continued lack of engagement with under-represented audiences Gradual decline in maintenance of rights of way and countryside access infrastructure unless public funding is maintained or new funding secured
4	23	<h2>4. The Future of the Chilterns</h2> <h3>Vision</h3> <p>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.</p> <p>To achieve this vision, the CCB advocates that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> All special qualities and natural resources of the Chilterns will be protected forever for everyone, current and future generations. The wildlife and natural beauty of the Chilterns have an intrinsic value that will be preserved and restored. The landscape is designated for the nation and will be protected by the nation. 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. The Chilterns provides a valuable resource for the enjoyment, health and wellbeing of a significant proportion of the country's population. The landscape is a place where many people live and work, where community facilities must be retained to foster sustainable, vibrant communities. 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. As one of the most accessible protected landscapes in Europe, more people should use the Chilterns for quiet recreation, especially the 1.6 2.25 million people who live within 8km 10km of the boundary and the adjacent urban populations, with carefully managed access to ensure the special qualities are protected. Those who live in or near, make a living from, visit and love the Chilterns are encouraged to help care for it. 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 National Landscape; 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.
4	24	<h2>Securing the Chilterns for Future Generations</h2> <p>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 first²⁰.</p> <p>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.”</p> <h3>General Policies</h3> <p>To achieve the above, we have set out four general policies across three key areas, to help conserve and enhance the Chilterns.</p> <p>[²⁰The Government, A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment, HMSO, 2018]</p>
4	24	<h2>National Park Status and Boundary Review</h2> <p><u>GP1 Continue to explore opportunities to enhance the status of the Chilterns National Landscape, including securing increased powers and resources, at least equivalent to redesignation as a National Park</u></p>

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		<p>In 2018, the CCB submitted a request to Natural England to consider redesignation of the Chilterns as a National Park. Whilst on paper the protections for National Parks and National Landscapes are identical, in reality National Parks benefit from increased resources and status as a planning authority.</p> <p>That request was supported by the Glover Landscapes Review in 2019, which recognised that the area met the designation criteria in terms of both natural beauty and opportunities for access and enjoyment, and recommended that if not redesignated a National Park, the Chilterns be given increased resources and powers to address the specific challenges that it faces.</p> <p>Redesignation is not universally popular as a solution in the Chilterns area, however, and there are questions about whether National Parks, based on legislation that has not been revisited for 75 years, offer the best value or necessarily achieve the best outcomes in terms of 21st century priorities. Nonetheless, National Park status is currently a benchmark for landscape-scale environmental management in the UK and the CCB continues to actively explore opportunities to create a new gold standard in this sector.</p> <p>National parks are extensive tracts of country designated because of their natural beauty and the opportunities they afford for open-air recreation²⁴. The Chilterns meets both criteria.</p> <p>National Park status could help raise the Chilterns' profile as a landscape of national (even international) significance, which the CCB is unable to do alone.</p> <p>General Policy 1 Explore the case for and against the Chilterns having enhanced status or being designated a National Park.</p> <p>[²⁴ National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, Section 5(2)]</p>
4	24	<p>[Delete the whole of General Policy 2 and its supporting text, and replace with the following:]</p> <p><u>GP2 Review the boundary of the National Landscape to cover a larger area of the Chilterns and adjoining landscapes that merits it.</u></p> <p>In 2021 Natural England committed to undertaking a review of the boundary of the designated area, undertook through consultants an extensive and positive assessment of the surrounding area, engaging with local authorities and other key stakeholders across Berkshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire, with the support of many local communities. However, the process was cancelled just before statutory public consultation was scheduled to begin in May 2025 as a result of budgetary constraints. It is known that the outcome of the assessment identified significant areas that met the criteria for designation, and were identified as being desirable to designate. The Board and its partners therefore strongly advocate that the process of designation should be completed as soon as resources become available.</p>
4	24	<p><u>A Renewed Approach to Partnership Working</u></p> <p><u>GP3 Establish a strong partnership to deliver the Chilterns National Landscape Management Plan working together in the best interests of the area, its environment, communities, economy and visitors.</u></p> <p>There are a significant number of organisations who are dedicated to caring for the Chilterns and in their feedback on the Plan, key partners and stakeholders stated that there is a need for a strong strategic partnership across the Chilterns. Collaborative working with local organisations, local authorities, charities and government agencies on delivery of the Management Plan will ensure more is achieved and there is a consistent approach to the conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns as the National Landscape expands. Cross-cutting subjects, such as health and wellbeing initiatives, have been identified as a top priority.</p> <p>Strong partnership working and effective engagement is also going to become more important in the context of the strengthened duty on public bodies to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape, and as the government's intentions become clearer on how the same public bodies will be expected to contribute towards developing future iterations of the Management Plan and delivering their objectives.</p> <p><u>General Policy 3 Establish a strong partnership to deliver the Chilterns AONB Management Plan working together in the best interests of the area, its environment, communities, economy and visitors.</u></p>
4	26-27	<p><u>Benefitting People and Nature; _an Ecosystems Approach</u></p> <p>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 Ecosystems Services, which Ecosystems Services can be broken down into four types:</p> <p>[Ecosystems services infographic]</p> <p>The AONB National Landscape can support the wider ecological network of surrounding areas so that they can all become more resilient. Examples of Ecosystem Services provided by the Chilterns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flint and timber for construction - Wood for fuel - Natural flood defences from woodland and grassland

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pollination by insects - Carbon storage by woodland and soil - Chalk aquifer for water supply - Cultural benefits from a health and recreational perspective - <u>Opportunities for people to enhance their physical and mental health and wellbeing</u> - Locally distinctive food like cheese and beer <u>Sustainable production of food and drink, including locally distinctive produce</u> <p>The Management Plan aims to use manage the Chilterns' this natural capital provided by the Chilterns more sustainably, to enhance the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> and contribute to the delivery of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan²².</p> <p>[²² The Government, A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment, HMSO, 2018]</p>
4	27	<p>[Delete all text from "Climate change is expected..." to "...millions in the south east." and insert new text as follows:]</p> <p>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, <u>for example</u>, alter the species composition of woodlands and the type of crops grown by farmers, leading to alteration to the landscape.</p> <p><u>Climate mitigation in the Chilterns National Landscape</u></p> <p>An important aspect of the value of the natural capital of the Chilterns is that it makes a significant contribution to helping to mitigate climate change in ways that are compatible with conserving and enhancing its natural beauty. Climate change mitigation refers to actions to slow down, and potentially reverse, the effects of climate change.</p> <p>Example climate mitigation actions for the Chilterns might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting nature recovery actions to help maintain ecosystem services which support carbon sequestration e.g. in chalk grasslands • Increasing capture and storage of greenhouse gases in natural systems through tree planting • Reducing carbon and methane emissions in agriculture and other sectors • Retrofitting old buildings to make them more energy efficient • Purchasing local food and wood products to reduce air miles • Holidaying in the Chilterns as a sustainable alternative to travel abroad <p><u>Adaptation to climate change in the Chilterns National Landscape</u></p> <p>Climate change adaptation involves ways of adjusting to the effects of climate change. Adaptation requires us to adjust our environment and develop actionable solutions to protect communities and ecosystems from changes that we cannot prevent.</p> <p>Examples of climate change adaptation suitable for the Chilterns might be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing runoff and enabling greater infiltration of water into soils to recharge chalk aquifers • Introducing shading and managing vegetation to help regulate air, river and standing water temperatures • Creating resilient ecological networks to allow species movement in response to climate change • Restoring chalk streams and other habitats to improve species resilience to climate change <p>The government's Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3) requires the Chilterns Conservation Board to produce a Climate Adaptation Management Plan that will be embedded in or linked to the management plan by 2028. The plan will include actions and objectives designed to adapt to climate change.</p>
4	27	<p><u>GP4 General Policy 4</u> Support projects and proposals that have a positive impact on the ability of the Chilterns to contribute sustainable Ecosystem Services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainably managing land and water environments • Protecting and providing more, better and joined up natural habitats across the AONB and with adjacent areas, enhancing networks through the landscape • Protecting and conserving water resources and improving water quality • Improving the Chilterns' resilience and adaptation to, and mitigation of, climate change • Increasing the ability to store carbon through new tree planting, <u>woodland creation</u>, wetland restoration or other means • Conserving and improving soil structure and quality • Reducing litter and environmental pollution, especially air <u>and water</u> pollution, <u>including sewage</u> • Managing and mitigating the risk of flooding • Supporting the sustainable production and local use of food, forestry and raw materials • Improving opportunities for peoples' health and wellbeing, including provision of high-quality green infrastructure close to where people live • Stimulating sustainable tourism and economic activity • Delivering high-quality sustainable design that protects the local distinctiveness of the Chilterns • Managing or controlling non-native invasive species

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
5	29	<p>5. Nature</p> <p>The Chilterns is home to a wonderful variety of wildlife, including many protected and notable species. The AONB <u>National Landscape</u> 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.</p> <p>The habitats associated with the Chilterns are often a by-product of traditional management – grazing, woodland management and quarrying – over many millennia by farmers, woodland owners and other land managers. Its chalk escarpment provides a crucial stepping stone for species moving through the landscape, often in response to climate change and other pressures.</p> <p><u>While this refreshed management plan recognises the value of nature, the increasing need to identify measures to mitigate against climate change and the intrinsic value the Chilterns landscape provides to the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors alike, significant advances in understanding have happened since the original plan, on which this refresh is based, was published in 2019.</u></p> <p><u>Nature Recovery</u></p> <p><u>Recognising the great value protected landscapes can offer to the country as a whole, later the same year (2019), our National Landscapes joined together to sign the Colchester Declaration. The declaration made ambitious commitments for nature recovery and woodland planting. From this time, each protected landscape, including the Chilterns, started the process of producing its own bespoke Nature Recovery Plan.</u></p> <p><u>The Environment Act 2021 led to Defra requiring certain local authorities to produce their own Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). This process started in earnest in 2023. Working with the four evolving LNRSs covering the Chilterns (Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire), we will publish the first Chilterns Nature Recovery Plan this year. In future, this Nature Recovery Plan will become an integral part of the Chilterns Management Plan. The Plan describes how the Chilterns National Landscape can respond to the government's ambitions for a nature recovery network and its commitment to the 30by30 target, recognising that National Landscapes have a critical role to play.</u></p> <p><u>Understanding whether our nature recovery actions across the landscape achieve the desired outcomes is essential and requires monitoring and evaluation. The Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework provides a national dataset to enable monitoring of trends in nature recovery across the landscape (see Chapter 3). Furthermore, the duty in s.85 of the CROW Act requires relevant authorities to 'seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty' which includes the landforms, geology, plants and animals that are critical to nature recovery (see Chapter X).</u></p> <p><u>Taken together, the Chilterns National Landscape management plan, nature recovery plan and embedded Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework provide strategic direction to inform how individuals and organisations can work together to co-ordinate nature recovery actions across the landscape at scale.</u></p>
5	29	<p>Designated Wildlife Habitat Sites [map]</p> <p>The Chilterns has many sites designated for their wildlife value, including nationally and internationally important sites, totalling 9,507ha (41.4%) <u>10,673 ha (12.8% of the AONB National Landscape)</u>. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Special Areas of Conservation (SACs – sites of international importance), including the Chilterns Beechwood SAC (made up of nine separate sites), Aston Rowant SAC and Hartslock Wood SAC • 64 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (national importance) • 494 local sites recognised for their wildlife or geology <p><u>The charity Plantlife identifies part of the Chilterns as an 'Important Plant Area' for internationally important plant populations.</u></p> <p><u>The map doesn't show local wildlife sites (almost 500). Total area of designated sites is greater than 9,500ha (over 41%) <u>10,673 ha (12.8% of the AONB National Landscape)</u>.</u></p>
5		Key Facts
5	30	<p>Grassland, heathland and bare ground</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chilterns supports important concentrations of species rich grassland including chalk, neutral and acid grassland • Remnant heathland is also found in the Chilterns, often on common land • Quarries/former quarries provide bare ground, an important habitat for many species • Chalk grassland is an internationally rare, fragile, wildlife rich habitat which has developed over centuries of grazing on nutrient-poor chalk soils

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home to populations of chalk specialist species, including wild candytuft, pasque flower, silver-spotted skipper and glow-worm • Grassland and heathland scrub up quickly if left unmanaged • Livestock grazing is the best way to manage chalk grassland and should be encouraged • Chalk scrub is often of high wildlife value –habitat mosaics, including small areas of scrub and longer grassland as well as short turf are important • Juniper and box scrub habitats are notable in the Chilterns • Many grassland and heathland sites are popular with visitors; this requires management to prevent disruption to sensitive species and habitats.
5	31	<p>Trees and woodland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chilterns is one of the most heavily wooded areas in England, famous for its extensive beech woods and ancient woodland • Ancient woodlands cover only 2% of England, <u>while they cover 13% of –In the Chilterns this figure is 13%.</u> They are home to many rare and threatened species • Priority habitats in the Chilterns include lowland beech and yew, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wood-pasture and parkland • The Chilterns has a rich heritage of parkland, wood pasture and common land, with high concentrations of veteran trees, associated deadwood invertebrates and fungi • The Chilterns has the largest native box woodland in the UK • Active management of woodlands is needed to let in light and create habitat mosaics • Plantations on ancient woodland sites need to be restored through a mix of natural regeneration and appropriate planting • Invasive non-native pests (including Grey Squirrel and Glis glis - Edible Dormouse) and disease, as well as increasing deer numbers, are a serious and growing concern for our woodlands that needs management • Management of woodlands to increase diversity species mix and age is needed to ensure resilience to climate change, pests and disease • Traditional orchards, particularly cherry, were once important in the Chilterns and the mix of old fruit trees and grassland are valuable for wildlife
5	32-33	<p>Water bodies and wetlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers and wetlands are scarce but precious habitats in the Chilterns • Chalk streams are a globally scarce habitat – nine of the <u>circa 300 283</u> chalk streams in the world are found <u>here in the Chilterns</u> and they are home to some of the UK's most endangered species including water vole, otter and brown trout • Chalk streams are shallow, fast flowing watercourses with a gravel bed and low banks. Flows depend on groundwater levels in the underlying chalk aquifer • They are home to some of the UK's most endangered species including water vole, otter and brown trout • Winterbourns, the upper reaches of streams that are dry in the summer months, support unique plants and animals • The chalk aquifer underlying the Chilterns supplies water to millions of people in the south east • Besides the main chalk streams there are numerous chalk springs at the foot of the scarp • Of the nine chalk streams, none are currently assessed as being of 'Good Ecological Status/ Potential' according to the latest Environment Agency assessment • Low flows are the key issue affecting the area's chalk streams • 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 • All our chalk streams have been heavily modified for example due to milling, agriculture and urban development leaving fragmented <u>habitats, degraded</u> 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 River Thames forms the boundary between the North Wessex Downs and the Chilterns • Other wetland habitats include lakes, gravel and mineral extraction pits, reservoirs, canals, ponds and temporary waterbodies, all providing important wildlife habitat • Many ponds on farmland and common land were 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 Chilterns has significantly declined over many years
5	33	<p>Farmland habitats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmland is the main land use in the Chilterns, covering over 60% of the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> and providing a wide range of wildlife habitats • Farming has created a mosaic of arable and grassland habitats, stitched together by hedgerows and interspersed with woodland, commons and downland • Species-rich ancient hedgerows and hedgerow trees provide important wildlife habitat and corridors • Hedgerows need the right management to sustain their value for wildlife

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers 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. • Farmers also have a crucial role to play in protecting and maintaining soil health to support soil invertebrates, fungi and microbes • Modern farming techniques and the move towards larger fields has impacted farmland wildlife; much of this change was concentrated in the early post-war period, yet declines in biodiversity continues • The Chilterns was once a stronghold for rare arable plants and farmland birds, such as lapwing, yellowhammer and skylark; many of these species are in decline
5	34	<p>Long term trends</p> <p>The Chilterns saw major losses in area of characteristic habitats and landscape features over the course of the 20th century²³ including:</p> <p>Chalk grassland 54% lost</p> <p>Commons, greens and heaths 43% lost</p> <p>Ancient woodland 9% lost</p> <p>(See “The Changing Landscape of the Chilterns” The Chilterns Historic Landscape Characterisation Project, Buckinghamshire County Council & Chilterns Conservation Board, 2009.)</p> <p>[²³ The Changing Landscape of the Chilterns, Chilterns Historic Landscape Characterisation Project Bucks County Council/ Chilterns Conservation Board 2009]</p>
5	35	<p>Recent trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UK State of Nature Report 2016 found that 56% of UK species have declined since 1970 <u>The UK State of Nature Report 2023 found that across the UK, species studied have declined on average by 19% since 1970 and 16%, nearly 1 in 6 species from Great Britain, are threatened with extinction.</u> • This trend is mirrored in the Chilterns with many wildlife species in long-term decline in both abundance and range • Much of the best surviving wildlife habitat lies within designated sites and nature reserves, and many formerly abundant species of the wider countryside are in decline. • Species with specialist habitat requirements are hardest hit • Over the past 10 years many woodland and farmland birds have declined or disappeared. The decline in specialist woodland bird species reflects a long-term reduction in woodland management across the Chilterns • Plant species – particularly specialist chalk loving plants – are also under pressure; the northern Chilterns is one of the top three most important chalk floras in the UK, yet ten of the 60+ rarer species are thought to be extinct. Many others are restricted to a single site
5	35	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>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 – <u>wildlife habitat and species</u> we are still losing being lost wildlife habitat and species from the Chilterns. This is due to a range of factors, many of which are listed below. More effective action is needed, for example, landscape scale conservation initiatives, in order to halt and reverse these declines.</p> <p>Habitat degradation takes many forms including direct loss of habitat, decline in habitat quality, fragmentation and increased isolation of habitat and increased leisure and recreational use. Species that require habitat mosaics rather than single habitats are often the hardest hit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in land management practices: A decline in traditional land management practise, such as extensive grazing crop rotation, small scale quarrying and hedge-laying has led to a decline in biodiversity. • Lack of wildlife habitat management: A lack of support and resources to manage existing wildlife sites, semi-natural habitats and important ecological networks, such as roadside verges and hedgerows. • Environmental and ecological change: Including climate change, loss of pollinators and impacts of pests, diseases and invasive non-native species (INNS) • Impacts of people and dogs: The actions of visitors to the Chilterns can damage many of the area’s wildlife habitats. For example, dogs can disturb ground nesting birds and high visitor numbers can make it harder to carry out appropriate site management. • Habitat fragmentation: Housing, transport infrastructure and changes in land use, continue to leave a legacy of habitat fragmentation from severed hedgerows, culverted chalk streams and lack of buffer zones along the rivers, to isolation of chalk grassland and ancient woodland. 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.
5	36	Rebuilding Nature – the ‘Lawton Principles’

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		<p>Professor Sir John Lawton's landmark report 'Making Space for Nature'²⁴, 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." This would include keystone species and species characteristic of the Chilterns. The report identified the essence of what needs to be done to enhance the resilience and coherence of England's ecological network in four words: more, bigger, better and joined.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>[Bigger, better, connected amoeba image]</p> <p>[²⁴ 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.</p>
5	37	<p>Strategic Objectives</p> <p>The Government's Biodiversity 2020 Strategy stated the ambition that, <i>"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."</i> 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. The Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework described in Chapter 3 provides the national ambitions for Protected Landscapes. This Management Plan sets out a framework for joint action to progress these ambitions in the Chilterns.</p> <p>The following objectives have been put in place to help prioritise and invest in the natural environment, and in the people and organisations that care for it, to deliver 'more, bigger, better, more joined up spaces for nature.'</p>
5	37	NO1 Ensure that spaces for wildlife are expanded, well connected, well managed and diverse.
5	37	NO2 Increase the range and abundance of populations of key wildlife species²⁵.
5	37	NO3 Minimise development impacts on the AONB National Landscape and its setting; where they are unavoidable, ensure they provide net environmental gains.
5	37	NO4 Ensure that chalk habitat management in the Chilterns is widely considered an exemplar of best practice.
5	37	NO5 Enable people to understand and be inspired by the natural environment of the Chilterns, ensuring that policies and decisions recognise the Chilterns' value to society and in its own right.
5	37	NO6 Secure greater protection for chalk streams as a globally rare habitat.
5	37	NO7 Encourage people from different organisations, communities and backgrounds, to work together to 'make space for nature' in the Chilterns.
5	38	<p>Policies</p> <p>To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:</p>
5	38	NO1 & NO4
5	38	NP1 Create large, more joined up, functional habitat networks, reconnect surviving pockets of habitat, and develop landscape-scale conservation initiatives.
5	38	<p>Strong collaboration, leadership and resources are needed to reverse the declines in wildlife and follow the rationale set out in the Lawton Report. Funding needs to be targeted firstly at supporting management of good quality existing habitat and secondly at re-creation of habitat in target areas, such as biodiversity opportunity areas and conservation target areas, to support the delivery of the Lawton Principles.</p> <p>Options for creation of more 'wilded' landscapes, linking core areas (e.g. priority habitat, designated sites, ancient woodland) with the wider countryside also need to be explored.</p>
5	38	NP2 Promote and support landowner and farmer-led initiatives that prioritise nature and deliver wildlife conservation and enhancement at a landscape/catchment scale.

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
5	38	Farmers and other land managers are key to sustaining landscape-scale conservation initiatives over the long term.
5	38	NP3 Look for and promote opportunities for restoring natural processes.
5	38	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 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.
5	38	NP4 Protect important, under-represented habitats and natural features through new designations and sensitive management.
5	38	Protect important habitats through nature conservation designations, including Local <u>Wildlife</u> Sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Local <u>Wildlife</u> 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 chalk streams, to be included in the national suite of SSSIs.
5	38	NP5 Control and eradicate (where possible) invasive non-native pests and diseases in the Chilterns and develop strategies to reduce their impact.
5	38	<p>Damaging impacts of deer, grey squirrel, <i>Glis glis</i> (edible dormouse) and mink need to be addressed, alongside a concerted effort to manage impacts of ash die back, acute oak decline, oak processionary moth, Phytophthora, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed.</p> <p>Collaborative action to reduce grey squirrel <u>and deer</u> damage is identified as a priority.</p> <p>Support schemes need to be put in place to promote good bio-security and prevent the spread and introduction of other invasive non-natives.</p> <p><i>See also Land, Woodland & Water (LO4, LP18, Key Action 4)</i></p>
5	38	NP6 Protect and enhance important wildlife habitats²⁶ [²⁶ 'Important wildlife habitats' used throughout to indicate semi-natural wildlife habitats]
5	38	The Chilterns' 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.
5	39	NP7 Improve ecological condition, resilience and diversity of important wildlife habitats
5	39	<p>Best practice management is required of all important wildlife habitats. We need to test and develop new ways of sustaining the diversity within our habitats that is 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.</p> <p>Regeneration, restoration and active management of the Chilterns' woodland and trees is needed to preserve the wooded landscape that the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> is renowned for.</p> <p>There are also places where less active management is required – for example, we need to leave dead wood in our woodlands to provide homes for beetles or fungi.</p> <p>We need to learn from our history of land management whilst developing new and contemporary ways of allowing nature to flourish.</p>
5	39	NP8 Maximise 'win-win' opportunities where restoration/expansion of wildlife habitats can, at the same time, provide benefits to society and respect/strengthen landscape character.
5		To do this we need to understand the key components of the Chilterns' natural capital and how past management has shaped the landscape. This includes understanding the benefits of good land management, such as reduced flood risk and provision of clean water. This understanding should 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.
5	39	NP9 Ensure those who make decisions that impact Chilterns' wildlife are able to do so on the basis of robust, up-to-date and readily available ecological information.

