

Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 (extended to 2025)

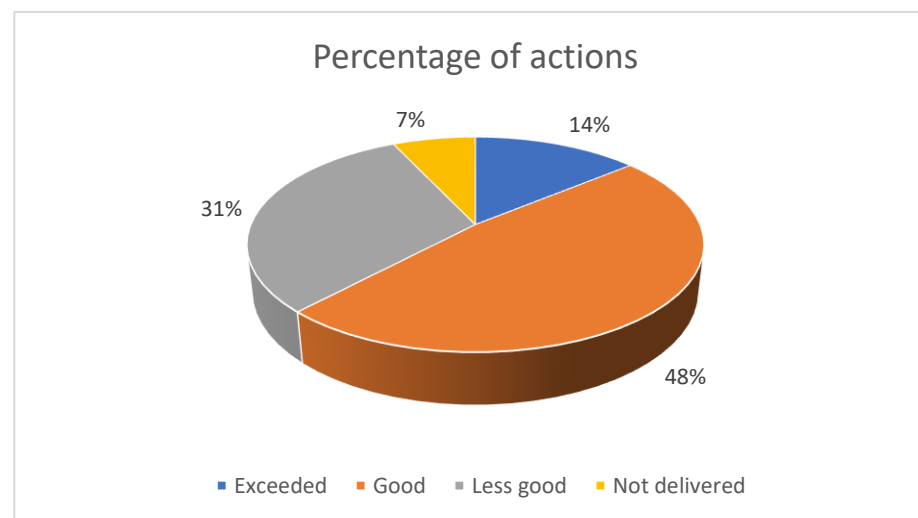
Overview of delivery against Implementation Action Plan.

The AONB Management Plan splits the actions that will be taken to deliver the policies into 15 that will be started in 2019/20, and 20 that may be started from 2020/21 onwards.

This overview summarises what has been delivered against each of the 35 actions; provides an assessment of progress; and comments on the relevance of each action for the period of the next Plan 2025-30.

The table and chart below present an assessment of progress in overall numbers and percentage terms.

Assessment of progress	Number of actions	Percentage
Exceeded	5	14%
Good	17	48%
Less good	11	31%
Not delivered	2	7%
Total	35	100



Taken together, significant progress is judged to have been made against the actions from the current Management Plan. Progress is underway to varying degrees of achievement on 90% of the actions (32 out of the 35). Approximately 66% of the actions (23) have been assessed as 'good' or having 'exceeded' what could be expected. Those actions that exceeded expectations largely did so because of additional funding that became available during the Plan period, for example, through the Government's Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme (Actions A12 and A13) and

Access for All fund (Action A5), as well as through Western Power funding for undergrounding powerlines (Action A15), and the efforts of the Chase Through Time volunteers to deliver multiple historic environment projects (Action B9).

Progress is underway on a further 10 actions, but considered to be 'Less good'. The reasons are various and include:

- competing priorities for resources and capacity within the National Landscape Team to progress some actions (for example, B1 – measures to reduce traffic impacts, B2 – influencing woodland owners and managers, B5 – the preparation of a deer management strategy, B6 - work on non-native invasive species)
- reappraisal of what is required for the action and a decision taken to consider alternatives (for example, A4 - the need for a Cannock Chase Landscape Trust (CIO) and investigation of a replacement model in the form of a Charitable Fund)
- challenges in bringing together partners to deliver co-ordinated action (for example, A6 – promoting and co-ordinating the recruitment of volunteers)
- new national initiatives, such as, the re-naming of AONBs as National Landscapes has had major implications for some actions (for example, A11 the development of social media)

Two actions have not been delivered:

- *B7: Develop a project to identify suitable heathland restoration areas on conifer plantations, acquiring land for compensation planting and planning a phased approach to delivery.* A feasibility study was undertaken, but the estimated costs of a potential large-scale restoration project were considered unaffordable. The review of the Cannock Chase Forest Plan presents opportunities for smaller-scale heathland restoration/creation projects to progress in the next Plan period.
- *B12: Work with facility providers and attractions within the AONB to encourage visitors to arrive by sustainable means of transport through provision of information, incentives such as discounts and the provision of facilities such as secure bicycle parking.* No known measures have been implemented during the current Plan period. The new Plan will need to include activities, such as, sustainable travel, that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Many of the actions are long-term and ongoing and remain relevant. They will, therefore, need to be included in the new Plan, alongside additional actions required to meet new imperatives and initiatives.

