



COTSWOLDS CONSERVATION BOARD

BUSINESS PLAN 2010-2013

**March 2010
Final Version**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1.0 THE MANAGEMENT OF THE COTSWOLDS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)	5
1.1 <i>The Cotswolds AONB.....</i>	<i>5</i>
1.2 <i>The Cotswolds Conservation Board.....</i>	<i>6</i>
1.3 <i>The Cotswolds Conservation Board's Team.....</i>	<i>7</i>
1.4 <i>The Voluntary Wardens.....</i>	<i>8</i>
1.5 <i>The Cotswold Way National Trail</i>	<i>8</i>
1.6 <i>Representation on external organisations</i>	<i>8</i>
1.7 <i>Highlights from 2009 - 2010.....</i>	<i>9</i>
2.0 PRIORITIES FOR 2010/13.....	11
2.1 <i>The Board's Operating Context.....</i>	<i>11</i>
2.2 <i>Priorities for Delivery</i>	<i>12</i>
2.3 <i>Developmental Priorities</i>	<i>14</i>
3.0 THE BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS.....	14
3.1 <i>The Links between the Management Plan and Business Plan ..</i>	<i>14</i>
3.2 <i>Three Year Timescale.....</i>	<i>15</i>
3.3 <i>Prioritisation of the Three Year Work Programme.....</i>	<i>15</i>
3.4 <i>Section 85 compliance</i>	<i>16</i>
3.5 <i>Consultation with Natural England and Local Authorities.....</i>	<i>16</i>
3.6 <i>Monitoring & review of the Business Plan</i>	<i>16</i>
4.0 FUNDING OF THE 2010/13 BUSINESS PLAN	17
4.1 <i>Overall Expenditure and Income</i>	<i>17</i>
4.2 <i>Natural England Funding</i>	<i>20</i>
4.3 <i>Local Authority Funding</i>	<i>21</i>
4.4 <i>Other Funding accounted for within the Business Plan</i>	<i>21</i>
4.5 <i>Other Funding not accounted for within the Business Plan.....</i>	<i>21</i>
4.6 <i>Reserve List</i>	<i>22</i>
5.0 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE	23
APPENDIX 1a. Cotswolds Conservation Board Structure	24
APPENDIX 1b. Board Members and their Responsibilities	24
APPENDIX 2. Local Authority Financial Contributions	27
APPENDIX 3. Schedule of Meetings for 2010	28
APPENDIX 4. Three Year Work Programme	29
APPENDIX 5 Budget	30

Cotswolds Conservation Board
Fosse Way
Northleach
Gloucestershire
GL54 3JH
Tel: 01451 862000
Fax: 01451 862001
E-mail: info@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk
Website: www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Business Plan sets out the work programme for the Cotswolds Conservation Board for the three year period from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2013. The budget required for this work programme, is £3,451,333 over the three years (Appendix 5).

The Conservation Board has two purposes:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB
- To increase understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB.

In fulfilling these roles, the Board has a duty to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the AONB.

Within the context of the Board's two purposes and duty, the Conservation Board has identified the following issues as its priorities for 2010/13:

1. Climate Change
2. Policy Development dissemination and implementation
3. Conservation and enhancement of the Cotswold's natural beauty
4. Active Enjoyment of the Cotswolds
5. Awareness of the Cotswolds

These are discussed in more detail in Section 2.0.

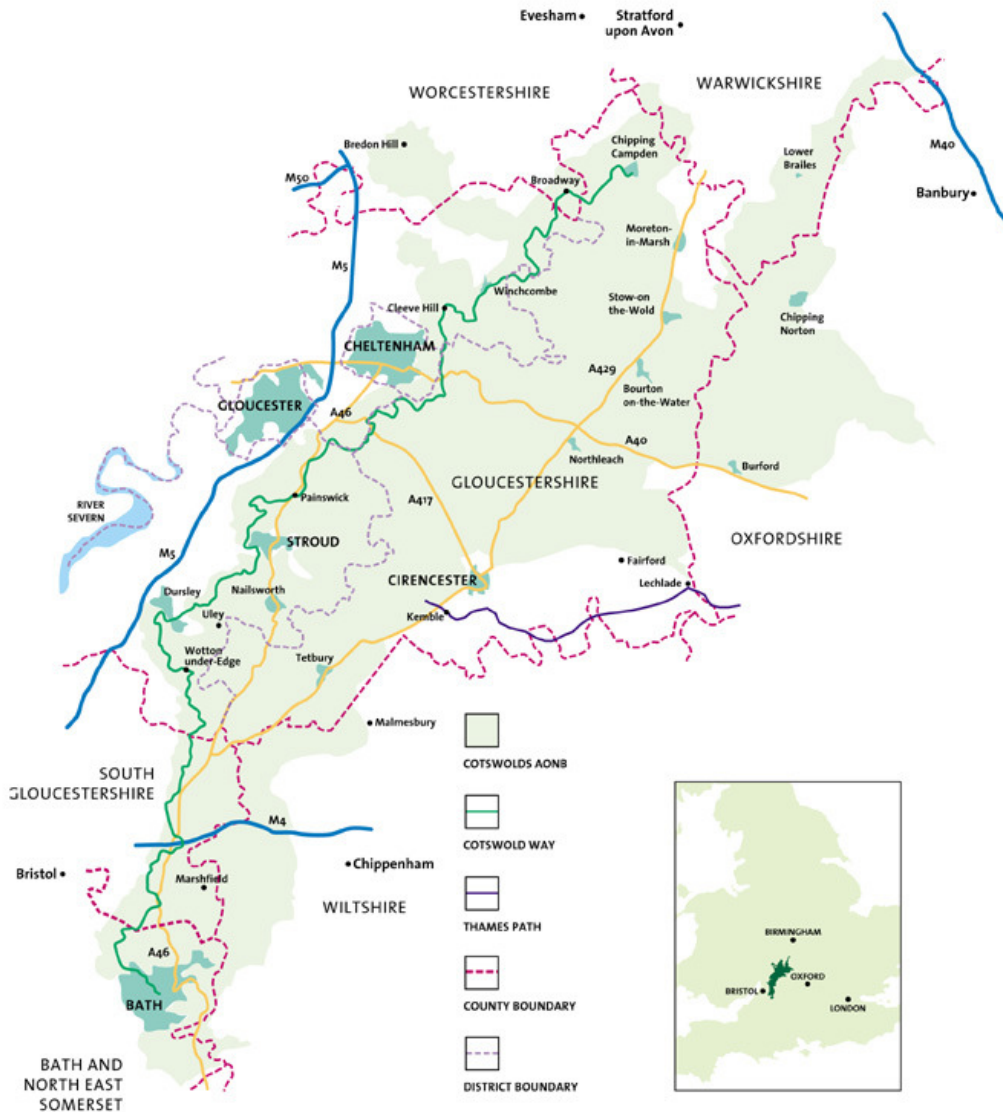
The Business Plan is the tool by which we convert the Management Plan's objectives and policies into action and delivery. It contains the activity that will be led by named officers in order to deliver the Management Plans Tasks. The Business Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis, as outlined in Section 3.0, to ensure its successful implementation.

