

A417 Missing Link  
TR010056

6.4 Environmental Statement  
Appendix 7.1 LVIA Policy and  
Guidance

Planning Act 2008

APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)  
Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and  
Procedure) Regulations 2009

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Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

**The Infrastructure Planning  
(Applications: Prescribed Forms  
and Procedure) Regulations 2009**

**A417 Missing Link**

Development Consent Order 202[x]

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**6.4 Environmental Statement Appendix 7.1 LVIA Policy and  
Guidance**

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# 1 Policy framework

## 1.1 National policy

1.1.1 Table 1-1 sets out the relevant National Planning Policy Framework considered as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).

**Table 1-1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019**

Relevant NPPF paragraph	NPPF <sup>1</sup> policy	Section of ES Chapter 7 Landscape and visual effects (Document Reference 6.2) in which policy is addressed
<b>Strategic policies</b>		
20	The section on Strategic Policies refers to strategies for infrastructure such as transport and <i>“the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.”</i>	See ES Figure 7.11 Environmental Masterplan (Document Reference 6.3), and section 7.9 Design, Mitigation and Enhancement Measures of ES Chapter 7 Landscape and visual effects (Document Reference 6.2).
<b>Open space and recreation</b>		
96	<i>“access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities.”</i>	See ES Figure 7.11 Environmental Masterplan (Document Reference 6.3), and section 7.9 Design, Mitigation and Enhancement Measures of ES Chapter 7 Landscape and visual effects (Document Reference 6.2).
<b>Developments</b>		
98	Developments <i>“should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.”</i>	See ES Figure 7.11 Environmental Masterplan (Document Reference 6.3) and section 7.9 Design, Mitigation and Enhancement Measures of ES Chapter 7 Landscape and visual effects (Document Reference 6.2) for layout proposals to Public Rights of Way (PRoW).
<b>Promoting sustainable transport</b>		
102	<i>“the environmental impacts of transport infrastructure should be identified and assessed including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains”</i> and that <i>“opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued.”</i>	See ES Figure 7.11 Environmental Masterplan (Document Reference 6.3), and section 7.9 Design, Mitigation and Enhancement Measures of ES Chapter 7 Landscape and visual effects for layout proposals to PRoW.
104	High quality walking and cycling networks should be provided for and that facilities such as cycle parking should be accommodated.	

170	The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural, built and historic environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological value and soils.	See ES Figure 7.11 Environmental Masterplan (Document Reference 6.3) and section 7.9 Design, Mitigation and Enhancement Measures of ES Chapter 7 Landscape and visual effects (Document Reference 6.2).
172	Great weight is to be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs and National Parks.	

## 1.2 Local policy

1.2.1 Local policy documents of relevance to the scheme include the adopted Cotswold District Local Plan to 2031, the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (JCS) 2011-2031 and the DRAFT Tewkesbury Borough Plan 2011-2031.

### Gloucestershire County Council

1.2.2 The scheme is situated within the Gloucestershire County boundary. Gloucestershire County Council is responsible for much of the area's infrastructure, mineral working and associated development, and the disposal of waste. It does not set policy or consider domestic or infrastructure projects such as the realignment of the A417 trunk road. Therefore, at the county level there are no relevant planning policies to consider.

### Stroud District Council (adopted November 2015)

1.2.3 The scheme is situated outside of Stroud District Council; however, their boundary crosses within a small proportion of the (1.86 mile) 3 kilometre study area, south-west of the scheme. This area is also situated within the Cotswolds AONB. Policies covering this area, which include CP4 Place Making "*protecting and enhancing a sense of place with a locally inspired or distinctive character*", will be considered as part of its wider AONB context. Therefore, at the local level there are no relevant planning policies to consider.