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		This underlines the importance of support for local record centres, but also other sources of information such as remote sensing data.
5	39	NO2
5	39	NP10 Halt and reverse declines in rare, protected and characteristic wildlife species.
5		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. Focus should be on species at the edge of their range and initiatives developed that encourage expansion and favourable management of their habitats. 'Keystone' species – those that play a critical role in maintaining the structure and composition of an ecological community (e.g. earthworms) – should also be helped to thrive.
5		NO3
5	39	NP11 Ensure delivery mechanisms are in place to secure net gains for biodiversity in the AONB <u>National Landscape</u> and its setting.
5	39	Planning policies and decisions must contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. This includes minimising the impact on and providing net gains for biodiversity. The 25-Year Environment Plan <u>Environment Improvement Plan (2023, due to be reviewed 2025)</u> 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.
5	40	NO5
5	40	NP12 Engage with more, and a greater variety of, local groups, communities, volunteers and young people to support wildlife, farming, land management and the local environment.
5	40	The demographic profile of those involved in wildlife conservation is very narrow, given the diverse communities within and close to the Chilterns. Everyone needs to feel they have a stake in the natural environment if we are to make progress. In 2024 the HLF-funded Chalkscapes Partnership published its report ' Chalkscapes: co-creating spaces for supporting diverse communities to use greenspaces and the countryside ' which shows how diverse communities engage with the Chilterns National Landscape and the wider countryside. Communities can get involved in several ways, including buying local food and products, as well as wildlife monitoring and practical conservation activity. Supporting and promoting citizen science initiatives can 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. School and outdoor activity programmes can encourage younger generations to develop a long-term interest and involvement.
5	40	NP13 Help visitors to discover and enjoy wildlife in the Chilterns while not harming or disturbing it.
5	40	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 ²⁷ . [²⁷ Section 87(1), Countryside and Rights of Way 2000]
5		NO6
5	40	NP14 End environmentally unsustainable abstraction from Chilterns chalk streams to restore their ecology and improve their resilience to climate change.
5		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. <i>See also Land, Woodland & Water (LP14, LP21, Key Action 5), Development (DP4)</i>
5		NO7

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
5	40	NP15 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.
5		Opportunities for networking and learning are important in themselves and they help to develop wider thinking and a landscape scale approach.
5	40	NP16 Create partnerships within and across sectors to drive forward better networking, decision making and action for wildlife.
5		Significant change will come through more joined up working within the nature conservation sector and, importantly, across sectors.
5	40	NP17 Manage land to enhance the resilience of key habitats and species to the impacts of climate change.
5	40	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.
5	41	<p>Key actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and secure support for a 'Chilterns Natural Environment Delivery Plan' with ambitious five-year and 25-year targets. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 • Proposals for reintroductions of key species – including pine martin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. 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 • Create an 'Agenda for Chilterns Wildlife'; a set of shared priorities to drive increased engagement and co-ordinated action for wildlife across the Chilterns, and secure support for this agenda across sectors including health, education, research and economic development. • 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. • Secure commitment to ending unsustainable abstraction from Chilterns chalk streams/chalk aquifers. • 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	43	<p>6. Historic Environment</p> <p>The Chilterns AONB National Landscape 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.</p> <p>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.²⁸ 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, with high potential for yielding evidence of the medieval period and earlier.²⁹ Prominent throughout the Chilterns are the historic towns and villages with buildings and churches in characteristic flint, brick, and timber materials.</p> <p>[²⁸ The Changing Landscape of the Chilterns: Chilterns Historic Landscape Characterisation Project Final Report (2009) p. 101.]</p> <p>[²⁹ The Changing Landscape of the Chilterns: Chilterns Historic Landscape Characterisation Project Final Report (2009) p. 101.]</p>
6	43	[Infographic of Heritage Assets in the Chilterns – requires figure for scheduled monuments at risk to be updated from 8 to 9]

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
6	44	<p>Many historic sites, features and monuments are formally designated as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, and so on, but many more are only recognised and designated locally (e.g. as locally listed buildings, described confusingly as 'non-designated heritage assets'); still more are Many sites are undesignated (e.g. are recorded in local Historic Environment Records) or have yet to be found). <u>All deserve recognition, management and protection commensurate with their significance.</u></p> <p>³⁰ 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 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 landscape is filled with the evidence of people in the past living and working in the Chilterns - from farmer's field systems that survive from the Bronze and Iron Ages through the Roman and early medieval periods, to the great earthwork monuments such as Grims Ditch, hillforts and burial mounds. The landscape also includes more recent creations, such as the industrial heritage of works such as the Grand Union Canal, constructed here to carry freight over the Chilterns between the midlands and London, as well as a large number of great houses with their parks and gardens designed by the likes of Humphry Repton and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.</p> <p>The natural and historic landscapes of the Chilterns have provided home and inspiration for some of Britain's greatest <u>most prominent</u> 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 <u>being</u> the country house of the <u>Prime Minister</u> since 1921.³⁴</p> <p>In summary, the region's historic environment and cultural heritage underpin the essential nature of the Chilterns.</p> <p>[³⁰ The Changing Landscape of the Chilterns: Chilterns Historic Landscape Characterisation Project Final Report (2009) pp. 34, 99, Fig. 69; Historic England Statutory Figures for AONBs (2017).] [³⁴ Cf. https://www.chilternsaonb.org/Products/34/20/Famous-People-of-the-Chilterns-booklet.html]</p>
6	44	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>The Chilterns AONB National Landscape 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. In the next five years the Chilterns AONB National Landscape faces unprecedented demands for development in housing and infrastructure, directly impacting the archaeology beneath them and the landscapes surrounding them. Numerous undesignated or unknown sites are at even greater risk, lacking statutory protections.</p>
6	44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development pressures: Developments can lead to the destruction of sites of national importance and the alteration of the character, cultural heritage and spirit of the Chilterns AONB. For example, the construction of HS2 will erase <u>has destroyed</u> 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.
6	44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in land management: The decline of traditional agriculture and industry has led to changes in land and woodland management, and the funding given to farmers for protecting heritage assets is uncertain.
6	44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites and landscapes unprotected: While designated assets, such as Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, and Scheduled Monuments are protected, their wider setting that is often integral to the character is not. Furthermore, the majority of known archaeological sites are 'undesignated heritage assets' <u>neither nationally nor locally designated</u>, lacking statutory protection and are at increased risk. <p>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 owners. Only two Listed Buildings are designated 'At Risk' by Historic England, along with eight <u>nine</u> Scheduled Monuments. However, the approach to designation takes a site specific, rather than landscape scale approach. This means the wider setting of monuments, often integral to their character, and perhaps beyond the bounds of the AONB National Landscape, is not protected.</p>
6	44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding and engagement: The heritage of the Chilterns is less well recognised and understood than <u>in</u> 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. <p>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.</p>
6	45	<p>Strategic Objectives</p> <p>HO1 Better protect the Chilterns' historic environment, <u>including both</u> formally designated and unprotected heritage assets.</p>

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
6	45	HO2 Seek new discoveries of unknown heritage assets and improve understanding of those already identified, to reveal the significance of the historic environment and cultural heritage of the Chilterns.
6	45	HO3 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.
6	46	Policies To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:
6	46	HO1
6	46	HP1 Encourage owners of designated heritage assets to create Conservation Management Plans and manage/restore assets appropriately.
6	46	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.
6	46	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.
6	46	The work of projects such as Beacons of the Past and Chalk, Cherries & Chairs will present have presented opportunities for coordinating improvement of known assets. The Beacons of the Past LiDAR survey of the Chilterns will discover discovered 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.
6	46	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.
6		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.
6	46	HP4 Work towards the coordination of groups with an interest in/responsibility for the historic environment of the Chilterns.
6	46	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 <u>National Landscape</u> for their work in protecting and learning more about its history. CCB can provide coordination, skills training, data and expertise to groups in order to assist in their activities.
6	46	HP5 Help communities to create robust Neighbourhood Plans which take heritage assets into account.
6		Expertise, information, and advice from CCB, will assist in signposting Neighbourhood Plan authors towards resources for creating robust plans, with consideration for the historic environment assets and their settings.
6	46	HO2
6	46	HP6 Improve knowledge of heritage assets through facilitating research and investigation.
6	46	The Beacons of the Past project and Chalk, Cherries & Chairs project, will greatly enhance have greatly enhanced 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 <u>are</u> involved in these discoveries through Citizen Science and Open Data approaches. County Historic Environment Records will be <u>are</u> closely involved in the investigation of these sites.
6	46	HP7 Identify and record the cultural history of Chilterns inhabitants and settlements to preserve memory for future generations.
6		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.

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
6	46-47	HP8 Improve the sharing of heritage information of the Chilterns, signposting individuals to appropriate sources such as local Historic Environment Records and History Centres.
6	46-7	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, and 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.
6	47	HP9 Encourage initiatives to highlight the importance of the Chilterns to political history, artistic history and literary history, as well as the industrial history of the area.
6		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, while our understanding of the industrial history of the <u>AONB National Landscape</u> will be greatly enhanced through the study of its traditional crafts.
6	47	HO3
6	47	HP10 Improve public understanding of the historic environment of the Chilterns through projects, events, information, and campaigns.
6	47	A far greater focus than ever before is being placed on the history and archaeology of the Chilterns through funding won by the CCB for large projects. These present <u>have created</u> fantastic opportunities to build momentum across the <u>AONB National Landscape</u> for engaging with its historic environment.
6	47	HP11 Create e-learning resources concerning history and archaeology for primary and secondary school curricula.
6		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.
6	47	Key Actions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement the Beacons of the Past project, working closely with other bodies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 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 — 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. 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 Chilterns Building Design Guide available to Parish Councils.
7	49	7. Land, Woodland and Water <p>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</p>

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		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.
7	50	Key Issues
7	50	Farming: Stock farming (sheep, beef, dairy) continues to decline. 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. With Arable farming, current economics and farming systems are leading to fewer people farming larger areas. Less time and resources are available to manage the 'non-farmed' areas.
7	50	Commons: 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.
7	50	Orchards: Once widespread, 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.
7	50	Woodland: The demise of the Chilterns furniture industry led to reduced timber production and now, due to both the rapid increases in deer and grey squirrel numbers, and the constant spread of new diseases, very few quality timber trees reach maturity. 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. However, the recent trend for wood burning stoves and wood fuel heating systems has recharged the management of small woodlands. Demand for locally sourced wood products can support the management of small woodlands.
7	50	[Replace whole section from "Chalk Streams: The porous..." to "...low flows in chalk streams." with the following text:] Chalk Streams: The porous chalk of the Chilterns Hills forms part of the most significant aquifer in the water-stressed south-east of England. Flow in the Chilterns' internationally rare chalk streams is reliant on water that is held within this aquifer. Water companies also make use of the aquifer, extracting (a process known as abstraction) drinking water for millions of people – residents of the Chilterns and beyond. <u>The Chilterns has one of the highest levels of domestic water use per head of population in the UK. Abstraction increased exponentially after the Second World War, leading to many chalk streams suffering from chronic low flows. Although water companies have reduced the amount of water that they abstract since the 1990s leading to flow recovery in a number of chalk streams, abstraction continues to be a significant contributory factor to low flows, and new development further increases water demand.</u> <u>Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of droughts and flooding events. Although annual rainfall totals have so far not changed appreciably, rainfall intensity has increased. Heavy rain runs quickly off valley sides causing flooding rather than soaking into the ground and recharging the aquifer. Increasing temperatures are leading to a contraction of the winter recharge window as the growing season is extending later, and beginning earlier, in the year. Higher summer temperatures are driving up water temperature with knock on effects to key chalk stream species.</u> <u>Climate change and unsustainable abstraction have a disproportionate impact on chalk stream headwaters (winterbournes) as droughts and long-term declines in groundwater levels are causing the functioning length of chalk stream habitat within the Chilterns to decrease.</u> <u>Chalk streams have been extensively altered by man over thousands of years. This has left a legacy of highly modified river channels that are disconnected, fragmented and possess degraded habitat. The National Landscape's chalk streams remain under threat of further modification by factors such as urban development and poor land management. Pollution is a key threat to the health of the area's chalk streams. There are a multitude of sources and types of pollution that are affecting these rivers. However, the most significant are sewage effluent, storm sewage overflows and urban runoff. An additional threat comes from chemicals of emerging concern such as fluorinated flame retardants known as PFAS.</u> <u>A range of invasive non-native species is impacting the health of the National Landscape's chalk streams such as signal crayfish and Himalayan balsam. New species such as demon shrimp, and red swamp crayfish are emerging and, as yet, unquantified threats to their ecology.</u> <u>Currently, all nine chalk streams that flow through the National Landscape are failing to attain the Water Framework</u>

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		<u>Directive (WFD) objective of Good Ecological Status (GES) or Potential (GES/P). This failure is primarily due to a combination of low flows, poor water quality, and biology.</u>
7	51	<p>Farming, forestry, <u>and</u> utility companies 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 (prone to erosion), our chalk aquifer and chalk streams (vulnerable to over-abstraction and diffuse pollution), 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.</p> <p>Many farmers and woodland owners do their best to protect the land they work on and look after the wildlife it supports. Many organisations and an increasing army of members of the public, volunteer to protect reserves, habitats and the countryside they enjoy.</p> <p>After leaving the European Union and, therefore, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), 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, in future, will assist land managers and foresters protect and enhance the Chilterns landscape.</p> <p><u>Continued support through developing DEFRA schemes, expanding numbers of ‘farm clusters’ and initiatives developed within the Chilterns National Landscape will help farming and forestry remain viable and protect wildlife at the same time. Farm clusters are groups of farmers working together to identify and deliver their own priorities for nature.</u></p>
7	51	Strategic Objectives
7	51	LO1 Protect and, where degraded, improve the Chilterns’ natural capital resources, including soils, water, clean air, plant and animal life.
7	51	LO2 Ensure that the Chilterns remain a functional, working landscape with viable, sustainable and diverse farming, forestry and rural economy sectors.
7	51	LO3 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.
7	51	LO4 Increase resilience to and effective management of pests, diseases, non-native invasive species and climate change.
7	51	LO5 Achieve Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives for the Chilterns water environment – rivers, valleys, wetlands and other riparian habitats.
7	51	LO6 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 National Landscape
7	52	Policies To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:
7	52	LO1
7	52	LP1 Make agreed best practice advice (farming, forestry and other land management) accessible to all.
7		Best practice will ensure healthy soils, well managed chalk streams, clean water and unpolluted air, vital for farming, forestry, wildlife, local communities and visitors. It 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, and pollard willows alongside chalk streams.
7	52	LP2 Publicise and promote appropriate land-based skill training and advances in new technology across the AONB National Landscape.
7		Both traditional rural skills and modern technology have their place in securing a healthy Chilterns landscape; from hedge laying to GPS guided farming operations that avoid compaction, damage to soils and over use of fertilizers and pesticides.
7	52	LP3 Promote the production and processing of local produce, including venison, traditional orchard fruit juice and wood-fuel.
7		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.
7	52	LO2

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
7	52	LP4 Ensure Support landowners and land managers to continue or re-introduce favourable grazing management on all areas of Chilterns chalk grassland.
7		Grazing animals are needed 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.
7	52-53	LP5 Ensure that more landowners sensitively manage hedgerows.
7		There are over 4,000km Recent DEFRA statistics (PLTOF 2022) suggest there are 3,300 km of hedgerow in the Chilterns. Between 2006 and 2008, 330 hedges in the Chilterns were surveyed and only 38% where were in good condition. Consequently, On the basis of this limited 'condition' dataset, 62% (approximately 2,500km or just over 1,500 miles) of our Chilterns hedgerows need attention. Reducing nutrient enrichment and buffering from cultivation would 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, 100km (62 miles) of hedge needs rejuvenating every year. Maintaining the hedge network will protect wildlife corridors, the linking fabric of our countryside and will preserve ancient field patterns that are still discernible today (particularly when rejuvenating old hedgerows). 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
7	53	LP6 Encourage landowners and local communities to plant over 500 new hedgerow trees across the Chilterns per year.
7		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 National Landscape.
7	53	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.
7		Farmland, woodland, orchards, commons, streams, golf courses, public open space, even road verges can all provide important links to connect wildlife habitats.
7	53	LP8 Ensure there is no net loss of woodland and no loss of irreplaceable ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees within the AONB National Landscape.
7	53	The Chilterns is renowned for its woodland, which covers 23.74% of the AONB National Landscape. 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. In line with government policy, we should see to increase the woodland area, but resources will be needed if the total area is to increase.
7	53	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.
7		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.
7	54	Woodland Cover [map]
7	54	LP10 Restore Planted Ancient Woodlands (PAWS) returning them to predominantly broadleaf species and implement sensitive long-term management.
7		Ongoing 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.
7	54	LP11 Manage glades, other open areas and woodland edges to provide a varied habitat for woodland birds, butterflies and plants.

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7		Partnerships between woodland owners, statutory agencies, local wildlife and volunteer groups will help achieve this policy.
7	54	LP12 Maintain and enhance traditional Chilterns orchards and encourage their use.
7		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.
7	54	LP13 Protect and sensitively manage historic and cultural features.
7		These features include ancient parish boundary hedges and field patterns, medieval Strip Lynchets, woodland boundary banks, saw pits and traditional orchards.
7	54	LP14 Restore chalk stream flows through reduction of abstraction to environmentally sustainable levels.
7	54	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. <i>See also Nature (NP4, Key Action 4), Development (DP4)</i>
7	55	LP15 Support a catchment-based approach to the enhancement and sustainable management of the Chilterns water environment.
7	55	This will include natural flood management (through farming, woodland planting and management practises) and help reconnect rivers with their flood plains.
7	55	LP16 Enhance and restore the natural form, function and connectivity of chalk streams and associated habitats.
7		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.
7	55	LP17 Encourage management that conserves and enhances the characteristic river valley landscape.
7		Smaller and irregular field patterns, wet meadows, woodland carr and pollard willows often characterise river valleys within the AONB <u>National Landscape</u>
7	55	LO3
7	55	LP18 Raise awareness of pest, diseases and non-native invasive species along with the need for improved biosecurity.
7		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. <i>See also Nature (NP7)</i>
7	55	LP19 Control and manage native pests and, where possible, seek to eradicate non-native invasive species, coordinated at a landscape scale.
7	55	Species include both native and introduced deer, grey squirrel, Glis glis (Edible Dormouse), 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). Statutory agencies will need to support landowner collaboration and partnership groups (similar to the 'Farmer Cluster' model) if this policy is to succeed. <i>See also Nature (NP7)</i>
7	55	LO4
7	55	LP20 Make relevant, informative and interesting information about farming, forestry and the rural economy readily available to all residents and visitors to the AONB National Landscape.
7		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.

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		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.
7	55	LP21 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.
7		Very few people are likely to understand how their use of water might affect a Chilterns chalk stream. Utility-Water 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. <i>See also Nature (NP4, Key action 4), Development (DP4)</i>
7	56	Water Framework Directive Status for Chiltern Surface Water Bodies [map]
7	57	Key Actions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Support existing and develop new collaborative projects. For example, both the Chiltern Woodlands Project and Chilterns Chalk Streams Project already 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. <i>See also Nature (NP7)</i> 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. <i>See also Nature (NP4, Key action 4), Development (DP4)</i> 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, management advice for chalk streams, woodland, sustainable farming, biosecurity measures),³⁴ publicise training and technical innovation to local businesses; provide information to the public and promote the Chilterns AONB. <p>[³⁴GB Invasive Non-Native Species Strategy http://www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?sectionid=55 Check Clean Dry campaign http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/ Forestry Commissions' 'Keep It Clean' campaign https://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/bee-h-a6tek3]</p>
8	59	8. Enjoyment and Understanding <p>[delete current introductory section from "The Chilterns has long..." to "...the most popular activity and replace with the following:]</p> <p>The Chilterns has long been a place for leisure and recreation. Since the time of 'Metroland' (when the Metropolitan Railway arrived in the early 20th Century), good public transport has allowed Londoners to take the train out of the city and into the countryside. This ease of access to the opportunities the Chilterns offers makes it a valuable recreational resource.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The landscape of the Chilterns with its great variety of habitats, extensive network of rights of way and many attractive countryside and destination sites makes it a valuable resource for recreation and leisure. It is a landscape ideal for walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding, as well as a wide array of other outdoor activities including mindfulness activities such as forest bathing. It also offers peace and tranquillity, an escape from busy and pressured lives, which is</p>

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		<p>enjoyed by millions of visitors every year. With rapid housing growth and increasing population in the urban areas surrounding the Chilterns, the Chilterns landscape has become more important than ever as a recreational resource.</p> <p><u>It is now clearly evidenced and widely recognised that a lack of physical activity and time spent in scenic, nature-rich greenspaces has major impacts on people's physical and mental wellbeing. The Chilterns provides an accessible natural health service, offering health walks, green gym programmes and a growing number of social prescribing activities. A huge array of groups use the Chilterns for recreation, health & wellbeing activities, education and learning experiences and volunteering. With the climate crisis becoming more acute as well as a growing public interest in issues such as the state of our chalk streams and species decline, people are more inspired to take action for the environment. Citizen Science programmes, such as the RSPB's Big Garden Bird Watch and Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count, have become more popular, and in the Chilterns there are now lots of varied conservation volunteering opportunities. It still attracts a narrow demographic, and the challenge now is to make the volunteering offer more inclusive.</u></p> <p><u>Despite being one of the most accessible landscapes in the UK with abundant opportunities for leisure and recreation, substantial sectors of the population face barriers to accessing the Chilterns countryside. A study by the University of Bedfordshire on how diverse communities engage with greenspaces and the countryside, found that only around 33% of participants in the Luton/Dunstable area visited greenspaces weekly, with older individuals, those facing various challenges, and people from minority ethnic backgrounds being the least frequent users. Addressing this inequality of access and working to make the countryside more welcoming and inclusive, including through accessible signage, information and infrastructure, is an overriding priority for the Chilterns.</u></p> <p><u>We are seeing gradual change. People from communities who have historically experienced barriers to accessing our National Landscapes are now breaking down those barriers, getting outside and inspiring others to do the same. Groups such as Muslim Hikers, Black Girls Hike and The Outdoor Lads have been leading the way nationally, along with local groups in the Chilterns such as Dadimas intergenerational walking group. Organisations are working to create change, with more focus on diversifying their audiences and engaging underserved communities. However it will require a widespread, long term and committed partnership approach to make the sustained and large-scale change which is necessary.</u></p> <p><u>There is capacity for more people to visit, enjoy and engage with the Chilterns, but there needs to be more investment in visitor management to be able to do this. Visitor management pressures have increased. There has been a marked increase in dog ownership, a greater volume of traffic on country lanes used by recreational users and an increase in organised cycling and challenge events which can create issues if not properly managed.</u></p>
8	60	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>Today, people are working longer hours, spending less time outdoors and leading lives that are more sedentary. The need for tranquil outdoors space is greater than ever. The Chilterns has capacity to accommodate greater use to help fill this need.</p>
8	60	<p>Attracting greater visitor numbers: The Chilterns already attracts a large numbers of local leisure users and this is increasing with new housing growth, however it has capacity for 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.</p>
8	60	<p>Protecting sensitive sites: At present visitor numbers are unevenly spread with pressure concentrated on the most sensitive chalk downland. The challenge is to manage visits and countryside services to protect the most popular and vulnerable countryside sites and habitats. The development of a Chilterns-wide visitor management initiative will help with this ambitious vision, which will need to be adequately resourced and require new sources of funding.</p>
8	60	<p>Engaging the surrounding community: Establishing a multi-partner network extending beyond the <u>AONB Chilterns National Landscape</u> to surrounding urban communities, greenspaces and new growth areas is needed. Public engagement will be an important part of the vision, attracting greater support for the <u>AONB National Landscape</u> and more volunteers and stewards to help care for it in the future.</p>
8	60	<p>Strategic Objectives</p> <p>EO1 Secure national recognition and greater resources for the wealth of accessible recreational opportunities the Chilterns countryside offers to residents and visitors.</p>
8	60	<p>EO2 Ensure more high-quality opportunities for outdoor recreation, life-long learning and volunteering for all.</p>
8	60	<p>EO3 Ensure more people can enjoy healthier and happier lives by enjoying the Chilterns.</p>
8	60	<p>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.</p>
8	60	<p>EO5 <u>Reduce barriers to accessing the countryside and encourage more diverse audiences to access and engage with the Chilterns, especially underserved audiences who currently have little connection. Encourage</u></p>

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		greater use of the Chilterns countryside by those from surrounding urban communities who currently have little connection with the AONB.
8	61	Policies
8		To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:
8	61	EO1
8	61	EP1 Secure greater support and funding for a well-maintained, high quality and better-connected rights of way network for walking, <u>wheeling</u>, cycling and <u>horse-riding</u>.
8	61	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 <u>Chilterns National Landscape</u> . 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.
8	61	EP2 Encourage greater use of the National Trails and regional promoted routes and maximise their contribution to the local economy.
8		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.
8	61	EO2
8	61	EP3 Support initiatives to improve the accessibility of rights of way and countryside sites.
8	61	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 <u>Chilterns National Landscape</u> and urban areas, more multi-user routes, better bridleway connectivity and provision of <u>accessible facilities both on appropriate sites (e.g. waymarked trails, information boards, cycle and car parking) and through digital tools (e.g. smartphone information, wayfinding and story-telling apps).</u>
8	61	EP4 Expand opportunities for volunteering and lifelong learning and ensure it is better coordinated across the Chilterns. <u>Expand opportunities for volunteering and lifelong learning, removing barriers to participation and making it more accessible and inclusive.</u>
8	61	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. <u>However volunteering attracts a traditional audience and people can face numerous barriers to participation which need to be addressed. Consideration should be given to a more coordinated approach across the Chilterns, starting with volunteering opportunities for young people and offering skills development and pathways to long-term involvement including paid traineeships to encourage entry into the conservation sector.</u>
8	61	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.
8		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.
8	61	EO3
8	61	EP6 Broaden public engagement activity to attract new audiences and increase understanding and enjoyment of the AONB <u>Chilterns National Landscape</u>, targeting urban communities.

