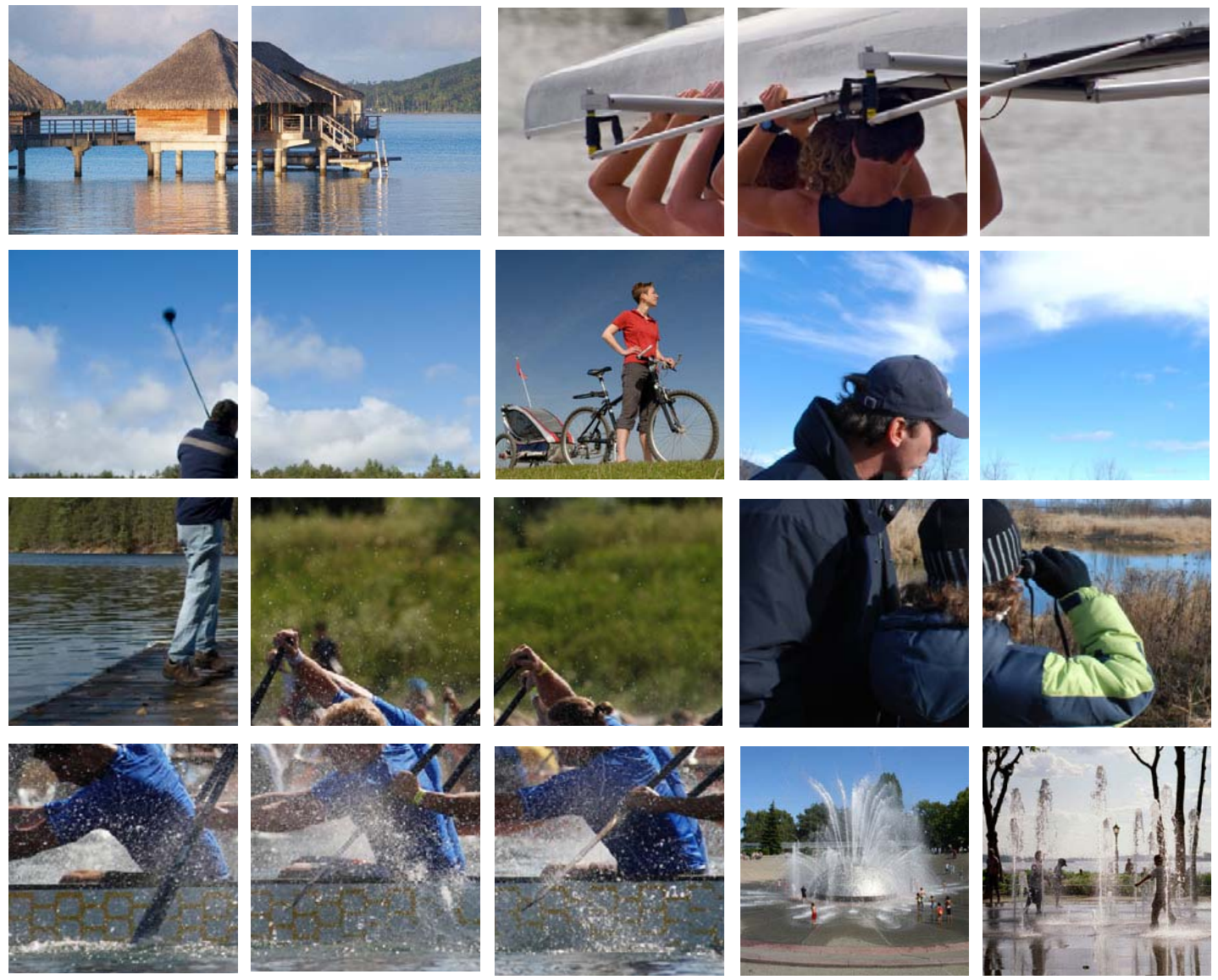




# Strategic Review and Implementation Plan for the Cotswold Water Park

## Stage III Vision and Implementation Plan

July 2008



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## COTSWOLD WATER PARK

### STAGE III REPORT

### VISION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

July 2008

Final

Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
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## Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
	Overview of Stages I & II.....	1
	CWP Study Boundary .....	3
2	The Context for the Vision .....	4
	Summary of the Key Issues .....	4
	Summary of the Options Appraisal.....	6
	The Preferred Development Framework Option – Deriving Greatest Mutual Benefit .....	7
3	The Twenty Year Vision .....	12
	The Cotswold Water Park, 2028 .....	12
	Guiding Statement for Achieving the Vision .....	15
4	Key Objectives .....	17
	The Core Priorities .....	17
	Supporting Drivers.....	29
	Enabling Drivers .....	33
	Potential Constraint .....	44
	Sustainability and the CWP Vision .....	45
5	Development Considerations .....	49
	Projects and Proposals .....	49
	Mutual Benefits Matrix.....	53
	Development Assessment Considerations.....	55
6	Management and Governance.....	56
7	Implementation Plan.....	59

## Appendices

Appendix A: Maps

Appendix B: Vision Images

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The CWP Joint Committee requires a strategic review and implementation plan to guide the future development of the Cotswold Water Park founded on a clear, robust and evidence based framework for delivering an achievable vision.
- 1.2 The full programme of this investigation comprises three stages:
- Stage I deals with the key issues affecting the CWP and provides the basis for option formulation.
  - Stage II examines the interrelationships between the different users, their needs and aspirations in relation to future development activities in the CWP.
  - Stage III provides the Vision and strategic framework for the CWP as set out in this report.
- 1.3 This Stage III report is the culmination of the full study programme and outlines a vision which is both sustainable and achievable whilst meeting the aspirations of the key stakeholders, namely:
- the local community who live and work within the CWP;
  - the businesses and industry that operate within the CWP;
  - the authorities and agencies responsible for the stewardship of the CWP; and
  - the people who visit the CWP and utilise its resources for a variety of purposes.
- 1.4 This is supported by an implementation plan covering an initial five-year period, and which identifies task and role responsibilities.