Actions	What has been delivered	Assessment of progress	Comment
<p>A1: Prepare guidance on 'Building and Infrastructure Design in Cannock Chase AONB' which Local Planning Authorities will be invited to adopt.</p>	<p>A Building Design Guide was published and approved in July 2020, and Local Planning Authorities invited to adopt. The guidance is used as supporting text in local plans, and in landscape planning advice offered by the Team.</p> <p>A Good Lighting Guide was published and adopted in March 2023 to promote dark skies and reduce artificial light pollution.</p> <p>In 2019 the Joint Committee and constituent local authorities agreed an updated planning protocol setting out the formal procedure/communication on planning matters within and adjoining or directly affecting the AONB. On average, the AONB Team is consulted on 125-150 planning applications each year, and provides detailed responses on 40-50% of these.</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>Planning will continue to be a key component of the new plan under the Place theme.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to promote the use of both guidance documents by LPAs, developers, householders and consultants to ensure that land use change and development is appropriate, sustainable, and conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the area.</p>
<p>A2: Monitor and report on the conservation status and needs of key species and their habitats in the AONB, including where they occur outside the SAC, and draw up actions to address identified threats.</p>	<p>Species recovery measures carried out during the plan period included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nightjar surveys were carried in 2019 and 2020, and the findings shared with landowners. This led to Forestry England adapting tree felling operations to provide more suitable nightjar habitat, and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust putting in place nesting plots on its heathland nature reserves. Conservation activities have been carried out for white-clawed crayfish including the creation of artificial reefs and other refugia, and the capture and removal of American signal crayfish. 	<p>Good</p>	<p>Nature is one of the key themes for the new Plan. Priorities will need to take account of and align with the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Staffordshire.</p> <p>Future species recovery actions will need to align with champion species for nature recovery drawn from a long-list of species of conservation concern.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 County Wildlife Sites have been re-surveyed. 13 sites retained their designation, 2 were downgraded, whilst 4 were no longer considered worthy of designation. • Cannock Chase bat audit completed February 2021 • Cannock Chase invertebrate audit completed March 2021. • Long-eared owl survey completed winter 2020-21 and 21-22. • 2022 quinquennial bird survey carried out by West Midland Bird Club, financially supported by the National Landscape Sustainable Development Fund. • Aquatic invertebrate survey carried out in 2023/24 to survey the ecological conditions and evaluate the biological quality of watercourses on the Chase. • Adder computer landscape modelling and survey project carried out in 2023/24, in collaboration with CEH, ARG UK, and major landowners. • Veteran tree training held for landowners and practitioners in September 2021, and for volunteers on 18 October 2022. 		
<p>A3: Work with local authority transport and green infrastructure teams to design and provide safe, connected cycle and pedestrian routes into the AONB.</p>	<p>The AONB Partnership supported a successful Cannock Chase Wayfinding application (Feb 2021) to Sport England to connect communities in Hednesford with Cannock Chase. The application has brought in £199,000 external investment from Sport England.</p> <p>A strategic review of AONB promoted walking routes was carried out in 2022. This resulted in the withdrawal of those routes that intersected with the ecologically sensitive Cannock SAC European wildlife site, and the creation of new routes around the periphery of the AONB.</p>		<p>This work is ongoing. For example, a review of AONB promoted horse-riding routes is still required. Improvements to improve accessibility on the Chase will be a key theme in the new plan.</p>