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
8	61	Many residents from towns adjoining the Chilterns do not visit the special landscape 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.
8	62	EP7 Encourage better provision and take-up of car-free visitor experiences to access and explore the Chilterns.
8	62	<p>Opportunities should be sought to reduce car use by visitors and residents by offering good alternatives and promoting their use. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <u>AONB Chilterns National Landscape</u> • Lobbying for more and safer cycling routes <p>Encouraging additional bike hire and cycle parking</p>
8	64	EO4
8	62	EP8 Promote greater understanding of the Chilterns landscape and respect for other users, through communication and education.
8	62	<p>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</p> <p><u>An increasingly urbanised population means people are becoming more disconnected from the countryside and lack awareness and appreciation of the Chilterns as a living, working landscape. People need to be aware of the potential effects their activities can have on habitats, species, historic features, residents, businesses (including farming and forestry) and other recreational users. There needs to be greater awareness of the Countryside Code and of the specialness of the Chilterns landscape. This can stimulate an interest in the Chilterns and encourage behaviour change including taking active steps to help care for the Chilterns.</u></p>
8	62	EP9 Raise the profile and visibility of the Chilterns through high quality information, interpretation and appropriate <u>AONB Chilterns National Landscape</u> gateway signage.
8		Awareness of the Chilterns as a protected landscape is low, even within the <u>AONB Chilterns National Landscape</u> . People are often unaware they are in the <u>AONB National Landscape</u> 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, <u>AONB National Landscape</u> gateway signs/artworks, signage, leaflets and digital communications.
8	62	EO5
8	62	EP10 Increase the sustainable use of the Chilterns for recreation and physical activity.
8	62	<p>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. There is potential for more people to benefit from countryside recreation within the <u>AONB Chilterns National Landscape</u>, but there needs to be a visitor management initiative to ensure visitor use is sustainable. this needs to be managed effectively to ensure visitor pressure does not adversely impact sensitive habitats.</p> <p><u>There is a much greater volume of traffic on country lanes which are also important recreational routes used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. This can cause particular issues on narrow lanes with no footpaths, making it an unpleasant and potentially dangerous experience. Organised cycling events can create conflicts, with some parts of the Chilterns unsuited to large-scale participation events. They need careful visitor management to ensure they do not conflict with other events, that routes are designed to minimise impacts, start times staggered and participant numbers are appropriate. Good visitor management should be encouraged, including promoting greater awareness of the Chilterns landscape and the Countryside Code.</u></p>
8	62	EP11 Develop and secure support for a visitor management strategy for the Chilterns
8		<u>Increased recreational use of the Chilterns countryside must be managed in order to protect vulnerable sites and address the uneven spread of visitor pressure in the Chilterns. Visitor footfall has increased substantially at countryside sites. This, along with the marked increase in dog ownership over the last few years, creates additional impacts on</u>

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		sensitive habitats and other landscape features which needs managing carefully. Adapting to these pressures requires resources and needs close partnership working to plan effective and joined up visitor management approaches. Multi-partner visitor management approaches will be supported.. 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.
8	62	<p>EP12 Ensure the Chilterns benefits from new and improved access and green space provision linked to new built development.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The number of people living in or close to the Chilterns National Landscape is increasing, large numbers of whom still do not make use of the countryside even though there is potential for more people to benefit from opportunities for recreation here. However, this needs to be managed effectively to ensure visitor pressure does not adversely impact sensitive habitats and archaeological features. This is especially the case in relation to the Chilterns Special Areas of Conservation, including the Chilterns Beechwoods at Ashridge and elsewhere. Part of the solution is to support the creation of appropriately located and designed 'suitable alternative natural greenspace' (SANG) sites. The CCB will be producing guidance on SANGs during the lifetime of this Plan.</p>
8	63	<p>Key Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Seek funding to develop and deliver a new large scale Chilterns public engagement programme, with a focus on urban audiences. 2) Develop a visitor management initiative to provide new and improved access while protecting the most vulnerable sites. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	65	<p>9. Social and economic wellbeing</p> <p>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. Communities and businesses within and beyond the Chilterns AONB enjoy many benefits from the landscape. From resources provided by its natural capital to cultural and recreational activities. There are tangible benefits from its natural resources such as clean water, fresh air and wood for fuel. And 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 AONB and its value to society is not fully realised especially to health and wellbeing. In addition, communities and businesses do not always recognise and value the importance of being in the Chilterns or the part they can play as custodians of this heritage.</p> <p>This can be changed 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.</p> <p><u>The Chilterns is a living and working landscape, shaped, worked and enjoyed by people living in and around it: 80,000 people live within the Chilterns National Landscape and a further 1.6 million live within 8km. Communities and businesses within and beyond the Chilterns National Landscape enjoy many benefits from the landscape. From resources provided by its natural capital to cultural and recreational activities. There are tangible benefits from its natural resources such as clean water, fresh air, wood for fuel and opportunities for carbon storage to help tackle climate change. And 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 great inequality of access to these benefits, with some sectors of the population facing substantial barriers to enjoying or engaging with the Chilterns landscape and all it offers. Those from areas of high deprivation, disabled people, the elderly and those from</u></p>

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		<p>ethnic minority groups face particular barriers. A priority should be to facilitate and develop opportunities, initiatives and partnerships to make these benefits more accessible to underserved audiences.</p> <p>There is also low awareness of the Chilterns National Landscape and its value to society is not fully realised especially its essential contribution to peoples' health and wellbeing. In addition, communities and businesses do not always recognise and value the importance of being in the Chilterns or the part they can play as custodians of this heritage.</p> <p>This can be changed by measuring and demonstrating the value of the Chilterns, building the brand and profile of the area, and securing support and investment for the Chilterns National Landscape including the potential for green finance programmes. 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.</p> <p>The Chilterns has huge potential as a sustainable tourism destination given its accessibility and excellent transport links, proximity to London and Oxford, and the quality and specialness of its tourism assets. However there is no Destination Management Organisation for the Chilterns and very limited sector support. Destination promotion across the region is patchy and the closure of Visit Buckinghamshire leaves a significant gap. This is greatly limiting the potential of the sustainable tourism sector in the Chilterns, which could be contributing more to the local economy. Opportunities should be sought to collaborate, support and invest in Chilterns destination development and promotion.</p>
9	66	<p>Key Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farming and forestry are in decline: While the economy of the Chilterns is above the national average, forestry and farming activities such as planting and managing woodlands to produce timber and grazing livestock on the hills are in decline. Work is needed to ensure the Chilterns remain a functional, working landscape with a viable rural economy, <u>because sustainable food and farming activities are vital in helping to maintain the Chilterns landscape and ensuring it is a working landscape.</u> The sector should be supported to develop and promote new markets, e.g. for Chilterns food and drink, and for timber products.
9	66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills shortage: There is a shortage in the skills required to manage the Chilterns landscape, such as forestry and flint work.
9	66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price of housing: House prices in the Chilterns are well above the national average, making it inaccessible to many that live in the local area. (See section 10, Development.)
9	66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social, welfare and transport issues: Closures of village shops, pubs and community facilities is contributing to isolation and mental health issues experienced by a growing number of people. The volunteering and activities within the Chilterns AONB <u>National Landscape</u> provide a way of addressing many of these issues. Better access links between rural and urban areas are also needed, as are improved public and community transport options, allowing local people access to facilities and services.
9	66	<p>Strategic Objectives</p> <p>SO1 Increase the economic and social wellbeing of local communities and businesses by supporting the development of the visitor economy and improving community facilities.</p>
9	66	<p>SO2 Ensure that the Chilterns AONB National Landscape 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.</p>
9	66	<p>SO3 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 funding.</p>
9	66	<p>SO4 Ensure that businesses and communities in and around the AONB National Landscape value its special qualities, support initiatives and help raise the profile of the area.</p>
9	67	<p>Policies</p> <p>To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:</p>
9	67	<p>SO1</p>
9	67	<p>SP1 Develop the visitor economy and increase its economic impact.</p>
9		<p>The Chilterns is a popular destination for local leisure, but awareness of it outside the 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.</p>

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9	67	SP2 Seek the coordination of visitor development and promotion across the Chilterns and secure dedicated resources.
9		Tourism promotion is largely based on local authority boundaries. Consequently, there is very limited Chilterns-wide tourism promotion other than by the CCB and Chilterns Tourism Network. There is no Destination Management Organisation for the Chilterns. Tourism promotion is based on local authority boundaries and there is subsequently very little Chilterns-wide tourism promotion or support. Additional resources are needed to develop and promote sustainable visiting.
9	67	SP3 Promote historic market towns as gateways to the countryside.
9		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, provide visitor facilities such as car parking, pubs, shops and cafes, and allow easy access to the countryside by foot or on bike.
9	67	SP4 Support rural diversification that adds value to the local economy.
9		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.
9	67	SP5 Retain and promote community facilities, including shops, pubs, public and community transport, and encourage them where there are gaps in provision.
9		Many villages in the Chilterns have lost shops and/or pubs over the years, as well as a decline in community facilities and services. Others are under threat. These amenities are the life-blood of the community and affect both local people and visitors. We must support and promote such facilities to help them survive. For example, some villages have been able to step in and buy the pub/shop threatened with closure and run it as a community business.
9	67	SP6 Promote local food, drink and craft products.
9		Recent 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 <u>supporting farm shops, farmers markets, festivals and events, promotional activity and business engagement</u> . 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).
9	67	SO2
9	67	SP7 Encourage greater use of the AONB National Landscape to improve levels of physical and mental health and wellbeing, <u>in particular underserved audiences who are not currently benefiting</u>.
9		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 gym. <u>The challenge is engaging with the underserved audiences who are likely to benefit most but face the most barriers and are harder to reach. Further opportunities to link with the health sector for social prescribing programmes should be developed, as well as developing more collaborative targeted outreach programmes.</u>
9	68	SP8 Expand opportunities for volunteering and lifelong learning. <u>Make it more accessible to diverse audiences and ensure it is better coordinated across the Chilterns.</u>
9		Provide opportunities for local people and visitors to learn about the Chilterns and to help care for its environment, <u>access networks and heritage</u> . Volunteering can bring multiple health benefits; it can increase people's skills and confidence, and it can decrease health inequalities and isolation. <u>Volunteering in the Chilterns still has a narrow demographic</u> . There is great potential to attract a wider range of volunteers to reflect the diversity of communities within and close to the Chilterns. This will require a partnership approach, to design, and coordinate relevant and accessible <u>volunteer opportunities</u> . <u>There need to be pathways to engagement including entry level and youth volunteering, with opportunities for training and skills development so that people can progress.</u>
9	68	SO3

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9	68	SP9 Ensure that the value of the natural capital assets of the AONB National Landscape is better understood and promoted, used to underpin investment and growth strategies and used to secure net gain for the Chilterns.
9		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 National Landscape. In particular, the benefit for populations living outside the AONB National Landscape is often over-looked. As more land is built on, the need to understand, value and promote the benefits becomes more important.
9	68	SO4
9	68	SP10 Ensure businesses and communities both in and around the AONB National Landscape, recognise the value of being located in the Chilterns and endorse the Chilterns brand.
9		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 National Landscape and its value as a protected landscape. Businesses and communities can play an important role in creating a stronger identity and sense of place for the Chilterns.
9	68	SP11 Investigate income generation opportunities including visitor-giving schemes.
9	68	Visitor giving is a way of offering visitors and residents the opportunity to give a little something back and help look 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.
9	68	SP12 Promote the Chilterns at key visitor entry points.
9	68	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, such as the market towns of the Chilterns. Yet people visiting or passing through 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 this AONB National Landscape.
9	69	Key Actions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	71	10. Planning and Development <p>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 National Landscape. The planning system protects AONBs in order to further the purpose of conserve and enhance conserving and enhancing 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.</p> <p>In the AONB the planning priorities are conservation and enhancement of landscape and scenic beauty, and the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage (see the National Planning Policy Framework³⁵, paragraph 172). Whilst nationally and locally 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 <u>asset in its own right</u> and as a green lung for London and the south east.</p> <p><u>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF: the government's planning policies for England) states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes, which, alongside National Parks and the Broads, have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The NPPF goes on to state that the scale and extent of development within the National Landscape should be limited, while</u></p>

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		<p>development within its setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated area.</p> <p>The Chilterns AONB National Landscape extends is split across thirteen nine local planning authorities (LPAs)³⁶ which have the responsibility both for housing allocations preparing development plans, which identify where development should be located and the criteria against which proposals will be considered, and for development decisions through planning policy and development management functions making decisions on most planning proposals. In doing so, local local planning authorities have a legal LPAs must comply with the duty under section 85 of the CROW Act to have regard to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB³⁷ area. They LPAs also have the specific power under section 84 of the same Act to take all such action as appears to them expedient to accomplish this³⁸.</p> <p>As noted in Chapter 1 Introduction, under 'What is natural beauty?', land is not prevented from being treated as having outstanding natural beauty by the fact that its features are the product of human intervention in the landscape. Agricultural, industrial and architectural features, including whole settlements, may be integral parts of the landscape and may embody the natural beauty that the National Landscape seeks to conserve and enhance.</p> <p>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. The CCB was set up at the request of the area's local authorities in part to provide expert advice on planning and development issues and advocate specific policies and actions to ensure that planning decisions deliver the purposes of the designation and the objectives of the Management Plan consistently across the whole area. CCB's planning advice includes understanding of local landscape character, sensitivities and capacity for accommodating change. We act by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offering observations on emerging plans and on significant planning applications; We comment as consultees on all emerging plans and major planning applications and we prepare preparing guidance for householders, architects and developers; and, We bring together those who make plans and determine planning applications in the Chilterns to encourage encouraging cross-boundary thinking and cooperation over the AONB National Landscape. <p>[³⁶ www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2] [³⁶ www.gov.uk/find-local-council] [³⁷ Section 85 of Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000] [³⁸ Section 84 of Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/section/84]</p>
10	71	<p>This AONB Management Plan is not part of the statutory development plan, but it may be is a material consideration in planning application decisions³⁹ and meaning that planning weight can be appropriately attached. This AONB The Management Plan should be also considered when developing local development plans, and including neighbourhood plans, within or affecting the Chilterns AONB National Landscape. It provides evidence on the characteristics of the Chilterns landscape and objectives for appropriate development in the Chilterns.</p> <p>It is the only plan for the whole AONB National Landscape and, 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.</p> <p>[³⁹ National Planning Practice Guidance section on Natural Environment www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment]</p>
10	72	<p>Protocol for consulting the Chilterns Conservation Board</p> <p>The CCB has a Planning Committee and employs a Planning Officer chartered town planners to provide specialist AONB planning advice on both development plans and planning applications. A protocol is in place has been agreed with local planning authorities LPAs setting out when to consult the Board, including on all applications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 National Landscape Renewable energy⁴⁰ developments, particularly for major energy generation <p>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.</p>

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		<p>It is anticipated that this protocol will be reviewed with the LPAs during this Plan's lifetime. This review will include <u>resolving repeated references to employment development in the list, and incorporating references to, for example, transport and water infrastructure. The protocol will also be revised to include guidance on understanding the setting of the National Landscape and applying the s.85 duty in the consideration of proposals.</u></p> <p>[⁴⁰ The Board has produced a Position Statement on Renewable Energy www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/planning-development/position-statements]</p>
10	73	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>Pressure for development: The Chilterns is a highly desirable area in which to live <u>and work</u>, within easy commuting distance of London, <u>and levels of development within the National Landscape and its setting continue to be high. Research shows a four-fold increase in the number of new homes granted planning permission each year in the Chilterns AONB⁴¹. Local authorities face pressures when preparing their local development plans and some, with a shortage of alternatives, are proposing significant housing allocations in the AONB here, despite the clear direction of policies of the NPPF in this regard. The NPPF's key 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' policy (para 11, Dec 2024) clearly states that the requirements for development plans, and for planning decisions in the absence of a development plan, are not required to meet and exceed identified need where National Landscape policies apply, and this includes in their setting. Government policy confirms that the presence of AONBs can restrict development in order to help achieve sustainable development⁴² and that "the scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited"⁴³.</u></p> <p>[⁴¹ 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 under count because the 2015–17 figures exclude smaller sites of less than 10 units).] [⁴² 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.] [⁴³ National Planning Policy Framework para 172.]</p>
10	73	<p>Small-scale changes: Small piecemeal <u>Piecemeal</u> changes to land and buildings can <u>progressively</u> harm the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB <u>National Landscape</u>. Examples include pony paddocks, garden extensions, newly landscaped grounds, the spread of fencing, replacement windows, new external lighting, private leisure buildings, trampolines and children's play equipment. Electric gates, high fencing and CCTV over public rights of way make the area feel more exclusive, and people feel excluded. <u>Collectively, they can</u> They can change the distinctiveness, heritage and character of the landscape, and leave less space for nature. The Board has prepared advice in the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide⁴⁴ and supplementary 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 <u>National Landscape</u>. The advice covers all aspects of building renovation, extensions, appropriate materials, outbuildings, boundary treatments etc. Our series of Chilterns Landowners' Guides⁴⁵ include information on appropriate native species for new hedgerow and tree planting in the Chilterns, and advice for horse owners.</p> <p>[⁴⁴ www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/planning-development/buildings-design-guidance]</p> <p>[⁴⁵ www.chilternsaonb.org/about-chilterns/farmingland-use/guidance-for-landowners]</p> <p>[⁴⁶ www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/planning-development/position-statements]</p>
10	73	<p>Permitted Development: AONBs <u>Previously, National Landscapes have traditionally</u> been excluded from <u>many types of</u> permitted development, but in recent years these rights have been widened, reducing councils' ability to control and secure appropriate manage some forms of development. However, where permitted development rights threaten harm to the AONB landscape, <u>local planning authorities LPAs can invoke powers to remove them using Article 4 Directions,</u> <u>but this option is difficult and can be costly to implement.</u></p>
10	73	<p>Cumulative impact of development: A single planning proposal may affect only a small area of the AONB <u>National Landscape</u>. However, a number of similar developments in the area, 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 <u>National Landscape</u>, its wildlife and people's enjoyment could slowly diminish over time. We have further advice in our Position Statement on the Cumulative Impacts of Development on the Chilterns <u>National Landscape</u>. AONB⁴⁶.</p> <p>[⁴⁶ www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/planning-development/position-statements]</p>
10	74	<p>Strategic Objectives</p> <p>DO1 Ensure planning decisions put the conservation and enhancement of the <u>AONB National Landscape</u> first.</p>
10	74	<p>DO2 Ensure that where development happens, it leaves the <u>AONB National Landscape</u> 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.</p>

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10	74	DO3 Embrace opportunities to restore natural beauty on sites currently degraded by unsympathetic development, infrastructure or dereliction.
10	74	Policies To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:
10	74	DO1
10	74	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 <u>AONB a National Landscape</u> is to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. That is the single and only purpose in law. An AONB <u>A National Landscape</u> 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 ⁴⁴ should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs <u>National Landscapes</u> . The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important in AONBs <u>here</u> . This requirement applies to all sizes of planning proposal, large and small. 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 ⁴⁵ . 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 <u>AONB National Landscape</u> . [Footnotes 44 & 45: not included in published plan, and not related to footnotes 44 & 45 on p.73.]
10	74	DP2 Reject development in the <u>AONB National Landscape</u> unless it meets the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is a use appropriate to its location, • it is appropriate to local landscape character, • it supports local distinctiveness, • it respects heritage and historic landscapes, • it enhances natural beauty, • ecological and environmental impacts are acceptable, • there are no detrimental impacts on chalk streams, • 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. Policy DP2 sets out what to consider in order to give great weight to conserving and enhancing the <u>AONB National Landscape</u> . It applies to all development in the <u>AONB National Landscape</u> , both minor and major.
10	75	DP3 Refuse planning permission for major development in the <u>AONB National Landscape</u> unless there are exceptional circumstances and where there is a clear demonstration it is in the public interest. 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" ⁴⁷ . <u>The definition of 'major development' in this context is different from other aspects of the planning system. 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 area. 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 needed⁴⁸. 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 here, 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 72) may be a useful indication of types of development more likely to be considered major.</u> <u>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 pages 7, 10 and 11). 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.</u>

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		<p>If a proposal is major, the decision maker will need to assess against the considerations in the NPPF para 172 183 (Dec 2024). The identified need for many kinds of major development can be met in alternative locations. Major housing schemes are unlikely to be acceptable because the need could be met outside the Chilterns AONB National Landscape, 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, in line with the duty under section 85 of the CROW Act, by following policies DP1 to DP15.</p> <p>[⁴⁷ 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.] [⁴⁸ See box in this Plan's Introduction 'What is natural beauty?']</p>
10	76-77	<p>DP4 In the setting of the AONB National Landscape, take full account of whether proposals harm the natural beauty of the area 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.</p> <p>A development outside the AONB National Landscape's boundary can cause harm to the AONB its natural beauty, even if it is some distance away; for example, development of land visible in panoramic views from the Chilterns escarpment, or which generates traffic in or travelling across the AONB National Landscape (including overflying), or which increases water abstraction from the chalk aquifer, thereby reducing flow in chalk streams.</p> <p>Since July 2021, the NPPF has formally recognised this in its statement that development in the setting of National Landscapes "should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts" on these areas. Since this is a policy relating to National Landscapes, it also means that development in the setting of a National Landscape can be considered as an exception to the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development under paragraph 11 of the NPPF.</p> <p>The local planning authority's legal duty towards the AONB⁴⁹ National Landscape under section 85 of the CROW Act applies when a proposal affects land in the AONB National Landscape, regardless of where that effect originates (inside or outside the AONB designated area). We have produced special advice in a Position Statement on Development Affecting the Setting of the Chilterns AONB⁵⁰. The setting of the AONB is not a geographic zone static area that can be mapped, nor does it cover a set distance from the AONB boundary. Rather, the extent of the setting will depend on the nature of the development proposed, and the impacts it may have on the National Landscape, whether those relate to visual impact (including light pollution), sound, emissions, or knock-on effects such as the generation of traffic. 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 Hence, the setting of the Chilterns AONB National Landscape 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.</p> <p>Outside the AONB, the The Chilterns National Landscape 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 43,500 homes. Growth is also being planned for Aylesbury, Luton, Princes Risborough, High Wycombe, Hemel Hempstead, Tring, and Chinnor, to name just a few. Some Many of these expansion plans include land in the setting of the National Landscape, within the AONB and many include land in its setting there is significant pressure for LPAs to propose development within the designated area: all growth will lead to additional pressure for infrastructure to cross the Chilterns. The vast scale of the nearby Oxford to Cambridge growth corridor will change the strategic geography of the region, making All of this makes it even more important that the Chilterns is protected to play its role in the health and wellbeing of that future population.</p> <p>The Chilterns chalk aquifer serves as the major source for drinking water for the AONB and wider sub-region. Over-abstraction this resource has contributed to chronic low flows in Chilterns chalk streams⁵¹. 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 are will require construction of new strategic water resources (e.g. reservoirs, water transfers and desalination plants) elsewhere in the south east of England, to avoid further serious harm to chalk streams and to help restore flows.</p> <p>[⁴⁹ in Section 85 of the CROW Act.] [⁵⁰ http://www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/planning-development/position-statements] [⁵¹ See also Nature (Policy NP4) and Land, Woodland & Water (LP13, LP21, Key Action 5)]</p>
10	77	<p>[Delete policy DP5 and the whole of its supporting text, including footnotes, from "All but the smallest..." to "...risk of light pollution." and replace with the following text:]</p> <p>DP5 Require a professionally-produced landscape assessment that meets the Landscape Institute's published standards for all development proposals where there are any concerns about impacts on the natural beauty of the area or more broadly on landscape and visual amenity.</p>

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		<p>Many development proposals, including relatively minor projects, can have impacts both positive and negative on the character of the surrounding landscape. <u>Landscape assessments help to ensure that these impacts are assessed and understood. The Landscape Institute publishes guidance on methodologies for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), which must be used for any proposal requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or for one likely to have a significant character or visual effect on an existing landscape or townscape setting, and for Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) which is recommended for less significant or complex proposals. Such assessments will also help clarify whether a proposal is a 'major development' in terms of para 190 of the NPPF (Dec 2024) - see also policy DP3 – and can help applicants and decision makers with evaluating measures necessary to demonstrate compliance with the s.85 duty.</u></p> <p><u>To be effective, a landscape assessment must address effects on both the National Landscape as a resource in its own right (whether visible or not), and assess the significance of effects on views and visual amenity (as experienced by people). The assessment should be prepared early enough to inform the evolution of a project, so that it is genuinely landscape-led, demonstrably contributes to conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the National Landscape, and fully integrates landscape character and qualities 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. Assessments should include night time effects as well as day time, to identify any risk of light pollution.</u></p>
10	77	<p>DP6 Support sustainable farming and forestry, nature conservation and facilities for visitors appropriate to the special qualities of the AONB National Landscape.</p> <p>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 <u>and bring benefits to the AONB National Landscape</u>, and in return bring benefits to the AONB, are those that are most compatible with conserving and enhancing its character and supporting <u>its enjoyment and understanding by the public appreciation</u>. 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).</p> <p>Conversely, developments most likely to be disadvantaged from an AONB National Landscape location include those with no particular reason to be in the area, especially those offering little or no benefit to conserving and enhancing the area's character of the AONB. These tend to detract from public appreciation and blur the distinction between the <u>AONB National Landscape</u> 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.</p>
10	78	DO2
10	78	<p>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, www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/planningdevelopment/buildings-design-guidance</p> <p>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, Hambleden and Aldbury are among our most popular visitor destinations. New development of all types needs to respect vernacular architecture, <u>historic</u> settlement character and the local landscape. This will require developers to do more than use standard designs.</p> <p>New design must also exhibit the highest environmental standards in terms of energy and water conservation whilst complementing the character the <u>AONB National Landscape</u>. 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.</p> <p>The Board has published the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide which has been adopted <u>is recognised as a supplementary planning document by most many of our local planning authorities LPAs, where it holds significant weight in the decision-making process; elsewhere the Guide still carries weight as a 'material consideration' that is based on detailed research and was subject to extensive engagement with stakeholders and the public.</u> It covers topics such as the setting of buildings, the design of vernacular features and the use of traditional local materials. 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.</p>
10	79	<p>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 demonstrate that it complies with published guidance⁵³ for intrinsically dark zones. Avoid architectural designs that spill light out of large areas of glazing.</p> <p>The Chilterns <u>AONB National Landscape</u> has relatively dark skies for the south east, making it a place people can still experience the wonder of starry skies and which is good for wildlife. AONBs <u>National Landscapes</u> are recognised as intrinsically dark environments (Zone E1 in the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance) and planning conditions</p>

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		<p>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 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The CCB has published Lighting Planning Guidance which includes a model policy recommended for inclusion in development plans. While the Guidance includes much by way of technical advice, those installing lighting equipment or designing buildings are strongly recommended to seek the advice of a professional lighting consultant.</p> <p>[⁵³ Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance GN01: 2011 Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light]</p>
10	80	<p>DP9 Ensure that the design and implementation of High Speed 2 complies with the HS2 Detailed Design Principles⁵⁴ prepared by the HS2 AONB Review Group.</p> <p>This document sets out design principles that could reasonably be applied to HS2 works in the Chilterns AONB National Landscape and its setting, and which aim to achieve an exemplar landscape design for the project.</p> <p>[⁵⁴ www.chilternsaonb.org/latestNews/hs2/HS2-Review-Group]</p>
10	80	<p>DP10 Make sure that all development that is permitted in the AONB National Landscape or affecting its setting delivers a net gain for the Chilterns by</p> <p>a. on-site improvements for biodiversity, landscape, the rights of way network, AONB visitor facilities, etc., and/or</p> <p>b. financial or in-kind contributions, secured through planning agreements including biodiversity net gain £106⁵⁵, CIL⁵⁶, or offsetting schemes, towards wider green infrastructure projects that enhance the AONB National Landscape by meeting the aims of this AONB Management Plan.</p> <p>The duty under section 85 of the CROW Act for public bodies, including planning decision makers, to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of a National Landscape means that where development is appropriate or necessary in the designated area, or its setting, then then there is an imperative to ensure not only that harms are avoided or reduced, but that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the outcome is a positive one for the National Landscape.</p> <p>The introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy and use of biodiversity accounting Planning agreements, including biodiversity net gain (BNG) can provide a way for developments to fund green infrastructure and biodiversity projects. Using these mechanisms, individual developments can contribute to conservation and restoration projects, and help offset the incremental increases each bring like traffic, recreation pressure, path erosion, and habitat reduction and severance. Avoiding harm, reducing harm and compensating for it is likely to play an increasing role. 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 CCB 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.</p> <p>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. Such projects should be informed by the Chilterns Nature Recovery Plan and/or by the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy, as well as the content of this Management Plan. For example, large scale housing and growth proposed near the AONB will mean extra near neighbours of the Chilterns. This investment could repair and connect habitats, or create new active travel green infrastructure links, strengthen the AONB's area'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. It is especially important to strengthen the area's capacity for accommodating additional visitors without damage, such as providing suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANGs) in relation to the Chilterns' Special Areas of Conservation (see also Chapter 8, policy EP12).</p> <p>We will work with partners to develop a menu of green infrastructure AONB projects to be funded by development (see section 11, Implementation).</p> <p>[⁵⁵ 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).</p> <p>[⁵⁶ 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.]</p>