## Overview of Stages I & II

- 1.5 Stage I provides baseline information for the CWP studies taking account of key issues (called drivers) that influence its current operation and will have a significant bearing on its future development. These drivers, as defined by the original study brief, are:
- Socio-economic Context and Travel Patterns
  - Biodiversity and Nature Conservation
  - Mineral (sand and gravel) Extraction
  - Tourism, Leisure, Recreation and Sport
  - Agriculture
  - Hydrology
  - Heritage

- Landscape
  - Planning
- 1.6 Stage II of the work programme has assessed the interrelationships between the various drivers in order to determine their influence and effect on the future development and aspirations for the CWP. In this context, it has been possible to define:
- the **core priorities** for development within the CWP:
    - The Countryside, the Community and the Settlements
    - Biodiversity
    - Sport, Leisure and Recreation
    - Tourism
  - the **supporting drivers** that will have an influence on achieving aspirations, whilst contributing to sense of place and identity within the CWP:
    - The Historic Environment
    - Agriculture
    - Arts
  - and the **enabling drivers** that are fundamental to the successful development of the CWP:
    - Mineral (sand and gravel) Extraction
    - Hydrology
    - Climate Change
    - Planning
    - Transport and Utilities
- 1.7 By defining specific roles for the drivers identified, it was possible to explore the potential development options to test where benefits could be gained and potential conflicts could arise.
- 1.8 A further consideration that has been identified as a **potential constraint** to achieving certain aspirations of the CWP is:
- Aerodrome Safeguarding
- 1.9 Stage II also identified the core issues in relation to the governance, management, boundary, status and destination awareness pertinent to the delivery of this Vision and development framework.

## CWP Study Boundary

- 1.10 At the outset of the study, two boundary lines were established to represent the CWP area (see Map FIGURE 1 in Appendix A). The first is the current designated boundary which represents the official area of the CWP (red line). This area has been gradually enlarged over the last 30 years. The second is the functional boundary (blue line), which represents the CWP area of influence and identifies the potential expansion area of the CWP.
- 1.11 The functional boundary has been used as the geographical reference for the study area. However, it should be noted that it is not envisaged that the Vision will be limited to this boundary line. In the future it is likely that mineral extraction sites will be sought beyond the functional boundary. Therefore, it is recommended that the boundary line be redrafted to ensure that the geographical area being applied to the Vision and any future planning documents are clearly aligned. This is discussed in Section 6 of this report.

## 2 The Context for the Vision

- 2.1 The main development constant in the CWP over the next 20 to 25 years is likely to be mineral extraction. This is due to the respective apportionment targets prescribed to the Minerals Planning Authorities, both of whom recognise the importance of the CWP/Upper Thames Valley for sand and gravel. FIGURE 2 (see Appendix A) provides a graphic representation of the defined mineral resource block, the preferred areas of search as defined in the previous minerals planning strategies, and the active and permitted sites. It is this activity and the opportunities for new land forms and use that mineral extraction creates that is likely to be the main catalyst for the future development of the CWP. The key purpose of this study has been to consider the future development options and opportunities that may arise and to place them within a coherent vision that seeks to define a sustainable future for the CWP.
- 2.2 The purpose of Stage II of the investigation process was to identify the scope for development for each of the core priorities. This was subsequently translated into a preferred option to guide the Vision and development framework for the CWP over the next 20 to 25 years. The following section summarises the outcome of the investigative process and provides the context from which the Vision has been prepared.

### Summary of the Key Issues

- 2.3 The Stages I and II reports have highlighted issues that need to be addressed through the Vision and development framework. These include the following:
- The communities and settlements, both within and in the vicinity of the CWP, are an integral part of the countryside character. They provide local identity and a sense of place. Many of the core settlements, however, are not presently integral to the CWP experience in that they don't currently provide places of interest, information and potential for economic exchange with a CWP focus. In this context, the opportunity to derive direct benefits from the CWP for local economies is being missed.
  - Local residents, whilst enduring the inconvenience of minerals activities and other development, perceive that they are not benefiting directly from the changing nature of the CWP. Common complaints include the loss of local public access to amenities and limited access to sports facilities. In addition, others suggest that tourism development has been imposed on the community without any direct benefits, and that there is a danger this could continue in the future.
  - The countryside character of the CWP has changed and this change will continue into the future. The lakes are an important and significant landscape feature that has given the area a new identity as a water park; the surrounding areas, however, lack a unifying landscape character that celebrates the CWP.
  - The biodiversity importance of the CWP's neutral grassland, standing open waters and floodplain grazing is recognised at a regional level, with the area the subject of a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) that details priorities for species and habitat creation and



protection. The CWP BAP is actively seeking to position the area to become a premier site for nature conservation where the requirements of industry, leisure, people and wildlife are successfully integrated.