The Business Plan includes a Corporate Governance Action Plan (Section 5.0) which sets out the actions required to ensure the effective management and running of the Conservation Board. Priorities for Corporate Governance are:

- Maintain adequate reserves;
- Widen and strengthen the Board's funding base;
- Review equalities policy
- Address issues arising out of the annual audit

1.0 THE MANAGEMENT OF THE COTSWOLDS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

1.1 The Cotswolds AONB



The Cotswolds AONB is one of 40 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England and Wales. It is the largest AONB in the country, covering 790 sq miles (2038 sq kms) and is the second largest protected landscape in England (the Lake District National Park is the largest). The Cotswold Way National Trail runs along its western edge.

The Cotswolds AONB overlaps with 15 local authority areas and three regions. Many of the partner organisations involved in managing the AONB are also divided along local authority or regional boundaries, making co-ordinated and consistent management of the AONB a real challenge.

1.2 The Cotswolds Conservation Board

The statutory purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of AONBs. The Conservation Board has an additional purpose to increase public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area and also has a duty to seek to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities. These additional roles bring the responsibilities of the Conservation Board more in-line with those of National Park Authorities than those of AONB Partnerships, although this is not reflected in the level of funding received by the Conservation Board (see Section 4).

The Board comprises 37 Board members: 14 nominated by the Secretary of State, 15 nominated by the Local Authorities and eight nominated by the Parish Councils. The Board has an Executive Committee comprised of 12 Board members: five from the Local Authority members, two from the Parish Council members and five from the Secretary of State members. Background information on the Board members is available on the Board's website at <http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=BoardMembers>

The Board meets four times a year and the Executive Committee meets eight times a year. The Board operates four sub committees of the Executive Committee:

- Living & Working (Planning & Transportation)
- Conserving & Managing (Land Management)
- Enjoying & Appreciating (Communication & Awareness)
- Grants

In addition the Board operates a series of Topic Working Groups, each chaired by a member of the Board:

- Planning
- Transport
- Biodiversity
- Cotswold Way National Trail

The Board also has a Standards Committee.

A schedule of the meetings of the Board, Executive, Sub Committee, Forum for Partners and Cotswold Way National Trail Working Group is provided in appendix 3.

The Board elects its Chairman, Vice Chairman, Executive and Sub Committee members each year at its AGM, held in December. The Board's Chairman is Jeff West and the Vice Chairman is Liz Eyre.

The Board's Patron is The Lord Plumb. DL FRAGS

A full list of Board Members and their responsibilities is provided in Appendix 1b.

1.3 The Cotswolds Conservation Board's Team

The Board employs a team of staff based in Northleach, Gloucestershire, who are managed by the Director, Martin Lane (see Appendix 1a). The team consists of staff and advisers.

Staff:

- Director – Martin Lane
- Business Planning & Project Development Officer Simon Smith
- Information & Interpretation Officer – Nicola Greaves
- Planning Officer – Malcolm Watt (part time, 80%)
- Office Manager – Margaret Fletcher
- Land Management Officer – Mark Connelly
- Volunteer Coordinator – Becky Jones (part time)
- Administrative Officer – Claire Parker (part time)
- Student Placement – Tom Pocklington
- Technical Accountant – John Hunt (part time)
- Cotswold Way National Trail Officer – James Blockley
- Cotswold Way Assistant National Trail Officer – Don Field
- Rural Skills and Grants Officer - David Molloy (part time)

Advisers:

- Finance Officer – Reg Talbot (via a contract with Talbot Audit & Review Services Ltd)
- Monitoring Officer - Nigel Adams (via a Service Level Agreement with Cotswold District Council)
- Committee Clerk – Stephen Holley & Nigel Adams (via a Service Level Agreement with Cotswold District Council)

Voluntary Wardens:

- Head Warden – David Colbourne
- Deputy Head Warden – Simon Malltratt

The Board also provides office space for Natural England's Farmland Birds Project Officer, Neil Harris and provides a hot desk facility for other members of Natural England's Gloucestershire team.

Service Level Agreements (SLAs) are in place with Cotswold District Council to cover payroll, personnel, legal and committee services. IT requirements are covered by a contract with Cheltenham Computer Centre Ltd (formerly Notebooks). Internal Audit provision is provided through a contract with Central England Audit & Consultancy (CEAC), with David Shelmerdine, Managing Director with CEAC as the Board's Head of Internal Audit. The Board's External Auditor is the Audit Commission, with Alex Walling as the Audit Manager.

The Conservation Board also hosts the National Association for AONBs. (employing one member of staff and providing office space for 2.5 staff).

1.4 The Voluntary Wardens

The Voluntary Wardens are the voluntary arm of the Conservation Board. There are currently 353 Voluntary Wardens each contributing at least 8 hours a month. They undertake a wide array of activities on behalf of the board including practical conservation and access projects, guided walks, talks and attending events. The Voluntary Wardens are of great significance to the board not only because of their number and the scale of their activities but because they represent a large part of the Boards contact with the public.

1.5 The Cotswold Way National Trail

Increased access to the countryside helps to ensure its protection through enhanced and wider understanding, and this is a key feature of the Cotswold Way and other National Trails. With increased access however, comes increased pressure on the fabric of the trails. The Board seeks to balance these pressures through proactive and reactive maintenance, information provision and active engagement with trail users, volunteers, landowners and a wide range of other stakeholders. Through this process, the Cotswold Way makes a significant contribution to the understanding, enjoyment and protection of the very special landscape through which it runs.

The elevation of the Cotswold Way to National Trail standard commenced in 1998 and was wholly funded by Natural England and its predecessor bodies.

With continued funding from Natural England, The Cotswolds Conservation Board takes responsibility for its ongoing protection, development, promotion and maintenance in partnership with the four highways authorities (HAs) through which the Trail runs, namely Worcestershire County Council, Gloucestershire County Council, South Gloucestershire Council and Bath and North East Somerset Council. The Cotswolds Conservation Board manages the distribution of Natural England funds for the Cotswold Way to the HAs concerned.

1.6 Representation on external organisations

To ensure the successful implementation of its purposes and duties, the Conservation Board works in partnership with a wide range of organisations. The Board is represented on a number of these organisations as outlined below:

- National Association for AONBs (NAAONB)
- Cotswolds and Forest of Dean Tourism (DMO)
- South West and South East Protected Landscape Forums (SWPLF and SEPLF)
- Europarc Federation and the Europarc Atlantic Isles Section of the Federation.
- Cotswolds Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

- National Trails Staff Forum

It is worth noting that Board members are well represented in many relevant organisations, including the South West Regional Development Agency, National Farmers' Union and Forestry Commission (see the Conservation Board's website for more details www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk).

1.7 Highlights from 2009 – 2010

- Circular walks from the Cotswold Way project launched. Series of 12 short walks designed to break down the perceived barriers that prevent a wider range of people accessing the AONB. Within a year, it became the most popular aspect of the CWNT website. Unique approach emulated by local and national partners
- Cotswold Way hall of fame launched. End-to-enders completing the trail receive a badge of achievement, and prospective walkers have access to a continuously growing list of 'customer reviews' from real people, whilst the trail office has another tool for gauging use and satisfaction
- Large number of long-standing infrastructure issues resolved along the Cotswold Way including opening of new route around Cleeve Hill, waymarking across Selsley Common and opening of new route through the outskirts of Bath
- Working closely with voluntary wardens, volunteer workparties, highway authorities and other partners, Cotswold Way trail maintenance elevated to fulfill National Trail Quality Standards as laid down by Natural England. Total budget for maintenance = £42,000
- Successful Annual Forum held on 26 February on the subject of Climate Change and the future of farming and forestry in the Cotswolds. The event attracted over 80 delegates with key speakers from Defra, Natural England, Forestry Commission and NFU plus 3 case studies on renewable energy projects.
- Officially registered as a candidate for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. A number of positive meetings have taken place with tourism stakeholders across the AONB and the core of a permanent sustainable tourism working group has been established.
- Successful workshop held on 28 January with tourism businesses in the AONB as part of the SE Protected Landscape's '*Sustainable tourism in our finest landscapes*' project'. This formed part of the first phase of a funding bid to RDPE to develop tourism product packages based around protected landscapes.
- Work has started on the development of a visitor centre for the AONB at Northleach, including appointment of a designer for the interpretation materials. Draft designs and text for the information panels have been produced and a listed building application submitted for the works to be carried out to the building.
- The Board negotiated a significant financial contribution from National Grid towards the mitigation of the impact on the landscape and communities

affected by the construction of a gas pipeline from Wormington to Sapperton.