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10	81	<p>DP11 Where a local community need is shown, support the development of well-designed, small-scale homes within villages which are affordable⁵⁷ for people who work within or have long-standing family connections to the Chilterns AONB National Landscape.</p> <p>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:</p> <p>Area Distinction Average Secondhand Sale Price, 12 months to April 2018 5 Year Growth Premium above County(s) average Premium above UK average</p> <p>Chilterns AONB £718,629 29% 75% 162%</p> <p>Source: Savills Research using Land Registry</p> <p>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 Schemes⁵⁸ in the Chilterns for several years and the stock of affordable homes has dwindled through the right to buy and loss of tied accommodation that goes with a job. 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 National Landscape needs to stay, and the area's cultural heritage is lost when families with long local connections move away. 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.</p> <p>We need new approaches to make sure the right kind of housing is being built. This does not mean proposing any extra <u>major</u> 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. <u>What is required are sensitively</u> Sensitively designed conversions, infill, rural exceptions sites and community-led housing schemes in the villages of the AONB National Landscape can benefit the AONB. They are best when of a small-scale and meeting local needs.</p> <p>[⁵⁷ Affordable housing is housing for eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.] [⁵⁸ 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.]</p>
10	81	<p>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.</p> <p>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 National Landscape designation purposes.</p> <p>Existing facilities, such a rural pubs, shops, public transport and community buildings, should be protected from loss or change of use. They are important assets and once lost are hard to replace.</p>
10	81	DO3
10	81	<p>DP13 Support opportunities for enhancing the AONB National Landscape by removing derelict or detracting developments and infrastructure.</p> <p>There are some places in the AONB National Landscape 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 unsightly structures can 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 National Landscape and recommend that that all new supplies should be undergrounded unless there are ecological or archaeological constraints to this.</p>
10	82	<p>DP14 Avoid new or upgraded infrastructure (roads, railways, airports, pylons, masts etc.) which harm the natural beauty of the Chilterns National Landscape AONB landscape, nature, air quality, tranquillity or the visitor experience. Fully assess impacts on the AONB National Landscape, including increased recreation pressure, traffic, overflying and severance of ecological connectivity in the AONB. Avoid, or mitigate harm where possible and compensate for harm if necessary, but always seek to achieve a net gain for the AONB National Landscape.</p> <p>In recent years, growing traffic volumes, speeding and rat running through the AONB Chilterns have brought more noise, motion, air pollution into the AONB area. 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</p>

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		<p>species. There are also safety risks for those wanting enjoying the to enjoy the Chilterns <u>through walking, wheeling, cycling or horse riding on foot, bicycle and horseback.</u></p> <p>Unsympathetic, over-engineered road schemes and excessive street lighting can further harm the <u>AONB National Landscape</u>. We have produced design advice on sympathetic management of Chilterns Highways in guidance produced with the County Councils⁵⁹ <u>our local highways authorities.</u></p> <p>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 <u>is being</u> 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 <u>will</u> result in more aircraft over-flying the <u>AONB National Landscape</u> and harm its tranquillity. The effects on the Chilterns <u>AONB National Landscape</u> must be assessed in full and cumulatively with other projects early in the decision-making process.</p> <p>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. Large national projects like HS2 are triggering a requirement for major investment in landscape to compensate (in some way) for harm. The duty to "seek to further" the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area under section 85 of the CROW Act requires decision-makers to take all reasonable steps to identify how that purpose can be furthered, i.e. to result in a net positive impact for the National Landscape.</p>
10	82	<p>DP15 Seek opportunities to remove or replace existing inappropriate external lighting to restore dark skies at night.</p> <p>Householders, farms, community facilities, recreational facilities and businesses in the <u>AONB National Landscape</u> can take simple steps to reduce light pollution by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angling existing lights downwards • Fitting timers • Replacing existing lighting with designs appropriate for intrinsically dark zones <p><u>More detailed information is provided in CCB's Lighting Position Statement.</u></p>
10	83	<p>Key Actions:</p> <p>1. Work together to ensure all development plans covering the Chilterns conserve and enhance the AONB, for example by incorporating the Chilterns AONB model policy⁶⁰ and exploring the scope for joint development plan documents for the AONB.</p> <p>[⁶⁰ Model Policy for the Chilterns AONB http://www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/planning-development/planning-training]</p> <p>2. Apply the CReW Act 2000 Section 85 duty⁶¹ and refer to it when making decisions on planning proposals in or affecting the Chilterns AONB</p> <p>[⁶¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/section/85]</p> <p>3. Apply the advice in the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide to ensure high quality sympathetic development.</p> <p>4. Encourage innovative mechanisms for rural affordable housing compatible with conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.</p> <p>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.</p>
11	85	<p>11. Implementation and Monitoring</p> <p>The creation of a Management Plan for the Chilterns <u>National Landscape</u> 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.</p> <p>The CCB has gathered feedback and input from the public, partners and stakeholders to create <u>and review</u> this plan. The plan describes what is needed to continue to conserve and enhance the <u>National Landscape</u> AONB, to engage and benefit people, and sets out key areas for partnership action.</p> <p><u>In 2023 a new section 90A was inserted into the CROW Act 2000 empowering the Secretary of State to issue regulations requiring public bodies to contribute to the preparation, implementation and review of management plans for National Landscapes and setting out how they must do so. These regulations are anticipated to be issued during the lifetime of this plan, and CCB will support its stakeholders in adjusting to the new requirements as they come into force. The Chilterns AONB Management Plan is top level and to In the meantime, to implement the plan, the CCB will continue</u></p>

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		<p>to 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.</p> <p>Implementation</p> <p>Implementation requires three key components to be secured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership working • Capacity and expertise • Appropriate resourcing
11	86	<p>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.</p> <p>To ensure this Management Plan is delivered, it is necessary for the following to be in place:</p>
11	86	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.
11	86	2. Commitment and funding from local authority partners who have a duty to care for the <u>National Landscape AONB</u> and contribute to the CCB to ensure the duty is co-ordinated effectively across authorities.
11	86	3. Support from farmers, landowners, land agents and land managers for policies and actions to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the <u>National Landscape AONB</u> , for example, working to shared conservation objectives through farmland clusters.
11	86	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.
11	86	5. Strengthened relationships with parish councils, community organisations and non-governmental organisations within and near the <u>National Landscape AONB</u> .
11	86	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.
11	86	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.
11	86	8. Expertise and support from statutory agencies including Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and Historic England.
11	86	9. Commitment from partner organisations to pool resources and expertise on priority project work (e.g. Thames Water and Affinity Water providing support to <u>the Chilterns National Landscape and Chilterns Chalk Streams Project</u>).
11	86	10. Design and development of initiatives that attract additional sources of funding <u>such as National Lottery Heritage Fund, green finance and corporate philanthropy.</u> such as the LEADER funding for the Chilterns Walking Festival and HLF funding for Beacons of the Past.
11	86	11. An effective partnership forum that allows partners to collaborate effectively, agree key actions and share best practice from one another.
11	86	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.
11	86	13. Datasets for monitoring outcomes which are accurate, accessible, repeatable, up to date, and relevant to the geographic area of the <u>Chilterns National Landscape AONB</u> .
11	87	<p>How will the delivery of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan be monitored?</p> <p>This Management Plan sets out <u>a vision for the Chilterns National Landscape, supported by a series of objectives and policies-and-actions,</u> whose implementation through coordinated collaborative action are intended to that aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns • Enhance public understanding and enjoyment of the special quality of the <u>National Landscape AONB</u> <p><u>For its own part the Chilterns Conservation Board will produce and publish annually a rolling three-year delivery plan.</u></p> <p>Effective long-term planning and decision-making requires evidence of the condition of the <u>National Landscape AONB</u> together with an understanding of long-term changes and drivers for change.</p>

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text		
		<p>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.</p> <p>Gathering the evidence against these headline indicators is an ongoing challenge requiring increased resource. Many of the indicators originally proposed in the Management Plan 2019-2024 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.</p> <p>Taking account of these challenges, our proposal for monitoring and evaluation over the period of the current plan is to work within the constraints of the Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework presented in Chapter 3 and to update with baseline indicator and supporting statistics as they become available, and create a two-tier set of monitoring indicators: Core and Theme indicators.</p>		
11	88	<p>CORE MONITORING INDICATORS</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>We hope to make greater use of aerial photography and remote sensing to monitor change.</p>		
11	89	4	Farmland management	<p>Environmental Land Management Scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — area of overall take up and of specific options — % of Utilisable Agricultural Area in ELMS — predecessor scheme area of take up
		-2	Woodland management	<p>Area of woodland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — % woodland under active and positive management
		3	Priority habitat	Area and condition of priority habitats
		4	Sites of scientific interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — % SSSI units in favourable condition — condition of SSSI units by broad habitat — % geological SSSI units
		5	Waterbodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — % of waterbodies in good ecological status (Water Framework Directive) — Kilometres of watercourse improved or enhanced
		6	Heritage assets	<p>Scheduled Monuments; Listed buildings (Grade 1/ 11* / 11); Registered Parks and Gardens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — % at risk — % in improved condition
		7	Land enhanced	Area of land in positive conservation management
		8	Volunteering	% change in number of volunteers/volunteer days
		<i>(Data sourced primarily from Defra agencies supplemented with local data, where available)</i>		
11	90	THEME INDICATORS We will work with partners to devise measures in relation to each of the following themes:		
11	90	<p>We will also draw on a combination of innovative Citizen Science activities (e.g. Chess Smarter Water Catchments and Tracking the Impact), national monitoring schemes and cutting-edge scientific techniques to measure trends in nature recovery and chalk stream health across the National Landscape. Lessons learnt from these activities will guide development of future monitoring.</p> <p>Conservation and enhancement of natural beauty</p>		

Ch	P	Proposed changes to Management Plan text
		<p>We will explore options to measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 planning applications in the AONB per year (above agreed threshold) • Air quality • Tranquillity/noise
11	89	<p><u>Most of the PLTOFs focus on capturing progress with achieving the primary statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape. The exception is target 9 which relates directly to accessibility and engagement. In addition, CCB has subsidiary duties with regard to the enjoyment and understanding of the National Landscape and the social and economic wellbeing of its communities, which are reflected in the Plan's local indicators 7 and 8 in chapter 3 relating to health walks and visitor numbers. In relation to these issues, we</u>Enjoyment and understanding of the special qualities of the Chilterns</p> <p>We will explore options to measure <u>factors such as the following:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of young people engaged • Number of community groups engaged • 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 <u>AONB National Landscape</u> • Increased number of rights of way, perhaps as permissive or equivalent • Additional Access Land and Local Green Space designation
11	89	<p>Social and economic wellbeing</p> <p>We will explore options to measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in health walks • Growth of population within the <u>National Landscape AONB</u> and within 5km of <u>AONB its boundaries</u> • Number/value of visitors/tourists • Numbers employed in tourism • Number of rural exceptions sites and community-led housing schemes to meet local needs
-	90	<p>Summary</p> <p>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.</p>
-	90	<u>[insert Glossary and Abbreviations, and any other relevant appendices at design stage]</u>
-	92	<u>[Acknowledgements, Photography Credits, Chilterns Conservation Board]</u>

ENDS

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2.5 Appendix 3 – Management Plan Refresh 2025-2030

Illustrative ‘clean’ version of Management Plan text

For illustrative purposes only. The Schedule of Amendments is the definitive version.

[Title page:]

Caring for the Chilterns forever & for everyone:

The area of outstanding natural beauty management plan for the Chilterns National Landscape, 2025-2030

Contents

[add section contents with page numbers in design stage]

1. Introduction

[Please see covering paper for special note concerning the status of Chapter 1 – Introduction.]

About the Chilterns

The Chilterns is a landscape of remarkable beauty and distinctive character with a unique interaction of geological, ecological and cultural heritage features. The underlying chalk gives rise to a steep chalk escarpment and hillsides of velvety, flower-rich downland. Attractive villages with brick and flint cottages nestle in quiet valleys, while woodlands, commons and meadows are criss-crossed by ancient routes and peppered with historic hillforts and chalk figures. Water stored in the chalk emerges as springs that feed clear, sparkling chalk streams like the Chess and Misbourne.

Designated in 1965 and extended in 1990, the Chilterns National Landscape covers over 838 km² (324 square miles) of mainly privately-owned countryside across Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire. With 1.6 million residents within 8km and 10 million within an hour, it's among Europe's most accessible protected landscapes, offering ample recreational opportunities and peaceful countryside sites perfect for relaxation, reflection, picnics and walks.

[insert key image: boundary & county map]

What is a National Landscape?

A National Landscape, previously an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)' is a formal designation for an area of land that is of national importance for its natural beauty. National Landscapes have the same level of landscape quality and similar legal and policy protections as National Parks. However National Parks benefit from being their own planning authority.

In policy and law, a National Landscape currently remains designated as an AONB. The sole purpose of AONB designation is 'to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area' (section 82 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000). All public bodies have a legal duty to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an AONB (section 85 of the CROW Act).

[consider insertion of new subsection providing an explanation of the **s.85 duty** here, summarising and linking to Defra's published guidance (which clarifies that the duty must be complied with in "the issuing of licences and permits") – precise text needs agreement with Natural England – (design stage)]

Global and national context of the Chilterns National Landscape

National Landscapes are part of the global network of protected landscapes. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has six management categories covering all types of protected areas. National Landscapes and National Parks fall into Category V: protected landscapes and seascapes, which are protected areas managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation. The IUCN published "Management Guidelines for IUCN Category V Protected Areas: Protected Landscapes/Seascapes" in 2002.

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There are 46 National Landscapes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland safeguarded in the national interest for their distinctive character and beauty.

The work National Landscape teams do is important, not least because:

- National Landscapes cover just under one fifth of the UK
- 66% of people in England live within an hour of their nearest National Landscape
- 170 million people visit National Landscapes every year

The Chilterns National Landscape is an active member of the National Landscapes Association, the organisation established to advocate, communicate and manage national programmes, to support the UK's network of National Landscapes, and help them be as effective as possible.

To find out more about the National Landscapes Association visit: <https://national-landscapes.org.uk/>

To find out more about the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and National Resources (IUCN) visit: <https://iucn.org/>

In recognition of the international nature crisis, more than 100 countries, including the UK, have signed up to a global target (included in the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#), 2022) to protect 30% of the planet (lands, rivers, lakes, wetlands and sea) for nature by 2030. The '30by30' pledge aims to reverse biodiversity decline and increase resilience to climate change. National and local action must now follow the international commitment to prevent continued and irrecoverable declines in nature, and Defra is clear that National Landscapes will provide the backbone of 30by30 in England.

What is natural beauty?

While the term 'natural beauty' is no longer directly referenced in the name 'National Landscape', these areas are still designated and managed in relation to this quality. It is the natural beauty of a designated National Landscape that is required to be conserved and enhanced.

The understanding of the term 'natural beauty' has evolved since it was first applied (but not defined) in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 ("the 1949 Act").

Natural beauty is a subjective characteristic of a landscape and ultimately involves a value judgment in the designation process. Flora and fauna, geological and physiographical features obviously contribute to the perception of natural beauty, as does cultural heritage, including visible and concealed physical features (archaeology) as well as artistic and literary associations and traditions. It is now widely accepted that the beauty of all our most cherished landscapes is in part due to human intervention including agriculture, forestry and settlement. It has long been the practice to include such factors in the assessment of natural beauty. Section 99 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 clarified that land is not prevented from being treated as having outstanding natural beauty by the fact that its features are the product of human intervention in the landscape. Natural England defines six factors that contribute to the perception of Natural Beauty:

- Landscape quality: A measure of the current physical state or condition of the landscape and its features.
- Scenic quality: The extent to which the landscape appeals to the senses.
- Relative wildness: The degree to which relatively wild character can be perceived contributes to a sense of place.
- Relative tranquillity: The degree to which tranquillity can be perceived in the landscape relative to areas outside of the landscape (i.e. not absolute tranquillity).
- Natural heritage features: The influence of flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features on the perception of the natural beauty of the area.
- Cultural heritage: The influence of cultural heritage on the perception of natural beauty of the area, including physical heritage features and associations with traditions, people, artists, writers or events in history.

The natural beauty of an area is often expressed in terms of certain 'special qualities' of the area (as in the next section). However, while the conservation and enhancement of those special qualities is sought through legislation and policy, including this Plan, the primary purpose of designation is to conserve and enhance the overall natural beauty of the whole area: once designated, the purpose applies to all parts of the National Landscape.

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What is a management plan and why is it important?

All National Landscapes are required, under section 89 of the CROW Act, to prepare a plan, known as the Management Plan, which formulates their policy for the management of the landscape and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it.

While the preparation of a management plan is a requirement in law, at the time of preparing this plan the delivery of the plan's objectives depends upon stakeholders' agreement to do so. However, under new section 90A of the CROW Act, introduced by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, the Secretary of State is now empowered to issue regulations requiring all public bodies to contribute to the plan's preparation, implementation and review.

In most National Landscapes, local authorities prepare this plan but, in the Chilterns, it is prepared by the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) on behalf of, and in partnership with, local authorities, communities and other stakeholders. The plan usually runs for five years and is then reviewed to see if its content needs to be updated. This plan covers the period 2025-2030.

The Management Plan is a guiding tool for all those who live, work, visit or have an interest in the future of the Chilterns, and is the only plan that guides the management of the whole of the Chilterns National Landscape. The plan contains a comprehensive summary of the key issues facing the area and is intended to influence and help coordinate across local authority boundaries other key strategies and activities affecting the area, including development plans, infrastructure plans and local nature recovery strategies.

It must be emphasised that successful delivery of the vision and objectives set out in the Management Plan depends on resources being available to support action, and on the cooperation of public, private and voluntary sector partners, including most importantly the area's local authorities, all of whom are invited to endorse the Plan. For public sector partners, reference to the Plan will be a key indicator of compliance with their duty under s.85 of the CROW Act; partners in other sectors are also encouraged to refer to the Plan, especially in relation to applications for consents, licences and funding.

The Chilterns Conservation Board

The Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) is an independent body created in 2004 by Parliamentary Order to manage the Chilterns National Landscape.

In summary, the CCB's statutory purposes, under s.87 of the CROW Act, are as follows:

- a) The CCB's key responsibility is to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Chilterns, i.e. the purpose of the designation.
- b) In addition, where doing so would not conflict with that key responsibility, the CCB will:
 - Promote the understanding and enjoyment of the Chilterns' special qualities.
 - Seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities by working with local authorities and other relevant organisations.
 - Consider the needs of agriculture, forestry, and the local economy.
 - Ensure water resources, both surface and underground, are protected from pollution, especially in coordination with the Environment Agency and water companies.

Board Members

The Board has 27 members, who are independent and do not represent any other organisation.

This comprises 13 local authority appointed members, six Parish Council elected members, and eight Secretary of State appointed members. All Board members will have expressed an interest in becoming a Board member for the Chilterns Conservation Board.

- Members appointed by the Secretary of State must go through a formal application and selection process and are appointed for a period of three years, which can be extended twice by another three years, nine years maximum.
- Parish Council members are elected by the parish councils in their appropriate county within the Chilterns National Landscape: two Buckinghamshire, two Oxfordshire, one Hertfordshire and one Bedfordshire. They can remain Board members as long as they are parish council members and are willing to remain Board members.
- Local Authorities in the Chilterns National Landscape appoint their members usually in May – some do it annually, and some appoint them for years. There are five for Buckinghamshire

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Council, and one each for Oxfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Central Bedford Council, Luton Borough Council, Dacorum Borough Council, North Hertfordshire District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and Three Rivers District Council.

The Chilterns Conservation Board and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) have no formal influence over who is appointed or elected to the Board.

2. The Significance of the Chilterns

Special Qualities

The Chilterns' special qualities are considered so important, nationally and internationally, that they require specific protection. The primary purpose of conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty depends on positively managing the integrity of the whole National Landscape, not just those parts of the landscape in which these special qualities are embodied.

- 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 1.5% of the National Landscape mostly in small fragments. Species for which the National Landscape 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 24% 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 Biodiversity Action Plan 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 2,300 ha of common land, heaths and greens, rich in wildlife and cultural heritage; 3700ha 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.

Landscape Character Map [map]

This map highlights the location of the main landscape character areas.

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. LCAs identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive by mapping and describing character types and areas.

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

These give us four broad types of landscape in the Chilterns as follows:

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 National Landscape, 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 National Landscape. 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.

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, 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.

Plateau and Dip-slope

A large proportion of the National Landscape 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.

Further detail on the landscape character of the Chilterns, including a timeline of the area's formation, is available on the CCB website here: <https://www.chilterns.org.uk/our-landscape/landscape-character/>

Timeline of the Chilterns [timeline infographic] Geology of the Chilterns Countryside [infographic]

3. The State of the Chilterns

The Chilterns National Landscape faces unprecedented pressure. From housing and transport infrastructure to climate change, there are many challenges to the natural beauty and special qualities of the Chilterns. The effect of Ash Dieback is clearly visible in our ash-dominated woodlands e; squirrels, deer and *Glis glis* (edible dormouse) mean that very few young trees survive and the chalk

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aquifer, which we rely on for drinking water, is under threat from pollution, over-abstraction and climate change.

This section provides a snapshot of the state of the Chilterns framed in terms of the government's new Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOFs) and a number of local indicators, and summarises key issues affecting the National Landscape. Tackling these issues requires collaborative action at many levels, from local to national and international. This Management Plan outlines what is needed and creates an agenda for action. Further details on the targets and outcomes defined for nature are included in the Chilterns Nature Recovery Plan (see chapter 5), and a Climate Adaptation Management Plan will be published by the government's target date of 2028.

Headline Indicators: Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework

The Protected Landscapes Target and Outcomes Framework (PLTOFs) sets the ambition for Protected Landscapes to achieve those outcomes from the government's Environmental Improvement Plan which are considered as most relevant to National Landscapes' statutory purpose.

The framework sets out ten targets which are expressed at national level. Some of the baseline data have yet to be released by the relevant authority. The Table below summarises the targets and the baseline data that the National Landscape has received at the time this Plan is published.

National PLTOF Target	Target Indicator	Chilterns Baseline Statistic
1. Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline).	Extent of wildlife-rich habitat created or restored within Protected Landscapes, outside of protected sites	To be released by Natural England in July 2025
2. Bring 80% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042	Percentage of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes in favourable condition	CNL has 58.9% of SSSI features in favourable condition (cf. average of 41.3 % for all 34 NLs) (© Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2025.)
3. For 60% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028	Percentage of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition	CNL has 29.4 % of actions 'on track' to achieve favourable condition (cf. average of 20.7 % for all 34 NLs) (© Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2025.)
4. Continuing favourable management of all existing priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042	Extent of priority habitat within Protected Landscapes, outside of protected sites, in favourable management through agri-environment schemes	To be released by Defra in June 2025
5. Ensuring at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030.	Percentage of land managers adopting nature-friendly farming on a percentage of their land	To be released by Defra in June 2025
Mitigating and adapting to climate change targets		

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6. Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels.	Level of greenhouse gas emissions within Protected Landscapes	Estimated net annual greenhouse gas emissions from CNL were 613.6 kt CO ₂ e in 2022 compared to 1,072.8 kt CO ₂ e in 2005 (Data published by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, June 2024). Data for 1990 are not yet available for National Landscapes.
7. Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat in Protected Landscapes by 2050.	Extent of peat under restoration in Protected Landscapes	Not of relevance to CNL due to landscape setting
8. Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline).	Extent of tree canopy and woodland cover in Protected Landscapes	<p>Total area of National Forest Inventory woodland in CNL is 19,423 ha.</p> <p>Total area of Trees Outside Woodland (including Orchards) is 4,043 ha.</p> <p>(© Forestry Commission copyright 2023. © Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2023.)</p> <p>Baseline figures to be supplied in 2025.</p>
Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment targets		
9. Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme		<p>A number of PLTOF access indicators are being measured by the Chilterns Conservation Board as part of the Defra Access for All and Farming in Protected Landscape programmes. Data capture commenced in 2022/23. These are providing a baseline for reporting in 2025. The metrics relate to access improvements delivered through these two programmes and include:</p> <p>Metres of accessible path Number of accessible toilets and rest stops Number of disability accessible parking spaces Number of accessible gates and gaps Number of visits and volunteer days facilitated by new equipment Number of schools engaged (primary and secondary) Number of volunteer days Number of accessible or easy access routes for which wayfinding has been created or improved</p>
10. Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes	Number and percentage of nationally designated heritage assets in Protected Landscapes to be deemed at risk	<p>There are 3 Grade II* listed building, 9 scheduled monuments and 2 Grade II* Registered parks and Garden at risk (Grade II* and II respectively)</p> <p>(At risk figures May 2025 data, Historic England.)</p>

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Local Indicators

The objectives and policies of the Management Plan also relate to a number of local indicators that support and complement the PLTOFs as set out below.

1. Environmental Land Management (ELM scheme coverage and take up)

. 15,000 ha of land (18% of total area and 33% of farmed land) were included in agri-environment schemes (AES) in Chilterns National Landscape, including Countryside Stewardship (CS), Environmental Stewardship (ES) and the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) schemes in 2023. The details of ELM payment schemes have been gradually rolled out since 2021, so these figures are likely to be in a state of flux and to change over the next few years.

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2. Woodland Management

67% of the woodland in the National Landscape is in active management (public and private combined). . Woodland management is important to create the conditions in which wildlife can thrive.