- Sports facilities are already present within the CWP, but there is a disproportionate concentration on one activity (angling), with comparatively limited provision for other sports and watersports, especially in regard to public access on a 'pay and play' basis.
- The existing leisure and recreation network of the CWP is disjointed and incomplete, with some routes servicing all types of user groups, such as walking, cycling and horse-riding, whilst others strictly serve only one user group. In addition, there is a lack of a meaningful comprehensive leisure network that links all parts of the CWP.
- Tourism development has tended to focus on self-catering and business-based serviced accommodation with a market direction aimed towards higher income visitors. This has meant that opportunities to exploit other markets are not being explored, including the more adventurous sports enthusiasts, education groups and nature enthusiasts.
- The location and provision of leisure and recreation facilities is limited, disjointed and spatially fragmented. The main asset, the Keynes Country Park, has problems in respect of access, seasonality and weather dependency.
- The location and sequential ordering of mineral extraction sites is not co-ordinated, at least in policy terms, between the two main Mineral Planning Authorities. This situation is not conducive to effective development planning for other activities.
- The respective local planning authorities have not been consistent in relation to the use and interpretation of policies for development in the CWP, with Cotswold District Council generally being more receptive to propositions for lakeside development when compared to North Wiltshire District Council.
- The implications of development and the hydrology of the area is not systematically understood at present. Low river flows are a known occurrence in the CWP area and flood risk is a growing concern, largely due to flooding in July/August 2007 and observed changes in weather patterns.
- The importance of agriculture as an activity is diminishing in the area through a combination of land sales for mineral extraction and the prevailing economic climate, yet land management through agriculture will be a key requirement to retain a high quality landscape.
- The heritage assets both within and in the vicinity of the CWP do not feature strongly in its profile. The CWP offers opportunities for a better understanding of its heritage through interpretation of archaeological findings over the last 30 years.
- The arts and cultural provision in the CWP could be strengthened, with the arts sector able to assist in creating a sense of place, providing features of interest in the environment, and encouraging community and visitors to explore the wider CWP area.

2.4 These issues, which are dealt with in greater detail in the Stage II report, need to be addressed in the development framework in order to achieve the CWP vision.

## Summary of the Options Appraisal

- 2.5 Stage I and Stage II of the study considered the development that has already taken place within the CWP and how it has delivered against each of the core priorities. For example:
- the countryside character has changed to a point whereby the ‘Cotswold Water Park’ is now considered a definable area;
  - the importance of the CWP is growing as a recognised haven for several important habitats and for biodiversity. This is reflected in the CWP’s inclusion in the South West Nature Map under the categories of Neutral Grassland, Open Water and Floodplain Grazing;
  - a range of watersports are available in the CWP, with angling, sailing and water skiing forming three of the main activities; and
  - tourism capacity has expanded to include holiday homes, self-catering establishments and most recently a 220+ bedroom hotel.
- 2.6 Furthermore, opportunity exists to increase the capacity of each of the priority areas. The primary catalyst for this is the mineral extraction activity.
- 2.7 It is against this background that a series of options were prepared for the further development of the CWP. Five options were formulated, four of which correspond to the development of the core priorities highlighted for the CWP through the consultation process. These included the countryside, communities and settlements; biodiversity; sport, leisure and recreation; and tourism. Each of the options is defined as follows:
- The **Status Quo** option, whereby the development of the CWP, particularly in relation to the subsequent (after-use) development of the lakes, is allowed to continue in its current uncoordinated format.
  - A **Countryside, Community and Settlements** option, whereby the approach to development is dictated by the need to retain the remaining pre-extraction rural character and existing sense of place for the benefit of the community.
  - A **Biodiversity** led option, whereby the development of the CWP is driven solely by the need to meet biodiversity targets.
  - A **Sports, Leisure and Recreation** led option, whereby the development of the CWP is driven by the need to maximise its rural and lakeland nature for the purpose of pursuing a range of different sports, especially watersports, leisure and recreation facilities.
  - A **Tourism** led option, whereby the development of the CWP is driven by the need to maximise its inherent location benefits with its proximity to the Cotswolds AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).
- 2.8 Maintaining a status quo approach as a guiding principle for the development of the CWP is not considered a viable option, despite the influence that the developments have had to date. This is because of the unconsidered approach to this development, especially the after-use development associated with the lakes; the fact that opportunities to derive benefits in the

priority areas have not been fulfilled; and that certain issues have been created which could have been avoided.