### Cotswold District Local Plan to 2031

1.2.4 Relevant policies within Cotswolds District Council's local plan include:

#### Policy EN4: the wider natural and historic landscape

*"1. Development will be permitted where it does not have a significant detrimental impact on the natural and historic landscape (including the tranquillity of the countryside) of Cotswold District or neighbouring areas.*

*"2. Proposals will take account of landscape and historic landscape character, visual quality and local distinctiveness. They will be expected to enhance, restore and better manage the natural and historic landscape, and any significant landscape features and elements, including key views, settlement patterns and heritage assets."*

#### Policy EN5: Cotswolds area of outstanding natural beauty

*"1. In determining development proposals within the AONB or its setting, the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape, its character and special qualities will be given great weight.*

*“2. Major development will not be permitted within the AONB unless it satisfies the exceptions set out in national Policy and Guidance.”*

Policy EN6: special landscape areas

*“Development within Special Landscape Areas will be permitted provided it does not have a significant detrimental impact upon the special character and key landscape qualities of the area including its tranquillity.”<sup>2</sup>*

**Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (JCS) 2011 – 2031**

- 1.2.5 The Joint Core Strategy is a partnership between Gloucester City Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council to deliver a co-ordinated strategic development plan. The Joint Core Strategy identifies larger strategic issues which impact all three authorities whilst each authority retains individual local plans that provide planning guidance on smaller and local development issues.

Joint core strategy

- 1.2.6 Policies considered in this assessment are set out in Table 1-2 and where appropriate relevant extracts have been included for ease of reference<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 1-2 Joint core strategy policies assessed**

<b>Policy number</b>	<b>Joint core strategy policy</b>	<b>Section of ES Chapter 7 Landscape and visual effects (Document Reference 6.2) in which policy is addressed</b>
Policy SD4: design requirement	<i>“Context, Character and Sense of Place; New development should respond positively to, and respect the character of, the site and its surroundings, enhancing local distinctiveness, and...materials appropriate to the site and its setting. Design should establish a strong sense of place using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live and having appropriate regard to the historic environment.”</i>	Section 7.7 Baseline conditions sets out the character of the site and wider area which is taken into consideration of the design. See ES Figure 7.11 Environmental Masterplan (Document Reference 6.3), and section 7.9 Design, Mitigation and Enhancement Measures.
Policy SD5: green belt	<i>“To ensure the Green Belt continues to serve its key functions, it will be protected from harmful development. Within its boundaries, development will be restricted to those limited types of development which are deemed appropriate by the NPPF, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. That is: ‘whether very special circumstances exist to outweigh the harm automatically caused to the Green Belt by virtue of the development being inappropriate and any other harm actually caused.’”</i>	A section of the scheme on the scarp slope is within the Gloucestershire and Cheltenham Green Belt. See the landscape section within section 7.7 Baseline conditions and section 7.10 Assessment of likely significant effects.
Policy SD6: landscape	<i>“1. Development will seek to protect landscape character for its own intrinsic beauty and for its benefit to economic, environmental and social well-being; “2. Proposals will have regard to the local distinctiveness and historic character of the different landscapes in the</i>	See landscape section within section 7.7 Baseline conditions, section 7.10 Assessment of likely significant effects and ES

