

# Public Document Pack



DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

**Committee: Executive**

**Date: Tuesday 6 January 2026**

**Time: 6.30 pm**

**Venue 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD**

## **Membership**

### **Councillor David Hingley (Chair)**

Councillor Tom Beckett  
Councillor Jean Conway  
Councillor Ian Middleton  
Councillor Rob Pattenden

### **Councillor Lesley McLean (Vice-Chair)**

Councillor Chris Brant  
Councillor Nick Cotter  
Councillor Robert Parkinson

## **AGENDA**

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest that they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

### **3. Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

The Chairman to report on any requests to submit petitions or to address the meeting.

### **4. Minutes (Pages 9 - 22)**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2025.

### **5. Chair's Announcements**

To receive communications from the Chair.

## **6. Urgent Business**

The Chair to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

## **7. Response to Motion: Supporting Young Women's Community Action for Safe Public Spaces (Pages 23 - 30)**

Report of Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety

### **Purpose of report**

To respond to the motion raised at full council in October 2025 requesting Executive to consider supporting young women's community action for safe public spaces.

### **Recommendations**

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To be supportive of the principles identified in the motion set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report.
- 1.2 To continue to support the initiatives identified in the motion through its Community Safety Team, through partnerships such as the Cherwell Community Safety Partnership and the area oversight groups, through engagement with organisers of community initiatives, specifically those referenced in the motion, and by using our communication channels to promote and support these initiatives.

## **8. Mental Health Provision for Young People (Pages 31 - 72)**

Report of Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services

### **Purpose of report**

Following a motion agree at Council in July 2024 to look at increasing spending in mental health initiatives from policy contingency budget for young people. It was subsequently agreed at the November 2024 Executive that the next step was for an increase in mental health provision within the Youth Activator team along with a research paper to be carried out by external provider to assess the needs of young people in Cherwell around mental wellbeing.

This report will outline the key findings from the research paper "*Unmet Mental Health & Wellbeing Need in Primary School - Aged Children*" that was delivered by MIND and agree next steps to address findings.

### **Recommendations**

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To endorse the research paper *“Unmet Mental Health & Wellbeing Need in Primary School - Aged Children”* in Cherwell.
- 1.2 To note the key findings in the research paper and agree to deliver a pilot movement and psychological support programme for a year for 8 – 11 year-olds in fifteen targeted schools through £50,000 Public Health funding and Wellbeing Team staff time to coordinate.

## **9. Simpler Recycling (Pages 73 - 88)**

Report of Assistant Director Environmental Services

### **Purpose of report**

This report sets out the possible options and the proposed recommendation for the waste collection service, following new requirements driven by The Environment Act.

### **Recommendations**

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the completion of a TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment covering paper & cardboard (Appendix 1) until the implications of DRS on the kerbside recycling service is fully understood.
- 1.2 To support a review of the frequency of residual waste collection.
- 1.3 To approve that any changes in the waste collection service should involve consultation with our Waste & Environmental Services Project (WESP) partners.

## **10. Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025 – 2030 (Pages 89 - 202)**

Report of Assistant Director Planning

### **Purpose of report**

To consider and endorse the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025 – 2030.

### **Recommendations**

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To endorse the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030.

## 11. **Climate Action Update** (Pages 203 - 228)

Report of Climate Change Programme Manager

### **Purpose of report**

To update Executive on progress made across Council and District Climate Programmes, including delivery against the Climate Action Plan (CAP), Performance KPIs, and Annual Development Plan (ADP) targets.

### **Recommendations**

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To note the progress achieved against the Climate Action Plan (CAP), Performance KPIs, and Annual Development Plan (ADP) targets between April 2024 and September 2025. As a part of periodic updates, the Climate Team is intending to bring this report annually.

## 12. **Council Tax Base 2026/2027** (Pages 229 - 250)

Report of Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer)

### **Purpose of report**

To provide the Council tax Base for 2026/27.

### **Recommendations**

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the report of the Assistant Director of Finance for the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for 2026/27
- 1.2 To agree that, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Cherwell District Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2026/27 shall be **60,654.5**
- 1.3 To agree for the parishes which form part of its area shown in Appendix 1, the amount calculated as the Council Tax Base for the year 2026/27 in respect of special items shall be as indicated in the column titled Tax Base 2026/27.
- 1.4 To agree for the Flood Defence Areas which form part of its area, the amount calculated as the Council Tax Base for the year 2026/27 for the purposes of levies on Oxfordshire County Council by River Authorities, shall be:

Thames Flood Defence Area	58,217.8
Anglian (Great Ouse) Flood Defence Area	1,965.2
Severn Region Flood Defence Area	471.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60,654.5</b>



### **13. Finance Monitoring Report November 2025 (Pages 251 - 274)**

Report of Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer)

#### **Purpose of report**

To report to Executive the council's forecast year-end financial position as at the end of the November 2025. Further detail can be found in the report and its appendices.

#### **Recommendations**

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To consider and note the contents of the council's financial management report as at the end of November 2025.
- 1.2 To approve the release of £0.060m from Policy Contingency for development resource required for property projects, associated planning advisors, consultancy and initial ground condition reports, as well as information on flooding.
- 1.3 To approve the proposed write offs, set out in exempt Appendix 4.

### **14. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The following item contains exempt information as defined in the following paragraphs of Part 1, Schedule 12A of Local Government Act 1972.

3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Members are reminded that whilst the following item has been marked as exempt, it is for the meeting to decide whether or not to consider it in private or in public. In making the decision, members should balance the interests of individuals or the Council itself in having access to the information. In considering their discretion members should also be mindful of the advice of Council Officers.

No representations have been received from the public requesting that this item be considered in public.

Should Members decide not to make a decision in public, they are recommended to pass the following recommendation:

“That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest

in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

15. **Finance Monitoring Report November 2025 - Exempt Appendix** (Pages 275 - 276)

**Councillors are requested to collect any post from their pigeon hole in the Members' Lounge before or at the end of the meeting.**

## **Information about this Agenda**

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence should be notified to [democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk) or 01295 221534 prior to the start of the meeting.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item.

### **Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates**

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

### **Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012**

This agenda constitutes the 5-day notice required by Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 in terms of the intention to consider an item of business in private.

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**Queries Regarding this Agenda**

Please contact Natasha Clark, Democratic and Elections [democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk), 01295 221534

**Shiraz Sheikh**  
**Monitoring Officer**

Published on Tuesday 23 December 2025

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## **Cherwell District Council**

### **Executive**

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 2 December 2025 at 6.30 pm

#### **Present:**

Councillor David Hingley (Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership) (Chair)  
Councillor Lesley McLean (Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property & Regeneration) (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Tom Beckett, Portfolio Holder for Greener Communities  
Councillor Chris Brant, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services  
Councillor Jean Conway, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management  
Councillor Nick Cotter, Portfolio Holder for Housing  
Councillor Ian Middleton, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services  
Councillor Robert Parkinson, Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities  
Councillor Rob Pattenden, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities

#### **Also Present:**

Councillor David Rogers, Deputy Leader Cherwell Independent and Alliance; and, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

#### **Also Present Virtually:**

Councillor Amanda Watkins, Leader of the Labour Group  
Councillor Les Sibley, Leader of the Independent Group

#### **Officers:**

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive  
Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration  
Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources  
Nicola Riley, Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services  
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer  
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer  
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning  
Heidi Radcliffe Hill, Interim Head of Chief Executive's Office  
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

#### **Officers Attending Virtually:**

Mona Walsh, Assistant Director - Property  
Richard Smith, Head of Housing  
Christina Cherry, Planning Policy, Conservation & Design Manager  
Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead

66        **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

67        **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Rogers, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Deputy Leader of the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance, who, as proposer of the motion, would be speaking in respect of item 7, Response to Motion: Planning Support for Town and Parish Councils; Councillor Watkins, Leader of the Labour Group; and, Councillor Sibley, Leader of the Independent Group.

68        **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2025 and the special meeting held on 13 November 2025 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

69        **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair referred to the illegal landfill in Kidlington and advised that the previous week a joint letter from himself and the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council had been sent to the Prime Minister making it clear on behalf of the Councils that it was very important that the site was cleared as soon as possible. The Councils could not for the criminal investigation. It was very important that it was dealt with, as residents expect, so the Environment Agency and partners were being encouraged to move forward quickly. The Government was being called on to release forward funding to enable the clearance to take place.

The Chair confirmed that the council's proposal for local government reorganisation had been submitted to the Government last Thursday ahead of the deadline. The proposal had been submitted jointly with South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Councils. Feedback from the Government on the proposal was expected next year.

70        **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

## 71 **Response to Motion: Planning Support for Town and Parish Councils**

Executive Director for Place and Regeneration to agree the response to the motion raised at the Council meeting on 20 October with regard to planning support for Town and Parish Councils. To seek approval for the allocation of £15,000 to provide targeted support to parish and town councils (PCs/TCs) in responding effectively to large-scale planning applications.

Councillor Rogers, proposer of the motion, addressed Executive and commented that he was very pleased with the response, which acknowledged the importance of engaging and working with Town and Parish Councils.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the in-year funding of up to £15,000 for the funding of a support package to Town and Parish Councils to respond to planning applications be approved.
- (2) That the virement of £15,000 from Health and Wellbeing (this budget was originally intended for the heating hardship fund, however the Government reinstated the winter fuel allowance national scheme, so this is no longer required) to Planning and Development Management be approved.

### **Reasons**

That Executive approves the allocation of £15,000 to deliver the above support package, enabling parish councils to engage more effectively with large-scale planning applications and contribute meaningfully to the planning process.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: Do Nothing. With a number of significant applications including nationally significant infrastructure projects, this option is not recommended as parish councils will not have access to make appropriate representations.

## 72 **Executive Response to Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations**

The Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Office submitted a report to present the draft Executive responses to four sets of recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee, following the presentation of the scrutiny reports to the Executive on 7 October 2025.

The Chair congratulated Councillor Rogers on his recent appointment as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Executive Responses to the Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations in respect of Planning Application Appeals, Climate Action, Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership be agreed.

### **Reasons**

The recommendations ensure both Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Executive comply with requirements as detailed in Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: Not to provide an Executive response. This is rejected, as it would be contrary to Section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000. Regardless of Executive's decision relating to the various recommendations, a response must be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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### **Infrastructure Funding Statement 2024-2025**

The Head of Development Management submitted a report to seek approval of the Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) 2024-25 for publication by 31 December 2025.

In considering the report, Executive members sought clarification as to why there were no funds in 2024/25 for green infrastructure and, in respect of s106 obligations delivered, the annual variation between funds received and funds spent.

The Assistant Director Planning explained that the IFS gave a picture over a period of time. In particular for larger strategic developments, there were trigger points which may kick in over a period of years. It could therefore be some years before some of the triggers were reached and funds received and then a further period of time before funds were spent. The Assistant Director Planning undertook to liaise with the Head of Development Management who would provide a more response incorporating more detail behind the figures.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That approve the Infrastructure Funding Statement 24-25 be approved for publication by 31 December 2025, subject to any final changes considered to be necessary by the Head of Development Management to secure accuracy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management.

### **Reasons**

The publication of an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is a statutory requirement that provides transparency and accessibility to information about



developer contributions secured by the Council through Section 106 Agreements.

The report has been produced in collaboration with Financial Services and the information contained within it is considered to represent the most robust data available at this time.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: Not to bring forward and Infrastructure Funding Statement. This is not a lawful option and would leave the Council in breach of its statutory duty.

Option 2: Seek review of the key statistics and proposed Infrastructure Funding Statement. Officers consider that this is not required as the information is the most accurate and available at this time.

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### **Annual Monitoring Report (Planning) 2025**

The Assistant Director Planning submitted a report to seek approval for publication of the 2025 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) which included a five-year housing land supply update (as at 31 October 2025). The report also sought approval of the accompanying updates to the Local Plan's Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Brownfield Land Register update (December 2025) and the Regulation 10A review of the adopted policies in the Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (Part 1) Partial Review – Oxford's Unmet Housing Need. (The Partial Review).

In considering the report, Executive members noted that 11,000 homes had been granted permission but were, as yet, unbuilt and these figures were not taken into account by the Government when assessing housing delivery, which resulted in an inaccurate picture of local performance and put pressure on the council to approve planning developments.

In response to a query regarding what the council could do to hold developers accountable and put pressure on developers to bring developments forward, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management explained that the Area Oversight Groups (AOGs) played an important role, Developer Forums were being organised, PR8 was coming forward and the Oxford Growth Commission was also doing work on this.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Regeneration and Property reminded Members that Executive had agreed funding for the AOGs, that would allow them to identify issues with housing land supply and housing delivery. This had resulted in some additional support and external funding from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government in relation to the delivery of housing locally and finding the barriers to ensuring developments could be delivered.

Whilst noting the action the council was taking, at the request of Executive, the Chair, as Leader of the Council, undertook to write to Minister for Housing

setting out the predicament and put pressure on the Government to recognise the situation as well as request that they speed up their infrastructure, including Highways England as appropriate infrastructure was essential alongside any housing development.

## **Resolved**

- (1) That the 2025 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), including a Housing Land Supply Statement and 2024/25 Infrastructure Delivery Plan update be approved for publication.
- (2) That the 2024/25 Brownfield Land Register be approved for publication.
- (3) That the review of the adopted policies in the Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (Part 1) Partial Review – Oxford's Unmet Housing Need under Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 be approved.
- (4) That the Assistant Director Planning be authorised to approve the final presentation of the AMR and Brownfield Land Register and to make any necessary minor administrative amendments and corrections to them prior to formal publication and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management.

## **Reasons**

The Annual Monitoring Report provides important information to measure the effectiveness of planning policies and to assist policy making and development management decision making. It is the statutory mechanism for monitoring housing delivery.

Its most significant conclusions are that Cherwell continues to deliver homes and employment land, albeit its land supply position continues to be challenging following the outcome of a planning appeal requiring combined assessment of the positions for Cherwell's and Oxford's needs and also due to the dependency on the rate of housebuilding. Affordable housing completions have decreased slightly although significantly more social rented homes were provided. Although the district has a high level of planning permission, officers will continue to pursue the objectives of the Housing Delivery Action Plan previously approved by the Executive.

## **Alternative options**

Option 1: Deferment to seek significant amendment of the: 2025 Annual Monitoring Report, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Brownfield Land Register or Regulation 10A Review.

The documents presented comprise technical documents which would support future decision making. They have been prepared to comply with planning legislation and guidance. Professional planning judgement and legal advice has informed the policy review. Monitoring is informed by factual

reporting and updating against relevant indicators and requirements, supported by data and research.

Option 2: Not to approve the documents for publication

Production of an Authorities Monitoring Report is a statutory requirement and the AMR's wider information supports the Local Plan implementation and review. Updating the Brownfield Land Register is also a statutory requirement. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is required to monitor and support delivery of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 and its Partial Review. The Regulation 10A review is also a statutory requirement as the Partial Review Plan is now five years' old.

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### **Flexible Home Improvement Loans Limited - Future of Company**

The Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services submitted a report to update the Executive on Flexible Home Improvement Loans Limited (FHIL) and its status, the alternative governance structures proposed for the company and to agree the preferred model as stated within the recommendations.

In response to a question regarding the benefits of the scheme to the council, the Head of Housing explained that numerous councils in England were involved in similar projects. Following the receipt of grant funding, FHIL had been established in 2008 as a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee, to administer home improvement loans on behalf of its local authority members. FHIL currently had twelve members, including Cherwell District Council. Local authorities assisted residents to apply for the scheme but did not provide the loans.

The Head of Housing confirmed that all twelve partners were considering a similar report, and it was anticipated that all would agree the recommendations. The Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services confirmed that two thirds of the

If response to a query regarding how Cherwell residents had benefited from the scheme and how many legacy loans there were in the district, the Head of Housing undertook to provide the information to Executive members after the meeting.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director Neighbourhood Services to enter into negotiations to form a consortium with other Local Authority members.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director Neighbourhood Services to engage with the procurement of a Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) regulated provider to undertake loan administration services on behalf of the consortium.

- (3) That the Executive Director Neighbourhood Services be authorised to engage with the winding up of Flexible Home Improvement Loans Limited once the net assets have been transferred with the appropriate safeguards.
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, to negotiate and agree new contracts pertaining to the future of Flexible Home Improvement Loans Limited on behalf of the Council.

### **Reasons**

The future of Flexible Home Improvement Loans Limited needs to be decided given the intentions of the host authority, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The decisions made need to give account to our legal obligations. Both within the Memorandum of Association and in accordance with Companies Act, due to Flexible Home Improvement Loans Limited being a Limited Company of which the Council has an appointed Director.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: Another member council, including Cherwell DC, takes over the role of managing Flexible Home Improvement Loans Limited (FHIL). This option is not considered viable as there are no other authorities willing to host FHIL. Cherwell DC does not have the capacity or expertise to host the limited company.

Option 2: Each Council administers its own loans. This option is not considered viable as if a local authority ceases to be a member, it is not permitted to take any funds out of the available fund for its own benefit. When borrowers pay back a loan, councils must ensure that the loan is paid back to the central lending fund.

Option 3: Do nothing. This option is not viable due to Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) signalling its intentions in not being willing to be the host authority. RBWM considers the hosting of FHIL an unnecessary burden in time, effort and resource. This is stated in its Cabinet report.

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### **Thames Valley Devolution Expression of Interest Endorsement**

The Executive Director Place and Regeneration submitted a report which sought endorsement of an Expression of Interest (EOI) to be made by Oxfordshire County Council to Government. This was in response to the Government's devolution policy and sought to position our region in the next round of devolution for the purpose of creating a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA).

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the benefits from the proposed devolution of powers and functions be endorsed and it be agreed to continue building on the collaborative approach across the region to date.
- (2) That the Expression of Interest (EOI) to be submitted by Oxfordshire County Council as the upper-tier authority to Government be endorsed, noting that the EOI is designed to proactively position our region for early consideration in the next wave of the Devolution Programme.
- (3) That the Expression of Interest be acknowledged as an initial invitation to Government, opening further dialogue and engagement, and not a decision to establish a Strategic Authority.
- (4) That it be agreed that a further report will be brought to Executive prior to any final decision by the County Council as upper-tier authority on the creation of a Strategic Authority.
- (5) That it be noted that the informal Devolution Programme Board will oversee discussions with Government, ensuring robust governance and stakeholder engagement by elected members throughout this process.

## **Reasons**

Opting to begin further discussions with Government on devolution would allow the Council to lead the definition of the strategic authority for our region. This will provide choice over the geography and the ability to determine the key priorities for our area.

Should this Council endorse a Mayoral Strategic Authority at a future meeting, it would have a seat at the Council of Nations and the Regions influencing government policy and ensuring local community voice is heard.

## **Alternative options**

The White Paper is clear that the Government intends that all of England be devolved by default and is committed to ending the deals-based approach. The Government will also legislate for a ministerial directive, which will enable it to directly create Strategic Authorities in any places where local leaders in that region have not been able to agree how to access devolved powers. Therefore the “do nothing” option could mean Government legislating on our behalf for devolution.

## **Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026-2027**

The Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to enable Executive to consider the proposed banded scheme for Council Tax Reduction (CTR) for 2026/2027.

In response to a query if pension credit was also applicable as a passported benefit as was not listed, the Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) understood to clarify after the meeting.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the report and any financial implications for the Council be noted.
- (2) That the comments of Budget Planning Committee, who considered the report at their 8 July 2025 meeting and recommended that the current scheme (adjusted for inflationary purposes be retained for 2026/27, be noted.
- (3) That Council be recommended to retain the current scheme for 2026/27.

### **Reasons**

The current scheme is understood by customers and has enabled them to budget for their council tax payments. One of the main advantages of the banded scheme is that it reduces the number of changes that the customer will experience enabling more effective personal budgeting. There is still a lot of financial uncertainty for many customers and in the current financial climate with the ongoing cost of living crisis it is therefore recommended that the existing scheme should be retained for 2026/27.

Budget Planning Committee considered the proposed CTRS scheme for 2026/27 at its meeting on 8 July 2025 and resolved that the Executive be recommended to agree that the current scheme (adjusted for inflationary purposes) be retained for 2026/27.

### **Alternative options**

The alternative option is to undertake a review of the current CTRS scheme but the rationale for not taking this course of action is set out under "reasons".

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### **Finance Monitoring Report October 2025**

The Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to report to the Executive the council's forecast year-end financial position as at the end of the October 2025.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the council's financial management report as at the end of October 2025 be noted.
- (2) That the Use of Reserve and Grant Funding Requests (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.

- (3) That Council be recommended approve the allocation of £1.65m capital budget to undertake roof replacement works at Castle Quay.

### **Reasons**

The report updates the Committee on the projected year-end financial position of the council for 2025/26. Regular reporting is key to good governance and demonstrates that the council is actively managing its financial resources sustainably.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: This report summarises the council's forecast revenue financial position up to the end of March 2026, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

## **79 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

### **Resolved**

That, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **80 Approval to Appoint a Contract for the Provision of the Council's External Print and Mail (Hybrid Mail)**

The Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted an exempt report which sought approval to award a contract for the provision of the Council's external printing and postage, also referred to as Hybrid Mail Solution to Financial Data Management following a competitive procurement process.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the contract for external print and mail contract be awarded to the successful bidder, as set out in the exempt decisions.
- (2) That authority be delegated to Assistant Director Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, to enter into a contract with the successful bidder.

### **Reasons**

Hybrid Mail is an effective cost saving and efficient solutions to manage both digital and physical mail, it offers significant benefits, such as reducing operational costs, saving time, improving quality and consistency, enhancing security and compliance and providing detailed tracking and reporting.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: The current revenues and benefits mail contract has expired, and we are in standard terms and conditions. The Council could decide to do nothing and continue to use the more traditional services for external print and posting. However, by doing so, it would not realise the potential cost savings of using a hybrid mail solution.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm

Chair:

Date:



By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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This report is public	
Response to Motion: Supporting young women's community action for safe public spaces	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	6 January 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities, Councillor Robert Parkinson
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	10 December 025
Report of	Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety, Tim Hughes

## Purpose of report

To respond to the motion raised at full council in October 2025 requesting Executive to consider supporting young women's community action for safe public spaces.

## 1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To be supportive of the principles identified in the motion set out in 2.1 below.
- 1.2 To continue to support the initiatives identified in the motion through its Community Safety Team, through partnerships such as the Cherwell Community Safety Partnership and the area oversight groups, through engagement with organisers of community initiatives, specifically those referenced in the motion, and by using our communication channels to promote and support these initiatives.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The motion proposed at full council in October by Councillor Dr Kerry Thornhill was as follows:

*“Young women in Cherwell District have reported long-standing concerns related to their right to be free and safe in public spaces, especially after dark. In 2025, local women have started organising, both formally and informally, to put a stop to gender-targeted harassment and assaults. Some emerging initiatives include: young women who work at night clubs organising to make their industry better at preventing harassment and assault, young women setting up peer support networks in the community, and women seeking the creation of dedicated spaces in town centres for peer support for young women and LGBTQ+ residents and visitors.*

*Community action from young women leaders is commendable. It benefits all of society, and it deserves strong support from Councils.*

*Cherwell District Council recognises that our goal to promote a thriving night-time economy must be inclusive of young women's safety and freedom in these spaces. We will ensure young women leaders are consistently engaged as stakeholders in implementing this aspect of the 2042 Local Plan.*

*Cherwell District Council pledges to encourage local businesses and other private sector stakeholders to support and sponsor young women's community initiatives for safety.*

*Cherwell District Council will identify low cost out-of-use sites that are suitable for proposals from women-led initiatives for the community benefit, and ensure these sites are financially accessible for community-based initiatives."*

- 2.2 Cherwell and its town centres are predominantly safe places to be. In the twelve months to end of 2025 Q2 (12 months ending) Cherwell had recorded 64.65 crimes per 1000 people. This had decreased from 67.90 crimes per 1000 people in the last equivalent period. (source: LG Inform). This ranks Cherwell 28 out of 51 in all local authority districts in the South East. Waverley had the lowest number of offences 37.06 crimes per 1000 people in this quarter with Crawley having the largest number at 112.19 crimes per 1000 people offences. This represents a low crime level compared to other boroughs/local authority districts in England and Wales. Our town centres attract large numbers of people who choose to come during the day or for an enjoyable night out. There is a strong tradition of partnership working with voluntary organisations and businesses ensuring that our night-time economy is vibrant and that safety is considered and promoted wherever possible.
- 2.3 Through our interactions with businesses and other stakeholders we will garner support for any initiatives that aim to increase women's and LGBTQ+ individuals safety in and across our district.
- 2.4 Through partnerships such as the Cherwell Community Safety Partnership and the area oversight groups, we will engage with organisers of community initiatives to help identify suitable locations for their women and LGBTQ+ support activities. We will also use our communication channels to promote and support these initiatives.

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	This report does not have any financial implications. The Community Safety Team operate within existing budget. If the Council ceases to receive funding from the Community Safety Partnership fund, via OCC, then the activities that are funded through this income stream will need to be reviewed and potentially terminated. Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 10 December 2025
Legal	The item was referred from full council and continues to support existing work carried out by the Council.

	As such there are no legal implications arising directly from this report. Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 10 December 2025		
<b>Risk Management</b>	There are no risk implications arising as a direct consequence of this proposal. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 10 December 2025		
<b>Impact Assessments</b>	Positive	Neutral	Negative
			Commentary
<b>Equality Impact</b>	x		
			Overall, the proposal seeks to have a positive impact to groups within the protected characteristics, gender, sex and age. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 10 December 2025
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	x		
			N/A
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	x		
			N/A
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>			
			This initiative primarily focuses on community safety and also presents opportunities to embed sustainability, addressing indirect environmental considerations in a proactive way. Repurposing out-of-use sites may involve energy use for lighting and heating; incorporating energy-efficient measures can mitigate this. Increased evening activities could lead to additional car journeys, but promoting safe walking and cycling routes can offset emissions. Events and promotional activities may generate waste; adopting digital-first communication and providing recycling facilities will minimize impact. Hitesh Mahawar, Climate Change Programme Manager, 10 December 2025
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>			
			N/A
<b>Data Impact</b>			
			N/A

<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>				N/A
<b>Council Priorities</b>	Community Leadership - Strengthen community collaboration and resilience			
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A			
<b>Property</b>	N/A			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	N/A			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Cherwell District Council has a small Community Safety Team that works with partners in addressing the issues highlighted in the motion with regards to young women's safety.
- 3.2 Cherwell District Council recognises that a thriving night-time economy must ensure that all those who participate in our wide and varied cultural offerings should feel safe and included.
- 3.3 The community safety team already promote schemes with businesses such as Ask Angela (<https://askforangela.co.uk/faqs/>) and Safe Spaces <https://www.safeplaces.org.uk/member-schemes/cherwell>.

### 4. Details

- 4.1 In order to assist those who may be vulnerable, or threatened, Cherwell District Council supports and promotes the Safe Places Scheme. Through the scheme businesses/partner premises can register to become a "Safe Place". To become registered on the scheme the premises/business commits to offering sanctuary and to help and support if someone is anxious, scared or believes they may be at risk.
- 4.2 This is a scheme run by Safe Places National Network which businesses can sign up to. We currently have 8 registered businesses in Banbury (one of which is 24 hours), 16 in Bicester and 5 in Kidlington. The Community Safety Team are committed to getting more businesses involved focusing particularly on businesses which are open later into the evening/early hours.
- 4.3 Alongside the other Oxfordshire local authorities, we fund a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) co-ordinator who is working with officers at Cherwell to develop specific VAWG initiatives.

- 4.4 With the co-ordinator, the community safety team will be supporting the development of a women's centre, creating and delivering consistent messaging around VAWG across schools and the development of a tool to identify VAWG services to enable better signposting to victims or those who feel threatened.
- 4.5 Cherwell District Council's taxi driver safeguarding training requirements also plays a role in protecting vulnerable people, including young women, when using licensed vehicles. All taxi and private hire drivers are required to complete safeguarding training as part of their licensing conditions. This training equips drivers to recognise signs of exploitation, harassment, and abuse, and to understand how to respond appropriately and report concerns to the relevant authorities. By ensuring that drivers are aware of their responsibilities and the procedures for safeguarding, the Council helps create a safer travel environment, reducing risks for individuals who may be vulnerable, particularly during late-night journeys or when travelling alone.
- 4.6 The Cherwell Community Safety Partnership places a strong emphasis on improving safety within the night-time economy. Recognising that vibrant evening and late-night activities should not come at the expense of individual wellbeing, the Partnership is committed to working collaboratively with local stakeholders to identify and implement new initiatives that enhance public safety. This proactive approach will involve exploring innovative measures and strengthening existing practices to ensure that residents and visitors feel secure and supported when enjoying Cherwell's night-time offer.
- 4.7 We will reach out to the proposer of the motion through our community safety team to obtain the details of the individuals and initiatives referred to in the motion submitted, including those who are supporting women. We will invite the organisers to attend a future Cherwell Community Safety Partnership meeting to share the details of the initiatives with partners to see how partners can support the activities being carried out and give them greater visibility and impact.
- 4.8 The motion requests that "low cost out-of-use sites that are suitable for proposals from women-led initiatives for the community benefit, and ensure these sites are financially accessible for community-based initiatives are identified by the council". We will ensure that community safety colleagues will liaise periodically with our Property Team to understand what council owned/controlled spaces are available and where suitable spaces become available share this information with organisers. We will commit to engaging with the organisers to understand their needs and see how we can assist them in finding suitable physical spaces.
- 4.9 There are a number of new initiatives being delivered in Cherwell that support the objectives of the motion these include:
- Princess Diana Park Space - Cherwell District Council and Banbury Town Council, working in partnership, will fund an area within Princess Diana Park to be made into a space designed with girls and young women in mind. Inspired by Make Space for Girls, this initiative addresses research showing that girls are far less likely to use parks after age 10 due to exclusion and safety concerns. Following consultation with girls at events such as Summer Fest and working with the charity Women in Sport, the designated area will create a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment featuring quiet zones, creative installations, and active play beyond competitive sports. Key features include informal seating, group swings, a revolving disc, a music post with mobile

connectivity, a patterned hard surface for dance and creative expression, visually appealing backdrops, exercise equipment with phone charging, and appropriate safety surfacing.

- Banbury Community Insight Profiles - Cherwell District Council working with Oxfordshire Public Health have designed insight profiles in the areas most in need in Banbury (Ruscote, Grimsbury and Neithrop) highlighting what needs in the local area are being expressed <https://data.oxfordshire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/community-insight-profiles/>. As part of this project there is funding available for grants in Banbury. This includes £60,000 from April 2026 which we will facilitate and encourage groups to make bids towards including projects focussed on women and girls.
- DCMS Youth Funding - Working with Oxfordshire County Council there has been a grant awarded to Oxfordshire to focus on Youth Provision specially around Youth Voice, training and the provision of opportunities. The funding is from the DCMS and will have a focus on Banbury due to a recent needs assessment highlighting the need for youth provision in the area. The funding coming to Banbury will be £94,500 which will be held by Cherwell DC and facilitated through Banbury Youth Partnership and a newly formed panel to ensure grants are distributed to youth organisations in Banbury. We will include a focus on women and girls within the grant process.

- 4.10 We will ensure that the Cherwell Community Safety Partnership is reflective of our community including young women leaders by ensuring their representation in the partnership. This will ensure we are able to get the necessary engagement with relevant stakeholders in ensuring that women's safety and freedom is a key focus in promoting a thriving night-time economy.

## **5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 5.1 No alternative options have been identified.

## **6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 6.1 To make contact with the organisers of the initiatives referred to in the motion to see how support might be provided. The promotion of the work already underway to make it more visible and easier to connect with for voluntary schemes or businesses will highlight the depth and consistency of the work already delivered by the team.

The council recognises the value and importance of community led initiatives in this space and will provide advice and networking opportunities for groups to benefit from as needed.

## **Decision Information**

<b>Key Decision</b>	No
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<b>Subject to Call in</b>	Yes
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All

## Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	None
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Reference Papers</b>	None
<b>Report Author</b>	Tim Hughes, Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety
<b>Report Author contact details</b>	tim.hughes@cherwell-dc.gov.uk tel: 01295 221686
<b>Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Interim Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services, Nicola Riley

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This report is public	
Mental Health Provision for Young People	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	6 January 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities, Councillor Rob Pattenden
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	10 September 2025
Report of	Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services, Nicola Riley

## Purpose of report

Following a motion agree at Council in July 2024 to look at increasing spending in mental health initiatives from policy contingency budget for young people. It was subsequently agreed at the November 2024 Executive that the next step was for an increase in mental health provision within the Youth Activator team along with a research paper to be carried out by external provider to assess the needs of young people in Cherwell around mental wellbeing.

This report will outline the key findings from the research paper *“Unmet Mental Health & Wellbeing Need in Primary School - Aged Children”* that was delivered by MIND and agree next steps to address findings.

## 1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To endorse the research paper *“Unmet Mental Health & Wellbeing Need in Primary School - Aged Children”* in Cherwell.
- 1.2 To note the key findings in the research paper and agree to deliver a pilot movement and psychological support programme for a year for 8 – 11 year-olds in fifteen targeted schools through £50,000 Public Health funding and Wellbeing Team staff time to coordinate.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Three options have been developed in response to the findings of the Mind research report, which secured £55,000 of Public Health funding to target fifteen schools. The recommended option utilises this external funding to implement the report’s recommendations, ensuring delivery of a year-long pilot that combines movement activities with evidence-based psychological strategies, coordinated through existing Wellbeing Team capacity

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary			
<b>Finance</b>	<p>Option 1 would not be recommended as would miss out on opportunity to provide provision and would miss out on the grant funding from public health</p> <p>Option 2 is not viable as there is no base budget to fund the Wellbeing Worker, requiring additional policy contingency funding and Option 3 provides everything required.</p> <p>Recommended Option 3 utilises the 55,000 Public Health funding and reallocates hours from an existing Wellbeing Team member to coordinate delivery in schools and community settings at no extra cost. This must be reflected in service levels to ensure clarity on capacity and expectations</p> <p>Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance, 26 November 2025</p>			
<b>Legal</b>	<p>Any service provision delivered through an external organisation will need to comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.</p> <p>Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 26 November 2025</p>			
<b>Risk Management</b>	<p>Risks related to any potential Mental Health programme from the options outlined will be managed through the service operational risk register.</p> <p>Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 26 November 2025</p>			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
<b>Equality Impact</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	X			<p>All potential options are in line with our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion framework, seeking to ensure that young people who are experiencing difficulties because of mental health pressures can be enabled to help manage their mental health</p> <p>Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 26 November 2025</p>
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>				N/A
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>				N/A

<b>Data Impact</b>				N/A
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>				N/A
<b>Council Priorities</b>	Healthy, resilient and engaged communities. The provision for young people to help manage their mental health and causes of health inequalities.			
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A			
<b>Property</b>	N/A			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	The programme will be evaluated in partnership with Public Health to show its impact on children and young people's mental health. This means we will collect evidence on how well the intervention works and use that information to keep improving provision. We will also work closely with young people, schools, and Oxfordshire Mind to review progress and make sure the programme continues to meet needs.			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

- 3.1 In Oxfordshire, mental health issues among young people have been rising, mirroring national trends. Recent data highlights a significant increase in school pupils requiring support for social, emotional, and mental health needs. There has also been a notable rise in the number of persistent absentees from secondary schools, which can be linked to mental health concerns.
- 3.2 Nationally, the prevalence of mental health concerns among young people is increasing. In 2024 in Oxfordshire, around 1 in 5 children and young people aged 8 to 16 years had a probable mental disorder. This was 20.3% of 8- to 16-year-olds,. (JSNA)
- 3.3 In the Academic year 2023/24 there was a total of 3,830 school pupils in Oxfordshire supported with a primary need of social, emotional and mental health (JSNA)
- 3.4 In Cherwell the Wellbeing Team currently supports young people's mental health through its Youth Activator programme, delivered in primary schools during transition years (Years 5 & 6). The programme combines physical activity with mental wellbeing education, covering topics such as stress, anxiety, goal setting, self-esteem, anger, and resilience. So far in 2025 it has reached 38 schools, helping pupils understand emotions and develop coping strategies. Impact data shows 79% reported improved wellbeing, 79% would recommend the course, and 92% rated their experience as good or amazing.
- 3.5 Building on the success of the Youth Activator programme, and following an executive motion to explore increased spending on youth mental health from the policy contingency budget, the next step was to expand mental health provision

within the Youth Activator team which saw the Activators deliver provision in 38 schools in 2025. In addition, an external research paper was commissioned after agreement from Executive to assess the mental wellbeing needs of young people in Cherwell, ensuring future support was evidence-based and targeted.

- 3.6 Cherwell District Council commissioned Oxfordshire Mind to carry out scoping research into the unmet mental health and wellbeing needs of primary school-aged children 5 –11 year olds in the district. The purpose was to provide evidence-based insights to shape future support for schools and ensure interventions were targeted and effective.
- 3.7 The research involved two surveys, one for school staff and one for parents/carers, both developed in consultation with the Council. The school staff survey was sent to all 60 primary schools in Cherwell, requesting one response per school, and achieved a 52% response rate with 31 schools participating. The parent/carer survey was distributed via schools and received 215 responses covering all year groups. Both surveys were open for six weeks.
- 3.8 Oxfordshire Mind also conducted a focus group with four Wellbeing Workers supporting children in GP practices and focus groups and short interviews with staff from two schools. This mixed-method approach was to make sure the research was robust in identifying mental health challenges, assessing current support, along with gathering views on future provision to inform evidence-based interventions for children in Cherwell.

## **4. Details**

- 4.1 The paper reported some great insight into the needs of children, schools and parents in the Cherwell District around mental wellbeing along with suggested recommendations for future improvements.

### **Key Findings from report**

- 4.2 41% of parents/carers reported that their child currently experiences a mental health or wellbeing challenge. This indicates a significant level of unmet need among primary-aged children in Cherwell.
- 4.3 Years 4 and 5 were highlighted as the cohorts most likely to face mental health challenges from research report This may relate to developmental transitions and the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic during their early school years.
- 4.4 Stress and anxious feelings were consistently identified as the leading issues by both parents and school staff. Other concerns included anger, low self-esteem, and low mood, but anxiety was the dominant theme.
- 4.5 Both parents and staff expressed a strong preference for a blended model of support combining universal whole class emotional literacy sessions with targeted one-to-one interventions for children who need extra help.
- 4.6 The majority of school staff reported that they only “to some extent” have the training required to support pupils with mental health needs. This suggests a need for

enhanced professional development, particularly around neurodiversity and emotional regulation.

- 4.7 Parents generally felt confident they would know who to approach if their child needed support, but were less confident that their child would know how to seek help independently. This highlights the importance of equipping children with emotional literacy and help-seeking skills.

### **Recommendations from Report**

- 4.8 Provide targeted training for school staff on supporting pupils with mental health needs, with a focus on neurodiversity, emotional regulation, and managing stress and anxiety. Mental Health Leads in schools should receive advanced training to strengthen whole-school approaches.
- 4.9 Embed Emotional Literacy in Schools into daily classroom practice using age-appropriate resources. This will help children identify and express feelings, build resilience, and develop help-seeking skills.
- 4.10 Offer a blended support model with a mix of whole class workshops, targeted one-to-one sessions, and family engagement activities. These need to be delivered consistently throughout the year to ensure continuity and flexibility in meeting needs.
- 4.11 Improve Communication with Parents by providing clear, accessible information about mental health support in schools and community. This support should be part of core school and community offer, reducing stigma and encouraging early engagement from families

### **Next Steps**

- 4.12 In response to the findings of the recent research report, Cherwell will pilot a public health emotional support package for primary schools for a year. This pilot will target 15 schools in Cherwell, providing tailored emotional health and wellbeing interventions throughout the academic year. The total investment for this pilot is £55,000 which will be funded through Public Health ensuring schools receive consistent support embedded within their whole-school approach.
- 4.13 The £55,000 funded intervention piloted in Cherwell will be for a year through commissioned organisation combines movement activities with evidence-based psychological strategies to support mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. It is universal for all pupils, so every child benefits from activities that build resilience, improve mood, and encourage positive coping skills. School staff will be trained to deliver these activities as part of everyday school life, and parents will receive guidance to reinforce these strategies at home.
- 4.14 Alongside being universal the programme will also be targeted for children identified as at risk. These pupils will receive additional early support tailored to their needs, helping prevent issues from escalating. Parents and teachers will be given practical tools to understand and respond to these children's challenges. By combining universal and targeted approaches, the intervention creates a strong support network, reduces stigma around mental health, and ensures that every child whether thriving or struggling has access to the right level of help.

- 4.15 The decision for Public Health to focus on Cherwell for the initial 15 schools is based on evidence from the research, which highlighted significant unmet mental health needs among primary-aged children in the district. By concentrating resources in one area, the pilot aims to deliver targeted, year-round support that addresses local priorities and builds a strong foundation for future county-wide implementation.
- 4.16 Schools will be chosen using a clear set of criteria to ensure support reaches those with the greatest need. These will include:
- Location and deprivation levels (IMD ranking)
  - Pupil headcount and readiness to engage
  - Free school meal and pupil premium status
  - Development and attainment indicator data
- 4.17 Alongside the public health funding of £55,000 to provide a programme of mental health support in 15 schools in targeted schools there is the proposal to have a children and young person wellbeing worker to co ordinate the programme and provide additional support for children and schools. This would be for 18.5 hours a week. The cost of £22,809. includes central costs, HR, Finance, Safeguarding and Line Management
- 4.18 **Option 1** – Do not access and deliver the £55,000 funded intervention from Public Health targeting 15 schools piloted first in Cherwell for a year April 2026 – March 2027 combining movement activities with evidence-based psychological strategies alongside not providing a wellbeing worker for 18.5 hours a week to coordinate the work in the targeted schools
- 4.19 **Option 2** – Access and deliver the £55,000 of Public Health funding to deliver a year-long pilot (April 2026–March 2027) across 15 Cherwell schools. The intervention will combine movement activities with evidence-based psychological strategies, coordinated by a Wellbeing Worker employed for 18.5 hours per week, funded from the policy contingency budget, to ensure effective implementation and support in the targeted schools and communities settings.
- 4.20 **Option 3 Recommended Option** Access and deliver the £55,000 of Public Health funding to deliver a year-long pilot (April 2026–March 2027) across 15 Cherwell schools. The intervention will combine movement activities with evidence-based psychological strategies, coordinated by a current member of the Wellbeing Team, utilising existing hours to provide 18.5 hours per week for implementation in the targeted schools.

## **5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Has been rejected due to it would mean not taking up the £55,000 Public Health-funded intervention, resulting in no pilot across 15 Cherwell schools, no integration of movement activities with psychological strategies along with coordination.



Option 2: Option 2 was rejected because, although it secures £55,000 of Public Health funding for a year-long pilot across 15 Cherwell schools, it requires additional funding from the policy contingency budget to cover the Wellbeing Worker's 18.5 hours per week.

## 6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 Option 3 is the most cost-effective approach, as it fully utilises the £55,000 Public Health funding without requiring additional internal budget. By reallocating existing Wellbeing Team hours to provide 18.5 hours per week for coordination, this option avoids extra staffing costs while still ensuring dedicated support for delivery.
- 6.2 The intervention combines movement activities with evidence-based psychological strategies, directly improving pupil wellbeing and resilience. Targeting 15 as a pilot in Cherwell schools and communities means that pupils can benefit first from provision along with measuring impact, and a scalable model for future expansion into more schools and communities.

### Decision Information

<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	Yes
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards

### Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	Report: Unmet Mental Health & Wellbeing Need in Primary School - Aged Children
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Executive Summary: Unmet Mental Health & Wellbeing Need in Primary School - Aged Children
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Reference Papers</b>	None
<b>Report Author</b>	Tom Gubbins, Wellbeing Manager
<b>Report Author contact details</b>	<a href="mailto:Tom.gubbins@cherwell-dc.gov.uk">Tom.gubbins@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a>
<b>Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services, Nicola Riley, 26 November 2025

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# Unmet Mental Health & Wellbeing Need in Primary School -Aged Children

A report prepared by Oxfordshire  
Mind for Cherwell District Council

July 2025



*Cherwell*

DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

# Executive Summary

Oxfordshire Mind prepared two surveys of the mental health and wellbeing needs of primary school aged children that were completed by 31 schools and 215 parents/carers respectively.

## Key findings

- 41% of parents/carers who responded indicated that their child had a current mental health or wellbeing concern.
- Years 4 and 5 were highlighted as most likely to be facing challenges.
- Stress and/or anxious feelings were reported as the biggest mental health and wellbeing challenge for children by both parents/carers and school staff.
- There was a widespread preference for a support offer blending whole-class and 1-1 support for mental wellbeing.
- The majority of school staff who responded reported feeling that they only “to some extent” have the training they need to support pupils with wellbeing issues.
- Parents generally reported high levels of confidence that they would know who to talk to if they had a worry, but less confidence that their child would know who to talk to.

## Recommendations for next steps

- Priorities for support identified by school staff, parents/carers and Oxfordshire Mind staff alike were:
  - ✓ Increased access to training around neurodiverse conditions and emotional regulation.
  - ✓ Support schools to embed emotional literacy into PSHE lessons and classroom practice.
  - ✓ Fund a blended support model combining 1:1 sessions, whole-class workshops, and family engagement.
  - ✓ Improve communication with parents about available mental health support in schools.

# Background and Methodology

Cherwell District Council oversees the Cherwell District of Oxfordshire

Within Cherwell, 18.8% of the population are aged 15 or under (compared to 18.6% in the South East and 18.5% nationally). This equates to about 30,268 young people aged 15 or under<sup>1</sup>.

It is estimated that 4,353 of those children live in low-income households – this represents about 14.% of the children in the District<sup>2</sup> and is similar to the figure for Oxfordshire (11%)<sup>3</sup>.

Rates of employment, homelessness and violent crime are slightly better across Cherwell District than in the South East region and England as a whole<sup>4</sup>.



However, the picture within the District is mixed; in some wards within Cherwell, these figures are much higher; in Banbury Ruscote, 28% of children live in poverty, double the rate in the District as a whole. Rates are also higher in two other Banbury wards (Grimsbury 23%, Banbury Cross and Neithrop, 22%).

These three wards are amongst the 20% most deprived nationally, when measured using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and on those three wards, all or most available health indicators are worse than the Oxfordshire average. 21.6% of children in the Cherwell District live in a ward that is in the 1st or 2nd most deprived decile nationally<sup>5</sup>.

Overall, this suggests that the picture of physical and mental health need is likely to be highly variable across the District.

1. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E07000177/>
2. <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/277/everybodys-wellbeing/1216/everybodys-wellbeing-strategy/4>
3. <https://data.oxfordshire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/community-insight-profiles/>
4. <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/13/ati/301/are/E07000225>
5. [Children and Young People - LTLA | Cherwell | Report Builder for ArcGIS](#)

## Methodology

Oxfordshire Mind were commissioned by Cherwell District Council to conduct scoping research to understand the unmet mental health needs of children in the District. The outcomes of the research are intended to help shape the support offered by Cherwell District Council to primary schools in the upcoming school year.

A research design with four components was proposed:

- A survey with school staff,
- A survey of parents and carers,
- A focus group with Oxfordshire Mind Wellbeing Workers providing support to children and young people within Primary Care settings in the District, and
- Qualitative research with a small number of school staff

Surveys were designed by Oxfordshire Mind staff, in consultation with Cherwell District Council. These were circulated to all 60 schools in the District on 15th May 2025, remaining open to responses until 19th June 2025. The full survey text is included as Appendix 1 and 2 of this report, and the findings are presented in the section Survey Findings, below.

The focus group with Oxfordshire Mind Wellbeing Workers was conducted on 21st May 2025. This brought together the three staff members who provided one-to-one support to children and young people aged 7+ in GP practices within the Cherwell District. A topic guide used to structure the conversation with Oxfordshire Mind staff is included as Appendix 5 of this report, and the findings are presented in the section Qualitative Findings, below.

Qualitative research was conducted with three staff from two schools; these were 30 minute conversations conducted over Microsoft Teams.

# Surveys Findings: School Staff and Parents & Carers

A survey of school staff was conducted between 15th May and 19th June 2025. It was sent to all primary schools in the Cherwell District, requesting one response per school. A full copy of the survey questionnaire can be found as appendix 1.

Parents and Carers at all Cherwell District schools were invited to complete a survey about their perception of the mental health and wellbeing support available in school. This survey was open to responses between 15th May and 19th June 2025. A full copy of the survey questionnaire can be found as appendix 2.

This report brings together the findings of the two survey questionnaires, looking at the different themes within the questions.

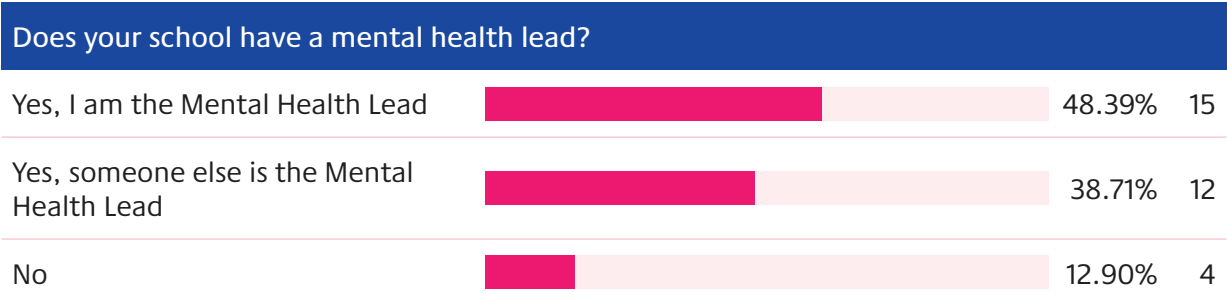
## Respondent profile: Staff Survey

All 60 schools in Cherwell District were invited to participate. Of these, 31 responded giving a response rate of 52%.

We asked respondents to tell us their role within the school. The majority of respondents said that they were the SENCO. 9 respondents chose other – in three cases, this was to describe a role that combined Special Educationla Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) responsibilities with other roles. Other roles mentioned included Family Support Workers and Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs).

What is your role within the school?			
Headteacher	<div><div></div></div>	16.13%	5
Deputy/ assistant head	<div><div></div></div>	6.45%	2
SENCO	<div><div></div></div>	48.39%	15
Other (please specify): Show	<div><div></div></div>	29.03%	9
Answered: 31 Skipped: 0		Response Total:	31

In addition to their formal role, we also asked respondents whether their school had a mental health lead.



87% of respondents reported that their school had a mental health lead, with just over half of these saying that they were the Mental Health Lead themselves. In 4 cases, the respondent reported that their school did not have a Mental Health Lead.

The most recent available data from August 2024 suggests that 71% of the schools in Cherwell District had, at that time, accessed the Senior Mental Health Lead training grant. Combined with the information gathered via the staff survey, this suggests that some schools may require further support to ensure that a designated member of staff has an identified responsibility for mental health in school and is trained to provide this leadership and guidance.

**87%**  
of respondents reported that their school had a mental health lead, with just over half of these saying that they were the Mental Health Lead themselves.





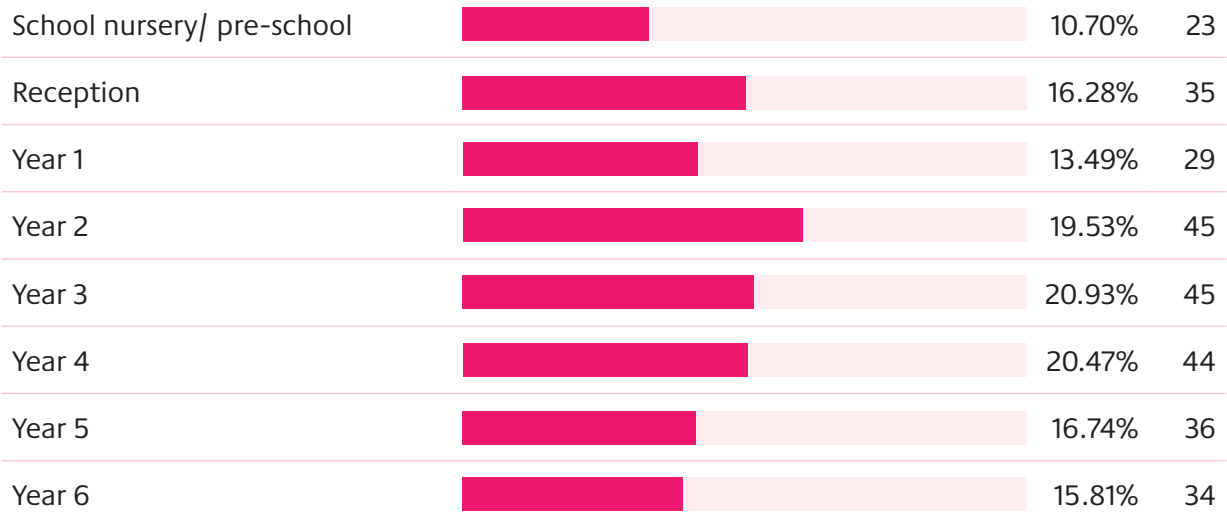
## Respondent Profile – Parent/Carer Survey

All schools within Cherwell District were sent the link to the parent/carers survey. The table below shows all schools from which at least one response was received. The number of responses was roughly evenly split between the Banbury area schools and Bicester and Kidlington area schools.

Each of these two areas comprise a mixture of urban and rural areas, though the Banbury area has higher levels of deprivation than the Bicester and Kidlington area; three electoral wards in and around Banbury are in the 20% most deprived nationally.

School	Responses	School	Responses
Banbury and Surrounding Villages		Bicester, Kidlington & Surrounds	
Bishop Carpenter	2	Charlton on Otmoor	1
Bloxham	1	Chesterton	10
Cherry Fields	5	Dr Souths	1
Christopher Rawlins	1	Edward Field	3
Cropredy	2	Gagle Brook	1
Hanwell Fields	1	Glory Farm	20
Hill View	10	Kings Meadow	2
Longford Park	1	Longfields	3
Orchard Fields	10	North Kidlington	25
Sibford Gower	26	St Edburg's	12
St John's Catholic Primary School	24	St Mary's Catholic Primary School	8
St Mary's Church of England School	2	St Thomas Moore	3
The Grange	20	West Kidlington	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>

Parents were asked what year groups their child(ren) were in. The graph below shows the breakdown of responses, demonstrating that more respondents had children in years 2,3 and 4 with fewer respondents with children in the lower and higher year groups. However, these differences were not large and all year groups were represented in the survey.



Answered: 215 Skipped: 0 **Response Total: 215**

NB: the totals for each year group sum to more than the 215 total responses, as respondents were able to choose more than one year group if they had more than one child in the school.

## Presenting Needs

Parents and carers responding to the survey were asked if their child has a current mental health challenge or concern. Slightly different questions were shown to respondents for the remainder of the survey, based on their answer to this question.

41% of parents indicated that any of their primary school aged children experience challenges with their mental health and wellbeing, with 59% reporting that they did not. NB: we did not ask whether the challenge was a diagnosable mental health condition, so there may be a wide range of presentations and experiences represented within this group.

Parents of a child with a mental health or wellbeing challenge (41% of all respondents, n=88) were asked about the kinds of challenge their child experiences. The list of presenting challenges were drawn from the different “pathways” that our Support Self Help (SSH) programme uses with children ages 7 and up, specifically:

- Low mood
- Anger
- Stress and/or anxious feelings
- Low self esteem
- Coping with loss/grief
- Loneliness
- Sleep

Parents/carers were asked to indicate whether each of the challenges was 1) the main challenge facing their child(ren), 2) A challenge they experienced but not their main concern or 3) Not a challenge they experienced.

The challenge that was most frequently identified was stress and/or anxious feelings, with 65% of respondents saying that this was their child’s main challenge. The second most frequently chosen “main challenge” was anger, with 31% of respondents choosing this.