2.9 However, although each of the other options delivered recognisable benefits for the CWP, they too have the potential to create conflict. For example:

- Retaining and improving the character of the countryside and settlements, in response to the high-level conservation aims for the CWP, would constrain the development of some of the other priorities. This may even include biodiversity as nature conservation would be a by-product of this approach, rather than the main priority for landscape design. Moreover, it would certainly prevent more sports development and some types of tourism development.
- Delivering an option purely based on biodiversity will achieve benefits for the character of the CWP; would fit well with the leisure and recreation network; and would have some benefits for tourism from a niche perspective, such as wildlife tourism and education. However, the biodiversity option is likely to impose constraints on sports development and its associated tourism benefits. Furthermore, the capacity to generate funding for environmental conservation would be limited due to potential restrictions on visitor numbers, in order to achieve high level habitat conservation for all sites.
- The sports potential of the CWP can be fully recognised through investment, especially in relation to watersports. However, if this option is to be a key driver leading to significant development it could detract from the other priorities of the CWP, principally the biodiversity aspirations and the retention of character. It would also limit the tourism potential in other non-sports/recreational sectors.
- Greater emphasis on more tourism development could bring considerable economic benefits, with the capacity to attract different visitor types. These could include business tourism, sports tourism, wildlife tourism, activity enthusiasts, family groups, educational and youth groups, arts and cultural events, and even specialist niche groups such as amateur archaeologists. However, an unstructured or unlimited approach to tourism expansion could damage the features of the CWP that visitors find most appealing, the attractive countryside-lakeland setting. Furthermore, high visitor levels in sensitive locations could conflict with biodiversity aspirations.

2.10 On the basis of this investigation, it has been concluded that a single core priority option for the CWP is inflexible and inappropriate. As a result future development should be based on the principle of securing mutual benefits amongst all of the activities, to establish the CWP as a sustainable area.

## The Preferred Development Framework Option – Deriving Greatest Mutual Benefit

2.11 The inability to secure mutual benefits has been a key criticism of some projects that have taken place in the CWP, whereby the linkages to other activities have not been fully examined through the development process. This has resulted in opportunities being missed or not fully

- exploited with problems and conflicts arising that could have been avoidable if a better integrated and more strategically defined development framework was in place.
- 2.12 It is for this reason that Scott Wilson has proposed that the preferred development option for the CWP should be to establish a means of deriving the greatest mutual benefit. The main premise of this option is that as long as there is a strong commitment to deliver projects with mutual benefits, there is sufficient scope for the aspirations of each of the core priorities and the supporting drivers to be realised.
- 2.13 Although this will require a balanced approach, the broad objectives for each driver should still be achievable. In some instances this will be through innovative projects rather than scale, with developments that have obvious synergies and are of a complementary nature taking precedence over projects that would present a radical transformation. To put this into context:
- the creation of a series of interlinking nature reserves associated with the living landscape of the CWP would be preferable to one significant biodiversity asset, for example a bio-dome;
  - a series of sporting facilities, some of which represent signature assets in their field, could have more impact on the credentials of the CWP as a sporting destination than one major sports complex or stadia; and
  - the provision of a mix of accommodation targeted towards markets that complement other priorities would have a considerable appeal from a visitor's perspective whilst contributing to the overall character of the CWP.
- 2.14 Overall, it is not envisaged that there will be one major development or lots of large-scale developments in the CWP. Rather, the evidence collated during the investigation process indicates the need for a series of developments that complement the character of the CWP and exploit its potential in terms of its countryside/lakeside setting; its biodiversity credentials; opportunities for sport, leisure and recreation; all of which have a direct synergy to tourism.
- 2.15 The purpose of Table 2.1 is to exemplify how the mutual benefits can be achieved. It should be noted that the premise of achieving 'mutual benefits' has been devised as a mechanism for testing a development against the broad range of issues facing the CWP. In this context, any development proposal should seek to address, where appropriate, the key objectives (as outlined in Section 4 of this report). The criteria to be used to assess the 'mutual benefit' prospects of developments are further explored in Section 5.

**Table 2.1**

<b>DERIVING GREATEST MUTUAL BENEFIT (Core Priorities)</b>				
<b>Aspirations</b>	<b>Countryside Character, Local Community, and Settlements</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>Sports, Leisure, Recreation</b>	<b>Tourism</b>
The changing character of the countryside and landscape of the CWP to be utilised to generate a greater sense of place.	The CWP will become a distinguished countryside in its own right, with the changing landscape to be utilised to strengthen the sense of place amongst 22,000 residents.	The countryside of the CWP will be manipulated for habitat creation. In turn, this will present new and interesting landscape features within the CWP.	The countryside character will present an attractive natural setting within which sports, leisure and recreation activities take place. This will include the creation of a series of facilities and a leisure network that are designed in sympathy with the countryside setting.	The distinguished countryside character of the CWP will become one of the core motivations for day and overnight visitors.
Settlements and communities to become fully integrated into the CWP.	The historic towns, villages and associated heritage features will be highlighted and presented to create a deeper sense of place and history for the CWP.	Settlements will include habitat creation and protection programmes, with local communities encouraged to become active 'managers' of the environment in which they live.	Communities will become active participants of the sports, leisure and recreation facilities, helping to improve health and well-being.	Settlements will become an integral part of the visitor experience, imparting information, being places of general sightseeing, and centres for economic exchange (accommodation, retail, food and drink).
Biodiversity to become integrated into all developments across the corridor area.	Biodiversity will become synonymous with the countryside character of the CWP and a place where local residents and visitors can see rare and endangered indigenous species.  Information dissemination and volunteering will be encouraged to assist with environmental conservation and management at a local level.	BAP targets will be supported by the creation of new habitats and reserves across CWP and the reserves will be linked via nature corridors to encourage natural species transit.	Sports, leisure and recreation developments will be designed to be complementary to biodiversity, including habitat creation wherever practical.	The core nature reserves will become visitor assets in their own right, able to attract nature tourists. The spend from visitors both at these reserves and in the wider CWP area will be encouraged to be invested in further environmental conservation management.  Other visitor attraction and accommodation development will achieve environmental accreditation.