Policy number	Joint core strategy policy	Section of ES Chapter 7 Landscape and visual effects (Document Reference 6.2) in which policy is addressed
	<i>JCS area, drawing, as appropriate, upon existing Landscape Character Assessments and the Landscape Character and Sensitivity Analysis. They will be required to demonstrate how the development will protect or enhance landscape character and avoid detrimental effects on types, patterns and features which make a significant contribution to the character, history and setting of a settlement or area."</i>	Figure 7.11 Environmental Masterplan (Document Reference 6.3).
Policy SD7: the Cotswolds AONB	<i>"All development proposals in or within the setting of the Cotswolds AONB will be required to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance its landscape, scenic beauty, wildlife, cultural heritage and other special qualities. Proposals will be required to be consistent with the policies set out in the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan."</i>	See ES Figure 7.11 Environmental Masterplan (Document Reference 6.3) for details of the landscape-led design of the highways scheme.
Policy SD14: health and environmental quality	<i>"1. High-quality development should protect and seek to improve environmental quality. Development should not create or exacerbate conditions that could impact on human health or cause health inequality. "2. New development must: vi. Take into account the quality and versatility of any agricultural land affected by proposals, recognising that the best agricultural land is a finite resource; vii. Have regard to any areas of tranquillity that are identified in adopted or emerging District plans and neighbourhood plans; and viii. Avoid any adverse impact from artificial light on intrinsically dark landscapes."</i>	See ES Figure 7.11 Environmental Masterplan (Document Reference 6.3).
Policy INF1: transport network	<i>"developers should provide safe and accessible connections to the transport network to enable travel choice for residents and commuters. All proposals should ensure that: ii. connections are provided, where appropriate, to existing walking, cycling and passenger transport networks and should be designed to encourage maximum potential use; and iii. all opportunities are identified and taken, where appropriate, to extend and/or modify existing walking, cycling and public transport networks and links, to ensure that credible travel choices are provided by sustainable modes."</i>	
Policy INF3: green infrastructure	<i>"1. The green infrastructure network of local and strategic importance will be conserved and enhanced, in order to deliver a series of multifunctional, linked green corridors across the JCS area by: • improving the quantity and/or quality of assets; • improving linkages between assets in a manner appropriate to the scale of development, and • designing improvements in a way that supports the cohesive management of green infrastructure."</i>	

Policy number	Joint core strategy policy	Section of ES Chapter 7 Landscape and visual effects (Document Reference 6.2) in which policy is addressed
	<p><i>"2. Development proposals should consider and contribute positively towards green infrastructure, including the wider landscape context and strategic corridors between major assets and populations;</i></p> <p><i>"3. Existing green infrastructure will be protected in a manner that reflects its contribution to ecosystem services (including biodiversity, landscape quality, the historic environment, public access, recreation and play) and the connectivity of the green infrastructure network. Development proposals that will have an impact on woodlands, hedges and trees will need to include a justification for why this impact cannot be avoided and should incorporate measures acceptable to the Local Planning Authority to mitigate the loss. Mitigation should be provided on-site or, where this is not possible, in the immediate environs of the site; and</i></p> <p><i>"4. Where assets are created, retained or replaced within a scheme, they should be properly integrated into the design and contribute to local character and distinctiveness. Proposals should also make provisions for future maintenance of green infrastructure."</i></p>	

### **Pre-submission Tewkesbury Borough plan (2011-2031)**

- 1.2.7 At the time of writing, the Tewkesbury Borough plan (Oct 2019) is still in the process of being adopted by Tewkesbury Borough Council. The draft version provides site options for future development and draft policies for those areas not covered by national guidance or the Joint Core Strategy. Relevant draft policies for each topic are outlined below.<sup>4</sup>

#### Policy LAN1: special landscape areas

- 1.2.8 *"Proposals for new development within Special Landscape Areas, as identified on the Policies Map, will be permitted providing:*
- *the proposal would not cause harm to those features of the landscape character which are of significance;*
  - *the proposal maintains the quality of the natural and built environment and its visual attractiveness;*
  - *all reasonable opportunities for the enhancement of landscape character and the local environment are sought; and*
  - *where a proposal would result in harm to the Special Landscape Area having regard to the above criteria, this harm should be weighed against the need for, and benefits from, the proposed development. Proposals causing harm to the Special Landscape Area will only be permitted where the benefits from the development would clearly and demonstrably outweigh the identified harm."*

#### Policy LAN2: landscape protection zones

- 1.2.9 *"Within the Landscape Protection Zone, as identified on the Policies Map, special protection is given to the ecology and visual amenity of the river environment. In*



*considering proposals for new development within the Landscape Protection Zone regard will be had to the following, as appropriate:*

- *the visual and ecological effect of the new development on the river banks or the associated landscape setting of the Severn Vale;*
- *the impact of the development on the water environment;*
- *whether the proposal would enable the protection of important landscape and environmental features within the designated area; and*
- *whether reasonable opportunities for the enhancement of the environment and landscape are sought, including appropriate provision for improved public access.”*

- 1.2.10 Key objectives of the Local Plan are to promote sustainable development, conserve and enhance the built and natural heritage of the borough and stimulate an approach to new development which: respects local environment conditions in the detailed siting and design; takes full account of local eco-systems and biodiversity; supports innovative design solutions consistent with sustainability objectives; and supports more efficient use of land.