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3. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

There are 64 SSSIs in the National Landscape, totalling 3,213ha. SSSIs are sub-divided into units characterised by features of special interest such as wildlife, geology or landform. Out of a total 163 SSSI features in the Chilterns National Landscape, 58.9% are in favourable condition and 27% of the SSSI features have 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition. A feature can only be on track to achieve favourable condition if it has an up-to-date condition assessment by Natural England and a management plan has begun to be implemented. (© Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2023.)

Priority Habitats [map]

4. Priority Habitat Extent and Condition

Natural England mapping shows 17,572 ha of priority habitat in the Chilterns National Landscape (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.

Priority habitat	Area (hectares)	Priority Habitat as % of total land area
Deciduous woodland	14,151	16.99
Lowland calcareous grassland	1,309	1.57
Good quality semi-improved grassland	493	0.59
Lowland heathland	289	0.35
Traditional orchard	142	0.17
Lowland meadows (dry)	51	0.06
Floodplain grazing marsh	49	0.06
Lowland dry acid grassland	38	0.04
Lowland fen	17	0.02
Purple moor grass and rush pastures		<0.01
No main habitat	1029	1.23
Total	17,572	21.1

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5. Chalk Streams

There are nine chalk streams in the National Landscape. None are currently assessed as achieving good ecological status . Of the nine, none are assessed as in bad condition, four are in poor condition, four in moderate condition and one is both poor and moderate condition (this latter river is split into two assessments for the purpose of the Water Framework Directive. The issues behind the poor state of these rivers are numerous and complex and include impacts of pollution, development, channel modification, invasive species, abstraction, droughts and climate change.

6. Historic Environment

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

Heritage Asset type	Number	Number at risk (April 2024)	% at risk	Average % at risk across National Landscapes in England
Listed building (Grade I)	47	0	0.0%	3.1%
Listed building (Grade II*)	119	3	2.5%	2.3%
Listed building (Grade II)	2045	0	0.0%	0.05%
Scheduled Monument	113	9	8.0%	11.9%
Registered Parks and Garden	18	2	11.1%	5.3%

However, the vast majority of known heritage assets, including archaeological sites, are either ‘non-designated heritage assets’ (NDHAs) or are not formally designated or recognised, and therefore not protected. There are significant gaps in our knowledge, particularly in the wooded areas of the Chilterns.

(At risk figures April 2024 data, Historic England.)

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 five years, with 64,000 health walk attendances in 2016-2017 across the National Landscape.

8. Visits to Countryside Sites

Visitor numbers to formal countryside attractions have increased over recent years, in some cases substantially. For example, Wendover Woods, in Buckinghamshire saw a 13% increase in visitors (2013-2017) and College Lake, near Tring, in Hertfordshire saw a 16% increase (2013-2016).

Forces for Change

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

Topic	Key Issues	Predicted Trends and Impacts without Intervention
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Decline in traditional land management (e.g. mixed farming, crop rotation, grazing, woodland management, orchards, watercress beds and exercise of common rights),Change of land use including increase in area of land used primarily for recreation (e.g. golf, liveries, and new businesses such as paintballing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Declines in abundance and range of flora and foraReductions in habitat connectivity and resilienceIncreasing impacts of pests and diseasesLoss of species diversity within semi-natural habitats including ancient woodlands and chalk grassland

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts of housing and infrastructure development • Declines in diversity within habitats • Eutrophication • Impacts of systemic pesticides • Impacts of non-native invasive pests and diseases • Climate change; increasing climatic variation • Visitor impacts on sensitive sites and habitats, especially along the escarpment • Unprotected sites • Habitat fragmentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of hedgerow trees particularly ash • Scrubbing up of grassland sites • Declines in characteristic species and habitats
Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development pressures • Changes in land management • Unprotected sites and landscapes; site specific focus of designation • Heritage of the Chilterns less recognised and understood than other protected landscapes • Limited resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of historic landscape character • Decline in condition of wider setting of monuments • Condition of designated assets largely stable but a few at risk • Increased archaeological understanding through housing and infrastructure development • Initiatives developed in isolation
Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in land management practices • Global markets contributing to demise of local industry for example furniture making • Growing markets in wood fuel and local products • Brexit – opportunities for influence and change alongside uncertainty for land managers and farmers • Impact on rural workers of high cost of housing • Fewer people employed in land management • Subdivision of woodlands into small plots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced commercial need to manage landscape features such as hedgerows and trees; loss of historic field patterns • Declines in soil health • Sheep grazing of chalk grassland is currently uneconomic leading to declining biodiversity • Under managed woodlands • Decreasing number of holdings, increase in larger holding, more contractors, land sold off for amenity, changes in area of land farmed • Farm diversification resulting from growth in marketing of local products and tourism
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmentally unsustainable levels of abstraction from chalk aquifer leading to chronic low flows and shortening of river habitats • Abstraction for River Thames at level of no more capacity • High levels of water usage • Modifications to water courses • Poor ecological condition of chalk streams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality decline • Further degradation of chalk streams, streams and rivers running dry • Failure to reach required Water Framework Directive status • Loss of key landscape features • Impact on ecology and loss of associated wildlife

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution, diffuse and non-diffuse • Non-native invasive pests and diseases • Impact of climate change 	
Settlement and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly desirable area, commutable to London • Unprecedented housing and infrastructure growth within and in setting of the National Landscape • Construction of HS2 • Airport expansion and increased over-flying • Creeping suburbanisation and gentrification • Lack of affordable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erosion of character • Increased noise, air/light pollution • Habitat severance, degradation/loss • Less enjoyable to visit • New building designs not locally distinctive • Housing even less affordable for local community
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population in and around the Chilterns is increasing rapidly • Some large urban populations on the edge of the Chilterns with relatively high incidence of health issues compared to the National Landscape; this provides major opportunities for enhancing health and wellbeing through outdoor activity • Public understanding of the benefits provided by the Chilterns is low • Low levels of engagement with some audiences (e.g. urban young people, Black and ethnic minority communities) • Declining public sector funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually increasing profile for the area and the opportunities it presents to increase health and wellbeing • Increased number of visitors • Risk of negative impacts of additional visitors to sensitive habitats and sites • Risk of anti-social behaviour (e.g. fly tipping, vandalism, wildlife crime) • Continued lack of engagement with under-represented audiences • Gradual decline in maintenance of rights of way and countryside access infrastructure unless public funding is maintained or new funding secured

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 CCB advocates that:

1. All special qualities and natural resources of the Chilterns will be protected forever for everyone, current and future generations.
2. The wildlife and natural beauty of the Chilterns have an intrinsic value that 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.

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8. As one of the most accessible protected landscapes in Europe, more people should use the Chilterns for quiet recreation, especially the 1.6 2.25 million people who live within 8km 10km 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 National Landscape; 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.

General Policies

To achieve the above, we have set out four general policies across three key areas, to help conserve and enhance the Chilterns.

GP1 Continue to explore opportunities to enhance the status of the Chilterns National Landscape, including securing increased powers and resources, at least equivalent to redesignation as a National Park

In 2018, the CCB submitted a request to Natural England to consider redesignation of the Chilterns as a National Park. Whilst on paper the protections for National Parks and National Landscapes are identical, in reality National Parks benefit from increased resources and status as a planning authority.

That request was supported by the Glover Landscapes Review in 2019, which recognised that the area met the designation criteria in terms of both natural beauty and opportunities for access and enjoyment, and recommended that if not redesignated a National Park, the Chilterns be given increased resources and powers to address the specific challenges that it faces.

Redesignation is not universally popular as a solution in the Chilterns area, however, and there are questions about whether National Parks, based on legislation that has not been revisited for 75 years, offer the best value or necessarily achieve the best outcomes in terms of 21st century priorities. Nonetheless, National Park status is currently a benchmark for landscape-scale environmental management in the UK and the CCB continues to actively explore opportunities to create a new gold standard in this sector.

GP2 Review the boundary of the National Landscape to cover a larger area of the Chilterns and adjoining landscapes that merits it.

In 2021 Natural England committed to undertaking a review of the boundary of the designated area, undertook through consultants an extensive and positive assessment of the surrounding area, engaging with local authorities and other key stakeholders across Berkshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire, with the support of many local communities. However, the process was cancelled just before statutory public consultation was scheduled to begin in May 2025 as a result of budgetary constraints. It is known that the outcome of the assessment identified significant areas that met the criteria for designation, and were identified as being desirable to designate. The Board and its partners therefore strongly advocate that the process of designation should be completed as soon as resources become available.

GP3 Establish a strong partnership to deliver the Chilterns National Landscape Management Plan working together in the best interests of the area, its environment, communities, economy and visitors.

There are a significant number of organisations who are dedicated to caring for the Chilterns and there is a need for a strong strategic partnership across the Chilterns. Collaborative working with local organisations, local authorities, charities and government agencies on delivery of the Management Plan will ensure more is achieved and there is a consistent approach to the conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns as the National Landscape expands. Strong partnership working and effective engagement is also going to become more important in the context of the strengthened duty on public bodies to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape, and as the government's intentions become clearer on how the same public

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bodies will be expected to contribute towards developing future iterations of the Management Plan and delivering their objectives.

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 include 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 Ecosystems Services, which can be broken down into four types:

[Ecosystems services infographic]

The National Landscape can support the wider ecological network of surrounding areas so that they can all become more resilient. Examples of Ecosystem Services provided by the Chilterns include:

- Flint and timber for construction
- Wood for fuel
- Natural flood defences from woodland and grassland
- Pollination by insects
- Carbon storage by woodland and soil
- Chalk aquifer for water supply
- Cultural benefits from a recreational perspective
- Opportunities for people to enhance their physical and mental health and wellbeing
- Sustainable production of food and drink, including locally distinctive produce

The Management Plan aims to manage the Chilterns' natural capital more sustainably, to enhance the National Landscape and contribute to the delivery of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

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, for example, alter the species composition of woodlands and the type of crops grown by farmers, leading to alteration to the landscape.

Climate mitigation in the Chilterns National Landscape

An important aspect of the value of the natural capital of the Chilterns is that it makes a significant contribution to helping mitigate climate change in ways that are compatible with conserving and enhancing its natural beauty. Climate change mitigation refers to actions to slow down, and potentially reverse, the effects of climate change.

Example climate mitigation actions for the Chilterns might include:

- Supporting nature recovery actions to help maintain ecosystem services which support carbon sequestration e.g. in chalk grasslands
- Increasing capture and storage of greenhouse gases in natural systems through tree planting
- Reducing carbon and methane emissions in agriculture and other sectors
- Retrofitting old buildings to make them more energy efficient
- Purchasing local food and wood products to reduce air miles
- Holidaying in the Chilterns as a sustainable alternative to travel abroad

Adaptation to climate change in the Chilterns National Landscape

Climate change adaptation involves ways of adjusting to the effects of climate change. Adaptation requires us to adjust our environment and develop actionable solutions to protect communities and ecosystems from changes that we cannot prevent.

Examples of climate change adaptation suitable for the Chilterns might be:

- Reducing runoff and enabling greater infiltration of water into soils to recharge chalk aquifers
- Introducing shading and managing vegetation to help regulate air, river and standing water temperatures
- Creating resilient ecological networks to allow species movement in response to climate change
- Restoring chalk streams and other habitats to improve species resilience to climate change

The government's Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3) requires the Chilterns Conservation Board to produce a Climate Adaptation Management Plan that will be embedded in or linked to the

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management plan by 2028. The plan will include actions and objectives designed to adapt to climate change.

GP4 Support projects and proposals that have a positive impact on the ability of the Chilterns to contribute sustainable Ecosystem Services by:

- Sustainably managing land and water environments
- Protecting and providing more, better and joined up natural habitats across the AONB and with adjacent areas, enhancing networks through the landscape
- Protecting and conserving water resources and improving water quality
- Improving the Chilterns' resilience and adaptation to, and mitigation of, climate change
- Increasing the ability to store carbon through new tree planting, woodland creation, wetland restoration or other means
- Conserving and improving soil structure and quality
- Reducing litter and environmental pollution, especially air and water pollution, including sewage
- Managing and mitigating the risk of flooding
- Supporting the sustainable production and local use of food, forestry and raw materials
- Improving opportunities for peoples' health and wellbeing, including provision of high-quality green infrastructure close to where people live
- Stimulating sustainable tourism and economic activity
- Delivering high-quality sustainable design that protects the local distinctiveness of the Chilterns
- Managing or controlling non-native invasive species

5. Nature

The Chilterns is home to a wonderful variety of wildlife, including many protected and notable species. The National Landscape 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 habitats associated with the Chilterns are often a by-product of traditional management – grazing, woodland management and quarrying – over many millennia by farmers, woodland owners and other land managers. Its chalk escarpment provides a crucial stepping stone for species moving through the landscape, often in response to climate change and other pressures.

While this refreshed management plan recognises the value of nature, the increasing need to identify measures to mitigate against climate change and the intrinsic value the Chilterns landscape provides to the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors alike, significant advances in understanding have happened since the original plan, on which this refresh is based, was published in 2019.

Nature Recovery

Recognising the great value protected landscapes can offer to the country as a whole, later the same year (2019), our National Landscapes joined together to sign the [Colchester Declaration](#). The declaration made ambitious commitments for nature recovery and woodland planting. From this time, each protected landscape, including the Chilterns, started the process of producing its own bespoke Nature Recovery Plan.

The Environment Act 2021 led to Defra requiring certain local authorities to produce their own Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). This process started in earnest in 2023. Working with the four evolving LNRSs covering the Chilterns (Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire), we will publish the first Chilterns Nature Recovery Plan this year. In future, this Nature Recovery Plan will become an integral part of the Chilterns Management Plan. The Plan describes how the Chilterns National Landscape can respond to the government's ambitions for a nature recovery network and its commitment to the 30by30 target, recognising that National Landscapes have a critical role to play.

Understanding whether our nature recovery actions across the landscape achieve the desired outcomes is essential and requires monitoring and evaluation. The Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework provides a national dataset to enable monitoring of trends in nature recovery across the landscape (see Chapter 3). Furthermore, the duty in s.85 of the CROW Act requires

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relevant authorities to ‘*seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty*’ which includes the landforms, geology, plants and animals that are critical to nature recovery (see Chapter X).

Taken together, the Chilterns National Landscape management plan, nature recovery plan and embedded Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework provide strategic direction to inform how individuals and organisations can work together to co-ordinate nature recovery actions across the landscape at scale.

Designated Wildlife Habitat Sites [map]

The Chilterns has many sites designated for their wildlife value, including nationally and internationally important sites, totalling 10,673 ha (12.8% of the National Landscape). These include:

- Three Special Areas of Conservation (SACs – sites of international importance), including the Chilterns Beechwood SAC (made up of nine separate sites), Aston Rowant SAC and Hartslock Wood SAC
- 64 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (national importance)
- 494 local sites recognised for their wildlife or geology

The charity Plantlife identifies part of the Chilterns as an ‘Important Plant Area’ for internationally important plant populations.

The map doesn’t show local wildlife sites (almost 500). Total area of designated sites is greater than 10,673 ha (12.8% of the National Landscape).

Key Facts

Grassland, heathland and bare ground

- The Chilterns supports important concentrations of species rich grassland including chalk, neutral and acid grassland
- Remnant heathland is also found in the Chilterns, often on common land
- Quarries/former quarries provide bare ground, an important habitat for many species
- Chalk grassland is an internationally rare, fragile, wildlife rich habitat which has developed over centuries of grazing on nutrient-poor chalk soils
- Home to populations of chalk specialist species, including wild candytuft, pasque flower, silver-spotted skipper and glow-worm
- Grassland and heathland scrub up quickly if left unmanaged
- Livestock grazing is the best way to manage chalk grassland and should be encouraged
- Chalk scrub is often of high wildlife value –habitat mosaics, including small areas of scrub and longer grassland as well as short turf are important
- Juniper and box scrub habitats are notable in the Chilterns
- Many grassland and heathland sites are popular with visitors; this requires management to prevent disruption to sensitive species and habitats.

Trees and woodland

- The Chilterns is one of the most heavily wooded areas in England, famous for its extensive beech woods and ancient woodland
- Ancient woodlands cover only 2% of England, while they cover 13% of the Chilterns. They are home to many rare and threatened species
- Priority habitats in the Chilterns include lowland beech and yew, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wood-pasture and parkland
- The Chilterns has a rich heritage of parkland, wood pasture and common land, with high concentrations of veteran trees, associated deadwood invertebrates and fungi
- The Chilterns has the largest native box woodland in the UK
- Active management of woodlands is needed to let in light and create habitat mosaics
- Plantations on ancient woodland sites need to be restored through a mix of natural regeneration and appropriate planting
- Invasive non-native pests (including Grey Squirrel and Glis glis - Edible Dormouse) and disease, as well as increasing deer numbers, are a serious and growing concern for our woodlands that needs management

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- Management of woodlands to increase diversity species mix and age is needed to ensure resilience to climate change, pests and disease
- Traditional orchards, particularly cherry, were once important in the Chilterns and the mix of old fruit trees and grassland are valuable for wildlife

Water bodies and wetlands

- Rivers and wetlands are scarce but precious habitats in the Chilterns
- Chalk streams are a globally scarce habitat – nine of the 283 chalk streams in the world are found in the Chilterns and they are home to some of the UK's most endangered species including water vole, otter and brown trout
- Chalk streams are shallow, fast flowing watercourses with a gravel bed and low banks. Flows depend on groundwater levels in the underlying chalk aquifer
- Winterbournes, the upper reaches of streams that are dry in the summer months, support unique plants and animals
- The chalk aquifer underlying the Chilterns supplies water to millions of people in the south east
- Besides the main chalk streams there are numerous chalk springs at the foot of the scarp
- Of the nine chalk streams, none are currently assessed as being of 'Good Ecological Status/Potential' according to the latest Environment Agency assessment
- Low flows are the key issue affecting the area's chalk streams
- 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
- All our chalk streams have been heavily modified for example due to milling, agriculture and urban development leaving 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 River Thames forms the boundary between the North Wessex Downs and the Chilterns
- Other wetland habitats include lakes, gravel and mineral extraction pits, reservoirs, canals, ponds and temporary waterbodies, all providing important wildlife habitat
- Many ponds on farmland and common land were 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 Chilterns has significantly declined over many years

Farmland habitats

- Farmland is the main land use in the Chilterns, covering over 60% of the National Landscape and providing a wide range of wildlife habitats
- Farming has created a mosaic of arable and grassland habitats, stitched together by hedgerows and interspersed with woodland, commons and downland
- Species-rich ancient hedgerows and hedgerow trees provide important wildlife habitat and corridors
- Hedgerows need the right management to sustain their value for wildlife
- Farmers 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.
- Farmers also have a crucial role to play in protecting and maintaining soil health to support soil invertebrates, fungi and microbes
- Modern farming techniques and the move towards larger fields has impacted farmland wildlife; much of this change was concentrated in the early post-war period, yet declines in biodiversity continue
- The Chilterns was once a stronghold for rare arable plants and farmland birds, such as lapwing, yellowhammer and skylark; many of these species are in decline

Long term trends

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

Chalk grassland 54% lost

Commons, greens and heaths 43% lost

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Ancient woodland 9% lost

(See “[The Changing Landscape of the Chilterns](#)” The Chilterns Historic Landscape Characterisation Project, Buckinghamshire County Council & Chilterns Conservation Board, 2009.)

Recent trends

- The UK State of Nature Report 2023 found that across the UK, species studied have declined on average by 19% since 1970 and 16%, nearly 1 in 6 species from Great Britain, are threatened with extinction. This trend is mirrored in the Chilterns with many wildlife species in long-term decline in both abundance and range. Much of the best surviving wildlife habitat lies within designated sites and nature reserves, and many formerly abundant species of the wider countryside are in decline.
- Species with specialist habitat requirements are hardest hit
- Over the past 10 years many woodland and farmland birds have declined or disappeared. The decline in specialist woodland bird species reflects a long-term reduction in woodland management across the Chilterns
- Plant species – particularly specialist chalk loving plants – are also under pressure; the northern Chilterns is one of the top three most important chalk floras in the UK, yet ten of the 60+ rarer species are thought to be extinct. Many others are restricted to a single site

Key Issues

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 – wildlife habitat and species are still being lost from the Chilterns. This is due to a range of factors, many of which are listed below. More effective action is needed, for example, landscape scale conservation initiatives, to halt and reverse these declines.

Habitat degradation takes many forms including direct loss of habitat, decline in habitat quality, fragmentation and increased isolation of habitat and increased leisure and recreational use. Species that require habitat mosaics rather than single habitats are often the hardest hit.

- **Changes in land management practices:** A decline in traditional land management practise, such as extensive grazing crop rotation, small scale quarrying and hedge-laying has led to a decline in biodiversity.
- **Lack of wildlife habitat management:** A lack of support and resources to manage existing wildlife sites, semi-natural habitats and important ecological networks, such as roadside verges and hedgerows.
- **Environmental and ecological change:** Including climate change, loss of pollinators and impacts of pests, diseases and invasive non-native species (INNS)
- **Impacts of people and dogs:** The actions of visitors to the Chilterns can damage many of the area's wildlife habitats. For example, dogs can disturb ground nesting birds and high visitor numbers can make it harder to carry out appropriate site management.
- **Habitat fragmentation:** Housing, transport infrastructure and changes in land use, continue to leave a legacy of habitat fragmentation from severed hedgerows, culverted chalk streams and lack of buffer zones along the rivers, to isolation of chalk grassland and ancient woodland. 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.

Rebuilding Nature – the ‘Lawton Principles’

Sir John Lawton's landmark report ‘Making Space for Nature’ 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” This would include keystone species and species characteristic of the Chilterns. The report identified the essence of what needs to be done to enhance the resilience and coherence of England's ecological network 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.

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[Bigger, better, connected amoeba image]

Strategic Objectives

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. The Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework described in Chapter 3 provides the national ambitions for Protected Landscapes. This Management Plan sets out a framework for joint action to progress these ambitions in the Chilterns.

The following objectives have been put in place to help prioritise and invest in the natural environment, 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, well connected, well managed and diverse.

NO2 Increase the range and abundance of populations of key wildlife species.

NO3 Minimise development impacts on the National Landscape and its setting; where they are unavoidable, ensure they provide net environmental gains.

NO4 Ensure that chalk habitat management in the Chilterns is widely considered an exemplar of best practice.

NO5 Enable people to understand and be inspired by the natural environment of the Chilterns, ensuring that policies and decisions recognise the Chilterns' value to society and in its own right.

NO6 Secure greater protection for chalk streams as a globally rare habitat.

NO7 Encourage people from different organisations, communities and backgrounds, to work together to 'make space for nature' in the Chilterns.

Policies

To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:

NO1 & NO4

NP1 Create large, more joined up, functional habitat networks, reconnect surviving pockets of habitat, and develop landscape-scale conservation initiatives.

Strong collaboration, leadership and resources are needed to reverse the declines in wildlife and follow the rationale set out in the Lawton Report. Funding needs to be targeted firstly at supporting management of good quality existing habitat and secondly at re-creation of habitat in target areas, such as biodiversity opportunity areas and conservation target areas, to support the delivery of the Lawton Principles.

Options for creation of more 'wilded' landscapes, linking core areas (e.g. priority habitat, designated sites, ancient woodland) with the wider countryside also need to be explored.

NP2 Promote and support landowner and farmer-led initiatives that prioritise nature and deliver wildlife conservation and enhancement at a landscape/catchment scale.

Farmers and other land managers are key to sustaining landscape-scale conservation initiatives over the long term.

NP3 Look for and promote opportunities for restoring natural processes.

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

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extensive grazing across different habitats. It could also include reintroduction of key species to the Chilterns to achieve better ecological balance, and action to support populations of pollinator species.

NP4 Protect important, under-represented habitats and natural features through new designations and sensitive management.

Protect important habitats through nature conservation designations, including Local Wildlife Sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Local Wildlife 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 chalk streams, to be included in the national suite of SSSIs.

NP5 Control and eradicate (where possible) 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 ash die back, acute oak decline, oak processionary moth, Phytophthora, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed.

Collaborative action to reduce grey squirrel and deer damage is identified as a priority.

Support schemes need to be put in place to promote good bio-security and prevent the spread and introduction of other invasive non-natives.

See also Land, Woodland & Water (LO4, LP18,)

NP6 Protect and enhance important wildlife habitats

The Chilterns' 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.

NP7 Improve ecological condition, resilience and diversity of important wildlife habitats

Best practice management is required of all important wildlife habitats. We need to test and develop new ways of sustaining the diversity within our habitats that is 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.

Regeneration, restoration and active management of the Chilterns' woodland and trees is needed to preserve the wooded landscape that the National Landscape is renowned for.

There are also places where less active management is required – 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.

NP8 Maximise 'win-win' opportunities where restoration/expansion of wildlife habitats can, at the same time, provide benefits to society and respect/strengthen landscape character.

To do this we need to understand the key components of the Chilterns' natural capital and how past management has shaped the landscape. This includes understanding the benefits of good land management, such as reduced flood risk and provision of clean water. This understanding should 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.

NP9 Ensure those who make decisions that impact Chilterns' wildlife 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.

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NO2

NP10 Halt and 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.

Focus should be on species at the edge of their range and initiatives developed that encourage expansion and favourable management of their habitats. 'Keystone' species – those that play a critical role in maintaining the structure and composition of an ecological community (e.g. earthworms) – should also be helped to thrive.

NO3

NP11 Ensure delivery mechanisms are in place to secure net gains for biodiversity in the National Landscape and its setting.

Planning policies and decisions must contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. This includes minimising the impact on and providing net gains for biodiversity. The Environment Improvement Plan (2023, due to be reviewed 2025) 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.

NO5

NP12 Engage with more, and a greater variety of, local groups, communities, volunteers and young people to support wildlife, farming, land management and the local environment.

The demographic profile of those involved in wildlife conservation is very narrow, given the diverse communities within and close to the Chilterns. Everyone needs to feel they have a stake in the natural environment if we are to make progress. In 2024 the HLF-funded Chalkscapes Partnership published its report '[Chalkscapes: co-creating spaces for supporting diverse communities to use greenspaces and the countryside](#)' which shows how diverse communities engage with the Chilterns National Landscape and the wider countryside. Communities can get involved in several ways, including buying local food and products, as well as wildlife monitoring and practical conservation activity.