**Table 2.1**

<b>DERIVING GREATEST MUTUAL BENEFIT (Core Priorities)</b>				
<b>Aspirations</b>	<b>Countryside Character, Local Community, and Settlements</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>Sports, Leisure, Recreation</b>	<b>Tourism</b>
An integrated leisure and recreation network to be created across the CWP.	The CWP will utilise the various programmes for change (e.g. mineral extraction, canal restoration, heritage landscape projects) to deliver a fully integrated leisure and recreation network across the CWP suited to multiple users.	Innovative interpretation and understanding of the natural environment will be encouraged.	Sport, leisure and recreation facilities will be linked through the leisure and recreation network to encourage sustainable movement throughout the CWP.	The leisure and recreation network will become a core component of the visitor product of the CWP, encouraging both day trips and overnight trips.
New sporting, leisure and recreation facilities to be established.	The new sporting, leisure and recreation facilities will present an asset base that is complementary to the countryside character of the CWP.  A greater range of sports, leisure and recreation facilities will be established that encourage public access and participation.	A series of new facilities created to support biodiversity will represent part of the leisure and recreation asset base, each linked through the leisure and recreation corridor.  Other sports, leisure and recreation development will be designed to complement biodiversity creation and management.	Encouraging diversity and accessibility for all will be a key priority in relation to sports, leisure and recreation provision.  Innovation in style and that heighten the profile of the CWP content will be encouraged.	The range of facilities will be designed to complement the target tourism markets identified for the CWP (e.g. family groups, nature tourism, sports tourism, education).
The CWP to become a visitor destination in its own right.	The settlements and countryside character of the CWP will define the sense of place for the destination (i.e. countryside) characterised by a series of man-made lakes offering a full range of activities and experiences.  In return, visitors will support the economy and encourage new business enterprise.	Biodiversity will represent a key component of the visitor experience in the CWP, both to visitors directly motivated by nature, and to those attracted by other assets of the area.  In return, visitors will become active supporters of biodiversity management and ongoing maintenance of the living landscape, with income directly and overtly supporting projects on the ground.	The CWP will become synonymous with a range of sports, leisure and recreation assets that are interlinked and open to the wider public. Equity of access will ensure disadvantaged groups are able to enjoy a full programme of different experiences.	The different visitor markets to the CWP will be complementary in nature, supported by a suitable mix of services to ensure that the overall experience of visitors exceeds expectation.



**Table 2.1**

<b>DERIVING GREATEST MUTUAL BENEFIT (Core Priorities)</b>				
<b>Aspirations</b>	<b>Countryside Character, Local Community, and Settlements</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>Sports, Leisure, Recreation</b>	<b>Tourism</b>
<p>The CWP as a place in which to live, work and visit to become entrenched within the principles of sustainability.</p>	<p>Local cultivation of biomass fuel will be promoted in appropriate locations to assist with reducing the carbon footprint of local communities, businesses and visitors.</p>	<p>Environmental conservation will be incorporated into other businesses, such as tourism, leisure, recreation and agriculture.</p>	<p>New sport, leisure and recreation facilities will incorporate cutting edge design in sustainable development. Facilities will also aim to source produce and services from within the CWP and its immediate sphere of influence.</p>	<p>New tourism facilities will incorporate cutting edge design in sustainable development. Facilities will also aim to source produce and services from within the CWP and its immediate sphere of influence.</p> <p>Environmental and green accreditation will be utilised to enhance the sustainable credentials of the CWP to visitors.</p>

## 3 The Twenty Year Vision

### The Cotswold Water Park, 2028

- 3.1 The growing drive for healthier lifestyles, a more sustainable environment and a less energy consuming economy may well be achievable through the potential offered by the Cotswold Water Park.
- 3.2 What began as an endeavour to create an attractive and natural setting for a variety of watersports could become a fully integrated rural development programme, addressing issues that range from agricultural diversification to tourism development, from the creation of local produce and biomass fuels to the provision of innovative forms of green transport; from the balanced development of local towns and villages to the restoration of major heritage features such as the Cotswold Canal; and the establishment of a major green wildlife and landscape corridor of national and even international significance.
- 3.3 These and other aspirations for the CWP are encapsulated in the following vision that describes the potential character of CWP in 2028.

***It is 2028**, and the Cotswold Water Park is an area that has a reputation as an environment of great scenic, natural and sporting value. This reputation is recognised at a regional, national and even international level, and is embraced by the residential and business community as being one of the main reasons that people want to live and work in the area.*

*The more traditional settlement, pasture and arable farmland settings are still present, but they have each prospered through their association with the CWP and this unique countryside area. The historic and countryside environment is evident at every turn, with towns such as Fairford, Cricklade and Lechlade providing a characterful backdrop for thriving economies that have a mix of markets, local shops, specialist shops, bars and restaurants. On sale is a range of locally distinctive products, with organic and environmentally sound meat products and reed-based products, just some of the area's specialities.*