### **1.3 Non-statutory plans and position statements**

- 1.3.1 The following non-statutory plans have been considered as part of the Environmental Statement (ES). The documents referred to in this section set out key principles which have been reflected in the scheme design and have been considered as part of the LVIA. A non-exhaustive summary of policies pertinent to the scheme has been outlined in the Case for the Scheme (Document Reference 7.1).

- 1.3.2 Design and environmental guidance documents produced by Cotswold Conservation Board, listed below, provide development advice on working with regionally-appropriate building materials, public access and enjoyment of the countryside, promoting the landscape features and systems, protecting and enhancing the tranquillity and dark skies and enhancing landscape character through plant species and local provenance.

#### **Cotswolds area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2018- 2023**

- 1.3.3 The Cotswolds AONB Management Plan, provides detail on the landscape character of the designation, and details policies regarding its management.

#### **Supplementary guidance**

- *Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023;*
- *Conserving and Celebrating Cultural Capital in the Cotswolds AONB;*
- *Cotswolds Dark Skies and Artificial Light Position Statement (Adopted 2019);*
- *Cotswolds Tranquillity and Dark Skies;*
- *Cotswolds National Park Position Statement;*
- *Cotswolds Public Rights of Ways; and*
- *Cotswolds Tree Species and provenance.*

- 1.3.4 The purposes of the AONB are to:

*“conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds AONB; and*

*increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Cotswolds AONB.”*

### Special qualities of the Cotswolds AONB

- 1.3.5 What makes the AONB so distinctive and valuable at a national scale are its special qualities. These are the key areas for conservation and enhancement and what the policies and management plan is prioritised on. The special qualities are the key characteristics of the AONB and are a combination of historical, social, economic, cultural, geological, geomorphological and ecological elements:
- *“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 AONB;*
  - *the high wolds – a large open, elevated predominately arable landscape with commons, ‘big’ skies and long-distance views;*
  - *river valleys, the majority forming the headwaters of the Thames, with high-quality water;*
  - *distinctive dry-stone walls;*
  - *internationally important flower-rich grasslands, particularly limestone grasslands;*
  - *internationally important ancient broadleaved woodland, particularly along the crest of the escarpment;*
  - *variations in the colour of the stone from one part of the AONB 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, 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 Cotswolds 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; and*
  - *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 Olympicks, cheese rolling and woolsack races.”*

### AONB vision and policies

- 1.3.6 The AONB’s vision is to be *“a distinctive, unique, accessible living landscape treasured for its diversity which is recognised by all for its wide open views, dry stone walls, intimate valleys, flower rich grasslands, ancient woodlands, dark skies, tranquillity, archaeology, historic and cultural heritage and distinctive Cotswold stone architecture.”*<sup>5</sup>
- 1.3.7 To achieve their purpose and ‘vision’ the AONB has set out several ‘outcomes’ which cover key topics such as landscape and geology, local distinctiveness,

tranquillity, dark Skies, and access and recreation, with associated policies. The relevant policies are listed below:

- Policy CC1: Developing a Consistent, Coordinated and Landscape-led Approach Across the Cotswolds AONB;
- Policy CC2: Compliance with Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (the ‘Duty of Regard’);
- Policy CC3: Working in Partnership;
- Policy CC4: Natural and Cultural Capital and Ecosystem Services – Principles;
- Policy CC5: Soils;
- Policy CC6: Water;
- Policy CC7: Climate Change – Mitigation;
- Policy CC8: Climate Change – Adaptation;
- Policy CE1: Landscape;
- Policy CE2: Geology;
- Policy CE3: Local Distinctiveness;
- Policy CE4: Tranquillity;
- Policy CE5: Dark Skies;
- Policy CE6: Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage;
- Policy CE7: Biodiversity;
- Policy CE8: Rural Land Management;
- Policy CE9: Problem Species, Pests and Diseases;
- Policy CE10: Development and Transport – Principles;
- Policy CE11: Major Development;
- Policy UE2: Access and Recreation; and
- Policy UE3: Health and Well-being.