Loneliness and grief/loss were identified as not being a challenge their child experienced by the majority of parents (65 and 68% of respondents respectively).

# 41%

of parents indicated that any of their primary school aged children experience challenges with their mental health and wellbeing

Answer Choices	This is the biggest challenge my child/ children experience	This is a challenge my child/ children also experience, but not the biggest one	This is not a challenge my child/ children experience	Response Total
Low mood	5.00% 4	50.00% 40	45.00% 36	<b>80</b>
Anger	31.25% 25	38.75% 31	30.00% 24	<b>80</b>
Stress and/or anxious feelings	65.48% 55	29.76% 25	4.76% 4	<b>84</b>
Low self esteem	17.07% 14	53.66% 44	29.27% 24	<b>82</b>
Coping with loss, grief	4.94% 4	27.16% 22	67.90% 55	<b>81</b>
Loneliness	5.13% 4	29.49% 23	65.38% 51	<b>78</b>
Sleep	16.05% 13	35.80% 29	48.15% 39	<b>81</b>

Respondents were also able to use a comments box to add any other challenges not listed. 9 respondents chose to do so and gave the following answers:

One specifically identified worries and stress around death in general (rather than a bereavement)

Two mentioned neurodiversity

One mentioned bullying

One mentioned domestic abuse/safeguarding issues

Two mentioned nightmares or night terrors and resulting anxiety

One mentioned separation anxiety

One mentioned difficulties expressing worries and distress.

Staff were asked a similar question about presenting needs, using the same categories of need. In this case, they were asked to rank the needs from most commonly observed amongst children in their school to lowest. Score displayed below is a weighted calculation; items ranked first are valued higher than the following ranks, the score is a sum of all weighted rank counts.

**Of the children in your school with a mental health challenge, what is the most common concern? Please rank the following options by how prevalent these concerns are in your school where 1 is the highest (a concern for most children) to 7 (a concern for the fewest children).**

Item	Total Score <sup>1</sup>	Overall Rank
Stress and/or anxious feelings	186	1
Low self esteem	154	2
Anger	148	3
Low mood	137	4
Sleep	93	5
Loneliness	77	6
Coping with loss, grief	73	7
<b>Answered: 31   Skipped: 0</b>		

Once again, stress and/or anxious feelings was the challenge most highly ranked by school staff. The remainder of the ranking also closely matched the responses from parents, with low self-esteem, anger and low mood receiving similar scores, before a drop in prevalence amongst the sleep, loneliness and loss/grief items. This suggests that parents and staff are noticing similar trends in the kinds of challenges that pupils are experiencing and could help guide the content of future interventions.

Staff were also asked about the year groups in their school in which they most commonly and least commonly observed mental health challenges. The scoring of this question followed the same weighting process as the previous question.

**In which year group do you see the highest levels of mental health and wellbeing challenges? (NB: this only needs to be your best estimate) Please rank the year groups in order of number of children experiencing a mental health and wellbeing challenge in that year group where 1 is most children experiencing a challenge and 7 is fewest children experiencing a challenge.**

Item	Total Score <sup>1</sup>	Overall Rank
Year 5	182	1
Year 4	173	2
Year 6	165	3
Year 3	159	4
Year 2	141	5
Year 1	130	6
Reception	97	7
Nursey/early years if applicable	69	8
<b>Answered: 31 Skipped: 0</b>		

Year 5 was the year group mostly highly scored as experiencing challenges, followed by Year 4. It may be relevant to note that these year groups would have been of starting school age during the COVID-19 pandemic. When planning how to distribute additional support, it may be worth considering whether evidence<sup>6</sup> about children and young people's mental health suggests that this level of prevalence seems likely to change as this cohort of children move on from primary school or whether the higher levels of need amongst year 4 and 5 are linked to social and emotional changes happening amongst that age group and likely to persist.

Finally, staff were asked if the prevalence of children with mental health concerns and challenges had changed since the COVID-19 pandemic. 100% of respondents reported that it had increased.

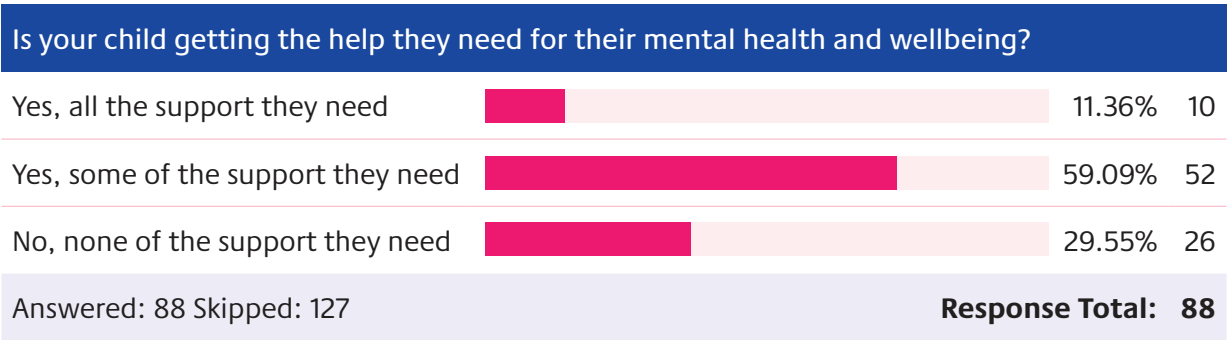
The findings identified by these questions were mirrored very closely in the qualitative elements of this work (see below).

6. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-surveillance-report/7-children-and-young-people>

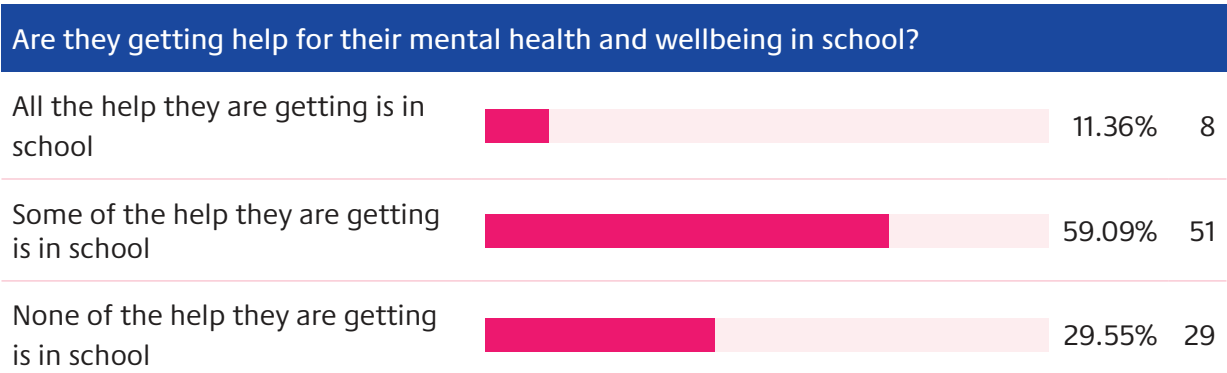
# Getting Help

Parents and carers who indicated that their child had a current mental health or wellbeing concern were asked about the current support their child is receiving, and how much of this is in school.

Of the 88 respondent who indicated that their child had a current mental health or wellbeing challenge, the majority (59%) reported that their child is getting some of the support they need. However, almost 1 in 3 respondents told us that their child is getting none of the support they need.






A similar proportion reported that at least some of the support their child is getting is in school. 9% said that all the support they were receiving was in school, meaning that for about one-tenth of children with a mental health concern, school may be the only source of support they are able to access.



Parents or carers who reported that their child did not have a current mental health or wellbeing challenge (n=127) were asked about their confidence in seeking support should their child need it in future. Encouragingly, 98% of respondents said they would definitely or maybe feel able to talk to someone in school if their child had a concern.

**Would you (parent or carer) feel able to talk to someone in the school if your child had a worry or mental health concern?**



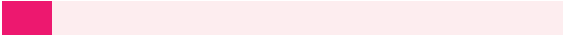
Yes, definitely		74.02%	94
Yes, maybe		24.41%	31
No		1.57%	2

Answered: 127 Skipped: 88

**Response Total: 127**

However, there was less confidence amongst parents/carers that their child would feel able to talk to an adult if they had a concern. Whilst 92% responded “definitely” or “maybe”, the majority chose “maybe” (51.2%).

**Do you think your child would feel able to talk to an adult in school about a worry or mental health concern?**

Yes, definitely		41.73%	53
Maybe		51.18%	65
No		7.09%	9

Answered: 127 Skipped: 88

**Response Total: 127**

When examined in combination with the year group of the children, there was no clear pattern in the levels of confidence relative to the age of the child. No parents with children in Reception, Year 5 or Year 6 answered “no” to this question. However, the numbers in each subgroup were relatively small and should be interpreted with caution.

Finally, parents of children without a current mental health or wellbeing concern were asked about their knowledge of current support available and whether, in their view, the right kind of support was available.

Whilst the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were aware of the available support (57%), this leaves a substantial proportion of respondents who were not fully aware.

Further, this group of parents were asked if they felt the right kind of support was currently available in school; the largest single group of respondents was those saying they neither agreed nor disagreed (40%) however, combined, a majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (52%).



These findings together suggest that there may be a need for greater communication between schools and all parents about the kind of support that is currently available within the school environment.

**Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements**

Answer Choices	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Response Total
I know what support is available in school for children's mental health and wellbeing	19.84% 25	37.30% 47	27.78% 35	11.11% 14	3.97% 5	126
I think the right kind of support is available in school for children's mental health and wellbeing	18.11% 23	33.86% 43	40.16% 51	5.51% 7	2.36% 3	127

*"I am aware that the school does provide mental and physical health education and awareness. As a parent I would be interested in learning more about it."*

*Quote from parent/carer survey respondent.*

## Future Support

Both parents/carers and staff were asked for their views about how future support for mental health and wellbeing could look in their school.

School staff were asked to consider four different forms of support that could potentially be introduced or expanded in schools. They were invited to reflect on whether they currently had sufficient access to each type of support, and to share their views on where additional provision might be most beneficial.

**Please indicate which of the kinds of support described below you would like to be able to provide more of**

Answer Choices	Yes, we want to offer more of this kind of support	No, we have enough of this kind of support/ do not need this	Response Total
Physical health and wellbeing sessions for all pupils (group sessions, blending exercise and wellbeing topics)	77.42% 24	22.58% 7	31
Assemblies for all pupils on mental health and wellbeing topics (adapted for each year group)	70.97% 22	29.03% 9	31
Workshops for all pupils on mental health and wellbeing topics (adapted for each year group)	100.00% 31	0.00% 0	31
Targetted 1-1 sessions for children referred for extra support	93.55% 29	6.45% 2	31

In all four cases, more respondents said they would like more of that type of support than those who said they felt they had enough. The most popular choice, with 100% of respondents wanting to offer more, were workshops for all pupils on mental health and wellbeing topics. The second most popular was targeted 1-1 support for children needing extra support.

*"Regular workshops and small group discussions for all pupils would teach children to pay attention to this topic since young age. They would learn how to look after their mental health and how to ask for help when they need to."*

Quote from parent/carer survey respondent.

Both school staff and parents/carers were asked to rank the four different forms of support that Cherwell District Council might be able to commission for schools. The results from both groups are presented below for comparison – as in previous questions, the score is weighted with higher preference items given more points. In this analysis, the scores from parents/carers have been split to show the difference between the response from parents/carers who have a child with a current mental health or wellbeing concern, versus those without.

The total score is given for each group, and then the ranking of that option from highest to lowest score in brackets.

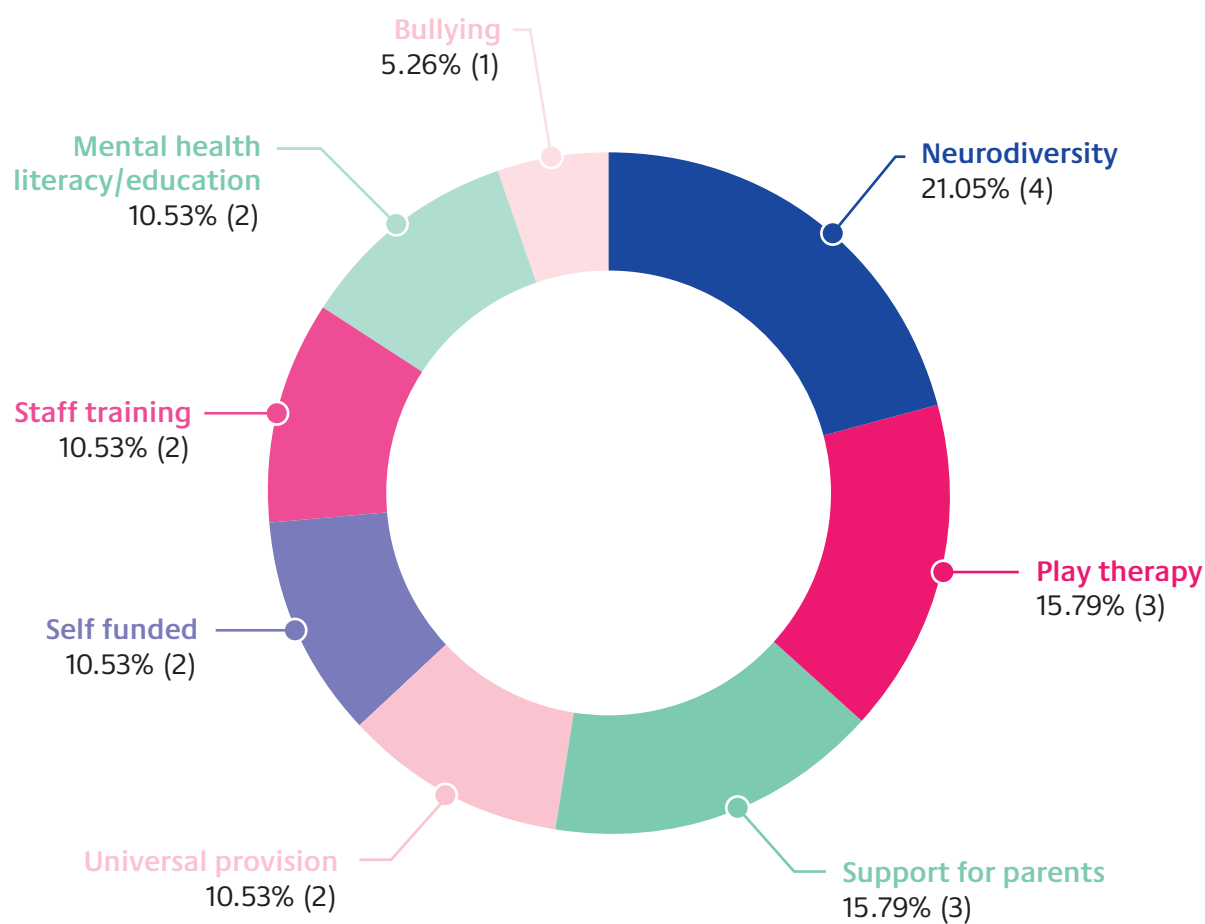
Type of Support	Parents/Carers with MH need (ranking)	Parents/ Carers with no MH need (ranking)	Staff Score (ranking)
Targeted 1-1 sessions for children referred for extra support	291 (1)	325 (2)	92 (2)
Physical health and wellbeing sessions for all pupils (group sessions, blending exercise and wellbeing topics)	217 (3)	398 (1)	60 (3)
Workshops for all pupils on mental health and wellbeing topics (adapted for each year group)	221 (2)	310 (3)	93 (1)
Assemblies for all pupils on mental health and wellbeing topics (adapted for each year group)	131 (4)	237 (4)	44 (4)

It is interesting to note that the preferences of parents/carers with a child experiencing a current mental health concern were more aligned with school staff preferences than with those of other parents. The scores presented here do not give greater weight to the experiences of parents with children who have current mental health needs, though this may be a consideration when using this intelligence as part of a decision-making process. Whatever the decision, given the differences in the views of these two groups, there is likely to be a need for careful communication about the balance of support offered to ensure that both groups understand the thinking behind the choice.

Both staff and parents/carers were able to add comments to describe any other forms of support they thought schools could usefully offer.

Amongst responses from staff, several mentioned wanting to be able to provide support for parents and children. Others mentioned specialist services, including crisis services. Full comments are included as appendix 3.

24 parent/carers comments were received; these were tagged with relevant themes, see pie chart below. Common themes included neurodiversity – a frequently recurring theme throughout this research – as well as a desire for a blend of universal mental health literacy provision alongside more targeted support. Several parent comments also mentioned a desire for more joined up support from the school, to help them understand strategies used to support children in school.



There was also a noticeable hesitance in some parent comments about whether mental health sessions were appropriate for children – comments wondered whether we should be “drawing attention” to mental health topics, fearing that children would find this “worrying” or “overwhelming”. It is important to consider how any package of support offered will be differentiated to be age appropriate and how this will be communicated to parents/carers.

The full text of parent comments is included as appendix 4.

## Staff Skills and Training

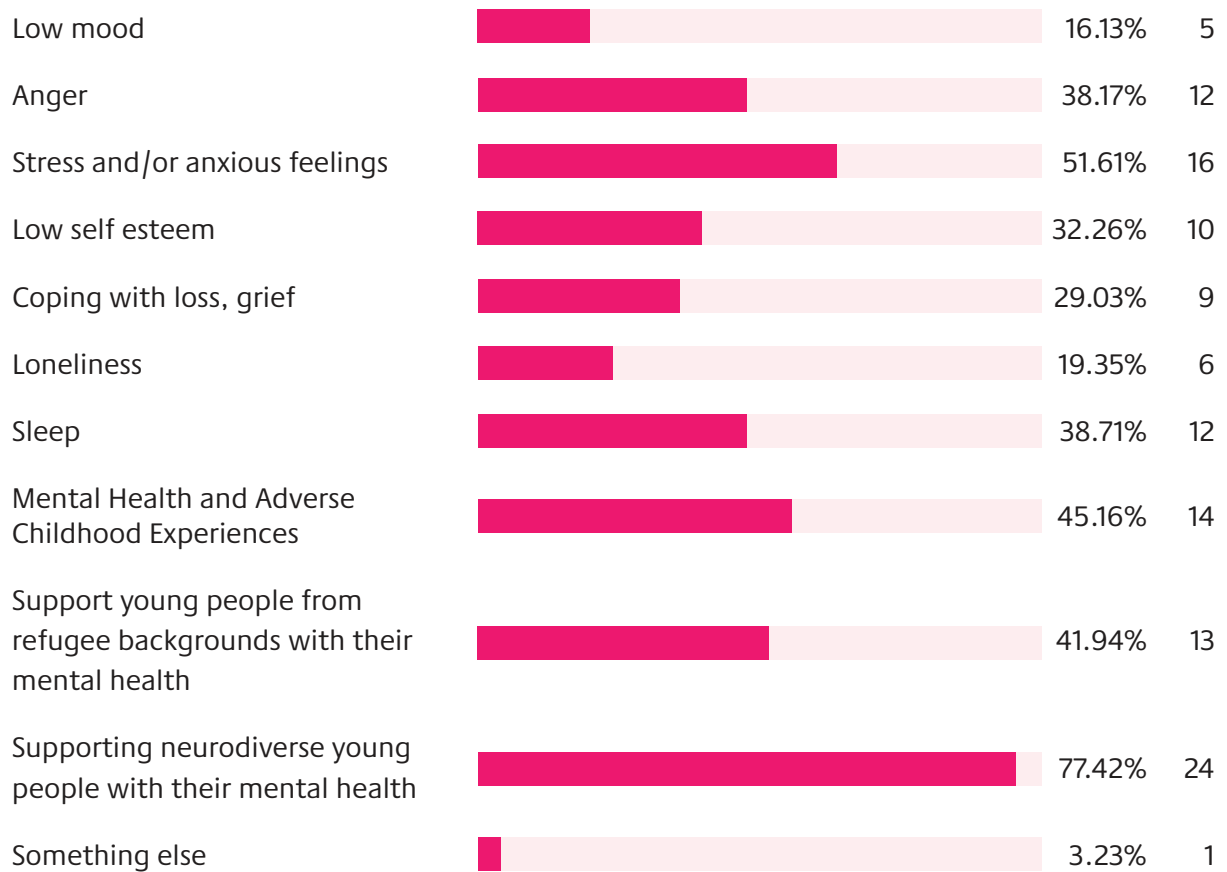
School staff were asked whether they felt they currently had enough training to support children with their mental health and wellbeing at school.

	Does your school have a mental health lead?				Row Totals
		Yes, I am the Mental Health Lead	Yes, someone else is the Mental Health Lead	No	
Do you feel like you have sufficient training to support children with their mental health and wellbeing .....	Yes, completely	3 20.0%	1 8.3%	0 0.0%	4 12.9%
	Yes, to some extent	10 66.7%	8 66.7%	3 75.0%	21 67.7%
	No	2 13.3%	3 25.0%	1 25.0%	6 19.4%
	Column Total	153 48.4%	12 38.7%	4 12.9%	31 100%

The results demonstrate that there may be a need for further training for staff to support their ability to manage the mental health and wellbeing needs of pupils.

As identified earlier in this report, this cohort of respondents largely occupy roles with a specific focus on mental health and wellbeing, meaning that they may be encountering more situations requiring mental health and wellbeing training. However, due to the focus of their roles, they may also be more likely to have attended mental health focused training in the past. Even amongst those who indicated that they are the Mental Health Lead, however, only 20% of respondents indicated that they felt they had sufficient training. Further investigation will be needed to understand the training needs of all staff across the school, including those with differing classroom-facing and pastoral focused responsibilities.

Further to this, staff were also asked about any particular topics relating to mental health and wellbeing in which they would appreciate further training. Full responses are included in the chart below. NB: responses sum to more than the total number of respondents as it was possible to select more than one option for this question.



The most popular choice was neurodiversity and mental health, identified by 77% of all staff as an area they would appreciate further training in. The second most popular item was stress and/or anxious feelings, which was identified as the most prevalent mental health challenge amongst pupils by both staff and parents/carers. These responses were mirrored in the feedback of Oxfordshire Mind staff, as described in the following section.

The most popular choice was neurodiversity and mental health, identified by

**77%**

of all staff as an area they would appreciate further training in.

## Oxfordshire Mind Staff Focus group

Oxfordshire Mind's Children and Young People's team are commissioned by Primary Care Networks to offer Supported Self Help for 7-18 year olds in several GP practices in Cherwell District. During the 2024/25 financial year, 522 children and young people completed up to six sessions of support with a Wellbeing Worker in their GP practice, 317 of these in the Cherwell District.

The Data and Quality Service Manager held a focus group with the Wellbeing Workers (WBWs) who are funded by Primary Care Networks to deliver the Supported Self Help programme in the Cherwell District. One WBW works across practices operated by Kidlington, Islip, Woodstock and Yarnton (KIWY) PCN, one across Bicester PCN and one across Banbury PCN.

The kinds of issues each Wellbeing Worker observed were shaped in part by the demographics of the area in which their practice(s) are situated. WBWs in Bicester and Banbury described a very mixed environment with a broad range of socio-economic status and ethnic backgrounds represented amongst families accessing support. In Bicester, there was a specific mention of many young people with armed forced backgrounds accessing support. In KIWY practices, the WBW reported a higher level of socio-economic status amongst families they saw, on average, with most families being from White British backgrounds.

## Presenting Need

Across all three areas, it was noted that the number of younger children (7-11) accessing the service had increased over time. A trend observed anecdotally by Wellbeing Workers was that younger children were more likely to be male, with presenting issues around anger and emotional regulation. By contrast, older children/teens accessing support were more likely to be female or non-binary.

Whilst the Supported Self Help (SSH) model allows children and young people to decide how involved a trusted adult is with their support sessions, with younger children it was noted that the help-seeking was largely parent-driven and many younger children were not really sure "why they were there". The issue, for the youngest of these children in particular (7-8 year olds), tended to be framed in the language of the trusted adult. Wellbeing workers reflected that, in many cases, these younger children were lacking the emotional literacy<sup>7</sup> to be able to describe the problem and noted that all six sessions could easily have been used in building this awareness of their emotions.

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7. Whilst different language was used by participants throughout this research, including emotional literacy, mental health literacy, emotional awareness, in all cases, respondents were describing a construct covering the ability to recognise, describe and manage a range of typical emotions, particularly in social situations.

Where children were able to describe the issue, Wellbeing Workers reported that they used language like “I’m different”, “I’m difficult” or “there’s something wrong with me”. Often, young people described being unable to control their emotions and “going from 0-100” without really understanding why. If children described particular issues, they often described friendship issues, bullying or specific difficult events as triggers for help-seeking. Specific events/circumstances that were cited as particular areas of concern for young people were exams, school transitions (primarily from primary to secondary, but also changing schools or just the transition to a new school year) and school residential.

Wellbeing Workers also reported a significant overlap between mental health concerns and neurodiversity amongst the children they see, with some trusted adults seeking support from WBWs as part of a process of obtaining a diagnosis. In other cases, adults or children reported that neurodiversity was a driver of emotionally-based school avoidance, with the child feeling overwhelmed in the school environment, and behavioural challenges resulting from their struggle to cope in the school environment.

Often, young people described being  
unable to control their emotions and

**“going from 0-100”**

without really understanding why.





## Support – what’s helpful and what isn’t?

In general, one-to-one support for children who are struggling seemed to be reported by children and their trusted adults as being the most helpful; Wellbeing Workers remarked that families are often sorry that the SSH sessions are coming to an end and wish the course of support could be longer<sup>8</sup>. Whilst this is positive feedback on the value that children and their trusted adults find in the support offered through the SSH programme, WBWs also felt there was some unwillingness from both young people and adults to detach from the support and start using the tools they have learned for themselves. In other cases, WBWs felt that the unwillingness to disengage was related to the child’s desire to continue to have a dedicated space where they felt listened to and understood.

When considering how young people responded to other forms of support they had already accessed or were signposted to, Wellbeing Workers also reported that anonymous chat services were frequently described by young people as being helpful. For more affluent families, privately funded therapy was also seen as a helpful option, though there were financial barriers to this for many.

Wellbeing Workers also reported that phone or online support, whilst often seen as options that make support more accessible, were less preferred by young people than options which were fully online (e.g. text/messaging services) or face-to-face support.

A final observation about support was that where young people were learning coping skills and strategies (either from WBWs or other forms of support), they were often limited in how well they were actually able to use these during times of stress in a school environment, particularly when these techniques involved taking a movement break or otherwise stepping away from the classroom environment.

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8. In the model, families are limited to 6 sessions but can re-engage for a second episode of support after 6 months.

## Support – what is needed?

Wellbeing Workers were very clear that the lack of emotional literacy amongst primary-school aged children is a barrier to being able to provide them with other mental health and wellbeing tools. There was general agreement that in a significant number of the younger pupils they see, all six sessions may be spent on identifying and naming feelings, before they can even begin to use some of the resources to help them in managing those feelings.

In terms of specific support to address this, Wellbeing Workers reflected that they were aware that some schools have Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs<sup>9</sup>) and that this kind of ongoing support appears to be helpful for children, as the skills are developed, practised and consolidated over time, rather than taught as a one-off.

However, they were also mindful that targeted interventions can be stigmatising for individual children who are identified as needing extra support, and that whole-class emotional literacy interventions may equip children who are not currently struggling with the language they need to seek support if they experience challenges in the future. However, across all three areas, staff reflected that children they worked with had at times described not feeling able to take part in whole-class activities of this nature due to friendship issues, bullying or worrying about what others would think of them.

They were also reflective about the fact that good quality resources are needed to support school staff in delivering and embedding emotional literacy frameworks within the classroom.

Wellbeing Workers noted the crucial role of parents and other carers in supporting children with their mental wellbeing. WBWs reported that there were three forms of support that they typically provided to trusted adults accompanying a child to SSH sessions; resources to understand their child and their mental wellbeing, resources to practice and develop coping strategies at home and signposting for their own mental wellbeing.

WBWs emphasised the following areas as ones where there was a particular gap in understanding between themselves and the trusted adults they worked with:

- Normalising mental health and drawing comparisons with physical health – emphasising that there is nothing “wrong” with a child who is struggling
- Focus on setting and holding boundaries with children
- Understanding behaviour as communication – that challenging behaviour is often an expression of distress.

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9. <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/what-is-elsa-intervention/>

All three WBWs felt that there was an opportunity to make support provided in school more effective by working more closely with parents. In particular, they felt that by providing consistency in the strategies used to support children with worries, feelings or behaviours at home and at school, a greater sense of security could be built for pupils. They were aware that some schools were already proactively doing this and reflected that some schools may need more resources to engage parents and devote adequate time to this kind of joined up working.

## Training for teachers

As described above, Wellbeing Workers were aware from working with school staff that staff were likely to need additional training to support them in embedding support strategies for specific children and/or whole-class emotional literacy interventions.

They observed that this is also likely to vary depending on the demographic profile of the school; Banbury and Bicester schools were more likely to need training in supporting children from different cultural backgrounds where views about mental health and illness vary, and that these need to be culturally informed, acknowledging the differing perspectives some children may be hearing at home and at school.

## Specific support – learning disabilities, SEN and neurodiversity

As described above, Wellbeing Workers reported a high prevalence of diagnosed or suspected neurodiversity, learning disability and other special educational needs amongst the children they saw in practice. Many felt that specific support on the mental health needs of children with these conditions was needed, as many mainstream resources were not suitable for their needs.

During the discussion about emotionally-based school avoidance, Wellbeing Workers described examples of good practice they were aware of that schools had implemented to support children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities to manage in school, including “soft starts” to the school day and movement breaks between lessons. However, they were aware that it was challenging within the structure of the school system to offer flexibility in all the different ways that children needed it.

When asked for their specific recommendations for the support that could most helpfully be offered to schools, all three staff members agreed that it would ideally consist of a mixture of:

- A blend of 1-1, small group and whole class support, with additional briefings for staff about the content to allow for consistency with classroom practice.
- Dedicated resource to engage families
- Training for staff on more general mental health topics but also on specific issues that are prevalent within their catchment area, e.g. refugee mental health, support needs of military families.

## School Staff Interviews

To add depth to our understanding of what schools need from mental health and wellbeing support, we reached out to schools who had taken part in the survey and invited them to a short interview.

Three staff attended an interview from two schools; these were 30 minute conversations conducted over Microsoft Teams.

The findings of these conversations are not, of course, representative of the experiences of all schools in the District but provide useful insights which contextualise the quantitative figures gathered through the survey.

## Presenting needs

Both schools interviewed described a mixed picture of presenting need with no one clear “target” group for whom they primarily lacked support options. Instead, they described high volumes of children who would benefit from support, with a range of needs from friendship and bullying issues, to struggles with neurodiversity, complex home situations up to highly levels of mental distress expressed through very challenging behaviour.

Some of the presenting need was easier for schools to predict; both schools reported dealing with high levels of emotionally-based school avoidance, particularly earlier in the year, and with more children feeling worried and anxious as the end of the year transition approached. This was particularly true for Y6 children but was noted in other year groups too.

Other types of need were harder to predict, making support hard to plan; bereavement, friendship issues and bullying, child protection issues and difficulties at home arose unexpectedly.

Staff broadly mirrored the findings of the staff and parent/carer surveys, reflecting that anxiety and worried feelings were, typically, the most common kind of need they were addressing, with anger also commonly cited as a prevalent issue.

One school described the challenges of supporting children with higher levels of need who were either on the waiting list for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), or who for some reason such as their social care involvement or physical health needs, were unable to be assessed. Being able to support these children whilst they waited for support, or where there was a lack of clarity about support they could access, was felt to be a major gap in their support offer.

Another school mirrored the comments of Oxfordshire Mind staff in highlighting that emotional literacy was low amongst many of the pupils they were supporting with mental health and wellbeing challenges. This limited how effective support interventions could be, as children lacked the awareness and language to describe how they were feeling. An approach the school had taken to address this is described below.

## Support available

Both schools who took part in interviews described a range of support options they could access to support the needs of pupils, but the overwhelming finding was that they needed much more availability of this support than they currently had to meet the needs of all children who could benefit from extra help.

One school described a comprehensive whole-school-approach to mental health and wellbeing, with an ELSA-trained TA at the centre of this. She co-ordinated 1-1 or group ELSA support for pupils who needed help, with an additional offering of Rhythm and Wellbeing<sup>10</sup> (RaW) for those children who were lacking the emotional literacy and awareness to access strategies taught through the ELSA sessions. However, this role is part time and always has a long waiting list for support.

Around the ELSA role, the staff described several other interventions which aimed to support and improve the wellbeing of children. This included a “life skills” group for children with communication needs or learning difficulties, access to a trainee play therapist, a whole-school PSHE programme called Life Skills, specific universal provision in Key Stage 1 (Colour Monster) and Key Stage 2 (around feeling safe). They also described increasing levels of skill amongst teachers in meeting the individual wellbeing needs of children with strategies like soft starts and movement breaks.

The other school also described sources of support they found helpful, identifying that the Mental Health Support team offered valuable input for some children, and that staff were readily able to access good quality training through Oxfordshire County Council amongst other sources.

One school described building positive engagement with parents around mental health support by treating it no differently to other forms of additional help a child might be offered in school. One staff member described how:

*“If your child needs maths support, we’re not going to ask permission to go and put them into a different group. If your child needs mental health support, this is just what we do. It’s just our offering.”*

She identified that her peers in similar roles had implemented similar approaches in their schools, and that this approach had been successful in engaging parents.

*“I’ve not had anyone this year come to me and say I don’t want you to work with my child or why are you asking?”*

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10. <https://redbridgeiass.org.uk/parentsandcarers/health/REWT/>

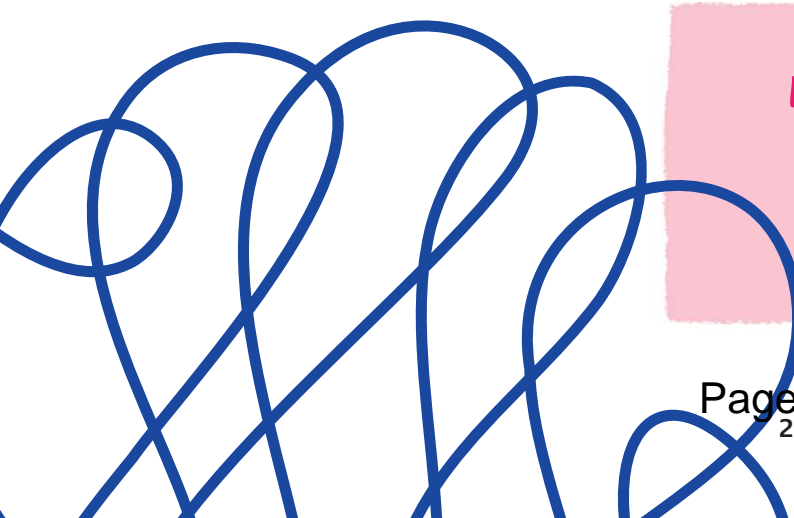
## What is needed?

Whilst schools reflected on some shortcomings in their current support offer, they also agreed that there was good quality provision in evidence in and around their school.

Where there were gaps in provision, they tended to relate to the highest levels of need; feedback from one school was clear that it was those children who had the most challenging mental health presentations for whom they felt current support was not sufficient, and that other services such as Mental Health Support Team (MHST) or CAMHS were not always able to help due to the complexity of the case, or because other agencies were already involved.

Overwhelmingly, though, the feedback was that it was sheer numbers of “boots on the ground” that would make the biggest difference. Expansion of the ELSA TA provision was suggested, as were dedicated staff to work holistically with the school, children and their families. As one staff member put it *“If I have a TA off, I don’t know what I’ll do. I don’t have a spare adult.”*

This lack of capacity did not just limit the amount of support available, it also made it challenging for staff to take part in helpful initiatives and improve their practice; one staff member reflected that they accessed supervision for their role alongside others in the District doing similar work, but often couldn’t attend when safeguarding responsibilities arose and they were the only available person to respond.



*If I have a TA off, I don’t know  
what I’ll do. I don’t have a  
spare adult.”*

Quote from staff member.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The feedback received through the different strands of this research indicates that the importance of the mental health and wellbeing of children is increasingly well understood and prioritised in school communities and beyond. However, it also describes high, and increasing, levels of need which schools are struggling to meet as fully as they would like to.

On the specific elements of a support offer that we consulted on, parents of children with mental health needs and staff were clear that targeted 1-1 support, in combination with workshops differentiated by age would combine to produce a robust offer. Parents of children without current wellbeing concerns highlighted the physical health and wellbeing blended support as more preferable. Given the difference in priorities between these groups of parents and carers, there may therefore be a need for thoughtful communication about any additional support offered to ensure that all parents understand what is being offered and why.

Qualitative work added richness to the survey findings and suggested that the focus of these sessions would need to vary widely to meet the needs of the broad range of children who experience challenges at different stages of their time in school. However, building emotional literacy as a foundation for developing coping strategies was identified throughout the research as a much-needed approach.

Forms of support that bring together children and parents/carers were also valued, as many comments identified the challenges parents face with their own wellbeing, as they seek to support their children.

# Next Steps

- 1** Identify schools where there is no designated **mental health lead** amongst staff and supporting them to develop this role,
- 2** Provide training to staff on key aspects of mental health and pupil experience, specifically neurodiversity, as identified by the survey,
- 3** Support schools to **communicate their current mental health offering to parents and carers**, making it clear that mental health support is a core element of the school's offer just as academic support would be. This support could also usefully include resources about child development and building emotional literacy.
- 4** Review the current PSHE provision across the District and support schools to integrate new, good quality mental health and emotional literacy resources into their curriculum where this is needed.
- 5** Encourage schools to think holistically about wellbeing needs - a holistic view that considers communication skills, emotional literacy, friendship and bullying, feeling safe in school and outside can support more formal mental health interventions.
- 6** Consider funding a package of support that blends 1-1 targeted support and whole-class workshops that continue throughout the school year and increase on-the-ground capacity in schools.





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# Unmet Mental Health Needs in Primary-Aged Children

## Executive Summary



*Cherwell*

DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Oxfordshire Mind prepared two surveys of the mental health and wellbeing needs of primary school aged children that were completed by 31 schools and 215 parents/carers respectively.

## Key findings

- 41% of parents/carers who responded indicated that their child had a current mental health or wellbeing concern.
- Years 4 and 5 were highlighted as most likely to be facing challenges.
- Stress and/or anxious feelings were reported as the biggest mental health and wellbeing challenge for children by both parents/carers and school staff.
- There was a widespread preference for a support offer blending whole-class and 1-1 support for mental wellbeing.
- The majority of school staff who responded reported feeling that they only “to some extent” have the training they need to support pupils with wellbeing issues.
- Parents generally reported high levels of confidence that they would know who to talk to if they had a worry, but less confidence that their child would know who to talk to.

## Recommendations for next steps

- Priorities for support identified by school staff, parents/carers and Oxfordshire Mind staff alike were:
  - ✓ Increased access to training around neurodiverse conditions and emotional regulation.
  - ✓ Support schools to embed emotional literacy into PSHE lessons and classroom practice.
  - ✓ Fund a blended support model combining 1:1 sessions, whole-class workshops, and family engagement.
  - ✓ Improve communication with parents about available mental health support in schools.

This report is public	
Simpler Recycling	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	6 January 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Ian Middleton
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	1 November 2025
Report of	Assistant Director Environmental Services, Ed Potter

## Purpose of report

This report sets out the possible options and the proposed recommendation for the waste collection service, following new requirements driven by The Environment Act.

## 1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the completion of a TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment covering paper & cardboard (Appendix 1) until the implications of DRS on the kerbside recycling service is fully understood.
- 1.2 To support a review of the frequency of residual waste collection.
- 1.3 To approve that any changes in the waste collection service should involve consultation with our Waste & Environmental Services Project (WESP) partners.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 A number of legislative changes will mean significant changes to the waste collection service residents receive. These legislative changes include

- Simpler Recycling
- Deposit Return Scheme
- Extended Producer Responsibility
- Emissions Trading Scheme

- 2.2 Simpler Recycling is being implemented to ensure that five main materials are collected from all councils across the country. For domestic collections from April 2026 the default position is for residents to receive the following materials collected at the kerbside- paper, cardboard, cans, plastic bottles & glass. This may result in residents having at least four containers. A bin for residual waste (non-recyclable waste), a bin for food waste recycling, a bin for paper & cardboard and a bin for dry

mixed recyclables. For those who pay an annual subscription a bin for garden waste is also provided. The details for Simpler Recycling were only revealed in late November 2024. To fully comply, residents will need to be issued with a container for paper & cardboard and glass will be added to the dry mixed recycling from January 2026. To collect paper & cardboard separately will require significant investment. The likely cost for new bins for each property will be around £1.5 million in capital. The new bin would have an average lifespan of 40 years plus. In addition, it should be noted that there is a requirement in Simpler Recycling for plastic film to be collected from the kerbside by the end of March 2027.

- 2.3 Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) is being implemented in October 2027. Drinks containers including plastic bottles and cans will have a deposit taken at the point of purchase. This deposit will be fully repaid once the can or plastic bottle is returned. The full details of the scheme have yet to be completely developed, but are likely to be released during 2026. However, it is likely that the number of drinks cans and drinks bottles in the dry mixed recycling will be substantially reduced from October 2027. It should be noted that glass drinks bottles do not fall under DRS.
- 2.4 Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (PEPR) pushes the costs of recycling packaging from local authorities to the retailers & the producers of packaging. In November 2025 this Council started to receive £1.7 million (for 2025/26) from the packaging industry for collection & treatment costs. To continue to receive significant payments the collection service must be judged to be 'effective & efficient'. If the service is not effective & efficient up to 20% of this payment (£350k) could be removed. The packaging industry are paying significant sums to local authorities so they will be looking to see improvements in collection rates of packaging materials & quality of packaging collected. The government have also indicated that they expect these payments to be utilised in improving recycling systems. Next year (2026/27) the indication is that the payment will be £1.75 million.
- 2.5 The Emissions Trading Scheme will cover Energy from Waste Plants from 2027. For the County Council this scheme could cost £3 million in extra disposal costs. By reducing the amount of residual waste delivered to Ardley and increasing the amount of recycling this extra disposal cost could be minimised. However, the current flow of funds between the disposal authority and the collection authorities means that to do more recycling will cost the collection authorities more, with all the financial benefits being received by the disposal authority. As a consequence, the County Council is proposing an incentive scheme with the collection authorities. The incentive scheme is designed so that much of the financial benefits will sit with the collection authorities.
- 2.6 The above changes have been considered by the Simpler Recycling Project Board in addition to the introduction of kerbside glass collection which commences in January 2026. Also, it is proposed, in the future that the service could move to a reduction in residual waste collections. To achieve future waste targets of 65% recycling, a restriction on residual waste is likely to be required to encourage residents to recycle more. Currently 40% of the contents of the residual waste bin could be recycled, if residents chose to fully utilise the recycling services.
- 2.7 The new waste collection service has a number of challenges:
- Introduction of kerbside collection of glass from January 2026

- Removal of bring banks across the district as bring bank tonnages fall as residents use the kerbside collection service instead
- Consideration of collecting paper & cardboard separately and the need to complete a TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment before March 2026
- Introduction of plastic film collections from 31 March 2027
- Consideration of reduced residual waste collections to encourage residents to fully use the kerbside recycling services including the weekly food waste collections.

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications		Commentary		
<b>Finance</b>		The financial impacts of collecting paper & cardboard separately are not yet understood. Capital investment of £1.5 million is required but the change in revenue cost is difficult to calculate due to a number of uncertainties such as DRS. Leanne Lock, Strategic Finance Business Partner, November 2025		
<b>Legal</b>		The Council has a statutory responsibility to arrange for the collection of household waste in its area under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Council also has to comply with the Environment Act 2021 to ensure that certain recyclable materials are collected appropriately. The proposals set out within this report will help to ensure that we remain compliant with our obligations. Denzil Turbeville, Head of Legal, November 2025		
<b>Risk Management</b>		The Council has to carry out most of the functions of Waste & Environmental Services as they are statutory services. A robust governance & risk management framework will be implemented to ensure a successful service change. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, November 2025		
Impact Assessments		Positive	Neutral	Negative
		Commentary		
<b>Equality Impact</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?			X	
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the			X	

lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?				
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>				Increasing recycling has a positive impact on the environment. Using recycled materials rather than virgin materials develops a circular economy and helps to address climate change
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>				No impact
<b>Data Impact</b>				No impact
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>				Any purchase of wheeled bins would be through existing framework agreements
<b>Council Priorities</b>	Supporting Environmental Sustainability			
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A			
<b>Property</b>	N/A			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	N/A			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Council collects around 60,000 tonnes of waste each year from around 73,000 properties. The number of properties is increasing by 1000 properties per year. The current service has an alternate week residual waste bin (green), an alternate week dry mixed recycling bin (blue), a weekly food waste recycling bin (silver) and for those who pay a subscription, an alternate week garden waste recycling bin or bins(brown).
- 3.2 The current alternate week collection service was introduced in 2003/04. The main changes to the service since then, has been the introduction of food waste collections. Initially food was added to the garden waste service in around 2010. Then, in 2022, a garden waste subscription service was introduced with a weekly separate collection of food waste. Other smaller services such as the collection of batteries, small electrical items and coffee pods have been successfully introduced over a number of years.
- 3.3 The national waste strategy which was launched in December 2018 has brought about a need to change and to move towards a circular economy. The process to consult & engage with all stakeholders has been long winded. It was only in November 2024 that most of the requirements for change became clear. Even now



details on areas such as Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), are difficult to fully assess the resulting impact on the waste collection service.

### **Simpler Recycling**

- 3.4 Simpler Recycling brings a requirement on collection authorities across the country to collect the same materials and to deliver similar services. The key elements are that collection authorities must collect at the kerbside - paper, card, plastics, steel & aluminium cans and glass. In addition, collection authorities must collect food waste on a weekly basis. The details of the waste collection service & frequency provided by collection authorities are the responsibility of individual councils. From 31 March 2027 plastic film needs to be added to the range of collection materials. A late addition to the collection requirements was collecting paper & cardboard separately from the other dry recycling materials.
- 3.5 To meet the requirements of Simpler Recycling, there are two changes required before the end of March 2026 & one further requirement before the end of March 2027. Firstly, collection of glass at the kerbside is required, this was approved by the Executive and will commence in January 2026. In addition, paper & cardboard needs to be collected separated from the rest of the recycling materials. However, implementing separate collections of paper & cardboard cannot be achieved by 31 March 2026 as a number of barriers exist and so a TEEP assessment is proposed. The one future requirement is collecting plastic film by 31 March 2027.
- 3.6 A TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment which will delay the implementation for collecting paper & cardboard separately until after October 2027. This is because of a number of reasons including
- The current recycling processing contract does not financially reward separate collection of paper & cardboard.
  - The financial impact on collecting paper & cardboard separately has yet to be fully understood
  - The impact on the recycling collection service from DRS will not become clearer until later in 2026
  - The lead time for changing our current recycling scheme and delivering a new bin is significant and will take around 12-15 months
  - Understanding the views of our partners in the WESP project to ensure efficiencies from joint action are secured.

## **4. Details**

### **Glass recycling**

- 4.1 At present glass is recycled through an extensive network of glass banks. This offers the lowest cost for the recycling of glass and also minimises CO2 emissions. The glass is colour separated and turned back into bottles and containers. Around 70% of household glass is captured and recycled through this collection method. The banks are sited at well over 100 sites so that residents can recycle their bottles at supermarkets, at local shops and at village halls and community centres. It is a low-cost collection method and requires one staff member with a specialist crane

lorry. The glass produces an income stream. The bring banks in some areas can be a focus for fly tipping with materials being dumped around bring banks.

- 4.2 Collecting glass at the kerbside will be launched from 01 January 2026. Glass will be added to the existing blue bins. This will make it easier for residents to recycle their glass and should increase the amount of glass recycled by around 500-700 tonnes/year.
- 4.3 The amount of glass going through the bring banks will rapidly fall and most of the bring bank sites will close in the early months of 2026. This should help to reduce fly tipping problems, at a number of sites, where fly tipping has become common.
- 4.4 The overall financial impact on collecting glass at the kerbside is in excess of 400k/year. The main issue being glass through the bring banks gave a good income and moving to add glass to the blue bin removes the income. It is a requirement of Simpler Recycling that glass is collected at the kerbside. As a result of collecting glass at the kerbside it will be easier for residents to recycle their glass and an extra 500-700 tonnes of glass is likely to be collected.

### **Separate Collection of Paper & Cardboard**

- 4.5 A late addition to the requirements of Simpler Recycling was the introduction of separate collection of paper & cardboard. The paper industry has always discouraged the collection of glass and paper in the same bin. This is due to the possibility of shards of glass getting caught up in paper. The presence of glass in paper for recycling can cause damage to paper processing equipment.
- 4.6 Paper & cardboard should have a lower gate fee than commingled dry recycling. However, our current recycling processor does not offer a better gate for paper & cardboard only. There is likely to be around 5000 tonnes present out of 15,000 tonnes of commingled dry recycling (once glass is added). The need to collect paper & cardboard separately will require resident to have another container; this is likely to be a wheeled bin. Delivering 73,000 new wheelie bins to each property will require a capital investment of £1.5 million. The expected life of a wheelie bin for paper & cardboard is at least 40 years.
- 4.7 Consideration on how the overall recycling scheme will operate needs to be examined. DRS could divert 2000 tonnes of cans & plastic bottles from the blue bin. Taking a further 5000 tonnes of paper & cardboard out of the blue bin should reduce the blue bin tonnages to 8000. The 8000 tonnes would likely be made up of 4000- 4500 tonnes of glass with the remaining 3500 – 4000 tonne being food cans, plastic detergent bottles and other plastic non drinks bottles.

### **Residual Waste Collections**

- 4.8 With two different recycling containers the frequency of emptying needs to be modelled. In addition, with a very comprehensive recycling service, how often should residual waste collections take place? To achieve both National targets and Oxfordshire Resources & Waste Partnership targets of 65% recycling, residual waste capacity for residents will need to be restricted. Currently 40% of the waste within residual waste bins (green bins) could be recycled using the current kerbside recycling services. By limiting residual waste collections the amount of recycling, including food waste recycling, will increase and residual waste tonnages will fall.

- 4.9 Reduced residual waste collections will increase the recycling rate and needs to be considered. Reducing frequency of residual waste collections does not reduce the amount of waste households produce, but it does encourage the full use of recycling services. More use of the weekly food waste recycling scheme (currently only 50% of food waste is captured) and the other kerbside recycling services (currently around 70- 75% of dry recycling captured) results in less residual waste being presented. Less residual collection reduces the number of crews for residual waste collections. However, these crew resources will be transferred to increase the resources on increased food waste recycling and dry recycling collections. The County Council financially gains as treatment of food waste and processing of dry recycling is much cheaper than disposal of waste through the Energy from Waste Plant. To avoid future increased disposal costs from Energy from Waste (EfW), due to the Emissions Trading Scheme, the County Council has indicated it is developing a scheme to encourage collection authorities to reduce the residual waste delivered. The proposal from the County Council has very recently appeared.

### **Local Government Reorganisation & the Waste & Environmental Services Project (WESP)**

- 4.10 This Council has been working closely with both Oxford City Council and West Oxfordshire District Council on waste collection. Work commencing in late 2024 identified some potential financial efficiencies by the three councils working more closely together on waste & other associated front-line services. This work is proceeding as there is a potential for significant financial savings. Since this work commenced Local Government Reorganisation indicates the three councils could potentially operate in a new unitary council covering all three authorities.
- 4.11 Currently the three councils have very similar waste collection services. All carry out separate weekly food waste collections, alternate residual waste collections and chargeable garden waste on a two-weekly basis. The dry recycling services are similar too, collecting the same materials with the exception of glass. In Oxford City glass is collected with the other recyclables, in this Council the glass is collected via bring banks. This changes in January 2026 when glass is collected at the kerbside and the network of glass banks will quickly be reduced.
- 4.12 If the financial benefits of working together are to be realised then it is important that the three councils operate in a similar manner. Consequently, when considering the kerbside recycling the methods employed by our partners need to be carefully considered and our partners should always be consulted.

## **5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Implement separate collection of paper & cardboard as soon as possible. This has been dismissed due to the uncertain financial impact – investing capital of £1.5 million plus and a great uncertainty about the impact on revenue costs

Option 2: Implement collection of plastic film as soon as possible. This has been rejected because our recycling processor, N&P, have yet to set out their specification regarding plastic film.

## 6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 The decision to introduce glass recycling from the kerbside in January 2026 was made by Executive in November 2025. To fully comply with Simpler Recycling by 31 March 2026 either paper & cardboard needs to be collected separately at the kerbside or a TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment carried out. It is recommended a TEEP assessment is carried out and the decision to move to collect Paper & cardboard separately is delayed until the financial implications are fully understood when DRS operations become clear. A draft assessment is attached in Appendix 1.
- 6.2 Plastic film needs to be introduced into kerbside collections before 31 March 2027. The decision on when to commence collections cannot be made until our processing recycling contractor indicates what plastic film is acceptable and what is unacceptable. This information is likely to be forthcoming before the summer of 2026.

### Decision Information

<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	Yes
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All

### Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment for separate collection of paper & cardboard
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Reference Papers</b>	None
<b>Report Author</b>	Ed Potter Assistant Director Environmental Services
<b>Report Author contact details</b>	ed.potter@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 221574
<b>Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Executive Director for Neighbourhood Services

# Template written assessment: collecting paper and card with plastic, metal and glass

Waste collection authorities and other waste collectors can use this template to create a written assessment to collect paper and card with other dry recyclable waste (plastic, metal and glass). You do not have to use this template and can choose to use a different format. You should retain a record of your written assessment and any supporting evidence.

You should read the [guidance on collecting paper and card with other dry recyclable waste](#) before you fill in this template.

## Information about your organisation

**Name of waste collector or waste collection authority**

Cherwell District Council

**Waste carrier number**

## Information about the assessment

**How many written assessments have you (the waste collector or waste collection authority) completed?**

**What geographical area, collection route or type of premises does this written assessment cover?**

All of the Cherwell District

**Which dry recyclable waste will you collect with paper and card?**

Plastic, metal and glass

## Exceptions you are relying on

**Which exception, or exceptions, are you relying on (technical, economic or environmental)?**

Technical, economic and environmental

### 1. Collecting separately is not 'technically practicable'

If you are relying on this exception, add the technical reasons why

Cherwell District Council currently operates a co-mingled collection service for dry recyclable materials, which is supported by a well-established Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) contract. Based on some further assessment of our infrastructure, vehicle fleet, collection rounds, and available resources, we conclude that separate collection of individual material streams is not technically practicable, for the following reasons:

#### **Fleet Limitations**

Our current collection fleet is designed for co-mingled waste collection. Transitioning to a multi-stream collection system would require a complete redesign and replacement of the fleet with specialist compartmentalised vehicles, especially if we were to collect both streams on the same day/vehicle. The procurement lead times, and operational disruption involved make this approach technically unfeasible in the short to medium term.

#### **Operational Constraints**

Separate collections would require significant changes to collection rounds, increased collection frequencies, and more complex logistics, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas. These operational constraints would result in inefficiencies, increased mileage, and practical delivery challenges.

#### **Infrastructure and Depot Capacity**

Our existing depot facilities do not currently have the physical capacity or layout to support the segregation, storage, and transfer of separately collected streams. Significant redevelopment would be needed, which is not currently deliverable within operational or spatial constraints.

#### **Service Disruption Risk**

Implementing separate collections would result in major service disruption during the transition phase, with a risk to consistent service delivery and resident engagement, potentially reducing overall recycling performance.

Based on the above considerations, Cherwell District Council concludes that separate collection of dry recyclables is not technically practicable at this time. We will continue to monitor technological advancements, funding opportunities, and policy developments that may change this position in the future. This conclusion will be reviewed regularly in

line with our duty to achieve high-quality recycling where practicable, and we remain committed to maximising recycling performance within the constraints of our current collection system.