*As well as being produce of high quality, there is a local and ethical advantage to purchasing these goods. Forged through a desire to lead the way in sustainable practices, all the businesses within and around the CWP are active supporters of nature conservation. Two of the main mechanisms for this support are through the contribution of local produce sales towards the efforts of habitat creation and management, and the adoption by local businesses and developers of good practice guidance in landscape design and management.*

*The co-operative nature between the private sector and nature conservation organisations has now led to one of the most important inland areas for biodiversity in England. This fact is made even more remarkable when it is considered that 20 million people live within a two-hour drivetime of the area. Working in partnership, conservation groups, businesses,*



*communities and other stakeholders have managed to overcome a range of issues to ensure the CWP presents habitats for once endangered wildlife species such as the bittern, otter, and even osprey, but all at levels that do not present increased risk to aerodrome safeguarding. One of the biggest advantages of the CWP is that it has been established through a whole landscape, with species encouraged to migrate around the CWP via strategically identified rivers and canal corridors.*

*Equally impressive is that these biodiversity ambitions have been achieved in association with development, especially the continuing extraction of minerals, the creation of new leisure amenities, and the realisation of long held sporting aspirations. In particular, the restored Thames and Severn Canal and North Wilts Canal are now hubs of different types of leisure activity, with a number of marinas providing ideal focal points with each consisting of moorings, pubs/restaurants, and retail as well as providing an attractive setting for small-scale office/business units.*

*Water has always been a significant feature of the CWP thanks to the creation of over 200 lakes, a legacy of the area's importance as a source for sand and gravel. Through innovation this water can now be enjoyed by a variety of different user groups:*

- for family groups, there are a series of small and medium-sized attractions such as lakeside beaches and aqua-adventure areas that contain water fountains, plunge pools, shooting water, and sub-aqua adventure to entertain and educate children and adults alike;*
- for the active leisure seeker, water skiing, rowing, sailing, wake boarding, wake surfing, jet skiing and scuba-diving can all be undertaken in the CWP, with tuition available for beginners through to expert;*
- for the walker, cyclist and horse rider, the varied and interconnecting multi-leisure routes take in a variety of lakes and waterways allowing them to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the countryside and to see first-hand the varied wildlife and heritage features that can be discovered in the area;*
- for the sports enthusiast, the CWP provides opportunities to participate in competitions, hone skills, and improve techniques, particularly in angling, rowing, and triathlon through the nationally important watersports and angling centres;*
- for corporations and education establishments, there is a range of one day, multiple day, and residential courses that can be taken to assist team building, outdoor education and life long learning respectively; and*
- for a bit of friendly rivalry, community sports days and events are regularly hosted with the annual dragon boat race one of the highlights of the annual events calendar.*

*In addition to the water-based activities, the CWP has a major farm-based attraction; a series of dedicated centres for wildlife watching and education; an arts and crafts centre as the centre piece of other innovative arts pieces to be explored within the wider countryside; and 'gateway' centres providing refreshments and information on the types of things to do and see in the area. It is this combination of amenities and facilities that has*

*seen the CWP emerge as an important destination for countryside recreation in the South West.*

*Access to the area by non-car traffic is encouraged, with visitors able to arrive by train at stations in Kemble and Swindon, whilst the renovated Swindon and Cricklade Steam Railway provides one of the more attractive means of travelling to the CWP. Similarly, more sustainable movement to and around the CWP is available via the interconnected leisure network, supported by bike hire facilities at the main access points so that people can spend a day or longer travelling through the network of quiet lanes or dedicated leisure paths. This network is directly connected to National Cycle Network routes 45 and 58, the Cricklade-Swindon Steam Railway and the water taxi system along the canal to promote non-car access to the CWP from Swindon and Cirencester.*

*For those arriving by car, the emphasis is placed on reducing additional car movements as people explore the area. For those on day visits to the area, the use of selected and strategically positioned car parks will be encouraged, which themselves are directly linked to electric vehicles or bicycle hire, or people can jump onto a water taxi using the canal system to explore the area. Likewise, the range of other transport options available in the area has enabled the offer of ‘one day’, ‘two day’ or ‘week long’ passes, with the latter being well used by staying visitors. This pass is also linked to other offers such as entrance to the variety of fun-oriented attractions, sports facilities, and adventure experiences; having a drink and a meal serving locally sourced produce; and purchasing goods and gifts from local businesses.*

*To accommodate overnight stays, there is a variety of farmhouse B&Bs, self-catering and eco-friendly camping and caravan site accommodation to choose from. Associated with the important ecological nature of the CWP, the latest eco-lodges are also available that offer the opportunity to see the outstanding range of habitats and wildlife that the area has to offer, but close-up. Continuing the environmental theme, other accommodation operators in the CWP are holders of environmental accreditation designed to reflect their efforts in wildlife conservation, establishing environmentally sustainable business practices, and encouraging sympathetic behaviour amongst their patrons.*

*Local residents are certainly not forgotten. Through a dedicated resident card, residents are actively encouraged to take full advantage of the leisure, recreational and sports facilities, and also the important nature reserves that can be found along the corridors of the River Thames and Thames and Severn Canals. Further special incentives are offered to those who are members of the volunteering scheme for the CWP, which has proved to be highly popular in terms of engaging with residents, local business and schools within and around the CWP area.*