- Environmental Guidelines for highway works in the Cotswolds AONB adopted by the Board and most highway authorities, including the Highways Agency
- Position Statement on Tranquility and Dark Skies adopted by the Board.
- Board gained statutory consultee status for National Planning Statements and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Proposals
- Responses to National Planning Statements (Energy), Core Strategy consultations, Draft Planning Policy Statement 15 (Historic Environment), significant planning applications, and Local Transport Plan 3 consultations.
- The Cotswolds Open Drystone Walling Competition took place on Sunday October 4th at Slade Farm, Bourton-on-the-Hill. 21 drystone wallers competed in 4 classes.
- The Farmland Bird Project has continued to go from strength to strength. So far over 72 farms have been visited, leading to 65 FEPs covering 21,700ha.
- A part time project officer was appointed for the Cotswolds Ancient Woodland Project. The project has focused on contacting woodland owners promoting the need to manage ancient woodlands and providing grant information and assistance in completing applications to the EWGS
- 27 hedgelayers competed in the 10th North Cotswolds Hedgelaying Competition on November 21st, alongside the Fosse Way at Foss Cross near Calmsden. The Central District Work party laid the rest of the hedge completing a run of over 600 yards.
- Thirteen full applications to the Sustainable Development Fund were considered by the Grants Sub-Committee. Of these applications, eight were successful in securing grants, valuing at total of over £31,000.
- Over £10,000 was awarded through the Sustainable Development Fund to projects promoting sustainable transport and green tourism in the Cotswolds.
- Twenty rural skills courses were organised by the Board, including dry-stone walling, hedgelaying, green woodwork, hurdle making and thatching.
- Over 180 people attended rural skills courses, receiving training in a variety of traditional Cotswold Skills.
- The Board secured and successfully implemented its preferred option for restructuring to take account of local government reorganisation in Wiltshire, reducing from 40 to 37 Board Members (15 local authority, 8 parish council and 14 Secretary of State appointees)
- The Board secured a new Parliamentary Order, applying the Financial Reporting Standard 17 (FRS17) to the Conservation Boards in the same way as it is applied to local authorities. This resulted in pension funds of circa £ 40,000 which had been frozen in the Boards accounts being released for projects.
- The Board received an unqualified audit and value for money audit opinion on its 2008/09 accounts from its external auditor, the Audit Commission. A year on year improvement in the Audit Commission's Annual Audit Letter.

During 2008/09 the Voluntary Wardens gave 41,719 hours of their time, equating to £271,000 in financial terms. Their work included:

- leading 261 published walks attended by 3,929 people
- patrolling 3,634 miles of rights of way
- liaising with 400 landowners and parish councils
- planting 892 trees
- installing 155 gates for easier access
- laying 1,090 metres of hedge
- working on 21 grassland sites (9.3ha) and 23 woodland sites (5ha)
- attending 47 shows and giving 54 talks

2.0 PRIORITIES FOR 2010/13

2.1 The Board's Operating Context

Three interlinked overarching external 'forces for change' will impact significantly on the Cotswolds AONB:

- Climate change and our response to it
- The effects of globalisation on agricultural land use
- Pressures from development, changing lifestyles and transportation

The AONB cannot be immune to their effects. Moreover these issues will affect the special qualities of the AONB.

The above is taken from the Board's Management Plan 2008 – 2013 written over the autumn and winter of 2007. It still serves to describe our operating context remarkably well although new factors are now also coming into play.

Climate change still dominates as the over-riding issue of our time and our actions are slowly becoming better informed. The publication of the Board's report on the impact of climate change on farming and forestry is a significant step in this process.

Climate change has also impacted on wider thinking concerning the conservation of biodiversity. The focus has moved from the management of isolated sites to helping our wildlife adapt to climate change on a landscape scale. The need for action is urgent as it is now becoming clear that nationally, efforts to date have failed to achieve the UK 2010 biodiversity targets.

Globalisation is likely to become increasingly influential particularly through the impact of fuel pricing. Global oil production per capita is now widely thought to have peaked in around 1979. Irrespective of behaviour & policy change connected with carbon dioxide emissions, the price of oil based products including fuel can only rise over time.

The impact of fuel pricing and the requirement to mitigate the causes of climate change will combine to drive change. It is likely that geography will become increasingly important, and both people and products will be travelling less.

The impact of the global recession over the last 12 – 24 months has provided a stern lesson in the global nature of our economics. This has impacted on public finances through both lost revenues and the costs of public intervention. A consequence of this is that public finances are under considerable pressure and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future.

It will become increasingly important for the Board to understand and communicate the wider environmental, social and economic benefits of both its work and the Cotswolds in general. The evidence base for these benefits is already developing, for example the mental and physical health benefits of a high quality “natural” environment and the provision of other public benefits and “ecosystem services” such as carbon storage and flood mitigation.

Conserving and enhancing the special nature and character of the Cotswolds whilst helping people to enjoy the place in the face of these changes will be the board’s defining challenge for the life of this plan and beyond.

As well as these global issues the work programme will also be delivered within a distinctive local context. The board will also need to consider local issues such as an ageing population, high second home ownership and new technology (or the lack of it) such as high speed broadband.

2.2 Priorities for Delivery

The Conservation Board team has identified five areas of work that it considers to have over-arching importance for the lifetime of the 2010-2013 Business Plan, but particularly in 2010/11. These five areas of work are:

- Climate Change
- Policy Development and Implementation
- Conservation and enhancement the Cotswolds natural beauty
- Active Enjoyment of the Cotswolds
- Awareness of the Cotswolds

These five areas of work are explained in more detail below:

1) Climate Change:

Climate change is identified in the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2008-2013 as one of the overarching external ‘forces for change’ which will impact significantly on the Cotswolds AONB.

As the AONB is a landscape designation, it is right that the Board focuses on the landscape impacts of climate change. Agricultural land accounts for 86% of the total area of the AONB and woodland accounts for a further 10% - 96% combined – so the starting point for understanding climate change in the AONB is to look at its potential impacts on farming and forestry and the ways in which these impacts can be mitigated and adapted to (including adaptation strategies for biodiversity). This work will be followed by the production of a wider Climate Change Action Plan.

2) Policy Development and Implementation:

Although the Conservation Board carries out a significant amount of on-the-ground activity, the Board's other key route for achieving its purposes is to influence local, regional and national policies and programmes to incorporate measures that address the purposes of the AONB. The Board achieves this by developing policies, guidance and position statements, which it then feeds into consultation responses on a wide range of issues, particularly planning, transport and agri-environment consultations.