### **Communications to residents**

A primary logistical consideration is ensuring effective and clear communication of service changes to residents. While simplicity and clarity are our goals, significant adjustments to collection schedules require widespread updates to printed and digital materials, including collection calendars and associated literature. These updates, if not carefully managed, may lead to confusion among residents. Therefore, adequate lead time is essential to develop and implement well-structured, tailored communications that align with the scale of change.

### **What type of data have you used?**

Add all that apply.

For example:

- analysis completed by your organisation
- analysis completed by a consultant
- WRAP (Waste and Resource Action Programme) data
- photographs
- floor plans
- other documentation (describe)

Analysis completed by Cherwell District Council – Environmental Services

## **2. Collecting separately is not ‘economically practicable’**

If you are relying on this exception, add the economic reasons why.

As part of our commitment to assessing the feasibility of separate collections, Cherwell District Council has also considered the economic implications of transitioning from a co-

mingled recycling service to a fully source-segregated collection of dry recyclables (paper, glass, plastics, and metals).

Our assessment finds that separate collection is not economically practicable, based on the following factors:

### **Capital Investment Requirements**

A transition to separate collections would require substantial upfront investment in new collection vehicles with multi-compartment capabilities, additional bins or containers for residents, and infrastructure upgrades at depots and transfer stations. These capital costs would place a significant financial burden on the council at a time of continued funding pressures.

### **Increased Operational Costs**

Separate collections would increase operational costs due to:

- More complex and longer collection rounds.
- Increased vehicle mileage and fuel use.
- Additional staffing or driver hours to accommodate longer routes.
- Higher maintenance costs for more specialised vehicles.

### **Lack of Economies of Scale**

The low density of some areas within the district, particularly rural zones, means that separate collection rounds would not achieve economies of scale. This would lead to higher per-household costs and reduced cost-effectiveness of service delivery.

### **MRF Contractual Arrangements**

Cherwell District Council currently benefits from an established co-mingled materials contract with a local Materials Recovery Facility. This contract provides good value for money, and switching to separate collections would incur potential penalties, contract renegotiation costs, and the need for new reprocessing arrangements for each material stream.

### **Limited Financial Incentives**

While there may be marginal quality or value improvements from collecting materials separately, current market prices for recycled materials do not justify the additional cost of separate collection. The marginal financial gain would not offset the increased operational and capital expenditure.

### **Impact on Wider Council Services**

Diverting resources to support the switch to separate collection would place pressure on other frontline services. In the current financial climate, such a diversion is not sustainable or responsible.

### **Conclusion**

Cherwell District Council concludes that separate collection of dry recyclable materials is



not economically practicable at this time. We will continue to monitor market conditions, funding opportunities, and national policy developments (e.g. Extended Producer Responsibility and Consistency in Collections) that may change the economic case in future.

### What type of data have you used?

Add all that apply.

For example:

- analysis completed by your organisation
- analysis completed by a consultant
- WRAP data
- other documentation (describe)

Analysis completed by Cherwell District Council – Environmental Services

### 3. Collecting separately has ‘no significant environmental benefit’

If you are relying on this exception, add the environmental reasons why.

Cherwell District Council is committed to delivering services that support sustainable resource use and environmental protection. In assessing the environmental practicability of switching from a co-mingled recycling collection to fully source-separated collections for paper/card, the following considerations were made:

After review, we conclude that separate collection is not environmentally practicable at this time, due to the following factors:

#### **Marginal Environmental Gains**

Our co-mingled recycling system currently delivers high capture rates and acceptable material quality levels through processing at a contracted Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). The environmental benefits of switching to source-separated collection—primarily slightly improved material purity—are not significant enough to outweigh the negative impacts of more complex logistics and resource use.

### **Increased Emissions from Collection Vehicles**

It is likely that separate collections would require more vehicles on the road, longer routes, and potentially increased collection frequencies. This would result in:

- Higher fuel consumption.
- Increased greenhouse gas emissions.
- Greater wear on road infrastructure.
- The net environmental effect of these changes would likely offset, or even exceed, the marginal gains from improved recycling quality.

### **Carbon and Resource Impact of System Changes**

The transition to separate collections would involve procurement of new vehicles and containers, and redevelopment of depot infrastructure. The carbon and resource footprint of this transformation must be considered as part of the overall environmental assessment and currently represents a significant upfront environmental cost.

### **Resident Engagement and Behaviour**

Introducing multiple separate recycling containers could risk confusion or reduced participation if not implemented carefully. A decline in participation rates or increase in contamination (due to user error) could undermine the environmental intent of separate collections.

### **Current Performance and End Destinations**

Materials collected co-mingled are sorted efficiently and sent to end markets that support closed-loop recycling. This contributes positively to the circular economy and demonstrates that good environmental outcomes can still be achieved without separate collections.

### **Conclusion**

Based on this assessment, Cherwell District Council concludes that separate collection of dry recyclable materials is not environmentally practicable under current circumstances. We will continue to review this position in light of future changes to technology, government policy, carbon reduction targets, and public engagement strategies.

### **What type of data have you used?**

Add all that apply.

For example:

- analysis completed by your organisation
- analysis completed by a consultant
- WRAP data
- other documentation (describe)

Analysis completed by Cherwell District Council – Environmental Services

## Authorisation

By typing your name, you confirm that the information you have given is correct.

**Name**

Ed Potter

**Job title**

Assistant Director Environmental Services

**Signature**

**Date**

December 2025

**Date of next review**

November 2026

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This report is public	
Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025 – 2030	
<b>Committee</b>	Executive
<b>Date of Committee</b>	6 January 2026
<b>Portfolio Holder presenting the report</b>	Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management, Councillor Jean Conway
<b>Date Portfolio Holder agreed report</b>	31 October 2025
<b>Report of</b>	Assistant Director Planning, David Peckford

## Purpose of report

To consider and endorse the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025 – 2030.

## 1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To endorse the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) Management Plan 2025-2030 is presented at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 A National Landscape is legally referred to as an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB). It is a 'protected landscape' and 'relevant authorities', including this Council, must now 'seek to further' their statutory purposes.
- 2.3 The statutory purposes of National Landscapes are conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty and, because there is a Conservation Board, increasing the understanding and enjoyment by the public of the special qualities of the area of outstanding natural beauty.
- 2.4 Cherwell has a small area of National Landscape within the north-west area of the district (see Appendix 2).
- 2.5 Under section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, there is a statutory requirement for a Management Plan which must be reviewed every five years or sooner.

- 2.6 The Cotswolds National Landscape Board, which includes representation from this Council, has prepared a new Management Plan covering the period 2025 – 2030. It was formally adopted by the Board on 25 February 2025.
- 2.7 The Management Plan covers the geographic area of the National Landscape / AONB, outlines the vision and strategy for conserving and enhancing its natural beauty, including wildlife and cultural heritage, and promotes opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities.
- 2.8 Officers consider that the Management Plan should be formally endorsed.

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary			
Finance	There are no direct financial implications. The Council pays a small annual subscription to the Cotswold Conservation Board which assists the Council in fulfilling its statutory obligation to further the purposes of National Landscapes. Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 31 October 2025			
Legal	The report notes that there is a legal requirement to review the plan every 5 years and identifies how this plan interacts with our local plan. The endorsement of a Management Plan would assist the Council in fulfilling its statutory obligation in furthering the purposes of National Landscapes. Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 6 November 2025			
Risk Management	There are no risks arising from the proposed adoption of the Management Plan. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 6 November 2025			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	X			The Management Plan includes a monitoring indicator framework for national targets set by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). It includes a policy (CC4) for working in partnership which relates to the national target for improving and promoting accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using metrics in the Government’s Access for All programme. A broad aim of the Management Plan is, <i>‘Increasing Understanding and Enjoyment; Ensuring access, learning and wellbeing opportunities are for everyone’</i>

				Outcome 13 – Access and Recreation, is that ‘ <i>The Cotswolds is recognised as a welcoming place, where barriers to access are being removed and everyone feels connected to the landscape</i> ’. Achievement of the Plan’s objectives would have a positive impact.
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	X			As above
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>	X			The Management Plan was informed by a process of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SEA concludes that the plan would have environmental and sustainability benefits for the Cotswolds National Landscape. The plan includes policies for climate change mitigation (CC1) and adaptation (CC2).
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>		X		N/A
<b>Data Impact</b>		X		N/A
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>		X		N/A
<b>Council Priorities</b>	Vision for Lasting Change 2025-2030 Priority 3 – Environmental Stewardship, specifically according with ‘to Safeguard the environment and promote biodiversity’.			
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A			
<b>Property</b>	N/A			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	Preparation of the Management Plan was assisted by public consultation and stakeholder engagement.			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Management Plan was prepared in consultation with local authority and public sector partners over the summer of 2024 and with the benefit of a wider consultation throughout November and December 2024. Throughout 2023 and 2024 research was commissioned by the Conservation Board to consider how the carbon footprint of the Cotswold National Landscape could be developed into a pathway towards net zero carbon emissions. Preparation was also informed by the

development of six Local Nature Recovery Strategies coincident with the Cotswolds.

- 3.2 Government guidance on how to 'seek to further' the statutory purposes of National Landscapes states that relevant authorities should consider the information contained in a Management Plan, make efforts to understand it and relate their functions to it. Authorities are encouraged to consider how measures, which could further the purposes of National Landscapes, would help to deliver the targets and objectives in the Management Plan.
- 3.3 The Management Plan has cross service application to policy- and decision-making and can be a material consideration in the determination of applications for planning permission.

## 4. Details

- 4.1 The management has four main components:

- i. Vision
- ii. Key Issues
- iii. Special Qualities
- iv. Outcomes and Policies

### ***i. A Cotswolds vision: a National Landscape for everyone***

- 4.2 The vision was adopted by the CNL Board in June 2021 following consultation with stakeholders. The key components of the vision are reproduced below.

*Challenges Lie Ahead - climate change; threats to wildlife and habitat; changes to the farming landscape and agriculture; finding ways to deliver opportunities for younger people and provide for an ageing population; and achieving access to, and involvement in, the countryside for everyone – in ways which help benefit the countryside and encourage a diverse range of people to appreciate and care for the Cotswolds.*

*What can we do, and how should we do it? - embrace new ways of thinking in order to find win-win solutions which both conserve and enhance natural beauty, and serve the people who are here....work hard, and in partnership – to find outcomes which offer the most positive benefits and the least negative impact....demonstrate collaboration and leadership....be energetic and proactive....bold, brave, and confident...work with other organisations and individuals to achieve results which benefit all...and nature.*

*The future should be bright - there is no 'one size fits all' for the future ...a greater opportunity than ever before to pull together as communities across the Cotswolds...to work with each other to harness...dedication and expertise...the Cotswolds National Landscape...for everyone, from all walks of life...to create a place that is vibrant, unique, welcoming, and truly special – for people and for nature...work towards ensuring that the Cotswolds stays a working landscape, where agriculture thrives and supply chains are secure....connected and diverse communities, but self-sustaining....visitors should feel welcome...confident about*



*access, and motivated to give something back to help look after the landscape...a place where the landscape, nature, and people work in harmony with each other.*

*The Cotswolds will be a place that will inspire generations of people to look after it – now and in the years ahead.*

## **ii. Key Issues**

### **4.3 Three key issues have informed the plan's vision and policies:**

Key Issue 1 - climate emergency: mitigating and adapting to climate change whilst conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape.

Key Issue 2 - nature's decline and the ecological crisis: enabling wildlife to recover, flourish and adapt to climate change through a robust nature recovery network which additionally provides us with clean air and water, and healthy soils.

Key Issue 3 - health and societal changes: ensuring that livelihoods are maintained and that everyone within and around the National Landscape can realise the health and wellbeing benefits of accessing its natural beauty.

## **iii. Special Qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape**

### **4.4 The special qualities of the National Landscape are defined as:**

- the unifying character of the limestone geology – its visible presence in the landscape and use as a building material;
- the Cotswold escarpment, including views from and to the National Landscape;
- the high wolds – a large open, elevated predominately farmed landscape with commons, 'big' skies and long-distance views;
- river valleys, the majority forming the headwaters of the Thames; and an important water resource;
- distinctive dry stone walls;
- flower-rich grasslands including floodplain meadows and neutral grasslands and particularly limestone grasslands;
- ancient broadleaved woodland particularly along the crest of the escarpment;
- variations in the colour of the stone from one part of the National Landscape to another which add a vital element of local distinctiveness;
- the tranquillity of the area, away from major sources of inappropriate noise, development, visual clutter and pollution;
- extensive dark sky areas;
- distinctive settlements, developed in the Cotswold vernacular with high architectural quality and integrity;
- an accessible landscape for quiet recreation for both rural and urban users, with numerous walking and riding routes, including the Cotswold Way National Trail;
- significant archaeological, prehistoric and historic associations dating back 6,000 years, including Neolithic stone monuments, ancient drove roads, Iron Age forts, Roman villas, ridge and furrow fields, medieval wool churches and country estates and parks;
- a vibrant heritage of cultural associations, including the Arts and Crafts Movement of the 19th and 20th centuries, famous composers, and authors and

traditional events such as the 'Cotswolds Olympics', Levellers Day and Woolsack Races.

#### ***iv. Outcomes and Policies***

- 4.5 The plan sets out a broad range of outcomes and policies, arranged under three main headings:
1. Cross-cutting themes – tackling 21st century issues through progressive partnerships
  2. Conserving and enhancing – influencing and delivering for landscape, nature and climate
  3. Increasing understanding and enjoyment – ensuring access, learning and well-being opportunities for everyone.

#### *Outcomes*

- 4.6 There are fourteen outcomes which seek to express the desired state of the National Landscape:

**Outcome 1 – Climate action:** By 2050 (or sooner), the Cotswolds National Landscape will have reached net zero (or better) through the collective efforts of stakeholders following a clearly defined pathway, while also building resilience to the impacts of climate change.

**Outcome 2 – Working together:** Through collaborative partnerships and a shared understanding, the purposes of the Cotswolds National Landscape and its Board are applied consistently across the whole area.

**Outcome 3 – Landscape:** The evolving landscape and much-loved character of the Cotswolds is better understood, and at the heart of all we do and the decisions we make.

**Outcome 4 – Local distinctiveness:** In a world of constant and rapid change, the local distinctiveness of the National Landscape is valued, conserved and enhanced.

**Outcome 5 – Tranquillity:** Noise pollution and visual disturbance are minimised to maintain tranquillity across the National Landscape.

**Outcome 6 – Dark skies:** Fewer areas of the Cotswolds National Landscape are affected by artificial light at night.

**Outcome 7 – Historic environment and cultural heritage:** The historic environment and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds National Landscape is better understood, conserved and enhanced.

**Outcome 8 – Biodiversity and nature recovery:** There is concerted unified action for a widespread recovery of nature – conserving, restoring and enhancing a connected mosaic of characteristically Cotswolds habitats and species.

**Outcome 9 – The water environment.** Watercourses and bodies of water within the Cotswolds National Landscape have good ecological and chemical status supported by sufficient quantities of water.

**Outcome 10 – Farming and land management** conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape in ways which balance the needs of recovering nature, climate action, food production, supporting livelihoods and public access.

**Outcome 11 – Development and infrastructure:** Development and infrastructure schemes positively contribute to the purpose of national landscape designation and also play a key role in facilitating the economic and social wellbeing of local communities.

**Outcome 12 – Health and wellbeing:** The Cotswolds National Landscape plays a full part in improving the nation's health, benefitting the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of the wide range of people who experience it.

**Outcome 13 – Access and recreation:** The Cotswolds is recognised as a welcoming place, where barriers to access are being removed and everyone feels connected to the landscape.

**Outcome 14 – Sustainable tourism:** Businesses and visitors have a shared commitment to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

#### *Policies*

4.7 The Management Plan's policies seeks to achieve the above outcomes. They are principles for how the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be managed in order to:

- a. conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the CNL;
- b. increase the understanding and enjoyment of the CNL's special qualities;
- c. foster the social and economic wellbeing of local communities;
- d. address issues that are having an adverse effect on the CNL;
- e. achieve the vision and outcomes of the Management Plan.

4.8. A summary of the policies is provided in the table below:

<b>Policy CC1: Climate change – mitigation</b>	Seeks sustainable land management, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting renewable energy. Increasing tree and hedgerow cover, improving soil carbon storage, and encouraging low-carbon construction and energy-efficient building practices. Promotes sustainable transport options, including active travel, public transport, and electric vehicle infrastructure. Encourages the reduction of emissions from food production.
<b>Policy CC2: Climate change – adaptation</b>	Reducing the risks of climate change through adaptive measures in development, infrastructure and land management. Promotes incorporating climate resilience into new projects, supporting sustainable land management and using research to better understand and respond to climate impacts.

<b>Policy CC3: Compliance with section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act</b>	Actively consider and support the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape.
<b>Policy CC4: Working in partnership</b>	Encourages stakeholders, communities, and businesses to collaborate in conserving and enhancing the Cotswolds National Landscape, promoting its special qualities, and supporting local economic and social wellbeing.
<b>Policy CE1: Landscape</b>	Conserving and enhancing landscape character and scenic quality. Avoiding the loss of key features. Supports incorporating landscape conservation into land management practices and promoting traditional rural skills.
<b>Policy CE2: Geology and Geomorphology</b>	Focuses on conserving and enhancing geological and geomorphological features.
<b>Policy CE3: Natural and cultural capital</b>	Emphasises the importance of recognising, assessing and valuing natural and cultural capital.
<b>Policy CE4: Local distinctiveness</b>	Promotes the conservation and enhancement of the Cotswolds' local distinctiveness by ensuring new developments respect the area's landscape character, settlement patterns, and traditional building styles using appropriate materials such as Cotswold limestone. Supports innovative, locally informed designs and encourages the creation of evidence-based design guidance.
<b>Policy CE5: Tranquillity</b>	Conserve and enhance the tranquillity of the landscape by minimising noise and visual disturbances.
<b>Policy CE6: Dark skies</b>	Conserving and enhancing the dark skies of the Cotswolds National Landscape by minimising light pollution.
<b>Policy CE7: Historic environment and cultural heritage</b>	Conserving and enhancing the historic environment and cultural heritage. Respecting the historical elements of the landscape.
<b>Policy CE8: Nature recovery and biodiversity</b>	Conserving and enhancing biodiversity by establishing a nature recovery network, aligning with local nature recovery plans and strategies, and prioritising species and habitats listed in relevant documents. Supporting conservation efforts.
<b>Policy CE9: Water</b>	Management and conservation of water resources. Improving water quality, ensuring adequate water supply, flood management, sustainable drainage, water efficiency and minimising pollution and re-naturalising water features / creating buffer zones.
<b>Policy CE10: Farming and land management.</b>	Ensuring that farming and land management contribute to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and special qualities.
<b>Policy CE11: Problem species, pests and diseases</b>	Managing problem species, pests, and diseases.
<b>Policy CE12: Soils</b>	Prevent and reverse degradation and prioritising soil health.
<b>Policy CE13: Development and infrastructure</b>	Prioritising the conservation and enhancement of the area's natural beauty and special qualities.

<b>Policy CE14: Major development</b>	Major development should be refused unless it meets exceptional circumstances and can be demonstrated as being in the public interest, as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
<b>Policy CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need</b>	Prioritises affordable housing in the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL), particularly for social rented housing and encourages local planning authorities to set policies ensuring at least 50% affordable housing in market developments. Seeks strong evidence of local need for 'windfall' housing sites and new housing used as a primary residence.
<b>Policy CE16: Waste management and the circular economy</b>	Emphasises the importance of following the waste hierarchy, prioritising waste prevention, reuse, and recycling. Discourages the establishment of new landfill sites or large-scale waste facilities in the National Landscape.
<b>Policy UE1: Health and wellbeing</b>	Enhancing health and wellbeing especially for communities facing health and social inequalities.
<b>Policy UE2: Access and recreation</b>	Improving access and recreational opportunities while preserving natural beauty. Reaching those who are less engaged, particularly from urban or deprived areas.
<b>Policy UE3: Sustainable tourism</b>	Promotes sustainable tourism while conserving its natural beauty. Supports sustainable transport initiatives and aims to spread tourism activity more evenly across the area.

## Relationship to the Cherwell Local Plan

- 4.9 Policy ESD 12 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 states that high priority will be given to protection and enhancement of the AONB and that the Council will seek to protect it and its setting from potentially damaging and inappropriate development. It highlights that the AONB's Management Plan will be used as supplementary guidance in decision making relevant to the AONB. The policy states that development proposals within the AONB will only be permitted if they are small-scale, sustainably located and designed, and would not conflict with the aim of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area.
- 4.10 Policy COM 10 of the Submission Draft of the Cherwell Local Plan 2042 is for *Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape* has the same purpose, stating that great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing the AONB's scenic beauty and landscape qualities, including its wildlife and heritage. It also references the use of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan as supplementary guidance in relevant decision making and states that development proposals within the National Landscape will only be permitted if they are small-scale, sustainably located and designed, and would not conflict with the aim of conserving and enhancing the scenic beauty of the area.
- 4.11 With regard to the Management Plan's encouragement of 50% affordable housing within the National Landscape in Policy CE15, such potential level of affordable housing was more broadly tested in preparing the Submission Local Plan. As Cherwell has only a small area of National Landscape in which only small-scale development is supported in principle, it is not considered that the lower affordable

housing proposals of the draft Local Plan would undermine the Management Plan's objectives in this regard.

- 4.12 There will be some aspects of the Management Plan that may not fully accord with local or national policies upon detailed application. The policies of the Development Plan is the primary consideration in development management decision-making and the Management Plan would, as guidance, be a material consideration where relevant. The Management Plan states, '*...policies are aspirational and as such, they might go further than current policies in individual development plans. It is intended that these aspirational policies will aid in helping to develop and evidence new local plan policies*'.
- 4.13 As the Management Plan would not comprise formal planning policy, this is not a significant concern and officers consider that it should be endorsed.

## **5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to endorse the Management Plan.

This is not recommended as the Management Plan will assist in meeting the statutory purpose of the National Landscape; it has been prepared with the benefit of the Council's representation; and it will be helpful guidance to the Council.

## **6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030 is a key mechanism for achieving the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of the CNL's special qualities. It is a legal requirement for a National Landscape to have a management plan under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and Conservation Boards are required to review their Management Plan before the end of a period of no more than five years. Officers consider that it will assist in conserving and enhancing that small part of the National Landscape within the district and recommend its endorsement.

### **Decision Information**

<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	Yes
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	Cropredy, Sibfords and Wroxton ward

## Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Plan showing area of Cherwell District within the Cotswolds National Landscape
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Reference Papers</b>	<p>1. Guidance – Management Plans for Protected Landscapes in England  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/management-plans-for-protected-landscapes-in-england/management-plans-for-protected-landscapes-in-england">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/management-plans-for-protected-landscapes-in-england/management-plans-for-protected-landscapes-in-england</a></p> <p>2. Guidance for relevant authorities on seeking to further the purposes of protected landscapes  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-protected-landscapes-duty/guidance-for-relevant-authorities-on-seeking-to-further-the-purposes-of-protected-landscapes">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-protected-landscapes-duty/guidance-for-relevant-authorities-on-seeking-to-further-the-purposes-of-protected-landscapes</a></p> <p>3. DEFRA Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework</a></p> <p>4. Strategic Environmental Assessment Report for the 2025/30 National Landscape Management Plan  <a href="https://www.cotswolds-nl.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/SEA-Environmental-Report-FINAL-25-01-20.pdf">https://www.cotswolds-nl.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/SEA-Environmental-Report-FINAL-25-01-20.pdf</a></p>
<b>Report Author</b>	David Peckford, Assistant Director - Planning
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<b>Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Ian Boll, Executive Director – Place and Regeneration 2 December 2025

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# Cotswolds National Landscape: area of outstanding natural beauty

## Management Plan 2025 – 2030

This title follows the format Defra are being consulted on by the National Landscapes Association.

This is the undesigned version. It is being made publicly available whilst the designed version is being developed.

Text in red is editorial narrative which will not be included in the designed version.

### A note on terminology

In June 2020 the Cotswolds National Landscape Board decided to replace the term Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) with National Landscape. All AONBs are now branded as National Landscapes.

This plan uses the name Cotswolds National Landscape for the area designated as the Cotswolds AONB. At times it is abbreviated to CNL. AONB is still the legal designation.

The name used for the organisation associated with the designation is the Cotswolds National Landscape Board. At times this is abbreviated to CNL Board or The Board.

The legal name of the organisation remains the Cotswolds Conservation Board but this name is no longer used in most circumstances.

'Principal Local Authorities' is used when referring to Unitary, County and District Councils, the term 'Local Authorities' is used to refer to Unitary, County, District, Parish and Town Councils.

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## Contents at a glance

*This table will be added at the design stage. The text below includes a footnote so has been included here to maintain the correct footnote numbering.*

Purpose 1: To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In delivering purposes 1 and 2, the Board has a duty to seek to foster the social and economic wellbeing of people living in the National Landscape. This duty is addressed through relevant policies under the two purposes.

## Executive summary

The Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) Management Plan is a statutory plan, which sets out the vision, outcomes and policies for the management of the CNL for the period 2025-2030. These are summarised in the table on the previous page.

The vision sets the overall context for the plan and was adopted in 2025 following consultation with stakeholders. The vision was drawn up in the light of three interlinked key issues:

1. The climate emergency
2. Nature's decline and the ecological crisis
3. Health and societal changes

The plan goes on to define the special qualities of the CNL. These are the aspects of the area's natural beauty which make it distinctive and which are considered valuable, especially at a national scale. It is the impact of these key issues, amongst others, on the special qualities that has informed the development of the plan's outcomes and policies.

The outcomes express the desired state of the CNL. They are arranged under three overarching headings which reflect the CNL's purpose of designation (to conserve and enhance natural beauty) and the CNL Board's additional purpose (to increase understanding and enjoyment). These headings are illustrated further with three broad aims:

1. Cross Cutting Themes; Tackling 21st century issues through progressive partnerships.
2. Conserving and Enhancing Natural Beauty; Influencing and delivering for landscape, nature and climate.
3. Increasing Understanding and Enjoyment; Ensuring access, learning and wellbeing opportunities are for everyone.

When viewed together the outcomes paint a powerful picture of what the Cotswolds would be like if this plan's vision became a reality:

Outcome 1 – Climate action: By 2050 (or sooner), the Cotswolds National Landscape will have reached net zero (or better) through the collective efforts of stakeholders following a clearly defined pathway, while also building resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Outcome 2 – Working together: Through collaborative partnerships and a shared understanding, the purposes of the Cotswolds National Landscape and its Board are applied consistently across the whole area.

Outcome 3 – Landscape: The evolving landscape and much-loved character of the Cotswolds is better understood, and at the heart of all we do and the decisions we make.

Outcome 4 – Local distinctiveness: In a world of constant and rapid change, the local distinctiveness of the National Landscape is valued, conserved and enhanced.

Outcome 5 – Tranquillity: Noise pollution and visual disturbance are minimised to maintain tranquillity across the National Landscape.

Outcome 6 – Dark skies: Fewer areas of the Cotswolds National Landscape are affected by artificial light at night.

Outcome 7 – Historic environment and cultural heritage: The historic environment and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds National Landscape is better understood, conserved and enhanced.

Outcome 8 – Biodiversity and nature recovery: There is concerted unified action for a widespread recovery of nature – conserving, restoring and enhancing a connected mosaic of characteristically Cotswolds habitats and species.

Outcome 9 – The water environment. Watercourses and bodies of water within the Cotswolds National Landscape have good ecological and chemical status supported by sufficient quantities of water.

Outcome 10 – Farming and land management conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape in ways which balance the needs of recovering nature, climate action, food production, supporting livelihoods and public access.

Outcome 11 – Development and infrastructure: Development and infrastructure schemes positively contribute to the purpose of national landscape designation and also play a key role in facilitating the economic and social wellbeing of local communities.

Outcome 12 – Health and wellbeing: The Cotswolds National Landscape plays a full part in improving the nation's health, benefitting the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of the wide range of people who experience it.

Outcome 13 – Access and recreation: The Cotswolds is recognised as a welcoming place, where barriers to access are being removed and everyone feels connected to the landscape.

Outcome 14 – Sustainable tourism: Businesses and visitors have a shared commitment to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

The policies outline in detail how these outcomes can be achieved and are perhaps the most important – and most utilised – part of the plan.

Although the CNL Board will play an important role in delivering the vision, outcomes and policies of the Management Plan, successful delivery is also dependent on all individuals and organisations with an interest in the Cotswolds.

The Management Plan identifies key actions for specific stakeholders. This is a plan for the place not the body. The Management Plan also identifies key indicators for each policy which will be used to gauge progress in its delivery. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 places a duty on relevant authorities to seek to further the statutory purposes of protected landscapes<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> More details can be found in appendix 4.

## Chair's foreword

The Cotswolds National Landscape Board has previously produced a Management Plan every five years. An interim review of the last plan, to cover the period 2023-25, was undertaken to align with the timeline of the government's 25-year Environment Plan and accommodate any changes in policy resulting from the 2019 Landscapes Review. This plan sees a return to the five yearly cycle.

The Management Plan is for the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL), the place. It continues to address the many issues currently facing the CNL, and as the protected landscape body, the CNL Board is determined to make the Management Plan's Outcomes a reality. As such, we have identified the following priorities to help focus our efforts:

- Informing, encouraging, and guiding efforts to ensure that the Cotswolds plays its part in both mitigating climate change whilst also adapting to its impacts.
- Encouraging and supporting the recovery of nature across the Cotswolds - so that populations of wild species can flourish and successfully adapt to climate change by moving through the landscape.
- Broadening engagement and improving access in the CNL so that a wider range of people can access the mental, physical and emotional benefits this brings.
- Striving to ensure that all activities undertaken within the CNL and its setting conserve and enhance natural beauty and, in particular, the CNL's special qualities.

We recognise that addressing climate change whilst conserving and enhancing natural beauty will be one of our key challenges in the coming years.

Many of these demands are increasing but our understanding of their consequences is improving all the time. In our Vision for the Cotswolds, we acknowledge the need to constantly find new win-win solutions that conserve and enhance the landscape and serve the people who live, work, and visit here.

Working collaboratively, with partners both old and new, will be essential to help identify and implement these solutions. This new plan indicates how the Cotswolds National Landscape can endeavour to balance the needs of nature, people, climate – and how we all transition to a future that will surely be very different from now.

Brendan McCarthy  
Chair, Cotswolds National Landscape Board  
February 2025



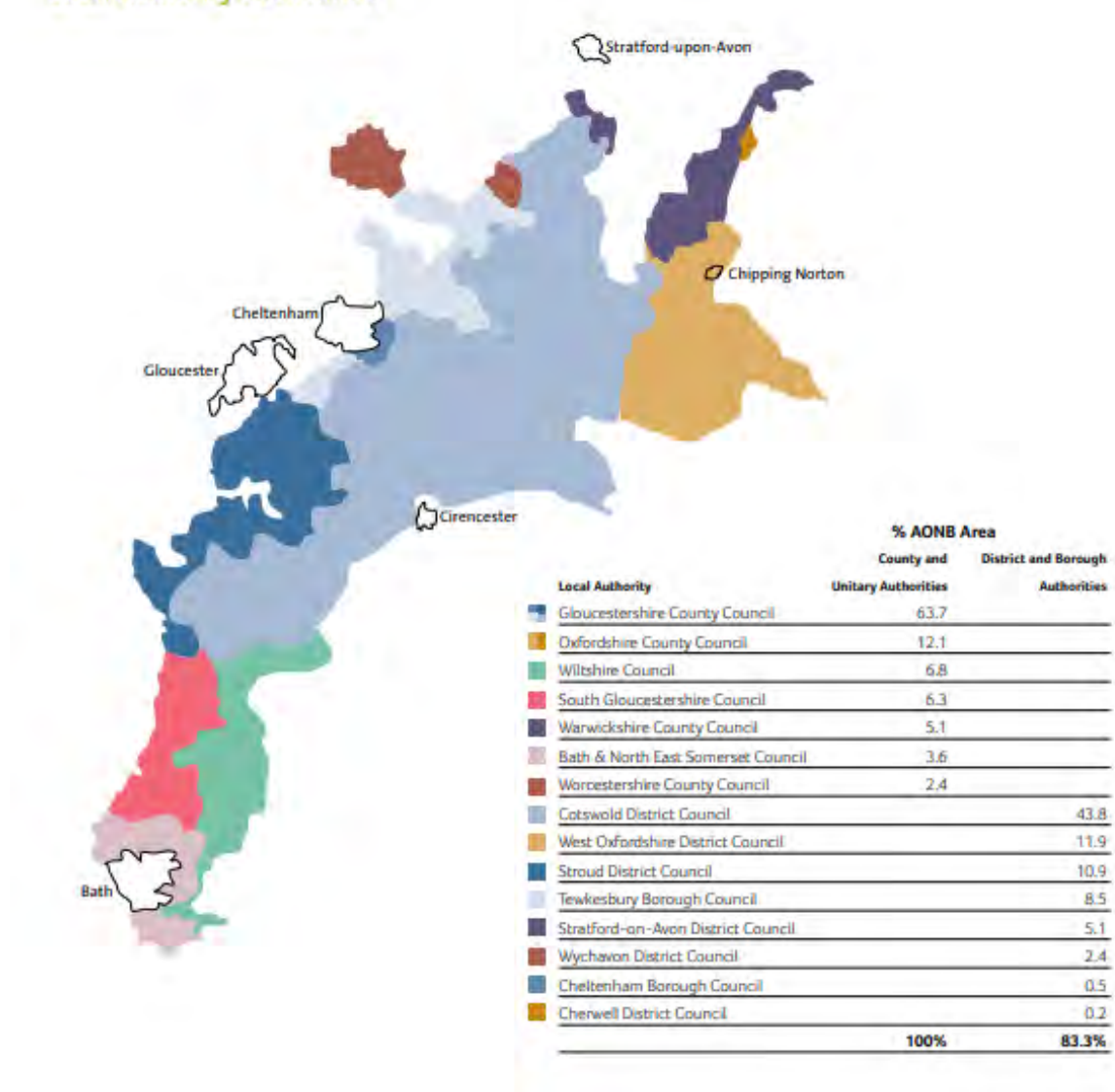
# 1. Introduction

## Management Plan – context

### What is the Cotswolds National Landscape?

The Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1966, and extended in area in 1990. Although AONB is still the legal name of the designation it was rebranded as a National Landscape for most purposes in June 2020. At 787 square miles, or 2038 square kilometres, it is the largest AONB – and the third largest protected landscape, including National Parks – in England. The CNL stretches from Bath and Wiltshire in the south, through Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire to Warwickshire and Worcestershire in the north. It cuts across 15 local authority areas.

#### Local Authority Boundaries



National landscapes are landscapes whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them<sup>3</sup>. The statutory purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance their natural beauty<sup>4</sup>.

Each national landscape has been designated by reason of its 'special qualities'. These include the flora, fauna, historical and cultural associations as well as landscape and scenic views. Information on the 'special qualities' of the CNL is provided in Chapter 4.

Further information on national landscape designation is provided in Appendix 1 and information on 'natural beauty' is provided in Appendix 2.

### What is the Cotswolds National Landscape Board?

The CNL Board ('the Board') was established by Parliament in 2004 as the Cotswolds Conservation Board and has two statutory purposes<sup>5</sup>:

1. To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape.
2. To increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

In fulfilling these roles, the Board has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of people living in the National Landscape.

In circumstances where these purposes and duties are irreconcilable, the Board must give priority to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL<sup>6</sup>.

The Board consists of 37 members, of whom 15 are nominated by principal local authorities, eight by parish councils and 14 are appointed by government. The Board's work programme is delivered by a small team of employees, supported by volunteers including the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens who deliver a programme of practical projects and guided walks across the CNL.

Further information about the Board can be found in Appendix 3 and on the Board's website: [www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)

### What is the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan?

The CNL Management Plan ('the Management Plan') is a statutory plan<sup>7</sup>, which sets out policies for the management of the CNL<sup>8</sup>. The CNL Board is the body responsible for preparing and publishing the Management Plan and for reviewing it at intervals of no more than five years. This is the sixth such document prepared by the Board.

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<sup>3</sup> Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) (2015). Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Landscape Protection and Enhancement Support Scheme (England) 2015 – 17. Application to European Commission.

<sup>4</sup> Section 82, Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).

<sup>5</sup> Section 87, Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), as amended by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006).

<sup>6</sup> This prioritisation of conserving and enhancing is known as the 'Sandford Principle', after Lord Sandford, who chaired the National Parks Policy Review Committee between 1971 and 1974.

<sup>7</sup> Section 89 (1), Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as amended by the NERC Act (2006).

<sup>8</sup> Section 89, Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as amended by the NERC Act (2006).

Although the Board is the body responsible for preparing and publishing the Management Plan and will play an important role in its delivery, the Board doesn't actually own or directly manage any of the land in the National Landscape or its setting. As such, the policies of the Management Plan are also intended to guide the work of other stakeholders in delivering the Management Plan's vision and outcomes.

### Why do we have a Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan?

The Management Plan is a key mechanism for achieving the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of the CNL's special qualities. The Management Plan is the only plan to guide the management of the CNL as a whole.

It is a legal requirement for a National Landscape to have a management plan under [Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act](#) and Conservation Boards are required to review their Management Plan before the end of a period of no more than five years.

### Who will deliver the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan?

This plan is ultimately about partnership working to make the vision a reality.

The CNL Board will play an important role in delivering the vision and outcomes of the Management Plan. However, its successful delivery is also dependent on other stakeholders, including local authorities and other public bodies, land owners and land managers, non-government organisations, developers, businesses and individuals. Many of these stakeholders already make a significant contribution to delivering the vision and outcomes of the Management Plan. This is a plan for the place and all the bodies and individuals engaged in it.

It is a legal requirement for 'relevant authorities', including all public bodies, to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL. This legal requirement is known as the 'seek to further' duty<sup>9</sup>. This duty applies to relevant authorities in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in the CNL. Helping to deliver the outcomes, policies and targets of the Management Plan is an important component of fulfilling this duty.

The Defra guidance on the 'seek to further' duty states that:<sup>10</sup>

- *When seeking to further the purposes, relevant authorities should consider the information contained in a Protected Landscape's Management Plan.*
- *Relevant authorities should make efforts to understand the Management Plan and relate their functions to it.*

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<sup>9</sup> Section 245 of the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#) introduced a new duty on relevant authorities in relation to management plans. For national landscapes, this is enacted through Section 90A of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which states that:

The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision:

- (a) requiring a relevant authority ... to contribute to the preparation, implementation or review of a plan under section 89 relating to an area of outstanding natural beauty in England;
- (b) setting out how such a relevant authority may or must do so.

These regulations are likely to be developed, consulted on and come into force during the lifetime of this Management Plan.

<sup>10</sup> Defra (2024) [Guidance for relevant authorities on seeking to further the purposes of Protected Landscapes](#).

The Defra guidance also states that one of the questions that relevant authorities should consider is:

- *Do measures which would further the purposes align with and help to deliver the targets and objectives in the Protected Landscape's Management Plan?*

The National Landscape Association's guidance for local planning authorities on applying the 'seek to further' duty states that:

- *Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the specific AONB will normally mean, as a minimum:*
  - *conserving and enhancing the character components or special qualities identified in the Management Plan;*
  - *supporting the Management Plan Objectives, Policies and / or Principles (as applicable) as set out for each of these; and*
  - *following any Management Plan actions set out for each.*<sup>11</sup>

More information about the 'seek to further' duty is provided in Appendix 4.

### How will the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan be delivered?

How the Board will contribute to the delivery of the Management Plan itself, as well as encourage and support other stakeholders is set out in a three yearly Business Plan Framework which in turn is delivered through an annual work programme.

Every individual and organisation with an interest in the CNL can help make this plan's vision and outcomes a reality by contributing to its delivery. The 'Stakeholder Delivery' table in Appendix 5 provides an indication of the key measures that the Board invites specific stakeholders to undertake in order to help deliver this plan.

### How will the delivery of the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan be monitored?

The Board will monitor and evaluate its contribution to the delivery of the Management Plan through the quarterly and annual review of its work programme. The 'State of the Cotswolds Report' – together with other local and national monitoring and surveys – will contribute to the provision of evidence, which is a crucial part of managing the National Landscape.

The Board will endeavour to monitor the key actions identified in the 'Stakeholder Delivery' table in Appendix 5. It will also endeavour to monitor compliance with the 'seek to further' duty (see Appendix 4).

Appendix 6 shows the key targets and monitoring indicators from the national [Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework](#) and additional local key indicators that will be used to monitor the delivery of the Management Plan. The monitoring indicators will demonstrate change over time. There are timed targets within supporting documents such as the Board's key performance indicators and the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan.

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<sup>11</sup> National Landscapes Association (2024) [Applying the CROW Act section 85 duty to 'seek to further the purpose' in National Landscapes \(AONBs\) - Guidance for Local Planning Authorities](#).

## Management Plan – process

Much of the groundwork for the preparation of this plan has been undertaken in recent years. Throughout 2023 and 2024 research was commissioned taking a closer look at how the carbon footprint of the CNL could be developed into [a pathway towards net zero](#). A great deal of stakeholder engagement has also been undertaken by partners through the development of the six Local Nature Recovery Strategies coincident with the Cotswolds.

Consultations were undertaken internally and with our local authority and public sector partners over the summer of 2024 and a wider consultation was undertaken throughout November and December 2024. Throughout these consultations, 60 responses were received. Many more individuals contributed as several responses were compiled from across teams and partnerships.

## Management Plan – structure and use

The core of the plan is made up of four components:

- Vision
- Key Issues
- Special qualities
- Outcomes and policies

The vision sets the overall context for the plan and was adopted by the CNL Board in June 2021 following consultation with stakeholders. The vision was drawn up in the light of three identified key issues:

1. The climate emergency
2. Nature's decline and the ecological crisis
3. Health and societal changes

The plan goes on to define the special qualities of the CNL. These are the aspects of the area's natural beauty which make the area distinctive and which are considered valuable, especially at a national scale. It is the impact of these key issues, amongst others, on the special qualities that has informed the development of the plan's outcomes and policies.

The outcomes and policies are arranged under three overarching headings which reflect the National Landscape's purpose of designation (to conserve and enhance natural beauty) and the National Landscape Board's additional purpose (to increase understanding and enjoyment). These headings are illustrated further with three broad aims:

1. **Cross cutting themes**  
Tackling 21st century issues through progressive partnerships.
2. **Conserving and enhancing**  
Influencing and delivering for landscape, nature and climate.
3. **Increasing understanding and enjoyment**  
Ensuring access, learning and wellbeing opportunities are for everyone.

The outcomes are complementary and interrelated. They express the desired state of the CNL, and the policies outline how this can be achieved.

The supporting text for each outcome outlines the underlying issues that the policies are aiming to address. Each outcome is followed by a brief statement describing the primary relevant drivers for change. The outcomes have been derived from the vision and were used to establish the policies. They form the link between the long term vision and immediate action.

The policies are perhaps the most important – and most utilised – part of the Management Plan. They serve five main purposes:

1. They are principles for how the CNL should be managed in order to:
  - a. conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the CNL;
  - b. increase the understanding and enjoyment of the CNL's special qualities;
  - c. foster the social and economic wellbeing of local communities;
  - d. address issues that are having an adverse effect on the CNL;
  - e. achieve the vision and outcomes of the Management Plan.
2. They provide a framework for action by all stakeholders with a role to play in the management of the CNL including the CNL Board.
3. They represent the policies of the CNL Board.
4. They are intended to guide, influence and be used by stakeholders in their own plans, policies, proposals, work programmes and decision making.
5. Together with other guidance produced by the CNL Board, they are intended to facilitate a consistent and coordinated approach across the whole of the CNL.<sup>12</sup>

It is important that all of the policies should be considered in their entirety, particularly in relation to development and rural land management. For example, when a development is being proposed in the CNL, the developer and the local authority should have regard to all of the policies, not just to Policy CE13 (Development and Infrastructure – Principles).

One of the areas which the Management Plan policies relate to is in the policy-making and decision-making of local planning authorities (LPAs). For example, the CNL Board would encourage LPAs to have regard to the Management Plan policies when reviewing and developing their own policies, including those within their development plans. The same principle applies to parish or town councils in relation to the review and development of neighbourhood plans. The Management Plan policies are aspirational and as such, they might go further than current policies in individual development plans. It is intended that these aspirational policies will aid in helping to develop and evidence new local plan policies.

The Management Plan should be a material consideration in planning decisions. However, it is recognised that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the LPA's development plan (unless material considerations indicate otherwise).

Section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act makes provisions for the Secretary of State to require relevant authorities to contribute to the preparation, implementation or review

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<sup>12</sup> The Management Plan and guidance documents produced by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board are the only publications that guide the management of the Cotswolds National Landscape as a whole. This is why the Board's guidance documents are specifically mentioned in several policies. The variation in local conditions and the importance of other plans and guidance that relate to specific parts of the National Landscape (i.e. individual local authorities) is also recognised.

of national landscape management plans and to set out how a relevant authority may or must do so.<sup>13</sup> These provisions could potentially come into effect, via secondary legislation, by the end of 2026.

The policies of the Management Plan are consistent in the use of the verbs 'must', 'will' and 'should', as outlined below:

- **'Must'** is used where the relevant stakeholder has a statutory requirement to implement the policy.
- **'Will'** is used where the Board is the stakeholder with primary responsibility for applying and/or delivering the policy.
- **'Should'** is used where a stakeholder other than the Board has primary responsibility for applying and/or delivering the policy (although the Board would still play an active role in many of these).

The plan goes on to consider how it can be delivered and monitored. Further detail and evidence are then provided in appendices.

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<sup>13</sup> [Section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#).

## 2. Vision

### A Cotswolds vision: a National Landscape for everyone

#### A time of opportunity

The Cotswolds is good for us; we feel better when we are here and engaged with the natural beauty of the landscape around us. In recent years we have been reminded of the intrinsic relationship between ourselves and the natural world – and the condition it is in. We believe the Cotswolds National Landscape offers opportunities for optimism, regeneration, wellbeing, and inclusion.

#### Challenges lie ahead

We are in the midst of a global climate emergency and an ecological crisis. Our awareness of ongoing social and economic inequalities is heightened. In the Cotswolds, these concerns are as real for us too, and we face significant challenges: climate change; threats to wildlife and habitat; changes to the farming landscape and agriculture; finding ways to deliver opportunities for younger people and provide for an ageing population; and achieving access to, and involvement in, the countryside for everyone – in ways which help benefit the countryside and encourage a diverse range of people to appreciate and care for the Cotswolds. The timespan of this management plan is crucial to us beginning the process of turning the tide on these challenges whilst also being prepared for the uncertain future they are likely to bring.

#### What can we do, and how should we do it?

To address these issues and begin to make improvements, we need to challenge ourselves. We must avoid complacency, and not adhere doggedly to past beliefs – this will hold us back, and limit how much positive change we can introduce. Instead, we need to embrace new ways of thinking in order to find win-win solutions which both conserve and enhance natural beauty, and serve the people who are here. We will work hard, and in partnership – to find outcomes which offer the most positive benefits and the least negative impact. We will need to demonstrate collaboration and leadership. We will need to be energetic and proactive. We will need to be bold, brave, and confident. Above all, we will need to acknowledge that we can't do it all alone – we want to work with other organisations and individuals to achieve results which benefit all of us, and nature.

#### The future should be bright

The treasured landscapes which make the Cotswolds nationally and internationally important are diverse in character, as are the people who live, work, and visit here. There is no 'one size fits all' for the future – but we have a greater opportunity than ever before to pull together as communities across the Cotswolds, and to work with each other to harness our dedication and expertise to forge the future of the Cotswolds. This place, the Cotswolds National Landscape, is for everyone, from all walks of life. In sharing it and looking after it, we will continue to create a place that is vibrant, unique, welcoming, and truly special – for people and for nature. We will work towards ensuring that the Cotswolds stays a working landscape, where agriculture thrives and supply chains are secure. Our communities should be connected and diverse, but self-sustaining. Visitors should feel welcome to enjoy being here, confident about access, and motivated to give something back to help look after the landscape. This should be a place where the landscape, nature, and people work in harmony with each other.

The Cotswolds will be a place that will inspire generations of people to look after it – now and in the years ahead.



### 3. Key issues

The Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) Board has identified three key issues that it considers to be having a significant effect on this plan's outcomes and in achieving its two purposes of:

- conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL; and
- increasing the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the CNL.

The impact of these key issues on the natural beauty of the CNL were considered during the development of the vision and the outcomes. They can be summarised as follows:

#### Key Issue 1 - The climate emergency

##### **Mitigating and adapting to climate change whilst conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape.**

Climate change is an important driver of environmental change in the CNL, and the symptoms of a changing climate are already being felt. The UK Met Office's Climate Projections Headline Findings report (2022)<sup>14</sup> states that climate change trends projected for the 21st century show an increased chance of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers along with an increase in the frequency and intensity of extremes. These changes present a significant threat to the natural beauty and special qualities of the CNL. However, there is still a small window of opportunity where the CNL can play a vital role in mitigating its worst impacts, whilst building a resilient landscape for future generations.

The Landscapes Review<sup>15</sup> emphasised the importance of the role National Landscapes should play in mitigating and adapting to climate change, and the CNL is committed to ambitious climate action.

In November 2021 the CNL Board adopted a [Climate Crisis Commitment](#) in which it states that:

*"It is our commitment to identify a scenario which allows us to endorse a path to net zero emissions (or better) by 2050 (or sooner)."*

In line with the commitment that all national landscapes have made in the [Colchester Declaration](#)<sup>16</sup>, this scenario will include clear, measurable targets to achieve net zero.

National Landscapes are also now required to embed climate adaptation plans within future Management Plans<sup>17</sup>, and will be expected to contribute to climate change targets in the [Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework](#) (PLTOF).

The CNL [Climate Change Strategy](#) (adopted by the CNL Board in February 2022) summarises our current understanding of the climate change impacts on the Cotswolds and what stakeholders can do to both adapt to and mitigate these impacts. This strategy has been followed up with the investment in a consumption-based carbon assessment and a pathway to

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<sup>14</sup> Met Office (2022). [UK Climate Projections: Headline Findings](#), version 4.

<sup>15</sup> Defra (2019) [Landscapes Review Final Report](#)

<sup>16</sup> A commitment to tackle the climate emergency and ecological crisis signed by all AONBs at a national conference in Colchester in 2019

<sup>17</sup> [Third National Adaptation Programme \(NAP3\)](#) Annex 1: Climate risks and opportunities

net zero. These resources demonstrate the CNL's commitment to ambitious climate action and provide the framework for achieving net zero by 2050, or sooner.

Land use and management will be central to delivering this. Farming needs to adapt to focus on improving soil health to continue producing food, whilst reducing soil loss, sequestering carbon, protect water resources and providing better water quality and flood management; and tree cover needs to increase to capture carbon and provide shade and cooling. Wildflower grassland also helps to sequester carbon<sup>18</sup>. Other areas such as energy and transport, and food and drink will also need to be addressed, with much more of our energy needs met through low carbon energy technologies, buildings becoming more energy efficient and greater resilience built into our infrastructure; and community food networks being created to link farmers, businesses and consumers.

Some climate change mitigation and adaptation measures have the potential to adversely affect the natural beauty of the National Landscape, but with careful design and implementation, many of these measures can not only conserve but also enhance natural beauty. The challenge is to develop a pathway to net zero which also conserves and enhances natural beauty.

## Key Issue 2 - Nature's decline and the ecological crisis

### **Enabling wildlife to recover, flourish and adapt to climate change through a robust nature recovery network which additionally provides us with clean air and water, and healthy soils.**

The story of our loss of wildlife is well documented and understood. Habitat destruction and fragmentation is a well-recognised driver now combining with climate change to threaten the loss of our already diminished wildlife at an even greater scale and pace. The need for action is urgent if we are to avoid a mass extinction event. The Landscapes Review<sup>19</sup> found that an urgent need to do more for nature was a dominant theme:

*In our call for evidence, the message was clear: more than any other single thing, people and organisations agreed that our landscapes should do more for nature.*

Nature is part of the uniqueness of the Cotswolds landscape and the CNL remains the last bastion for many, diminished habitats and rare species. We know what we have to do to allow our wildlife to recover, flourish and adapt to climate change. We need to create a robust and resilient nature recovery network – a landscape rich in joined up and well managed habitats. Such a nature recovery network is not only good for wildlife, it provides a range of 'ecosystem services' such as clean water or food or a beautiful place to get away from it all and enjoy some peace surrounded by nature. These ecosystem services are critically important to the wellbeing and economy of people living in and around the Cotswolds and beyond. Nature's recovery also involves nature-based solutions, playing an important role in delivering an adapted and resilient landscape.

The Landscapes Review proposed that:

*National Landscapes should form the backbone of Nature Recovery Networks – joining things up within and beyond their boundaries.*

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Grasslands-as-a-Carbon-Store.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Defra (2019) [Landscapes Review Final Report](#)

National landscapes collectively responded to the challenge of the Landscapes Review with the [Colchester Declaration](#)<sup>2015</sup> which contains commitments to produce nature recovery plans and restore habitats and populations of endangered species.

The Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan was adopted as CNL Board guidance in October 2021. It represents a detailed look at the species and habitats of the Cotswolds, and what should be done to enable their recovery and adaptation to climate change – in a timely manner.

We are entering a new era of collective and resourced action on delivering nature recovery. Now is the time to raise our ambition for what can be achieved. The international obligation that the government has signed up to of 30% of land and sea managed for nature by 2030 is an indication of this ambition.

New statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategies have been or are being developed which identify and map nature recovery priorities and measures. They are a key tool for driving and directing resources towards the recovery of nature. Biodiversity Net Gain already uses them for targeting and other funders have indicated a willingness to do the same. There are six of these strategies coincident with the Cotswolds and the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan has been used to influence their content.

The national statutory Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (Appendix 6) includes seven targets directly relevant to the recovery of nature in the Cotswolds. These are targets for the place and are owned by all stakeholders. When combined with the duties on public bodies to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity and to further the purposes of designation of protected landscapes they will help drive resources to the recovery of nature across the national landscape.

### Key Issue 3 - Health and societal changes

#### **Ensuring that livelihoods are maintained and that everyone within and around the National Landscape can realise the health and wellbeing benefits of accessing its natural beauty.**

Wider societal changes continue to affect people living and working in the Cotswolds. These include increased costs of living and fuel poverty, worsening housing affordability, pressure on the agricultural sector and established hybrid and remote working patterns.

We face unprecedented environmental challenges in the form of the climate emergency and ecological crisis. We have to respond quickly and vigorously to address them and furthermore we have to do this in a way that supports livelihoods and communities. The solutions have to work in social and economic terms as well as environmental if they are to have a lasting impact.

It will be important to manage the national drive for economic growth. We are likely to see increased pressure from housing as well as energy and infrastructure, and it is important that growth is managed in a sustainable way, with the interests of people and nature in mind.

The mental and physical health benefits of accessing natural beauty are becoming increasingly understood and appreciated. The Landscapes Review published by Julian Glover in 2019 challenged Protected Landscapes to do more to welcome people and crucially to do a lot more to ensure that people from currently underrepresented groups can enjoy the benefits of

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<sup>20</sup> A commitment to tackle the climate emergency and ecological crisis signed by all AONBs at a national conference in Colchester in 2019.

accessing them too. A challenge that the Cotswolds National Landscape Board intends to address, building on current activity and continuing to work with stakeholders, old and new.

## 4. The special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape

The 'special qualities' of a national landscape are those aspects of the area's natural beauty which make the area distinctive and which are considered valuable, especially at a national scale. They are the key attributes on which the priorities for its conservation, enhancement and management are based. They bring out the essence of the national landscape as an evocative description of the area rather than as a statistical account.

