



Cllr Noel Davis
Marston Sicca Parish Council

By email only to: neighbourhood@marstonsicca-pc.gov.uk

7 July 2022

Dear Councillor Davis,

LONG MARSTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Thank you for consulting the Cotswolds Conservation Board on the Pre-Submission Draft of the Long Marston Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

As you may be aware, Parish Councils and other 'relevant authorities' have the following statutory duty, under s.85 of the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, commonly referred to as the 'duty of regard' namely that *"In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty"*.

This includes having regard to the potential impacts of development outside an AONB on the AONB. Further information on this 'duty of regard' is provided in Appendix 4 of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023 ([link](#)). As outlined in Appendix 4, relevant authorities are expected to be able to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the duty of regard and should be able to clearly show how they have considered the purpose of AONB designation in their decision making.

Although Marston Sicca Parish or the Neighbourhood Area boundary do not overlap with the Cotswolds National Landscape (i.e. the Cotswolds AONB), the Neighbourhood Area boundary does come within approximately 900m of the National Landscape boundary and within approximately 1.5km of footpaths on Meon Hill, within the National Landscape, that provide elevated views across the parish. As such Marston Sicca Parish and the Neighbourhood Area are located within the setting of the National Landscape. This is reflected at paragraph 3.1.1 of the draft NDP, which recognises that the parish is a gateway to the Cotswolds AONB.

The Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment identifies 19 landscape character types (LCTs) within the National Landscape. Meon Hill forms part of LCT 1 Escarpment Outliers ([link](#)) and more specifically, it forms part of Landscape Character Area 1F (Escarpment Outliers – Meon and Ebrington Hills). There will also, undoubtedly, be impressive views of Meon Hill and the Cotswolds National Landscape from within the Neighbourhood Area.

Notwithstanding the major development currently taking place in the local area (and outside of the Neighbourhood Area), land within the setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape can make an important contribution to maintaining its natural beauty. Where development within the setting of the National Landscape is poorly located or designed, it can do significant harm to this natural beauty. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is

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The Cotswolds National Landscape is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), managed and looked after by the Cotswolds Conservation Board.

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complementary. Development within the setting of the National Landscape will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account.

For these reasons, I would recommend that the Neighbourhood Development Plan makes explicit reference to the Cotswolds National Landscape and the need to ensure that views from and to the National Landscape are not further adversely affected by development within the parish.

The Board's Position Statement on 'Development in the Setting of the Cotswolds AONB' ([link](#)) may be useful in this regard.

I trust this response is helpful, but if you wish to discuss further, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Joyce', with a small dot at the end.

Simon Joyce

Planning Officer

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