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	<p>As a legacy of the Commonwealth Games 2022, the Sherbrook cycling trail is no longer promoted in order to reduce the volume of use in the Cannock Chase SAC, and signage has been removed.</p> <p>Defra's Access for All Fund (2022-25) has facilitated a range of digital and physical access improvements on the Chase, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Videos of walking trails Disability trail improvements Improved waymarking Awareness guide Accessibility audit and guide 	Good	
<p>A4: Support the establishment of the Cannock Chase Landscape Trust (CIO) and, through its business plan, develop ways of proactively engaging local businesses and community groups with delivery of this Management Plan.</p>	<p>An alternative model of a Cannock Chase Charitable Fund for business and voluntary giving is under discussion with Staffordshire Community Foundation.</p>	Less good	<p>Action not yet completed. Legal questions about the form and operation of the Fund are still to be resolved.</p> <p>An option for business and voluntary giving is a way for people to support and invest in the work of the National Landscape Partnership and will be included as an action in the new Plan.</p>
<p>A5: Re-engage with, and draw up an updated database of, interested parties in the AONB and maintain regular contact with them on matters of interest.</p>	<p>Governance membership is regularly reviewed and kept up to date. Interested parties have been re-engaged in governance meetings as well as steering groups to deliver projects.</p> <p>An inclusion and diversity study carried out in 2022 identified the additional voices that need to be heard in the</p>		<p>This work is ongoing, and will always form a key part of the effective governance of the National Landscape Partnership, and ensuring that partners are informed and engaged.</p>

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	<p>AONB Partnership. A call for new non-voting members on the Joint Committee was issued in 2023, and resulted in the appointment of 5 new members.</p> <p>An e-newsletter has been introduced as the main vehicle for regular communication. As at April 2024 this had 2,340 subscribers. A partnership bulletin was also introduced in Feb 2023.</p>	Exceeded	More effort is required to make the Partnership more inclusive and representative of the people who live, work in, or visit the area.
<p>A6: Work in Partnership with organisations currently using volunteers in the AONB and local area to identify ways that the promotion and recruitment of volunteers can be coordinated, and their inputs made best use of for different activities on the Chase.</p>	<p>At least 7 partner organisations offer volunteering opportunities within the National Landscape that contribute to its conservation and enhancement.</p> <p>Cannock Chase Council Chase Up! Green Volunteer Network aims to match volunteering enquiries with organisations that have volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>The National Landscape website signposts people to volunteering opportunities with partners on the Chase.</p> <p>A new cohort of National Landscape volunteers for Milford Information Hut was established and is provided support by National Landscape officers.</p>	Less good	<p>For the first time, volunteer engagement has been included as an indicator to measure progress towards the Government's targets and outcomes for protected landscapes.</p> <p>Apart from signposting volunteer enquiries to organisations, partners have their own volunteering arrangements, and little co-ordination takes place.</p>
<p>A7: Use the Annual Conference to report to partners and the local community on the progress of actions contained within this Management Plan. Use this platform to fully engage with these groups and take account of their views.</p>	<p>Annual conferences have taken place as following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 October 2019 (Theme: Changing views – heathland management on Cannock Chase. 75 delegates attended) • 3 March 2022 (Theme: Changing perceptions and behaviours. 101 delegates attended) • 8 March 2023 (Theme: The Chase Through Time – Legacy, Lessons and what happens next. 80 delegates attended.) 	Good	<p>Annual conferences will continue to take place, in accordance with the requirements of the AONB Partnership Agreement.</p>

Actions	What has been delivered	Assessment of progress	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 April 2024 (Theme: Nature recovery. 80 delegates attended) <p>In 2020/21 no conference took place due to the Covid pandemic)</p>		
<p>A8: Develop a shared design protocol for recreation and leisure facilities, signage and promotional material, aimed at producing consistent high standards for use by all providers in the Chase.</p>	<p>A place brand for Cannock Chase was developed in this plan period to encourage high quality, consistent interpretation and information materials. This included a design protocol for signage and promotional material. The brand was developed through the consensus of the partners and was rolled out, for example, at Brindley Heath, RAF Hednesford, Milford Hut, Cannock Chase Visitor Centre, Gentleshaw Common. Partners were encouraged to incorporate it within their own signage and messaging.</p> <p>AONBs were re-named as National Landscapes in November 2023. A new National Landscapes brand is replacing the local Cannock Chase place brand as opportunities arise.</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>Work will be ongoing in the new Plan period to implement the National Landscape brand in visitor</p> <p>A new design protocol for recreation and leisure facilities will need to be considered as part of a proposed new Recreation Strategy for the National Landscape.</p>
<p>A9: Draw-up and co-ordinate dissemination of consistent messages about the significance and conservation requirements of sensitive sites and species in the AONB to key decision-making bodies and networks.</p>	<p>An independent review of the AONB Partnership's communications activities was undertaken in 2019, and followed up in 2020 with a strategy to deliver better clarity of purpose, co-ordinating communications activity, stakeholder management, branding and digital communications.</p> <p>A landowner/emergency services group was set up during the Covid pandemic to improve collaboration and co-ordination of actions and messages.</p> <p>A Cannock Chase Code was prepared and adopted by all major landowners, local authorities and emergency services.</p>		<p>Communication will continue to be a core component of the work of the National Landscape Partnership to raise awareness of the special qualities and change people's perceptions and behaviours.</p> <p>More needs to be done to co-ordinate messages across partner organisations.</p> <p>The arts is a powerful medium through which people can connect more with nature.</p>