Supporting and promoting citizen science initiatives can 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. School and outdoor activity programmes can encourage younger generations to develop a long-term interest and involvement.

NP13 Help visitors to discover and enjoy wildlife in the Chilterns while not harming or disturbing it.

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.

NO6

NP14 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

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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 (LP14, LP21,), Development (DP4)

NO7

NP15 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.

NP16 Create partnerships within and across sectors to drive forward better networking, decision making and action for wildlife.

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

NP17 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.

6. Historic Environment

The Chilterns National Landscape 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, with high potential for yielding evidence of the medieval period and earlier. Prominent throughout the Chilterns are the historic towns and villages with buildings and churches in characteristic flint, brick, and timber materials.

[Infographic of Heritage Assets in the Chilterns – requires figure for scheduled monuments at risk to be updated from 8 to 9]

Many historic sites, features and monuments are formally designated as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, and so on, but many more are only recognised and designated locally (e.g. as locally listed buildings, described confusingly as 'non-designated heritage assets'); still more are undesignated (e.g. are recorded in local Historic Environment Records or have yet to be found). All deserve recognition, management and protection commensurate with their significance.

The landscape is filled with the evidence of people in the past living and working in the Chilterns - from farmer's field systems that survive from the Bronze and Iron Ages through the Roman and early medieval periods, to the great earthwork monuments such as Grims Ditch, hillforts and burial mounds. The landscape also includes more recent creations, such as the industrial heritage of works such as the Grand Union Canal, constructed here to carry freight over the Chilterns between the midlands and London, as well as a large number of great houses with their parks and gardens designed by the likes of Humphry Repton and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.

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The natural and historic landscapes of the Chilterns have provided home and inspiration for some of Britain's most prominent 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 being the country house of the Prime Minister since 1921. In summary, the region's historic environment and cultural heritage underpin the essential nature of the Chilterns.

Key Issues

The Chilterns National Landscape 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. In the next five years the Chilterns National Landscape faces unprecedented demands for development in housing and infrastructure, directly impacting the archaeology beneath them and the landscapes surrounding them. Numerous undesignated or unknown sites are at even greater risk, lacking statutory protections.

- **Development pressures:** Developments can lead to the destruction of sites of national importance and the alteration of the character, cultural heritage and spirit of the Chilterns. For example, the construction of HS2 has destroyed 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, and the funding given to farmers for protecting heritage assets is uncertain.
- **Sites and landscapes unprotected:** While designated assets, such as Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, and Scheduled Monuments are protected, their wider setting that is often integral to the character is not. Furthermore, the majority of known archaeological sites are neither nationally nor locally designated, lacking statutory protection and are at increased risk.

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 owners. Only two Listed Buildings are designated 'At Risk' by Historic England, along with nine Scheduled Monuments. However, the approach to designation takes a site specific, rather than landscape scale approach. This means the wider setting of monuments, often integral to their character, and perhaps beyond the bounds of the National Landscape, is not protected.

- **Lack of understanding and engagement:** The heritage of the Chilterns is less well recognised and understood than in 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.

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

HO1 Better protect the Chilterns' historic environment, including both formally designated and unprotected heritage assets.

HO2 Seek new discoveries of unknown heritage assets and improve understanding of those already identified, to reveal the significance of the historic environment and cultural heritage of the Chilterns.

HO3 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.

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Policies

To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:

HO1

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

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 have presented opportunities for coordinating improvement of known assets. The Beacons of the Past LiDAR survey of the Chilterns discovered 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/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 National Landscape for their work in protecting and learning more about its history. CCB can 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 consideration for the historic environment assets and their settings.

HO2

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

The Beacons of the Past project and Chalk, Cherries & Chairs project, have greatly enhanced knowledge of heritage assets throughout the Chilterns. Partners and the public are involved in these discoveries through Citizen Science and Open Data approaches. County Historic Environment Records are 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.

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HP8 Improve the sharing of heritage information of the Chilterns, signposting individuals to appropriate sources such as local Historic Environment Records and History Centres.

Communication to all audiences of the results of research into the historic environment is essential, from academic communities to the general public.

HP9 Encourage initiatives to highlight the importance of the Chilterns to political history, artistic history and literary history, as well as the industrial history of the area.

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, while our understanding of the industrial history of the National Landscape will be greatly enhanced through the study of its traditional crafts.

HO3**HP10 Improve public understanding of the historic environment of the Chilterns through projects, events, information, and campaigns.**

A far greater focus than ever before is being placed on the history and archaeology of the Chilterns through funding won by the CCB for large projects. These have created fantastic opportunities to build momentum across the National Landscape for engaging with its historic environment.

7. Land, Woodland and Water

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.

Key Issues

Farming: Stock farming (sheep, beef, dairy) continues to decline. 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. With Arable farming, current economics and farming systems are leading to fewer people farming larger areas. Less time and resources are available to manage the 'non-farmed' areas.

Commons: 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: Once widespread, 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.

Woodland: The demise of the Chilterns furniture industry led to reduced timber production and now, due to both the rapid increases in deer and grey squirrel numbers, and the constant spread of new diseases, very few quality timber trees reach maturity. 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.

Demand for locally sourced wood products can support the management of small woodlands.

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Chalk Streams: The porous chalk of the Chilterns Hills forms part of the most significant aquifer in the water-stressed south-east of England. Flow in the Chilterns' internationally rare chalk streams is reliant on water that is held within this aquifer. Water companies also make use of the aquifer, extracting (a process known as abstraction) drinking water for millions of people – residents of the Chilterns and beyond.

The Chilterns has one of the highest levels of domestic water use per head of population in the UK. Abstraction increased exponentially after the Second World War, leading to many chalk streams suffering from chronic low flows. Although water companies have reduced the amount of water that they abstract since the 1990s leading to flow recovery in a number of chalk streams, abstraction continues to be a significant contributory factor to low flows, and new development further increases water demand.

Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of droughts and flooding events. Although annual rainfall totals have so far not changed appreciably, rainfall intensity has increased. Heavy rain runs quickly off valley sides causing flooding rather than soaking into the ground and recharging the aquifer. Increasing temperatures are leading to a contraction of the winter recharge window as the growing season is extending later, and beginning earlier, in the year. Higher summer temperatures are driving up water temperature with knock on effects to key chalk stream species.

Climate change and unsustainable abstraction have a disproportionate impact on chalk stream headwaters (winterbournes) as droughts and long-term declines in groundwater levels are causing the functioning length of chalk stream habitat within the Chilterns to decrease.

Chalk streams have been extensively altered by man over thousands of years. This has left a legacy of highly modified river channels that are disconnected, fragmented and possess degraded habitat. The National Landscape's chalk streams remain under threat of further modification by factors such as urban development and poor land management.

Pollution is a key threat to the health of the area's chalk streams. There are a multitude of sources and types of pollution that are affecting these rivers. However, the most significant are sewage effluent, storm sewage overflows and urban runoff. An additional threat comes from chemicals of emerging concern such as fluorinated flame retardants known as PFAS.

A range of invasive non-native species is impacting the health of the National Landscape's chalk streams such as signal crayfish and Himalayan balsam. New species such as demon shrimp, and red swamp crayfish are emerging and, as yet, unquantified threats to their ecology.

Currently, all nine chalk streams that flow through the National Landscape 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 a combination of low flows, poor water quality, and biology.

Farming, forestry, and utility companies 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 (prone to erosion), our chalk aquifer and chalk streams (vulnerable to over-abstraction and diffuse pollution), 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.

Many farmers and woodland owners do their best to protect the land they work on and look after the wildlife it supports. Many organisations and an increasing army of members of the public, volunteer to protect reserves, habitats and the countryside they enjoy.

Continued support through developing DEFRA schemes, expanding numbers of 'farm clusters' and initiatives developed within the Chilterns National Landscape will help farming and forestry remain viable and protect wildlife at the same time. Farm clusters are groups of farmers working together to identify and deliver their own priorities for nature.

Strategic Objectives

LO1 Protect and, where degraded, improve the Chilterns' natural capital resources, including soils, water, clean air, plant and animal life.

LO2 Ensure that the Chilterns remain a functional, working landscape with viable, sustainable and diverse farming, forestry and rural economy sectors.

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LO3 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.

LO4 Increase resilience to and effective management of pests, diseases, non-native invasive species and climate change.

LO5 Achieve Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives for the Chilterns water environment – rivers, valleys, wetlands and other riparian habitats.

LO6 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 National Landscape

Policies

To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:

LO1

- **LP1 Make agreed best practice advice (farming, forestry and other land management) accessible to all.**
- Best practice will ensure healthy soils, well managed chalk streams, clean water and unpolluted air, vital for farming, forestry, wildlife, local communities and visitors. It 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, and pollard willows alongside chalk streams.
- **LP2 Publicise and promote appropriate land-based skill training and advances in new technology across the National Landscape.**
- Both traditional rural skills and modern technology have their place in securing a healthy Chilterns landscape; from hedge laying to GPS guided farming operations that 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.

LO2

- **LP4 Support landowners and land managers to continue or re-introduce favourable grazing management on all areas of Chilterns chalk grassland.**
- Grazing animals are needed 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.
- **LP5 Ensure that more landowners sensitively manage hedgerows.**

Recent DEFRA statistics (PLTOF 2022) suggest there are 3,300 km of hedgerow in the Chilterns. Between 2006 and 2008, 330 hedges in the Chilterns were surveyed and only 38% were in good condition. On the basis of this limited 'condition' dataset, 62% (approximately 2,500km or just over 1,500 miles) of our Chilterns hedgerows need attention. Reducing nutrient enrichment and buffering from cultivation would 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, 100km (62 miles) of hedge needs rejuvenating every year.

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

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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

- **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 National Landscape.
- **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 National Landscape.**
- The Chilterns is renowned for its woodland, which covers 23.74% of the National Landscape. 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. In line with government policy, we should see to increase the woodland area, but resources will be needed if the total area is to increase.
- **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.

Woodland Cover [map]

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

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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), 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 practises) 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 National Landscape

LO3

- **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)*

- **LP19 Control and manage native pests and, where possible, seek to eradicate non-native invasive species, coordinated at a landscape scale.**

Species include both native and introduced deer, grey squirrel, Glis glis (Edible Dormouse), 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).

Statutory agencies will need to support landowner collaboration and partnership groups (similar to the 'Farmer Cluster' model) if this policy is to succeed.

- *See also Nature (NP7)*

LO4

- **LP20 Make relevant, informative and interesting information about farming, forestry and the rural economy readily available to all residents and visitors to the National Landscape.**

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.

- 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.

- **LP21 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.**

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Very few people are likely to understand how their use of water might affect a Chilterns chalk stream. Water 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.

- See also *Nature (NP4)*, *Development (DP4)*

Water Framework Directive Status for Chiltern Surface Water Bodies

[map]

8. Enjoyment and Understanding

The landscape of the Chilterns with its great variety of habitats, extensive network of rights of way and many attractive countryside and destination sites makes it a valuable resource for recreation and leisure. It is a landscape ideal for walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding, as well as a wide array of other outdoor activities including mindfulness activities such as forest bathing. It also offers peace and tranquillity, an escape from busy and pressured lives, which is enjoyed by millions of visitors every year. With rapid housing growth and increasing population in the urban areas surrounding the Chilterns, the Chilterns landscape has become more important than ever as a recreational resource.

It is now clearly evidenced and widely recognised that a lack of physical activity and time spent in scenic, nature-rich greenspaces has major impacts on people's physical and mental wellbeing. The Chilterns provides an accessible natural health service, offering health walks, green gym programmes and a growing number of social prescribing activities. A huge array of groups use the Chilterns for recreation, health & wellbeing activities, education and learning experiences and volunteering. With the climate crisis becoming more acute as well as a growing public interest in issues such as the state of our chalk streams and species decline, people are more inspired to take action for the environment. Citizen Science programmes, such as the RSPB's Big Garden Bird Watch and Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count, have become more popular, and in the Chilterns there are now lots of varied conservation volunteering opportunities. It still attracts a narrow demographic, and the challenge now is to make the volunteering offer more inclusive.

Despite being one of the most accessible landscapes in the UK with abundant opportunities for leisure and recreation, substantial sectors of the population face barriers to accessing the Chilterns countryside. A [study](#) by the University of Bedfordshire on how diverse communities engage with greenspaces and the countryside, found that only around 33% of participants in the Luton/Dunstable area visited greenspaces weekly, with older individuals, those facing various challenges, and people from minority ethnic backgrounds being the least frequent users. Addressing this inequality of access and working to make the countryside more welcoming and inclusive, including through accessible signage, information and infrastructure, is an overriding priority for the Chilterns.

We are seeing gradual change. People from communities who have historically experienced barriers to accessing our National Landscapes are now breaking down those barriers, getting outside and inspiring others to do the same. Groups such as Muslim Hikers, Black Girls Hike and The Outdoor Lads have been leading the way nationally, along with local groups in the Chilterns such as Dadimas intergenerational walking group. Organisations are working to create change, with more focus on diversifying their audiences and engaging underserved communities. However it will require a widespread, long term and committed partnership approach to make the sustained and large-scale change which is necessary.

There is capacity for more people to visit, enjoy and engage with the Chilterns, but there needs to be more investment in visitor management to be able to do this. Visitor management pressures have increased. There has been a marked increase in dog ownership, a greater volume of traffic on country lanes used by recreational users and an increase in organised cycling and challenge events which can create issues if not properly managed.

Key Issues

Today, people are working longer hours, spending less time outdoors and leading lives that are more sedentary. The need for tranquil outdoors space is greater than ever. The Chilterns has capacity to accommodate greater use to help fill this need.

Attracting greater visitor numbers: The Chilterns already attracts a large numbers of local leisure users and this is increasing with new housing growth, however it has capacity for greater use. It can

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benefit a much greater proportion of the 1.6 million people who live within 8km of the Chilterns, in particular the least active.

Protecting sensitive sites: At present visitor numbers are unevenly spread with pressure concentrated on the most sensitive chalk downland. The challenge is to manage visits and countryside services to protect the most popular and vulnerable countryside sites and habitats. The development of a Chilterns-wide visitor management initiative will help with this ambitious vision, which will need to be adequately resourced and require new sources of funding.

Engaging the surrounding community: Establishing a multi-partner network extending beyond the Chilterns National Landscape to surrounding urban communities, greenspaces and new growth areas is needed. Public engagement will be an important part of the vision, attracting greater support for the National Landscape and more volunteers and stewards to help care for it in the future.

Strategic Objectives

EO1 Secure national recognition and greater resources for the wealth of accessible recreational opportunities the Chilterns countryside offers to residents and visitors.

EO2 Ensure more high-quality opportunities for outdoor recreation, life-long learning and volunteering for all.

EO3 Ensure more people can enjoy healthier and happier lives by enjoying the Chilterns.

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 Reduce barriers to accessing the countryside and encourage more diverse audiences to access and engage with the Chilterns, especially underserved audiences who currently have little connection.

Policies

To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:

EO1

EP1 Secure greater support and funding for a well-maintained, high quality and better-connected rights of way network for walking, wheeling, cycling and horse-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 Chilterns National Landscape. 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.

EO2

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

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enjoy the countryside. Priorities include improved access for those with limited mobility, new or improved access links between the Chilterns National Landscape and urban areas, more multi-user routes, better bridleway connectivity and provision of accessible facilities both on appropriate sites (e.g. waymarked trails, information boards, cycle and car parking) and through digital tools (e.g. smartphone information, wayfinding and story-telling apps).

EP4 Expand opportunities for volunteering and lifelong learning, removing barriers to participation and making it more accessible and inclusive.

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. However volunteering attracts a traditional audience and people can face numerous barriers to participation which need to be addressed. Consideration should be given to a more coordinated approach across the Chilterns, starting with volunteering opportunities for young people and offering skills development and pathways to long-term involvement including paid traineeships to encourage entry into the conservation sector.

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.

EO3

EP6 Broaden public engagement activity to attract new audiences and increase understanding and enjoyment of the Chilterns National Landscape, targeting urban communities.

Many residents from towns adjoining the Chilterns do not visit the special landscape 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 Chilterns National Landscape
- Lobbying for more and safer cycling routes
- Encouraging additional bike hire and cycle parking

EO4

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

An increasingly urbanised population means people are becoming more disconnected from the countryside and lack awareness and appreciation of the Chilterns as a living, working landscape. People need to be aware of the potential effects their activities can have on habitats, species, historic features, residents, businesses (including farming and forestry) and other recreational users. There needs to be greater awareness of the Countryside Code and of the specialness of the Chilterns landscape. This can stimulate an interest in the Chilterns and encourage behaviour change including taking active steps to help care for the Chilterns.

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

Awareness of the Chilterns as a protected landscape is low, even within the Chilterns National Landscape. People are often unaware they are in the National Landscape 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, National Landscape gateway signs/artworks, signage, leaflets and digital communications.

EO5

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. There is potential for more people to benefit from countryside recreation within the Chilterns National Landscape, but this needs to be managed effectively to ensure visitor pressure does not adversely impact sensitive habitats.

There is a much greater volume of traffic on country lanes which are also important recreational routes used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. This can cause particular issues on narrow lanes with no footpaths, making it an unpleasant and potentially dangerous experience. Organised cycling events can create conflicts, with some parts of the Chilterns unsuited to large-scale participation events. They need careful visitor management to ensure they do not conflict with other events, that routes are designed to minimise impacts, start times staggered and participant numbers are appropriate. Good visitor management should be encouraged, including promoting greater awareness of the Chilterns landscape and the Countryside Code.

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 and address the uneven spread of visitor pressure in the Chilterns. Visitor footfall has increased substantially at countryside sites. This, along with the marked increase in dog ownership over the last few years, creates additional impacts on sensitive habitats and other landscape features which needs managing carefully. Adapting to these pressures requires resources and needs close partnership working to plan effective and joined up visitor management approaches. Multi-partner visitor management approaches will be supported..

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

The number of people living in or close to the Chilterns National Landscape is increasing, large numbers of whom still do not make use of the countryside even though there is potential for more people to benefit from opportunities for recreation here. However, this needs to be managed effectively to ensure visitor pressure does not adversely impact sensitive habitats and archaeological features. This is especially the case in relation to the Chilterns Special Areas of Conservation, including the Chilterns Beechwoods at Ashridge and elsewhere. Part of the solution is to support the creation of appropriately located and designed 'suitable alternative natural greenspace' (SANG) sites. The CCB will be producing guidance on SANGs during the lifetime of this Plan.

9. Social and economic wellbeing

The Chilterns is a living and working landscape, shaped, worked and enjoyed by people living in and around it: 80,000 people live within the Chilterns National Landscape and a further 1.6 million live within 8km. Communities and businesses within and beyond the Chilterns National Landscape enjoy many benefits from the landscape. From resources provided by its natural capital to cultural and recreational activities. There are tangible benefits from its natural resources such as clean water, fresh air, wood for fuel and opportunities for carbon storage to help tackle climate change. And it is a place for relaxation, exploration and inspiration, offering a rich cultural heritage, contact with nature, a

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sense of place and numerous opportunities for leisure, recreation and learning. However there is great inequality of access to these benefits, with some sectors of the population facing substantial barriers to enjoying or engaging with the Chilterns landscape and all it offers. Those from areas of high deprivation, disabled people, the elderly and those from ethnic minority groups face particular barriers. A priority should be to facilitate and develop opportunities, initiatives and partnerships to make these benefits more accessible to underserved audiences.

There is also low awareness of the Chilterns National Landscape and its value to society is not fully realised especially its essential contribution to peoples' health and wellbeing. In addition, communities and businesses do not always recognise and value the importance of being in the Chilterns or the part they can play as custodians of this heritage.

This can be changed by measuring and demonstrating the value of the Chilterns, building the brand and profile of the area, and securing support and investment for the Chilterns National Landscape including the potential for green finance programmes. 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.

The Chilterns has huge potential as a sustainable tourism destination given its accessibility and excellent transport links, proximity to London and Oxford, and the quality and specialness of its tourism assets. However there is no Destination Management Organisation for the Chilterns and very limited sector support. Destination promotion across the region is patchy and the closure of Visit Buckinghamshire leaves a significant gap. This is greatly limiting the potential of the sustainable tourism sector in the Chilterns, which could be contributing more to the local economy. Opportunities should be sought to collaborate, support and invest in Chilterns destination development and promotion.

Key Issues

- **Farming and forestry are in decline:** While the economy of the Chilterns is above the national average, forestry and farming activities such as planting and managing woodlands to produce timber and grazing livestock on the hills are in decline. Work is needed to ensure the Chilterns remain a functional, working landscape with a viable rural economy, because sustainable food and farming activities are vital in helping to maintain the Chilterns landscape and ensuring it is a working landscape. The sector should be supported to develop and promote new markets, e.g. for Chilterns food and drink, and for timber products.
- **Skills shortage:** There is a shortage in the skills required to manage the Chilterns landscape, such as forestry and flint work.
- **Price of housing:** House prices in the Chilterns are well above the national average, making it inaccessible to many that live in the local area. (See section 10, Development.)
- **Social, welfare and transport issues:** Closures of village shops, pubs and community facilities is contributing to isolation and mental health issues experienced by a growing number of people. The volunteering and activities within the Chilterns National Landscape provide a way of addressing many of these issues. Better access links between rural and urban areas are also needed, as are improved public and community transport options, allowing local people access to facilities and services.

Strategic Objectives

SO1 Increase the economic and social wellbeing of local communities and businesses by supporting the development of the visitor economy and improving community facilities.

SO2 Ensure that the Chilterns National Landscape 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.

SO3 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 funding.

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SO4 Ensure that businesses and communities in and around the National Landscape value its special qualities, support initiatives and help raise the profile of the area.

Policies

To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:

SO1

SP1 Develop the visitor economy and increase its economic impact.

The Chilterns is a popular destination for local leisure, but awareness of it outside the 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.

SP2 Seek the coordination of visitor development and promotion across the Chilterns and secure dedicated resources.

There is no Destination Management Organisation for the Chilterns. Tourism promotion is based on local authority boundaries and there is subsequently very little Chilterns-wide tourism promotion or support. Additional resources are needed to develop and promote sustainable visiting.

SP3 Promote historic market towns as gateways to the countryside.

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, provide visitor facilities such as car parking, pubs, shops and cafes, and allow easy access to the countryside by foot or on bike.

SP4 Support rural diversification that adds value to the local economy.

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.

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 shops and/or pubs over the years, as well as a decline in community facilities and services. Others are under threat. These amenities are the life-blood of the community and affect both local people and visitors. We must support and promote such facilities to help them survive. For example, 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.

Recent 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 supporting farm shops, farmers markets, 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).

SO2

SP7 Encourage greater use of the National Landscape to improve levels of physical and mental health and wellbeing, in particular underserved audiences who are not currently benefiting.

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

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based on outdoor activity such as health walks and green gym. The challenge is engaging with the underserved audiences who are likely to benefit most but face the most barriers and are harder to reach. Further opportunities to link with the health sector for social prescribing programmes should be developed, as well as developing more collaborative targeted outreach programmes.

SP8 Expand opportunities for volunteering and lifelong learning. Make it more accessible to diverse audiences 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, access networks and heritage. Volunteering can bring multiple health benefits; it can increase people's skills and confidence, and it can decrease health inequalities and isolation. Volunteering in the Chilterns still has a narrow demographic. There is great potential to attract a wider range of volunteers to reflect the diversity of communities within and close to the Chilterns. This will require a partnership approach, to design, and coordinate relevant and accessible volunteer opportunities. There need to be pathways to engagement including entry level and youth volunteering, with opportunities for training and skills development so that people can progress.

SO3

SP9 Ensure that the value of the natural capital assets of the National Landscape 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 National Landscape. In particular, the benefit for populations living outside the National Landscape is often over-looked. As more land is built on, the need to understand, value and promote the benefits becomes more important.

SO4

SP10 Ensure businesses and communities both in and around the National Landscape, 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 National Landscape and its value as a protected landscape. Businesses and communities can play an important role in creating a stronger identity 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 and help look 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, such as the market towns of the Chilterns. Yet people visiting or passing through 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 this National Landscape.

10. Planning and Development

Special planning controls apply in the National Landscape to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing their natural beauty.

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Whilst nationally and locally 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 asset in its own right and as a green lung for London and the south east.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF: the government's planning policies for England) states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes, which, alongside National Parks and the Broads, have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The NPPF goes on to state that the scale and extent of development within the National Landscape should be limited, while development within its setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated area.

The Chilterns National Landscape extends across nine local planning authorities (LPAs) which have the responsibility both for preparing development plans, which identify where development should be located and the criteria against which proposals will be considered, and for making decisions on most planning proposals. In doing so, LPAs must comply with the duty under section 85 of the CROW Act to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area. LPAs also have the specific power under section 84 of the same Act to take all such action as appears to them expedient to accomplish this.

As noted in Chapter 1 Introduction, under 'What is natural beauty?', land is not prevented from being treated as having outstanding natural beauty by the fact that its features are the product of human intervention in the landscape. Agricultural, industrial and architectural features, including whole settlements, may be integral parts of the landscape and may embody the natural beauty that the National Landscape seeks to conserve and enhance.

The CCB was set up at the request of the area's local authorities in part to provide expert advice on planning and development issues and advocate specific policies and actions to ensure that planning decisions deliver the purposes of the designation and the objectives of the Management Plan consistently across the whole area. CCB's planning advice includes understanding of local landscape character, sensitivities and capacity for accommodating change. We act by:

- offering observations on emerging plans and on significant planning applications; preparing guidance for householders, architects and developers; and
- encouraging cross-boundary thinking and cooperation over the National Landscape.

This Management Plan is not part of the statutory development plan, but it is a material consideration in planning decisions meaning that planning weight can be appropriately attached. The Management Plan should be also considered when developing development plans, including neighbourhood plans, within or affecting the Chilterns National Landscape. It provides evidence on the characteristics of the landscape and objectives for appropriate development in the Chilterns.

It is the only plan for the whole National Landscape and should be read along with government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework, and policies in local authority development plans and communities' neighbourhood plans.

Protocol for consulting the Chilterns Conservation Board

The CCB has a Planning Committee and employs chartered town planners to provide specialist planning advice on both development plans and planning applications. A protocol has been agreed with LPAs 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

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- New visitor facilities
- Airport development likely to lead to overflying of the National Landscape
- 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.

