

## Decision details

### Protecting Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation for Future Generations

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**Decision Maker:** Cabinet

**Decision status:** **Item Called In**

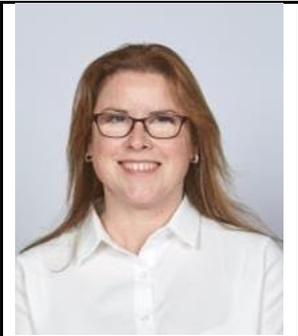
**Is Key decision?:** Yes

**Is subject to call in?:** Yes

#### **Purpose:**

To consider proposals to mitigate the impacts of increased visitor numbers to Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation, including changes to visitor infrastructure at the Council-owned country park such as car parking and site infrastructure.

#### **Decisions:**

	<p>“Not only is Cannock Chase a place of outstanding natural beauty, it is a home of national and international significance to rare plants and wildlife. Staffordshire County Council has a legal and moral duty to protect that vulnerable flora and fauna while maintaining open access for increasing numbers of visitors.</p> <p>This investment of housebuilders’ money over 15 years will improve trails, way signs and interpretation boards, carrying out conservation education in schools and influencing where people park so that we reduce footfall where the landscape and wildlife are most vulnerable and increase capacity where it is more robust.</p> <p>This way we can protect the very things that people come to enjoy, the very things that make Cannock Chase so special and so loved by those who know it”.</p>
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	Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture
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**Reasons for the Decision** – To consider proposals for Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) to mitigate impacts of recreational pressure associated with a growing resident population. The plans include a range of on-site measures across the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to reduce pressure on the most sensitive habitats, improve infrastructure and facilities in more robust locations and raise public awareness of the sensitivity of the site.

**Decision** – (a) That the proposed mitigation plans for Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) be noted.

(b) That the recommended approach and proposed scheme of delegation (as follows) be agreed:

- (i) Operational delivery to be overseen by the Assistant Director - Culture, Rural and Safer Communities; and
- (ii) Agreement of options appraisal / feasibility study outcomes for Chase Road and Marquis Drive by delegated decision by the appropriate Cabinet Member in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities.

**Report author:** Sarah Bentley

**Publication date:** 21/01/2021

**Date of decision:** 20/01/2021

**Decided at meeting:** [20/01/2021 - Cabinet](#)

**Issue status:** The decision is currently being reconsidered

**This decision has been called in by:**

- [Charlotte Atkins](#) who writes 1.The Cabinet approach appears piecemeal and lacks evidence of a long term plan for the protection and conservation of the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation. 2. The plans do not fully address the needs of people living with a range of disabilities. 3. Despite the County Council's focus on volunteering both before and during the pandemic, the plans do not incorporate a role for volunteers in the protection and conservation of the site. 4. No evidence has been presented to demonstrate that closing car parks and directing people into larger car parks will change the behaviour which is impacting adversely on the SAC. Nor has the environmental impact of expanding some car parks been assessed. 5.The lack of an ecological

assessment of some areas over the last five to ten years raises concerns about the evidence base for these plans."

**Accompanying Documents:**

- [Protecting Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation for Future Generations](#)  PDF 282 KB
- [Appendix 6b - CIA Summary Checklist](#)  PDF 249 KB