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	<p>It is used on signage and promotional materials to help change perceptions and behaviours.</p> <p>The National Landscape Team has produced a wide range of materials during the plan period, for example, welcome leaflet, souvenir guide, trail leaflets and videos for Brindley Heath, Milford Common and RAF Hednesford, 6 x walking leaflets, 8 new interpretation panels, induction pack and video about the National Landscape, displays in the Museum of Cannock Chase and Milford Information Hut, and Field Studies Council guide to the Chase.</p> <p>The Sustainable Development Fund supported Sustainability Matters – Stafford to produce a video to help highlight how visitors and wildlife can co-exist on the Chase.</p> <p>Partners have been connecting people with nature through the arts in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry workshop held in October 2023 on the theme of ‘the environment of Cannock Chase’ • Local Cultural Place Makers, global change makers arts programme • Art workshop for local artists and producers held in March 2022. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Good</p>	

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<p>A10: Review and influence the content and delivery of visitor management plans and open space strategies surrounding the AONB to ensure they identify and promote sites, facilities and activities inside and outside the AONB boundary that will reduce the negative impacts of recreation on sensitive sites and species in the Chase.</p>	<p>The Cannock Chase Special Area for Conservation (SAC) Partnership has prepared Detailed Implementation Plans for Car Parks and Site Users within Cannock Chase. Preparatory work is underway to improve some car parks, but work has yet to start on the ground. The AONB Partnership issued a Position statement supporting the proposals in September 2020.</p> <p>In 2021 the AONB Partnership published car park landscape principles (2021) to support and inform the implementation of the proposals.</p>	<p>Less good</p>	<p>The AONB Visitor Management Strategy 2015 and AONB Interpretation Strategy 2016 are both out of date and need replacing. It is proposed to bring these together into a single Recreation Strategy in the new Plan.</p> <p>Led by the SAC Partnership, work is ongoing to deliver the SAC Detailed Implementation Plans.</p>
<p>A11: Develop the on-line/social media presence for the Chase, using this to promote its special qualities, co-ordinate information from partners and signpost to appropriate websites and other sources.</p>	<p>The AONB website was refreshed in 2022 to incorporate the Cannock Chase place brand. It will undergo another refresh in 2024 so that it is aligned with the National Landscape rename and rebrand.</p> <p>Social media presence was delayed pending the National Landscape rebrand, but is now beginning to be used. We have 1700 followers on X (formerly Twitter).</p> <p>Partners are beginning to co-ordinate messages around specific campaigns, eg, litter, dark skies, and dogs.</p>	<p>Less good</p>	<p>The National Landscape Partnership will need to strengthen its on-line social media presence to raise awareness about the Chase.</p>
<p>A12: Work with local partners to ensure appropriate advice and incentives are available and suitably targeted to farms and smallholdings in the AONB.</p>	<p>The AONB team ran an Environmental Land Management (ELM) advocacy project (Jan-Mar 2021), that provided farming insight and began to establish contacts with the farming community on the Chase.</p> <p>In July 2021, the AONB Team took on a new role delivering the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme. For the first time the AONB has been able to provide advice and</p>	<p>Exceeded</p>	<p>The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme concludes on 31 March 2025. Defra has indicated that funding will continue until 30 September 2025 to enable the programme to be closed down, and until 31 March 2027 for FiPL Officers to continue to have a technical role to help optimise the effectiveness and take-up of ELMs in</p>