### **Cotswolds Conservation Board local distinctiveness and landscape change report**

1.3.8 This document supplements the AONB Landscape Character Assessment and guidance in providing additional understanding and guidance on the uniqueness and special qualities which contribute to the Cotswolds local distinctiveness, particularly in relation to Policy CE3: Local Distinctiveness.

1.3.9 The built environment, in defining local distinctiveness, can be categorised in terms of settlement, boundaries, and roofs and walls:

*“Boundaries of many types exist within the AONB, though dry stone walls and hedges predominate. Formally, it is important to distinguish between boundaries within settlement and those that subdivide the wider landscape, and to recognise the subtle stylistic variations that exist within types. Dry stone walls are only found where stone is close to the surface, and the distinctiveness of the landscape of the AONB stems from a subtle balance between walls and hedges, not the dominance of one or the other. Gates, stiles and other details are crucial to the special character of a boundary”<sup>6</sup>.*

1.3.10 A strategic approach produced by the Gloucestershire Nature Partnership outlines priorities to conserve and enhance the county’s biodiversity for the benefit of the environment and people. This is echoed through Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust’s Strategic Plan (2017-2022) and the National Trust’s strategic vision.

1.3.11 The Strategic Vision 2019 -2022 produced by Gloucestershire County Council provides guidance on transport and infrastructure in relation “*to safeguarding the county’s natural landscape and environment*”. Key areas of focus include:

- *“embedding green infrastructure into our thinking and planning for Gloucestershire’s future development and regeneration; and*
- *Planning and designing with health and wellbeing in mind.”*<sup>7</sup>

#### **Environment Strategy 2017<sup>8</sup> and Delivery Plan 2020-2025<sup>9</sup>**

1.3.12 The Highways England vision is for a strategic road network that works more harmoniously with its surroundings to deliver an improved environment. This includes investment to improve the appearance of the network and to protect and enhance the character and quality of the built and natural landscape. Key areas of focus include:

- addressing existing environmental problems and specifically reducing visual intrusion by revising existing landscape mitigation;
- amending the design of roads to better address national, regional and local priorities; and
- promoting schemes that are better integrated with the surrounding environment at a landscape scale, which also deliver associated ecosystem service benefits.

#### **Cotswolds AONB position statements**

1.3.13 Design and environmental guidance documents produced by Cotswolds Conservation Board listed below, provide development advice on working with regionally-appropriate building materials, landscape features and systems, and plant species to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB and maintain local distinctiveness.

##### Cotswolds AONB national park position statement (adopted 2018)

1.3.14 *“Discussions over whether the Cotswolds should be considered for designation as a National Park have steadily grown over the last two years. These discussions chime with the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan”*<sup>10</sup>. The Glover Review of National Parks and AONBs also states that the Cotswolds AONB is a ‘strong candidate’ for National Park status<sup>11</sup>. Becoming a national park could provide a consistent approach to managing the area.

##### Cotswolds AONB tree species and provenance position statement (adopted 2017)

1.3.15 The position statement provides guidance on woodland creation, restocking and individual tree planting. It also provides recommendations for extending or linking ancient woodland.