*Underlying all of this is the principle of sustainability, with the area now being highlighted as a beacon for demonstrating self-sufficiency in relation to supporting the community and environment through local initiatives. This is exemplified by the cultivation of appropriate biomass crops that is of a scale and nature that is suitable to the biodiversity aspirations, and the construction of industry-leading sustainable buildings utilising techniques pioneered by the original Gateway Centre.*

*In this context, significant progress has been made since 2008. The enthusiasm, energies and abilities of all stakeholders have been used to extract mutual benefits from the development, change and opportunity that mineral extraction in particular has created. Overall, the CWP has been transformed into an area of distinctive and sustainable countryside of high environmental value that delivers tangible benefits for local residents and people working and visiting the area.*

## Guiding Statement for Achieving the Vision

- 3.4 The descriptive 2028 vision of the future development of the Cotswold Water Park is based on the principle of ‘Deriving Mutual Benefits’ as outlined in Section 2 with the overarching aim being to take advantage of the existing and potential attributes of the area in a balanced and well co-ordinated manner. The following acts as a guiding statement as to how the Vision is to be achieved:

***The Vision will be achieved by harnessing the resources and economic activity in the Cotswold Water Park to create a distinctive and sustainable countryside of high environmental value for the benefit of local residents and people working in and visiting the area.***

- 3.5 The main premise is that the existing and developing resources, principally mineral extraction, will continue to change the landform of the CWP. This in turn will present opportunities for development in the core priorities. The aims for each of the priorities can be defined as follows:

- The CWP to become a **distinctive countryside** environment in which to live and work, engendering a sense of community spirit, pride, well-being, vitality and prosperity across the whole of the CWP area.
- The CWP to become a **premier site for nature conservation**, achieving regionally, nationally and internationally important biodiversity targets through a landscape-scale programme in which stakeholders can create, nurture, and protect rare and endangered indigenous habitats and species.
- The CWP to offer a **range of sports, leisure and recreation facilities** of local, regional and national significance that promote public access to and enjoyment of the countryside for local residents and visitors.
- The CWP to present a **quality visitor destination** that draws on the unique character of the lakes, the settlements, the sports, the history and the natural environment to deliver a wide range of experiences.

- 3.6 Underpinning these activities will be the sustainability edict with which all development now needs to be considered. In this context, the priority in relation to sustainability is defined as:

- The CWP to become a **truly sustainable place** that is pioneering in its approach to development that incorporates measures to significantly reduce the environmental footprint of all types of activity.

- 3.7 The Vision provides the vehicle to set targets and objectives in each of the key areas to realise a more coherent and identifiable entity and to influence the attractiveness and quality of the CWP.

## 4 Key Objectives

- 4.1 The purpose of the following section is to set out the objectives relating to the core priorities, the supporting drivers and the enabling drivers. These objectives provide the basis from which the implementation plan will be formed. Please see Maps S3.1 to S3.9 in Appendix A and the Vision Images in Appendix B for a graphic representation of the Vision and development framework.

### The Core Priorities

#### The Countryside, Communities and Settlements

**The CWP to become a distinctive countryside environment in which to live and work, engendering a sense of community spirit, pride, well-being, vitality and prosperity across the whole of the CWP area.**

- 4.2 The countryside, the local communities and the settlements are at the very heart of the Vision.
- 4.3 Projections suggest that mineral extraction could continue for at least another 20 years at current extraction rates, which in turn is likely to deliver further changes in the landscape character and composition of the CWP. The opportunity now exists for development initiatives to contribute towards the improvement, well-being, vitality and prosperity of local communities in the CWP.

#### Integrating Communities and Settlements

- 4.4 A key objective for the CWP is to ensure not only that development does not unduly compromise the wellbeing of residents, but that it provides them with direct benefits. In order to achieve this aspiration, the countryside, the communities and the settlements must be more effectively integrated to ensure that the CWP becomes a defined entity in its own right. This should be achieved through a series of social, economic, physical and environmental initiatives.
- 4.5 Physical and environmental initiatives should embrace the following:
- the creation of an open landscape whose character helps define the CWP as an area, with agricultural fields, vistas of lakes, and canal and river corridors throughout the area providing strong visual linkages, edges and gateways;
  - the provision of wetland habitats, for example extensive reedbed creation in the central section of the CWP reedbeds established in appropriately defined wetland conservation areas of the central CWP section;
  - core settlements, especially the market towns and larger villages, to become recognised as part of the CWP, accommodating strategically required services and amenities, and encouraging economic exchange for the benefit of the wider CWP area and surrounding region which in turn will support services for the local population;