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	<p>support for farmers and land managers to deliver outcomes for nature, climate, people and place.</p>		<p>alignment with protected landscape management plans, local priorities and the plans and the Targets and Outcomes Framework.</p> <p>The transition to the new Environmental Land Management Scheme will be completed by 2028.</p>
<p>A13: Identify and promote projects that enhance the landscape connectivity, biodiversity resilience and heritage value of countryside and public open space around the Chase.</p>	<p>The plan period has seen a number of new initiatives being delivered by partners, supported and facilitated in various ways by the National Landscape Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural England is delivering the Midlands Heathland Heartland (Purple Horizons) project, aiming to restore heathland connections between Cannock Chase and Sutton Park. • With £192,291 funding from National Grid’s Landscape Enhancement Initiative, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust is improving habitats on its Gentleshaw Common Nature Reserve (2019-25). • HS2 Environmental Enhancement projects (Shugborough woodpasturescape (creating 40ha of new/restored habitat); Trent Sow Washlands (restoring 50 ha of wet grassland/wetlands); connecting towpaths; Ingestre Orangery Garden; Shugborough Estate Gardens; Revealing Tixall’s Halls) • The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and Forestry England working together to restore heathland in the Connecting Cannock Chase corridors. • During its first three years, the Farming in Protecting Landscapes Programme has supported 809ha of habitat 	<p>Exceeded</p>	<p>The new Plan will need to embed national targets for nature set out in the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework.</p> <p>The new Plan will also need to embed any relevant local targets.</p>

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	<p>improvements, 5,373 metres of new hedgerow, and planted 479 native trees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heathland restoration by Staffordshire County Council at Cannock Chase Country Park and by Cemex on land adjoining their Rugeley Quarry. • In 2019 Staffordshire County Council, working with RSPB and Natural England entered into a new 10 year countryside stewardship scheme to move the open habitats on Cannock Chase Country Park into a favourable condition. 		
<p>A14: Assess updated historic environment information on non-designated features to prioritise sites for survey, condition assessment and monitoring to inform future management.</p>	<p>In 2020 an assessment of the historic environment resource of Cannock Chase categorised the significance of all the sites recorded for the Chase in the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record. In total it identified 89 sites of national importance, 364 of regional importance and 533 of local importance, and commented on their vulnerabilities, suitability for visitor access and interpretation.</p> <p>This was followed up in 2021 with a document that began to set out a vision for the historic environment of Cannock Chase, and contained advice and recommendations for the conservation of heritage assets and landscapes, as well as project ideas for improving access and interpretation. It identified four thematic story strands to help guide and shape the content and key messages for visitors, as well as a series of delivery zones and advice notes to assist future management and interpretation.</p>	<p>Less good</p>	<p>These studies have informed the preparation of an Historic Environment Strategy which is due to be published in 2024.</p> <p>The strategy will include a list of potential projects for the National Landscape Partnership to take forward in the new Plan period under the three aims of understanding, enjoying and caring.</p>

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<p>A15: Produce guidance on the significant view points and views, including historic views, into and out of the AONB.</p>	<p>A Views and Setting Guide was published and approved in July 2020, and distributed to Local Planning Authorities. The guidance is used as supporting text in local plans, and in landscape planning advice offered by the Team.</p> <p>Two sections of power lines were undergrounded during the Plan period at Moors Gorse (2019 – 3.5kms) and Shugborough (2021 – 1km).</p> <p>The Fixed Point Photography project has run throughout the plan period, monitoring landscape change.</p>	<p>Exceeded</p>	<p>Planning will continue to be a key component of the new plan under the Place theme.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to promote the use of the guide by LPAs, developers, householders and consultants.</p> <p>Further opportunities for undergrounding powerlines have been identified and shared with Western Power, and are awaiting a response as to whether or not they are likely to be progressed.</p> <p>The continuation of the Fixed Point Photography is important to monitor landscape change.</p>
<p>B1: Explore with SCC Highways Department, building on good practice, the practical steps that can be taken to reduce traffic impacts through the AONB.</p>	<p>The Highways Design guide has been updated and is due to be published in 2024.</p> <p>Scheme ideas / proposals for traffic calming, new route gateway markers, and gateway markers / information points on train stations have been put forward to the Staffordshire Local Transport Plan which is being updated in 2024.</p>	<p>Less good</p>	<p>Once adopted, the guide will need to be promoted and used by the highway authority and their contractors.</p> <p>Seek opportunities to reduce traffic impacts through the updated Staffordshire Local Transport Plan.</p>
<p>B2: Support the work of the Forestry Commission and other woodland owners and managers to deliver both long term forestry/woodland design plans and short-term woodland management operations in</p>	<p>The National Landscape Team has had little contact with woodland owners and managers during the current Plan period.</p> <p>Support for woodland managers is available through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (2021-25), but</p>	<p></p>	<p>The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme concludes on 31 March 2025. Defra has indicated that funding will continue until 30 September 2025 to enable the programme to be closed down, and until 31 March 2027 for FiPL Officers to continue to have a technical role to help optimise the</p>

