



**Cotswolds
National
Landscape**

Cotswolds National Landscape

Head of Strategic Planning

Job Description

Job Title:	Head of Strategic Planning
Salary:	£52,292
Hours:	Full time, permanent contract. Flexible working requests will be considered.
Location:	Rendcomb, Gloucestershire, GL7
Reporting to:	The Chief Executive

Introduction to the Cotswolds National Landscape

The Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) is the public sector statutory body for the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is an independent organisation comprising 37 Board members nominated by local authorities, parish councils and the Secretary of State for Defra. A small team are employed, based at offices in Rendcomb (between Cheltenham and Cirencester), and supported by an extensive voluntary warden network. Funding for the CNL is provided through contributions from Defra and local authorities.

The Cotswolds is the largest of 38 AONBs in England and Wales, covering 790 square miles (2038 square kilometres). It was originally designated in 1966 and extended in area in 1990. Along with the Chilterns it is one of only two National Landscapes that are Conservation Boards.

The organisation has two purposes:

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

In fulfilling these purposes, the Board seeks to foster the social and economic well-being of people living in the AONB.

Role summary

The CNL is seeking an experienced and highly motivated Head of Strategic Planning to join its senior leadership team and lead our planning function. This is a rare opportunity to join a multi-disciplinary team working in one of the country's most treasured and high-profile protected landscapes.

As the Head of Strategic Planning you will lead the CNL's planning function to ensure the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape is at the heart of planning policy and decision-making. You will need to effectively communicate advice, views and guidance to planning authorities and other relevant bodies to ensure fulfilment of their statutory duty with regard to the AONB as set out under section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).

You will play a key role in building and maintaining relationships with the 15 local authorities within the boundary of the CNL, as well as government departments, national bodies and partner organisations. As a member of the CNL's senior leadership team, you will play a leading role in shaping the organisation and ensuring that it punches above its weight in terms of what it delivers.

The CNL has a statutory duty to prepare a Management Plan and review it at intervals of no more than five years. The Management Plan contains a comprehensive summary of the key issues facing the Cotswolds National Landscape, and the management policies and actions needed to conserve and enhance this special place. It is a keystone piece of work which is central to everything we do as an organisation.

As the Head of Strategic Planning, you will also be responsible for reviewing the 2025-2030 CNL Management Plan and leading the development and production of the 2030-2035 Plan. Although the CNL is the body responsible for preparing and publishing the Management Plan and plays an important role in its delivery, the success of that delivery is also dependent on a wide range of stakeholders. As such, the policies of the Management Plan are intended to guide the work of these stakeholders in helping to deliver the Management Plan's vision and outcomes.

We are seeking an MRTPI and/or CMLI qualified professional with an in-depth knowledge of and an ability to blend planning and landscape strategy and policy. You will be a strategic thinker and team player with excellent engagement skills and have a passion for the conservation sector and the environment.

The package comprises a payment of RTPI (or LI) subscription, being part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and (if relevant) continuous government service.

Key tasks and responsibilities

1. Lead on planning issues regarding the CNL's statutory purposes and the objectives and policies of the CNL Management Plan.
2. Lead the review of the 2025-2030 Management Plan and develop and draft the 2030-2035 Management Plan.
3. Advise the Board on local, regional and national planning policy. Lead the preparation of the Board's responses to relevant consultations, including those relating to national

planning policy, local authority development plan documents and, where necessary, neighbourhood plans, to support the aims of the Board and purposes of AONB designation. This may require representing the Board at local plan and neighbourhood planning examinations.

4. Influence the wider development of planning policy through engagement with MHCLG, Defra, Natural England, the National Landscapes Association and other National Landscapes.
5. Work with the Planning Officer to identify, assess and respond to planning applications which may have potential significant impacts on the CNL, including preparing consultation responses and, where necessary, representing the CNL at Planning Committees and appeals.
6. Provide advice and make representations on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) in or affecting the CNL; this may require representing the CNL at NSIP examination hearings.
7. Proactively review current and develop new planning-related Position Statements and guidance which support Management Plan aims and objectives for adoption by the Board.
8. Ensure that the statutory purposes of the CNL are taken into full account when considering planning matters through providing advice to the Board and its Planning and Infrastructure Working Group.
9. Advise, report to and ensure the effective operation of the CNL's Planning and Infrastructure Working Group and provide advice to other Working Groups as required (for example in relation to climate, nature recovery, farming and/or land use). Work closely with the Chair of the Planning and Infrastructure Working Group.
10. Consider potential income generation routes, providing chargeable pre-application advice to developers and infrastructure providers, and securing project funding and mitigation as appropriate. This may also require providing advice and input to funding applications.
11. Lead, manage and develop the CNL's planning function, including line management of our Planning Officer and advising on future team development.
12. Provide strategic support and advice to the Chief Executive and act as a spokesperson for the CNL as required, maintaining the profile and reputation of the Board.
13. Attend meetings and events outside normal office hours as necessary i.e. evenings and weekends. This is the exception and not typical of the role.

Person Specification

	Essential/ Desirable	Method of Assessment
Qualifications		
A recognised qualification, degree or equivalent in Town and Country Planning or a related discipline	Essential	Application/Certificates
Chartered membership of the RTPI, LI or equivalent	Essential	Application/Certificates
Experience		
An in-depth knowledge of development management, planning policy, related legislation and procedures	Essential	Application/Interview
Significant experience (typically 5+ years) in planning policy	Desirable	Application/Interview
Understanding of natural beauty and landscape scale ecological issues in the planning process and related regulations	Essential	Application/Interview
Proven ability to deliver high quality services that are cost effective and provide excellent customer service.	Essential	Application/Interview
Demonstrable experience of the understanding and application of planning law and regulations, especially as they apply to protected landscapes.	Essential	Application/Interview
Skills and Behaviours		
- Ability to work under pressure, on own initiative and organise workload effectively - A skilled communicator, able to provide coherent, competent and professional advice both written and verbal - An ability to demonstrate organisational and interpersonal skills required to deliver complex work areas and meet deadlines. - A team player, with the desire to mentor and support colleagues on planning related issues. - Adept at dealing diplomatically with the public, CNL Board Members, staff and stakeholders. - Ability to proactively engage local communities and other key stakeholders in the development and delivery of the service - A willingness to attend public meetings outside core office hours	Desirable	Application/Interview

Conditions of Service

1. The Conditions of Service are those of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.
2. The Local Conditions of Service are contained in an Employee Handbook.
3. The normal working week is Monday to Friday.
4. Business travel costs will be reimbursed.
5. The post holder will be required to comply with the CNL's policies including Health and Safety.
6. The post is subject to a six-month probation period.
7. The CNL's operational base is in Rendcomb, between Cheltenham and Cirencester.
8. This is a hybrid role with an expectation of approximately 2 days per week in the office and up to 3 days homeworking (with flexibility subject to business need).
9. Flexible working arrangements will be considered.

Drafted: May 2026