The Cotswolds is a rich mosaic of historical, social, economic, cultural, geological, geomorphological<sup>2116</sup> and ecological features. The special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) are:

- The unifying character of the limestone geology – its visible presence in the landscape and use as a building material;
- The Cotswold escarpment, including views from and to the National Landscape;
- The high wolds – a large open, elevated predominately farmed landscape with commons, 'big' skies and long-distance views;
- River valleys, the majority forming the headwaters of the Thames; and an important water resource;
- Distinctive dry stone walls;
- Flower-rich grasslands including floodplain meadows and neutral grasslands and particularly limestone grasslands;
- Ancient broadleaved woodland particularly along the crest of the escarpment.
- Variations in the colour of the stone from one part of the National Landscape to another which add a vital element of local distinctiveness;
- The tranquillity of the area, away from major sources of inappropriate noise, development, visual clutter and pollution;
- Extensive dark sky areas;
- Distinctive settlements, developed in the Cotswold vernacular with high architectural quality and integrity;
- An accessible landscape for quiet recreation for both rural and urban users, with numerous walking and riding routes, including the Cotswold Way National Trail;

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<sup>21</sup> Geomorphology is the physical features of an area, strongly influenced by geology.

- Significant archaeological, prehistoric and historic associations dating back 6,000 years, including Neolithic stone monuments, ancient drove roads, Iron Age forts, Roman villas, ridge and furrow fields, medieval wool churches and country estates and parks;
- A vibrant heritage of cultural associations, including the Arts and Crafts Movement of the 19th and 20th centuries, famous composers, and authors and traditional events such as the Cotswolds Olympics, [Levellers day](#) and woolsack races<sup>22</sup>.

## 5. Cross cutting themes

### Tackling 21st century issues through progressive partnerships

#### The climate emergency

##### Outcome 1 – Climate action:

**Climate action: By 2050 (or sooner), the Cotswolds National Landscape will have reached net zero (or better) through the collective efforts of stakeholders following a clearly defined pathway, while also building resilience to the impacts of climate change.**

This outcome reflects our shared ambition for the future of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL), it sets out the desired state and provides a clear direction for collective action. Stakeholders will work collaboratively to define and implement a pathway that ensures meaningful reductions in emissions while increasing resilience to climate change.

The urgency of climate action is undeniable, and the CNL is not exempt from playing a full part. [Analysis shows](#) that emissions per person in the CNL are over 25% higher than the UK average, primarily due to greater carbon footprints from food and drink, electricity use, and significantly higher emissions from driving and flying. Tackling this requires decisive action, prioritising measures that deliver immediate benefits while being designed to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds.

#### Policy CC1: Climate change – mitigation

CC1.1. Climate change mitigation including the sequestration of carbon should be a key component of land management practices and Environmental Land Management, and rural development support mechanisms in the National Landscape. Examples include:

- Increase canopy cover through increased tree cover and woodland and hedgerow creation, restoration and enhancement.
- Measures that capture and store carbon in soil such as cover cropping, using herb-rich leys, minimising soil disturbance and wildflower grassland restoration.
- Measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from farming operations, such as minimising the use of synthetic fertilisers, improving energy efficiency, moving

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<sup>22</sup> A fuller list of heritage and cultural associations is in the [Conserving and Celebrating Cultural Capital in the Cotswolds National Landscape](#) position statement.

to more extensive grazing systems and integrating extensive livestock systems with arable production.

CC1.2. Greenhouse gas emissions should be minimised through reducing energy demand in existing and new buildings and infrastructure by:

- Improving energy efficiency, for example, by retrofitting existing buildings. Where traditional buildings including listed buildings are retrofitted and this effects the fabric of the building, this should, ideally be undertaken by historic building specialists and in a manner that is compatible with the purpose of National Landscape (AONB) designation<sup>23</sup>;
- Reducing embodied carbon through the use of sustainably sourced timber and secondary and recycled materials within all construction unless demonstrably unachievable on technical and practical grounds;
- Utilising passive measures, for example the orientation of buildings, passive house design and the provision of high levels of insulation;
- Additional glazing, solar panels, heating systems (e.g. heat pumps) and low carbon driveway materials such as locally sourced gravels and natural stone, should be considered.
- Sustainable construction methods and management plans to reduce and manage construction waste should be implemented<sup>24</sup>;
- Supporting voluntary sustainability standards, where appropriate, for example BREEAM, Building with Nature, [the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard](#) and One Planet Living principles.

CC1.3. Greenhouse gas emissions should be minimised through reducing emissions from both residents' and tourists' transport and travel by:

- Reducing the need to travel, for example by encouraging home working (supported by suitable broadband provision) and affordable housing provision close to sources of employment, services and facilities;
- Reducing car use for example, through increasing green and active travel including public transport (and accessible public transport) and increasing shared mobility through car sharing schemes;
- Improving the sustainability of travel through for example; a comprehensive bus service linked to public transport hub promotion/integration and information.
- Prioritise the provision of walking, cycling and public transport use, including adequate cycle parking and safe cycle routes.
- Providing sufficient infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles, scooters and bikes;
- Promoting messages aimed at minimising air travel by Cotswolds residents and visitors.
- Developers should demonstrate how their development promotes the use of public transport and active travel, including features like cycle storage, staff facilities, car club provisions, enhanced EV charging points, and integration with other active travel networks.

CC1.4. Greenhouse gas emissions should be minimised through generating and distributing

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<sup>23</sup> Relevant guidance, in this regard, includes the Board's guidance on '[Traditional Cotswold Buildings - Saving Energy](#)' and Historic England's guidance on '[Energy Efficiency and Retrofit in Historic Buildings](#)'. Policy CE4 (Local Distinctiveness), below, is also relevant.

<sup>24</sup> This is backed up by CONFOR's '[The National Wood Strategy](#)' and the '[Timber in Construction Roadmap](#)'

energy from low carbon sources in a manner consistent with the purpose of National Landscape (AONB) designation, this plan and associated guidance including the CNL [Renewable Energy Position Statement](#) (June 2023):

- All developments, should be encouraged to have a net zero operational carbon balance and 100% energy provided by low carbon sources.
- Support community-led renewable energy production, in line with the CNL [Renewable Energy Position Statement](#).

CC1.5 Greenhouse gas emissions from food production should be reduced by supporting the development of community food networks, connecting farmers and businesses with consumers and promoting the purchase of locally produced food to help reduce food miles and enhance resilience. Small-scale vegetable growing in gardens and allotments should be encouraged.

CC1.6. Climate action should be undertaken in a way that is compatible with and seeks to further the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

CC1.7. Stakeholders should work towards the delivery of the relevant targets for climate change within the national Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework.

Target 6. Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels.

Target 8. Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline). The target for increasing tree canopy and woodland cover by 2050 across the CNL is 4.59% of the CNL (9,367 Ha). The target for 2030 is 0.92% of the CNL (1,873 Ha)

## Policy CC2: Climate change – adaptation

CC2.1. The risks posed by the consequences of climate change should be reduced through a range of adaptation measures, including those identified in:

- relevant policies of this Management Plan. (including but not limited to; CE1, CE7, CE8, CE9, CE10, CE11, CE12, & CE13)
- [the CNL Climate Change Strategy \(2022\)](#)

CC2.2. Climate change adaptation should be a significant driver in the design of all new development, infrastructure and transport provision<sup>25</sup>.

CC2.3. Climate change adaptation should be a key component of land management practices and Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms, in the National Landscape.

CC2.4. Further research into the predicted impacts of climate change on the CNL should be undertaken. This research should be used to advise and inform sustained behavioural change to adapt to climate change and conserve and enhance the National Landscape and its special qualities.

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<sup>25</sup> Additional measures not explicitly addressed in the Management Plan include protecting transport infrastructure from extreme weather events and ensuring that all new and retrofit development recognises the need to compensate for hotter summers and extreme weather events.



Our climate is rapidly changing, driven by greenhouse gas emissions from human activities. We are already experiencing the dangerous impacts of a rapidly heating climate and many of the defining characteristics and special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) are threatened by climate change and potentially our responses to it. Even if we cut emissions to zero tomorrow, further warming is inevitable due to the legacy of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere that will take decades to decline to safe levels. However, a small window of opportunity remains for ambitious climate action to prevent its worst impacts, and to help people and wildlife adapt.

To do this, the CNL has invested in a [consumption-based carbon assessment](#), to understand the extent and sources of current emissions in the landscape, whilst setting out a rough scenario to reach Net Zero. A series of workshops with stakeholders ran throughout the winter of 2023. [The resulting report published in February 2024 set these findings in the context of the CNL](#). These investments provide a clear framework for setting out these policies for the CNL to reach Net Zero by 2050, or sooner (Appendix 7).

Land use and management changes should be a priority area for reducing emissions and sequestering carbon, but any changes must seek to further and be compatible with the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the CNL. The CNL Board will look to achieve this by undertaking a range of actions, including:

- Creating a woodland, tree and hedgerow opportunity map in consideration of the core purposes of CNL and using this map to guide increased appropriate woodland and hedgerow creation. The potential for different tree species to be more resilient to climate change should be taken into consideration when choosing which species to plant<sup>26</sup>.
- Quantify current emissions from farming and the potential contribution of regenerative agriculture to emissions reductions and climate mitigation. Use this to accelerate the uptake of regenerative agriculture practices in the CNL.

This Management Plan covers 20% of the remaining harvests before 2050. Accordingly, actions cannot be delayed, and so further analysis, opportunity mapping etc. must happen alongside encouraging changes now in land use and management.

One of the key actions to mitigate climate change and follow a pathway to net zero is to capture as much carbon as possible through increased tree canopy and woodland cover whilst ensuring the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

The target included in policy CC1.7. is based on estimating the increase of tree canopy and woodland cover that can be accommodated within each Landscape Character Type (LCT).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Details are in the Cotswolds National Landscape [Tree Species and Provenance Position Statement](#).

<sup>27</sup> This was achieved through a three-step process.

1. An assessment of the area under each LCT where increasing tree canopy and woodland cover is constrained.
2. A landscape sensitivity assessment to increased tree canopy and woodland cover for each LCT.
3. The application of a % tree canopy and woodland cover increase to the areas without constraints. The % increase was derived from the landscape sensitivity assessment using a sliding scale from 1% to 5% centred around the 3%, national target. The target for 2030 is based on extrapolating steady progress towards the 2050 target. This work became available immediately before the adoption of this management plan. It is subject to further refinement so the target is tentative and may change as we learn more.



A pro rata apportionment of the national 3% target across English protected landscape gave a figure of 6,123 Ha for the Cotswolds.<sup>28</sup> This is similar to the figures within the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan (woodland + 1/3 of mixed habitat area). This new target is half as much again reflecting the need for increased woodland and canopy cover to help mitigate climate change in the light of the relatively high local carbon footprint.

A key principle of resilience planning is to prepare for a range of possible future changes to the CNL. To support this, the CNL Board is developing a Climate Adaptation Plan that considers future climate projections for the Cotswolds. The plan will assess the level of risk to each of the landscape's special qualities and identify targeted adaptation actions. It will also outline clear roles for stakeholders, ensuring a collaborative approach to building a resilient landscape. The full Climate Adaptation Plan should be published by the end of summer 2025.

## Working together

### Outcome 2 – Working together:

**Through collaborative partnerships and a shared understanding, the purposes of the Cotswolds National Landscape and its Board are applied consistently across the whole area.**

This Management Plan is a place-based plan for the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL), not just the National Landscape Board – the Board is unable to deliver the plan by itself. The Plan helps inform the activity of a multitude of partners, stakeholders, landowners, communities and visitors in order to contribute to the purposes of the protected landscape designation.

### Policy CC3: Compliance with section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act

CC3.1. Relevant authorities, including public bodies and statutory undertakers, must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL, in line with Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The legal requirement for relevant authorities to seek to further the purpose of National Landscape designation (the 'seek to further' duty) provides an important mechanism for conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape. Further information on the 'seek to further' duty is provided in Appendix 4.

### Policy CC4: Working in partnership

CC4.1. Stakeholders should work in partnership to support the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. Stakeholders should also cooperate in fostering the economic and social wellbeing of communities in and around the National Landscape.

CC4.2. Communities and businesses within and around the CNL should be encouraged to value and celebrate being part of a nationally recognised landscape and to contribute to the purpose of national landscape designation.

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<sup>28</sup> Figures prepared for a Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework apportionment workshop by Land Use Consultants, September 2024.

CNL is an administratively complex area, extending across 15 principal local authorities and three geographical regions. This makes it very challenging to develop and deliver a consistent approach to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL including its special qualities and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. However, the potential benefits are huge, including better coordination of planning, development, Environmental Land Management schemes, nature recovery planning, tourism and recreation.

Taking a consistent approach, in this context, means being consistent in having regard to (and, ideally, being compatible with): the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape; national policy relating to national landscapes; the policies of the Management Plan; and the guidance and position statements published by the Board. However, this does not necessarily mean that decisions made or actions taken will always be the same across the whole of the National Landscape, as these will vary depending on local social, economic and environmental circumstances.

Guidance on what is meant by 'landscape-led' is provided in the Board's Landscape-led Development Position Statement.

The new duty to seek to further the purposes of designation combined with a statutory targets and outcomes framework act as a powerful driver for relevant authorities, including public bodies, to continue working collaboratively towards the outcomes in the plan and to contribute even more.

Though there is generally a significant level of appreciation for the Cotswolds landscape amongst communities and businesses in and around the CNL, awareness and understanding of its status as a protected landscape and the implications of this are lacking. This reduces awareness of the need for the conservation and enhancement of the sense of place, its distinctive features and special qualities.

## 6. Conserving and enhancing

### **Influencing and delivering for landscape, nature and climate.**

#### Landscape

##### Outcome 3 – Landscape:

**The evolving landscape and much-loved character of the Cotswolds is better understood, and at the heart of all we do and the decisions we make.**

Landscape changes over time. Such change is often perceived as slow or non-existent, but when a view or place is compared to its earlier self, even over a comparatively short time span, the change can be dramatic. Since national landscape designation in 1966 much has changed in the Cotswolds, driven to a large extent by government policies for farming, consumer demand for cheap food and global commodity markets supported by technological advances in agriculture.

## Policy CE1: Landscape

- CE1.1. Proposals that have the potential to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL), should be delivered in a way that is compatible with and seek to further the conservation and enhancement of the landscape character of the location, as described by the CNL Board's Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy and Guidelines. There should be a presumption against the loss of key characteristics identified in the landscape character assessment.
- CE1.2. Proposals that have the potential to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the CNL, should seek to further the conservation and enhancement of the scenic quality of the location and its setting, views, including those into and out of the National Landscape and visual amenity.
- CE1.3. Conserving and enhancing landscape character should be a key objective of Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape.
- CE1.4. Rural skills training and the utilisation of those skills – such as dry stone walling, stonemasonry, woodland creation and management and hedge laying – should be supported to ensure the long term retention, creation and management of the key features of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

Environmental Land Management schemes and woodland grants, changes in the shooting and equestrian sectors, tree diseases, fluctuations in commodity prices, population growth and migration and changes in employment and communications, can all be influenced by Government policy and financial support. Continued change is inevitable and will have an impact on the landscape and the appearance of the Cotswolds in the future. Addressing the climate emergency, nature's decline and the ecological crisis will cause more change. This change needs to be managed and guided to ensure the Cotswolds retains its landscape character and special qualities.

It is important to consider the cumulative impact of changes on landscape character. This applies to both incremental building development, neglect and land use change, particularly equestrian development and horticultural production under polytunnels.

The surroundings and setting of the National Landscape are important to its landscape and scenic beauty. For example, the impact of development and land management outside the National Landscape on views from – and to – the National Landscape is an important consideration, as is the retention of key views.

Support mechanisms for farming, forestry and other land management sectors could impact the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and special qualities of the National Landscape. It could also lead to legislative changes in environmental protection and management impacting on the conservation and enhancement of the National Landscape and its special qualities.

The loss of traditional skills is a significant issue for the future management of the landscape and the special qualities of the National Landscape.

In 2021 the National Landscape Board published [a position statement on landscape-led development](#) supported by [appendices](#).

The CNL is significant for its geology and geomorphology with some features unique to the area. The geology influences the landscape, soils and biodiversity and has played a significant role in the National Landscape's industry and heritage. Survey work has also identified the Cotswolds as significant for tufa streams and springs. It is vital that this geological resource is protected, conserved, enhanced, promoted and better understood.

### Policy CE2: Geology and Geomorphology

- CE2.1. Proposals that have the potential to impact on the geological and geomorphological features of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be delivered in a way that is compatible with and seek to further the conservation and enhancement of these features.
- CE2.2. The geological and geomorphological features of the CNL should be conserved and enhanced through effective management.
- CE2.3. Opportunities should be sought to promote awareness and understanding of the geological and geomorphological features of the CNL.
- CE2.4. Exploration and research into the geology and geomorphology of the CNL should be continued in order to improve understanding of the landscape, and of the geological resource and its importance to inform the conservation and management of geological and geomorphological sites.

The Cotswolds represents the best-known section of the oolitic limestone band that arcs across England from Dorset to the Humber. The distinctive character of the Cotswolds and its special qualities are defined by this underlying limestone geology. It provides a unifying character with a visible presence in the landscape and use as a building material. The importance of geology in the CNL is illustrated by the designation of 36 geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest and over 85 Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites.

### Policy CE3: Natural and cultural capital – principles

The CNL has a wealth of natural and cultural capital (the stock of natural and cultural heritage assets) that provide goods and services, often called ecosystem services, that benefit wider society as a whole. These assets – and the services that they provide – are of local, national and, for some services, international importance. However, they are not fully understood or valued.

- CE3. 1. The natural and cultural capital of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL), and the services they provide, should continue to be assessed and evaluated.
- CE3. 2. The use of natural and cultural capital accounting should be encouraged in order to fully understand the implications of investment, development and management decisions.
- CE3.3. The financial and non-financial benefits of natural and cultural capital and the services they provide should be promoted.
- CE3.4. Proposals affecting the CNL should have regard to – and seek to conserve and enhance – the natural and cultural capital of the CNL and the services they provide.
- CE3.5. Natural and cultural capital and the services they provide should be key components of

Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms in the CNL.

Natural capital stock includes renewable and non-renewable natural resources e.g. geology, minerals, soils, water, air, plants, animals, habitats and ecosystems. The National Landscape's cultural heritage assets are equally rich, including the cultural-historical landscape, individual heritage assets, historic settlements and vibrant cultural activity.

Ecosystem services include; food and fuel provision, the regulation of climate including through carbon sequestration and storage, water supply, water purification and flood management, as well as wellbeing benefits to people through recreation and appreciation of nature.

The CNL Board published a Position Statement on [‘Conserving and Celebrating Cultural Capital in the Cotswolds AONB’](#) in 2019 and in 2021 the Board published [‘A Natural Capital Evaluation of the Cotswolds National Landscape’](#) and a [‘Cotswolds Natural Capital Atlas’](#). In 2022 the Environment Agency undertook a Natural Capital accounting exercise for the CNL using their Natural Capital Register and Account Tool (NCRAT). This provides an estimate of the economic value of natural capital benefits. [\(Link to be added when report posted on website\)](#)

## Local distinctiveness

### Outcome 4 – Local distinctiveness:

**In a world of constant and rapid change, the local distinctiveness of the National Landscape is valued, conserved and enhanced.**

One of the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape is the unifying character of the limestone geology – its visible presence in the landscape and its use as a building material. Development pressures could potentially erode this local distinctiveness, for example, through the use of inappropriate building materials and inappropriate design.

### Policy CE4: Local distinctiveness

CE4.1. Proposals that are likely to impact on the local distinctiveness of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be delivered in a way that is compatible with and seek to further the conservation and enhancement of this local distinctiveness. This should include:

- being compatible with the CNL Board's Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Strategy and Guidelines, Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change and any relevant position statement or guidance published by the Board.
- being designed to respect local settlement patterns, building styles, scale and materials and in accordance with design guidance prepared by local planning authorities;
- using an appropriate colour of Cotswold limestone to reflect local distinctiveness.

CE4.2. Innovative designs, compatible with the conservation of natural beauty – which are informed by local distinctiveness, character and scale – should be welcomed.

CE4.3. The development of design guidance – which is supported by a robust evidence base and which reflects relevant guidance published by the CNL Board – will be encouraged.

CE4.4. Provision should be made for the quarrying of limestone, at an appropriate scale, in order

to provide building materials that help maintain and enhance the local distinctiveness of the National Landscape. Any such mineral sites should be required to demonstrate that they do not have any significant adverse effects on the natural beauty of the National Landscape including its special qualities or the integrity of existing wildlife sites. This should include the consideration of cumulative impacts, including the impact of HGV movements. Any production of aggregate and agricultural lime should only be as by-product for local use and only for essential operational purposes, with sufficient material being left to deliver the agreed restoration plan (or a more natural landform) without relying on imported material. Opportunities should be sought to retain geological outcrops to promote awareness and understanding of the geological and geomorphological features of the CNL. The restoration of mineral sites should be addressed at the earliest opportunity and realise their potential to contribute to nature recovery networks. Consideration should also be given to the after use of quarries for solar energy and battery storage schemes, where appropriate.

All local planning authorities are required to *'prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code and which reflect local character and design preferences.'*<sup>29</sup> Addressing local distinctiveness is a key component of reflecting local character and is consistent with the National Design Guide and National Model Design Guide. For example, the National Design Guide states that *'well-designed places are influenced positively by ... the local vernacular, including historic building typologies ... characteristic materials and details.'*<sup>30</sup>

It will be important to maintain an adequate supply of locally sourced, appropriately coloured limestone as this varies across the Cotswolds and stone sourced from too far away will be intrusive and undermine local distinctiveness.

Local distinctiveness includes natural elements including but not limited to: woodlands, grasslands, species, the shape and scale of fields, and the character of field boundaries such as hedges and walls. These elements should guide the design of new green and blue infrastructure.

The elements that contribute to local distinctiveness are described in detail within the report [Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change](#). They also include building walls, roofing and features.

## Tranquillity

### Outcome 5 – Tranquillity:

**Noise pollution and visual disturbance are minimised to maintain tranquillity across the Cotswolds National Landscape.**

Research undertaken by CPRE has identified a growing loss of tranquil areas in England, down from 75% of England in the 1960s to around 50% in 2007<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024) [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

<sup>30</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) [National Design Guide](#).

<sup>31</sup> CPRE (2007). [Developing an Intrusion Map of England](#)

## Policy CE5: Tranquillity

- CE5.1. Proposals that have the potential to impact on the tranquillity of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be delivered in a way that is compatible with and seek to further the conservation and enhancement of this tranquillity, by seeking to avoid and where avoiding is not possible, minimise noise and other aural and visual disturbance.
- CE5.2. Measures should be taken to remove and where removal is not possible, minimise existing sources of noise and other aural and visual disturbance in order to enhance the tranquillity of the CNL.
- CE5.3. Proposals that have the potential to impact on the tranquillity of the CNL should have regard to – and be compatible with – the CNL Board’s Tranquillity Position Statement.<sup>32</sup>

Although the CNL has a relatively high level of tranquillity, the CNL is being increasingly affected by unwanted, man-made noise and by activity arising from developments. For example, the increasing demand for air transport is leading to expansion of controlled air space over the CNL. Additionally, the use of drones, both commercially and privately, is likely to increase, further reducing levels of tranquillity.

Tranquillity relates to issues of visual impact and light pollution as well as noise and other disturbance. However, given that Policy CE1 addresses visual impacts and Policy CE6 addresses light pollution, Policy CE5 has an emphasis on noise. This incorporates issues such as significant increases in traffic in the towns, villages, smaller settlements and across the wider countryside of the CNL, including increased traffic arising from developments outside of the CNL.<sup>33</sup> Increased use of electric vehicles will not help reduce traffic noise as most vehicle noise, when moving, is generated by tyres and air noise.

The CNL Board published a [position statement on tranquillity](#) in 2019.

It is important to note that this policy is not intended to prevent the noise arising from normal working countryside operations such as operating power tools or farm machinery or non-mechanised quiet recreation.

## Dark skies

### Outcome 6 – Dark skies:

#### **Fewer areas of the Cotswolds National Landscape are affected by artificial light at night.**

The CNL has relatively dark, nighttime skies compared to other parts of England that are not in national landscapes, with these dark skies being one of the CNL’s special qualities. For example, Cotswold District, which covers 44% of the CNL, ranks 13<sup>th</sup> for the quality of its dark skies out of all the districts, boroughs and unitary authorities in England. However, light pollution from surrounding urban areas and from market towns, larger villages, industrial and business

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<sup>32</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2019). [Tranquillity Position Statement](#).

<sup>33</sup> The Board’s [Tranquillity Position Statement](#) identifies that, as a ‘rule of thumb’, if a proposed development would increase traffic movements (and / or HGV movements) on roads within and / or along the boundary of the CNL by 10% or more, this should be considered a significant increase.



premises and facilities such as sports pitches within the CNL does significantly and increasingly affect the dark skies of the CNL in those locations. 'Light pollution' of the night sky is an intrusion into the countryside at night, which can have harmful effects on the health of people and wildlife. With ever-increasing levels of new housing (and other lit development) in the CNL, light pollution is likely to get worse unless action is taken to address this issue.

## Policy CE6: Dark skies

CE6.1. Proposals that have the potential to impact on the dark skies of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be delivered in a way that is compatible with and seek to further the conservation and enhancement of these dark skies, by seeking to avoid and where avoiding is not possible, minimise lighting.

CE6.2. Measures should be taken to increase the area of dark skies in the CNL by removing and, where removal is not possible or appropriate, reducing existing sources of lighting.

CE6.3. Proposals that have the potential to impact on the dark skies or dark landscapes of the CNL should have regard to and be compatible with:

- The National Landscapes Board's Dark Skies & Artificial Light Position Statement.<sup>34</sup>
- Cotswolds National Landscape Technical Lighting Design Guidance ([link to be added when on website](#))
- Best practice standards and guidance, in particular, that published by the Institution of Lighting Professionals.

CE6.4. Consideration will be given to seeking a formal dark sky designation for those parts of the Cotswolds National Landscape that are least affected by light pollution.

The Cotswolds National Landscape has a significant and extensive area of naturally dark night skies and remains an area where the wonders of the night sky can be enjoyed as an integral part of its natural beauty. Dark night skies are important for landscape, heritage, wildlife, recreation and enjoyment and health and well-being. Minimising light pollution saves energy, reduces nuisance and helps conserve and enhance the CNL's landscape character and tranquillity. Dark skies are a Special Quality of the Cotswolds AONB but are under pressure from increasing light pollution from commercial and domestic security lighting, development and street lighting. The area of darkest night skies within the AONB has diminished since 1993 by more than 40%<sup>35</sup>.

There are three main forms of light pollution: sky glow, glare and light trespass. It is also important to consider a fourth source of light pollution, which is 'presence'. Even if a lighting scheme were designed that avoided sky glow, trespass and glare, there still exists the possibility of significant residual impacts on dark and sensitive landscapes and wildlife due to the presence of the lights and the illuminance it provides.

It is recognised that there is a genuine need for artificial lighting for the purposes of ensuring safety and security, but that these needs can be met within proactive light management policies that are both sensitive and effective, using latest technology and other means to avoid, minimise and in many cases reduce unnecessary light pollution

The CNL Landscape Strategy and Guidelines seeks to address the issue of 'presence' by discouraging the introduction of lit elements into dark, night-time landscapes within the CNL.

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<sup>34</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2019). [Tranquillity Position Statement](#).

<sup>35</sup> This figure was derived by comparing the [CPRE 2016 Night Blight Map](#) with earlier mapping.



This is particularly relevant for isolated dwellings in the countryside and for other forms of lighting in isolated locations.

With any lighting installation, the aim should always be: the right light, in the right place at the right time with the right controls.

The CNL Board adopted and published a [Cotswolds Dark Skies & Artificial Light Position Statement](#) in 2019. It is supported by [the Cotswolds Night Lights Map](#) and CNL Technical Lighting Design Guidance ([link to be added](#)). The guidance provides advice and technical specifications for planning proposals with lighting elements within and in the setting of the CNL that may impact on the quality of the dark sky. It also provides advice on how to install lighting properly and to reduce and avoid light pollution for any installations whether new, existing or when replacing existing lighting.

Further guidance is provided by the [Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance note on The Reduction of Obtrusive Light](#).

## Historic environment and cultural heritage

### Outcome 7 – Historic environment and cultural heritage:

**The historic environment and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds National Landscape is better understood, conserved and enhanced.**

The historic environment is complex, diverse and irreplaceable, and it is continuing to decline and be lost due to development, changes in land management and a lack of understanding and management particularly with regard to the wider historic landscape and the less visible and non-designated sites which have little or no protection. The historic environment also includes historic and cultural features of the wider landscape including but not limited to: field (enclosure) patterns and road and path networks.

### Policy CE7: Historic environment and cultural heritage

CE7.1. Proposals that have the potential to impact on the historic environment and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be delivered in a way that is compatible with and seek to further the conservation and enhancement of these heritage assets and their setting. This should include respecting the historical elements of landscape character including features such as; buildings, sites, layout and context, including the relationship between the existing feature or settlement and the landscape.

CE7.2. Heritage and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments should be used to prevent or minimise harm when considering any change to a heritage asset and to influence decisions regarding the management of the historic environment and cultural heritage assets.

CE7.3. The historic environment and cultural heritage of the CNL, both designated and non-designated<sup>36</sup>, should be conserved and enhanced through effective management.

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<sup>36</sup> 'Non-designated' covers the full spectrum of undesignated assets related to the historic environment, for example, ranging from archaeological sites to sites associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

- CE7.4. Designated historic environment sites, such as scheduled monuments and listed buildings, and non-designated heritage assets of equivalent significance, should be protected, in line with national policy and guidance.
- CE7.5. Historic environment and cultural heritage should be a key component of Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms in the CNL.
- CE7.6. Opportunities should be sought to promote the awareness, understanding and use of Historic Environment Records, Conservation Area Appraisals, Historic Landscape Characterisation and Heritage Strategies and Action Plans. These should be used to influence decisions regarding the management of the CNL's historic environment and cultural heritage.
- CE7.7. The cultural heritage of the Cotswolds should be better understood and celebrated in arts, cultural, and social activities across the National Landscape.
- CE7.8. Stakeholders should work towards the delivery of the relevant targets for heritage assets within the national Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework. Details of the indicators for monitoring this target are outlined in appendix 6.

Target 10      Decrease the number of nationally designated [heritage assets at risk](#) in the CNL from a 2024 baseline of 62 to 52 in 2030 and 7 in 2050.

Our historic environment and cultural heritage is the result of a complex history of interaction between people and the natural environment. The historic landscape and natural environment form the foundations of our regional identity and local distinctiveness, contributing to the character and natural beauty of the area.

Cultural heritage in the Cotswolds runs deeper than associations made with established examples such as the Arts and Crafts Movement or the music of Vaughan Williams. It is more than how the landscape inspires people. It is intrinsically linked to our understanding of the landscape, the changing seasons, farming, and the natural world. Cultural heritage includes many intangible elements, for example; arts and crafts activities such as artist-blacksmithing, oral history, folklore, superstition, tradition and ritual. Without understanding and celebrating this rich cultural heritage, there is a risk it will be lost, and with it will go a key part of the local identity. The government ratified the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in March 2024.

If historic buildings go out of use, they become at high risk of dereliction and potentially full loss. It is important to keep historic buildings in use, or adapt them appropriately for re-use wherever possible to prolong their lives and character.

Not all heritage assets<sup>37</sup> have currently been identified and it is likely that heritage assets of equal significance to designated sites such as listed buildings or scheduled monuments may survive within the Cotswolds.

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<sup>37</sup> A heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

The need to understand and promote the connectivity of historic sites and their settings as part of the wider landscape character is vital in order to effectively conserve and manage the historic environment and Historic Landscape Character<sup>38</sup>31. Historic Environment Records (HER) of non-designated assets of local significance and Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), produced by principal local authorities need to be better promoted and used by all stakeholders. Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is a method of identification and interpretation of the varying historic character within an area that looks beyond individual heritage assets as it brings together understanding of the whole landscape and townscape into repeating HLC Types. It can be used to help secure good quality, well designed and sustainable places.

Land management, farming practices, wildlife conservation and public access all impact upon the historic environment. Current agri-environment/ELM (Environmental Land Management) schemes have contributed to the management and conservation of historic features such as archaeological remains, registered historic parks and gardens, barns, dew ponds and walls in the wider landscape. It is essential that new support mechanisms play a significant role in encouraging investment in the National Landscape which conserves and manages the historic environment, this includes bringing archaeological remains out of arable cultivation. Environmental management schemes should be an important mechanism in reducing the number of heritage assets at risk.

New developments, by virtue of their scale and design, surrounding the historic cores of settlements can cause separation of historic cores from the wider landscape and have a detrimental effect on their distinctive character. The conversion or extension of historic buildings and farmsteads, the introduction of domestic clutter, lighting and landscaping resulting from development can harm the historic character of buildings and their setting, and their relationship to the wider landscape.

However, the historic environment can also act as the inspiration or catalyst for positive change through creative and sympathetic design. The NPPF (paragraph 196) states that plans should take into account “opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place “

Climate change is likely to increase the extremes of wetting and drying, leading to accelerated decay of stonework and an increased risk of subsidence. Increased flooding and erosion may cause damage to buildings and to archaeological sites. Policy CE7 should help to reduce the potential impacts of climate change on the historic environment. Additional measures relating to climate change are provided in Policies CC1 and CC2.

## Nature recovery and biodiversity<sup>39</sup>

### Outcome 8 – Nature recovery and biodiversity:

**There is concerted unified action for a widespread recovery of nature – conserving, restoring and enhancing a connected mosaic of characteristically Cotswolds habitats and species.**

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<sup>38</sup> More information on Historic Landscape Characterisation is available on the [Historic England Website](#)

<sup>39</sup> Biodiversity is commonly defined as the variety of life, including the number of species, their genetic variation, and how they interact in ecosystems. More recently abundance (number of individuals) has also been included. For the purposes of this plan nature recovery means an increase in the area of habitats and an improvement in their condition and connectivity, combined with an increase in biodiversity and the growth of populations of wild species.

The internationally important habitats and species found across the Cotswolds have been declining significantly for decades. This greatly diminished wildlife now faces additional challenges resulting from climate change. We are now at a potential turning point where new funding mechanisms may help to achieve the recovery of nature, just before it is too late.

## Policy CE8: Nature recovery and biodiversity

CE8.1. Biodiversity (including the abundance of wildlife) in the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be conserved and enhanced by establishing a coherent and resilient nature recovery network across the CNL and in its setting. This should be achieved in accordance with the outcomes, priorities, targets and measures within the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan and Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs), and focus on the priority species and habitats listed in Appendix 8. The relevant LNRSs are:

- i. Gloucestershire
- ii. Oxfordshire
- iii. Warwickshire
- iv. West of England
- v. Wiltshire
- vi. Worcestershire

CE8.2. Policy and strategic documents that are likely to impact on the biodiversity of the CNL should have regard to the CNL Management Plan and guidance including the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan and position statements. This includes but is not limited to, the following:

- i. Local Plans
- ii. Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- iii. Neighbourhood Development Plans
- iv. Green Infrastructure Strategies
- v. Tree and Woodland Strategies
- vi. Ecological Emergency and Climate Change Strategies

CE8.3. Proposals that have the potential to impact on the biodiversity of the National Landscape should seek to further the conservation and enhancement of this biodiversity. They should have regard to – and be consistent with – the CNL Management Plan and guidance including the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan. This would include, but is not limited to, the following delivery mechanisms:

- i. Environmental Land Management and other grant schemes and rural development support mechanisms
- ii. Biodiversity Net Gain
- iii. Payment for Ecosystem Services including but not limited to carbon sequestration and storage, flood management, water supply and water quality improvements

CE8.4. Stakeholders should work towards the delivery of the relevant targets for nature recovery within the national Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework. The targets for the Cotswolds are:

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Target 1. | Restore or create more than is 28,079 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline) |
| Target 2. | 80% Percent of SSSIs in favourable condition by 2042   |
| Target 3. | 60% Percent of SSSIs assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028                              |
| Target 4. | Continue favourable management of all existing priority habitat already  |

- in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increase to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042
- Target 5. 65% to 80% of land managers adopting nature-friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030
- Target 8. Increase tree canopy and woodland cover by 2050 across the CNL by 4.59% of the CNL (9,367 Ha). The target for 2030 is 0.92% of the CNL (1,873 Ha)

CE8.5. A mitigation hierarchy should be applied to development proposals whereby adverse impacts on biodiversity are: (i) avoided; (ii) mitigated; and (iii) compensated for. Development proposals should provide a net gain in biodiversity of at least 20% particularly with regard to the habitats listed in Appendix 8. Development should also deliver a net benefit to species using bespoke measures as appropriate, particularly with regard to the species listed in Appendix 8.

CE8.6. Damage or loss of irreplaceable habitat should be avoided. Irreplaceable habitat includes but is not limited to:

- I. Ancient and veteran trees
- II. Ancient woodland (continually wooded since 1600)<sup>40</sup>
- III. Ancient unimproved grassland (surviving since 1945)
- IV. Ancient hedgerows (present since before the Enclosure Acts, passed mainly between 1720 and 1840)

CE8.7. Development near the habitats listed in appendix 8 should secure significant gains in the form of enhancing existing habitat condition, buffering the habitat and improving greater connectivity between similar habitats.

CE8.8. Measures to conserve and restore biodiversity including the outcomes, priorities, targets and measures within the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan should be delivered in a way that is compatible with conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

The story of our loss of wildlife is well documented and understood. Habitat destruction and fragmentation is a well-recognised driver now combining with climate change to threaten the loss of our already diminished wildlife at an even greater scale and pace. The need for action is urgent if we are to avoid a mass extinction event.

We know what we have to do to allow our wildlife to flourish and adapt to climate change. We need to create a robust and resilient nature recovery network – a landscape rich in joined up and well managed habitats. [The Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan](#)<sup>41</sup> was adopted as CNL Board guidance in October 2021. It represents a detailed look at the species and habitats of the Cotswolds and what should be done to enable their recovery and adaptation to climate change.

The current extent of wildlife rich habitats within the Cotswolds is 48,000 Ha which is 23% of the area of the National Landscape. The extent of these habitats needed to form a robust nature recovery network that will enable wildlife to flourish and adapt to climate change is 82,000 Ha,

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<sup>40</sup> Note this includes ancient semi-natural woodland, ancient wood pasture and parkland, and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) Natural England and the Forestry Commission have published joint [Standing Advice for Ancient Woodland and Ancient and Veteran Trees](#), (updated in January 2022). This Standing Advice can be a material consideration for planning decisions.

<sup>41</sup> Adopted by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board.

40% of the area. The rationale for these figures is outlined in the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan. More detail on the targets in CE8.4 can be found in Appendix 6.

We may be entering a new era of collective and resourced action on delivering nature recovery. The next five years represent an opportunity set a course that can achieve the recovery of nature at the scale required to allow our wildlife to flourish and adapt to climate change. Now is the time to raise our ambition for what can be achieved. The international obligation that the government has signed up to of 30% of land and sea managed for nature by 2030 (30by30) is an indication of this ambition.

New statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) have been developed which identify and map nature recovery priorities and measures. They are a key tool for driving and directing resources towards the recovery of nature. Biodiversity Net Gain already uses them for targeting and other funders have indicated a willingness to do the same. There are six of these strategies coincident with the Cotswolds and the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan has been used to influence their content. They should be followed as a means of delivering the Cotswolds Management Plan and Nature Recovery Plan.

Supporting LNRS delivery is one of the ways that public authorities, including the CNL Board, can demonstrate their compliance with the biodiversity duty<sup>42</sup> that the Environment Act 2021 introduced. Under this duty they *"must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England."*

LNRSs should be compatible with the CNL Management Plan and guidance (including the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan). This is one of the ways that the accountable bodies responsible for them can demonstrate compliance with their duty to seek to further the statutory purposes of protected landscapes<sup>43</sup>.

The national statutory Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF) (Appendix 6) includes six (out of 10) targets directly relevant to the recovery of nature in the Cotswolds. These are targets for the place and are owned by all stakeholders. When combined with the duties on public bodies to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity and to further the purposes of designation of protected landscapes they will help drive resources to the recovery of nature across the National Landscape. This will make a significant contribution to national ambitions for the recovery of nature. [The criteria for 30by30 on land in England, published by Defra in October 2024](#) states;

*"Our Protected Landscapes will provide the backbone to 30by30 in England, contributing towards the target where they are effectively managed and delivering in-situ conservation. We recognise that we can, and must, go further within Protected Landscapes than other areas to meet our national environmental targets, including 30by30. This will be driven by the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework, as well as further action to ensure that these special places are wilder and greener. Through their management plans, existing structures and strong partnerships, Protected Landscapes organisations can also play a convening role to champion, identify and support areas that meet, or have potential to meet, the 30by30 criteria."*

*"It is important that Protected Landscapes deliver a significant contribution towards 30by30 in England. This is key to delivering landscape-scale nature conservation and realising our vision of a well-connected and ecologically representative 30by30 network."*

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty>. The requirement to comply with this duty also applies to [Parish Councils](#).

<sup>43</sup> [Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)



The guidance on apportioning national PLTOF targets<sup>44</sup> goes on to say; “Successful delivery of the ten targets in the PLTOF will support Protected Landscapes’ contribution to the 30by30 commitment.”

In the wider countryside agri-environmental programmes are expected to be the most important single mechanism for developing a nature recovery network and Environmental Land Management schemes will play a critically important role. It is essential that they include the measures recommended in the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan and Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Additional funding mechanisms are starting to play an increasingly significant role in supporting the recovery of nature particularly Biodiversity Net Gain as mitigation from development and Payments for Ecosystem Services. Water and carbon collection and storage are becoming increasingly valued as ecosystem services and their importance will continue to grow.

Although the national statutory requirement for net gain in biodiversity arising from development proposals is 10%, It should be 20% within the Cotswolds National Landscape. The justification for this enhanced net gain in biodiversity is outlined in Appendix 9. Local planning authorities may need to gather additional evidence when reviewing their Local Plans. For example, they may need to provide evidence that there are sufficient opportunities to deliver this additional BNG and assess impacts on viability for development.<sup>45</sup> Where there are exemptions to the legal requirement for 10% BNG, the delivery of BNG should still be encouraged.

The inclusion of species within the biodiversity net gain policy is aspirational and would take place outside of the formal development plan related biodiversity net gain process.

New development can have an impact on habitats by increasing access and the erosion, disturbance and litter that comes with it. This impact can be mitigated by providing good quality accessible green space, for example Stroud District Council have the Rodborough Common Recreation Mitigation strategy (2022) and the Cotswold Beechwoods Recreation Mitigation Strategy (2022), both of which seek to conserve these valuable sites from visitor pressures through careful management – using a range of measures including offsetting the impacts of increasing use.’

The priority habitats and species list in Appendix 8 is adapted from Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, which lists the habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The habitats and species in appendix 8 are considered to be:

- (i) characteristic of the Cotswolds; and/or
  - (ii) those for which the Cotswolds National Landscape is considered to a stronghold.
- There are other priority habitats and species within the National Landscape, which merit an appropriate level of protection, but which do not meet the two criteria outlined above. Habitats and species not on the NERC Act list but which have been identified, by the National Landscape Board and relevant stakeholders, as priorities for the Cotswolds National Landscape are also included.

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<sup>44</sup> Land Use Consultants (2024) *Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework Guidance on apportioning national targets*

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>. Paragraph 006.

The Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan defines ancient and veteran trees (based on a list of characteristics), ancient woodland (continually wooded since 1600) and ancient grasslands ("unimproved" and predating modern agricultural practices) as irreplaceable habitat. A wildflower grassland (calcareous, floodplain meadow or other neutral) present in 1945 at the end of the Second World War is likely to be ancient. This should be taken into account when considering proposals that are likely to impact on them.

Ancient hedgerows (present since before the Enclosure Acts, passed mainly between 1720 and 1840) are included as irreplaceable habitat and this should be taken into account when considering proposals that are likely to impact on them because:

- Hedgerows are a priority habitat
- Hedgerows are a key characteristic/feature of many of the landscape character types within the National Landscape's Landscape Character Assessment
- Ancient hedgerows are an important component of the historic environment and the cultural heritage of the area

Although Policy CE8 focuses on the National Landscape and its setting, consideration will also need to be given to ecological networks in the wider environment, for example, river corridor ecological networks where the rivers start in the National Landscape but extend well beyond its boundaries.

One of the ways wildlife adapts to climate change is to move northwards to a new 'climate space'. This means that we need to think about the National Landscape's future wildlife in addition to that currently present, particularly that currently found to the south of the Cotswolds. [Big Chalk](#) is a partnership programme aiming to improve ecological connectivity across and between the calcareous landscapes of southern England from the south coast to the midlands.

## Water

### Outcome 9 The water environment

**Watercourses and bodies of water within the Cotswolds National Landscape have good ecological and chemical status supported by sufficient quantities of water.**

None of the rivers in the Cotswold's achieve good chemical status and only 11.7% of their length achieve good ecological status<sup>46</sup>. Most of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) failures are linked to fish, macrophytes and phosphate. The water quality of the CNL's rivers is affected by pollution from:

- Wastewater and sewage
- Diffuse rural pollution from agriculture
- Diffuse pollution from towns, villages and roads

Water management needs to address a range of issues including quality, supply and flow in an integrated manner.

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<sup>46</sup> Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework 2024 data release.



## Policy CE9: Water

- CE9.1. Water resources should be managed and conserved to: improve water quality; ensure adequate aquifer recharge; protect future public water supply; ensure adequate river flows; and contribute to natural flood management systems.
- CE9.2. Development (new and existing sites) should assess and minimise flood risk and implement Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), adopt high water efficiency standards in line with RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge and domestic water use targets, and water conservation measures, for example rainwater harvesting and/or water recycling and grey water systems.
- CE9.3. New development that links to the sewerage system should not be commenced until the sewerage infrastructure (including the relevant sewage treatment works) has sufficient capacity to cope with the additional load, including future loads resulting from changing rainfall patterns.<sup>47</sup>
- CE9.4. Sewage pollution from storm overflows and continuous outfalls should be minimised and be at least within legal and regulatory requirements.
- CE9.5. Phosphorus treatment should be provided at all sewage treatment works to achieve good Water Framework Directive (WFD) status for phosphate.
- CE9.6. Permit conditions relating to the provision of appropriate manure storage facilities for farming and/or equestrian sites, including disposal frequency and method etc. should be explored to help mitigate runoff and subsequent water contamination. Similar conditions can be imposed to septic tanks and cess pits, to prevent degradation and overflow and subsequent contamination.
- CE9.7. Practical measures to improve water quality and quantity should be implemented including:
- I. Preventing water from running onto roads and where it does remove it from roads before it enters watercourses at low points.
  - II. The restoration of river and wetland habitats. New wetland habitats should be sited to intercept runoff from roads and reedbeds can be created to filter potentially polluted water from settlements before it is discharged to rivers.
  - III. Implementing natural flood management measures such as leaky dams and temporary pools to help manage high water flows.
  - IV. Minimising soil erosion and run off by implementing soil conservation measures including habitat creation.
  - V. Minimising pesticide and artificial fertiliser use and implementing measures to reduce pollution from agriculture such as minimal tillage, buffer strips, cover crops and riparian land use change to permanent grassland and trees.
  - VI. Promoting individual measures and behaviours in the home and workplace that protect water volume and quality in rivers.

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<sup>47</sup> This type of requirement is commonly referred to as a 'Grampian condition', after the case law established by Grampian Regional Council v City of Aberdeen District Council (1984) 47 P&CR 633. In planning, this would be a pre-commencement condition. Further guidance on pre-commencement conditions is provided here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/use-of-planning-conditions#the-use-of-pre-commencement-conditions>

- VII. Citizen science programmes such as riverfly monitoring and water quality testing to monitor water quality and river naturalness surveys to measure their physical condition and habitats.

CE9.8. For proposals on sites incorporating or located adjacent to watercourses, opportunities should be sought through careful design and landscaping to re-naturalise the water courses where possible, including restoration of the bankside and instream habitats and leaving an undeveloped buffer zone of at least 10 metres width.

The proportion of pollutants from wastewater and sewage, agriculture, and towns villages and roads varies across and within the different river catchments. For example, within the Evenlode 85% of phosphate is derived from the water industry and the rest from mainly agriculture and a small percentage from urban sources. Consequently, the phosphate status for the whole of the River Evenlode is poor.

A significant issue caused by a combination of new development and lack of investment in waste water treatment is sewage treatment works operating beyond their designed capacity. The issue is exacerbated by groundwater and surface water ingress compounded by warmer and wetter winters caused by climate change. The result is storm overflow discharges releasing untreated sewage into the rivers.

There are also issues around urban creep from new developments leading to less permeable surfaces and more surface water running into the sewers. Reduction in storm overflows is complex, but sustainable urban drainage has a part to play to reduce overflows. Less permeable surfaces also increase the risk of flooding.

Storm overflows may run for a few hours or days but phosphorous from sewage treatment works, even during normal operation, is a constant. The technically achievable limit of phosphorus removal at sewage treatment works is 0.25 mg/litre and whilst a good target to aim for may not be required at all sites to achieve good status. Typically, good status for a waterbody is between 0.05 mg/l – 0.075 mg/l depending on waterbody characteristics such as altitude and alkalinity.

To help address this issue, some principal local authorities have imposed 'Grampian conditions' which prevent housing development (and other development that requires a connection to the sewerage system) from being occupied until the sewerage infrastructure has capacity to deal with the additional load.

Diffuse pollution from towns, villages and roads comes from runoff: commerce e.g. car washes, drainage misconnections e.g. domestic appliances connected to the surface water network, and inappropriate disposal of domestic materials.

Sewage and diffuse pollution contain nutrients, chemicals including heavy metals, pathogens, microplastics, oil and sediment resulting in eutrophication, loss of biodiversity, risks to human health, increased cost of water treatment and harm to tourism and recreation.

Redevelopment of sites incorporating/ adjacent to a watercourse present the valuable opportunity for ecological betterment. Through considered design and landscaping, opportunities should be sought to re-naturalise the watercourse, restore the bankside and instream habitats, leave an undeveloped buffer zone of at least 10 metres width and update and improve the site's surface water drainage infrastructure. In some cases, this may require reinstatement of the buffer zone on previously developed land. Upgraded drainage

infrastructure should look to use natural strategies such as ecological swales and reedbeds to improve the quality of water discharged into the watercourse.

The water in the CNL is mainly from deep in the limestone aquifers. The Cotswolds is home to a large aquifer which supplies water to homes and businesses both inside and outside the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL). There are 14 groundwater bodies in the CNL. 50% are rated good, and 50% as poor. The main sources of groundwater pollution are pesticides, herbicides and nitrates from agriculture. As a consequence, most of the CNL is designated as a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone and a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone. It could, however, take decades for the pollutants to work through the aquifer.

The rivers in the CNL are important for water supply, recreation and biodiversity. They provide a range of habitats which are reliant on particular water flow and levels dependent largely on groundwater fed by the underlying limestone aquifers. However, some stretches of rivers in the Cotswolds are already prone to low flows and drought, resulting in damage to riverine habitat, concentration of pollutants and increasing their vulnerability to groundwater abstraction. Over-abstraction can have a detrimental impact on these factors. Summers are predicted to become drier, which would exacerbate this problem even further, and the water system as a whole needs to become more resilient to climate change. Good quality and diverse riverine habitats are essential for improving resilience to drought.

The CNL is not, at present, an area widely prone to flooding. However, in extreme rainfall events, such as that of July 2007, some towns and villages have been affected by flooding from rivers or as a result of limited drainage. Climate change is likely to increase the risk of flooding and the frequency of such extreme rainfall events.

The rivers that originate in the CNL flow downstream through larger towns and villages outside of the National Landscape which are more prone to flooding. As such, land management in the river valleys of the National Landscape can play a key role in helping to reduce flood risk downstream. Natural flood management works with natural processes to 'slow the flow' of flood waters. This helps to reduce the maximum water height of a flood (the 'flood peak') and/or delay the arrival of the flood peak downstream, increasing the time available to prepare for floods. Sustainable drainage systems, and ecological river restoration projects are important components of natural flood management.

With the anticipated drier summers and wetter winters, there is likely to be an increased demand for rainwater harvesting and storage.

The CNL is a distinct geographical and geological area important for its water in terms of supply, quality, landscape, natural beauty, biodiversity and economy. The CNL is, however, divided across seven catchments, four water companies (four of which supply water and three treat waste water) and three Environment Agency regions making managing water across the CNL complex. River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) describe the framework used to protect and improve the quality of waters in each river basin district. They are the strategic plans for water in England and include information on the current condition of waterbodies, reasons why they are not in good condition, objectives, and measures to achieve these. They are updated every six years, with the next update in 2027. This plan and supporting guidance, particularly the [The Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan](#) support measures within RBMPs and similarly the delivery of RBMPs should reflect this plan's policies and associated guidance.

There are three regional water resources planning groups that include parts of the CNL within their geographical areas, and there are opportunities via these regional groups to promote

catchment management schemes which may not deliver direct water supply benefits but could provide improved environmental resilience to drought through NBS.

Consideration should be given to developing an integrated water plan for the CNL with a primary goal of thriving plants and wildlife enhancing the beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment. This would be underpinned by goals such as improving environmental quality, using nature's resources sustainably and improving climate change mitigation.

## Farming and land management

### Outcome 10 – Farming and land management:

**Farming and land management conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape in ways which balance the needs of recovering nature, climate action, food production, supporting livelihoods and public access.**

The CNL is a farmed landscape, its landscape is largely a product of farming and will continue to be so. 87% of land in the CNL is agricultural land, 49% of which is arable and 43% grassland<sup>48</sup>. Farming is worth around £800 million annually to the National Landscape's economy, and in turn provides the landscape which supports the Cotswolds tourism industry (annually worth around £1 billion). In addition to these major and long-established economic drivers, farming and land management decisions are increasingly influenced by a far more diverse set of societal needs, such as carbon storage, nature recovery, clean energy and public access.

### Policy CE10: Farming and land management

CE10.1. Farming and land management in the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) and in the setting of the CNL should be compatible with and seek to further the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the CNL. It should also help increase the understanding and enjoyment of the CNL's special qualities.

CE10.2. Farming and land management in the CNL and in the setting of the CNL should be compatible with and seek to further the CNL Management Plan. It should also be compatible with and seek to further guidance produced by the CNL Board including the:

- i. CNL – Landscape Strategy and Guidelines
- ii. CNL – Landscape Character Assessment
- iii. CNL Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change
- iv. CNL Board Position Statements
- v. Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan
- vi. CNL Pathway to Net Zero
- vii. CNL Climate Change Strategy

CE10.3. Woodland creation and tree planting proposals (including natural colonisation) should be compatible with and seek to further the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the CNL in accordance with guidance produced by the CNL Board. In particular they should:

- i. Work with the landscape character of their setting and compliment the open views that people enjoy from viewpoints, roads and public rights of way

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<sup>48</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2015). [Farming, Forestry and the Equestrian Sector in the Cotswolds AONB, Update](#)

- ii. Be located where they best meet the objectives of the nature recovery network, improving the connectivity of woodland habitats whilst avoiding damaging other habitats and their potential to be better connected
- iii. Avoid potential harm to the physical integrity of scheduled monuments and other historic heritage
- iv. Be located in accordance with the CNL canopy cover opportunity mapping

CE10.4. Farmers and land managers should have access to sound, clear and consistent sources of advice, guidance and support, including fair access to markets and payments for environmental services.

The two main aspects of rural land management are farming and woodland management.