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ways which enhance the AONB's special qualities	<p>tends to involve the creation and management of small-scale copses on farmland, rather than woodlands.</p> <p>Forestry England is preparing a new Forest Plan for Cannock Chase Forest covering the period 2024-34.</p>	Less good	<p>effectiveness and take-up of ELMs in alignment with protected landscape management plans, local priorities and the plans and the Targets and Outcomes Framework.</p> <p>The transition to the new Environmental Land Management Scheme will be completed by 2028.</p> <p>The new Plan will need to embed national targets for expanding tree and woodland cover set out in the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework.</p> <p>The new Plan will also need to embed any relevant local targets.</p>
B3: Prepare and publicise information, and offer advisory events, for rural non-farming landowners in the AONB on how they can help conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Chase.	Support and advice for non-farming landowners has been made available through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (2021-25). These include holding awareness-raising events.	Good	The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme concludes on 31 March 2025. Defra has indicated that funding will continue until 30 September 2025 to enable the programme to be closed down, and until 31 March 2027 for FiPL Officers to continue to have a technical role to help optimise the effectiveness and take-up of ELMs in alignment with protected landscape management plans, local priorities and the plans and the Targets and Outcomes Framework.

Actions	What has been delivered	Assessment of progress	Comment
			The transition to the new Environmental Land Management Scheme will be completed by 2028.
<p>B4: Work with stakeholders and local communities to develop a phased reintroduction of livestock grazing to key sites to support sustainable management.</p>	<p>During the plan period grazing has been reintroduced on the Chase at several locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Trust reintroduced grazing at Berry Hill in 2020. • Staffordshire County Council began a grazing trial at Moors Gorse in 2021, which has continued every subsequent summer. • Cemex introduced fenceless grazing on its land adjoining Rugeley Quarry in 2023. • In 2024, grazing should re-commence on the former 'Connecting Cannock Chase corridors', following a long-term lease between Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and the landowner Forestry England. • Grazing continues to be carried on Hednesford Hills LNR, just outside the AONB boundary. 	<p>Good</p>	<p>The reintroduction of livestock grazing at key sites remains work in progress and will continue to be a priority for conservation land management.</p>
<p>B5: Draw up a strategy and action plan for monitoring and managing the deer population in the Chase and engaging and informing the public about the need to manage the deer population.</p>	<p>During the plan period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A deer management group has met regularly. • Deer census and activity and impact studies have been carried out in 2022 and 2024. • Deer deflectors have been installed on road collision hotspots. 	<p>Less good</p>	<p>A deer management strategy and action plan needs to be prepared and adopted by the major landowners.</p>