3) Conservation and enhancement the Cotswolds natural beauty

This is an underpinning purpose for the policy development and implementation work but it is also the purpose behind a great deal of direct project work such as the Farmland Bird and Ancient Woodland Projects. Climate change has also impacted on the wider thinking concerning the conservation of biodiversity. The focus has moved from the management of isolated sites to helping our wildlife adapt to climate change on a landscape scale. This means two things, large sites where species can move as their "niche" changes to new aspects or elevations and permeable landscapes that enable wildlife to move north towards a new "climate space". The Board is well placed to deliver these new ecological imperatives for example the proposed creation an 80 mile long wildlife corridor based on the Cotswolds scarp running from Bath to Mickleton.

4) Active Enjoyment of the Cotswolds:

The Board is keen to encourage a wide range of people to actively enjoy the Cotswolds AONB, be it on a guided walk or trying their hand at a range of rural skills. In particular, the Board wants to promote this active enjoyment of the AONB to a new audience – people from communities in the surrounding urban areas. We also need to think about those that live within the AONB, but are not "users" of the AONB – and about the small parcels of deprivation within the AONB's rural communities. The Cotswold Way National Trail and the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens will provide a focus for this active enjoyment.

5) Awareness of the Cotswolds:

The Board's communication and publicity activities, including the Cotswold Lion newspaper and website, provide a vital mechanism for raising awareness of and support for the special qualities of the Cotswolds, its designation as an AONB and the work of the Conservation Board. The creation of a new interpretive visitor centre in the heart of the Cotswolds will provide a unique facility for local residents and visitors to improve their understanding and awareness of the AONB and the work of the Board.

2.3 Developmental Priorities

Key development priorities for the year ahead include;

- My Countryside – helping people overcome barriers to their enjoyment of the Cotswolds
- Farming & Forestry study – applying the lessons learned
- Rural skills – broadening the range of courses delivered and bidding to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a new training bursary scheme.
- Interpretive visitor centre – Information for the public in the middle of the Cotswolds
- The development of a three-year strategy to guide the management and promotion of the National Trail after March 2011
- The Cotswolds scarp corridor – helping our wildlife adapt to climate change

3.0 THE BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS

3.1 The Links between the Management Plan and Business Plan

The Conservation Board adopted a new Management Plan in March 2008.

The Cotswolds AONB Management Plan sets out a future vision of the Cotswolds AONB in 20 years time and the proposed policies that will be pursued to try to achieve it over a five year period.

The Business Plan is the means by which the Management Plan is translated into a detailed work programme. The work programme presented in this Business Plan is therefore structured around the Management Plan theme headings:

- Climate Change
- Globalisation
- Development Pressures
- Landscape
- Rural Land Management

- Natural Resources
- Historic Environment
- Biodiversity
- Development and Transport
- Awareness and Appreciation
- Enjoying and Exploring

As in the Management Plan, under each of these headings there are a number of ‘actions’ and ‘tasks’. The ‘actions’ are for implementation through the efforts of all organisations involved in the management of the Cotswolds AONB. The ‘tasks’ represent the activity to be implemented by the Board as its contribution to the implementation of the ‘action’. The purpose of this plan is to guide the activities of the Board, and to encourage the collective efforts of all concerned with the Cotswolds. Consequently the work programme takes the tasks as its starting point. In some cases the tasks identified in the Management Plan have been further split into sub-tasks in the Business Plan to help provide clarity on the outputs from the task.

3.2 Three Year Timescale

The Board undertakes its business planning by looking at a three year period and reviewing it on an annual rolling basis. This allows sufficient time to assess the impact of the board’s work whilst remaining reactive to changing priorities and opportunities. Whilst the Business Plan identifies budgets and outputs over a three year period, these budgets and outputs are not set in stone. The Board will review the work programme each year to make sure that it is focussing on the most appropriate actions and priorities, providing flexibility to respond to external drivers such as changes to Natural England priorities and external funding opportunities that may arise.

3.3 Prioritisation of the Three Year Work Programme

For each task in the Business Plan, the Conservation Board has given a priority ranking, based on the Board’s considered and consensual view of the relative importance of each task:

The Business Plan’s work programme table (Appendix 4) has been colour coded to reflect the scoring for each task:

- Task completed - yellow
- High priority – green
- Medium priority – orange
- Low priority – pink

Rows in the table with no shading are those tasks that have been further divided into sub-tasks, with the sub-tasks being given the priority score. Rows

in the table coloured blue are projects we wish to deliver but currently lack the funds for (See 4.6 Reserve List).

Priorities will change over time, particularly as this is the last 3 year business plan being wholly delivered entirely under the current management plan. The work programme allows for this as it is possible to give the same task a different priority in different years. These priorities will be reviewed annually.

3.4 Section 85 compliance

Compliance with the policies, and furtherance of the actions, of the AONB Management Plan will be the way by which public bodies will be able to demonstrate compliance with their duty under Section 85 of the CROW Act 2000 to “have regard to” the purposes of the designation of the AONB.

3.5 Consultation with Natural England and Local Authorities

The Conservation Board has formally consulted Natural England and the local authorities on a draft version of the 2010/13 Business Plan during the period 1 November to 30 November 2009.

3.6 Monitoring & Review of the Business Plan

The Business Plan will be regularly reviewed by the team, and reported to the Executive Committee and / or Board, to monitor progress on implementing the work programme and to identify new activities, as outlined below.

- March 2010 (for Board meeting on 25/3)
 - 2010/13 Business Plan approved by the Board
- May 2010 (for Executive Committee meeting on 20/5)
 - Annual Review for 2009/10
 - Statement of Accounts 2009/10
- June 2010 (for Board meeting on 24/6):
 - Annual Review for 2009/10
 - Statement of Accounts 2009/10
- July 2010 (for Executive Committee on 22/7):
 - Quarter 1 Review
- September 2010 (for Executive Committee on 09/9):
 - Draft 1 of the 2011/14 Business Plan (including budgets)
- October 2010 (for Board meeting on 7/10):
 - Draft 1 of the 2011/14 Business Plan (including budgets)
 - Quarter 1 Review
- November 2010 (for Executive Committee on 4/11):

- Quarter 2 Review
 - Update on the 2011/14 Business Plan
- November 2010 (for Executive Committee on 25/11)
 - Draft 2 of the 2011/14 Business Plan
- December 2010 (for Board meeting on 9/12):
 - Draft 2 of the 2011/14 Business Plan
 - Quarter 2 Review
- January 2011 (for Executive Committee meeting):
 - Quarter 3 Review
- February 2011 (for Executive Committee meeting)
 - Draft 3 of the 2011/14 Business Plan (based on confirmed grant offers from Natural England)
- March 2011 (for Board meeting)
 - The 2011/14 Business Plan presented to the Board for approval
 - Quarter 3 Review

The Board's schedule of meetings for 2010 is shown in Appendix 3.