Farming and land management in the UK is undergoing a period of significant change and disruption, largely driven by the market and changes to policy that have altered the way farmers can access public funding to support their businesses. This has involved a shift from an approach largely based on subsidising the cost of agricultural activities, to one that pays farmers for environmental goods and services (or 'public goods'). Managing this transition and maintaining a viable farm business can be very challenging.

In addition to the policy context, farmers are under increasing pressure to respond to many other factors that are influencing the way they use and manage land. For example, the climate crisis requires farmers to not only identify how they can reach net zero within their farm businesses and supply chains, but additionally find ways of sequestering and storing carbon in the landscape for the rest of society. They also have to achieve this without compromising food security and affordability by taking too much land out of production or failing to develop farming systems that are climate resilient. Additionally farming also has an essential role to play in nature recovery, as many of the distinctive Cotswold habitats are a result of farming activity, and farming operations such as grazing are necessary to manage and restore them. Nature friendly farming measures across the wider countryside are also critically important for the recovery of species. These combined challenges are complex and we need to seek ways of decision-making that achieves holistically optimal outcomes.

The continued development of more sustainable and regenerative farming practices, which may span conventional and organic systems, has an important role to play in delivering multiple social and environmental objectives whilst simultaneously producing food. A focus on improving landscape function can help inform any approach and lead to more holistically optimal outcomes. Landscape function considers underpinning resources and processes such as:

- The mineral/nutrient cycle  
Actions to minimise the use of artificial inputs and improve the natural fertility of agricultural soils, increasing the nutritional value of food produced from them.
- The water cycle  
Actions to increase soil infiltration rates, slowing the flow of water through farmed and managed land, improving drought resilience and reducing diffuse pollution.
- Energy flow  
Actions to increase the amount of solar energy being captured by plants and trees (including crops), sequestering more atmospheric carbon and driving food chains for people and wildlife.
- Biodiversity/community dynamics  
Actions to increase the diversity and abundance of plants and wildlife on farmland, supporting greater natural resilience to pests, disease and other environmental stresses.

Farm businesses need to be economically viable and resilient to deliver everything we are asking of them. This requires continued public and private investment that is accessible and effective, as well as fair access to markets. For example, the success of publicly funded schemes, such as Environmental Land Management (ELM) and the Farming Investment Fund, supported by advice and guidance, is essential. Similarly, the rollout of privately funded green finance schemes needs to be effective in delivering both environmental outcomes and supporting farm businesses and livelihoods.

Wider societal changes are impacting on farming and land management. An ageing farm population, rising production costs and the rapid development of new technology both increases the risks of a loss of skills and land fragmentation and offers opportunities for the wider adoption of sustainable, regenerative and nature recovery practices.

Bringing woodlands back into management is a priority and can be more important than planting new woodlands. Actively managing woodland in a sustainable way helps the woodland become more resilient to the impacts of climate change including, pests, disease, storms and fire. It also benefits biodiversity and supports the rural economy. Lack of management is due to many factors, but especially the lack of appropriate markets for woodland products and the lack of management in the long-term has resulted in a lack of good quality timber. Ash dieback has prompted many woodland owners to bring woodland back into management but 38% of woodland, 10,158ha, in the CNL is still classed as unmanaged. Bringing ancient woodland back into management is particularly important for biodiversity and 9,218ha of ancient woodland (35% of the total woodland) is still classed as unmanaged.

To contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation the Government's target is to increase tree cover in England from 14.5% in 2023 to 16.5% by 2050. The CNL's canopy cover is around 18% but there is capacity to increase canopy cover through woodland creation and establishing trees outside of woods (by planting or natural regeneration). The latter includes wood pasture, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, in-field trees, agroforestry and trees in towns and villages, particularly in new development.

Woodland creation and tree establishment should consider its impacts on the landscape setting and, in particular, its effects on the open views that people enjoy from viewpoints, roads and Public Rights of Way. In some instances, tree establishment that is implemented to mitigate the visual impact of new development can also adversely affect landscape character. Design and use of open ground can help with woodland creation and tree establishment but it may not be appropriate for a particular site because of the value of the existing habitat, potential to create and link other priority habitats or landscape character, archaeological sites and their setting.

The creation of new woodland should occur where it best meets the objectives of the nature recovery network and it should be appropriately managed. Opportunities for natural colonisation should be looked for in concert with opportunities for planting, to assist this process.

'Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason' principles should be applied when establishing trees. For example, the planting of 'privacy belts' around property is having a detrimental impact on landscape character and views, particularly from roads.

In woodlands where timber production is one of the main objectives, ecologically sound forestry practices such as continuous cover management regimes should be applied. These create a diverse woodland structure and bring a multitude of environmental benefits to the woodland whilst producing a sustainable timber source. Understanding of the local supply chain, and enhance connections between woodland owners/managers and timber markets should be

increased. Woodlands should be managed according to the most recent version of the [UK Forestry Standard](#).

Woodland creation and tree establishment, including restocking after felling, through woodland management operations or loss through pests and diseases, should seek to retain the character of existing Cotswold woodlands and treescapes outside of woodlands whilst considering species diversity, genetic diversity (provenance and origin), adaptation to climate change and pests and diseases

The CNL Board has commissioned an opportunity map to guide the creation of new canopy cover. **If completed before the designed Management Plan is published add link.**

Farming, woodland management and other rural land management practices that make a positive contribution to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape have been largely reliant on payments from agri-environment schemes. It is critical that Environmental Land Management Schemes maintain and build on what has been achieved to date. In addition, payments for carbon sequestration, nature recovery, nutrient neutrality and ecosystem services are areas that will grow.

Climate change is likely to lead to greater variability in quantity and quality of crop and grass yields, including crop failure. New management methods and new varieties and novel crops are likely to be adopted in response to warmer, drier conditions. There may be an increase in crops grown for energy and biofuels competing with land for food production and space for nature. The overall area of grassland is not expected to change significantly, but management may become more extensive. With regards to forestry, increased timber and biomass production can be expected, but with a reduction in quality, particularly timber. Some species, such as oak, are expected to fare better than others such as beech. Land management practices, together with Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms, will need to encompass and deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation measures appropriate to the National Landscape. Relevant measures to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, in relation to rural land management, are outlined elsewhere in this Management Plan, notably in policies CC1 and CC2.

### Policy CE11: Problem species<sup>49</sup>, pests and diseases

CE11.1. The population of grey squirrel and deer in the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should continue to be controlled and managed. This should be undertaken and coordinated at a landscape scale.

CE11.2. National guidance – and guidance produced by the CNL Board – on Ash Dieback should be followed to ensure any measures implemented will conserve and enhance the qualities of the landscape.

CE11.3. National and local guidance – including guidance from Government Agencies and the Non-Native Species Secretariat – on invasive non-native species, pests and diseases should be followed and appropriate biosecurity measures promoted.

Increasing deer and grey squirrel populations and lack of coordinated management is having an adverse impact on the landscape of the CNL and on the quality of woodland, woodland biodiversity and timber. There is a need for more deer management groups and landscape scale

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<sup>49</sup> These species are not addressed in the Biodiversity section as they are not species that we are aiming to conserve and enhance (see Appendix 8).

coordination along with and a landscape scale coordinated approach to managing grey squirrels. Recolonisation by or reintroduction of pine martens would assist grey squirrel control.

There is an increasing prevalence of tree pests and diseases resulting from climate change, increased global trade, travel and the importation of diseased material. In particular, Ash dieback will continue to have an increasing impact on woodland and trees in the landscape during the life of this Management Plan. The active management of woodlands to create varied structure and species composition will increase woodland resilience to pests and diseases.

Invasive non-native species pose a serious risk to ecosystems, outcompeting native species, disrupting ecological processes and transforming habitats.

There are a number of invasive non-native species present in the CNL that are having a harmful impact, particularly on biodiversity. These include the American Signal Crayfish, Himalayan Balsam and New Zealand Pygmy Weed in rivers and ponds, and Holm oak and Cotoneaster on species rich grassland. Driven by climate change and globalisation, there is an increasing risk of further plant and animal pests and disease becoming established in the CNL and having a harmful impact on landscape, biodiversity and the economy. Ash dieback is a recent example.

Any activity (i.e., Development) that facilitates or fails to adequately mitigate the introduction and spread of invasive non-native species, can cause detrimental impacts on native biodiversity and the ecosystem functionality.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is a legal offense to introduce or encourage the proliferation of any species listed as invasive under schedule 9. Similarly, species classified as 'controlled waste' under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 must be handled in accordance with legal regulations. These species must be safely disposed of at a licensed landfill site to prevent further proliferation and environmental harm.

Control measures including check, clean, dry should be integral throughout all plans/ method statements of any formal work within or that interacts with the natural landscape (i.e., included but not limited to check, clean, dry).

Up to date, representative data of invasive populations is essential. The recording of invasive species activity/ presence (i.e., via citizen science) is a key strategy to inform management strategies.

## Policy CE12: Soils

CE12.1. Soils should be managed to halt and reverse degradation. Soil health that supports resilient ecosystems and sustainable farming practices should be prioritised. Principles that inform beneficial land use and management decisions include:

- I. Minimising soil disturbance (physical and chemical)
- II. Maintaining living roots and keeping the soil covered year-round
- III. Increasing biodiversity (above and below ground)
- IV. Mitigating compaction and improving soil aggregation
- V. Integrating livestock and grazing

CE12.2. Soil management should be a key component of farm management plans, supported by agri-environment schemes and other funding and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL).



A [recent study](#) estimated that soil is home to 90% of the world's fungi, 85% of plants, and more than 50% of bacteria – 59% of life on earth, overall. It is also widely acknowledged that we still know relatively little about our soils. Only about [1% of the microorganisms found in soil have been identified](#), yet [95% of food production relies on the soil](#).

Our soils are essential for:

- Food production and nutrient cycling
- Climate regulation and carbon storage
- Water filtration and flood control
- Biodiversity and habitat provision
- Erosion prevention and pollution detoxification

However, in 2023 the Environment Agency [reported](#) that in England and Wales almost 4 million hectares of soil are at risk of compaction, over 2 million hectares of soil are at risk of erosion, and arable soils have lost about 40 to 60% of their organic carbon. Soil degradation was calculated in 2010 to cost £1.2 billion every year.

Causes of soil degradation include; compaction, loss of soil organic matter, nutrient leaching, low fertility, erosion, poor water cycling, and biodiversity decline – all of which are exacerbated by climate change. For example, with a predicted 22% decrease in summer rainfall by 2080, the free draining Cotswold soils will become more prone to drought. Meanwhile, extreme weather events and a predicted 22% overall increase in winter rainfall could lead to more flooding and erosion of soils.<sup>50</sup>

Soil management is important in developing and maintaining healthy, functional ecosystems that can support productive, resilient farms.

There are many examples of farmers and land managers that are successfully taking action to reverse the trend of degradation by placing soil management at the heart of their operations. For example, through the regenerative agriculture movement farmers are seeking to observe and understand the processes that are happening in their soils, and how their actions influence them. Management decisions, such as tillage, agronomy and grazing practices, are then made, monitored and adapted accordingly, guided by a set of principles that help steer a path to regeneration. It's a journey – one that is different for every farm and farmer, and which can have a transformative effect on both them and the landscape.

Such farmers and land managers need supporting, so soil management must be an increasingly central aspect of land use and management planning, agri-environment schemes, green finance initiatives, and other sources of advice, guidance and support.

## Development and infrastructure

### Outcome 11 – Development and infrastructure:

**Development and infrastructure schemes positively contribute to the purpose of national landscape designation and also play a key role in facilitating the economic and social wellbeing of local communities.**

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<sup>50</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2022). [Climate Change Strategy](#)

The CNL is a living and working landscape in which the social and economic wellbeing of local communities is an important consideration. Maintaining vibrant and thriving local communities is essential to the long term future of the CNL. The provision of housing and services that meets local needs plays an important role in achieving these aspirations, as does the provision of necessary infrastructure, including transportation systems, communication networks and water and sewage infrastructure. However, these aspirations should be delivered in a way that is compatible with the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL.

### Policy CE13: Development and infrastructure – principles

#### CE13.1. Development and infrastructure proposals in the Cotswolds National

Landscape (CNL) and its setting should be delivered in a way that is compatible with and seeks to further the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the CNL including its special qualities. In doing so, they should have regard to – and be compatible with the CNL Management Plan and guidance produced by the CNL Board, including the:

- (i) CNL – Landscape Strategy and Guidelines
- (ii) CNL – Landscape Character Assessment
- (iii) Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan
- (iv) CNL - Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change
- (v) CNL Board Position Statements
- (vi) CNL Pathway to Net-Zero
- (vii) CNL Climate Change Strategy

CE13.2. Development and infrastructure proposals in the CNL should be delivered in a way that is compatible with and seeks to further the purpose of increasing the understanding and enjoyment of the CNL's special qualities. They should also contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of CNL communities, in a way that is compatible with conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL.

CE13.3. Development and infrastructure proposals in the CNL and its setting should comply with relevant national planning policy and guidance, particularly with regards to those paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that relate to national landscapes.

CE13.4. The purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of the CNL special qualities should be identified as strategic priorities in Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans, Local Transport Plans and other relevant plans and strategies. These plans and strategies should explicitly identify the CNL Management Plan as a material consideration when considering development and infrastructure proposals.

CE13.5. The cumulative impacts of development proposals on the natural beauty of the CNL should be fully assessed.

CE13.6. A landscape-led approach should be applied to the planning, design and implementation of development and infrastructure proposals in the CNL and its setting, proportionate to the type and scale of development being proposed, whereby proposals:

- a) Address the natural beauty of the CNL as primary consideration at all stages of the development process, from initial conception through to implementation
- b) Address all of the factors that contribute to the natural beauty of the area
- c) Address access to natural beauty including the character of the public rights of way network and its role within wider green infrastructure
- d) Reflect and enhance the character of the local area

- e) Avoid adverse effects where possible and, if adverse effects can't be avoided, minimise them
- f) Seek opportunities to enhance the natural beauty of the CNL and
- g) Deliver more beneficial effects than adverse effects for the natural beauty of the CNL.<sup>51</sup>

This landscape-led approach is particularly important for major development<sup>52</sup>.

This policy provides principles relating specifically to development and infrastructure. However, it is important to note that development and infrastructure proposals should have regard to the Management Plan policies as a whole. For example, Policy CE8 (Nature Recovery and Biodiversity), paragraph 5, relating to biodiversity net gain, would be a key consideration in development proposals.

Other important policies which have a significant bearing on development and infrastructure are CC1 Climate Change Mitigation and CC2 Climate Change Adaptation.

Policy CE13 refers to relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for context, as this national policy underpins much of what Policy CE13 is seeking to achieve. However, Policy CE13 expands on this national policy by referencing relevant case law and best practice.

Planning legislation and policy affords the highest level of protection to National Landscapes in relation to landscape and scenic beauty – the same level of protection as for National Parks. Although some level of development may be required to meet local (CNL) housing needs, as determined by the local housing needs assessment, and to ensure that the vitality of CNL settlements is maintained and enhanced, development should not be at such scale that either individually or cumulatively, it erodes the natural beauty of the CNL. This would undermine the reason for the Cotswolds being designated as national landscape in the first place.

With regards to cumulative impacts, a particularly important consideration is where multiple, separate developments have been implemented or proposed in the same locality. Individually, they might not be particularly significant. However, collectively, their impacts could be significant.

In planning decisions, national landscape considerations will need to be weighted in the overall planning balance alongside other relevant considerations. In line with national planning policy, great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL. It is worth noting that case law has clarified that this great weight should also be applied in relation to the impact of development outside a national landscape on views from the national landscape. (i.e. development in the setting of the national landscape). More information on this issue is provided in the Board's position statement on Development in the Setting of the Cotswolds AONB.<sup>53</sup>

Increasing traffic volume and vehicle sizes on the National Landscape's roads can lead to congestion, noise and air pollution, damage to roadside verges (with consequent drainage and soil erosion issues), reduced safety for non-motorised road users and traffic 'rat-running' along minor roads and through villages. Measures to address these issues should be integral

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<sup>51</sup> This was a design principle for the A417 Missing Link Scheme – see Case Study 3 in [Appendix 1](#) of the Board's [Landscape-led Development Position Statement](#) for further details.

<sup>52</sup> 'Major development', in this context, equates to the definition provided in Footnote 67 of the [NPPF](#). See also Policy CE11.

<sup>53</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2017) [Development in the Setting of the Cotswolds AONB](#)

considerations in new developments and can include lowering speed limits, the provision of suitably designed speed reduction schemes, the provision of off-road routes for non-motorised users and the provision of appropriate signage. In line with the recommendations in the Board's Tranquillity Position Statement, if a development proposal would increase in traffic movements (or HGV movements) by 10% or more, this should, as a 'rule of thumb', be considered significant in terms of impact on tranquillity.<sup>54</sup>

The distinctive character of minor roads reflects and contributes to the character of the wider CNL and these roads are an important means for people to experience the CNL. Insensitive, over-engineered road schemes and excessive lighting can have a detrimental impact. Impacts on landscape character are addressed in Policy CE1 (Landscape).

The transport recommendations within Policy CC1 and the CNL [Pathway to Net Zero](#) should also be pursued.

Further information on what is meant by a landscape-led approach to development is provided in the Board's 'Landscape-led Development Position Statement'.<sup>55</sup> Appendix 3 of the Position Statement specifically addresses landscape-led principles for major development.

### Policy CE14: Major development

CE14.1. In line with national planning policy, permission should be refused for major development within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL), in the context of paragraph 190 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.<sup>56</sup>

CE14.2. Relevant stakeholders should fully assess relevant site allocations and development proposals to see if they constitute major development. In considering or deciding whether a proposed development constitutes major development, relevant stakeholders should have regard to the major development checklist in Appendix 5 of the Board's Landscape-led Development Position Statement.<sup>57</sup>

CE14.3. Local authorities and other relevant stakeholders should explicitly state whether they consider relevant allocations and development proposals to be major development<sup>58</sup>.

CE14.4. The mandatory major development 'tests' specified in paragraph 190 of the NPPF should be rigorously applied and documented for all allocations and development proposals that are deemed to be major development.

CE14.5. When relevant stakeholders are considering or applying the major development 'tests' specified in paragraph 190 of the NPPF, it should be recognised that:

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<sup>54</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2019) [Tranquillity Position Statement](#) (see Section 4.5).

<sup>55</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2021) [Landscape-led Development Position Statement](#) and [appendices](#).

<sup>56</sup> Paragraph 190 of the [NPPF](#)

<sup>57</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2021) [Landscape-led Development Position Statement](#) and [appendices](#).

<sup>58</sup> There are examples of case law where planning permissions have been quashed because the local authority (specifically, the planning committee) did not explicitly address the issue of major development and the related issue of 'exceptional circumstances' (e.g. [R \(Mevagissey Parish Council\) v Cornwall Council \[2013\] EHC3684 \(Admin\)](#)).

- 'exceptional need' does not necessarily equate to 'exceptional circumstances';<sup>59</sup>
- no permission should be given for major development save to the extent the development was needed in the public interest, met a need that could not be addressed elsewhere or in some other way and met that need in a way that to the extent possible, moderated detrimental effect on the environment, landscape and recreational opportunities.<sup>60</sup>

CE14. 6. When making decisions on major development proposals, local authorities (and/or other relevant decision makers) should not simply weigh all material considerations in a balance, but should refuse an application unless they meet the exceptional circumstances and public interest criteria.<sup>61</sup>

As with Policy CE13, Policy CE14 refers to relevant sections of the National Planning Policy (NPPF) for context, as this national policy underpins much of what Policy CE13 is seeking to achieve. However, Policy CE14 expands on this national policy by referencing relevant case law and best practice.

Paragraph 190 of the NPPF states that *'when considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest'*. Footnote 67 of the NPPF explains that *'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 purposes for which the area has been designated or defined'* (footnote 67).

This definition of major development differs from the definition in [The Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015](#) (or 'DMP' for short), which relates specifically to: minerals and waste development; housing developments of 10 or more dwellings or on sites having an area of 0.5 hectares or more; the provision of buildings where the floor space to be created is 1,000 square metres or more; or development on a site having an area of one hectare or more. However, the DMP definition is still a relevant consideration in relation to footnote 60 of the NPPF. There may be circumstances where a development that is larger than the DMP thresholds would not constitute major development in the context of paragraph 190 of the NPPF. Equally, there may also be circumstances where a development that is smaller than the DMP threshold would constitute major development in the context of paragraph 190 of the NPPF. The policy would also be relevant in relation to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs).

Paragraph 190 of the NPPF specifically addresses the issue of major development in the context of planning permissions (i.e., as part of the development management process). However, legal opinion has stated that *'it would arguably amount to an error of law to fail to consider [paragraph 190] at the site allocations stage of plan making... The consequence of doing so would be to risk allocating land for major development that was undeliverable because it was incapable of meeting*

<sup>59</sup> [R \(Advearse\) v Dorset Council v Hallam Land Management Ltd](#) [2020] EWHC 807. Direct quote from paragraph 35

<sup>60</sup> [R \(Mevagissey Parish Council\) v Cornwall Council](#) [2013] EHC 3684 (Admin), paragraph 51: 'The planning committee are required, not simply to weigh all material considerations in a balance, but to refuse an application unless they are satisfied that...'

<sup>61</sup> [R \(Mevagissey Parish Council\) v Cornwall Council](#) [2013] EHC 3684 (Admin), paragraph 51: 'The planning committee are required, not simply to weigh all material considerations in a balance, but to refuse an application unless they are satisfied that...'

*the major development test in the NPPF*<sup>62</sup>. As such, it is appropriate to address the issue of major development at the plan making stage as well as at the development management stage.

The 'Assessment of Site Allocations Against Major Development Considerations' undertaken by the South Downs National Park Authority in 2015<sup>63</sup> and 2017<sup>64</sup> as part of their Local Plan process is an excellent case study in this regard.

The major development checklist in the Board's Landscape-led Development Position Statement is not intended to set rigid criteria. Instead, it is intended to help guide the decision maker (and other stakeholders) through the process of assessing if a proposed development constitutes major development.

Due to their scale, major infrastructure and development projects, such as roads or energy developments, are likely to have a more significant impact on the natural beauty of the CNL than smaller-scale developments. There is an even stronger need for these projects to be exemplars for how they have regard to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the CNL including its special qualities.

Further guidance regarding major development is provided in Appendix 10 of the Management Plan and in Section 7.3, Appendix 3 and Appendix 5 of the Board's Landscape-led Development Position Statement.<sup>65</sup>

## Policy CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need

CE15.1. Housing delivery in the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be focused on meeting affordable housing requirements, particularly housing that is affordable in perpetuity such as social rented housing.<sup>66</sup>

CE15.2. When local planning authorities are reviewing their Local Plans, they should give consideration to setting policies for affordable housing provision in the CNL that require:

- at least 50% affordable housing in market housing developments
- 100% affordable housing on Rural Exception Sites, with a lower percentage only being permitted in exceptional circumstances and the absolute minimum being 75%
- on-site affordable housing provision for housing developments of five units or fewer

CE15.3. Priority should be given to maintaining and enhancing local community amenities and

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<sup>62</sup> Landmark Chambers (2017) [In the matter of the South Downs National Park and in the matter of paragraph 116 of the NPPF](#) (see paragraph 5).

<sup>63</sup> South Downs National Park Authority (2015) [South Downs Local Plan Preferred Options: Assessment of Site Allocations Against Major Development Considerations – Technical Report](#).

<sup>64</sup> South Downs National Park Authority (2017) [South Downs Local Plan Pre-Submission: Assessment of Site Allocations Against Major Development Considerations – Technical Report](#).

<sup>65</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2021) Landscape-led Development Position Statement and appendices.

<sup>66</sup> Sections 5.4 and 5.5 of the [Board's Housing Position Statement](#) and [appendices](#) provide additional context on this issue.



services and improving access to these amenities and services. Priority should also be given to supporting local employment opportunities.<sup>67</sup>

CE15.4. It should be recognised that:

- a) The housing need figure derived from the Government's 'standard method' for calculating housing need is an unconstrained assessment of housing need<sup>68</sup> and does not factor in relevant constraints. Whilst local planning authorities are expected to plan to meet their housing needs in full, there may be local constraints on land and delivery that justify a lower housing requirement figure.<sup>69</sup>
- b) The application of national planning policies relating to national landscapes may mean that it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs (OAN) in full in local authority areas that overlap with the CNL.<sup>70</sup>
- c) The CNL is unlikely to be a suitable area for accommodating unmet needs from adjoining, non-designated areas.<sup>71</sup> In the context of the CNL, this includes unmet needs relating to adjacent settlements and unmet needs arising in neighbouring local authority areas that do not overlap with the CNL.
- d) The scale and extent of development in the CNL should be limited.<sup>72</sup>

CE15.5. When the allocation of sites is being considered in the Local Plan process, regard should be given to the evidence of need specific to: (i) the settlement/parish where the allocation is being proposed; and (ii) the CNL 'sub-area' within which the allocation is being proposed.

CE15.6. Within the CNL, windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining, or outside of, built up area boundaries (or equivalent) should only be supported where there is robust evidence of a specific local housing need such as needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement.

CE15.7. Where choice-based lettings systems, such as Homeseeker Plus, are used as part of the evidence base for affordable housing need:<sup>73</sup>

- the 'local connection' component of the choice-based lettings system should be applied consistently; and
- data from the choice-based lettings systems should not be used explicitly as a measure of affordable housing need unless the data has been verified and there is a clear local connection to – and preference for – the settlement in question.

CE15.8. When local authorities are reviewing their Local Plans, they should give consideration to

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<sup>67</sup> Sections 5.4 and 5.5 of the Board's Housing Position Statement and appendices provide additional context on this issue.

<sup>68</sup> UK Government (202) [Guidance on Housing and economic needs assessment](#). Paragraph 001.

<sup>69</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024) [Government response to the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system consultation](#). 3. Planning for the homes we need: Advisory starting point and alternative approaches - Questions 1 and 2.

<sup>70</sup> [Government Guidance on the Natural Environment](#). Paragraph 041. This reflects paragraph 11b of the National Planning Policy Framework

<sup>71</sup> See previous footnote. Section 5.3 of the [Board's Housing Position Statement](#) and [appendices](#) provide additional context on this issue.

<sup>72</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024) [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#). Paragraph 189.

<sup>73</sup> Sections 5.6 and 5.10 of the [Board's Housing Position Statement](#) and [appendices](#) provide additional context on this issue.

setting policies that ensure that new market housing is used as a principal residence rather than as a second home or holiday home.

Housing in the Cotswolds is amongst the most unaffordable in the country. Some types of “affordable housing” as defined by national planning policy are unaffordable in real terms to people that have a local connection to the Cotswolds.

With regards to paragraphs 1 to 3 of Policy CE15, Government guidance recognises that national parks are not suitable locations for unrestricted housing. Instead, *‘the expectation is that new housing will be focused on meeting affordable housing requirements, supporting local employment opportunities and key services’*. The same guidance requires national park authorities to work to *‘ensure that... affordable housing remains so in the longer term’*.<sup>74</sup> National landscapes have the same level of protection as national parks, with regards to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty, and the scale and extent of development in both designations should be limited.<sup>75</sup> As such, it is logical to apply the same principles, outlined above for national parks, in national landscapes as well.

The targets in paragraph 2 of the Policy CE15 are based on what the Board would consider to be best practice within other protected landscapes. The Board acknowledges that these aspirations might exceed current policy in Local Plans. However, we consider that they are appropriate targets to aim for in a protected landscape, where the main focus for housing provision should be the provision of affordable housing. We acknowledge that these targets would be subject to viability assessments.

Paragraph 36 of the NPPF states that, in order to be sound, Local Plans should ‘as a minimum, seek to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs’ (OAN). However, paragraph 11 of the NPPF allows for circumstances in which the OAN might not be met in full, including with regards to NPPF policies that relate to national landscapes. Government guidance explicitly states that the application of policies in the NPPF relating to the protection of national landscapes *‘may mean that it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs in full through the plan-making process’*.<sup>76</sup> As such, it should be recognised that, in some circumstances, it might be appropriate for the housing requirement figure identified in development plans (that overlap with national landscapes) to be less than the OAN / “standard method” figure.

With regards to paragraph 5 of Policy CE15, the evidence base for affordable housing need relating to specific settlements / parishes includes rural housing need surveys and data from choice-based letting systems. The lack of a specific housing need figure, or housing requirement figure, for the AONB ‘sub-area’ within which an allocation is being considered could potentially make the allocation (and the Plan) unsound. This was the case in West Oxfordshire, where the Local Plan inspector concluded that *‘in the absence of a housing need figure for the Burford – Charlbury sub-area... the allocation in the plan of housing sites, and the reliance on additional windfall housing development, in the Burford – Charlbury area, over and above existing completions and commitments, would not be sound’*.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Defra (2010). [English National Parks and the Broads – UK Government Vision and Circular 2010](#), Paragraphs 78 and 79.

<sup>75</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2023) [National Planning Policy Framework](#). Paragraph 189.

<sup>76</sup> [Government Guidance on the Natural Environment](#). Paragraph 041.

<sup>77</sup> Planning Inspectorate (2018) [Report on the Examination of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031](#). Paragraph 219.



The wording of paragraph 6 of Policy CE15 is based on paragraph 5.39 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, which states that: *'Within the Cotswolds AONB, windfall housing proposals on undeveloped land adjoining built up areas... will only be supported where there is convincing evidence of a specific local housing need such as needs identified through a neighbourhood plan or affordable housing needs specific to a particular settlement, for example through a rural exception site'*.<sup>78</sup>

There is concern that high levels of second home ownership, retirement homes and buy to let have removed housing from the market that could otherwise be made available to people who need a home within the Cotswolds that they can afford to buy or rent. This results in increased demand within a reduced pool of housing stock, which inflates house prices and makes housing less affordable. The Board is particularly concerned that that younger people, families, key workers, those who care for the landscape of the CNL and others who form part of the Cotswold communities are able to live within the Cotswolds. This is vital for sustaining community services such as schools and reducing long distance commuting from locations where housing is more affordable.

All of these issues, including relevant case studies, are addressed in more detail in the Board's Housing Position Statement. The recommendations in the Housing Position Statement are based on government guidance and on best practice in the Cotswolds and other protected landscapes. Many of these recommendations have now been incorporated into Policy CE15, although the Position Statement provides additional, useful context.<sup>79</sup>

## Policy CE16: Waste management and the circular economy

CE16.1. Waste management should align with the following hierarchy, as set out in the Government's Waste Management Plan 2021:

- a. Prevention
- b. Prepare for reuse
- c. Recycling
- d. Other recovery
- e. Disposal

CE16.2. Measures that help to deliver a circular, or closed-loop, economy, in which waste generation is avoided, should be encouraged.

CE16.3. Proposals for new landfill sites and strategic waste facilities should not normally be permitted in the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL), especially where they involve importing significant amounts of waste into the CNL (for example, waste generated in neighbouring urban areas).

CE16.4. Any waste management facilities that are permitted in the CNL should:  
(i) be sited in such a way that adverse environmental impacts are minimised, in line with relevant permitting regimes; and (ii) be primarily to receive waste that arises within the CNL (within close proximity to the proposed facility).

CE16.5. The management or use of waste by way of depositing it to land as an inert 'recovery' operation, land raising and bunding or for further restoration of previous landfill operations, should only be allowed: (i) in very limited circumstances within environmental limits; (ii) where it can demonstrate a significant net-benefit for the conservation and

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<sup>78</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2018). [West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031](#).

<sup>79</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Board (2021). [Housing Position Statement](#) and [appendices](#).

enhancement of the natural beauty of the CNL; and (iii) where it complies with the policies of the relevant Waste Local Plan and relevant environmental regulations.

Communities and businesses within the Cotswolds produce a significant amount of waste which needs to be disposed of in an appropriate and safe manner. In future, efforts must concentrate on minimising waste and dealing with it in close proximity to where it is produced. The reduction of waste should be promoted by supporting policies and plans which result in re-use, reduction and recycling of waste materials and the efficient and effective collection of waste in a manner that will support its management as high up the waste hierarchy as is practicably possible.

Proposed activities including development, should proactively support the transition to a circular economy throughout the CNL. They should apply waste avoidance and reduction practices and adopt procurement strategies that favour the purchase of goods and services, which contribute to closing energy and material loops within supply chains.

The significant number of urban areas close to the CNL has the potential to create pressure to import waste into the CNL, particularly to former quarry locations. This can generate additional lorry traffic within the National Landscape, with associated negative impacts on communities, the rural road network and roadside verges. There are also implications for the groundwater resource due to the permeable nature of limestone.

Infilling with inert waste is sometimes proposed for quarries within the CNL. The need for infilling should be minimised by ensuring that a sufficient quantity of by-product is retained during the quarry operation to enable an appropriate restoration scheme to be achieved. Retrospective infilling may require a considerable number of HGV movements which can adversely affect the tranquillity of the CNL and result in unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions. As such, the potential benefits of restoring a former quarry to a more natural landform will need to be weighed in the balance against these potential adverse effects.

## 7. Increasing understanding and enjoyment

**Ensuring access, learning and wellbeing opportunities are for everyone.**

### Health and wellbeing

Outcome 12 – Health and wellbeing:

**The Cotswolds National Landscape plays a full part in improving the nation's health, benefitting the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of the wide range of people who experience it.**

The mental physical and emotional health benefits of accessing natural beauty are becoming increasingly understood and appreciated. The Landscapes Review published by Julian Glover in 2019 challenged Protected Landscapes to do more to welcome people and crucially to do a lot more to ensure that people from currently underrepresented groups can enjoy the benefits of accessing them too.

### Policy UE1: Health and wellbeing

- UE1.1. Further opportunities for improving health and wellbeing in the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be created, improved and promoted, particularly for communities experiencing health and social inequities. This should include, where appropriate, the provision of: green or blue spaces (e.g. rivers) within easy reach of communities, walking, cycling and riding routes, including routes for disabled people; opportunities to access and interact with nature, and volunteering and personal development opportunities.
- UE1.2. All children and young people resident within and around the CNL should be provided with environmental education opportunities to experience the CNL through direct contact with the natural environment.
- UE1.3. The health care and voluntary sectors should make greater use of the benefits that the National Landscape provides for the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors, for example, by actively promoting and supporting green prescribing initiatives in the CNL countryside and in green and blue spaces.

A lack of physical activity can lead to a variety of chronic diseases and conditions such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease which, combined with an ageing population, is contributing to a public health crisis. A lack of access to scenic, wildlife-rich green and blue (water) spaces and other open spaces can also adversely affect mental health. Many people, particularly children and young people, do not readily have opportunities to learn about the environment or to develop an understanding and appreciation of the Cotswolds countryside. The Cotswolds Outdoor Learning Network has drawn together Partner organisations to share best practice and funding opportunities within the Cotswolds and will be a great source for creating further learning opportunities with schools and community groups going forward. The new natural History GCSE will also help to further understanding of the natural environment and facilitate more involvement from the education sector and encourage future citizen scientists and connection to the Cotswolds and its wildlife.

The health and wellbeing benefits of volunteering in the countryside cannot be underestimated. Volunteering helps to improve physical health, and working and walking in the outdoors can also help with a variety of mental health challenges such as social isolation, bereavement and low confidence and self-esteem. Volunteer groups often struggle to attract those from underrepresented communities due to perceived and real-life barriers and so more support is needed for organisations to encourage and enable a more diverse range of volunteers. The variety of opportunities available across the National Landscape and wider partnership of organisations needs to be more clearly signposted.

There is a need to implement and develop a variety of approaches to address these issues, including the provision of outdoor activities and experiences. There is also a need to promote the link between physical and mental health and enjoying and understanding the special qualities of the National Landscape. This should include encouraging more partnership working between health and social care professionals and other stakeholders to implement measures such as 'green' prescriptions (for example, prescribing walks in the CNL). Where appropriate, links should be developed between these health and wellbeing aspirations and the enhancement of ecological networks and the provision of green and blue infrastructure.

## Access and recreation

### Outcome 13 – Access and recreation:

**The Cotswolds is recognised as a welcoming place, where barriers to access are being removed and everyone feels connected to the landscape.**

The Landscapes Review published by Julian Glover in 2019 challenged Protected Landscapes to do more to welcome people, and to do a lot more to ensure that people from currently underrepresented groups can enjoy the benefits of accessing them too. Two following reports published in 2022 built on these findings; *Increasing Children's Engagement with Protected Landscapes*<sup>80</sup> and *Improving the Ethnic Diversity of Visitors to England's Protected Landscapes*<sup>81</sup>

### Policy UE2: Access and recreation

UE2.1. Visitors, residents and local communities should be provided with opportunities to increase their understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the CNL.

UE2.2. A priority for engagement in the CNL should be individuals who are not currently enjoying or engaged with the benefits of the landscape. These include those from within the CNL and from the surrounding urban areas, especially those from areas of high deprivation and those that are not traditional visitors to the Cotswolds.

UE2.3. A safe, pleasant, accessible, clearly waymarked and well-connected public rights of way network that welcomes people of all abilities should be maintained, enhanced and promoted across the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) and into surrounding communities.

UE2.4. Improvements to access and recreation provision including public rights of way should

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<sup>80</sup> Defra (2022) *Increasing children's engagement with protected landscapes*

<sup>81</sup> Defra (2022) *Improving the Ethnic Diversity of Visitors to England's Protected Landscapes*

be undertaken in a way that is compatible with and seeks to further the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of CNL. Innovative ways of providing named routes without introducing additional signage should be explored. This should be balanced with the needs of groups that lack confidence in exploring the countryside, sensitive sites and of landowners and farmers who need to keep people on designated routes.

- UE2.5. Open Access Land and other land including country parks, that is open to public access<sup>82</sup> should be maintained, enhanced and promoted across the CNL. Where appropriate, more land should be made available for public access.
- UE2.6. Sustainable funding for National Trails, including the Cotswold Way and Thames Path, should be secured in order to ensure they are maintained to national standards. Further uplift in this funding should be sought to continue to improve the Trails, making them more accessible.
- UE2.7. Easily accessible online, downloadable and onsite resources for walking, cycling, horse riding, volunteering and educational activities should be provided in the CNL to help promote access to the area and promote understanding and appreciation of its special qualities.
- UE2.8. Visitor facilities and routes that are accessible to those of all abilities should be provided.
- UE2.9. Guided walks and activities for those who are not confident walking in the countryside should be provided to increase confidence and share knowledge of the CNL and its special qualities.
- UE2.10. Arts and cultural experiences should be provided to encourage people to deepen their connection to the landscape and support the engagement of new and existing audiences.
- UE2.12. The type and level of use access and recreational opportunities including public rights of way should be compatible with the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the CNL. Where recreational use is having or is likely to have, an adverse impact on the natural beauty of the National Landscape or on the integrity of existing wildlife and historic sites, steps should be taken to evaluate, prevent or mitigate these impacts. Such steps can include enhanced maintenance and wayfinding, onsite engagement, legal restrictions, and providing and promoting access and recreational opportunities in new alternative suitable locations.
- UE2.11. The Countryside Code should be promoted to educate visitors and communities to behave responsibly in the countryside. This would help to improve understanding between visitors and those living and working in the area.
- UE2.13. Where there is a conflict between (i) conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and (ii) public enjoyment of this natural beauty in the CNL, the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty should be given greater weight.

The use of the term “everyone” within the wording of this outcome is deliberate and is intended to promote equity, diversity and inclusion.

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<sup>82</sup> This includes access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (which includes commons) and where public access is permitted on land managed by landowners, non-government organisations and charities such as the National Trust, the Wildlife Trusts and the Woodland Trust.

The extensive 3000 miles of public rights of way network provides a huge opportunity to enhance public enjoyment and appreciation of the CNL. For some people, there are both real and perceived barriers to accessing and enjoying this network. These could be financial, health, cultural or other reasons. These barriers should be broken down and access provision should be adapted and extended where possible to reach the widest demographic.

Partners including the National Landscape Board, Highway Authorities, parishes and landowners should work together to improve public rights of way furniture, surfacing and facilities for the benefit of everyone.

Digital platforms such as websites and social media should be used, alongside targeted communications in more underrepresented communities to promote a variety of activities that will appeal to multiple audiences.

Offering high quality arts and cultural experiences which encourage people to deepen their emotional connection to the landscape will be an important part of how new and existing audiences are engaged in the future. Weaving thought-provoking and inspiring arts and culture activity into access and recreation work has the potential to connect people with nature and the landscape. The Arts in the Landscape strategy, led by the National Landscapes Association and adopted by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board in 2021, will support this work.

A current lack of long term and increasing funding from Natural England for National Trails makes long term planning, maintenance and promotion more challenging. Ongoing partnership working with the Cotswold Way Association (CWA) and the new National Trails Charity (NTUK) will be key to the long term sustainability of these internationally recognized flagship Trails.

New agri- environment schemes have the potential to create additional access to the Cotswolds and improve existing routes and should be encouraged.

The recreational use of the National Landscape should not be allowed to adversely affect the National Landscape's special qualities. For example, measures will need to be put in place to avoid, minimise and mitigate recreational pressure arising from new developments both inside and outside the National Landscape, especially where these developments are located close to sensitive locations, such as designated nature conservation sites and Scheduled Monuments. The provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG) should be developed to protect designated sites. For example, the Cotswold Beechwoods Recreation Mitigation Strategy (2022) actively aims to educate and guide visitors to less sensitive areas of the Cotswolds Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. This can include the provision of SANG areas funded through developer contributions and a range of other Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) measures.

The prioritisation of 'conserving and enhancing natural beauty' over 'public enjoyment' is known as the 'Sandford Principle', after Lord Sandford, who chaired the National Parks Policy Review Committee between 1971 and 1974. This principle is embedded in the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#), in relation to Conservation Boards.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Section 87, Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).

## Sustainable tourism

### Outcome 14 – Sustainable tourism:

#### **Businesses and visitors have a shared commitment to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the National Landscape.**

The natural beauty of the CNL is the foundation on which the tourism industry in the Cotswolds is based. This natural beauty is an asset which needs to be managed, conserved and enhanced. The tourism sector should, therefore, contribute to the conservation and enhancement of this natural beauty.

### Policy UE3: Sustainable tourism

- UE3.1. Tourism within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be delivered and managed in a way that is compatible with and seeks to further the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of CNL and should minimise the emission of greenhouse gases in accordance with policy CC1.
- UE3.2. Visitors, residents, local businesses and communities should be provided with opportunities to directly contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL and improve access to the area through local individual, community and employee volunteering opportunities.
- UE3.3. The 'Caring for the Cotswolds' visitor giving scheme will raise awareness of the CNL and generate funds from visitors to directly help to look after it by supporting projects which conserve habitats and species, look after heritage and landscape, improve access, and help provide education resources encouraging people to understand the landscape and nature better.
- UE3.4. Visitors should be provided with a variety of accommodation options over a range of prices. The siting and design of visitor accommodation should be compatible with conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL including its special qualities.
- UE3.5. Air travel arising from the Cotswolds as a destination should be minimised.
- UE3.6. Existing sustainable and integrated transport initiatives should be supported and new initiatives developed to help facilitate the car free visitor experience.
- UE3.7. The activity and impacts of tourism should be spread more evenly across the CNL.

New tourism products that increase the sustainable tourism offer should be encouraged. Further research and evidence are needed to better understand the impacts and patterns of tourism in the CNL to ensure it becomes sustainable. Updated visitor and tourism survey data would help to underpin Policies UE2 and UE3.

Visitors' emissions, including travelling to/from the Cotswolds, are equivalent to about half of total residents' emissions. Their emissions overwhelmingly come from travelling to/from the Cotswolds, rather than what they do, buy and eat while they are here. In particular, emissions

from travelling are dominated by flying (48%) and road fuel (41%). Of the remaining 11%, while visitors are here, about half their emissions are due to food and drink.<sup>84</sup>

Though there is generally a significant level of appreciation for the Cotswolds landscape amongst visitors, awareness and understanding of its status as a protected landscape and the implications of this are lacking. This reduces awareness of the need for protection and enhancement of the sense of place and its distinctive features and special qualities.

Limited availability of low-cost accommodation, including camping, can exclude families and those on low incomes from staying in the area, reducing the diversity of visitors. Provision of such accommodation should be compatible with the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

The limited provision of public transport - and limited integration of this provision – restricts the scope for visitors (and residents) without a car to explore the Cotswolds resulting in a heavy reliance on car usage. Transport providers should be supported to increase and promote integrated travel initiatives in order to encourage a car-free visitor experience.

The distribution of tourism activity is very uneven across the Cotswolds with “honeypot” areas suffering from the impacts of very high tourism whilst other communities could better benefit from tourism. Any initiatives to widen the distribution of tourism activity must seek to do so in a manner compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty”.<sup>85</sup>

Following the 2021 “*de Bois Review: an independent review of Destination Management Organisations in England*” and the government response, VisitEngland is currently creating a portfolio of nationally supported and strategic ‘Local Visitor Economy Partnerships’ (LVEPs). These LVEPs will provide strong local leadership and governance in tourism destination all over the country. In 2023 the Cotswolds Plus Local Visitor Economy Partnership was accredited by VisitEngland, and now provides strategic advice and direction to the following destination marketing organisations: Cotswolds Tourism (lead partner), Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Tourism, Marketing Cheltenham, Visit Gloucester, Visit Gloucestershire. The Cotswolds Plus LVEP has a Management Board made up of strategic partners including Gloucestershire County Council and local authority representatives from the geographic area of the LVEP and is independently chaired by a representative of the Cotswolds National Landscape Board. The main themes of work are: Sustainability (transport and active travel); Sustainability (business practices and biodiversity); Accessibility and Inclusion; Skills and Training; Research and Data; Business Support; Travel Trade; and Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE).

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<sup>84</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape (2023). [Creating a Pathway to a Climate-Friendly Cotswolds. A Layman’s Guide to Small World Consulting’s Carbon Baseline Assessment Technical Report.](#)

<sup>85</sup> Section 87 of the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#) states that, where there is a conflict between the Board’s two purposes, greater weight should be given to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty over the purpose of increasing understanding and enjoyment.



## 8. Delivery and monitoring

### Cotswolds National Landscape Board delivery

The Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) Board will play an important role in delivering the vision, outcomes and policies of the Management Plan. How the CNL Board will contribute to the delivery of the Management Plan is set out in a three yearly Business Plan Framework which in turn is delivered through an annual work programme. Together these show how the vision, outcomes and policies of the Management Plan are translated into measurable actions for the Board.

### Stakeholder delivery

Although the CNL Board is the body responsible for preparing and publishing the Management Plan and will play an important role in its delivery, the Board doesn't actually own or directly manage any of the land in the CNL or its setting. As such, the policies of the Management Plan are also intended to guide the work of other stakeholders in helping to deliver the Management Plan's vision and outcomes.

The detail of how other stakeholders contribute to the delivery of the Management Plan is too complex to cover in this Management Plan, particularly given that the National Landscape cuts across 15 local authority areas. However, the 'Stakeholder Delivery' table in Appendix 5 outlines the key actions that the Board invites specific stakeholders to undertake in order to help deliver the Management Plan. The actions and policies listed in the table are not intended to be exhaustive.

In essence, stakeholders are asked to:

- have regard to the Management Plan, including its vision, outcomes and, perhaps most importantly, its policies;
- incorporate the Management Plan's vision, outcomes and policies into their own plans, policies, proposals, work programmes and decisions, where appropriate.

### Monitoring

The National Landscape Board will monitor and evaluate its contribution to the delivery of the Management Plan through the quarterly and annual review of its work programme. The 'State of the Cotswolds Report' – together with other local and national monitoring and surveys – will contribute to the provision of evidence, which is a crucial part of managing the National Landscape.

Where practicable the Board will monitor the key actions identified in the 'Stakeholder Delivery' table in Appendix 5 and compliance with the 'duty of regard' (see Appendix 4).

The delivery of the Management Plan will be monitored through the national Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework supplemented with local indicators. These targets are listed in appendix 6.

## 9. Appendices

### Appendix 1: National Landscape (AONB) designation

The Cotswolds National Landscape was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1966 and extended in area in 1990. At 787 square miles, or 2038 square kilometres, it is the largest AONB and the third largest protected landscape in England.

Although AONB remains the legal name of the designation, the Board of the Cotswolds Conservation Board decided in June 2020 to use the name National Landscape (NL) for the area designated as an AONB and the name Cotswolds National Landscape Board for the Cotswolds Conservation Board. All AONBs now use the name National Landscape.

This plan uses the term National Landscape for the designated area and National Landscape Board for the organisation.

AONBs are landscapes whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them<sup>86</sup>. They have the same landscape status as national parks.

The statutory purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance their natural beauty<sup>87</sup>. AONBs are designated in law following a prescribed process which includes an objective appraisal of landscape quality, statutory assessments by the national conservation agencies and wide consultation with stakeholders including local landowners, residents and businesses<sup>88</sup>.

Each AONB has been designated by reason of its 'special qualities'. These include the flora, fauna, historical and cultural associations as well as landscape and scenic views, as outlined in Chapter 2 of the Management Plan.

AONBs exist within a legal framework which has been progressively strengthened since the first AONBs came into existence after the Second World War. The primary, or enabling, legislation for the designation of AONBs was the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 subsumed and strengthened the AONB

provisions of the 1949 Act. It confirmed the purpose and significance of AONBs, clarified the procedure for their designation, and created a firm legislative basis for their designation, protection and management. The Act also provided for the establishment of Conservation Boards to manage AONBs – see Appendix 3.

AONBs are part of a family of protected areas recognised and classified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) throughout the world. IUCN recognises AONBs and National Parks in England and Wales as Category V Protected Landscapes – a protected area whose special qualities are the result of the interaction between people and nature. As such, they are an international designation as well as a national-level designation. They are managed mainly for landscape protection and recreation.

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<sup>86</sup> Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) (2015) *Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Landscape Protection and Enhancement Support Scheme (England) 2015 – 17. Application to European Commission*.

<sup>87</sup> Section 82, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

<sup>88</sup> National Association of AONBs (2018) *AONB Management Plan Revision. Specimen text: policy and legal framework*.

## Appendix 2: Natural beauty

The concept of natural beauty is one of the cornerstones of legislation to protect landscapes in the UK. It has been the basis for the designation of national landscapes (AONBs) and National Parks since the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act.

Natural beauty goes well beyond scenic or aesthetic value. It encompasses everything that makes an area distinctive: geology, climate, soil, plants, animals, communities, archaeology, buildings, the people who live in it, past and present, and the perceptions of those who visit it<sup>89</sup>. It is widely accepted that natural beauty is, in part, due to human intervention, such as agriculture<sup>90</sup>.

Natural England has developed a list of natural beauty criteria<sup>91</sup> to be used when assessing landscapes for designation as AONBs or National Parks, as outlined in the table below. It is Natural England's view that the practical application of the natural beauty criteria is identical for National Park and AONB designations, despite there being differences in the degree to which the criterion is clarified in the legislation<sup>92</sup>. So, for example, the extent to which wildlife and cultural heritage are factored into natural beauty assessments by Natural England is the same for both AONBs and National Parks. It is also the Government's formal position that the natural beauty required of an AONB and a National Park are the same<sup>93</sup>.

The list is not intended to be exhaustive and other factors may be relevant in some circumstances. Not all factors will be relevant in every case.

### Table of factors related to natural beauty<sup>94</sup>

#### Landscape quality

This is 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 (primarily, but not only, the visual senses).

#### Relative wildness

The degree to which relatively wild character can be perceived in the landscape and makes a particular contribution to sense of place.

#### Relative tranquillity

The degree to which relative tranquillity can be perceived in the landscape.

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<sup>89</sup> Countryside Agency (2001) *Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans*. A guide. Countryside Agency Publications. West Yorkshire

<sup>90</sup> Natural England (2021) [Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England](#).

<sup>91</sup> Natural England (2021) [Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England](#). (see Table 3 and Appendix 1).

<sup>92</sup> Natural England (2021) [Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England](#).

<sup>93</sup> See Lords Hansard 20 Mar 2006 (Col 51) and Commons Hansard 13 June 2000 (Col 556W).

<sup>94</sup> Table extracted from the Natural England guidance Natural England (2011) [Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England](#).

#### Natural heritage features

The influence of natural heritage on the perception of the natural beauty of the area. Natural heritage includes flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features.

#### Cultural heritage

The influence of cultural heritage on the perception of natural beauty of the area and the degree to which associations with particular traditions, people, artists, writers or events in history contribute to such perception.

The CNL's 'special qualities', outlined in Chapter 4, above, are the most significant components of the area's natural beauty. The key features / characteristics of the CNL's 19 landscape character types, as outlined in the CNL Landscape Character Assessment and in the CNL Landscape Strategy & Guidelines, are also an important component of the area's natural beauty.

## Appendix 3: Cotswold National Landscape Board

The Cotswolds Conservation Board ('the Board') was established by Parliamentary Order<sup>95</sup> in 2004. It was renamed as the Cotswolds National Landscape Board for most purposes in June 2020 (although the legal name remains unchanged). It has two statutory purposes, which it must seek to further<sup>96</sup>:

- The purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape.
- The purpose of increasing the understanding and enjoyment, by the public of the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

In fulfilling these purposes, the Board has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities within the National Landscape<sup>97</sup>.

These purposes and duties are modelled on those of the National Park Authorities. In circumstances where the two purposes are irreconcilable, the Board must give priority to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape<sup>98</sup>.

The Board consists of 37 members, of whom 15 are nominated by principal local authorities, eight by parish councils and 14 are appointed by government. The Board's work programme is administered by a small team of staff, supported by a network of Cotswold Voluntary Wardens who deliver a programme of practical projects and guided walks across the National Landscape. It is one of only two Conservation Boards in England, the other being the Chilterns Conservation Board.

The Board has a statutory responsibility, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000, to draft and publish the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan and to review it at least every five years. The Board's work programme for how it will contribute to the delivery of the Management Plan is set out in the Board's separate, rolling, three-year Business Plan.

The Board has a series of functions or powers that it shares with the Local Authorities, as specified in the Board's Establishment Order.

As the only organisation with responsibilities for the Cotswolds National Landscape as a whole, the Board produces a variety of publications and guidance. This is to facilitate a consistent and coordinated approach across the whole of the National Landscape, which puts the purpose of National Landscape designation at the heart of plans, proposals, decisions and work programmes affecting the National Landscape.

Board publications that are of particular relevance to the Management Plan – and which are referred to in some of the Management Plan policies and or supporting text – are outlined below:

- **Cotswolds National Landscape – [Landscape Character Assessment \(LCA\)](#)**: The LCA provides an assessment of the character, distinctiveness and qualities of the Cotswolds

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<sup>95</sup> The Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Establishment of Conservation Board) Order 2004.

<sup>96</sup> Section 87, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, as amended by the NERC Act 2006.

<sup>97</sup> Section 87 of the CROW Act specifies that, '*a conservation board... shall for that purpose [i.e. fostering social and economic wellbeing] co-operate with local authorities and public bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic or social development within the area of outstanding natural beauty*'.

<sup>98</sup> This prioritisation of conserving and enhancing is known as the 'Sandford Principle', after Lord Sandford, who chaired the National Parks Policy Review Committee between 1971 and 1974.

National Landscape. It also identifies and describes the National Landscape's component landscape character types (LCTs). It identifies 19 different LCTs in the Cotswolds National Landscape.