1.3.16 *“Future tree planting should seek to retain the character of existing Cotswold woodlands whilst considering species diversity, genetic diversity (provenance and origin) and assisted migration. Species selection also needs to take account of the context of the planting e.g. extending ancient woodland or creating a stand-alone plantation.”*

- 1.3.17 *“Woodland creation and restocking after felling should comprise ⅓ of trees from selected seed sources from the same Region of Provenance as the site to be planted (403 and 404 for the Cotswolds), ⅓ from the region to the south (404 and 305) and ⅓ from northern France to increase resilience to climate change as recommended by the Forestry Commission.”<sup>12</sup>*

Cotswolds AONB public rights of way position statement (adopted 2015)

- 1.3.18 As one of the most popular areas in Britain for outdoor recreation, the Cotswolds AONB has a good network of public rights of way (PRoW) including the Cotswold Way National Trail. PRoW within the AONB should be safe, well-maintained, clearly waymarked and well connected to provide positive, high quality experiences to recreational users<sup>13</sup>.

Management of roadside verges position statement

- 1.3.19 *“Roadside verges are important to the special character of the Cotswold landscape.”*
- 1.3.20 *“The need to protect and enhance verges is made more urgent by the dramatic and continuing loss of Britain’s wildflower-rich grassland. Almost all of this has now been destroyed by agricultural improvement, development or neglect.”*
- 1.3.21 The statement provides recommendations for management of roadside vegetation and verges in an AONB and also sites of special scientific interest (SSSI), which is relevant in the proximity of Barrow Wake and Crickley Hill. Consideration should be given to name road verges of exceptional wildlife interest as Protected Road Verges, which is a known practice in AONBs<sup>14</sup>.

Dark skies and artificial light position statement

- 1.3.22 There is a significant and extensive area of naturally dark night skies within the Cotswolds AONB. This is a special quality of the AONB, and a Dark Skies Area. The conservation of this area is under pressure by the genuine need for artificial lighting to ensure the safety of the public and these can be met by sensitive, well designed lighting, in accordance with Policy CE5<sup>15</sup>.

Tranquillity position statement

- 1.3.23 Tranquillity is one of the special qualities of the AONB which make the Cotswolds ‘Outstanding’, it is a ‘state of calm and quietude’ which can substantially enhance people’s quality of life. Whilst some level of noise and visual disturbance is inevitable, great weight should be given to avoid, minimise and reduce adverse impacts on tranquillity in accordance with Policy CE4 in the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan<sup>16</sup>.

**Cotswolds AONB landscape strategy and guidelines**

- 1.3.24 Cotswolds Conservation Board (CCB) published its Landscape Strategy and Guidelines documents in June 2016 with the intention to help manage change in a sustainable and positive way. Strategies and guidelines are presented for each of the landscape character areas (LCA) located within the AONB, with potential forces of change identified for each landscape character type (LCT), with a

description of the implications of these changes. Relevant chapters of the document include sections for LCT 2 Escarpment<sup>17</sup>; LCT 7 High Wold<sup>18</sup>; LCT 8 High Wold Valley<sup>19</sup>; and LCT 18 Settled Unwooded Vale<sup>20</sup>.

#### 1.3.25 Relevant strategies include:

- major road construction and improvement schemes on escarpment slopes;
- road upgrading and improvements, especially of minor country roads, as a result of development or general improvement schemes;
- visitor pressure at escarpment vantage points and circular walks commencing from car park areas;
- loss of dry-stone walls due to abandonment, development of volunteer hedges, replacement with hedges or fences or removal to build/restore a wall elsewhere;
- loss of hedges characteristic of the Settled Unwooded Vale due to inappropriate management or ‘abandonment’;
- loss of traditional orchards in recent years;
- inappropriate woodland creation and planting of shelterbelts and farm copses; and
- creation of woodland.

#### 1.3.26 The “*potential landscape implication*” of these and the proposed “*landscape strategies and guidelines*” have been reviewed throughout the iterative design process and have been considered within the LVIA.

### **A green future: Our 25-year plan to improve the environment**

#### 1.3.27 In 2018, the Government published its plans for creating a greener future and how it intends to improve the environment<sup>21</sup>. The introduction states that landscapes are goods in themselves and that broader landscapes are transformed by connecting habitats into larger corridors for wildlife.

#### 1.3.28 Under the heading ‘Our 25-year goals’, the Government introduces its aims and goals, including:

- thriving plants and wildlife;
- enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment; and
- mitigating and adapting to climate change.