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<p>B6: Monitor invasive species and support collaborative and targeted management to address them where required.</p>	<p>A list of non-native species to prioritise for targeted management is in preparation. Management has yet to take place.</p>	<p>Less good</p>	<p>Co-ordinated action for priority invasive non-native species will need to be included within the new Plan.</p>
<p>B7: Develop a project to identify suitable heathland restoration areas on conifer plantations, acquiring land for compensation planting and planning a phased approach to delivery.</p>	<p>A feasibility evaluation of a land exchange to return up to 650 has of the Cannock Chase public forest estate to heathland was published in 2020. The findings were discussed with Forestry England, but the estimated costs involved (for both the purchase and planting of compensatory land and restoration of the conifer plantations to heathland) were considered unaffordable, and a large-scale restoration project will not be progressed.</p>	<p>Not delivered</p>	<p>The review of the Cannock Chase Forest Design Plan 2024-34, identifies opportunities to increase the area of land being managed for nature, including lowland heathland.</p>
<p>B8: Through the Trent-Sow Parklands and Cannock Chase AONB HS2 Group, develop and influence design principles, mitigation measures and environmental enhancement measures for the HS2 route that will minimise impacts on, and conserve and enhance, the special qualities of the AONB</p>	<p>The AONB Partnership has participated in the Trent Sow Parklands HS2 Group throughout the plan period, and hosts the web pages for the group on its website. Design principles for the route of HS2 where it passes to the north of the AONB were signed off and endorsed by the AONB Partnership in 2020. The AONB Partnership also supported the development of the HS2 environmental enhancement programme, investing £1.5m in 6 projects.</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>The cancellation of HS2 north of Birmingham has removed the threat to the landscape north of the AONB. The work of the Trent Sow Parklands HS2 Group will continue for a short while into the new Plan period, focussing on making good construction compounds and site works, as well as monitoring delivery of the environmental enhancement programme.</p>

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<p>B9: Building on the success of 'The Chase Through Time', develop a project to engage local communities by celebrating the AONB's cultural heritage and involving them in historic environment citizen science activities.</p>	<p>Multiple historic environment projects have been delivered during the current Plan period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples on the Chase • Lens through the past • Trig point restoration • Conservation works at Castle Ring • Conservation of an assault training wall, part of RAF Hednesford camp • Interpretation panels telling the story of the Chase's military association have been installed at RAF Hednesford (5 panels), Brindley Heath (2 panels), and the Great War Hut (1 panel installed as part of the refresh of the Chase Heritage Trail). • A natural memorial has been created to the Armed Forces by sowing wildflowers on the footprint of 6 wartime barrack huts, accompanied by a new interpretation panel. 	<p>Exceeded</p>	<p>The new Historic Environment Strategy will include a list of potential projects for the National Landscape Partnership to take forward in the new Plan period under the three aims of understanding, enjoying and caring.</p>
<p>B10. Improve facilities at key visitor sites such as Marquis Drive to develop an enhanced visitor experience appropriate to a nationally important protected landscape.</p>	<p>Staffordshire County Council SCC has been successful with RDPE funding to refresh the interior interpretation at Cannock Chase visitor centre with RPDE funding.</p> <p>A new interactive touch-screen kiosk in Cannock Chase Visitor Centre tells the story of the Chase through 4 themes.</p> <p>In 2024 the County Council announced plans to re-develop Cannock Chase Visitor Centre as a discovery centre for the National Landscape.</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>The re-development of Cannock Chase Visitor Centre as a discovery centre for the National Landscape is a key visitor infrastructure investment and will be a key action within the new Plan as part of wider improvements to the overall visitor welcome and sense of arrival in the National Landscape.</p>

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<p>B11: Develop the 'Love Cannock Chase' project to promote the ways in which visitors and local businesses can protect and enhance the AONB's special qualities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Sense of Place toolkit for businesses was published in March 2021, and businesses have been encouraged to register for the use of business locators and imagery materials. Take up has been low. • Cannock Chase Welcome leaflet and Guide for visitors published. • Cannock Chase Code promotes responsible behaviours. • The AONB Partnership supported the Cannock Chase Cultural Education Partnership to develop activities engaging with young people 	<p>Good</p>	<p>Closer working relationships with local businesses in and around the National Landscape will continue to be developed.</p> <p>Greater use of the arts would help to celebrate the National Landscape and break down barriers to engagement.</p>
<p>B12: Work with facility providers and attractions within the AONB to encourage visitors to arrive by sustainable means of transport through provision of information, incentives such as discounts and the provision of facilities such as secure bicycle parking.</p>	<p>No known measures have been implemented during the current Plan period.</p>	<p>Not delivered</p>	<p>The new Plan will need to include actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help mitigate the impacts of climate change.</p>
<p>B13: Work with healthcare providers to develop and promote activity and wellbeing programmes suitable for different groups, based on key visitor sites.</p>	<p>Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles has introduced the Cannock Chase Can app to encourage local residents to make healthier lifestyle choices.</p> <p>Six new walking routes have been produced, together with trail leaflets and videos for Brindley Heath, Milford Common and RAF Hednesford.</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>Cannock Chase serves the local community as a place to take part in recreation, relax and enjoy. Actions that deliver outcomes for health and wellbeing will feature in the new Plan.</p>
<p>B14: Explore the development of an AONB quality mark for businesses within the AONB and wider local economy that</p>	<p>The existing Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark is promoted through the Sense of Place toolkit (published March 2021). A separate quality mark for the AONB was</p>	<p>Less good</p>	<p>Closer working relationships with local businesses in and around the National Landscape will continue to be developed.</p>