- **Cotswolds National Landscape – [Landscape Strategy and Guidelines](#):** The Landscape Strategy and Guidelines provides an overview of the forces for change that are influencing the landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape and outlines a series of landscape and land management strategies to help guide change in a positive and sustainable way. It is intended to help developers, local planning authorities, land managers and other decision makers to make informed decisions about the suitability of proposed development – or other changes – within each of the LCTs.
- **[Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan](#).** The Nature Recovery Plan represents a detailed look at the species and habitats of the Cotswolds and what should be done to enable their recovery and adaptation to climate change. It sets priorities and targets for nature recovery and describes the measures that can achieve it.
- **[Position Statements](#):** The Board issues a number of Position Statements, which expand on specific policies in the Management Plan and on related issues. They contain further background information and recommended good practice. They are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- **[Cotswolds National Landscape Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change](#)**<sup>9984</sup>: This document aims to assist a wide range of stakeholders to broaden their understanding of what makes the Cotswolds National Landscape special and different from other parts of the country.
- **The Cotswolds National Landscape [Climate Change Strategy](#)** (adopted by the National Landscape Board in February 2022). This summarises our current understanding of the climate change impacts on the Cotswolds and what stakeholders can do to both adapt to and mitigate these impacts.

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<sup>99</sup> Conservation Board (2003) *Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change*. Produced by Latham Architects for the Cotswolds AONB Partnership.

## Appendix 4: The “seek to further” duty.

Section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023<sup>100</sup> (LURA) introduced a statutory duty on relevant authorities<sup>101</sup> to seek to further the statutory purposes of protected landscapes<sup>102</sup> (the ‘seek to further’ duty). With regards to National Landscapes, this requirement has been incorporated into Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, which now states:

*In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty in England, a relevant authority other than a devolved Welsh authority must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.*<sup>103</sup>

This replaces the previous version of Section 85 of the CROW Act, which required relevant authorities to have regard to the statutory purpose of national landscape designations (the ‘duty of regard’).

Section 245 of the LURA and Section 85 of the CROW Act also state that ‘the Secretary of State may by regulations make provision about how a relevant authority is to comply with the duty’. These regulations are likely to be enacted during the lifetime of this iteration of the CNL Management Plan.

However, the application of the duty is not dependent on these regulations.

The ‘seek to further’ duty is in force now, as it has been since 26 December 2023, and must be complied with.

### Guidance and advice

Guidance on the ‘seek to further’ duty has been published by Defra<sup>104</sup> and the National Landscapes Association<sup>105</sup>. In addition, Natural England has provided advice on the ‘seek to further’ duty in relation to a nationally significant infrastructure project<sup>106</sup> and the Campaign for National Parks has obtained a legal opinion on the duty<sup>107</sup>. Other useful reference points include the Government’s explanatory note on the Lords’ amendments to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill<sup>108</sup> and the Government’s LURA press release<sup>109</sup>.

This appendix pulls together key aspects of this guidance and advice, as outlined below (with references being provided for the relevant guidance / advice), in order to provide a coherent narrative.

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<sup>100</sup> [Section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#).

<sup>101</sup> As specified in [Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#), ‘relevant authority’, in this context, includes any Minister of the Crown, public body, statutory undertaker or person holding public office.

<sup>102</sup> ‘Protected landscapes’ means national parks, the Broads and National Landscapes.

<sup>103</sup> [Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#).

<sup>104</sup> Defra (2024) [Guidance for relevant authorities on seeking to further the purposes of Protected Landscapes](#).

<sup>105</sup> National Landscapes Association (2024) [Applying the CROW Act section 85 duty to ‘seek to further the purposes’ in National Landscapes - guidance for local planning authorities](#).

<sup>106</sup> Natural England (2023) [Letter from Natural England to the Planning Inspectorate regarding the application by National Highways for an order granting development consent for the Lower Thames Crossing](#). Annex 2.

<sup>107</sup> Landmark Chambers (2024) [Re: section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#). Instructed by the Campaign for National Parks.

<sup>108</sup> UK Parliament (2023) [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill – Explanatory Notes on Lords Amendments](#).

Updated version, 12 October 2023. Page 35.

<sup>109</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-laws-to-speed-up-planning-build-homes-and-level-up>

## Strengthened duty

The 'seek to further' duty is a strengthened duty compared to the previous 'duty of regard'.<sup>110</sup> If 'have regard to' was the same as 'seek to further', then there would be no need for the amendment.<sup>111</sup> The duty is therefore clearly intended to impose new and more onerous requirements with respect to the statutory purposes than existed before.<sup>112</sup>

## Outcome focussed

The 'seek to further' duty is intended to facilitate better outcomes for National Landscapes, which are in line with their statutory purpose (i.e. to conserve and enhance their natural beauty).<sup>113</sup> As stated in the Government's LURA press release, the duty '*will enhance our national network of beautiful, nature-rich protected landscapes that can be enjoyed right across the country*'.<sup>114</sup> In this context, natural beauty should be considered in its holistic sense and 'conserve and enhance' should be treated as a singular purpose.<sup>115,116</sup>

## Active / pro-active duty

The 'seek to further' duty is an active duty, not a passive one.<sup>117</sup> This means that the duty should be pro-actively considered when exercising or performing any functions to which the duty applies.<sup>118</sup> For example, a relevant authority must factor in the duty before the adoption of a proposed policy and not merely as a 'rearguard action' following a concluded decision.<sup>119</sup>

Relevant authorities would be well-advised not treat the new duty as 'business as usual'.<sup>120</sup> 'Seek' and 'further' both imply demonstrable action in the form of assistance and promotion of the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty of National Landscapes. It is not enough that a decision simply does not conflict with that purpose: it must seek to further it.<sup>121</sup>

## Reasonable and proportionate

A relevant authority should take all reasonable and proportionate steps to explore how the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of National Landscapes can be furthered.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> National Landscapes Association (2024), Landmark Chambers (2024) (paragraphs 6, 16d and 21), Government Explanatory Notes (2023).

<sup>111</sup> Landmark Chambers (2024). Paragraph 16d.

<sup>112</sup> Landmark Chambers (2024). Paragraph 6.

<sup>113</sup> Defra (2024), NLA (2024), Landmark Chambers (2024) (paragraph 17g).

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-laws-to-speed-up-planning-build-homes-and-level-up>

<sup>115</sup> National Landscapes Association (2024).

<sup>116</sup> Please refer to Appendix 2 for further information on natural beauty.

<sup>117</sup> Defra (2024), National Landscapes Association (2024), Natural England (2023), Landmark Chambers (2024) (paragraphs 2a, 16d, 17b, 19ii, 21).

<sup>118</sup> Landmark Chambers (2024). Paragraph 17b.

<sup>119</sup> Landmark Chambers (2024). Paragraph 17c.

<sup>120</sup> Landmark Chambers (2024). Paragraph 21.

<sup>121</sup> Landmark Chambers (2024). Paragraph 17c.

<sup>122</sup> Defra (2024), National Landscapes Association (2024), Natural England (2023).



## **Going beyond avoidance and mitigation of harm**

As far as is reasonably practical, relevant authorities should seek to avoid harm and contribute to conserving and enhancing of the natural beauty of National Landscapes.<sup>123</sup>

This goes beyond mitigation and like for like measures and replacement. The proposed measures to further the statutory purpose of a National Landscape should explore what is possible in addition to avoiding and mitigating the effects of the development, and should be appropriate, proportionate to the type and scale of the development and its implications for the area and effectively secured.<sup>124</sup> Consideration should be given to the appropriateness of compensation measures.<sup>125</sup>

## **The setting of National Landscapes**

As well as being applied within National Landscapes, the 'seek to further duty' also applies to functions undertaken outside of the designation boundary which affects land within a National Landscape.<sup>126</sup>

## **Management Plans**

When seeking to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty, relevant authorities should consider the information contained in a National Landscape's Management Plan.<sup>127</sup> Relevant authorities should make efforts to understand the Management Plan and relate their functions to it.<sup>128</sup>

Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the specific National Landscape will normally mean, as a minimum:

- conserving and enhancing the character components or special qualities identified in the Management Plan;
- supporting the Management Plan Objectives, Policies and/or Principles (as applicable) as set out for each of these; and
- following any Management Plan actions set out for each.<sup>129</sup>

Consideration should also be given to whether the measures being taken by the relevant authority align with and help to deliver the targets in the Management Plan.<sup>130</sup>

## **Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework**

Relevant authorities should refer to the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcome Framework.<sup>131</sup>

## **Dialogue with the National Landscapes team**

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<sup>123</sup> Defra (2024).

<sup>124</sup> Natural England (2023).

<sup>125</sup> Defra (2024).

<sup>126</sup> Defra (2024).

<sup>127</sup> Defra (2024).

<sup>128</sup> Defra (2024).

<sup>129</sup> National Landscapes Association (2024).

<sup>130</sup> Defra (2024).

<sup>131</sup> Defra (2024).

Dialogue with the National Landscape team can assist the relevant authority<sup>132</sup> (i.e. in this instance, dialogue with the Cotswolds National Landscape Board).

### **Scenarios where there would be a neutral effect on the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty**

If the measures taken by a relevant authority, in relation to the 'seek to further' duty, would have a neutral effect on the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty, consideration should be given to what modifications would help to further this purpose.<sup>133</sup>

### **Scenarios where a relevant authority concludes that their decision / action would not seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty**

If, having considered the implications of a decision, a relevant authority reaches the view that the decision does not 'seek to further' the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty, it would be hard to argue that the decision would, in fact, be open to the relevant authority. This is because it would appear to be in breach of the duty. In those circumstances, the decision would need to either be withdrawn or modified such that the relevant authority could confidently say that it did seek to further the relevant purpose.<sup>134</sup>

### **Scenarios where the natural beauty of a National Landscape would not be conserved and enhanced**

The 'seek to further' duty does not preclude decisions that are 'net harmful' to the natural beauty of a National Landscape. If that were so, the duty would be to 'further the purpose' rather than to 'seek to further the purpose'. However, positive evidence is required to demonstrate that the relevant authority has, in all the circumstances, sought to further the purpose, not merely through mitigation of harm but by taking all reasonable steps to further the purpose.<sup>135</sup>

### **Evidence**

A relevant authority should be able to demonstrate with proportionate, reasoned, and documented evidence that they have complied with the 'seek to further' duty. This evidence should include the measures that have been taken, or to which consideration has been given, to further the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of National Landscapes.<sup>136</sup>

If it is not practicable or feasible to take measures to further this purpose, the relevant authority should provide evidence to show why it is not practicable or feasible.<sup>137</sup>

### **Monitoring and Compliance**

A relevant authority may consider it appropriate to instigate a formal compliance monitoring and reporting system to ensure adherence to the duty.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Defra (2024).

<sup>133</sup> National Landscapes Association (2024).

<sup>134</sup> Landmark Chambers (2024). Paragraph 17g.

<sup>135</sup> Landmark Chambers (2024). Paragraph 17h.

<sup>136</sup> Defra (2024), National Landscapes Association (2024), Natural England (2023), Landmark Chambers (2024).

<sup>137</sup> Natural England (2023).

<sup>138</sup> Defra (2024).

## Potential errors in law

A failure to consider the 'seek to further' duty, or a failure to understand its pro-active and mandatory nature, would be an error of law.<sup>139,140</sup>

If a relevant authority makes a decision that engages the duty and it cannot demonstrate that it has done all it reasonably can to further the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty as part of the decision, that decision will be open to legal challenge.<sup>141</sup>

If a relevant authority applies the principles that are set out in this appendix conscientiously, it will be less open to a judicial review challenge on the basis of an alleged breach of the new duties.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Landmark Chambers (2024). Paragraph 16e.

<sup>140</sup> An example of this 'error in law' is [a case relating to works undertaken by Greater Anglia at Manningtree train station, in Dedham Vale National Landscape, in Essex](#). In this case, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government accepted that their failure to apply the 'seek to further' duty, when making an Environmental Impact Assessment screening decision, constituted an error in law and that the outcome might have been different if the duty been applied.

<sup>141</sup> Landmark Chambers (2024). Paragraph 20.

<sup>142</sup> Landmark Chambers (2024). Paragraph 18.

## Appendix 5: Stakeholder delivery – priority actions

**National Landscape Board Delivery** How the National Landscape Board will contribute to the delivery of the Management Plan is set out in a three yearly Business Plan Framework which in turn is delivered through an annual work programme.

**Recommended Stakeholder Actions** Every individual and organisation with an interest in the National Landscape can help make this plan's vision and outcomes a reality by contributing its delivery. Many of these stakeholders already make a significant contribution to delivery. This 'Stakeholder Delivery' table provides an indication of the key measures that the Board invites specific stakeholders to undertake in order to help deliver this plan.

Stakeholder	Key measure (i.e. 'if you do nothing else to support the implementation of the Management Plan, please do this')	Most relevant policies (not an exclusive list)
<b>All 'relevant authorities'<sup>143</sup></b>	Seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL). In doing so, have regard to and align with the CNL Management Plan and other National Landscape guidance. This should include helping to deliver the vision, outcomes and policies of the National Landscape Management Plan by: (i) addressing them – and, where appropriate, adopting them – in relevant plans, policies, proposals, work programmes, decisions and actions; and (ii) recognising them as priorities for investment.	All policies
	Contribute to the delivery of targets within the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework where relevant.	All policies
<b>Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)</b>	Promote guidance on the 'seek to further' duty.	All policies
	Develop secondary legislation on how relevant authorities should comply with the 'seek to further' duty.	All policies
	Develop secondary legislation on how relevant authorities should contribute to the production and implementation of protected landscape management plans and the delivery of the targets within the Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework.	All policies
	Ensure that Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms contain measures appropriate for the Cotswolds National Landscape and are targeted towards the delivery of Local Nature Recovery Strategies and the delivery of the targets within the Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework, in particular targets 1,2,3,4,5,8 & 10.	CE1, CE4, CE7, CE8, CE9, CE10, CE11, CE12, UE2
<b>Ministry of Housing, Communities &amp; Local Government</b>	Publish new guidance, to accompany the National Planning Policy Framework, which clarifies and explains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the meaning of 'highest status of protection';</li> <li>that development in AONBs should be limited;</li> <li>what the development priorities should be for AONBs (i.e. affordable housing and improvement of services);</li> <li>what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances' and 'in the public interest', in the context of major development.</li> </ul>	CE13, CE14, CE15

<sup>143</sup> As defined in Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which is explained in Appendix 4. Includes all public bodies and statutory undertakers.

<b>Natural England</b>	Support the establishment and delivery of Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms specifically for the Cotswolds National Landscape.	CE1, CE4, CE7, CE8, CE9, CE10, CE11, CE12, UE2
	Provide funding for National Trails through three-year rolling funding streams, and provide cohesive national co-ordination	UE2
	Contribute to the delivery of targets within the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework, in particular targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 & 10	CE8, CE10, CE11
<b>Forestry Commission</b>	Develop and support land management and rural development support mechanisms appropriate for the Cotswolds National Landscape.	CE8, CE10
	Ensure that publicly funded woodland creation schemes reflect Cotswolds National Landscape Board guidance including the Landscape Strategy and Guidelines and the Nature Recovery Plan.	CE1, CE8, CE10
	Contribute to the delivery of targets within the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework, in particular targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, & 10.	
<b>Environment Agency</b>	Support the delivery of the Cotswold Nature Recovery Plan and the River Valleys Nature Improvement Area, for example, through appropriate policies and actions in River Basin and Catchment Management Plans.	CE8, CE9, CE10
	Lead on the delivery of actions to implement the Water Framework Directive.	CE8, CE9, CE10
	Contribute to the delivery of targets within the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework, in particular targets 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5.	
<b>Historic England</b>	Continue to make publicly available information on the historic character and heritage assets of the area, and to provide advice and guidance on a range of heritage related matters via the Historic England website, such as <a href="#">Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency: Historic England Advice Note 18 (2024)</a>	CE7
	Provide advice to applicants for environmental land management schemes to ensure improvement to affected heritage assets (registered landscapes or scheduled monuments) can be secured.	CE7
	With other partners and landowners, support initiatives that improve the condition of the historic environment and heritage assets at risk contributing to the delivery of target 10 within the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework.	CE7
<b>Health and Wellbeing Boards</b>	Commission health walks and conservation activity as an adjunct or alternative to normal prescription treatment.	UE1
	Invest in programmes to help deprived communities, within the Cotswolds National Landscape and surrounding areas, overcome barriers preventing them from realising the mental and physical health benefits of enjoying the National Landscape.	UE1
<b>Local Enterprise Partnerships</b>	Support the development of funding mechanisms that leverage private finance to provide for payments for ecosystem services (Gloucestershire LEP roles and responsibilities transferred to Gloucestershire County Council from April 2024).	CE8, CE10, CE1, UE1
	Endorse the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan.	All policies

<b>Principal Local Authorities</b>	Recognise the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan as a material consideration in Local Plans and in planning decisions.	CE13, CE14, CE15
	Include a policy specifically about the Cotswolds National Landscape in Local Plans, which specifies how the purpose of National Landscape designation will be achieved in the Local Plan area.	CE13, CE14, CE15
	Ensure that Local Nature Recovery Strategies take account of the outcomes, priorities and measures of the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan.	CE8, CE9
	Prioritise the provision of affordable housing to meet identified local needs arising from within the National Landscape.	CE15
	Maintain and enhance public access, roads, public transport and countryside management, in line with the policies of the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan.	UE1, UE2, CE13,
	Contribute to the delivery of targets within the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework where relevant.	All policies
	Undertake surveys to update the heritage at risk register	CE7
<b>Town and Parish Councils and Parish Meetings</b>	Use the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan and Landscape Strategy and Guidelines to inform Neighbourhood Plans, Parish Plans and Village Design Statements and when considering planning applications.	CE1, CE4, CE8, CE13
<b>Town and Parish Councils and Parish Meetings</b>	Celebrate and promote the fact that the town or parish lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• utilising National Landscape boundary markers;</li> <li>• incorporating 'within the Cotswolds National Landscape' text in village or town entry signs;</li> <li>• providing information about the Cotswolds National Landscape on information panels and displays in the town or parish.</li> </ul>	UE1, UE2, UE3,
<b>Conservation organisations</b>	Help to halt and reverse declines in priority habitats and species.	CE8, CE9
	Help to establish and manage coherent and resilient nature recovery networks that join up across the National Landscape as outlined in the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan.	CE8, CE9
	Contribute to the delivery of targets within the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework where relevant.	
<b>Historic environment and cultural heritage organisations</b>	Support the conservation, enhancement, promotion and monitoring of the historical environment and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds National Landscape.	CE7
	Contribute to the delivery of targets within the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework, particularly target 10.	
<b>Farmers, landowners, land managers and related organisations</b>	Use the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan and guidance published by the Cotswolds Conservation Board, including the Landscape Strategy and Guidelines and Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan, to inform investment, development, and land management decisions and actions.	All policies

	Ensure that environmental land management and rural development support mechanisms support the Cotswolds National Landscape's policies and guidance and deliver Local Nature recovery Strategies.	CE8, CE10
	Support the delivery of targets within the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework where relevant.	All policies
<b>Tourism organisations and tourism providers</b>	Support the development of and contribute to the Caring for the Cotswolds visitor giving scheme.	UE3
	Support a coordinated approach to tourism across the whole of the Cotswolds.	CC6, UE2, UE3
<b>Geology Trusts</b>	Support the conservation and enhancement of geological and geomorphological features in the Cotswolds National Landscape.	CE2
	Support the increased understanding and awareness of geological and geomorphological features in the Cotswolds National Landscape.	CE2
<b>Developers and infrastructure providers (including utilities, rail and highways)</b>	Avoid adverse impacts on the Cotswolds National Landscape resulting from development and infrastructure provision. Mitigate unavoidable impacts and, as a last resort, compensate for impacts that cannot be mitigated on site, for example, by enhancing visual amenity.	CE1, CE13, CE14
	Ensure that any major infrastructure projects that are permitted in the Cotswolds National Landscape are 'landscape-led' <sup>144</sup> .	CE13
<b>Water companies or utilities</b>	In addition to avoiding and mitigating adverse impacts, contribute to the management of water-dependent environments through delivering actions to support Water Framework Directive objectives.	CE9

<sup>144</sup> See Policy CE10.6, paragraph 2, for more details on what 'landscape-led' means in this context.

## Appendix 6: Monitoring indicators

### Targets in the National Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF).

These are the indicators for national targets set by Defra within the PLTOF. Three of them, wildlife rich habitats restored or created, peat and tree canopy and woodland cover are currently being apportioned across all protected landscapes through a national process. The framework is new (the first data release being in 2024) so many of the targets and much of the baseline data are still being developed.

Abbreviations;

PLTOF – Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework

NLs – National Landscapes

NPs – National Parks

PLs – Protected Landscapes

TI – Target Indicator

Management Plan Outcomes and Policies	National PLTOF Target	Target indicator	Cotswolds baseline figure from the 2024 data release	Cotswolds Target 2030	Cotswolds Target 2050	Notes	Statistic Code
1. Climate action CC1: Climate change – mitigation	7. Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat in Protected Landscapes by 2050.	Extent of peat under restoration in Protected Landscapes	0 Ha	0 Ha	0 Ha		TI_07
	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	1,090.32 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e	773.45 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e	0 kt CO <sub>2</sub> e (net)	Overall emissions are given as a single figure, measured in kilotons of carbon dioxide equivalent (KtCO <sub>2</sub> e), by weighting non-carbon dioxide gases by their global warming potential (GWP). The baseline figure is for 2022 (nearest available to 2024). Data is available from 2005 (2005 was 1740.2 a reduction of 649.88 to 2022). The 2030 figure was estimated by projecting forward the rate of reduction required to achieve 0 in 2050. The baseline and 2030 figures are not	TI_06



						net and will need adjusting as further work is required to establish the residual emissions that will be mitigated.	
1. Climate action CC1: Climate change – mitigation  8. Biodiversity and nature recovery CE8: Nature recovery and biodiversity	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	35,903 Ha	37,776 Ha (+1,873 Ha)	45,270 Ha (+9,367 Ha)	Indicator is in development. Interim statistics provided for woodland cover & tree canopy. Woodland based on national forest inventory = 26,105 ha + trees outside woods based on trees outside woods and orchards maps of 9,798 ha. This target is based on estimating the increase of new tree canopy and woodland cover that can be accommodated within each Landscape Character Type (LCT). This was achieved through: 1. An assessment of the area under each LCT where increasing tree canopy and woodland cover is constrained. 2. A landscape sensitivity assessment to increased tree canopy and woodland cover for each LCT. 3. The application of a % tree canopy and woodland cover increase to the areas without constraints. The % increase was derived from the landscape sensitivity assessment using a sliding scale from 1% to 5% centred around the 3%, national target. This work is subject to further refinement so the target is tentative and may change.	TI_08
			17.62%	18.54% (+0.92%)	22.21% (+4.59%)		
2. Working together CC4: Working in partnership	9. Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme.	Policies in place to ensure Protected Landscapes are taking positive action to widen the diversity of their staff, boards and volunteers	1	1	1	<a href="#">Equalities and Diversity Policy</a> published December 2020. Note. Unlike the other targets, this target is not repeated under the relevant policy within the main body of the plan. This is because it relates to the CNL Board alone and not the CNL as a place.	TI_09i
7. Historic environment and cultural heritage CE7: Historic environment and cultural heritage	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	62	52	7	Historic England were consulted on the development of this target. The agreed approach was to set a modest improvement for 20230 with further progress scaling up over time. <b>Data subject to revision due to an inconsistency in the reporting of places of worship.</b>	TI_10

	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	0.56%	0.47%	0.06%	Historic England were consulted on the development of this target. The agreed approach was to set a modest improvement for 20230 with further progress scaling up over time. <b>Data subject to revision due to an inconsistency in the reporting of places of worship.</b>	TI_10
8. Biodiversity and nature recovery CE8: Nature recovery and biodiversity	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	Not available  CNRP (2021) 41,471 Ha	17,331 Ha	33,684 Ha	Indicator is in development. Interim targets based on Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan targets less hedgerows. Habitat definitions align with Environment Act habitat target - definitions and descriptions (April 2024) and Environment Act habitat target reporting data model and standard (December 2024). 2042 target is 28,079 Ha arrived at by adding 2/5 of the difference between 2040 & 2045 targets to 2040. Baseline is the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan existing habitat figures less hedgerows.	TI_01
	2. Bring 80% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042	Percentage of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes in favourable condition	49%	59%	84%	Percentage of SSSI features in favourable condition. National baseline figures; NLS 41.3%, NPs 34.8%, PLs 38.6%, England 39.5%. Interim 2030 & 2050 targets estimated by calculating the average annual increase to meet the 2042 target assuming a steady rate (1.72%pa) & projecting that forward. Natural England were consulted on this target but did not comment.	TI_02
	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	14.4%	83.0%	100%	"Negative" refers to actions which have not been yet undertaken or which are resulting in a negative impact on the SSSI. National baseline figures; NLS 15.3%, NPs 10.8%, PLs 13.4%, England 14.1%. A feature can only be considered to have an 'action on track' if it has an up-to-date condition assessment. Many do not and so do not count as having 'actions on track'. When the assessments are updated, if they are still favourable, they will then count as having 'actions on track'. Interim 2030 target estimated by calculating	TI_03

						the average annual increase to meet the 2028 target & (11.3%pa) & projecting it forward by 2 more years. Natural England were consulted on this target but did not comment.	
	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	Not available	TBA	TBA	Indicator is in development.	TI_04
	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	Not available	TBA	TBA	Indicator is in development.	TI_05
12. Health and wellbeing UE1: Health and wellbeing	9. Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all.	Number of volunteers active with the Cotswolds National Landscape Board	497	Figure is for 2023/24. No target set as this is not a target under the PLTOF. It is a local indicator being used as a proxy whilst the national indicator is in development.			Local_01
		No of female Cotswolds Voluntary Wardens	96	Figure is for 2023/24. No target set as this is not a target under the PLTOF. It is a local indicator being used as a proxy whilst the national indicator is in development.			Local_02
		Number of volunteer hours delivered through the Cotswolds National Landscape Board	52,971	Figure is for 2023/24. No target set as this is not a target under the PLTOF. It is a local indicator being used as a proxy whilst the national indicator is in development.			Local_03
		Children/young people (<16) worked with by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board	1,727	Figure is for 2023/24. No target set as this is not a target under the PLTOF. It is a local indicator being used as a proxy whilst the national indicator is in development.			Local_04
		Young people (16-25) worked with by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board	118	Figure is for 2023/24. No target set as this is not a target under the PLTOF. It is a local indicator being used as a proxy whilst the national indicator is in development.			Local_05
		Schools worked with by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board	55	Figure is for 2023/24. No target set as this is not a target under the PLTOF. It is a local indicator being used as a proxy whilst the national indicator is in development.			Local_06

13. Access and recreation UE2: Access and recreation	9. Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all.	Number of improvements made to the Public Rights of Way network by the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens	496	Figure is for 2023/24. Number of stiles, gates, bridges and waymarking posts installed or improved. No target set as this is not a target under the PLTOF. It is a local indicator being used as a proxy whilst the national indicator is in development.	Local_07
			78,593m	Figure is for 2023/24. Length of path cleared or surface improved. No target set as this is not a target under the PLTOF. It is a local indicator being used as a proxy whilst the national indicator is in development.	Local_08
		Downloads of walking and exploring resources from the Cotswolds National Landscape Board website.	57,651	Figure is for 2023/24. 48,450 self-guided walks & 9,201 cycle route downloads. No target set as this is not a target under the PLTOF. It is a local indicator being used as a proxy whilst the national indicator is in development.	Local_09

### Monitoring Indicators

There are an additional 24 data sets within the PLTOF and they are supplemented with additional local indicators. The PLTOF indicators have statistic codes starting with "Stat" and the supplementary indicators have codes starting with "Local". The PLTOF indicators will be monitored nationally with data cut to their boundaries provided to the protected landscapes. The local indicators will be monitored locally. The PLTOF is new (the first data release being in 2024) so many of the indicators and much of the baseline data are still being developed.

Management Plan Outcomes	Management Plan Policies	Description of statistic	Cotswolds baseline figure from the 2024 data release	Notes	Statistic Code
1. Climate action	CC1 – Climate change mitigation	Area, depth and percentage cover of peatland within Protected Landscapes	24.45 Ha	Deep peaty soils (= 0%). NLS 6.18% PLS 9.01%	Stat_06
1. Climate action	CC1 – Climate change mitigation	Estimate of the amount of carbon stored and sequestered by habitats within Protected Landscapes	42,783,399 tonnes of carbon (t C)	Sum of the median estimate for 0-150cm soil depth and the median estimate for biomass. % of England's total carbon; All National Parks 15.7%, All National Landscapes 17.2% All Protected Landscapes 32.8%	Stat_07
1. Climate action	CC1 – Climate change mitigation	Total predicted output from new renewable energy schemes permitted in the Cotswolds National Landscape each year.	0	Figure is for 2023/24. No records of solar or wind proposals permitted within recent years. This is the predicted output from planning	Local_10

				applications which is frequently greater than the actual output.	
2. Working together	CC3 – Compliance with section 85 of the CRoW Act	% of planning decisions that are made in line with CNL Board recommendations (where the Board has objected).	56%	Figure is for 2023/24. When a local authority (or planning inspector) has reached a decision that is contrary to our recommendation it doesn't necessarily mean that they have failed to comply with the 'seek to further duty'.	Local_11
2. Working together	CC3 – Compliance with section 85 of the CRoW Act	% of decisions (for development management proposals that we have commented on) that explicitly refer to the S85 'seek to further' duty.	10%	The 'seek to further' duty was introduced at the end of Q3 in 2023/24. This data is for the 2024 calendar year. 11/114 = 10%	Local_12
2. Working together	CC3 – Compliance with section 85 of the CRoW Act	% of decisions (for development management proposals that we have commented on) that, in CNL opinion, adequately address the S85 'seek to further' duty.	6%	The 'seek to further' duty was introduced at the end of Q3 in 2023/24. This data is for the 2024 calendar year. 7/114 = 6%	Local_13
3. Landscape	CE1 – Landscape	National Character Areas which contain Protected Landscape(s), where changes to landscape and waterscape character is assessed as improving/no change/declining	Not available		Stat_10
3. Landscape 8. Nature recovery and biodiversity	CE1 – Landscape CE8 – Nature recovery and biodiversity	Length of hedgerows and other traditional field boundaries (drystone walls) within Protected Landscapes	13,100 km	Initial figures are for the length of hedgerow. Figures will be added for the length of dry-stone walls and shared in April 2025. Quite a lot of drystone walls are already included in the hedgerow data as the methodology could not differentiate walls with scrub or trees alongside them.	Stat_11
3. Landscape	CE2 – Geology	Number of geological and geomorphological SSSI unit features and percentage in favourable or recovering condition	40		Stat_15
3. Landscape	CE2 – Geology	Number of geological and geomorphological SSSI unit features and percentage in favourable or recovering condition	58%		Stat_15
5. Tranquillity	CE5 – Tranquillity	% of National Landscape recorded as 'most tranquil'	5.9% most tranquil.	0.96% of England is most tranquil. This is the most tranquil decile. Top 3 deciles	Local_14

				is 31.88% for the Cotswolds compared to 8.6% for England. Data from 2006	
6. Dark skies	CE6 – Dark skies	% of National Landscape affected by light pollution	26.9%	Affected by light pollution defined as >0.25 NanoWatts/cm2/sr. Data CPRE 2016	Local_15
7. Historic environment and cultural heritage	Policy CE7	Number of nationally designated heritage assets in Protected Landscapes	11,112		Stat_09
8. Nature recovery and biodiversity	CE8 – Nature recovery and biodiversity	Extent of priority habitat and other habitats within Protected Landscapes	23,655 Ha	Statistics on 'other habitats' available in April 2025,	Stat_01
8. Nature recovery and biodiversity	CE8 – Nature recovery and biodiversity	Extent of priority habitat and other habitats within Protected Landscapes	13%	Statistics on 'other habitats' available in April 2025,	Stat_01
8. Nature recovery and biodiversity	CE8 – Nature recovery and biodiversity	Area of land within Protected Landscapes designated at international, national and local level for nature conservation	6,080.43 Ha	Excludes Local Wildlife Sites	Stat_02
8. Nature recovery and biodiversity	CE8 – Nature recovery and biodiversity	Area of land within Protected Landscapes designated at international, national and local level for nature conservation	3%	Excludes Local Wildlife Sites	Stat_02
8. Nature recovery and biodiversity	CE8 – Nature recovery and biodiversity	Area of woodland within Protected Landscapes under sustainable management	16,142 Ha		Stat_03
10. Farming and land management	CE10 - Farming and land management				
8. Nature recovery and biodiversity	CE8 – Nature recovery and biodiversity	Extent of ancient woodland within Protected Landscapes	9,353.1 Ha	Includes PAWS	Stat_04
9. Water	CE9 – Water	Ecological status of watercourses and water bodies within Protected Landscapes	11.7%	% Length of rivers, canals & surface water transfers in good ecological status (no high in Cotswolds). NLS 17.26%, PLs 23.27%	Stat_05
9. Water	CE9 – Water	Ecological status of watercourses and water bodies within Protected Landscapes	0%	% lakes in good ecological status (no high in the Cotswolds). NLS 1.02%, PLs 11.20%	Stat_05
9. Water	CE9 – Water	Ecological status of watercourses and water bodies within Protected Landscapes	50%	% Groundwater bodies in good ecological status. NLS 20.35%, PL's 23.27%.	Stat_05

9. Water	CE9 – Water	Ecological status of watercourses and water bodies within Protected Landscapes	12.61%	% Waterbody catchments in good ecological status (no high). NLS 14.83, PLs 23.68	Stat_05
10. Rural land management	CE10 - Farming and land management	Total area of land managed under agri-environment schemes and total value of schemes within Protected Landscapes	64,500 Ha	Countryside Stewardship, Sustainable Farming Incentive 2022, Sustainable Farming Incentive 2023 and Environmental Stewardship. All National Landscapes £595,900. All Protected Landscapes £1,185,200	Stat_12
10. Rural land management	CE10 - Farming and land management	Total area of land managed under agri-environment schemes and total value of schemes within Protected Landscapes	£14,001,800	Countryside Stewardship, Sustainable Farming Incentive 2022, Sustainable Farming Incentive 2023 and Environmental Stewardship. All National Landscapes £94,084,300. All Protected Landscapes £144,574,200.	Stat_12
10. Rural land management	CE10 - Farming and land management	Area of land under different agricultural land uses within Protected Landscapes and number of livestock	Not available	Not in data release	Stat_13
10. Rural land management	CE10 - Farming and land management	Area and distribution of main landcover types within Protected landscapes	Not available	Not in data release	Stat_14
10. Rural land management	CE10 - Farming and land management	Extent of agricultural businesses within Protected Landscapes (number and size of holdings, number of agricultural workers)	Not available	Not in data release	Stat_16
11. Development and infrastructure	CE13 – Development and transport principles	Number of adopted Local Plans with policy-level reference to the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan.	10	Figure is for 2023/24. Out of the 15 local planning authorities that overlap with the CNL (76%)	Local_16
11. Development and infrastructure	CE14 – Major development	Number of development proposals (that CNL have commented on), which have been permitted, that the Board considers to be major development	3	Figure is for 2023/24. In the context of paragraph 183 of the NPPF. 2023/24	Local_17
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Population estimates for Protected Landscapes	169,600		Stat_17
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Average age of the population living in Protected Landscapes	46		Stat_18

11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Proportion of the population within each ethnic group in Protected Landscapes	1%	Asian, Asian British, or Asian Welsh. All NLS 1%, All PLs 1%, England 10%	Stat_19
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Proportion of the population within each ethnic group in Protected Landscapes	0%	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean, or African. All NLS 0%, All PLs 0%, England 4%.	Stat_19
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Proportion of the population within each ethnic group in Protected Landscapes	2%	Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups. All NLS 2%, All PLs 2%, England 3%.	Stat_19
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Proportion of the population within each ethnic group in Protected Landscapes	97%	White. All NLS 96%, All PLs 96%, England 81%	Stat_19
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Proportion of the population within each ethnic group in Protected Landscapes	0%	Other. All NLS 0%, All PLs 0%, England 2%	Stat_19
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Median earnings in Protected Landscapes	£2,350 pcm	All NLS = £2,300, All PLs = £2,300. Rural England = £2,300, England = £2,350	Stat_20
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	House price affordability ratios in Protected Landscapes	11x	Ratio of mean house purchase price to mean gross annual household income. All NLS = 11, All PLs = 11, Rural England = 8, England = 8	Stat_21
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Number of new housing units (i.e. dwellings) permitted through planning applications CNL has commented on.	16	Figure is for 2023/24	Local_18
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Registered businesses by size and type in Protected Landscapes	1,345	10+ employees. Cotswolds all sizes 12,855	Stat_22
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Registered businesses by size and type in Protected Landscapes	9,540	1-9 Employees. Cotswolds all sizes 12,855	Stat_22
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Registered businesses by size and type in Protected Landscapes	1,965	0 employees. Cotswolds all sizes 12,855	Stat_22



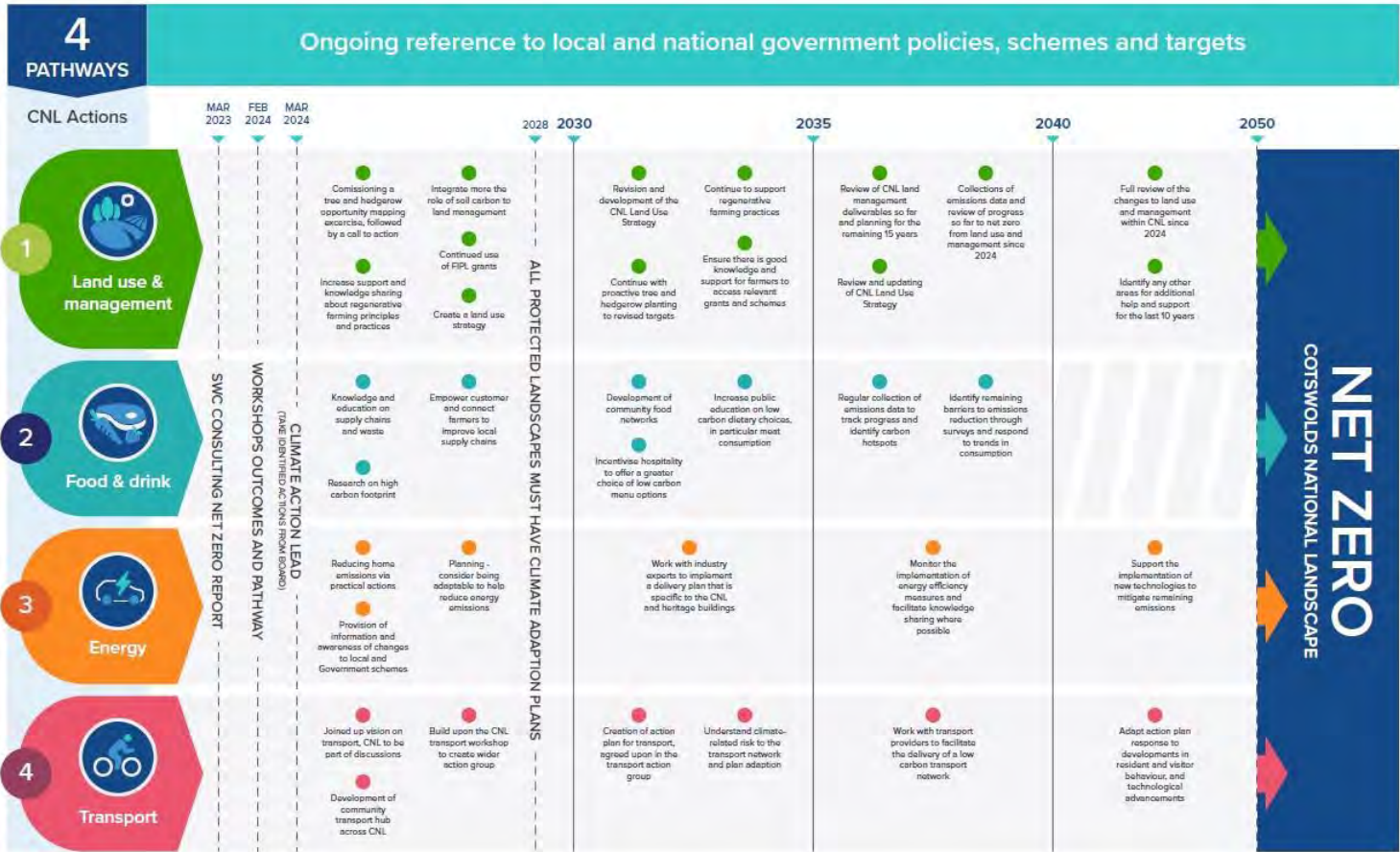
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Registered businesses by size and type in Protected Landscapes	10%	10+ employees. NLs 11%, PLs 11%, Rural England 9%, England 10%	Stat_22
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Registered businesses by size and type in Protected Landscapes	74%	1-9 Employees. NLs 73%, PLs 71%, Rural England 74%, England 80%	Stat_22
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Registered businesses by size and type in Protected Landscapes	15%	0 employees. NLs 18%, PLs 18%, Rural England 17%, England 10%	Stat_22
11. Development and infrastructure 12. Health and wellbeing	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Proportion of the population living in each decile of deprivation in Protected Landscapes	Median decile = 8	NLs, PLs & rural England; 7. England 5.	Stat_23
11. Development and infrastructure	CE15: Development priorities and evidence of need	Number of pupils on the school roll (against total capacity) in Protected Landscapes	86%	Proportion of school capacity reached	Stat_24
11. Development and infrastructure	CE16 – Waste management and the circular economy	Number of landfill and strategic waste management sites permitted.	1	2023/24. Using a threshold of 50,000 tonnes per annum as a definition of 'strategic'	Local_19
13. Access and recreation	UE2: Access and recreation	Length of National Trails within Protected Landscapes	163.4 km		Stat_08

Appendix 7: Pathway to net zero overview.

# PATHWAY TO NET ZERO OVERVIEW



Cotswolds  
National  
Landscape



[Download the full report.](#)

## Appendix 8: Priority habitats and species

This list of priority habitats and species for the Cotswolds National Landscape is adapted from Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, which lists the habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The habitats and species listed below are considered to be: (i) characteristic of the Cotswolds; and/or (ii) those for which the Cotswolds National Landscape is considered to be a stronghold of those particular habitats or species. There are other priority habitats and species within the National Landscape, which merit an appropriate level of protection, but which do not meet the two criteria outlined above. Habitats and species with an asterisk (\*) are not on the NERC Act list but have been identified, by the National Landscape Board and relevant stakeholders, as priorities for the Cotswolds National Landscape.

### Habitats

- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- Lowland beech and yew woodland
- Habitat mosaic including; wood pasture, parkland, veteran trees and large areas of tree, scrub and grassland mosaic
- Wildflower rich grasslands – lowland calcareous grassland, lowland meadows and other neutral grasslands.
- Flushes, streams and rivers
- Arable field margins important for birds and plant species
- Hedgerows
- Natural box scrub
- Areas important for bats ('batscapes') \*
- Hard-water springs depositing lime\*

### Species

- Farmland birds, such as skylark, lapwing and corn bunting
- Pasqueflower
- Pearl-bordered fritillary
- Arable plants
- Juniper
- Cotswold pennycress
- Bats
- Dormouse
- Water vole
- Brown hare
- Limestone grassland butterflies
- Marsh fritillary
- Violet click beetle
- White clawed crayfish
- Native brown trout
- Bath asparagus\*
- Common box\*
- Rockrose pot beetle
- Rugged oil beetle
- Ancient woodland ground flora, such as helleborines and angular Solomon seal.
- Ancient grassland flora such as musk and fly orchid

## Appendix 9: Why biodiversity is an important consideration in the Cotswolds National Landscape

### Introduction

This appendix sets out why biodiversity is an important consideration in the Cotswolds National Landscape (including why a higher biodiversity net gain requirement would be appropriate in the Cotswolds National Landscape, compared to neighbouring, non-designated areas).

**Statutory purposes, duties and powers** The Cotswolds National Landscape is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The statutory purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of these areas.<sup>145</sup> Local authorities and other 'relevant authorities' have a statutory duty to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of AONBs.<sup>146</sup> Local authorities also have the statutory power to take action to accomplish this purpose.<sup>147</sup>

Public authorities also have a statutory biodiversity duty<sup>148</sup> introduced under the 2006 Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act and strengthened by the Environment Act 2021. Under this duty they "*must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England.*"

### Link between natural beauty and biodiversity

Natural heritage (including biodiversity) is one of the factors that contributes to the natural beauty of AONBs.<sup>149</sup> As such, the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is an important consideration when seeking to further the purpose of AONB designation.

Paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that '*the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in [AONBs]*'.<sup>150</sup>

### Biodiversity Net Gain and the Seek to Further Duty

Research by the Kent Nature Partnership (KNP) has identified that increasing biodiversity net gain (BNG) delivery from 10% to 20% doesn't significantly affect viability.<sup>151</sup>

A recent Wildlife and Countryside Link report on BNG refers to that KNP research.<sup>152</sup> It also states that Defra's own research<sup>153</sup> has shown that 10% BNG is the minimum that is required to ensure no net loss. So, it could be argued that in order to actually deliver a genuine gain in biodiversity, you need to have a BNG figure higher than 10%.

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<sup>145</sup> Section 82 of the [Countryside and Rights of Way \(CROW\) Act 2000](#).

<sup>146</sup> Section 85 of the [CROW Act 2000](#). Further information on the 'duty of regard' is provided in Appendix 4 of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2025-2030.

<sup>147</sup> Section 84 of the [CROW Act 2000](#).

<sup>148</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty>

<sup>149</sup> Natural England (2021) [Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England](#). Table 3, page 13, and Appendix 1, page 25.

<sup>150</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) [National Planning Policy Framework](#). Paragraph 176, page 50.

<sup>151</sup> <https://cieem.net/kent-assesses-20-biodiversity-net-gain-requirement/>

<sup>152</sup> Wildlife and Countryside Link (2024) *Biodiversity Net Gain: more than a fancy offset?* ([link](#)).

<sup>153</sup> [https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use/net-gain/supporting\\_documents/181121%20Biodiversity%20Net%20Gain%20Consultation%20IA%20FINAL%20for%20publication.pdf](https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use/net-gain/supporting_documents/181121%20Biodiversity%20Net%20Gain%20Consultation%20IA%20FINAL%20for%20publication.pdf). The relevant section is 5.1.1, page 18.

The University of Kent's research into BNG outcomes for early adopter councils shows that certain loss of biodiversity is being traded for the promise of unverifiable gains at some point in the future.<sup>154</sup>

This is relevant to the new statutory duty to seek to further the purpose of protected landscapes designation (i.e. for national landscapes, to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the protected landscape). As outlined above, natural heritage / biodiversity is one of the factors that contributes to the natural beauty of a national landscape. If 10% BNG is the minimum that is required to ensure no net loss, then 10% BNG isn't necessarily enhancing the natural beauty of the area, in this regard, it is just ensuring no net loss. For actual enhancement of natural beauty (in relation to biodiversity), it could be argued that a BNG figure of more than 10% is necessary.

### **Landscapes Review, Government response and '30 by 30'**

The Government-commissioned Landscapes Review Final Report<sup>155</sup> proposes that:

- national landscapes<sup>156</sup> should form the backbone of Nature Recovery Networks – joining things up within and beyond their boundaries;<sup>157</sup>
- national landscapes should have a renewed mission to recover and enhance nature;<sup>158</sup>
- there should be stronger purposes in law for our national landscapes, including 'recover, conserve and enhance... biodiversity';
- strengthened [AONB] Management Plans should set clear priorities and actions for nature recovery.<sup>159</sup>

The [Government's response to the Landscapes Review](#) Final Report states that:

- Working with... AONBs in the coming years, we will ensure our protected landscapes boost biodiversity.<sup>160</sup>
- Our vision for protected landscapes is a coherent national network of... nature-rich spaces... Protected landscapes will drive forward nature recovery.<sup>161</sup>
  - The Prime Minister has committed to protect 30% of UK land for nature by 2030 (30 by 30)<sup>162</sup>... Achieving 30 by 30 will rely on improvements in how these areas are protected and managed for nature recovery.<sup>163</sup>
  - We will put our protected landscapes at the heart of delivering our nature recovery... policies.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Zu Ermgassen, S.O.S.E., Marsh, S., Ryland, K., Church, E., Marsh, R., Bull, J. W. (2021). *Exploring the ecological outcomes of mandatory biodiversity net gain using evidence from early-adopter jurisdictions in England*. Conservation Letters. 14: e12820. <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12820>

<sup>155</sup> Defra (2019) [Landscapes Review Final Report](#).

<sup>156</sup> The phrase 'national landscapes' relates to AONBs and national parks.

<sup>157</sup> Proposal 4, page 52.

<sup>158</sup> Proposal 1, page 36.

<sup>159</sup> Proposal 3, page 43.

<sup>160</sup> [Landscapes review: government response](#). Foreword.

<sup>161</sup> Landscapes review: government response. Introduction.

<sup>162</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-commits-to-protect-30-of-uk-land-in-boost-for-biodiversity>. This press release implies that the 30% figure includes the entirety of AONBs: 'Existing National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other protected areas already comprise approximately 26% of land in England. An additional 4%... will be protected to support the recovery of nature'. However, the Government's response to the Landscapes Review states that 'at present, under their current statutory purposes, level of protection and management, protected landscapes cannot be said to contribute towards 30 by 30 in their entirety'.

<sup>163</sup> [Landscapes review: government response](#). Since the publication of the review - nature and climate.

<sup>164</sup> [Landscapes review: government response](#). Chapter 2: Nature and climate.

- Given their spatial scale, and track records in planning and delivering landscape-scale restoration projects, protected landscapes could play a particularly important role in the delivery of the Nature Recovery Network.<sup>165</sup>
- We will explore ways for protected landscapes to support responsible authorities in preparing [Local Nature Recovery Strategies].<sup>166</sup>
- By strengthening the first purpose [of protected landscape designation] for nature... we will ensure these areas can contribute to this ambitious commitment for biodiversity and our wider nature recovery ambitions.<sup>167</sup>
- We will strengthen this purpose [to 'conserve and enhance'], making it clear that we need to actively recover nature in these areas, rather than simply conserve what remains.<sup>168</sup>
- A core function of protected landscapes should be to drive nature recovery.<sup>169</sup>

The Government report 'Delivering 30by30 on land in England'<sup>170</sup> states that '30by30' will be delivered across three themes:

1. Strengthening.
2. Extending and creating.
3. Investing.

Measures identified under the 'strengthening' theme that relate specifically to protected landscapes include:

- Action through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act to enhance Protected Landscape management plans and place a stronger requirement on partners such as local authorities and public bodies to contribute to their delivery.
- The creation of a new partnership between the National Landscapes Association (formerly the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), National Parks England, National Trails UK and Natural England to deliver a range of exciting projects and programmes on nature recovery and widening access to nature. The partnership will also boost opportunities for private sector investment in our Protected Landscapes.
- A new outcomes framework for Protected Landscapes, which will set targets for their contributions to national environment and climate commitments, to be embedded in their management plans. We are also updating Protected Landscape management plan guidance to ensure consistency.
- Our response to the consultation on implementing the Landscapes Review, which sets out our action plan for Protected Landscapes.

Measures identified under the 'investing' theme that relate specifically to protected landscapes include:

- Committing to invest £100 million in thriving farming businesses through our successful Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme. More than 5,000 farmers and land 8 of 15 managers have engaged with the programme, delivering projects that achieve outcomes for climate, nature, people and place.
- Investing in National Parks Partnerships and the National Landscapes Association to build the capacity to create a pipeline of projects to generate more private finance in Protected Landscapes.
- Pledging a further £15 million to support our existing National Parks and National Landscapes, helping to support our most iconic landscapes.

The report also states that protected landscapes will be at the heart of 30by30.

<sup>165</sup> [Landscapes review: government response](#). The Nature Recovery Network and 30 by 30.

<sup>166</sup> [Landscapes review: government response](#). The Nature Recovery Network and 30 by 30.

<sup>167</sup> [Landscapes review: government response](#). The Nature Recovery Network and 30 by 30.

<sup>168</sup> [Landscapes review: government response](#). A stronger mission for nature recovery.

<sup>169</sup> [Landscapes review: government response](#). A stronger mission for nature recovery.

<sup>170</sup> Department of Farming, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) (2024) *Delivering 30by30 on land in England* ([link](#)).



As such, protected landscapes (including national landscapes) are clearly a vital component of delivering the 30by30 commitment (i.e., ensuring that 30% of land in England is managed for nature).

### **Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework**

The Government's Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework identifies several biodiversity-related targets, specifically for protected landscapes, that are relevant to the Cotswolds National Landscape:<sup>171</sup>

- **Target 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).<sup>172</sup>
- **Target 2:** Bring 80% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042.
- **Target 3:** For 60% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028.
- **Target 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.
- **Target 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.
- **Target 8:** Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline).

It is important to note that the Target 1 figure of 250,000 hectares is half of the Government's target of creating or restoring 500,000 hectares in England by 2042<sup>173</sup>. So, protected landscapes are expected to deliver 50% of the national (England) target for habitat restoration / creation even though they only cover 25% of England. In other words, protected landscapes will be expected to restore / create three times as much wildlife-rich habitat, per unit area, as land outside protected landscapes.

### **Colchester Declaration**

The 'Colchester Declaration', launched in 2019, is a formal commitment by the family of AONBs, under the umbrella of the National Association of AONBs (NAAONB), to redress declines in species and habitats within the context of a wider response to climate change.

The commitments include that, by 2030:

- At least 200,000ha of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in AONBs will be in favourable condition.
- At least 100,000ha of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites will have been created/restored in AONBs.

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<sup>171</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework>

<sup>172</sup> This is half of the national target (including areas outside protected landscapes) of restoring or creating 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat, outside protected sites, by 2042 ([link](#)), even though protected landscapes only cover 25% of England.

<sup>173</sup> The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, in 2018, introduced a target to create or restore 500,000ha of wildlife-rich habitat outside the protected landscapes network ([link](#) – page 26). This target was reiterated in the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan, in 2023, which specified that this target would be met by 2042 ([link](#) – page 31). This target became legally binding in the Environmental Targets (Biodiversity) (England) Regulations 2023 ([link](#)). This target is also reiterated in the Government's '30by30' policy paper ([link](#) – page 7).

- At least 36,000ha of new woodland will have been planted or allowed to regenerate in AONBs following the principle of the right tree in the right place.

### **Considerations specific to the Cotswolds National Landscape**

Two of the 'special qualities' of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL)<sup>174</sup> are the:

- Flower-rich grasslands particularly limestone grasslands;
- Ancient broadleaved woodland particularly along the crest of the escarpment.

The special qualities of the CNL are those aspects of the area's natural beauty which make the area distinctive and which are valuable, especially at a national scale. They are the key attributes on which the priorities for the area's conservation, enhancement and management should be based.

In the 1930s, 40% of the CNL was covered in wildflower-rich grasslands. Sadly, agricultural intensification and changing land management practices have led to the loss of almost all of this wildflower grassland... less than 1.5% remains.<sup>175</sup>

In 2019, the CNL Board published the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan (CNRP)<sup>176</sup> which identifies that in order to form a robust nature recovery network, the extent of wildlife rich habitats within the CNL needs to expand from 48,000ha (23% of the CNL area) to 82,000ha<sup>177</sup> (40% of the CNL area), with the target being to achieve this by 2050. This is consistent with the current scientific evidence<sup>178</sup>.

The highest priority habitats in the CNRP are:

- veteran trees;
- ancient woodland;
- ancient, unimproved, limestone grassland.

The CNRP states that achieving this target will require a farmer and land manager led approach to nature recovery, for example, through Environmental Land Management Schemes and Payment for Ecosystems. Biodiversity Net Gain mechanisms will also play an important role. It is also intended that the CNRP will feed into the forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

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<sup>174</sup> Chapter 4 provides a full list of the National Landscape's special qualities.

<sup>175</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape. [Glorious Cotswold Grasslands](#).

<sup>176</sup> Cotswolds Conservation Board (2021). [Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan](#).

<sup>177</sup> The figure rises to over 190,000ha if arable fields containing environmental measures are included.