4.0 FUNDING OF THE 2010/13 BUSINESS PLAN

4.1 Overall Expenditure and Income

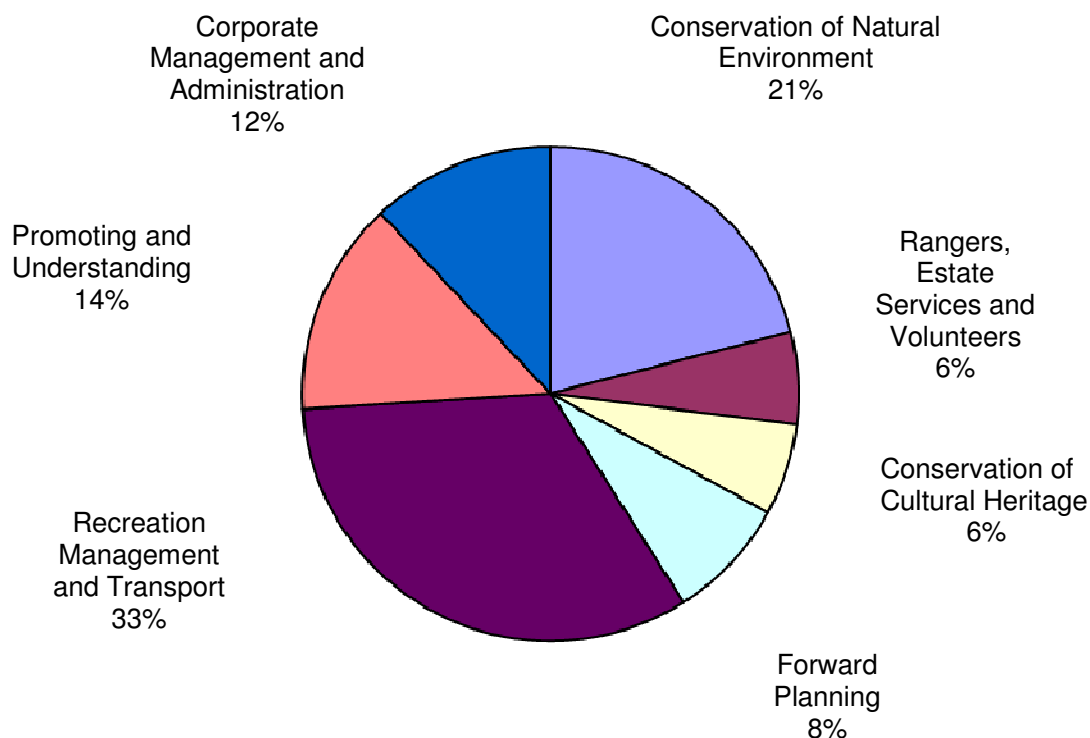
As indicated in Section 2.2 above, the Business Plan outlines a three year work programme for the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2013 (see Appendix 5). The Cotswold's Conservation Board's total budget for this period comes to £3,451,333.

For 2010/11 the split of the Board's anticipated expenditure is shown in the pie graph on the following page:

These expenditure figures include only the core activities and projects that the board expects to receive adequate funding for. It does not include additional activity that will be delivered if planned bids are successful. Nor does it include the full value of the board's work, for example the voluntary wardens delivered over 41,000 hours of work in 2008/09, valued at over £ 270,000.

A conservative estimate of the additional value brought to the Cotswolds by the Board through voluntary effort and bid development (see section 4.5) is over £1.5 million during the life of this plan. If this included the targeting and facilitating of agri-environment schemes in the area, or funding in mitigation of developments the figure could be considerably higher. For example the measures negotiated in addition to the mitigation of the Wormington – Sapperton pipeline are estimated to be worth around £1.2 million (including landowner match for walling grants).

Expenditure 2010/11



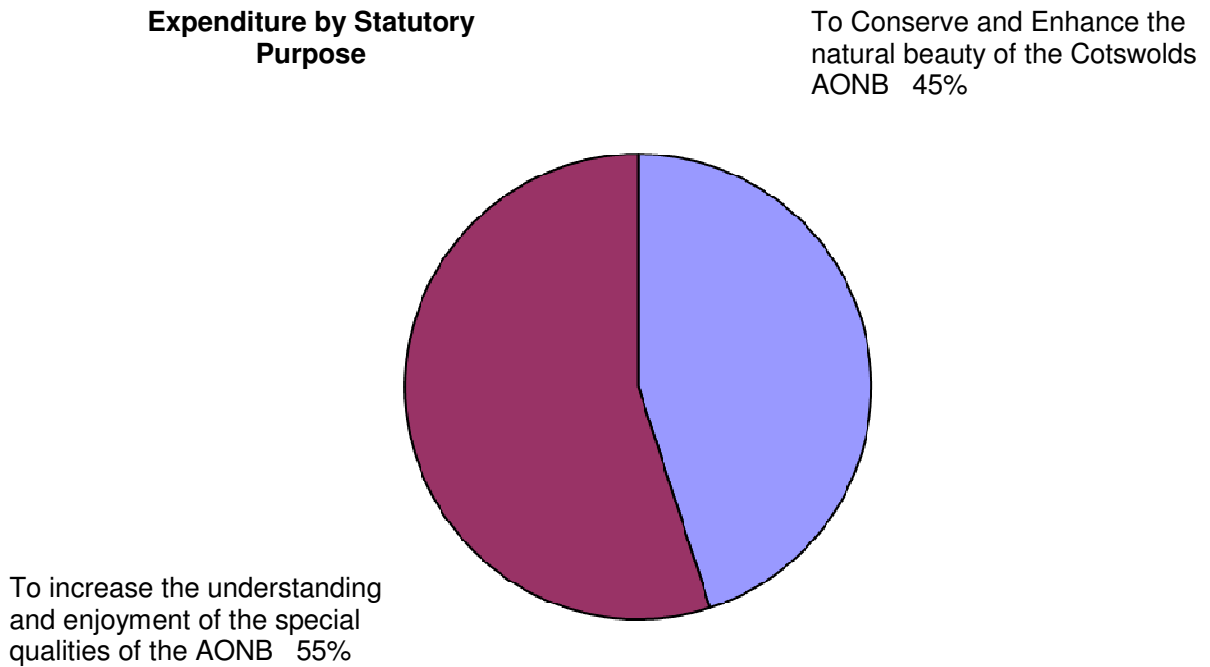
The headings used in this chart are the headings used in the Board's annual Statement of Accounts. They reflect best practice for standard expenditure analysis, as recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA). Their use allows for comparisons with National Parks. Employee costs and running costs are split between the headings, based on the proportion of staff time spent on activity under each heading.

The highest expenditure (33%) is on Recreation Management and Transport. Just over half of this is the budget for the Cotswold Way National Trail (16% of total expenditure).

In this plan, the "Rangers, Estate Services and Volunteers" heading is only used for expenditure in relation to supporting volunteers in particular but not exclusively the Voluntary Wardens.