Actions	What has been delivered	Assessment of progress	Comment
support and help deliver the special qualities of the AONB.	considered unnecessary and duplication, and could not have been supported by the AONB Team.		
B15: Report progress with the new Ground Water modelling being undertaken by the Environment Agency and PWS companies to ensure sustainable abstractions.	Natural England has conducted a hydrological investigation in the Sherbrook Valley during 2024.	Less good	A healthy water environment remains a priority.
B16: Monitor the condition of designated heritage features in the AONB to identify management requirements.	<p>Condition surveys of all 7 scheduled monuments in the AONB have been completed.</p> <p>Chase Through Time volunteers have received training to assess the condition of non-designated heritage assets</p>	Good	Work is ongoing, and the new Plan will include actions to continue monitoring of heritage assets.
B17: Develop and deliver sustainable management regimes for heritage assets with land owners, managers, decision makers and local communities through raising their awareness of the historic environment and its significance and providing them with support and guidance.	<p>Management of heritage assets has been discussed and delivered with landowners through the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme.</p> <p>The restoration and conservation of a number of heritage assets is being delivered through the HS2 Environmental Enhancement programme.</p>	Good	The emerging Historic Environment Strategy will include a list of potential projects for the National Landscape Partnership to take forward in the new Plan period under the three aims of understanding, enjoying and caring.
B18: Proactively work with Partners to plan for future land use changes ensuring that opportunities are maximised to support and enhance the special qualities of the AONB	<p>During the plan period partners are delivering a range of examples of land use changes that are supporting and enhancing the special qualities of the AONB, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS2 Environmental Enhancement projects. • Midlands Heathland Heartlands (Purple Horizons) 		Ongoing work that needs to be included within the new plan.

Actions	What has been delivered	Assessment of progress	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenhouse Gas Emissions assessment undertaken and pathway to net zero prepared 2022, including land use targets • Cannock Chase Forest Design Plan and the potential contribution of the Forest to 30 X 30. • Phased restoration at Cemex quarry. • Castle Ring • Gentleshaw Common • Shoal Hill Common • Cannock Chase Country Park • Shugborough Estate 	Good	
B19: Increase awareness and appreciation of Local Geological Sites within the AONB amongst Partners and identify ways to coordinate their monitoring and management	A condition assessment of all 6 Local Geological Sites was carried out in 2021, and the findings reported to landowners. Three of the sites remained in good condition, with one site unchanged in an unfavourable state, and one site requiring further investigation. One site could not be accessed.	Good	The new plan will need to include a commitment to monitor sites, and act on any recommendations for their protection, conservation and interpretation.
B20: Work with education providers to coordinate, develop and promote educational opportunities that allow every local child to understand, experience and explore the natural benefits that the AONB has to offer	<p>The Future Guardians of Cannock Chase programme was launched in 2023. Developed with Cannock Chase SAC Partnership it provides a range of resource materials for Staffordshire Libraries, DofE, Girlguiding Staffordshire and Staffordshire Scouts. The content informs, explains and inspires about the special qualities that define the area, its vulnerabilities, and how young people can get involved to look after it.</p> <p>Campaigns and events to promote the value of dark skies have taken place in 2022 and 2023, with the support of CPRE Staffordshire and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.</p>	Good	Educational opportunities for children will need to be expanded in the new Plan period, including ongoing support for the Future Guardians programme, and the continuing educational work of the SAC Partnership.

Actions	What has been delivered	Assessment of progress	Comment
	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust has been running school awareness sessions with the support of the SAC Partnership.		

December 2024

Cannock Chase National Landscape Team