<sup>178</sup> Defining and delivering resilient ecological networks: Nature Conservation in England. Isaac. N.J. et al 2017. Journal of Applied Ecology



## Appendix 10: Major development

Footnote 67 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) clarifies that:

- *‘For the purposes of paragraphs 190 and 191 [relating to protected landscapes, including national landscapes], whether a development 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 purposes for which the area has been designated or defined’.*

As such, it is not possible or appropriate to apply a blanket definition for what should be treated as major development in the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL). Nevertheless, there are some key factors that help to define if a development is major, as outlined below.

The purpose for which the CNL has been designated is to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. Therefore, the judgement as to whether or not a development is major development depends, to a large degree, on whether or not the development could have a significant adverse impact on the natural beauty of the CNL. As outlined in Appendix 2, natural beauty incorporates a number of criteria, including landscape quality, scenic quality, tranquillity, natural heritage and cultural heritage. Within the context of the CNL, those aspects of the CNL’s natural beauty which make the area distinctive and which are particularly valuable – the CNL’s ‘special qualities’ – are listed in Chapter 2.

On this basis, a development should be considered ‘major’ if, by reason of its nature, scale and/or setting, it could have a significant adverse impact on any of the above criteria, including the CNL’s ‘special qualities’. As well as potential impacts within the CNL, consideration should also be given to impacts on these criteria within the setting of the CNL, particularly in the context of visual impact (i.e. views into and out of the CNL) and impacts on tranquillity.

As outlined in paragraph 190 of the NPPF, applications for such development should include an assessment of:

- a. *‘the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy’;*

The Board would expect any such development proposal be accompanied by a statement of need in the context of national considerations and, ideally, in the context of needs arising from within the CNL. The impacts of permitting or refusing the development should be clearly identified, including the social, economic and environmental impacts, with specific reference to the impacts upon the natural beauty of the CNL, and the economic and social needs (including housing needs) of the local communities affected. Such a statement should be based upon objective assessment and clear evidence.

- b. *‘the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way’;*

The Board would encourage any such development proposal to be accompanied by a report setting out a sequential approach to site selection. This should evidence the extent to which alternative sites have been assessed before the selection of sites within the CNL, and clearly identify why sites outside of the designated area could not be developed. The report should also identify and evidence why the need for the development could not be met in some other way. The report should include relevant evidence of the cost of developing outside of the CNL.

- c. *'any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated'.*

The Board would expect any such development proposal to be accompanied by a report identifying any detrimental effects upon the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities. Such a report should relate directly to the natural beauty of the CNL as a whole as well as those specific to the development site.

Any mitigation identified to moderate these impacts should be:

- clearly detailed, in line with the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL,
- be compatible with the outcomes and policies of the CNL Management Plan, and
- be capable of realisation through robust planning conditions or obligation.

This Management Plan was adopted by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board February 2025

Cotswolds National Landscape

New registered office address to be added here.

[info@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](mailto:info@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)  
[cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](http://cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)

The Cotswolds National Landscape is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), managed and looked after by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board (The legal name is the Cotswolds Conservation Board)

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# Cotswolds National Landscape



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This report is public	
Climate Action Update	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	6 January 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Greener Communities, Councillor Tom Beckett
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	4 December 2025
Report of	Climate Change Programme Manager, Hitesh Mahawar

## Purpose of report

To update Executive on progress made across Council and District Climate Programmes, including delivery against the Climate Action Plan (CAP), Performance KPIs, and Annual Development Plan (ADP) targets.

## 1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To note the progress achieved against the Climate Action Plan (CAP), Performance KPIs, and Annual Development Plan (ADP) targets between April 2024 and September 2025. As a part of periodic updates climate team is intending to bring this report annually.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the Council's Climate Action Programme covering the period April 2024 to September 2025. It summarises progress against the Climate Action Plan (CAP), Performance KPIs, and Annual Development Plan (ADP) targets, highlighting key achievements, and strategic developments.

- 2.2 Key achievements include:

- Securing over £1 million through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) Phase 4 bid for energy efficiency upgrades.
- Completion of Phase 1 of the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) and mobilisation of Phase 2.
- Development of the Carbon Impact Assessment tool (Carbon Budget tool) and its pilot use in capital project planning.
- Establishment of the Climate Change Programme Board (CCPB) as the governing body for strategic climate oversight and LAEP Phase 2.



- Executive approval for transitioning CDC's fleet to HVO fuels, replacing diesel with a renewable fuel source for 90 heavy goods vehicles used in waste collection and other services across north Oxfordshire.
  - This change, agreed by the Executive on 2 September 2025, will reduce fleet emissions around 80%, cutting overall council emissions by 25–30% and saving an estimated 1,150 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> over two years.
  - HVO fuel is produced from vegetable and waste oils, primarily used cooking oils, offering a cleaner and more sustainable alternative to fossil diesel.
- Through recycling initiatives, council collected and recycled 64 tonnes of Small Waste Electricals, around 50 tonnes of coffee pods, and 16 tonnes of consumer batteries, supporting circular economy principles.
- Current recycling rate stands at 53.2%, consistently improving year-on-year and 10% higher than England's average.
- CDC Executive (4 November 2025) agreed to award contract for Lot 2 (CDC package) under OxLEVI (Oxfordshire Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) enabling EV charging provision in CDC-owned car parks.
  - Preferred bidder committed to deliver minimum 136 lower-power chargers and 10 higher-power chargers across 19 sites (Banbury: 10, Bicester: 7, Kidlington: 2) subject to feasibility.
  - Target completion for programme: end of 2027.
- Biodiversity & Nature Recovery
  - Ells Farm Habitat Bank (Bloxxham): Cherwell's first-ever habitat bank launched in partnership with Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE). A Section 106 agreement signed, enabling creation of new habitats such as native woodlands, ponds, and wildflower meadows, supporting biodiversity net gain locally.
  - Otmoor Habitat Bank: Second habitat bank established with RSPB, creating a 21-hectare wetland reserve to support rare wading birds (lapwing, redshank, curlew, snipe) and ecologically valuable plant and invertebrate species.

Both initiatives increase the opportunity for developers' off-site biodiversity contributions to remain within Cherwell, delivering long-term nature recovery aligned with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

- CDC has strengthened its environmental stewardship through the Local Plan Review 2042, embedding climate actions and sustainability principles across development policies.
- Appointment of Flood Risk Officer to enhance climate resilience and flood response.
- Commissioning, finalising, and review of multiple studies including net zero pathways for Council's and District emissions, and Solar Strategy.
- Expanding climate team from a one (permanent) to a four (2 permanent, 2 temporary) member team.
- Raising the profile of Climate Team and internal and external visibility through extensive stakeholder engagement.

2.3 The Climate Change Strategy is under development and will integrate both organisational and district-wide emissions. A draft is expected to be presented to the Executive in early Q4, 2025-2026.



## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications		Commentary		
<b>Finance</b>		<p>There are no finance implications arising directly from this report. However, if the individual measures required to achieve the Climate Change Strategy and the Climate Action Plan as adopted cannot be funded from existing budgets or new external grants, a business case will need to be prepared for consideration by the Executive.</p> <p>Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer), 12 December 2025</p>		
<b>Legal</b>		<p>There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The Climate Change Act 2008 set a national target for the UK to reduce its emissions by 80% by 2050 compared to its 1990 levels. While there is no statutory duty placed on Local Authorities under this legislation it is generally understood that local government plays a critical role in achieving these targets.</p> <p>Cherwell declared a climate emergency in 2019 looking to do its part to support the district in becoming carbon net zero, and ensuring that its own operations and activities are carbon net zero by 2030.</p> <p>Climate emergency declarations hold a legally ambiguous position but it is important to note they are a potential mechanism to challenge decisions taken by a local authority who has made one. The Council also has a duty to report its greenhouse gas emissions and this report helps it to achieve that duty.</p> <p>The report indicates that despite significant investment in renewable technologies the Council's emissions have increased slightly rather than decreased. The report does provide some explanatory points in relation to why this is.</p> <p>It is important to interrogate our spending in line with our duties of economy, efficiency and effectiveness and to ensure that we are complying with our fiduciary duty towards spending public money.</p> <p>Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal, 19 December 2025</p>		
<b>Risk Management</b>		<p>This is an information report, as such there are no risk implications arising as a direct consequence of it.</p> <p>Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 11 December 2025</p>		
Impact Assessments		Positive	Neutral	Negative
<b>Equality Impact</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could				

impact on inequality?				
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?				N/A
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>	x			This report supports the Council's climate agenda and demonstrates progress toward efforts in reducing carbon emissions and achieving net zero targets.
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>				N/A
<b>Data Impact</b>				N/A
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>				N/A
<b>Council Priorities</b>	The report aligns with the Council's strategic priority of Environmental Stewardship and supports its vision of enabling positive, lasting change.			
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A			
<b>Property</b>	N/A			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	The Climate Team has actively engaged with key internal and external stakeholders to advance actions under the Climate Action Plan and broader climate agenda.			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Cherwell District Council's Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a key strategic framework supporting the Council's ambition to become a net zero organisation and district. The CAP is monitored quarterly through updates aligned with the Performance KPIs and Annual Development Plan (ADP) targets.
- 3.2 Over the past 18 months, the Climate Action Team has significantly expanded its scope and delivery capacity, growing from one to four core members and establishing the Climate Change Programme Board (CCPB) to oversee strategic governance.
- 3.3 Multiple studies have been commissioned to inform future strategy and delivery, including net zero pathways, natural capital assessments, and the Solar Strategy, including:
- Net Zero Pathways for

- Council's emissions (excluding fleet)
- Council's Fleet
- Council's Scope 3 emissions
- District emissions
- Detailed Business and Industrial emissions
- Natural Capital
  - Inventory of carbon stored and sequestered by habitat in Cherwell District
  - Burnehyll Community Woodland / Ecological baseline assessment
  - Burnehyll Community Woodland: Carbon Sequestration forecast
  - Banbury CP cost analysis report for habitat creation / enhancement
- Solar Strategy

3.4 The Council has also contributed to regional and national consultations on climate adaptation and energy planning, including the Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map, Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and strategic energy planning initiatives such as transitional Regional Energy Strategic Plan (tRESP) by National Energy System Operator (NESO), Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES) by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) by central govt.

## 4. Details

### **CDC's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions**

- 4.1 CDC has commissioned the production of the GHG 2024/25 report, which is expected to be completed next year.
- 4.2 Total Emissions Change: CDC's emissions rose by around 1% (+49 tCO<sub>2</sub>e) in 2023/24, from 4,071 to 4,119 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.
- 4.3 Drivers of Change: The increased emissions were caused by increases in Corporate Electricity, Leisure Electricity, Leisure Gas, Business Travel and Water emissions (+155 tCO<sub>2</sub>e), with roughly one-third of the rise (52.4 tCO<sub>2</sub>e) linked to a 5% higher carbon intensity of the UK electricity grid compared to 2022/23. Additionally, a significant increase in leisure centre visitors (25,000+) contributed to higher electricity and gas usage in the leisure portfolio. These were not outweighed by Corporate Gas, Fleet & Landscape, and Corporate PV (-106 tCO<sub>2</sub>e) and unfortunately decarbonisation equipment installed in 2022/23 did not deliver expected gas savings in the leisure portfolio. This requires review and corrective action, which is under way and incorporated into the property capital programme alongside the PSDS4 programme.

### **Programme Delivery and Performance**

- 4.4 The CAP currently (Q2 2025-2026) includes 115 actions, with quarterly RAG ratings showing consistent delivery progress. As of Q2 2025–2026, 71 actions are rated Green, 35 Amber, and 9 Red.

### **Strategic Governance and Partnerships**

- 4.5 The CCPB was formally established in Q1 2025–2026. It endorsed progression to LAEP Phase 2 (Cherwell LAEP) and confirmed its role as the governing board for Cherwell LAEP.
- 4.6 CDC has also joined the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP), enhancing collaboration with businesses, academia, and local authorities.
- 4.7 In October 2025, the Council implemented a major internal restructuring, creating the Directorate for Place and Regeneration, which now brings together Planning, Development Management, Regeneration and Growth, Climate Resilience, and Property under one umbrella.
- 4.8 This new structure reflects members' ambition to enable good growth, strengthen town centre resilience, and use Council assets effectively.
- 4.9 For the Climate Team, this change provides greater capacity, stronger internal relationships, and improved alignment with planning and regeneration priorities, empowering the service to deliver more impactful climate action.
- 4.10 Additional funding and resources committed by Members for climate resilience and flood response further strengthen the Council's ability to address changing weather patterns and infrastructure challenges.
- 4.11 The new directorate structure also enhances opportunities for cross-service collaboration, ensuring climate considerations are embedded in development, regeneration, and property strategies.

### **Next Steps**

- 4.12 The next steps are:
- Finalisation of the Climate Change Strategy and submitting it for Executive approval.
  - Production of Climate Action Plan 2026 – 2027.
  - Production of Cherwell LAEP and continued stakeholder engagement.
  - Production of CDC's Greenhouse Gas 2024-2025 report.
  - Implementation of fleet decarbonisation measures.
  - Full rollout of the Carbon Impact Assessment tool (Carbon Budget Tool) in Gate 1 forms for capital projects.
  - Continued refinement of commissioned studies and integration into strategic planning.
  - Finalise HVO supply tender by Dec 2025; rollout fleet transition, Implement fleet decarbonisation measures.
  - From January 2026, Blue Bin collections will include glass bottles, boosting recycling by ~1% and removing one HGV from fleet.
  - Advance OxLEVI EV charger rollout: Award tender, complete site feasibilities and start installations.
  - Continue to facilitate the development of habitat banks to support biodiversity net gain.

## 5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option1: Do not note the report. This option is not applicable as this is an update report.

Option 2: Delay consideration of report. This option is not applicable as this is an update report.

## 6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 The Executive is recommended to acknowledge the progress outlined in this report and accept the update as part of ongoing climate programme governance.

### Decision Information

<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	Yes
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All

### Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	Climate Action Plan Nov'24 – Apr'26
<b>Appendix 3</b>	None
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Reference Papers</b>	None
<b>Report Author</b>	Hitesh Mahawar, Climate Change Programme Manager
<b>Report Author contact details</b>	Hitesh.mahawar@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
<b>Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration

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# **Cherwell District Council North Oxfordshire**

## **Climate Action Plan Nov'24 – Apr'26**

### **Introduction**

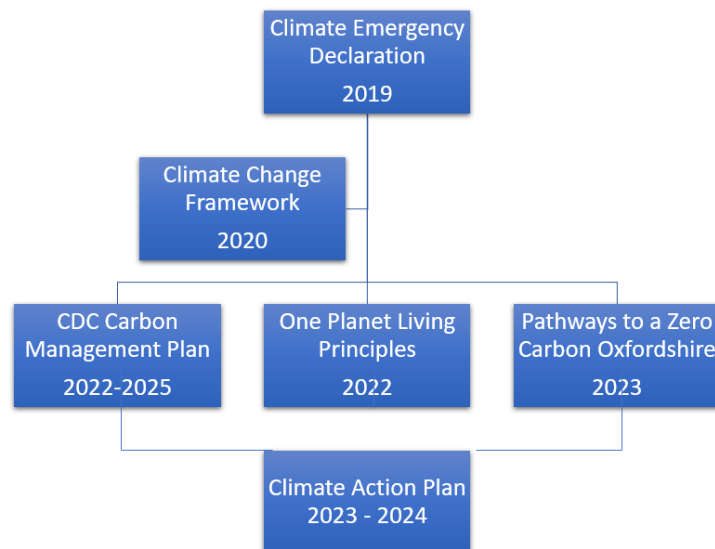
This plan was revised during the autumn of 2024, in close consultation with all services of Cherwell District Council and is authored by the Climate Action Team. It was built on the previous Climate Action Plan 2023-24 which was based upon Climate Change Framework 2020, which sets our ambitions for both the council and the wider district to become carbon net zero.

For clarification, this is an internal operational document which sets out how the council will deliver on the Climate Change Framework.

Additionally, the plan reflects several initiatives which are taking place across the county in which Cherwell District Council is a participant. Most significantly is the Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PaZCO) report and plan, which has been endorsed by the Council. PaZCO is overseen by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, whose officer and councillor Environment groups have representation from Cherwell District Council.

This Climate Action Plan takes into account the following documents:

- CDC's Climate Action Plan 2023-24
- CDC's Climate Action Framework 2020
- CDC's Carbon Management Plan 2022
- Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan
- One Planet Living – Gap Analysis of CDC's Policies



The actions on the natural environment have been reviewed and supported by Oxfordshire's Local Nature Partnership, of which the Council is a member. The need to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain is becoming increasingly important and the Government's statutory requirement for qualifying development to achieve at least 10% net gain which has come into effect in November 2023. Biodiversity enhancement has a significant role to play in helping us with our climate change response.

## Structure of the Action Plan

The Action Plan covers the activities needed over the next 18 months until April 2026, to reduce the emissions of both the council and the Cherwell district. Over 125 actions have been identified.

Following the introductory text, the actions are laid out in a table, the columns of which include:

- The specific goal
- The actions needed to achieve the goal
- The service area of the council which will provide most support

There are 17 goals, and the associated actions are categorised in two ways.

- Actions for the CDC
- Actions for the Cherwell District

## Scope of the Action Plan

When looking at the emissions of any organisation, typically they are divided into 'scopes', in particular, Scopes 1, 2 and 3.

- Scope 1 – includes direct emissions from the burning of fuels, e.g. gas/petrol/diesel
- Scope 2 – includes indirect emissions from the generation of electricity
- Scope 3 – includes indirect emissions from an organisation's supply chain.

The target for CDC to be carbon net zero by 2030 relates only to Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, where the council has a strong degree of influence. Within the Action Plan, however, are actions which relate to our Scope 3 emissions, which need to be better understood in order to plan for reductions, e.g. by working closely with the supply chain.

## Context

It is widely recognised that climate change is becoming the most pressing issue facing humankind. The serious impacts of climate change are already being seen across the world and the situation is unfortunately only going to deteriorate. The UK has to an extent avoided some of extreme weather events and other impacts associated with climate change, however the 40 degree heatwave experienced in 2022 gives an indication of what is likely to come in the very near future. We need to do all we can to minimise these impacts.

Current climate action is aimed at minimising the rise in global temperatures to no more than 1.5 degrees, as scientific modelling suggests that beyond that figure, the world is likely to experience severe climate disruptions that could exacerbate hunger, conflict and drought worldwide. Despite global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to support the 1.5 degree target, the significant reductions in emissions which are needed, are unfortunately not being achieved. It is, nevertheless, critical that the UK continues to do everything possible to achieve its own target of becoming carbon net zero by 2050 and CDC has an important supporting role to play.



The council's climate change work is unique in that it has some level of impact across almost every service. In areas such as healthy place-shaping and economic regeneration, climate change sits at core of the strategic thinking. This Action Plan recognises however, that there is still work to be done in helping to embed climate change into how the council functions, for example in strengthening governance arrangements.

CDC has previously declared its commitment to taking climate action, through its Climate Emergency announcement in 2019, the production of the Climate Change Framework 2020 (our climate change strategy) and the Corporate Business Plan 2023-2024, in which environmental sustainability is one of the four key priorities.

This Action Plan strengthens further CDC's commitment to tackling climate change, in setting out a wide range of over 120 actions which support emissions reductions for both the council and the district. Whilst some of the actions are currently aspirational, many are also planned and budgeted for, ensuring that they will take place. This is a reflection of much of the proactive work that CDC is already doing across its functions.

## **Benefits of action**

The benefits of taking climate action go well beyond improving our resilience to climate change and reducing our emissions. Responding to climate change helps to make CDC a more financially resilient organisation, as we generate more of our own energy and reduce the demand for energy by making our buildings more energy efficient.

Taking climate action for the district, helps to improve the lives of residents, for example, through creating greener and cleaner public spaces, making homes warmer in the winter and easier to heat and reducing the amount of waste people generate and therefore that needs to be processed by our waste team.

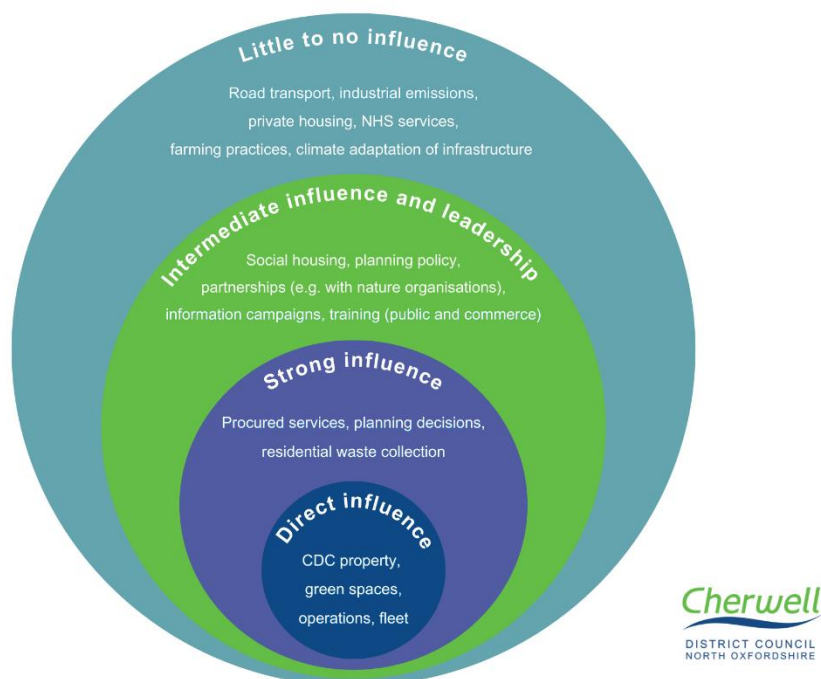
There are many more benefits to residents from taking climate action, and this is a further justification for why sustainability needs to remain a key corporate priority and why it needs to be firmly embedded across our strategic thinking and operations.

## **Influencing emission reductions**

It is important that the council understands and uses effectively, its ability to influence emissions reductions and also to recognise where this is strong and where this is more limited. This allows for the most effective use of resources and for an on-going focus on the most important areas of activity.

The area where the council has the strongest influence is over its corporate estate and fleet vehicles, the Council's two biggest sources of emissions. In addition to policy making to help reduce emissions (e.g. through our Local Plan) we can also have a positive impact through our decision-making and operations e.g. through how we provide our Planning, Enforcement, and Waste Collection services and by management of the parks and open spaces we control.

The diagram below provides a visual representation of the council's influence on greenhouse gas emissions reductions.



## Progress on climate action

Since 2008/2009, the baseline year for CDC's emissions when they were at 6,804 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, there has been a reduction almost every year since then, with emissions in 2021/2022 at 3988. CDC's emissions are recorded annually in a Greenhouse Gas Report, which looks in detail at our energy use across our estate and operations.

Figures for the district are generated from national government data which is disaggregated down to each local authority area and shows that since 2005, Cherwell's emissions have fallen from 1.6 million t/CO<sub>2</sub> to 1.1 million t/CO<sub>2</sub>. Much of that reduction, however, is due to the decarbonisation of the national electricity grid, from which further reductions are expected as the grid makes even greater use of renewable sources for the production of electricity.

In 2021, CDC received a grant of almost £6million from the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), leading to significant investments in our leisure centres including heat pumps. This is expected to make an import reduction in our annual emissions. Other corporate sites have received investments too, and further work is planned to expand the amount of Solar PV across the corporate estate.

Work has also begun on decarbonising our fleet, through the purchase of several EVs with more expected to arrive before the end of 2024-2025 financial year. Funding is being identified to build a strong businesses case for decarbonising the fleet and presenting various pathways to achieving this by 2030.

Across other areas of the council, climate action is being included, for example in expenditure under the Shared Prosperity Fund, the emerging Local Plan, Banbury Vision 2050 and in the process of healthy place-shaping.

## **Delivering emissions reductions**

The biggest reductions to the council's emissions will come from focussing on the leisure centres, the fleet and the remainder of the corporate estate, respectively. Some of the most important actions in the Plan, will not themselves reduce emissions, but are essential steps in leading to the large emissions we need to see. For example, undertaking an energy audit on a building and identifying appropriate energy efficiency measures is the first step in decarbonising, before identifying and targeting funding sources accordingly.

This Plan contains a wide range of actions across many areas of both council activity and district activities, and if implemented will lead to falls in greenhouse gas emissions.

The funding of climate action will come from a range of sources, reflecting the wide range of areas where action is needed. Government grants, such as the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), will continue to be a critical source of funding to support the energy efficiency of our buildings. The LEVI scheme (Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) will support the expansion of the county's charging infrastructure for electric vehicles. CDC will have to bear some costs, e.g. providing match funding for PSDS, initiating consultancy studies to inform our decision-making, e.g. the best buildings for optimising arrays of Solar PV.

The picture of funding for climate action is complex and is still emerging, with future models still needing to be investigated and better understood, e.g. municipal bonds. The council will however, continue to be proactive in seeking as many sources of funding as possible to support our climate change ambitions.

## Glossary

**Biodiversity Net Gain** – a net improvement to an area's biodiversity, following a new development, e.g. housing

**Carbon Net Zero** – when all available steps have been taken to reduce emissions and off-setting is required for residual emissions which cannot be prevented

**Carbon Neutral** – when an organisation balances its emissions by off-setting the equivalent amount. In theory, this allows an organisation to continue using producing greenhouse gas emissions and to make no reduction.

**CO<sub>2</sub>e** – carbon dioxide equivalent

**Greenhouse gases** – the gases that are produced from the burning of fossil fuels and other industrial and agricultural activities and which have a warming effect upon the climate, e.g. carbon dioxide

**Off-setting** – the process of balancing out greenhouse gas emissions, either through the production of renewable energy or through nature-based solutions.

**Nature-based solutions** - an approach to reducing greenhouse gases by using nature to absorb emissions, e.g. through planting trees or restoring peatlands.

## Climate Action Plan

The Action Plan is based on upon 17 goals which support the council's and the district's ambitions to become carbon net zero.

Cherwell District Council Goals	
1.	Reduce emissions from Cherwell DC buildings to net zero by 2030
2.	Reduce emissions from Cherwell DC fleet to net zero by 2030
3.	Reduce emissions from staff behaviour to net zero by 2030
4.	Reduce emissions from Cherwell DC's procurement
5.	Reduce emissions from CDC's Landscape Contract to net zero by 2030
6.	Other aspects of CDC's activities
7.	Targets date for achieving carbon net zero
Cherwell District Goals	
8.	Ensure emerging Local Plan is compatible with Cherwell becoming net zero carbon
9.	Support emission reductions from transport
10.	Support emission reductions from housing
11.	Support emission reductions from businesses
12.	Enhance the district's natural capital to support carbon off-setting and biodiversity enhancement
13.	Decarbonising the district's energy
14.	Waste
15.	Support OCC's work on adaptation
16.	Partnership working
17.	Governance, monitoring, and communication

## Climate Action Plan Nov'24 - Apr'26

	Action	Supporting Area(s)
<b>1</b>	<b>Reduce emissions from Cherwell DC buildings to net zero by 2030</b>	
1.01	Continue to include low-carbon measures when carrying out routine buildings improvements.	Property
1.02	Agree approach to decarbonising the corporate estate, including a phased plan.	Property
1.03	Upgrade existing supply to Thorpe Lane Depot to allow charging of EV RCVs.	Property
1.04	Install solar PV car ports at Kidlington and Spiceball Leisure Centres.	Property
1.05	Additional Solar PV at Community Centres.	Property
1.06	Carry out investment-grade energy audit at Stratfield Brake Pavilion	Climate Change
1.07	Procurement and project delivery of the solar projects for BLC	Leisure
1.08	Delivering a plan to ensure the EPC performance of buildings is in line with our 2030 target.	Property
1.09	Removal of radiant gas heaters at Thorpe Lane Depot.	Property
1.10	Optimise and integrate the building mgmt systems (BMS) to support with the recently installed energy efficiency measures in CDC's buildings	Leisure/Property
1.11	Submit an application to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.	Climate Change
1.12	Work with the GSE Net Zero Energy Hub to support heat decarbonisation in corporate buildings	Climate Change
1.13	Produce a design for the new fleet depot at Graven Hill.	Environment Services
1.14	Any new buildings, e.g., leisure centres/Community centres, to be built to be as low carbon as financially viable.	All Services

1.15	Working with CDC procurement and legal to procure a tender package to appoint a technical adviser (company) to take energy usage reporting and suitable and sufficient tariffs forward also managing the AMRs and upcoming MOP contract in 2026.	Facilities
1.16	Carry out audit of buildings/car parks, to identify opportunities for additional energy generation.	Climate Change
1.17	Explore opportunities across council estate for reducing energy demand, e.g. LED lighting; air handling	Property
1.18	Searching suitable and sufficient products for new/old properties	Facilities
1.19	Changing cleaning chemicals	Facilities
1.20	Procuring suitable energy efficient products and services and adding clauses of sustainability in the contract and/or new tenders	Facilities
1.21	Procurement and project delivery of the solar projects for BLC	Leisure
1.22	Localised Service Plan Target of reducing 5% (absolute number) of electricity/Gas/water consumption usage for Leisure/Community Centres.	Leisure
2	Reduce emissions from Cherwell DC fleet to net zero by 2030	
2.01	Upgrade existing supply to Thorpe Lane Depot to allow charging of EV RCVs.	Property
2.02	Increase EV fleet to 25% by Jun’25	Fleet
2.03	Produce business case and pathways for decarbonising the fleet	Fleet
2.04	Continue to optimise routes for RCVs.	Fleet/Landscape
2.05	Continue to monitor the market for new technologies around HGVs.	Fleet
2.06	Awaiting the outcome of the Environment Act regarding waste collection and the potential need to expand the service.	Fleet
2.07	Explore other fuel types for the fleet	Waste Services
2.08	Minimize fuel consumption	Waste Services

<b>3</b>	<b>Reduce emissions from staff behaviour to net zero by 2030</b>	
3.01	Plan and begin delivery of a programme of Carbon Literacy training for staff.	HR
3.02	Consider the viability of e-bikes and e-cargo bikes for business journeys	Climate Change/Facilities
3.03	Review the success of EV pool car pilot project	Climate Change
3.04	Install EV charging points at council-owned sites to support the use of staff-owned EVs.	Property
3.05	Produce an evidence base for commuter miles in order to be able to address business mileage.	HR
3.06	Promote better use of recycling facilities in corporate buildings.	Facilities
<b>4</b>	<b>Reduce emissions from Cherwell DC's procurement</b>	
4.01	Annually track emissions from procurements with individual contractors via an annual report of CDC's scope 3 emissions	Procurement
4.02	Identify the suppliers/contractors with the highest emissions	Procurement
4.03	Produce outline 5-year plan for reducing Scope 3 emissions from Procurement	Procurement
<b>5</b>	<b>Reduce emissions from CDC's Landscape Contract</b>	
5.01	Consider if next contract can include the use of electric vehicles and machinery.	Environmental Services
<b>6</b>	<b>Other aspects of CDC's activities</b>	
6.01	Produce the 2023/2024 Greenhouse Gas Report	Climate Change
6.02	Support Cherwell DC's 'transformation' process, in identifying climate actions for Service Areas.	Climate Change
6.03	Second an additional member of staff to support climate change activity.	Climate Change



6.04	Produce a robust evidence base showing how Cherwell can become a carbon net zero district and CDC a carbon net organisation	Climate Change
6.05	Increase capacity of Cherwell DC to support its 2030 net zero target, as well as the ambition for the district to become carbon net zero.	Corporate Leadership Team
6.06	Climate actions to feature in all Business Plans	All Services/Leisure
6.07	Explore new funding mechanisms to support delivery of net zero actions	Climate Change
6.08	Identifying sources of funding to support CDC’s and Cherwell District’s Net Zero Pathways	Finance
7	Target dates for achieving carbon net zero	
7.01	Obtain clear data on possible net zero pathways for the Cherwell District and CDC	Climate Change
7.02	Agree a revised target date for net zero carbon for the district.	Climate Change
8	Ensure emerging Local Plan is compatible with Cherwell becoming net zero carbon	
8.01	Ensure the timely production of a deliverable Cherwell Local Plan, to strengthen our policies to respond to climate change	Planning
8.02	Ensure a suite of planning policies are included to support climate change mitigation and adaptation. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Net zero development</li><li>• Biodiversity Net Gain</li><li>• Green Infrastructure</li><li>• Low carbon and active travel</li></ul> Decentralised and renewable energy systems	Planning
8.03	Ensure national policy successes are reviewed, responded to, and where possible incorporated into the Local Plan	Planning
8.04	Support partnership working, e.g. Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP), utility providers, other local authorities, to engage proactively on common policies that support climate action.	Planning

8.05	Through planning policy, establish the viability of ensuring all houses in major new build developments are designed to at least meet the 2025 targets of the RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge	Planning
8.06	Understand the viability of incorporating into the Local Plan a requirement for developers to target industry standards regarding construction waste reduction, resource efficiency and circular economy principles.	Planning
8.07	Consider the principles of One Planet Living through the Local Plan process.	Planning
9	Support emission reductions from transport	
9.01	Work with OCC to implement LEVI funding to expand EV infrastructure in Cherwell	Climate Change
9.02	Support the development of local cycling and walking infrastructure plans	Leisure/Wellbeing
9.03	Continue to work closely with OCC as Local Highway Authority to support the improvement in the provision of public transport in Cherwell and active travel	Planning
9.04	Increase the number of people walking and cycling in conjunction with healthy place shaping principles	Leisure/Wellbeing
10	Support emission reductions from housing	
10.01	Promote energy efficiency opportunities, e.g. HUG/Heat Pump Ready Scheme/Cosy Homes Oxfordshire/LEAP/ECO4	Communications
10.02	Work to ensure the delivery of requisite infrastructure and affordable housing at NW Bicester whilst maintaining as many of the net zero carbon objectives as possible, linking with viability discussions.	Bicester & Planning Teams
10.03	Improve our understanding of the district’s housing stock so that we can prioritise funding	Housing
10.04	Understand with Registered Providers to establish what measures are being taken to increase energy efficiency of social housing.	Housing

10.05	Engagement with retrofit market to better understand capacity and capability	Economic Growth
10.06	Understanding the property in the private sector: people living in various housing/taking stock of energy efficient housing	Housing
10.07	Offer home improvement loan scheme through a third party but enabled by CDC.	Housing
11	Support emission reductions from businesses	
11.01	Sustainable Construction Skills & Supply Chains – enable pipeline of skills and labour through apprenticeships/training opportunities, related to skills and training plans in s106 planning conditions and increasing social value of contracts through future pledge to the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership.	Economic Growth
11.02	Support businesses to Decarbonise and Improve the Natural Environment	Economic Growth
11.03	Support industry decarbonisation by promoting the switch from burning gas and other fuels to burning sustainable alternatives such as green hydrogen through new Local Plan policies.	Planning Policy
11.04	Cherwell-focussed business forum/network – consider the role of Greentech in drawing resources into Cherwell to support businesses to reduce emissions.	Economic Growth
11.05	Sustainable Business Award - Continue to support (through the Cherwell Business Awards 2024) to showcase business best practice and innovation in all sectors.	Economic Growth
11.06	Green Skills - Provision of free Retrofit Construction Skills courses	Economic Growth
11.07	Facilitate completion of business carbon emissions assessments and/or carbon reduction plans	Economic Growth
12	Enhance the district’s natural capital to support carbon off-setting and biodiversity enhancement	

12.01	Consider the feasibility of a planning policy to achieve 20% Biodiversity Net Gain from new development	Planning
12.02	Work with the Local Nature Partnership to explore the establishment of an Oxfordshire-based carbon offsetting scheme, potentially aligned to Oxford City's Area-Based In-setting approach.	Climate Change
12.03	Produce a management plan for Longford Park to reduce regular mowing activities, improve biodiversity and engage with the community	Environment Services
12.04	Enhancement of Banbury Country Park, Longford Park, Burnehyll Woodland and Graven Hill to support biodiversity and carbon sequestration	Environment Services
12.05	Support key biodiversity partners and local communities to protect, manage and enhance habitats which have biodiversity value and carbon removal/storage functions.	Environment Services
12.06	Support and promote wellbeing initiatives that encourage residents to look after their natural environment, connect them with nature and improve access to local green spaces.	Wellbeing/Biodiversity/Communities
12.07	Develop a comprehensive tree/forest strategy in order to increase tree planting rates within the district and ensure long-term maintenance/stewardship of forests/woodlands	Environment Services
12.08	Supporting the county-wide Local Nature Recovery Strategy process which is being led by Oxfordshire County Council with the support of the Local Nature Partnership.	Environment Services
12.09	Support emergence and facilitation of farmer clusters, boosting their key role in delivery of landscape-scale natural capital enhancement.	Environment Services
12.10	Explore with neighbouring planning authorities, the extent to which the Local Nature Recovery Strategy can be incorporated into the Local Plan and related decision-making processes.	Planning
12.11	Enable Planning and Communities officers to integrate elements of Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework into the new Local Plan and other delivery plans.	Planning/Wellbeing
12.12	Increase the amount of natural capital in Cherwell through additional habitat creation, especially in urban areas.	Environment Services

12.13	Aim to increase the biodiversity value of our Local Wildlife Sites, by increasing frequency of monitoring and provision of improved management guidance.	Environment Services
12.14	Endorse and support delivery of the Oxfordshire Nature Finance Strategy, including exploring the potential role of the council in the establishment of an Oxfordshire Environment Fund.	Environment Services
12.15	Work with partners to ensure availability of sufficient biodiversity net gain offset sites in Cherwell to ensure that the maximum biodiversity and carbon capture value of this policy is retained within the district. That this is targeted at priority nature recovery areas as defined by the draft Nature Recovery Network and the forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Planning
12.16	Support Bernwood Otmore Ray, as a key landscape recovery project in the District	Environment Services
13	Decarbonising the district's energy	
13.01	Complete a Techno-Feasibility Study on a Banbury Heat Network	Climate Change/Banbury
13.02	Participate in a county-wide Local Area Energy Plan process	Climate Change
13.03	Support officers working on development at NW Bicester around the provision of low-carbon energy sources.	Climate Change
13.04	Co-ordinate and liaise with the energy study, looking at renewable energy for NW Bicester	Bicester Team
13.05	Support opportunities for community-owned renewable energy schemes	Climate Change
14	Waste	
14.01	Increase rates of domestic recycling (currently c.55%) in line with the Oxfordshire Waste Strategy, which is aiming for 70%	Waste Services
14.02	Support the work of the Cherwell Food Action Waste Group	Waste Services/Wellbeing
14.03	Work with internal/external partners and others to minimise waste arisings from domestic and commercial sources	Waste Services

14.04	Reduce recycling contamination	Waste Services
14.05	Measure and analyse CO2 from collected waste	Waste Services
14.06	Reduce annual tonnage of general waste collected	Waste Services
15	Support OCC’s work on adaptation	
15.01	Understand the threats to CDC’s estate, assets and operations from climate change	Climate Change
15.02	Identify areas for action for CDC	Climate Change
15.03	Understand the threats to Cherwell from climate change, e.g. public health; the local economy	Climate Change
15.04	Enhancing the green spaces in Banbury town centre	Banbury
16	Partnership working	
16.01	Support Banbury Master Planning to ensure sustainability is at the heart of the process	Climate Change/Banbury
16.02	Continue with partnership working as a key approach to delivering carbon reductions across the district.	Climate Change
16.03	Support the implementation of the Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map	Climate Change
16.04	Support the work of the Local Nature Partnership’s <i>Natural Capital</i> group	Climate Change
16.05	Continue to liaise and work closely with other local authorities across Oxfordshire	Climate Change
16.06	Explore opportunities for closer collaboration with neighbouring authorities around resident communication	Climate Change
16.07	Support community groups and parish councils in best practice and advice	Climate Change
16.08	Work with OCC to develop circularity strategy; Increase Circular waste economy	Waste Services
16.09	Support Kidlington Area Strategy Development to incorporate sustainable development actions	Kidlington
17	Governance, monitoring, and communication	

17.01	Report annually to the Executive on climate change progress	Climate Change
17.02	Report twice a year to the Corporate Leadership Team on climate change progress	Climate Change
17.03	Report twice a year to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on climate change progress	Climate Change
17.04	All reports that go to Executive and Corporate Leadership Team to continue to include an Environmental Impact section.	Climate Change
17.05	Review existing arrangements for delivering climate change activity, to ensure more effective and closer working between officers across CDC	Climate Change
17.06	Meet regularly with the Climate Change Working Group to review and discuss climate action activities	Climate Change
17.07	Review overall progress of Action Plan and prepare a new one for the next 12 months	Climate Change
17.08	Provide emissions data to OCC	Property, Leisure, HR, Fleet, Climate Change
17.09	Monitor how much waste is being processed through closed loop recycling	Waste Services
17.10	Climate Action, recurring social media messages 2024 – 2025	Communications
17.11	Identify activities being delivered by council service areas and the council's partners in the district which aim to reduce emissions and increase biodiversity and work to promote them where appropriate to help make them as effective as possible.	Communications

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This report is public	
Council Tax Base 2026/27	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	6 January 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	10 December 2025
Report of	Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer), Michael Furness

## Purpose of report

To provide the Council tax Base for 2026/27.

## 1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the report of the Assistant Director of Finance for the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for 2026/27
- 1.2 To agree that, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Cherwell District Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2026/27 shall be **60,654.5**
- 1.3 To agree for the parishes which form part of its area shown in Appendix 1, the amount calculated as the Council Tax Base for the year 2026/27 in respect of special items shall be as indicated in the column titled Tax Base 2026/27.
- 1.3 To agree for the Flood Defence Areas which form part of its area, the amount calculated as the Council Tax Base for the year 2026/27 for the purposes of levies on Oxfordshire County Council by River Authorities, shall be:

Thames Flood Defence Area	58,217.8
Anglian (Great Ouse) Flood Defence Area	1,965.2
Severn Region Flood Defence Area	471.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60,654.5</b>

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council must legally set a tax base for the following year by 31 January. This will allow the Council to notify its preceptors of the taxbase in order for them (and the Council) to set their budgets for 2026/27.

### Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications		Commentary		
<b>Finance</b>		There are no direct financial implications within this report. However, when the Council determines its Council Tax Requirement when setting the budget, the Council Tax Base is used for calculating the amount of Council Tax set by Cherwell District Council. The tax base of 60,654.5 will be reflected in the budget papers taken to Executive and Council in February 2026. Lynsey Parkinson, Strategic Finance Business Partner, 10 December 2025		
<b>Legal</b>		For each financial year and each category of dwellings in its area, the council must set an amount of council tax (section 30, Local Government Finance Act 1992). Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 demand that the council calculates a tax base by 31 January 2026. This will be used for Council Tax setting purposes in February 2026 Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director of Law and Governance, 10 December 2025		
<b>Risk Management</b>		If the Council does not set a tax base in accordance with statutory deadlines, then it will not be able to set its Council Tax for the 2026/27 financial year. This is managed as an operational risk and escalated to the leadership risk register as and when necessary. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 10 December 2025		
Impact Assessments		Positive	Neutral	Negative
<b>Equality Impact</b>			X	
<b>A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is</b>			X	

delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?				
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>				N/A
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>				N/A
<b>Data Impact</b>				N/A
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>				N/A
<b>Council Priorities</b>	All			
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A			
<b>Property</b>	N/A			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	N/A			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

3.1 For the purposes of Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012,

(a) the whole of its area and

(b) for any parts of its area for the purposes of:

- (i) Apportioning precepts and levies and
- (ii) Calculating the tax base for each area subject to a special item

3.2 In respect of the 1 (a) 'the whole of its area':

3.2.1 The tax base has to be notified by Cherwell District Council to major precepting bodies (i.e., Oxfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley) and levy authorities (i.e., Thames Flood Defence Area, Anglian (Great Ouse) Flood Defence Area and Severn Region Flood Defence Area) by 31

January 2026 to enable their precepts to be calculated as a tax per band D equivalent properties.

3.3 In respect of 1 (b) 'parts of its area'

3.3.1 Major precepting and levying authorities have to notify Cherwell District Council (the billing authority) by 31 December 2025 of the area(s) subject to a special item (expense) and for which an apportionment of the tax base is required. No such notification has been received.

3.3.2 Parishes who levy a precept are automatically treated as a special item and there has to be a tax base calculated for each of the parishes in the area. They are not required to calculate a precept as a tax per band D equivalent property but can request the tax base figure to be supplied to them within ten days of making a request. Each parish and town council are notified of the figure for their area.

## 4. Details

### Calculation of the tax base

4.1 The starting point of the calculation, as shown in Appendix 3, is the total number of council tax dwellings and their council tax band.

4.2 The council then allows for the following information and estimates for each band:

(a) Dwellings which are exempt, so no council tax is payable (e.g., those where all occupiers are students)

(b) Dwellings which attract a 25 per cent reduction (e.g., those with a single adult occupier)

(c) Dwellings which attract a 50 per cent reduction (e.g., those properties where all adult residents are disregarded or 'don't count' for council tax purposes)

(d) Dwellings which are treated as paying a lower band because they have been adapted for a disabled person. The regulations specify how to adjust the tax base in respect of band A dwellings.

(e) Dwellings which attract a reduction through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

(f) Dwellings which are subject to additional charges from council tax (e.g. those that have been empty and unfurnished for 1 year and over).

4.3 Each band is then converted into "band D equivalents" by applying the factor required by legislation. A band H, for example, is multiplied by two. All of these are added together to give a total number of band D equivalents.

4.4 A further adjustment is made to allow for non-collection. The council is required to decide what its collection rate is likely to be and applies this to its council tax base. For 2025/26 this was 98% and it is proposed it should be 98% in 2026/27.

4.5 A final adjustment is made for Class O exempt properties (Armed forces' properties)

accommodation) as the Ministry of Defence makes a payment roughly equal to the council tax that it would have had to pay for each property if they were not exempt.

## 5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 There are no alternative options. The Council has to set a tax base in order to set its council tax for 2026/27.

## 6. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 The Council must legally set a tax base for the following year by 31 January. This will allow the Council to notify its preceptors of the taxbase in order for them (and the Council) to set their budgets for 2026/27.

### Decision Information

Key Decision	No
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All

### Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Council Tax Base by Parish Area 2026/27
Appendix 2	Council Tax Base by Flood defence area 2026/27
Appendix 3	Council Tax Valuation Bands 2026/27
Appendix 4	Equality Impact Assessment 2026/27
Background Papers	N/A
Reference Papers	N/A
Report Author	Sven Hoffmann, Service Accountant
Report Author contact details	Sven.hoffmann@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 221853
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Report of Statutory Officer, S151 Officer

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## Appendix 1 – Council Tax Base 2026/27

Number of Band D equivalent dwellings per Parish area

Parish	Number of Band D Equivalent Dwellings	Armed Forces Exempt Dwellings	Tax Base for 2026/27
Adderbury	1,415.5	0.0	1,415.5
Ambrosden	668.6	214.7	883.3
Ardley	266.6	0.0	266.6
Arncott	315.6	1.8	317.4
Banbury	17,685.9	2.4	17,688.3
Barford	284.2	0.0	284.2
Begbroke	367.5	0.0	367.5
Bicester	13,488.3	0.9	13,489.2
Blackthorn	149.8	0.0	149.8
Bletchington	464.3	0.0	464.3
Bloxham	1,598.0	0.0	1,598.0
Bodicote	1,022.8	0.0	1,022.8
Bourton	354.6	0.0	354.6
Broughton	128.4	0.0	128.4
Bucknell	110.1	0.0	110.1
Caversfield	568.5	26.7	595.2
Charlton on Otmoor	201.0	0.0	201.0
Chesterton	460.8	0.0	460.8
Claydon	148.0	0.0	148.0
Cottisford	72.0	0.0	72.0
Cropredy	309.3	0.0	309.3
Deddington	1,095.5	0.0	1,095.5
Drayton	119.5	0.0	119.5
Duns Tew	247.0	0.0	247.0
Epwell	138.0	0.0	138.0
Fencot and Murcott	127.1	0.0	127.1
Finmere	217.8	0.0	217.8
Fringford	271.1	0.0	271.1
Fritwell	311.8	0.0	311.8
Godington	20.7	0.0	20.7
Gosford and Water Eaton	560.8	0.0	560.8
Hampton Gay and Poyle	89.1	0.0	89.1
Hanwell	119.8	0.0	119.8
Hardwick with Tusmore	39.9	0.0	39.9
Hethe	124.1	0.0	124.1
Hook Norton	1,099.8	0.0	1,099.8
Horley	159.4	0.0	159.4
Hornton	175.9	0.0	175.9
Horton Cum Studley	254.5	0.0	254.5

Parish	Number of Band D Equivalent Properties	Armed Forces Exempt Dwellings	Tax Base for 2025/26
Islip	329.4	0.0	329.4
Kidlington	5,171.2	0.0	5,171.2
Kirtlington	468.7	0.0	468.7
Launton	621.9	0.0	621.9
Lower Heyford	217.1	0.0	217.1
Merton	142.6	5.0	147.6
Middle Aston	67.4	0.0	67.4
Middleton Stoney	154.0	0.0	154.0
Milcombe	283.7	0.0	283.7
Milton	88.2	0.0	88.2
Mixbury	119.3	0.0	119.3
Mollington	242.0	0.0	242.0
Newton Purcell	42.8	0.0	42.8
Noke	83.7	0.0	83.7
North Aston	99.1	0.0	99.1
North Newington	159.5	0.0	159.5
Oddington	62.3	0.0	62.3
Piddington	188.5	0.0	188.5
Prescote	5.6	0.0	5.6
Shenington	236.9	0.0	236.9
Shipton on Cherwell	160.1	0.0	160.1
Shutford	213.7	0.0	213.7
Sibford Ferris	215.6	0.0	215.6
Sibford Gower	255.9	0.0	255.9
Somerton	146.1	0.0	146.1
Souldern	208.4	0.0	208.4
South Newington	156.0	0.0	156.0
Steeple Aston	450.4	0.0	450.4
Stoke Lyne	109.9	0.0	109.9
Stratton Audley	223.1	0.0	223.1
Swalcliffe	115.2	0.0	115.2
Tadmarton	260.6	0.0	260.6
Upper Heyford	174.3	0.0	174.3
Wardington	251.6	0.0	251.6
Wendlebury	196.8	0.0	196.8
Weston on the Green	277.7	0.0	277.7
Wigginton	121.4	0.0	121.4
Wroxton	285.6	0.0	285.6
Yarnton	1,218.1	0.0	1,218.1
Heyford Park	1,327.0	0.0	1,327.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60,403.0</b>	<b>251.5</b>	<b>60,654.5</b>



## Appendix 2 – Council Tax Base by Flood Defence Area 2026/27

Parish	Tax Base 2026/27		
	Thames	Anglian ( Great Ouse)	Severn
Adderbury	1,415.5		
Ambrosden	883.3		
Ardley		266.6	
Arncott	317.4		
Banbury	17,688.3		
Barford	284.2		
Begbroke	367.5		
Bicester	13,489.2		
Blackthorn	149.8		
Bletchington	464.3		
Bloxham	1,598.0		
Bodicote	1,022.8		
Bourton	354.6		
Broughton	128.4		
Bucknell	110.1		
Caversfield	595.2		
Charlton on Otmoor	201.0		
Chesterton	460.8		
Claydon	148.0		
Cottisford		72.0	
Cropredy	309.3		
Deddington	1,095.5		
Drayton	119.5		
Duns Tew	247.0		
Epwell	138.0		
Fencot and Murcott	127.1		
Finmere		217.8	
Fringford		271.1	
Fritwell		311.8	
Godington		20.7	
Gosford and Water Eaton	560.8		
Hampton Gay and Poyle	89.1		
Hanwell	119.8		
Hardwick with Tusmore		39.9	
Hethe		124.1	
Hook Norton	1,099.8		
Horley	159.4		
Hornnton	175.9		
Horton Cum Studley	254.5		

Parish	Tax Base 2026/27		
	Thames	Anglian ( Great Ouse)	Severn
Islip	329.4		
Kidlington	5,171.2		
Kirtlington	468.7		
Launton	621.9		
Lower Heyford	217.1		
Merton	147.6		
Middle Aston	67.4		
Middleton Stoney	154.0		
Milcombe	283.7		
Milton	88.2		
Mixbury		119.3	
Mollington	242.0		
Newton Purcell		42.8	
Noke	83.7		
North Aston	99.1		
North Newington	159.5		
Oddington	62.3		
Piddington	188.5		
Prescote	5.6		
Shenington	236.9		
Shipton on Cherwell	160.1		
Shutford	213.7		
Sibford Ferris			215.6
Sibford Gower			255.9
Somerton		146.1	
Souldern	208.4		
South Newington	156.0		
Steeple Aston	450.4		
Stoke Lyne		109.9	
Stratton Audley		223.1	
Swalcliffe	115.2		
Tadmarton	260.6		
Upper Heyford	174.3		
Wardington	251.6		
Wendlebury	196.8		
Weston on the Green	277.7		
Wigginton	121.4		
Wroxton	285.6		
Yarnton	1,218.1		
Heyford Park	1,327.0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>58,217.8</b>	<b>1,965.2</b>	<b>471.5</b>

## Appendix 3 – Council Tax Valuation Bands 2026/27

## ALL PARISHES

All figures at 01 December 2025	Band A with disabled reduction	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	2026/27 Tax Base
1. Total dwellings on the valuation List	0	6,250	16,763	19,930	12,766	9,314	4,530	2,909	268	<b>72,730</b>
2. Number of exempt dwellings	0	255	518	341	392	92	51	28	3	<b>1,680</b>
3. Number of demolished dwellings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
4. Number of chargeable dwellings (Lines 1 - 2 - 3)	0	5,995	16,245	19,589	12,374	9,222	4,479	2,881	265	<b>71,050</b>
5. Number of chargeable dwellings in line 4 subject to disabled reduction	0	7	40	95	61	53	24	12	12	<b>304</b>
6. Number of dwellings effectively subject to council tax for this band by virtue of disabled relief	7	40	95	61	53	24	12	12	0	<b>304</b>
7. Number of chargeable dwellings adjusted in accordance with lines 5 and 6 (Lines 4-5+6)	7	6,028	16,300	19,555	12,366	9,193	4,467	2,881	253	<b>71,050</b>
8. Number of dwellings adjusted In Line 7 entitled to a 25% (SPD)	5	3,315	6,306	6,096	3,086	1,635	693	379	21	<b>21,536</b>
9. Number of dwellings in Line 7 entitled to a 25% discount due to all but one resident being disregarded	0	27	124	158	92	76	36	6	1	<b>520</b>
10. Number of dwellings in Line 7 entitled to a 50% discount due to all residents being disregarded	0	22	33	20	9	11	6	17	12	<b>130</b>
11. Number of dwellings in Line 7 classed as second homes	0	141	163	146	103	81	41	54	13	<b>742</b>
12. Number of dwellings in Line 7 classed as empty and receiving a 0% discount	0	46	78	59	43	31	9	11	1	<b>278</b>
13. Number of dwellings in Line 7 classed as empty and receiving a discount	0	107	211	136	72	46	18	14	2	<b>606</b>
14. Number of dwellings in Line 7 classed as empty and being charged the Empty Homes Premium	0	47	60	67	38	25	15	16	5	<b>273</b>
15. Total number of dwellings in Line 7 classed as empty (Lines 12 + 13 + 14)	0	200	349	262	153	102	42	41	8	<b>1,157</b>

16. Number of dwellings that are classed as empty and have been for more than 6 months (from properties in Line 15)	0	93	139	131	85	58	27	29	6	<b>568</b>
16a. Number of dwellings included in Line 16 which are still empty because of flooding that occurred between 1 December 2015 and 31 March 2016	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
17. Number of dwellings that are classed as empty and have been for more than 6 months (formerly Class A exempt excluding any dwellings in Line 16a)	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
18. Number of dwellings classed as empty for more than 6 months excluding those empty due to flooding (Line 16 - line 16a - line 17)	0	91	139	131	85	58	27	29	6	<b>566</b>
19. Number of dwellings in line 7 where there is liability to pay 100% council tax before Family Annexe discount	2	2,513	9,568	13,087	9,075	7,404	3,700	2,453	214	<b>48,016</b>
20. Number of dwellings in line 7 that are assumed to be subject to a discount or a premium before Family Annexe discount	5	3,515	6,732	6,468	3,291	1,789	767	428	39	<b>23,034</b>
21. Reduction in taxbase as a result of the Family Annexe discount (b/fwd. from Family Annexe tab)	0	28	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	<b>36</b>
22. Number of dwellings equivalents after applying discounts and premiums to calculate taxbase	6	5,262	14,792	18,113	11,654	8,824	4,316	2,823	256	<b>66,045</b>
23. Ratio to Band D	5/9	6/9	7/9	8/9	9/9	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9	
<b>24. Total number of band D equivalents (to 1 decimal place) (line 22 x line 23)</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3,508.2</b>	<b>11,504.8</b>	<b>16,100.2</b>	<b>11,655.4</b>	<b>10,785.2</b>	<b>6,234.8</b>	<b>4,705.1</b>	<b>511.6</b>	<b>65,008.5</b>
Allowance for new unbanded properties										<b>170.6</b>
Allowance for Council Tax Reduction Scheme										<b>-3,543.7</b>
<b>Allowance for non-collection (2%)</b>										<b>-1,232.4</b>
Number of band D equivalents of contributions in lieu of M.O.D.										<b>251.5</b>
<b>Taxbase for 2026/27</b>										<b>60,654.5</b>

**Cherwell District Council  
Equality Impact Assessment**

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Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts .....	7
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts .....	8
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## Section 1: Summary details

<b>Directorate and Service Area</b>	Resources - Finance
<b>What is being assessed</b> (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	This assessment sets out the overall impact that the council tax base proposals have on a range of equality and diversity characteristics, including the nine protected characteristics defined under the Equality Act 2010, and sets out any mitigations that have been put in place against possible negative impacts.
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	This impact assessment provides an overview of the 2026/27 council tax base proposals and so comments on changes to existing programmes.
<b>Summary of assessment</b> Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?  (following completion of the assessment).	The Council must legally set a tax base for the following year by 31 January. This will allow the Council to notify its preceptors of the taxbase in order for them (and the Council) to set their budgets for 2026/27.  <b>An ECIA has been completed for the Council's overall budget and business planning proposals and authorised in December 2025.</b>
<b>Completed By</b>	Lynsey Parkinson, Strategic Finance Business Partner – Budget Setting
<b>Authorised By</b>	Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader
<b>Date of Assessment</b>	10 December 2025

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p><b>Context / Background</b></p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>For each financial year and each category of dwellings in its area, the council must set an amount of council tax (section 30, Local Government Finance Act 1992). Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 demand that the council calculates a tax base by 31 January 2026. This will be used for Council Tax setting purposes in February 2026.</p>
<p><b>Proposals</b></p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>That the Executive agrees that, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Cherwell District Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2026/27 shall be 60,654.5.</p> <p>There are no alternative options. The Council has to set a tax base in order to set its council tax for 2026/27.</p>
<p><b>Evidence / Intelligence</b></p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback</p>	<p>All implications have been reviewed by the responsible officer.</p>



<p>from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	
<p><b>Alternatives considered / rejected</b></p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>There are no alternative options. The Council has to set a tax base in order to set its council tax for 2026/27.</p>

### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		

### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
Armed Forces	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
Carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
Areas of deprivation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		

### Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

<b>Additional Wider Impacts</b>	<b>No Impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Description of Impact</b>	<b>Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts</b>	<b>Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)</b>	<b>Timescale and monitoring arrangements</b>
<b>Other Council Services</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
<b>Providers</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
<b>Social Value <sup>1</sup></b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		

<sup>1</sup> If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

## Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

<b>Review Date</b>	10 December 2025
<b>Person Responsible for Review</b>	Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 10 December 2025
<b>Authorised By</b>	Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance, 10 December 2025

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This report is public	
Finance Monitoring Report November 2025	
Committee	Executive
Date of Committee	6 January 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration, Cllr Lesley McLean,
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	19 December 2025
Report of	Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer), Michael Furness

## Purpose of report

To report to Executive the council's forecast year-end financial position as at the end of the November 2025. Further detail can be found in the report and its appendices.