It is anticipated that this protocol will be reviewed with the LPAs during this Plan's lifetime. This review will include resolving repeated references to employment development in the list, and incorporating references to, for example, transport and water infrastructure. The protocol will also be revised to include guidance on understanding the setting of the National Landscape and applying the s.85 duty in the consideration of proposals.

Key Issues

Pressure for development: The Chilterns is a highly desirable area in which to live and work, within easy commuting distance of London, and levels of development within the National Landscape and its setting continue to be high. Local authorities face pressures when preparing their development plans and some, with a shortage of alternatives, are proposing significant housing allocations here, despite the clear direction of policies of the NPPF in this regard. The NPPF's key 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' policy (para 11, Dec 2024) clearly states that the requirements for development plans, and for planning decisions in the absence of a development plan, are not required to meet and exceed identified need where National Landscape policies apply, and this includes in their setting.

Small-scale changes: Piecemeal changes to land and buildings can progressively harm the natural beauty of the Chilterns National Landscape. Examples include pony paddocks, garden extensions, newly landscaped grounds, the spread of fencing, replacement windows, new external lighting, private leisure buildings and children's play equipment. Electric gates, high fencing and CCTV over public rights of way make the area feel more exclusive, and people feel excluded. Collectively, they can change the distinctiveness, heritage and character of the landscape, and leave less space for nature. The Board has prepared advice in the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and supplementary technical notes to help householders and landowners to make well-informed choices so that changes are appropriate to the special qualities of the Chilterns National Landscape. The advice covers all aspects of building renovation, extensions, appropriate materials, outbuildings, boundary treatments etc.

Permitted Development: Previously, National Landscapes have been excluded from many types of permitted development, but in recent years these rights have been widened, reducing councils' ability to manage some forms of development. However, where permitted development rights threaten harm to the landscape, LPAs can invoke powers to remove them using Article 4 Directions, but this option is difficult and can be costly to implement.

Cumulative impact of development: A single planning proposal may affect only a small area of the National Landscape. However, a number of similar developments in the area, 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 National Landscape, its wildlife and people's enjoyment could slowly diminish over time. We have further advice in our Position Statement on the Cumulative Impacts of Development on the Chilterns National Landscape.

Strategic Objectives

DO1 Ensure planning decisions put the conservation and enhancement of the National Landscape first.

DO2 Ensure that where development happens, it leaves the National Landscape 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.

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Policies

To achieve these objectives, we must work together to:

DO1

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 a National Landscape is to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. That is the single and only purpose in law. A National Landscape 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 National Landscapes. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important in here. This requirement applies to all sizes of planning proposal, large and small.

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 National Landscape.

DP2 Reject development in the National Landscape unless it meets the following criteria:

- it is a use appropriate to its location,
- it is appropriate to local landscape character,
- it supports local distinctiveness,
- it respects heritage and historic landscapes,
- it enhances natural beauty,
- ecological and environmental impacts are acceptable,
- there are no detrimental impacts on chalk streams,
- 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.

Policy DP2 sets out what to consider in order to give great weight to conserving and enhancing the National Landscape. It applies to all development in the National Landscape, both minor and major.

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

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".

The definition of 'major development' in this context is different from other aspects of the planning system. 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 area. Developments below the size of the usual thresholds for major development could constitute major development here, 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 72) may be a useful indication of types of development more likely to be considered major.

If a proposal is major, the decision maker will need to assess against the considerations in the NPPF para 183 (Dec 2024). The identified need for many kinds of major development can be met in alternative locations outside the Chilterns National Landscape. 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, in line with the duty under section 85 of the CROW Act, by following policies DP1 to DP15.

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DP4 In the setting of the National Landscape, take full account of whether proposals harm the natural beauty of the area. .

A development outside the National Landscape's boundary can cause harm to its natural beauty, even if it is some distance away; for example, development of land visible in panoramic views from the Chilterns escarpment, or which generates traffic in or travelling across the National Landscape (including overflying), or which increases water abstraction from the chalk aquifer, thereby reducing flow in chalk streams.

Since July 2021, the NPPF has formally recognised this in its statement that development in the setting of National Landscapes "should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts" on these areas. Since this is a policy relating to National Landscapes, it also means that development in the setting of a National Landscape can be considered as an exception to the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development under paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

The local planning authority's duty towards the National Landscape under section 85 of the CROW Act applies when a proposal affects land in the National Landscape, regardless of where that effect originates (inside or outside the designated area). . The setting of the AONB is not a static area that can be mapped, nor does it cover a set distance from the AONB boundary. Rather, the extent of the setting will depend on the nature of the development proposed, and the impacts it may have on the National Landscape, whether those relate to visual impact (including light pollution), sound, emissions, or knock-on effects such as the generation of traffic. Hence, the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape 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.

The Chilterns National Landscape is surrounded by large settlements, many of which are planned to expand. Growth is being planned for Aylesbury, Luton, Princes Risborough, High Wycombe, Hemel Hempstead, Tring, and Chinnor, to name just a few. Many of these expansion plans include land in the setting of the National Landscape, and there is significant pressure for LPAs to propose development within the designated area: all growth will lead to additional pressure for infrastructure to cross the Chilterns. All of this makes it even more important that the Chilterns is protected to play its role in the health and wellbeing of that future population.

DP5 Require a professionally-produced landscape assessment that meets the Landscape Institute's published standards for all development proposals where there are any concerns about impacts on the natural beauty of the area or more broadly on landscape and visual amenity.

Many development proposals, including relatively minor projects, can have impacts both positive and negative on the character of the surrounding landscape. Landscape assessments help to ensure that these impacts are assessed and understood. The Landscape Institute publishes guidance on methodologies for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), which must be used for any proposal requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or for one likely to have a significant character or visual effect on an existing landscape or townscape setting, and for Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) which is recommended for less significant or complex proposals. Such assessments will also help clarify whether a proposal is a 'major development' in terms of para 190 of the NPPF (Dec 2024) - see also policy DP3 – and can help applicants and decision makers with evaluating measures necessary to demonstrate compliance with the s.85 duty.

To be effective, a landscape assessment must address effects on both the National Landscape as a resource in its own right (whether visible or not), and assess the significance of effects on views and visual amenity (as experienced by people). The assessment should be prepared early enough to inform the evolution of a project, so that it is genuinely landscape-led, demonstrably contributes to conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the National Landscape, and fully integrates landscape character and qualities 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. Assessments 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 National Landscape.

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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 and bring benefits to the National Landscape are those that are most compatible with conserving and enhancing its character and supporting its enjoyment and understanding by the public. 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 National Landscape location include those with no particular reason to be in the area, especially those offering little or no benefit to conserving and enhancing the area's character. These tend to detract from public appreciation and blur the distinction between the National Landscape 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.

DO2

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, Hambleden and Aldbury are among our most popular visitor destinations. New development of all types needs to respect vernacular architecture, historic 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 National Landscape. 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 the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide which is recognised as a supplementary planning document by many of our LPAs, where it holds significant weight in the decision-making process; elsewhere the Guide still carries weight as a 'material consideration' that is based on detailed research and was subject to extensive engagement with stakeholders and the public. It covers topics such as the setting of buildings, the design of vernacular features and the use of traditional local materials. 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.

DP8 Keep skies dark at night by only using light where and when needed. All new lighting should be the minimum required and demonstrate that it complies with published guidance for intrinsically dark zones. Avoid architectural designs that spill light out of large areas of glazing.

The Chilterns National Landscape has relatively dark skies for the south east, making it a place people can still experience the wonder of starry skies and which is good for wildlife. National Landscapes are recognised as 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 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.

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Traditional Chilterns vernacular buildings have small windows. Modern 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.

The CCB has published Lighting Planning Guidance which includes a model policy recommended for inclusion in development plans. While the Guidance includes much by way of technical advice, those installing lighting equipment or designing buildings are strongly recommended to seek the advice of a professional lighting consultant.

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

This document sets out design principles that could reasonably be applied to HS2 works in the Chilterns National Landscape 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 National Landscape or its setting delivers a net gain for the Chilterns by

a. on-site improvements for biodiversity, landscape, the rights of way network, visitor facilities, etc., and/or

b. financial or in-kind contributions, secured through planning agreements including biodiversity net gain, towards wider green infrastructure projects that enhance the National Landscape by meeting the aims of this Management Plan.

The duty under section 85 of the CROW Act for public bodies, including planning decision makers, to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of a National Landscape means that where development is appropriate or necessary in the designated area, or its setting, then there is an imperative to ensure not only that harms are avoided or reduced, but that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the outcome is a positive one for the National Landscape.

Planning agreements, including biodiversity net gain (BNG) can provide a way for developments to fund green infrastructure and biodiversity projects. Using these mechanisms, individual developments can contribute to conservation and restoration projects, and help offset the incremental increases each bring like traffic, recreation pressure, path erosion, and habitat reduction and severance. Avoiding harm, reducing harm and compensating for it is likely to play an increasing role. 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 CCB 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.

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 to projects which assist with delivering Management Plan aims. Such projects should be informed by the Chilterns Nature Recovery Plan and/or by the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy, as well as the content of this Management Plan. For example, investment could repair and connect habitats, or create new active travel green infrastructure links. It is especially important to strengthen the area's capacity for accommodating additional visitors without damage, such as providing suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANGs) in relation to the Chilterns' Special Areas of Conservation (see also Chapter 8, policy EP12).

DP11 Where a local community need is shown, support the development of well-designed, small-scale homes within villages which are affordable for people who work within or have long-standing family connections to the Chilterns National Landscape.

The Chilterns is becoming increasingly expensive as a place to live. Although many homes have been permitted in the AONB in recent years, very little of it has been affordable housing and the stock of affordable homes has dwindled through the right to buy and loss of tied accommodation that goes with a job. 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 National Landscape needs to stay, and the area's cultural heritage is lost when families with long local connections move away.

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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.

We need new approaches to make sure the right kind of housing is being built. This does not mean proposing major housing development in the Chilterns: the challenge is changing who they are for, so that homes are available and affordable for local people. What is required are sensitively-designed conversions, infill, rural exceptions sites and community-led housing schemes in the villages of the National Landscape. 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 National Landscape designation purposes.

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

DO3

DP13 Support opportunities for enhancing the National Landscape by removing derelict or detracting developments and infrastructure.

There are some places in the National Landscape 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 unsightly structures can 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 National Landscape and recommend 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 natural beauty of the Chilterns National Landscape or the visitor experience. Fully assess impacts on the National Landscape, including increased recreation pressure, traffic, overflying and severance of ecological connectivity. Avoid or mitigate harm where possible and compensate for harm if necessary, but always seek to achieve a net gain for the National Landscape.

In recent years, growing traffic volumes, speeding and rat running through the Chilterns have brought more noise, motion, air pollution into the area. 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 enjoying the Chilterns through walking, wheeling, cycling or horse riding.

Unsympathetic, over-engineered road schemes and excessive street lighting can further harm the National Landscape. We have produced design advice on sympathetic management of Chilterns Highways in guidance produced with our local highways authorities.

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, is being 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 will result in more aircraft over-flying the National Landscape and harm its tranquillity. The effects on the Chilterns National Landscape 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

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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. The duty to “seek to further” the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area under section 85 of the CROW Act requires decision-makers to take all reasonable steps to identify how that purpose can be furthered, i.e. to result in a net positive impact for the National Landscape.

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

Householders, farms, community facilities, recreational facilities and businesses in the National Landscape can take simple steps to reduce light pollution by:

- Angling existing lights downwards
- Fitting timers
- Replacing existing lighting with designs appropriate for intrinsically dark zones

More detailed information is provided in CCB’s Lighting Position Statement.

11. Implementation and Monitoring

The creation of a Management Plan for the Chilterns National Landscape 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 and review this plan. The plan describes what is needed to continue to conserve and enhance the National Landscape, to engage and benefit people, and sets out key areas for partnership action.

In 2023 a new section 90A was inserted into the CROW Act 2000 empowering the Secretary of State to issue regulations requiring public bodies to contribute to the preparation, implementation and review of management plans for National Landscapes and setting out how they must do so. These regulations are anticipated to be issued during the lifetime of this plan, and CCB will support its stakeholders in adjusting to the new requirements as they come into force. In the meantime, to implement the plan, the CCB will continue to work with partners to agree and take forward detailed action plans.

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 National Landscape 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 National Landscape, 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 National Landscape.
6. A new Environmental Land Management system, replacing Common Agricultural Policy agri-environment schemes, which provides support for land and woodland management, targeting

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natural capital protection, nature's recovery and access, providing public funding for public benefit.

7. Joint working to develop a menu of green infrastructure 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 Chilterns National Landscape and Chilterns Chalk Streams Project).
10. Design and development of initiatives that attract additional sources of funding such as National Lottery Heritage Fund, green finance and corporate philanthropy.
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 Chilterns National Landscape .

How will the delivery of the Management Plan be monitored?

This Management Plan sets out a vision for the Chilterns National Landscape, supported by a series of objectives and policies, whose implementation through coordinated collaborative action are intended to:

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns
 - Enhance public understanding and enjoyment of the special quality of the National Landscape
- For its own part the Chilterns Conservation Board will produce and publish annually a rolling three-year delivery plan.

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

Gathering evidence against headline indicators is an ongoing challenge requiring increased resource. Many of the indicators proposed in the Management Plan 2019-2024 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 work within the constraints of the Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework presented in Chapter 3 and to update with baseline indicator and supporting statistics as they become available.

We will also draw on a combination of innovative Citizen Science activities (e.g. [Chess Smarter Water Catchments](#) and [Tracking the Impact](#)), national monitoring schemes and cutting-edge scientific techniques to measure trends in nature recovery and chalk stream health across the National Landscape. Lessons learnt from these activities will guide development of future monitoring.

Most of the PLTOFs focus on capturing progress with achieving the primary statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape. The exception is target 9 which relates directly to accessibility and engagement. In addition, CCB has subsidiary duties with regard to the enjoyment and understanding of the National Landscape and the social and economic wellbeing of its communities, which are reflected in the Plan's local indicators 7 and 8 in chapter 3 relating to health walks and visitor numbers. In relation to these issues, we will explore options to measure factors such as the following:

- Number of young people engaged
- Number of community groups engaged
- 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'

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- Number of members of conservation groups in the Chilterns (BBOWT, Chiltern Society, National Trust, Woodland Trust etc.)
- Perceptions of the value of the National Landscape
- Increased number of rights of way, perhaps as permissive or equivalent
- Additional Access Land and Local Green Space designation
- Participation in health walks
- Growth of population within the National Landscape and within 5km of its boundaries
- Number/value of visitors/tourists
- Numbers employed in tourism
- Number of rural exceptions sites and community-led housing schemes to meet local needs

[insert Glossary and Abbreviations, and any other relevant appendices at design stage]

[Acknowledgements, Photography Credits, Chilterns Conservation Board]

Item: 2.6 **Nature Recovery Plan**

Authors: Kate Heppell, Head of Landscape, & Neil Jackson, Conservation and Landscape Officer

Purpose of Report: To seek the Board's approval for the Nature Recovery Plan and authority for officers to complete and publish the Plan with final sign off by the Chair and CEO.

Background

The Nature Recovery Plan is not a statutory plan but is the result of a commitment made by National Landscapes in 2019 as part of the Colchester Declaration. Following the statutory requirement for certain local authorities to produce Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSSs) under the Environment Act 2021, the principle of National Landscape Nature Recovery Plans was retained as good practice to ensure that nature conservation and recovery efforts could be coordinated across administrative boundaries and help to deliver the objectives of National Landscape's Management Plans.

The CCB's draft Nature Recovery Plan was developed in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities, NGOs and other experts, with a steering group that actively advised and contributed throughout the Plan's development and included one Board member (James Norman) with the above purpose carefully in mind. Officers are confident that the draft Plan reflects the objectives of the Management Plan and the wider policies and priorities of the CCB.

The draft [Nature Recovery Plan](#) was published online for consultation from 6 May to 3 June. Over 200 people and organisations were invited to comment by email, including all members of the Board. The consultation was advertised in two monthly e-newsletters and on the CCB's website. 22 responses were received (see spreadsheet [here](#)) via the on-line questionnaire and a further two responses via email.

Overall, the plan was well-received by stakeholders, who commended its structure, ambition, and ecological focus. Respondents appreciated the integration of cultural heritage, climate resilience, and community engagement. The plan's emphasis on landscape-scale recovery was particularly welcomed.

'I thought this is a hugely useful document and one which I know I will be referring back to! A clear, well written and evidenced report.' **Natural England**

'This is an excellent plan we are happy to support. In particular we support the priorities for woodland management, PAWS restoration, & condition assessment; mapping ancient & veteran trees; much more detail and action is needed on deer management.' **Woodland Trust**

'Congratulations on producing an excellent, well-structured and thoughtful plan. The document presents a coherent and compelling vision for recovering nature in the Chilterns, with a welcome emphasis on ecological function, landscape-scale recovery, and stakeholder collaboration.'

Zoological Society of London

'I think it is a very comprehensive document indeed. It clearly sets out a plan to reverse biodiversity decline and increase resilience to climate change, shows the need and examples of ways in which people, nature, organisations, volunteers and farmers are working together to achieve the Vision for the Chilterns National Landscape.' **Ellesborough Parish Council**

'We welcome inclusion of a section on heritage considerations with nature recovery in the plan. Furthermore, it is good to see the proposed strategic approach to archaeology and associated short and long-term aims.' **Historic England**

'It's been a really interesting read and gets us fired up to engage our communities to protect what we have.' **Chiltern Rangers**

Three consultees (Misbourne River Action, Upper Thames Branch of Butterfly Conservation and Natural England Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire region) would like to see a strengthened **delivery plan** for nature recovery. Our report is akin to Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) in that it sets out desirable nature recovery outcomes for the landscape for incorporation by local stakeholders into their own plans. The intention is that this document acts as a driver to encourage partnership working across the landscape, and a commitment to meet Defra's Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework targets.

Any future **delivery plan** should dovetail with statutory LNRS ambitions for delivery, and so we intend to work together with the four LNRS that cover the area on a delivery strategy for Chilterns National Landscape. For example, we are leading a workshop at the Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes NEP annual summit on 23 June 2025 to explore with key stakeholders how we should best work together to deliver nature recovery in the Buckinghamshire area of the Chilterns.

In response to the comments that we have received, areas that we will be looking to strengthen in the document include:

Deer Management: Frequently raised as a critical issue, with calls for clear strategies to manage deer populations and mitigate their impact on woodland regeneration and biodiversity.

Woodland Resilience: Strong support for enhancing woodland health, including Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) restoration, ancient tree mapping, and increasing structural and genetic diversity.

Heritage Integration: Respondents encouraged deeper integration of cultural and historic landscape features into nature recovery strategies.

Species Prioritisation: Feedback included the need to better justify species choices, consider ecosystem roles, and consolidate species lists.

Process-Led Recovery: Some respondents advocated for allowing natural processes like regeneration and succession to play a larger role alongside targeted interventions.

Length of document: The document is over 100 pages when presented in Word format, but is being designed (for online reading only) with interactive links so that readers can easily find the sections of interest and relevance to them. We are also designing a series of leaflets with key messages for target audiences (e.g. members of the public, farmers and landowners, parish councils) and links to appropriate sections of the report.

Officers will complete the assessment of individual consultation responses and amend the plan as appropriate, including clear confirmation of the extent of the CCB's role and responsibility for Nature Recovery in the Chilterns National Landscape. When published, the Nature Recovery Plan will support delivery of the refreshed Management Plan (see item 2.5), including assisting with balancing nature recovery objectives with other objectives of the wider Plan. It will also assist with securing funding for nature recovery projects, including through biodiversity net gain (BNG).

To enable swift progress to publication, officers are seeking the Board's in-principle support for the Nature Recovery Plan as it currently stands, recognising that a final version will incorporate submissions made on the consultation by stakeholders, as outlined above. We further seek for the Board to grant authority to officers to publish the final revised Plan, subject to sign-off by the Board chair and CEO.

Recommendations:

- 1. To APPROVE the Nature Recovery Plan**
- 2. To APPROVE publication of the Nature Recovery Plan, as amended taking into account feedback following stakeholder consultation, subject to final approval by the Chair and CEO.**

Item 3.1**CEO Update**

Author: Elaine King, CEO

Purpose of Report: To update the Board on key areas of work during the last period.

Background

This report comprises highlights from a particularly busy period since the Board meeting in March 2025.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The SLT continues to take oversight of the organisation's activities, meeting weekly to plan, monitor, and deliver across a range of areas. A key focus of attention has continued to be on budgets and business planning, in particular securing confirmation of our Defra grant settlement for this financial year and understanding the criteria for the capital (CDEL) uplift.

Our core grant has now been received and is expected to clear in our bank account on the 16th June. We now also have greater clarity on the criteria for Capital (CDEL) funding, following National Landscapes sending a further series of questions and scenarios of potential spending to Defra, including a number developed by the SLT based on our proposed spending. Most, but not all of our plans, are eligible, and we continue to seek clarity on some points where we appear to have received contradictory advice. More detail was set out in the Funding Strategy update to the Executive Committee in May [here](#).

Other key work being led and managed by the SLT include finalising a refreshed Chilterns AONB Management Plan, preparing for and managing a public consultation on our Nature Recovery Plan (launched on 6th May), liaising with Natural England regarding its Boundary Review, supporting Defra in preparing to recruit new Secretary of State appointed Board members, ensuring succession planning amongst Board members, assisting and advising local authorities in appointing members to the Board following the local elections, exploring new funding opportunities, finalising our new HR policies, completing appraisal meetings and associated reports, running a whole-team prioritisation exercise to better identify priorities, time allocations and manage workloads, managing risk, including implementing new systems for risk assessments, and collaborating with the National Landscapes Association (NLA) and other National Landscapes.

We are also maintaining momentum in implementing actions arising from October's staff engagement survey, some of which were already being addressed through the organisational transformation project, such as improving IT systems and information management, improving the office environment and exploring and introducing an HR system.

Refreshing the Chilterns AONB Management Plan

Following the Board approval in March of a slightly amended timetable for preparing the Management Plan, the team has made final adjustments to the refreshed plan, which has included incorporating feedback submitted as part of the stakeholder consultation on the Plan.

Work during this period included finalising screening reports for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the Plan, along with developing an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to demonstrate compliance with the public sector equality duty (s.149 of the Equality Act 2010).

A further email was also sent to all local authorities to encourage non-responders to the public consultation to send their feedback. The TFG also met in April and met again on the 11th June before the Board meeting to review and sign off the final plan. See paper 2.5 for more detail.

Changes to the Board

The process for recruiting five new Secretary of State appointed Board members is reaching the end point, with the Board's Chair having assisted Defra in short-listing applications and sitting on the panel for interviews (being conducted w/c 16th June). John and I will share some reflections on the experience at the meeting, and once the process is complete.

Following the May local elections in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Hertfordshire, I've liaised with local authority officers, new Leaders and new members to the Board, which has included providing the new [briefing paper](#) on the Roles and Responsibilities of the CCB's Board members.

Two of our five Bucks Council appointed members are new – Cllr Martin Tett (former Leader of the Council) and Cllr Justine Fulford. Cllr Adrian England joins us from Dacorum Borough Council, replacing Council Leader, Cllr Sally Symington, and a meeting is being arranged with Adrian, Sally and Diane Southam, Interim Strategic Director for Place and Communities, in August. The new Leader at Herts County Council, Cllr Steve Jarvis, is a former Board member and we are waiting to hear of any updates from them, plus Oxfordshire County Council's plans to replace former Board member, David Bartholomew, who was not re-elected.

Other local and national government engagement

In addition to supporting the Board and local authorities with regards to new Board members, I've liaised very closely during this period with Tom Beeston, Chief Officer at the Chiltern Society, to advocate for the Chilterns National Landscape with MPs, local councils and their elected members.

A number of meetings and events have been held or are planned. For example, in May, we were joined on the River Chess in Chesham by Sarah Green MP and the Leader of the Liberal Democrats, Ed Davey, where we discussed the value of collaboration between the CCB, Chiltern Society, Bucks Council, NGOs, funders and local community groups, showcasing the river restoration project on The Moor.

Tom and I also had a very productive discussion with Steve Bambrick and Eric Owens at Bucks Council in early June, on subjects including the CCB's new Chalk Streams Planning Guidance and ensuring a good flow of information between the Council and the CCB (Board members and staff).

Former Board member, Cllr Carl Jackson, has also been appointed Cabinet member for, Environment, Climate Change and Waste at Bucks Council, and Tom and I are meeting him with his predecessor, Cllr Thomas Broom, in July.

On the 17th June, I will be contributing with Tom Beeston and our Head of Landscape Kate Heppell, to a briefing session in Parliament on chalk streams, hosted by Henley MP, Freddie van Mierlo. Our aims include supporting the re-convening of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Chalk Streams, advocating for legal protection for chalk streams and sharing some of the data and evidence from our collaborative project work in the Chilterns – for example the River Chess Citizen Science [Report](#), the [Chalk Streams Planning Guidance](#) and the outcomes of the [Smarter Water Catchment](#) project.

A joint Chiltern Society and Chilterns National Landscape briefing has been developed for the session, which can be provided to members on request. The briefing supports advocacy work being carried out by others in this area, such as the Wildlife Trusts, and one of our local Trusts, BBOWT in particular, linked in part to the government removing from the Planning and Infrastructure Bill proposals to provide legal protection to chalk streams.

Following the decision at the Board meeting in March to convene a group to advise on and plan local authority engagement, Richard Newcombe, Matt Thomson and I met in May to discuss the priorities for the group. A paper is being drafted and a further meeting to discuss it

will be held in late July/early August, with a view to the full group meeting before the next Board meeting in September.

Discussions are also ongoing with Defra officials on a number of areas, including governance arrangements for conservation boards, funding for Protected Landscapes, a proposal for conservation boards to be statutory consultees, and advocating for one of the government's proposed nine new river walks to include one in the Chilterns (we are advocating the Lea, whose source is on the site of the Nature Calling project in Luton) and the River Chess.