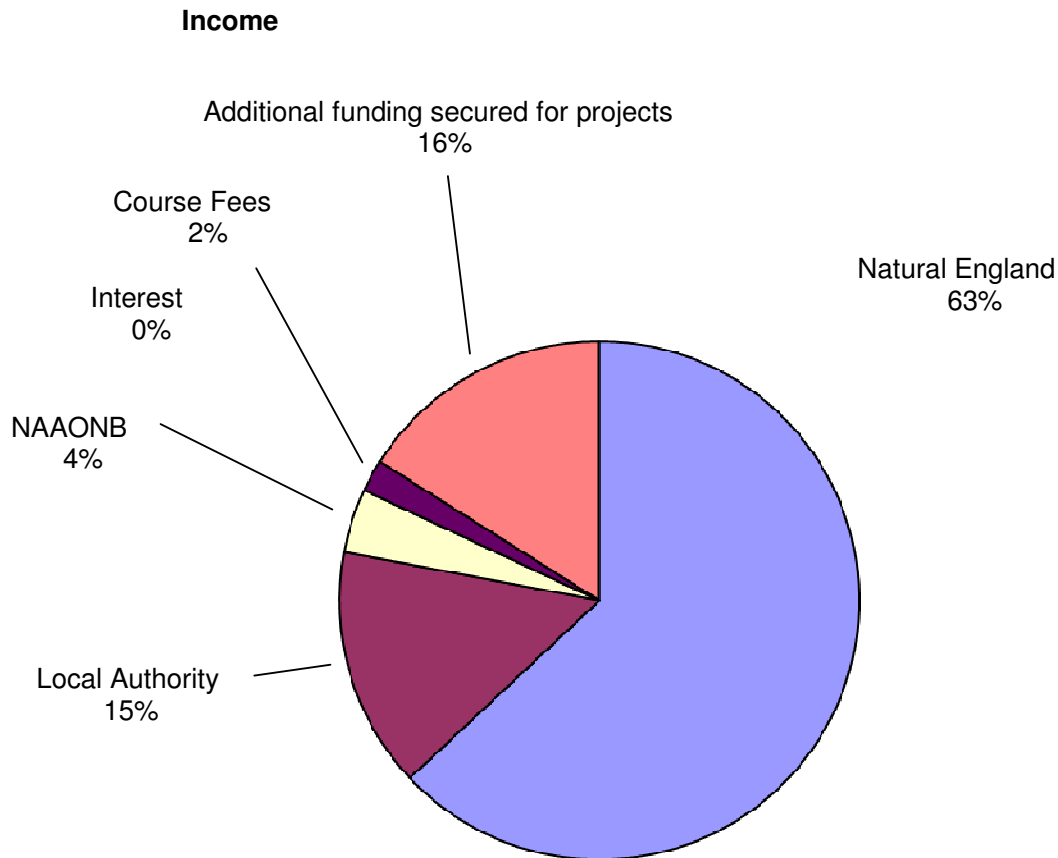
"Forward Planning" refers to work undertaken to influence the policies documents and decisions that form the planning framework, often called strategic planning. Any corporate or business planning undertaken to guide the work of the board is included under Corporate Management and Administration not this heading.

The chart below compares expenditure in relation to the Boards two statutory purposes.



This has been calculated by allocating the areas of expenditure to the statutory purposes. Corporate Management and Administration has been divided between the two. Consequently the “understanding and enjoyment” purpose includes the budget for the Cotswold Way National Trail at 16% of total expenditure.

The split of the Board's anticipated income for 2010/11 is shown in the chart below:



4.2 Natural England Funding

Natural England aspires to provide a rolling three year funding arrangement with the Conservation Board. At present, Natural England's funding commitments for the 'single pot' grant are as follows:

- **2010/11:** Natural England will provide 100% of its 2009/10 contribution of £577,926 (no increase to allow for inflation).
- **2011/12:** The Conservation Board will receive no less than 95% of its 2009/10 grant. During 2010/11, guidance will be produced explaining how individual performance will be measured, enabling the additional 5% funding to be released.
- **Future Arrangements:** It is Natural England's intention to commit to a second three year agreement for the three years 2011/12-2013/14. Between now and 2011/12, Natural England will review how its grant is allocated between AONBs. [N.B. The Conservation Board's income forecasts are based on Natural England providing 100% of its 2008/09

grant offer to 2013/14. However, as part of Natural England's review of how its grant is allocated between AONBs, the Conservation Board will lobby for an increased % of the national AONB grant to reflect the relatively large size, population and bureaucratic complexity of the Cotswolds AONB and its additional responsibilities.]

The Cotswold Way grant is currently allocated on a year-by-year basis, pending the outcome of the National Trails Review. It is anticipated to be £197,259. The Board's aspiration is that the Cotswold Way grant will become part of the 'single pot' grant, which would help to streamline the grant process and provide more security for the Cotswold Way grant.

Natural England has reviewed how its own objectives and targets are reflected in the actions and tasks of the Conservation Board's Business Plan. This process has identified strong links between the two, demonstrating that the Conservation Board's work programme will help to implement Natural England's priorities.

4.3 Local Authority Funding

The contributions of the individual local authorities are proportional to the area of the AONB that they occupy. The anticipated funding from each local authority for 2009/10 is shown in Appendix 2, totalling £180,230. The forecast local authority income for 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 is based on the 2009/10 figure, plus inflation in line with RPI (estimated as 1.5% for the purposes of the Business Plan), in line with the Board's Partnership Agreement.

The 25% contribution from Highway Authorities for maintenance and depreciation works on the Cotswold Way National Trail totalling £6886 is not included in these figures. Nor does this money pass through the Board's accounts.

4.4 Other Funding accounted for within the Business Plan

In addition to Natural England and local authority funding, the Conservation Board also anticipates the following income over the three year period of the Business Plan:

- National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) (£148,514) – this is the funding anticipated from NAAONB to cover the costs of hosting the NAAONB officer. However, the NAAONB has approached the Conservation Board to provide office space for additional NAAONB officers, which would provide additional income.
- Countryside Fund (£18,000): this is income generated by the Voluntary Wardens through their programme of walks, talks and work parties. The money is ring-fenced for on-the-ground activity by volunteers.

- Interest (£8,000): this is the income anticipated from interest on the Conservation Board's bank account.
- Course fees (£69,096): this is the income anticipated from the Board's rural skills courses.
- Income for project and walling grants from National Grid (£386,000) resulting from a new gas pipeline.

4.5 Other Funding not accounted for in the Business Plan

There are a variety of bids in development and ideas for further bids that may or may not be realised during the life of this business plan. Opportunities unforeseen at the time of writing will also inevitably arise. As the outcome of any one bid is not guaranteed figures for bids in progress have not been included in the budget. This is an area of work that changes constantly and this section will become dated the moment it is written, however the examples below will help illustrate its potential impact (even if none of them actually happen!).

- My Countryside – an Access to Nature bid for £370,000 to employ two additional officers who will engage people facing barriers to participation both within the Cotswolds AONB and in the surrounding urban communities.
- The Cotswolds Scarp Corridor. Creation an 80 mile long wildlife corridor based on the Cotswolds scarp running from Bath to Mickleton. If agreed as a regional priority, a bid for £120,000 of landfill tax credit funding would be prepared and possibly a Heritage Lottery Fund bid too. The resulting project would ensure the spending of hundreds of thousands of pounds of Higher Level Stewardship funding to help deliver climate change adaption.
- Skills in the Landscape – A bid to the Heritage Lottery Funds skills for the future programme for £332,000 to provide work based training for 16 people in the skills necessary to conserve the Cotswolds natural and built character.
- A bid for up to £15,000 to a charitable trust to further build on and extend our skills training.
- Funding from the South East Regional Development Agency to develop Green Tourism Projects, potentially amounting to tens of thousands of pounds at stage 2.

4.6 Reserve List

The Business Plan includes a 'reserve list' of projects coloured blue in the 3 year work programme (appendix 4). These are projects that the Conservation Board would like to implement, but does not currently have all the funding for. What can be delivered will depend on the outcome of bids both in progress and yet to be written. In particular the My Countryside Access to Nature bid. If unsuccessful it will release the board's contribution towards the match funding for other projects.

5.0 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The Board is required to have a Code of Corporate Governance Action Plan and associated processes to record and respond to work needed to develop its governance arrangements.