## 1. Recommendations

The Executive resolves:

- 1.1 To consider and note the contents of the council's financial management report as at the end of November 2025.
- 1.2 To approve the release of £0.060m from Policy Contingency for development resource required for property projects, associated planning advisors, consultancy and initial ground condition reports, as well as information on flooding.
- 1.3 To approve the proposed write offs, set out in exempt Appendix 4.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report sets out the forecast year-end position for 2025/26, projecting an overspend of £0.609m to the financial year end. This is an increase of £0.209m compared to the year end forecast at Period 7.
- 2.2 The capital forecast year-end position will be reported on a Quarterly basis with the third report being December 2025.

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications		Commentary		
<b>Finance</b>		Financial and Resource implications are detailed within sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this report. The reserves policy requires Executive to agree transfers to and from earmarked reserves and general balances during the financial year. Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance, 10 December 2025		
<b>Legal</b>		There are no legal implications arising at this stage. The Council has a fiduciary duty to council taxpayers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, including control of expenditure, financial prudence in the short and long term and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers. The Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a balanced budget and the monitoring process enables Executive to remain aware of issues and understand the actions being taken to maintain a balanced budget. The report sets out as at November 2025 finance position for the Council as part of its fiduciary duty to implement budgetary controls and monitoring. Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 10 December 2025		
<b>Risk Management</b>		There are no risk implications arising directly from this report. Financial resilience and any risks link to it are managed through the Corporate Leadership Risk register. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 10 December 2025		
Impact Assessments		Positive	Neutral	Negative
<b>Equality Impact</b>			X	
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?			X	
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics,			X	



including employees and service users?				
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>		X		N/A
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>		X		N/A
<b>Data Impact</b>		X		N/A
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>		X		N/A
<b>Council Priorities</b>	This report links to all council's priorities, as it summarises our progress against them during 2025/26.			
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A			
<b>Property</b>	N/A			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	N/A			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

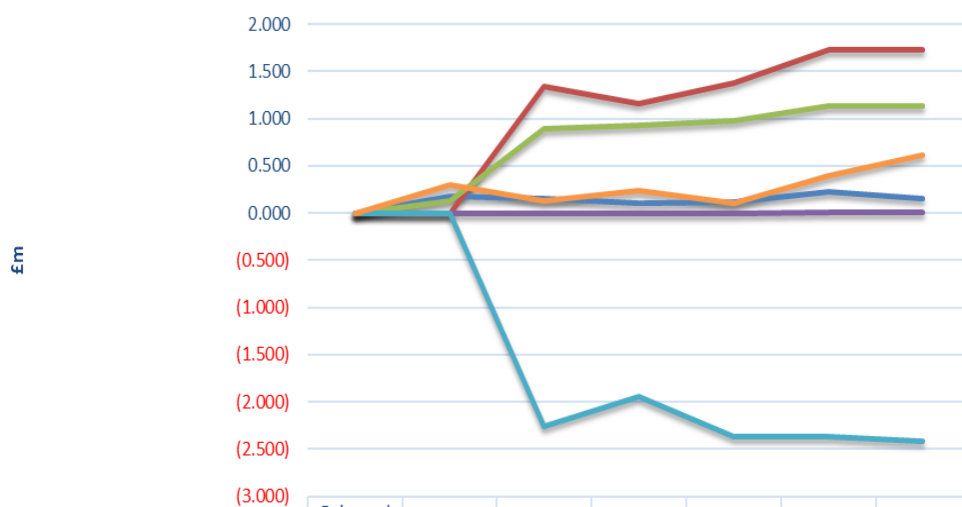
- 3.1 The council actively and regularly monitors its financial position to ensure it can deliver its corporate priorities and respond effectively to emerging issues.
- 3.2 This monitoring takes place monthly for finance, so the council can identify potential issues at the earliest opportunity and put measures in place to mitigate them.
- 3.3 These updates are consolidated on a quarterly basis where Performance and Finance updates are given due to the implications and interdependencies between them, and this is the summary financial forecast for the end of the financial year position for 2025/26.

### 4. Details

#### 4.1 Finance Update

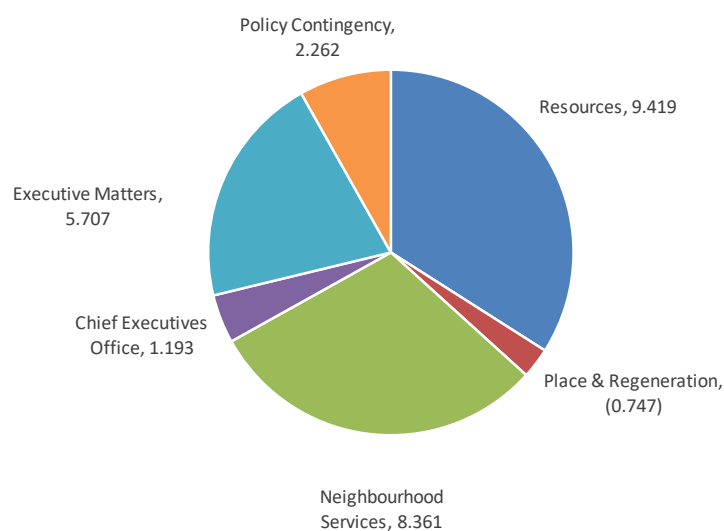
- 4.1.1 The Finance section presents the forecast year-end revenue position for the 2025/26 financial year and in a summary dashboard as detailed below:

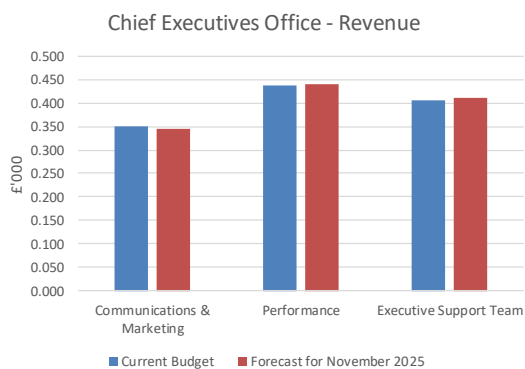
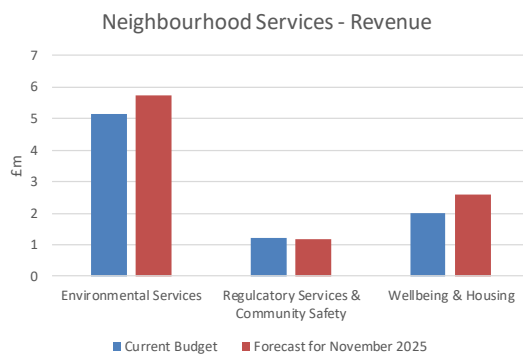
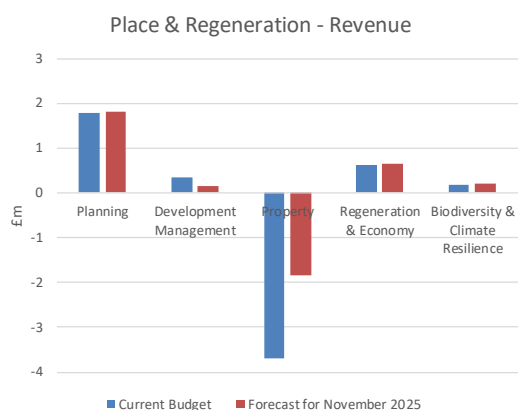
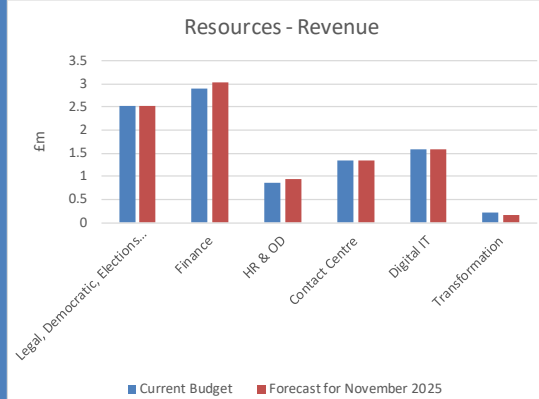
### Monthly Forecast Variance By Directorate



### Current Budget By Service Area

Total Net Budget £26.195m

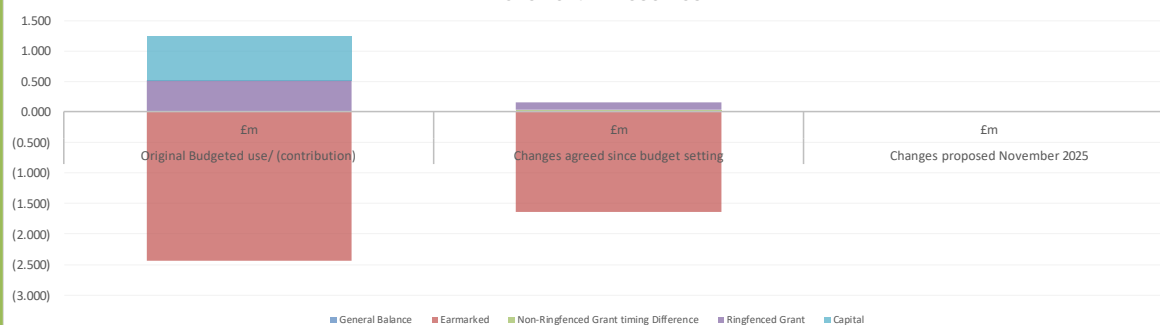




#### Directorate Analysis

Service	Resources	Place & Regeneration	Neighbourhood Services	Chief Executive Office	Executive Matters	Policy Contingency	Total
<b>Budget approved by Council</b>	9.419	-0.747	9.761	1.193	4.306	2.428	26.360
Budget Adjustments approved:							
Move of the EPR Budget to Env Servs			-1.400		1.400		
<b>Current Budget</b>	9.419	-0.747	8.361	1.193	5.706	2.428	26.360
Wellbeing & Housing - Top slice of grants, IT license costs and temporary accommodation costs			0.575				0.575
Environmental - gate fees, agency			0.926				0.926
Property - shortfall in projected income		1.843				-1.100	0.743
Environmental Services - Additional EPR funding			-0.309				-0.309
Treasury					-0.811		-0.811
Dividend					-0.500		-0.500
Transformation - over recovery of land charges income and vacancies	-0.066						-0.066
Contact Centre - minor underspend	-0.008						-0.008
Planning - Various		0.021					0.021
Development Management - Over Recovery of Income		-0.198					-0.198
Biodiversity & Climate Resilience		0.010					0.010
Regulatory Services underspend - staffing changes & less Contribution to CCTV than anticipated			-0.058				-0.058
Regeneration & Economy - primarily due to staffing costs where a full-time post is only partially funded (50%) through the service budget.		0.052					0.052
IT - Minor overspends across the service	0.015						0.015
HR & OD - Overtime policy changes non-deliver	0.041						0.041
HR & OD - Legal employment advice, Recruitment Costs & Minor Overspends	0.043						0.043
Chief Executives - Minor Overspends across the Directorate				0.005			0.005
Finance - increased expenditure on temporary accommodation & supported accommodation claims	0.197						0.197
Finance - Additional New Burdens Grant Income	-0.069						-0.069
Performance - Minor Overspend							0.000
Executive Support Team - Minor Overspend							0.000
<b>Current (Under)/Overspends</b>	<b>0.153</b>	<b>1.728</b>	<b>1.134</b>	<b>0.005</b>	<b>-1.311</b>	<b>-1.100</b>	<b>0.588</b>

#### Movement in Reserves



4.1.2 The council's overall forecast year-end position for 2025/26 is an overspend of £0.609m. The forecast currently shows an overspend across Directorates with potential mitigations that are currently being investigated, these mitigations are not part of the forecast.

The projected outturn for the services is summarised below in Table 1 and further details providing explanations for variances can be found in Appendix 2.

4.1.3 The table shows the November 2025 year-end forecast compared to the current budget across various services. Overall, the total budget is £26.195m, with a forecast of £26.804m, resulting in an overspend of £0.609m (2.3%). The largest variances are in Neighbourhood Services which includes, Environmental Services £0.617m, 12.0%, and Wellbeing & Housing £0.575m 28.8%, along with the

following in Place & Regeneration, Property £1.843m, 50.1%, and Development Management £0.198m, -57.6%,

The subtotal for directorates shows a £3.020m overspend (16.6%), compared to October, the overall position has worsened by £0.209m. Significant underspends are noted in Policy Contingency (£1.100m), (48.6%), and Executive Matters (£1.311m), (23%), which together provide a strong mitigating effect against directorate-level increases.

**Table 1: Forecast Year End Position**

Service	Current Budget £m	November 2025 Forecast to Year End £m	November Variance (Under) / Over £m	% Variance to current budget %	October Variance (Under) / Over £m	Change since Previous (better) / worse £m	
Legal, Democratic, Elections & Procurement	2.518	2.518	0.000	0.0%	0.000	0.000	
Finance	2.911	3.039	0.128	4.4%	0.178	(0.050)	
HR & OD	0.852	0.936	0.084	9.9%	0.086	(0.002)	
Contact Centre	1.340	1.332	(0.008)	0.6%	(0.009)	0.001	
Digital IT	1.575	1.590	0.015	1.0%	0.015	0.000	
Transformation	0.223	0.157	(0.066)	-29.6%	(0.046)	(0.020)	
<b>Resources</b>	<b>9.419</b>	<b>9.572</b>	<b>0.153</b>	<b>1.62%</b>	<b>0.224</b>	<b>(0.071)</b>	
Planning	1.796	1.817	0.021	1.2%	0.046	(0.025)	
Development Management	0.344	0.146	(0.198)	-57.6%	(0.239)	0.041	
Property	(3.681)	(1.838)	1.843	-50.1%	1.539	0.304	
Regeneration & Economy	0.609	0.661	0.052	8.5%	0.052	0.000	
Biodiversity & Climate Resilience	0.185	0.195	0.010	5.4%	0.010	0.000	
<b>Place &amp; Regeneration</b>	<b>(0.747)</b>	<b>0.981</b>	<b>1.728</b>	<b>-231.3%</b>	<b>1.408</b>	<b>0.320</b>	
Environmental Services	5.133	5.750	0.617	12.0%	0.606	0.011	
Regulatory Services & Community Safety	1.232	1.174	(0.058)	-4.7%	(0.049)	(0.009)	
Wellbeing & Housing	1.996	2.571	0.575	28.8%	0.575	0.000	
<b>Neighbourhood Services</b>	<b>8.361</b>	<b>9.495</b>	<b>1.134</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>1.132</b>	<b>0.002</b>	
Communications & Marketing	0.350	0.346	(0.004)	-1.1%	(0.004)	0.000	
Performance	0.437	0.440	0.003	0.7%	0.003	0.000	
Executive Support Team	0.406	0.412	0.006	1.5%	0.006	0.000	
<b>Chief Executives Office</b>	<b>1.193</b>	<b>1.198</b>	<b>0.005</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.005</b>	<b>0.000</b>	
<b>Subtotal for Directorates</b>	<b>18.226</b>	<b>21.246</b>	<b>3.020</b>	<b>16.6%</b>	<b>2.769</b>	<b>0.251</b>	
Executive Matters	5.707	4.396	(1.311)	-23.0%	(1.269)	(0.042)	
Policy Contingency	2.262	1.162	(1.100)	-48.6%	(1.100)	0.000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>26.195</b>	<b>26.804</b>	<b>0.609</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>0.400</b>	<b>0.209</b>	
<b>FUNDING</b>	<b>(26.195)</b>	<b>(26.195)</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	
<b>Forecast (Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.609</b>	<b>0.609</b>		<b>0.400</b>	<b>0.209</b>	

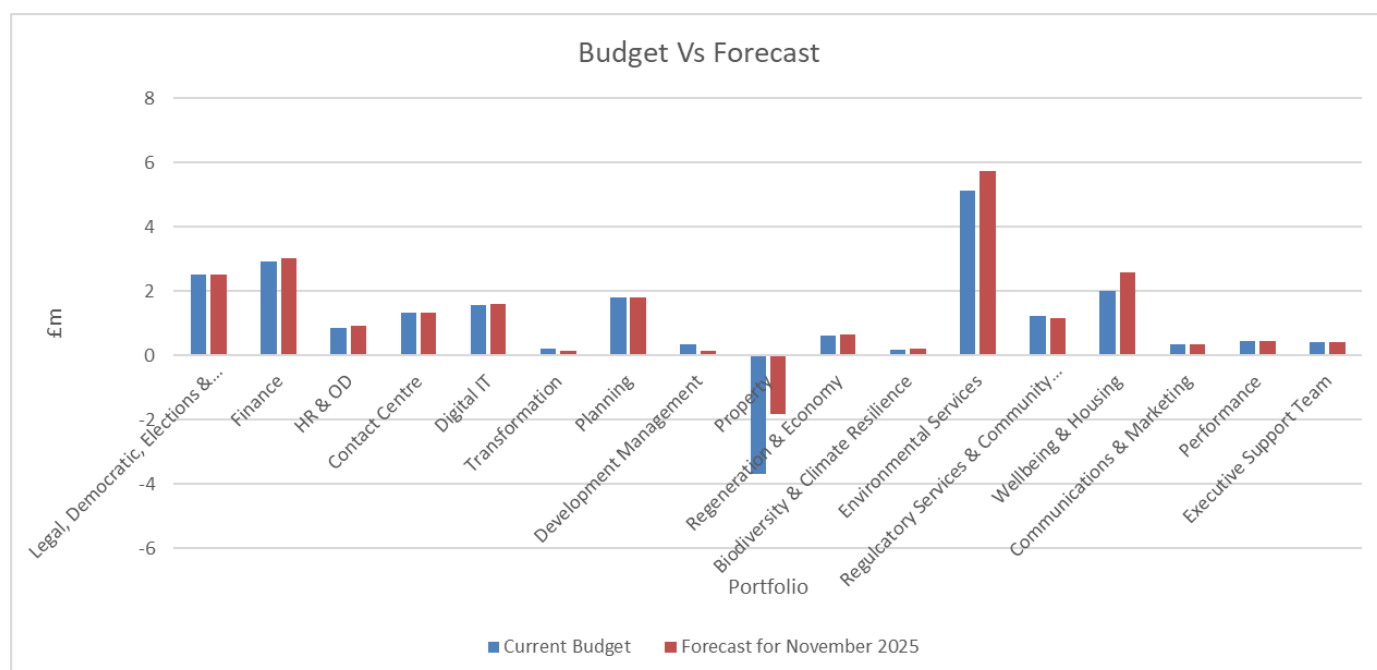
**Note:** A positive variance is an overspend or a reduction in forecast income and a (negative) is an underspend or extra income received.

Green represents an underspend and red represents a overspend for the outturn position.

**Table 2:** Analysis of Variance – November 2025

Breakdown of current month forecast	November 2025 Forecast to Year End £m	Base Budget Over/ (Under) £m	Savings Non- Delivery £m
Resources	9.572	9.496	0.076
Place & Regeneration	0.981	0.923	0.058
Neighbourhood Services	9.495	9.164	0.331
Chief Executives Office	1.198	1.198	0.000
<b>Subtotal Directorates</b>	<b>21.246</b>	<b>20.781</b>	<b>0.465</b>
Executive Matters	4.396	4.396	0.000
Policy Contingency	1.162	1.162	0.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>26.804</b>	<b>26.339</b>	<b>0.465</b>
<b>FUNDING</b>	<b>(26.195)</b>	<b>(26.195)</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>(Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>0.609</b>	<b>0.144</b>	<b>0.465</b>

4.1.4 The graph below shows the Budget compared with the forecast to the end of the financial year.

**Graph 1:** Budget compared with Forecast

4.1.5 Table 3 below summarises the major forecast variances for the reporting period. Further details can be found in Appendix 2.

**Table 3: Top Major Variances:**

Service	Current Budget	Variance	% Variance
Property	(3.681)	1.843	-50.1%
Environmental	5.133	0.617	12.0%
Wellbeing & Housing	1.996	0.575	28.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.448</b>	<b>3.035</b>	

## Reserves

4.1.6 Allocations to and from reserves are made according to the Reserves Policy. Table 4 below summarises the movements, there are no reserve requests as at 30 November 2025.

**Table 4: Reserves forecast:**

Reserves	Balance 1 April 2025	Original Budgeted use/ (contribution)	Changes agreed since budget setting	Changes proposed November 2025	Balance 31 March 2026
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
General Balance	(8.021)	0.000	0.000	0.000	(8.021)
Earmarked	(31.264)	(2.444)	(1.637)	0.000	(35.345)
Non-Ringfenced Grant timing Difference	(0.033)	0.000	0.033	0.000	0.000
Ringfenced Grant	(1.918)	0.523	0.129	0.000	(1.266)
<b>Subtotal Revenue</b>	<b>(41.236)</b>	<b>(1.921)</b>	<b>(1.475)</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>(44.632)</b>
Capital	(5.321)	0.720	0.000	0.000	(4.601)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(46.557)</b>	<b>(1.201)</b>	<b>(1.475)</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>(49.233)</b>

\*According to the Reserves Policy Executive are only required to approve uses of Capital Reserves, not contributions.

## 5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: This report summarises the council's forecast revenue financial position up to the end of March 2026, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

## 6. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 The report updates the Committee on the projected year-end financial position of the council for 2025/26. Regular reporting is key to good governance and demonstrates that the council is actively managing its financial resources sustainably.

## Decision Information

<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	Yes
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All

## Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	Detailed Revenue Narrative on Forecast November 2025
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Virements & Aged Debt November 2025
<b>Appendix 3</b>	Funding November 2025
<b>Appendix 4</b>	EXEMPT Write Off Details November 2025
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Reference Papers</b>	None
<b>Report Author</b>	Leanne Lock
<b>Report Author contact details</b>	leanne.lock@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 227098
<b>Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Report of Statutory Officer, Section 151 Officer

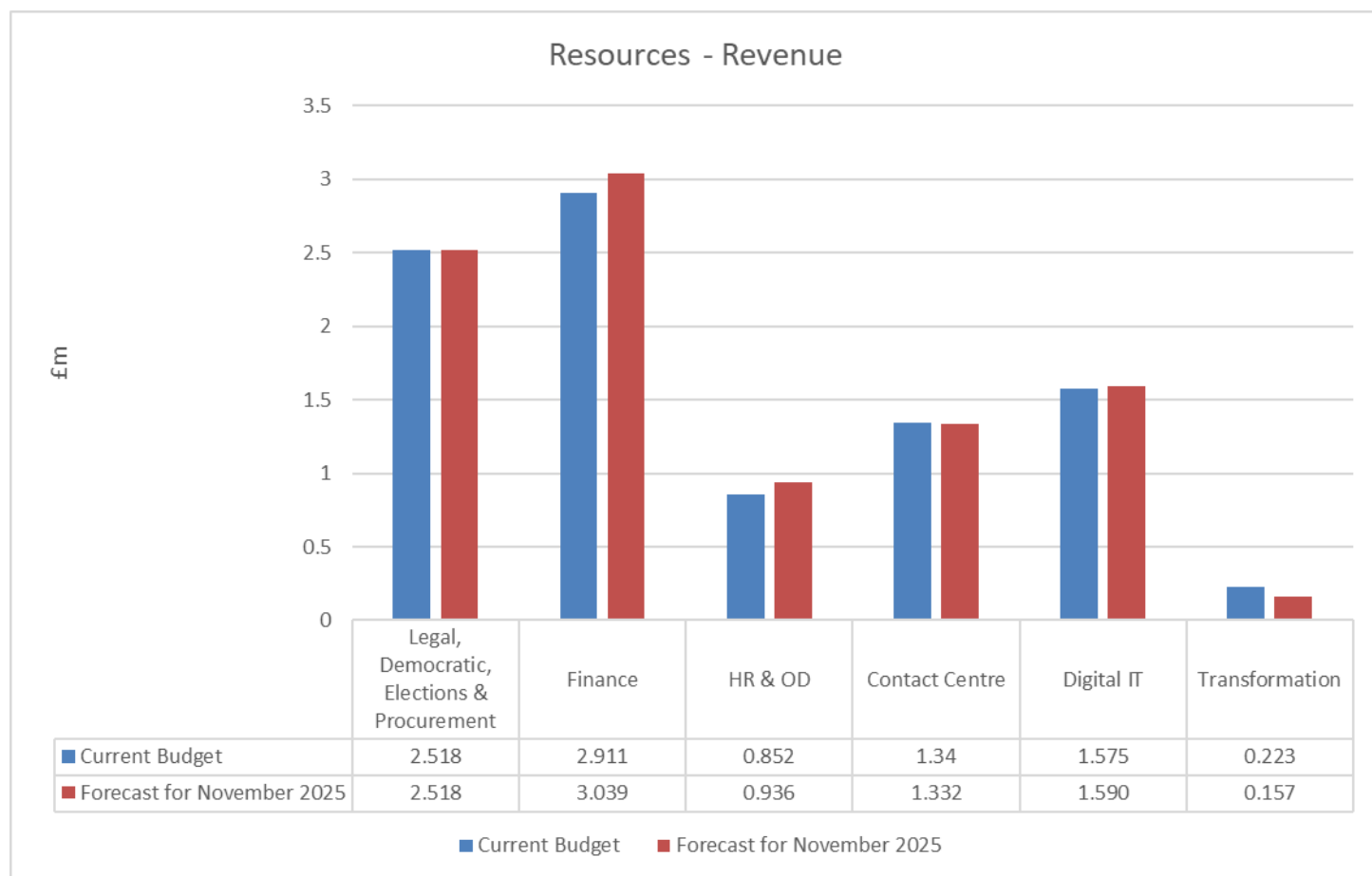


## Appendix 1 – Detailed Narrative on Forecast November 2025

### Resources

#### Revenue:

Resources are forecasting £0.153m overspend against a budget of £9.419m (1.62%). The majority of the directorate's overspend relates to a share of the overtime policy implications, whilst being offset by other minor underspends. Whilst there is limited ability to reduce the actual overspend due to the reason for it occurring, the directorate monitors all spend to minimise any unnecessary costs and spend and embodies the councils aim for striving to excellence in financial management.



<p>Legal, Democratic, Elections &amp; Procurement</p> <p>Variation £0.000m</p>	<p>Overview of Forecast: We are currently showing no overspend however there is a real risk that overspend occurs. We have increased the income forecast, based on current projection, but this is very much dependent on developers/ planners agreeing s106 agreements. Continued recruitment issues also mean that we continue use locum staff in high-risk areas such planning and litigation. Recruitment still an issue across law and governance and we are looking at readvertisements.</p>
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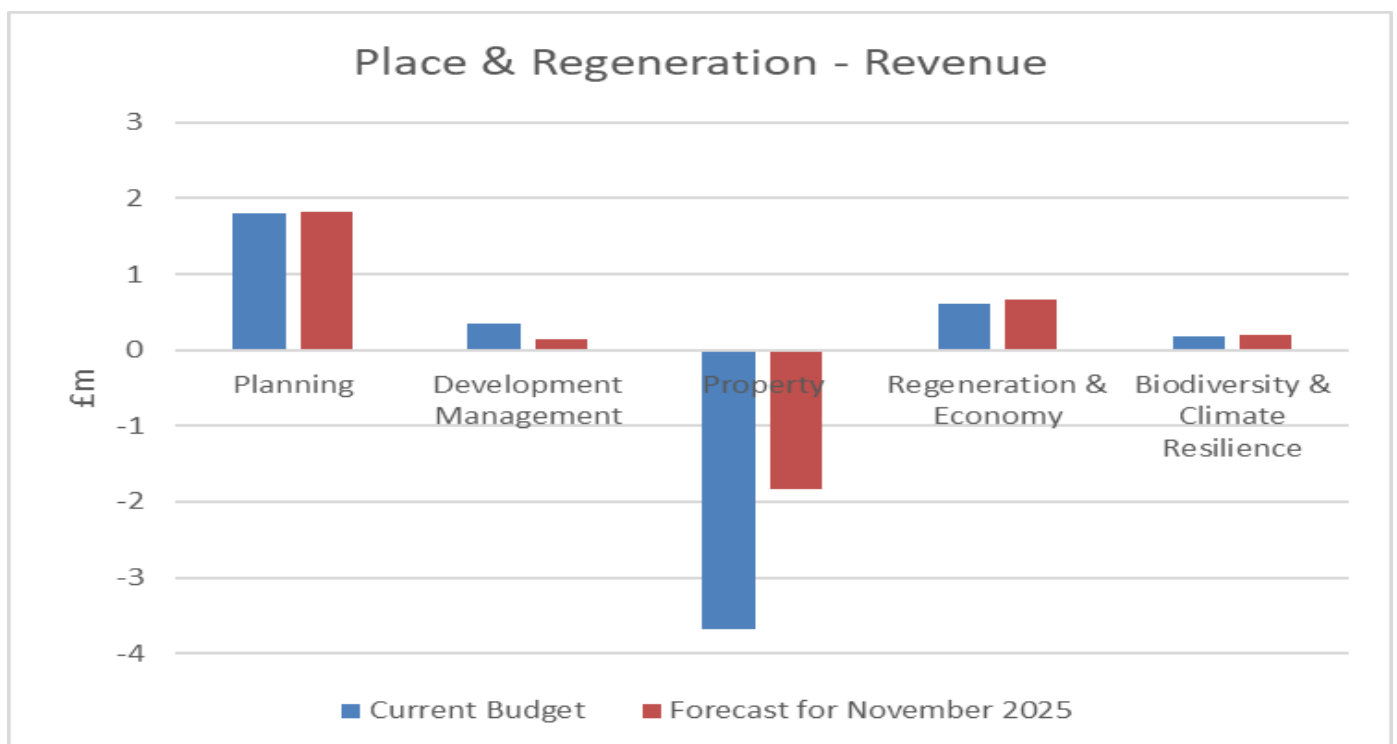
Variations To October's Forecast £0.000m	
<p>Finance</p> <p>Variation £0.128m Overspend</p> <p>Variation to October's Forecast (£0.050m)</p>	<p>The forecast year end position is an overspend of £0.128m. Following the submission of the Mid-year estimate for Housing Benefit Grant to the DWP and including a review of the caseload, despite a reduction in the overall grant payments to be made, we are forecasting a overspend due to increased expenditure on Temporary accommodation and Supported accommodation claims which are not fully grant funded by the Government, but the council has an obligation to pay. Additional New Burdens grant funding has also been received of (£0.069m).</p> <p>Minor changes across budget areas this month.</p>
<p>HR &amp; OD</p> <p>Variation £0.084m Overspend</p> <p>Variation to October's Forecast (£0.002m)</p>	<p>The main driver of the forecasted overspend is the corporate decision not to proceed with changes to the current overtime policy, resulting in the non-delivery of £0.041m savings. Other overspends have emerged during the year, that were not anticipated at the time of budget setting for 2025/26. These overspends include legal costs for employment advice (£0.020m), graduate recruitment costs (£0.007m), training software licence costs (£0.012m) and consultants fees relating to the structure project (£0.006m).</p> <p>The overspend has increased due to more legal costs anticipated and the recruitment costs for the graduates that were not included in previous forecast.</p>
<p>Contact Centre</p> <p>Variation (£0.008m) Underspend</p> <p>Variation to October's Forecast £0.001m</p>	<p>Customer Contact Centre is running to budget. Land Charges is showing a small underspend due to additional income. However, will need to monitor closely as there is a risk that post budget impact on the housing market could reduce income during remainder of financial year.</p>
<p>Digital IT</p> <p>Variation £0.015m Overspend</p>	<p>Minor overspends across the service.</p>

Variation to October's Forecast (£0.000m)	Vacant post not filled until part way through the year.
Transformation  Variation (£0.066m) Underspend	Underspend is due to current Business Process Analyst Vacancy. Planning to recruit for this in Q4 of 2025/26, assuming greater clarity and stability of pipeline of work for the Transformation PMO.
Variation to October's Forecast (£0.020m)	Business Process Analyst Vacancy remains vacant.

## **Place & Regeneration**

### Revenue:

Place & Regeneration are forecasting £1.728m overspend against a budget of (0.747m) (-231.3%).



<p>Planning &amp; Development Management</p> <p>Planning Variation £0.021m Overspend</p> <p>Development Management Variation Underspend (£0.198m)</p> <p>Variation to October's Forecast Planning (£0.025m)</p> <p>Development Management £0.041m</p>	<p>Building Control is presently forecast to be within budget (-£0.035m) assisted by additional income receipts. Planning Policy, Conservation &amp; Design is presently forecast to be overbudget by some £0.053m due to staff resource costs associated with the submission of the Local Plan and its Examination. A reserve is available for the Local Plan Examination that can be called upon if required in due course.</p> <p>Development Management is presently forecasting an underspend of (-£0.198). Income is expected to exceed budget by the end of the year. In addition to national fee increases at the start of the financial year, a number of strategic applications have been received with higher fees. Resource needs to meet additional demands are being kept under review.</p> <p>The main changes since last month are the Development Management forecasts for Planning Performance Agreement income and staffing agency costs. Both have significantly increased which reflects the level of service activity on strategic planning applications. Continued close monitoring of Development Management income and agency costs.</p>
<p>Property</p> <p>Variation £1.843m Overspend</p> <p>Variation to October's Forecast £0.304m</p>	<p>A detailed review of the in year position, including a number of rent reviews has identified a reduction in the 25/26 forecast, primarily due to lower than expected rental income from delayed lettings, reduced renewal rates and tenant failures. Offsetting this, we anticipate higher turnover rents, improved insurance recovery, and increased income from car parking and Lock29.</p> <p>To strengthen future reporting, we have completed a full data review, introduced improved processes for regular financial updates, and are recruiting an in-house resource to replace the current supplier role, ensuring greater clarity and robustness. While unforeseen events remain a risk, these measures will significantly reduce volatility and improve confidence in future forecasts.</p>
<p>Regeneration &amp; Economy</p> <p>Variation £0.052m Overspend</p>	<p>Regeneration &amp; Growth is currently reporting an overspend of £0.052m, primarily due to staffing costs where a full-time post is only partially funded (50%) through the service budget. A review of the team's</p>

Variation to October's Forecast £0.000m	structure and budget allocation is underway, following approval of the new structure in November, which will mitigate the overspend.
Biodiversity & Climate Resilience  Variation £0.010m Overspend  Variation to October's Forecast £0.000m	The forecasted pressure of £0.010m within Biodiversity & Climate Resilience is largely due to an increase in forecast studies and annual reports required in 2025/26.

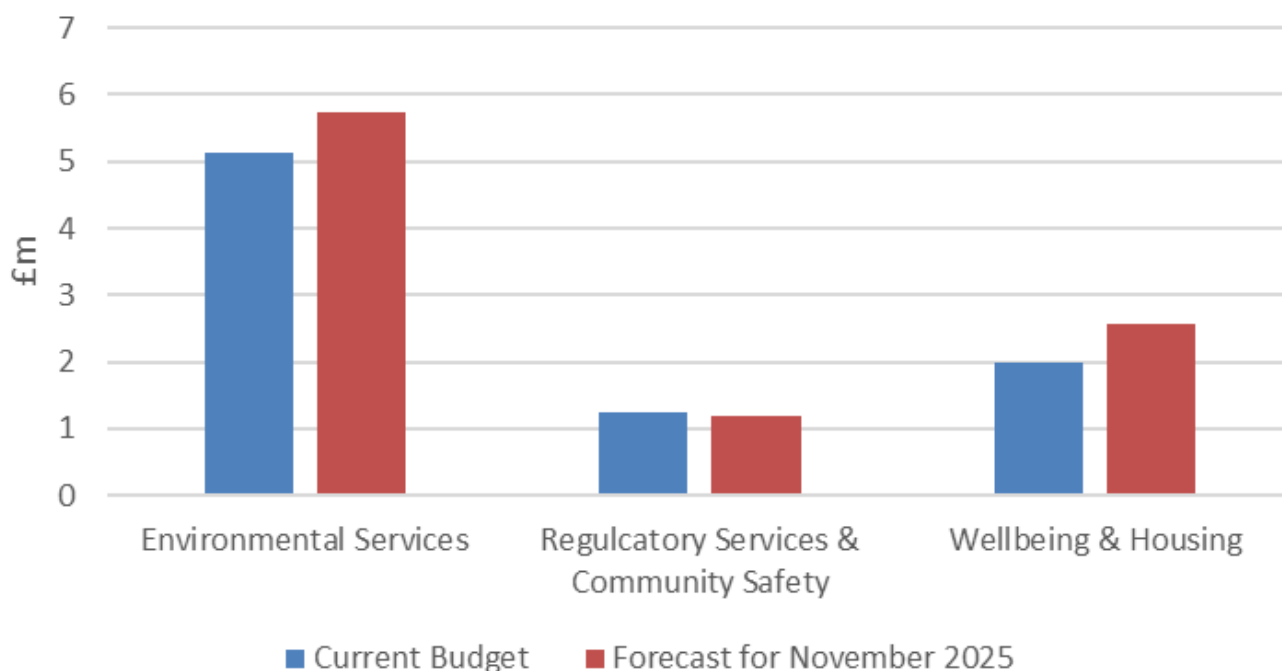
## **Neighbourhood Services**

### **Revenue:**

Neighbourhood Services are forecasting £1.134m overspend against a budget of £8.361m (13.6%).

The forecast overspend should remain stable as whole year costs have been reflected based on the first 6 months activity. Mitigations are being sought where possible and close working across the services to identify programmes that can be slowed or delayed to ease the budget pressures are being sought. The drivers for the overspend are long term sickness in our waste crew, additional temporary accommodation costs, and the delayed delivery of implementing an Agency arrangement in our Leisure Centres.

## Neighbourhood Services - Revenue



### Environmental Services

Variation  
£0.617m  
Overspend

The forecasted pressure of £0.617m within Environmental Services is largely due to staffing pressures £0.610m within Waste and Recycling primarily because of agency staff usage. His pressure is being actively managed by the service with support as needed from HR.

An under recovery of anticipated income for the Vehicle workshop for internal and external for labour on vehicle repairs of £0.113m.

A reduction of £0.015m in anticipated income for street markets and annual fairs.

The rise in gate fees and increase in more expensive repairs to an aging fleet have also impacted the service.

Variation to  
October's  
Forecast  
£0.011m

There have been small movements across many services in the last month resulting in an increased overspend. Mitigations are being actively sought.

Environmental services are continuing to investigate ways to mitigate this overspend, to date they include non-recruitment to several vacant posts across the service, a reduction in Arboricultural works carried out at sites, additional work carried out on behalf of local partners and a reduction in non-essential training carried out.

This will be continued to be monitored and mitigations identified throughout the year including curtailing any noncritical services to offset this overspend.

<p>Regulatory Services &amp; Community Safety</p> <p>Variation (£0.058m) Underspend</p> <p>Variation to October's Forecast (£0.009m)</p>	<p>Regulatory Services and Community Safety are forecasting an underspend of £0.058m.</p> <p>We have additional savings from staffing costs due to maternity leave.</p>
<p>Wellbeing &amp; Housing</p> <p>Variation £0.575m Overspend</p> <p>Variation to October's Forecast £0.000m</p>	<p>The forecast is based on whole year expenses being needed as budgeted and accounts for increased IT license costs, legal fees and the increase in temporary accommodation demand due to rising homelessness.</p> <p>Changes in temporary accommodation provision is likely to increase forecasted costs in the short term, separate from demand pressures, and this is reflected through the new forecast. Potential efficiencies from changes in contractual arrangements within the service are yet to be realised, but are being accelerated, but are not yet forecastable.</p> <p>Over the course of the year, it may be possible to underspend on some provisions within the budget and reduce the forecasted overspend. Allowing for the increased budget provision for temporary accommodation the scale of the eventual overspend will depend on the demand for temporary accommodation.</p>

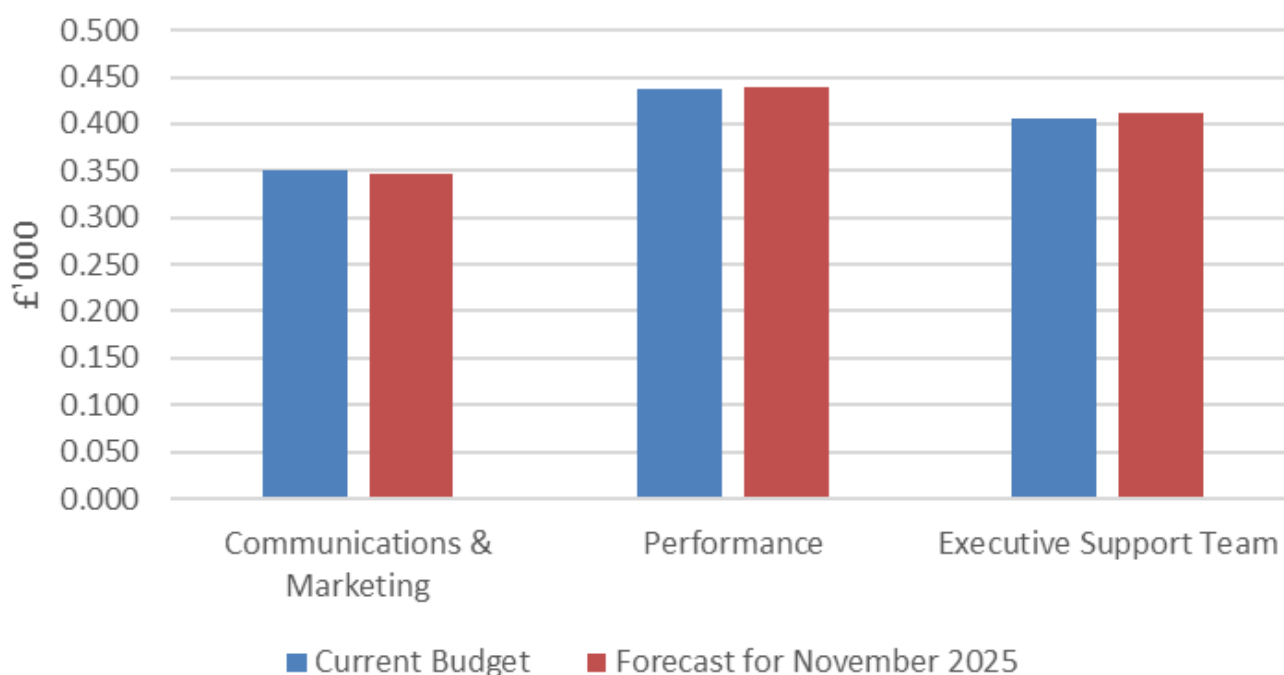
## **Chief Executives Office**

### **Revenue:**

Chief Executives Office are forecasting £0.005m overspend against a budget of £1.193m (0.4%).

Overall, the Service is £0.005m (0.4%) behind budget for the 25/26 financial year. The respective areas are managing their budgets carefully and it is anticipated that the full year budget will be achieved.

## Chief Executives Office - Revenue



<p>Communications &amp; Marketing</p> <p>Variation (£0.004m) Underspend</p> <p>Variation to October's Forecast £0.000m</p>	Minor Variations within the service.
<p>Performance</p> <p>Variation £0.003m Overspend</p> <p>Variation to October's Forecast £0.000m</p>	Minor Variations within the service.
<p>Executive Support Team</p> <p>Variation £0.006m Overspend</p> <p>Variation to October's Forecast £0.000m</p>	Minor Variations within the service.



## **Executive Matters**

### **Revenue:**

Executive Matters are forecasting a (£1.311m) underspend against a budget of £5.707m (-23.0%).

Executive Matters	
Variation (£1.311m) Underspend	Executive Matters are forecasting an underspend of (£1.311m) funding that is due to be received in July, (£0.500m) dividend expected from Graven Hill and an over recovery of net interest of (£0.811m).
Variation to October's Forecast (£0.042m)	

## **Policy Contingency**

### **Revenue:**

Policy Contingency are forecasting a (£1.100m) underspend against a budget of £2.262m (-48.6%).

Policy Contingency	
Variation (£1.100m) Underspend	Policy Contingency includes £1.100m for Market Risk. This has been released (and shown as an underspend) in order to offset overspends in the directorates
Variation to October's Forecast £0.000m	

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## Appendix 2 - Virement Summary

### Virement Movement

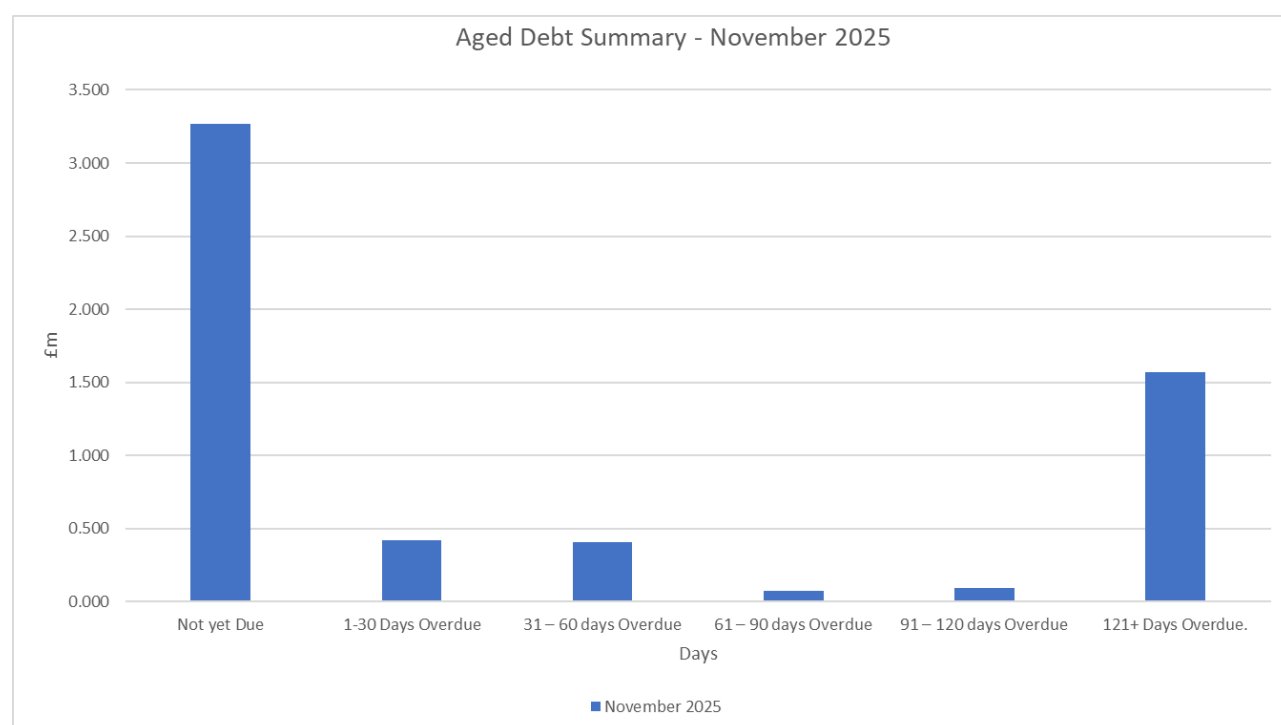
This table shows the movement in Net Budget from October 2025 to November 2025.

Virements - Movement in Net Budget	£m
Directorate Net Budget - November 2025	18.226
Directorate Net Budget - October 2025	18.176
<b>Movement</b>	<b>(0.050)</b>

Breakdown of Movements	£m
Arts Centre Feasibility Study from Policy Contingency	0.050
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.050</b>

### Aged Debt Summary

The below graph shows the movement in sundry aged debt for the period ending 30 November 2025.



The financial regulations make provision for writing off debts that are bad, uneconomical to collect or irrecoverable. The Council maintains a number of bad debt provisions in the anticipation that debts will become bad and these once agreed are charged to the relevant provision or cost centre.

There is a provision within the council for sundry bad debt totalling £0.507m that is sufficient and by writing off the amount of debt mentioned in this report will not cause

the provision to be exceeded. This provision is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that we have sufficient within it.

#### **Aged Sundry Debt Write Off Summary:**

	£m
Sundry Debts previously written off	0.027
Sundry Debts written off in August 2025, September and October 2025 under S151 delegation	0.006
Sundry Debts written off in November 2025 over £0.005m details in Appendix 4	0.020
<b>Total write offs in financial year 2025/26</b>	<b>0.053</b>

#### **Housing Benefit Write off Summary:**

	£m
Housing Benefit previously written off	0.027
Housing Benefit due to be written off in August 2025 under S151 Delegation	0.000
Housing Benefit Overpayments to be written off via committee approval,	0.000
<b>Total write offs in financial year 2025/2026</b>	<b>0.027</b>

#### **Council Tax Write off Summary:**

	£m
Council Tax previously written off	0.374
Council Tax due to be written off in November 2025 under S151 Delegation	0.000
Council Tax to be written off via Committee	0.000
<b>Total write offs in financial year 2025/2026</b>	<b>0.374</b>

#### **Non-Domestic Rates Write off Summary:**

	£m
Non-Domestic Rates previously written off	0.105
Non-Domestic Rates to be written off in November 2025 under S151 Delegation	0.000
Non-Domestic Rates written off via Committee Approval	0.000
<b>Total write offs in financial year 2025/2026</b>	<b>0.105</b>

## Appendix 3 - Funding for 2025/26

### Specific Funding received since budget was set:

Dept.	Grant Name	Funding £
DLUHC	Homelessness Prevention Grant	(£0.246)
DLUHC	Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme	(£0.035)
DLUHC	Redmond Review Implementation	(£0.024)
DLUHC	Local Audit Backstop New Burdens	(£0.046)
DLUHC	New Burdens Funding for Accommodation-based Domestic Abuse	(£0.037)
DLUHC	ATLAS	(£0.085)
DLUHC	New Burdens Funding for Renters Rights	(£0.049)
DEFRA	Biodiversity Net Gain Grant	(£0.027)
DEFRA	Food Waste Collection Grant	(£0.005)
DWP	Welfare Reform New Burdens Funding	(£0.035)
DWP	LA IT changes Scottish Government Grant	(£0.005)
DWP	LA IT Changes SHBE	(£0.001)
DWP	IT Suppliers	(£0.001)
DWP	Housing Benefit Award Accuracy Initiative	(£0.017)
Home Office	Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy	(£2.103)
Home Office	Syrian Resettlement Programme	(£0.011)
DSIT	Innovate	(£0.025)
		<b>(£2.752)</b>

### Grants included as part of Budget setting:

Directorate	Grant Name	£m
<b>Communities</b>	Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy	(0.244)
	Asylum Accommodation Dispersal	(0.029)
	Homeless Prevention Grant	(0.763)
	Syrian Resettlement Scheme	(0.183)
	Homes for Ukraine	(0.417)
	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	(0.335)
	<b>Communities Total</b>	<b>(1.972)</b>
<b>Resources</b>	NNDR Cost of Collection Allowance	(0.231)
	Rent Allowances	(25.004)
	<b>Resources Total</b>	<b>(25.235)</b>
<b>Services Sub-total</b>		<b>(27.207)</b>
<b>Corporate</b>	Extended Producer Responsibility	(1.400)
	Funding Floor	(3.400)
	National Insurance Contribution Compensation	(0.258)
	<b>Corporate Total</b>	<b>(5.058)</b>
<b>Cost of Services total</b>		<b>(32.265)</b>
<b>Funding</b>	Business Rates Retained Scheme	(7.490)

	New Homes Bonus	(0.935)
	Revenue Support Grant	(0.368)
	<b>Funding Total</b>	<b>(8.793)</b>
<b>Government Grants Total</b>		<b>(41.058)</b>

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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