External engagement

This period has also seen a number of meetings with partners and stakeholders, including a number of the CCB team meeting with the NFU's County Advisor, Nathan Boyd to discuss partnership with farmers, improved information sharing and to maximise opportunities for farmers to benefit from the Farming in protected Landscape programme, and be involved with the CCB's five farmer clusters.

In May, I also attended the third Future Countryside event, co-hosted by Julian Glover who led the Landscapes review, and held this year at Chatsworth in the Peak District National Park. The event was an excellent opportunity to speak with some of the key organisations and individuals in the environment, farming and landscapes sector.

Other meetings planned include with Tim Hill at the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Stewart Pomeroy at the Colne Valley Regional Park, and John Nicholls will be representing the CCB at a reception for the Canal and River Trust on 30th June. I will also be joining several members of the team at the Centre for Hydrology and Ecology (CEH) on the 16th June, to meet those involved with the Floods Droughts and Research Infrastructure ([FDRI](#)) programme. Our Head of Landscape, Kate Heppell, is the Chess Champion for a new FDRI project that monitors the entire hydrological system of a river, helping to better understand and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Natural England's Boundary Review

Board members will by now be aware that, in early June, Natural England announced its decision to cancel its project to review the Chilterns boundary. This decision was communicated to us in confidence in early April, which gave us time to consider our response. John Nicholls, our Chair, and I also wrote to Natural England's CEO to express our huge disappointment, to seek answers and to urge for the project to continue. We understand that the decision was precipitated by Defra cutting Natural England's budget for landscape designations.

Officers tabled a confidential paper for the Executive Committee meeting on 7th May, ahead of the announcement being made, setting out the situation, our planned actions, and to enable officers to brief the Committee and seek their observations. In the interest of open government, the paper has now been published, as the matter is no longer confidential, and can be found in the papers for the Executive Committee meeting [here](#).

The CCB's [response](#) to the announcement was circulated to all our stakeholders, including local authorities and MPs either with parts of their constituencies in the Chilterns National Landscape, or would potentially have had if the boundary review had been completed. John Nicholls and I have also written this month to the Defra Secretary of State, Mary Creagh.

Following the communication to MPs, a number of meetings have been arranged to discuss the matter further, for example with Blake Stephenson MP (Mid Bedfordshire & PPS to the Shadow Chancellor), and a number of MPs have either written to the Minister or discussed the matter with them, including Emma Reynolds MP (High Wycombe and Economic Secretary to the Treasury) and Laura Kyrke-Smith MP (Aylesbury).

Nature Recovery Plan

The Nature Recovery Plan is largely complete, following a public consultation on 6th May and subject to any final observations from the Board. Kate Heppell and Neil Jackson have led development of the Plan, with input from a other colleagues, and a communications strategy agreed with Vicki Pearce, our Communications Manager. See paper 2.6 for more detail.

Risk management

The SLT keeps a close eye on, and mitigates where possible, issues that present potential risk to the organisation, as outlined in the Risk Register. These largely focus on finance and personnel. We continue to monitor the status of Thames Water, which makes a significant contribution towards the Chilterns Chalk Streams Project (CCSP) and is the primary funder of the River Chess Smarter Water Catchment pilot (SWC). That said, we have secured all committed funding in advance also secured additional funding – see Funding Strategy update for more detail.

Collaborating with the National Landscape Association and other Protected Landscapes

Work with the [NLA](#) includes continuing to advocate the value of National Landscapes to the government in order to secure the level of funding required for us to deliver our statutory purposes effectively and meet the government's ambitions and targets.

Recently we have been liaising with the NLA and other National Landscapes over the extent and criteria for the capital (CDEL) funding for 2025/26, resulting in a set of criteria that we feel we can work with, subject to clarification on some remaining queries. However, the challenge remains that revenue funding is reduced, making it difficult to ensure we have enough staff capacity to deliver capital projects.

Discussions on the specific financial challenges for Conservation Boards are ongoing with the CEO at the Cotswolds Conservation Board, the NLA and Defra. See Funding Strategy update in the May Executive Committee papers for further detail.

Other key areas in which we are engaging with the NLA and the wider family of Protected Landscapes include:

- implementing Defra's Protected Landscapes [Targets and Outcomes Framework \(PLTOF\)](#)
- developing Climate Adaptation Plans
- implementation by Relevant Authorities of the s85 Duty in the CRoW Act (and similar duties for National Parks and the Broads), including assessing the impacts of emerging case law
- Responding to a new government [call for evidence](#) on examples of using private finance to support nature recovery. We have some experience to share, not least through our partnership with Affinity Water and Thames Water, with the former funding our work on chalk streams and farmer clusters, and the latter funding River Chess Smarter Water Catchment project, and both providing financial support for the Chilterns Chalk Streams project.

I also joined National Landscape and National Parks Lead Officers in the South East and East in early April to discuss current issues and opportunities, with some useful actions being taken forward on areas including green finance, planning and wider fundraising initiatives.

Several of the staff team will also be attending the NLA's annual conference in Winchester in early July. I have proposed that Steph Horn, who led production of the Chalk Streams Planning Guidance, contributes to a 'one slide, three minutes' briefing session at the conference, where National Landscape colleagues share a success with others. The chalk streams planning guidance focusses on the Chilterns but is a blueprint designed to also be implemented in other areas of the country.

Staff engagement survey

As reported previously, an annual staff engagement survey was conducted in October 2024. We are now taking forward plans to address areas where staff felt improvements can be made

– largely centred on improved collaboration, internal communication, training and development, and addressing workloads, with a clear link between the pressures of workload and the impact this has on the ability to communicate and collaborate effectively. Current activities include establishing three focus groups. The IT and Information Management focus group is progressing work including exploring development of a new HR System and a new Health & Safety System and making the most effective use of HubSpot and Mail Chimp. The Office Environment focus group has made huge progress in improving the office, while the focus group to improve internal communications and collaboration will be established shortly.

The first quarterly updates to the team - 'you said, we did' - was circulated in mid-March, along with the first quarterly Pulse Survey circulated at the end of March. A further Pulse Survey is planned in the coming weeks and the full annual survey will be repeated in October 2025.

Improving IT systems and information management

In October we launched the **Information Management Transformation Programme** which started with a review of our options for IT systems and information management (Phase 1) and addresses some of the CCB's key operational and compliance risks. The review included exploring continued use of the F Drive as our primary filing system, full movement to Teams and Sharepoint, as well as testing a cloud IT solution, 'Egnyte'. In December, following discussion with key staff in the CCB as well as with our current IT provider, the results were presented to the SLT and a decision in principle made that the CCB will move to adopting Teams and Sharepoint as our primary information management system.

In January we kicked off a planning phase (Phase 2) and contracted Anna Foster (who has led similar work for other organisations) to test the decision in principle through collating and addressing staff and organisational issues and requirements, and to ensure that we establish an effective transition plan for the whole organisation. The planning phase is now complete, having been informed by an excellent report from Anna, in part informed by feedback from all members of the staff team.

Improving the office environment

A number of improvements to the office environment have been made during recent months including:

- Replacing the path around the office, leading to the car park
- Improving external lighting
- Purchasing two stand up desks
- Replacing a fridge and kettle
- Fitting more window blinds in the office
- Establishing more work space in the out-house adjacent to the main office

We are currently working on other areas such as providing staff with locker space.

New HR system

In December, a working group comprising the CEO, Head of Operations, Senior Administration Officer and an external consultant (contracted for six months to help lead our HR work) reviewed a number of HR systems. A preferred provider has been identified, and this will be progressed once other transformation work has been completed.

Recommendation:

1. **To NOTE and provide feedback on the update.**



Chilterns National Landscape

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the Conservation Board for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**HELD ON Wednesday 7th May 2025 at The Meeting Room, Chilterns Conservation Board,
90 Station Road, Chinnor OX39 4HA commencing at 11.00 AM.**

Present:

Cllr Hector Sants	Board Member – Chair
Sue Rowlands	Board Member – online
Cllr Charles Hussey	Board Member
Cllr Louise Price	Board Member
Cllr Richard Newcombe	Board Member
Cllr Phillip Spicer	Board Member
Cllr John Griffin	Board Member
John Nicholls	Board Member – Chair of the Board
Richard Newcombe	Board Member

In attendance:

Elaine King	Chief Executive Officer
Andy Brock-Doyle	Head of Operations
Graham Hurst	Finance Officer
Matt Thomson	Head of Strategy & Planning and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Lorna Coldwell	Clerk to the Board and Minute taker
Kathryn Foster	Senior Finance Manager
Kate Heppell	Head of Landscape
Annette Weiss	Head of Engagement and Partnerships - online

The Chair welcomed all present.

24/25.52 Standing Items

52.1 Apologies for absence

Paul Mains – Secretary of State.

52.2 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

52.3 Chair's Announcements

No announcements from the Chair.

Cllr Richard Newcombe advised that, as he is not standing for re-election at Buckinghamshire Council, he will therefore be replaced after its Annual General Meeting.

Cllr Louise Price has been elected to Hertfordshire County Council and remains appointed to the Board by Three Rivers District Council.

CCB Executive Committee Meeting

Wednesday 7th May 2025**52.4 Notice of Urgent Business**

None.

52.5 Approval of Minutes of the previous meeting 24/02/25

The minutes of the meeting 24/02/25 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

The Chair of the Board asked if papers can be presented to the next Executive Committee relating to minute 48.2, recommendation to identify any further functions to be performed by the Executive Committee.

52.6 Matters Arising

All items covered on the agenda.

52.7 Consideration of Motions Submitted by Members

None at this meeting.

52.8 Public Questions

No members of the public were present.

24/25.53 Items for Decision**53.1 Reserves Policy**

The Senior Finance Manager, Kathryn Foster, advised that there is currently a brief Reserves Policy set out in the Constitution and that it would be useful to have a more comprehensive policy to be included in the new Financial Regulations, which are being drafted. Based on assessments that have been carried out, it is proposed that an overall Unrestricted Reserves comprises a new consolidated General Reserve of £338k (combining the current General Reserve and Revenue Reserve) and a separate Development Reserve of £258k.

- 1. The Executive Committee APPROVED the proposed new framework for the Reserves Policy and that this be incorporated into the Financial Regulations being updated as part of the review of the Constitution**
- 2. The Executive Committee APPROVED the consolidation of reserves into General Reserve for recommendations to the Board.**

53.2 2025/26 Budget

The Senior Finance Manager, Kathryn Foster, had provided a paper to set out the proposed final 2025-26 Core Budget. This budget envelope shows a £97k deficit for 2025-26 and proposes to use the current 2024-25 year surplus, estimated to be £111k, to fund the deficit. The anticipated position after two years is a surplus of £14k and relieves pressure on reserves to fund the deficit. The guidance from Defra on the use of the allocated £348k Capital (CDEL) funds is being assessed. There is still uncertainty over how those funds will be used. It is hoped that the forthcoming three-year settlement from Defra will make future budget setting easier going forward.

- 1. The Executive Committee APPROVED the final 2025/26 Budget for recommendation to the Board**
- 2. The Executive Committee APPROVED the use of reserves towards the organisational transformation work that are not deemed to be eligible for Defra CDEL funding for recommendation to the Board.**

53.3 Financial Approvals

CCB Executive Committee Meeting

Wednesday 7th May 2025

The Senior Finance Manager, Kathryn Foster, had provided a paper detailing the need to make changes to the Financial Approvals. This is an interim measure whilst the Constitution review and updating of Financial Regulations is being undertaken. The increased limits proposed better reflect inflationary costs and the current economic reality, making the approval of payments more efficient.

- 1. The Executive Committee APPROVED the changes to Financial Approvals effective from 01/04/25 for recommendation to the Board.**
- 2. The Executive Committee NOTED that these changes will be incorporated into the Financial Regulations as part of the updated Constitution**

53.4 Local Authority Engagement Advisory Group

The Chair of the Board, John Nicholls, proposed to establish an informal working group to address working relations with Local Authorities within the Chilterns National Landscape. The group would meet infrequently to discuss items set out in his paper, including how to improve the relationship between the organisation and Local Authorities. Board members Cllr Richard Newcombe, Gemma Harper, Cllr Louise Price, and Cllr Hector Sants have volunteered to take part in the working group, which will also involve the CEO Elaine King and the Senior Finance Manager, Kathryn Foster. Similar work with town and parish councils would be conducted later.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer, Matt Thomson, advised that it would be prudent to co-opt Cllr Newcombe to the Executive Committee when he ceases to be a Board member, which will be addressed before the next meeting.

- 1. The Executive Committee APPROVED the establishing of a group and IDENTIFIED participants**

53.5 Exclusion of the Public and Press

The Head of Strategy & Planning and Deputy Monitoring Officer, Matt Thomson, advised that the procedure for a confidential session is being reviewed to enable a proportionate approach. As there were no members of the public present, it was proposed to leave the video and sound of the Zoom call enabled, which was unanimously agreed. The call is not recorded. It was resolved to exclude the public, of which there were none present.

- 1. The Executive Committee APPROVED the motion to exclude any members of the public and press**

53.6 Natural England's Boundary Review project (confidential paper)

This agenda item was discussed in closed session because, while Natural England had advised the CCB's Chief Executive in April that it would be cancelling its Chilterns Boundary Review project, the announcement was not expected to be made public until after the Executive Committee meeting. The paper sought to inform the Committee, advise it on current and planned actions and seeking observations and advice from the Committee.

The Committee expressed its significant concern at the cancellation of the work, not least due to the lost opportunities and the significant investment of time and resources by the Chilterns National Landscape team and various stakeholders already expended on the project. Members questioned whether the decision was connected to the government's apparent drive for economic growth at all costs.

CCB Executive Committee Meeting

Wednesday 7th May 2025

The CCB's CEO and Chair have written to Natural England's CEO to make clear the CCB's deep disappointment at the decision and to request assurances that the review can be resumed in the future.

Further actions include drafting a statement for publication at the time Natural England announces its decision, outlining the CCB's concerns and highlighting the potential environmental implications of this decision. The CEO will also prepare a paper for the next Executive Committee meeting, with an update and next steps.

1. The Executive Committee NOTED the paper and its contents in closed session

Update: Natural England announced its decision on 9th June. The CCB responded with a [statement](#) published on its website and circulated to key stakeholders and partners, including MPs and local authorities. The CCB is now able to publish the confidential paper, and this is included in an updated set of papers for this Executive Committee meeting, posted [here](#) on the CCB's website.

24/25.54 Items for Noting/Information

54.1. Quarter 4 Finance Report

The Senior Finance Manager, Kathryn Foster, reported on the accounts to 31st March 2025.

Core profit was £111k for the year to 31st March 2025, against a budgeted surplus of £10k. This is mainly due to better than anticipated interest income which will continue next financial year, lower planning consultancy costs, and legal contract review being deferred into financial year 2025-26.

An additional £114k capital funds were received from Defra for 2024-25. These monies have been spent on Core and Project activities, including a drone, water monitoring equipment and IT investments. Project income is £3.277m, costs are £3.572m and there is a deficit on projects of £295k overall.

The year-end review and reconciliation work are being undertaken.

1. The Committee NOTED the financial position as of 31st March 2025

54.2. Quarter 4 Delivery Report

The Head of Operations, Andy Brock-Doyle, had circulated a paper to update the Executive Committee on the progress of the Chilterns National Landscape team between January and March 2025 against the financial year 2024-25 Delivery Plan. In Q4 (January-March 2025):

- 51 (49 in Q3) delivery lines reported as completed or progressing on track (51) (50%)
- 24 (29 in Q3) delivery lines reported as being slightly delayed / slightly limited in effectiveness (23%)
- 13 (15 in Q3) delivery lines reported as being significantly delayed / significantly limited in effectiveness (13%)
- 15 (9 in Q3) delivery lines have been postponed for reconsidering in FY25-26 planning (15%)

1. The Committee NOTED the Q4 Delivery report

54.3. Funding Strategy

The Executive Committee was provided with a paper detailing the progress on delivering the Funding Strategy by Elaine King, Chief Executive Officer, which was taken as read. Whilst overall funding from Defra has increased this year, revenue funding has declined in real terms because of inflation, increases to employer National Insurance contributions, and new requirements being placed on

National Landscapes by the government. The three-year settlement from Defra is expected in June/July. The CCB continues to press Defra to recognise the additional funding challenges of conservation boards, and to contribute its views on a fairer funding formula.

The CEO and members if the team are also actively exploring, with some success, securing funds from other sources. She gave thanks to the team for their efforts.

1. The Committee NOTED the Funding Strategy update

54.4. Chief Executive Officer’s Update

A comprehensive paper was circulated by the CEO, which was taken as read with highlights including:

- The SLT continue to oversee the organisation’s activities, planning, monitoring, and delivering across a wide range of areas.
- The public consultation for the Nature Recovery Plan will commence on 6th May.
- Support has been given to Defra in the recruitment campaign for new Secretary of State Board members, including ensuring succession planning amongst Board members.
- Final adjustments are being made to the Management Plan refresh, the final version of which will be taken to the next Board meeting on 19th June.
- Collaboration with the National Landscapes Association and other Protected Landscapes continues on a range of areas including funding arrangements, implementing Defra’s biodiversity targets, responding to the draft Land Use Framework and implementing s85 of the CRoW Act (as amended by s245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act).
- Following up on the staff engagement survey including establishing two focus groups, one on IT and Information Management, the other on improving the office environment. Work on the latter has included replacing the outside footpath, improving external lighting, purchasing new equipment and improving the office environment for staff, such as standing desks and new kitchen items.

1. The Committee NOTED the CEO’s update

24/25.55 Any Urgent Business

None, all items covered in the agenda.

Cllr John Griffin wished to flag that, whilst on the Risk Assessment already, cyber security is a big topic currently in the media. The Head of Operations, Andy Brock-Doyle, confirmed that information management is being addressed, including conversations with the CCB’s IT provider, who are happy with the current system in place.

24/25.56. Next Executive Committee meeting

Tuesday 9th September 2025 at 10am.

Further meeting Dates:

Planning Committee	Executive Committee	Board
		Thursday 19 th June, 10am Location tbc

CCB Executive Committee Meeting

Wednesday 7th May 2025

	Tuesday 9 th September, 10am Chinnor Village Centre	Thursday 25 th September, 10am Gateway Offices, Buckinghamshire Council, Aylesbury
Thursday 23 rd October, 10am Chinnor Office	Thursday 13 th November, 10am Chinnor Village Centre	Thursday 11 th December, 10am Gateway Offices, Buckinghamshire Council, Aylesbury

The meeting was closed at 12.52.

The Chair.....

Date.....

Chilterns Conservation Board

Planning Committee meeting 17th April 2025

Chilterns National Landscape

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF
THE CHILTERN'S CONSERVATION BOARD
held on Thursday 17th April 2025 at CCB offices, The Lodge, 90 Station Road,
Chinnor OX39 4HA commencing at 10.00 AM**

Present:

Cllr Louise Price	Board Member	Local Authorities
Cllr Charles Hussey	Board Member	Parish Councils
Simon Mortimer*	Board Member	Secretary of State
Cllr Paula Hiscocks*	Board Member	Local Authorities
Paul Hayes*	Co-opted Member	

In attendance:

Matt Thomson	Head of Strategy & Planning	Officer
Mike Stubbs	Planning Advisor	Officer
Lorna Coldwell	Clerk to the Board and Minute taker	Officer

*listened online

No public present.

The Chair welcomed all present and introductions were made. The Head of Strategy and Planning, Matt Thomson noted that the meeting was inquorate due to lack of Secretary of State appointees in the room. The meeting was duly adjourned and key decisions deferred to the next meeting. Those present agreed to continue discussions on the agenda items as an update for members and an informal steer for officers.

24/25.29 Apologies for absence

Apologies received and accepted from Committee members:

Cllr Sue Rowlands – Parish Council member
Colin Courtney – Secretary of State member
Cllr Robert Carington – Local Authority member
Chris Hannington – Co-opted member
Elaine King – Chief Executive Officer

24/25.30

Declarations of Interest

None declared.

24/25.31 Notice of Urgent Business

None.

24/25.32 Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2025

The minutes from the meeting were taken as a true record but could not be signed by the Chair due to not being quorate.

24/25.33 Matters Arising

- The Head of Strategy and Planning, Matt Thomson will circulate the response to the Dacorum Local Plan and upload the response on the shared drive for all to see. A reminder of how to access this will also be sent to members.
- It was agreed at the March Board meeting to defer the approval of the Management Plan refresh until the June Board meeting. This will allow for a better understanding of consultation responses, and for conversations with Local Authorities to take place, particularly with those who did not respond to the consultation so they have a chance to give input and feel able to endorse the Management Plan refresh.
- The Head of Strategy and Planning, Matt Thomson is exploring working with contractors for the Planning Officer role that has not been filled and is in the process of obtaining quotations and discussions with various organisations.

Action: MT to forward Dacorum Local Plan response

24/25.34 Considerations of Motions Submitted by Members

No motions received.

24/25.35 Public Question Time

None in attendance.

24/25.36 Planning Committee work programme (summary paper)

Several Local Authorities, namely Buckinghamshire Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire County Council along with some Parish Councils are currently in a pre-election period, and appointees to the Board and Committees will be addressed post-election if needed.

The Board approved at its last meeting the Lighting Position Statement and the Chilterns Chalk Stream guidance; these will be ready for publication within the next months.

As agreed last year, there is no Planning Committee meeting until October however a written update will be circulated in July when a meeting would have been held if frequency had not been decreased.

1. The Committee NOTED these updates**24/25.37 Strengthened section 85 duty – key decisions and implications (summary paper)**

The Head of Strategy and Planning, Matt Thomson had provided a detailed paper regarding the strengthening of the section 85 duty to “seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area” from “have regard” to the same purpose. The National Landscapes Association published guidance in November 2024, and Defra in December 2024. In December 2024, a High Court judgement regarding a planning application in the New Forest National Park was the first judgment to the new legislation and will therefore have significance to the strengthened duties and how they are applied in practice. The Local Planning Authority refused an application for

Chilterns Conservation Board

Planning Committee meeting 17th April 2025

an upper storey extension to a house located in the National Park, which subsequently was taken to appeal and approved by the Planning Inspectorate. The LA then went to the High Court to challenge the decision, which was dismissed. It was deemed that the level of attention paid to the duty should be proportionate to the level of impact the proposal has on the National Landscape. If there is a minor impact, then the proposal should not be expected to significantly enhance the area.

The Head of Strategy and Planning will circulate a written statement to Committee members outlining the potential future implications of the verdict. Both the National Parks and National Landscapes teams are currently reviewing the matter.

The application for the extension at Luton Airport was approved by the Secretary of State, a written report will be provided in due course. The approval considers the recommendations from the Planning Inspectorate and work has been completed to addresses issues raised. Committee members queried if a Judicial Review could be held, however it is not felt in this case it would be warranted. £250,000 was agreed as per the suggestion from the applicant for a fund for enhancement of the National Landscape. The Secretary of State viewed the impact to the National Landscape as slight, therefore the funding is also slight. It was suggested to seek to gear this settlement to CPI to account for future inflation, as the sum is not due to be triggered until a certain point in the expansion process which is scheduled for the 2030s.

The Chair thanked the planning team for the explanations and hard work on this matter.

Action: MT to circulate responses to the High Court judgement when available

1. The Committee NOTED these updates

24/25.38 Development Management Casework Update (full paper)

Mike Stubbs, Planning Advisor had provided a detailed paper on live cases. He noted that a new format had been created for reporting items so the Committee members received a shorter version of representations made, picking out points of particular importance. He also commented that there has been an uptake in the number of requests for comments by various organisations received, due to an increase in applicants appealing decisions.

Between January and March 2025, a total of 23 responses were made, including 5 appeal representations, 4 objection in principles, 4 supportive comments.

Particular note was made of the following applications:

- Land at Green Park Copperkilns Lane Amersham – 8 enforcement notices were upheld to remove an unauthorised caravan site.
- OS Field 7141, Latimer Road, Chenies (unauthorised chicken farm) was dismissed on appeal, notices were upheld but varied on time for remedies.
- London Luton Airport expansion – as discussed, the Secretary of State permitted
- Land between Footpath 79 and Park Lane Stokenchurch – a prior approval application for an agricultural building under permitted development, to which an objection in principle has been submitted to seek a full planning application. The proposed building is intrusive within the National Landscape.
- DBC 23/01894/FUL Frithsden Vineyard Frithsden Lane Frithsden – formation of a new winery. Following amendments requested, the application is now suitable and has been supported.

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- CBC CB/25/00140/VOC Mile Barn Farm Dagnall – following amendments the scheme is now acceptable and a comment of support has been submitted.

A brief update was provided regarding the National Trust site at Ashridge, Meadley’s Meadow following a site visit by the Committee in September 2024. The National Trust have submitted a proposal for temporary parking at the beginning of April. This is the first of several stages to resolve the parking issue to avoid further environmental damage and unlawful parking.

1. **The Committee NOTED the updates in the paper but were unable to ENDORSE and this was DEFFERED to the October meeting due to note being quorate**

24/25.39 Planning Policy Casework Update (verbal update)

A list of current casework was provided, including the Grand Union Canal Transfer and applications located within the National Landscape but with no responses proposed.

24/25.40 Urgent Business

The Head of Strategy and Planning, Matt Thomson discussed the proposed Grand Union Canal Transfer and provided a summary of the scheme, which is to take water from the Severn Trent area in the Midlands and pump through to an existing underground reservoir located between Luton and Dunstable. Whilst the formal process begins in September 2026, the water companies have been in contact with the Chilterns National Landscape since the beginning giving the opportunity to discuss. Whilst it is unlikely that the scheme could be stopped, the effects on the Chilterns and how to mitigate will be investigated.

Cllr Paula Hiscocks raised concerns regarding the current state of the River Chess at Rickmansworth. Cllr Louise Price confirmed she would raise the matter with Three Rivers District Council. Matt Thomson, the Head of Strategy and Planning, advised that as the area falls outside the Chilterns National Landscape it is beyond the team's remit; however, he will refer the issue to the Chalk Streams team.

24/25.41 Dates of the next Meeting

- Thursday 23rd October, 10am, Chilterns National Landscape Office, Chinnor

The meeting was closed at 12.04.

The Chair.....

Date.....