The Board has implemented the Corporate Governance Action Plan as a means of recording, responding to and monitoring progress against recommendations from members, officers, funding partners, internal and external audit, and other sources to develop its corporate governance arrangements. The Plan is integrated with the Board's work programme (Appendix 4).

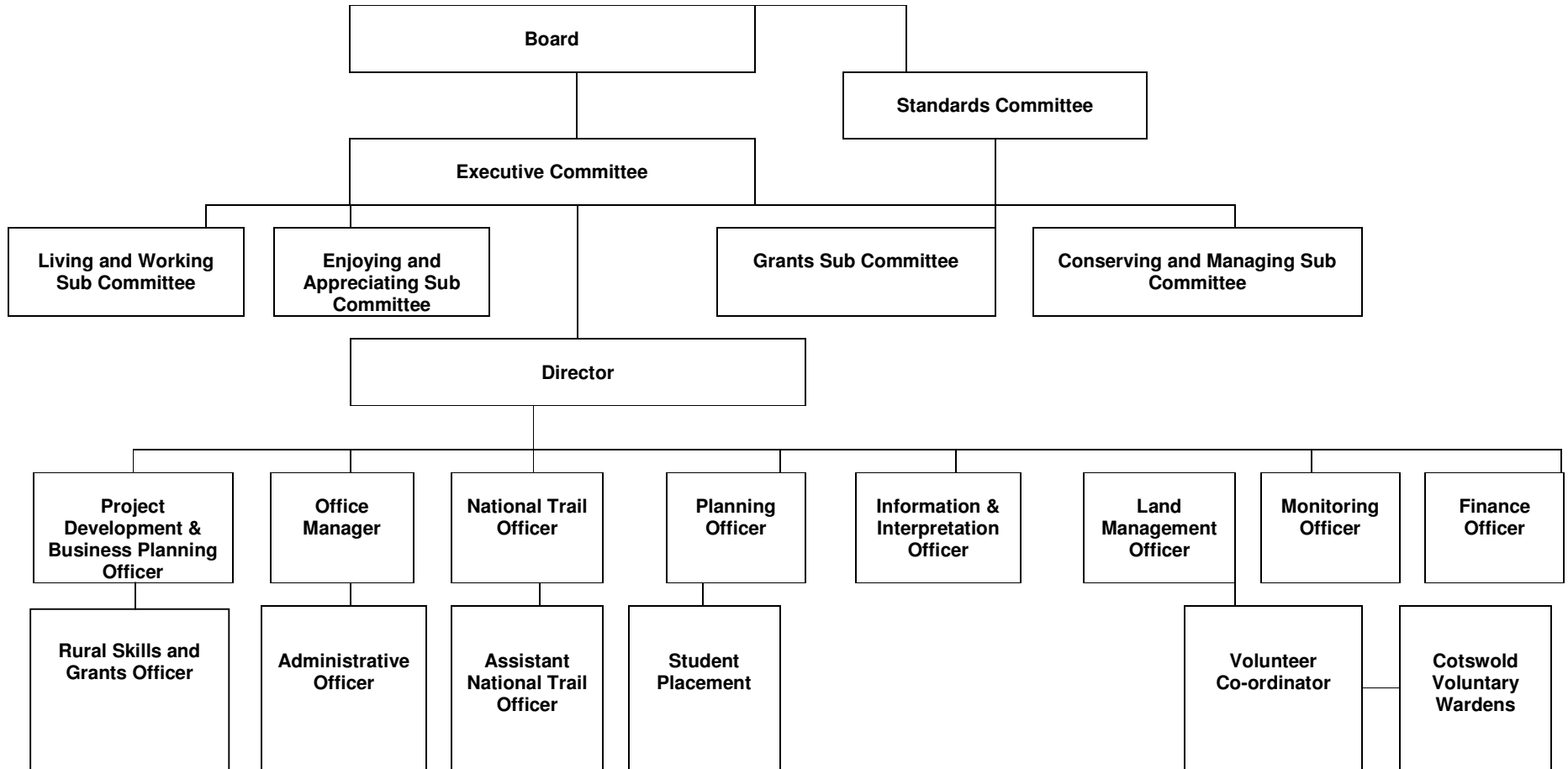
The Action Plan enables the reader to identify what needs to be done, timescales and resources required. It is subject to review annually by the Board and monitoring half-yearly by the Executive Committee.

Key priorities are:

- Maintain adequate reserves;
- Widen and strengthen the Board's funding base;
- Review equalities policy.
- Adoption of an environmental performance policy
- Address issues arising out of the annual audit

APPENDIX 1a.

COTSWOLDS CONSERVATION BOARD STRUCTURE



COTSWOLDS CONSERVATION BOARD, FOSSEWAY, NORTHLEACH, GLOS GL54 3JH
 TEL: 01451 862000 EMAIL: info@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

Appendix 1b Board Members and their Current Responsibilities December 09	Chairman	Vice-Chairman	Executive	Living & Working	Conserving & Managing	Enjoying & Appreciating	Grants	Standards	External Organisations
Michael Banks				✓					✓(DMO)
Ken Betteridge			✓			✓			
Libby Bird						✓			
Hazel Bleaken						✓			
Ann Boon							✓		
Jo Burgon			✓			✓			
Rebecca Charley					✓				
Andrew Clark									
Niel Curwen			✓		✓				
Matthew Darby					✓				
Peter Doyle					✓				
John Evetts					✓				
Liz Eyre		✓	✓	✓					
Stephen Gray							✓		
Adrian Hardman								✓	
Tim Hill									
Liz Hodges				✓					
Nick Holliday			✓			✓	✓		
Sue Hope			✓						
Verena Hunt			✓						
Richard Lloyd			✓		✓				

Appendix 1b (continued)									
Board Members and their Current Responsibilities	Chairman	Vice-Chairman	Executive	Living & Working	Conserving & Managing	Enjoying & Appreciating	Grants	Standards	External Organisations
December 09									
Will Manley				✓					
John Matthews				✓					
Susie Moore			✓				✓		
Adrian Phillips					✓				
Simon Randall						✓			✓ (Friends)
George Reynolds					✓				
Christopher Saint						✓			
Don Seale						✓			
Christine Shine				✓					
Lloyd Surgenor			✓				✓		
Carole Topple			✓	✓					
Martin Veal				✓				✓	
Robert Vines									
Judith Webb									
Jeffrey West	✓		✓						

APPENDIX 2. Local Authority Financial Contributions to the Cotswolds Conservation Board.

Local Authority	2009/10 Contribution*
South Gloucestershire Council	11,947
Bath & North East Somerset Council	8,055
Gloucestershire County Council	40,378
Cotswold District Council	30,850
Cheltenham Borough Council	3,718
Stroud District Council	10,587
Tewkesbury Borough Council	5,150
Worcestershire County Council	5,056
Wychavon District Council	5,007
Cherwell District Council	2,388
Oxfordshire County Council	11,866
West Oxfordshire District Council	11,866
Warwickshire County Council	6,524
Stratford-on-Avon District Council	7,473
Wiltshire Council	19,365
TOTAL	180,230

This business plans budget (Appendix 5) assumes a 1.5% annual increase in local authority income.

Note

The 25% contribution from Highway Authorities for maintenance and depreciation works on the Cotswold Way National Trail totalling £6886 is not included in these figures. Nor does this money pass through the boards accounts.