#### 1.3.29 Chapters in the 25-year plan of relevance to the protection and enhancement of landscape in relation to the scheme include Chapter 1 and 2, with relevant sections lifted and commented on below.

#### 1.3.30 Chapter 1: using and managing land sustainably introduces the principles of developments (including infrastructure schemes like the A417) providing ‘environmental net gain’, improving soil health, expanding woodland cover and enhancing existing woodland, having a net positive impact and bringing wider environmental improvements by recognising the significant heritage value and irreplaceable character of ancient woodland and veteran trees and focusing on woodland to maximise its many benefits by increasing tree planting, creating new forests as part of the Government’s plan to plant 11 million trees.

#### 1.3.31 Chapter 2: recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes, sets out the Government’s intention to protect and restore wildlife, and conserve and enhance the natural beauty of landscapes by connecting wildlife sites or adding

new wildlife habitats, in the region of 500,000 hectares. This landscape-scale approach to restore wildflower-rich grassland meadows could include the A417 design intention to restore and enhance large areas of calcareous grassland, positively contributing to the Government's Nature Recovery Network, along with extensive woodland planting and providing better access for people to nature. Carbon capture is an additional benefit of planting trees, positively contributing to improving the environment, and although this would not offset the impacts of the scheme, they can help reduce them.

- 1.3.32 ES Figure 7.11 Environmental Masterplan (Document Reference 6.3) shows the combined landscape, biodiversity and historic environment proposals, which would address and positively contribute to achieving environmental improvements as outlined within the Government's 25-year plan.

### **The road to good design 2018**

- 1.3.33 The document sets out a vision, which aims to put people at the heart of Highways England's work, by designing an inclusive, resilient and sustainable road network. This road network should be appreciated for its usefulness but also its elegance, reflecting in its design the beauty of the natural, built and historic environment through which it passes, and enhancing it where possible<sup>22</sup>.

## References

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- <sup>1</sup> Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, “National Planning Policy Framework,” 2019.
- <sup>2</sup> Cotswold District Council, “Cotswold District Local Plan to 2031,” Cirencester, 2018
- <sup>3</sup> Gloucester City Council, Cheltenham Borough Council, and Tewkesbury Borough Council, “The Joint Core Strategy,” 2017
- <sup>4</sup> Pre submission version of the Tewkesbury Borough Plan (PSTBP).
- <sup>5</sup> Cotswolds Conservation Board, “Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018- 2023,” 2018
- <sup>6</sup> Countryside Agency (now Natural England), “Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change,” 2003
- <sup>7</sup> Gloucestershire County Council, “Gloucestershire Looking to the Future 2019 - 2022,” 2019
- <sup>8</sup> Highways England, “Environment Strategy: Our approach,” 2017
- <sup>9</sup> Highways England, “Delivery Plan 2015-2020,” 2015
- <sup>10</sup> Cotswolds Conservation Board, “Cotswolds AONB National Park Position Statement,” 2018
- <sup>11</sup> J. Glover, “Landscapes Review: A final report,” 2018
- <sup>12</sup> Cotswolds Conservation Board, “Cotswolds AONB Tree Species and Provenance Position Statement,” 2017
- <sup>13</sup> Cotswolds Conservation Board, “Cotswolds AONB Public Rights of Way Position Statement,” 2015
- <sup>14</sup> Cotswolds Conservation Board, “Cotswolds AONB Management of Roadside Verges Position Statement,” 2015
- <sup>15</sup> Cotswolds Conservation Board, “Cotswolds AONB Dark Skies and Artificial Light,” 2019
- <sup>16</sup> Cotswolds Conservation Board, “Cotswolds AONB Tranquility Position Statement,” 2019
- <sup>17</sup> Cotswolds Conservation Board, “Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines - LCT 2 Escarpment,” 2016
- <sup>18</sup> Cotswolds Conservation Board, “Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines - LCT 7 High Wold,” 2016
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