*Figures are the expected income for 2009/10 in the 2009/2012 Business Plan

APPENDIX 3. Schedule of Meetings for 2010

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Board Meetings			25 Mar			24 June				7 Oct		9 Dec
Executive Meetings	28 Jan	25 Feb		22 Apr	20 May		22 July		9 Sept		4 and 25 Nov	
Forum for Partners				22 Apr								
Conserving and Managing Sub-Committee			11 Mar 10am			17 June am - site visit pm - meeting				7 Oct After Board Meeting		2 Dec 10am
Enjoying and Appreciating Sub-Committee		16 Feb			12 May				7 Sep			14 Dec
Grants Sub-Committee	28 Jan After Exec Committee		25 Mar After Board Meeting			24 June After Board Meeting				7 Oct After Board Meeting		9 Dec After Board Meeting
Living and Working Sub-Committee				13 April			6 July			12 Oct		
Cotswold Way National Trail Working Group				9 Apr				20 Aug				

- Meetings of the Board, the Executive Committee and the Enjoying and Appreciating Sub-Committee all start at 10.00 am
- Meetings of the Grants Sub-Committee all start at 12.30pm, or at the close of the meeting of the Board or Executive Committee, whichever is the later time
- Meetings of the Living and Working Sub-Committee all start at 2.30pm

APPENDIX 4. Three Year Work Programme

Presented in a separate document electronically for printing purposes as prepared in A3

APPENDIX 5. Budget

BUSINESS PLAN 2010/13

EXPENDITURE Themes	YEAR			TOTAL
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	
Climate Change	900	-	-	900
Energy Conservation Advice (CCT5)	450	-	-	450
Renewable Energy Technologies Advice (CCT8)	450	-	-	450
Development Pressures	450	-	-	450
Position Statements (PPT2)	450	-	-	450
Landscape	7,250	6,200	6,200	19,650
Consultation responses review ((LT1)	900	-	-	900
Geopark (LT3)	1,350	-	-	1,350
GIS (LT4)	5,000	5,000	5,000	15,000
Landscape strategy (LT2)	-	1,200	1,200	2,400
Rural Land Management	137,200	227,100	21,600	385,900
Deer Management (RLMT4a)	1,800	5,500	-	7,300
Horse Pasture Management (RLMT4b)	1,800	-	-	1,800
Ancient Woodland Project (RLMT4c)	12,000	-	-	12,000
Hedgelaying & Walling Comp (RLMT10a)	8,000	8,000	8,000	24,000
Rural Skills (RLMT10b)	13,600	13,600	13,600	40,800
Gas pipeline walling grants	100,000	200,000	-	300,000
Historic Environment	-	10,000	-	10,000
Farmstead Characterisation Project (HET2)	-	10,000	-	10,000
Biodiversity	17,900	-	-	17,900
Farmland Bird Project (BT1)	12,500	-	-	12,500
Biodiversity Datasets (BT3)	5,400	-	-	5,400
Development & Transport	21,000	21,000	21,000	63,000
Explore the Cotswolds (DTT8)	21,000	21,000	21,000	63,000
Awareness & Appreciation	54,719	54,219	51,319	167,157
Cotswold Lion (AAT1a)	26,919	26,919	26,919	80,757
Website (AAT1b)	3,000	4,000	9,000	16,000
Communications Activity (AAT1c)	14,000	14,000	14,000	42,000
Annual Review / Updates (AAT1d)	3,550	3,550	3,550	10,650
Annual Forum/Forum for Partners (AAT1e)	3,500	3,800	3,800	11,100
Quantum Sheep (AAT1f)	2,800	-	-	2,800
Farming Forum (AAT4)	950	950	950	2,850
Archaeology & Farming doc (AAT7)	-	1,000	-	1,000
Enjoying & Exploring	285,699	270,209	270,209	826,117

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (EET3)	10,900	-	-	10,900
Access Conference (EET4b)	650	650	650	1,950
Voluntary Wardens (EET5)	57,890	53,300	53,300	164,490
Voluntary Wardens - Core Budget	41,000	41,000	41,000	123,000
Voluntary Wardens - Countryside Fund	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
Voluntary Wardens - Walks on Wheels	1,800	1,800	1,800	5,400
Voluntary Wardens - Dew Pond Project	2,700	2,700	2,700	8,100
Voluntary Wardens - Education Project	5,400	1,800	1,800	9,000
Voluntary Wardens - Volunteer Exchange	990	-	-	990
My Countryside (EET6) Match Funding Only	19,000	19,000	19,000	57,000
Cotswold Way (EET8)	197,259	197,259	197,259	591,777
Sub-Total	525,118	588,728	377,228	1,491,074

Cross Cutting Actions				
Management Plan	-	5,000	-	5,000
SDF Grant	40,000	40,000	40,000	120,000
Friends of the Cotswolds	7,000	7,000	-	14,000
Gas pipeline fund projects	86,000	-	-	86,000
Sub-Total	133,000	52,000	40,000	225,000

Management, Staff & Running Costs				
Employees	348,367	352,354	357,639	1,058,360
Transport	25,631	26,015	26,405	78,051
Premises	29,960	30,409	30,865	91,234
Supplies & Services	53,699	53,876	54,682	162,257
Contract Costs	75,144	76,271	77,415	225,432
NAAONB	36,706	37,256	37,815	111,777
Money Into Reserves	2,250	2,500	-	4,750
Management Plan	2,250	-	-	2,250
Asset Acquisition	-	2,500	-	2,500
Sub-Total	571,757	578,681	584,821	1,735,259
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,229,875	1,219,409	1,002,049	3,451,333

The pie graph in section 4.1 (page 18) illustrates how these costs are spent in achieving the boards objectives

INCOME	YEAR			TOTAL
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	
Natural England	775,185	775,185	775,185	2,325,555
Core / Project / SDF ('Single Pot')	577,926	577,926	577,926	1,733,778
Cotswold Way	197,259	197,259	197,259	591,777
Local Authority	182,933	185,677	188,462	557,072
Countryside Fund	6,000	6,000	6,000	18,000
NAAONB	49,013	49,503	49,998	148,514
Interest	2,000	3,000	3,000	8,000
Course fees	19,941	21,155	28,000	69,096
External funding for large projects	-	-	-	-
Gas pipeline fund projects	86,000	-	-	86,000 -
Gas pipeline walling grants	100,000	200,000		300,000
TOTAL INCOME	1,221,072	1,240,520	1,050,645	3,512,237
BALANCE	-8,803	21,111	48,596	60,904

Income for Gas pipeline walling grants is subject to confirmation

Reserves

The Board's policy states that the Board will interpret and adapt the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Guidance Note on Local Authority Reserves and Balances (LAAP Bulletin 55 – February 2003) and any subsequent guidance to its legislative and regulatory circumstances. It will follow the principles of the guidance as far as they relate to the Board's financial activity.

In light of this the Board will hold reserves sufficient to provide:

- a working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing;
- a contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies;
- a means of building up or holding funds, often referred to as earmarked reserves, to meet known or predicted liabilities.

The reserves at 31 March 2009 were £127,087. Estimated reserves at the 31 March 2010 are £96,108 this assumes that the pension fund adjustment for 09/10 is the same as 08/09 and that all allocated Cotswolds National Trail funds are spent in 09/10. At least half of these reserves are earmarked for specific purposes.

The finance officer considers that this level of reserves is inadequate to meet the Board's reserves policy.

£300,000 for Gas pipeline walling projects will arrive in 2010/11. The £200,000 of this to be spent in 2011/12 will be placed in reserves for this purpose.