- local residents to be able to enjoy access to the countryside from their homes, with both existing lakes and future landscapes adjacent to settlements protected as an informal leisure and recreation amenity;
  - the design of the leisure and recreation network, transport infrastructure and service provision to knit the settlements and the countryside together to present a coherent area that people can be encouraged to explore; and
  - the culture of the CWP communities to be enhanced through special events focussed on locally distinctive produce, sports competition, and the creative sector.
- 4.6 Such initiatives will need to be supported by schemes that actively encourage residents to participate in and enjoy all that the CWP has to offer. A greater sense of belonging and privilege of living in the CWP can be enhanced through strengthening the brand and encouraging community involvement. These schemes could include an active communities campaign designed to ensure residents:
- take advantage of the sports, leisure and recreation facilities and amenities available, helping to improve individual health and well-being;
  - learn about the natural environment and how personal decisions and behaviour can enable and inhibit environmental conservation;
  - become committed supporters of environmental conservation and assist in the delivery of biodiversity targets through volunteering, financial support and adopting appropriate behaviour when within or close to highly sensitive habitats; and
  - adopt the principles of lowering environmental footprints by sourcing fuels and produce locally wherever possible.
- 4.7 The use of special events and arts and crafts festivals can also contribute to the sense of identity for an area such as the CWP by providing a cultural focus. It is certainly conceivable that a cultural programme could be introduced to cover the whole of the CWP area that provokes and challenges people's perceptions of the CWP through the arts; that promotes friendly competition and rivalry through sporting events, using the available sporting facilities; and that showcases local customs, traditions and talents through festivals, performances and carnivals.
- 4.8 Combined, these measures have the potential to deliver a host of community benefits for local residents. In turn, this will help to secure commitment to the CWP and encourage residents to identify with, and have pride in the area.
- 4.9 In addition, it is also important to help conserve the nature and character of the settlements themselves and protect them from inappropriate development. This has been achieved through specific Settlement Protection Boundaries/Zones in the local plans. The principles behind these are supported, however there is a danger that such stipulations may preclude opportunities that could actually benefit the community and its residents. The purpose of including communities as a core priority for consideration is that dialogue with communities can be engendered early in the planning process to ensure that there is a proactive approach to identifying appropriate development opportunities and priorities.

## Creating a Distinctive Countryside Landscape

- 4.10 It is clear that the landscape of the CWP has experienced significant changes and challenges. In particular, the historic and natural landscape that define the countryside character of the CWP are in danger of being further eroded by the continuation of mineral extraction activities. However, these challenges can be addressed through better strategic guidance, whilst further development activity should also bring opportunities for defined landscape improvements.
- 4.11 The composition of the CWP’s agricultural holdings, various waterscapes (lakes, rivers and canals), and the rural nature of the settlements themselves all indicate that the CWP has the makings of an interesting and unusual man-influenced landscape. It is arguable that at present, this can only really be fully experienced from a birds-eye perspective. On the ground the settlements and the lakes are largely disassociated from each other; the sense of water within the CWP is limited both due to a lack of public access to lakes and the poor integration of the water bodies into the wider landscape; whilst a sense of enclosed spaces has been created by boundary vegetation.
- 4.12 The influence of water within Cotswold ‘Water’ Park should be at the forefront of any future landscape development considerations. This should include the creation of more Lakeland vistas and open views through appropriate landscape restoration and improvement mechanisms, especially where mineral extraction occurs. Likewise, improvements to the agricultural and settlement landscapes as key existing features should be encouraged, particularly in terms of providing aesthetically designed linkages to the wider network of leisure and recreational routes.
- 4.13 Therefore, as a principle recommendation, a more holistic landscape strategy needs to be established for the CWP in order to guide the future priorities for establishing the principals for promoting sustainable development, protecting and enhancing the environment and positively managing its change. This strategy should have regard to challenges of the past, present and future change on the basis that development activity has already occurred, is continuing, and is likely to continue in the future. Overall, these changes and improvements should be designed to create a strong and coherent landscape character for the CWP area that will strengthen its image and raise awareness.

### **The Countryside, Communities and Settlements Objectives**

- Establish a defined Landscape Strategy for the CWP in order to facilitate more appropriate landscape design to changes in the past, present and future.
- Through constructive stakeholder involvement, identify development and land use change that is designed to complement and enhance the landscape, countryside and settlement character of the CWP, which will engender improved well-being, vitality and prosperity for the area as a whole.
- Establish actual links between the countryside and settlements of the CWP using strong landscape features; the establishment of key settlements as CWP centres of activity; securing the provision of open public spaces close to settlements; and the development of an integrated leisure infrastructure network.
- Encourage stronger ties between the CWP as a defined place and the residents that live there by promoting resident participation in the full range of activities that can be undertaken; adopting a consistent branding strategy to be incorporated into the marketing, information and promotion; and establishing a programme of cultural events.



## Biodiversity

**The CWP to become a premier site for nature conservation, achieving regionally, nationally and internationally important biodiversity targets through a landscape-scale programme in which stakeholders can create, nurture, and protect rare and endangered indigenous habitats and species.**

- 4.14 A holistic, landscape-scale approach to biodiversity action is identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for the CWP. Overall, the CWP BAP is seeking to position the area as a premier site for nature conservation by 2070. One of the primary elements of the BAP is to link a series of existing and future habitats through connecting corridors, all of which are to be designed to promote the natural movement and dispersal of species across a wide area.
- 4.15 It is important to recognise that biodiversity is the generic term used to describe all types of organisms within a defined area. In this context, the biodiversity objectives of the BAP is designed to cater for a variety of different species, including bird species, insects (e.g. dragonflies, butterflies), various aquatic mammals (e.g. otters and beavers), and fresh water fish, for example.
- 4.16 Conservation organisations, such as the Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Wildlife Trusts, the RSPB and the CWP Society via the established CWP Nature Conservation Forum, are already taking a lead in the implementation of the BAP. The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, for example, has established a living landscape network in relation to Lower Moor Farm, Clattinger Farm, Oaksey Moor Farm Meadow and Swillbrook Lakes. The BAP takes this premise a step further by highlighting the opportunities to link in other strategically identified habitat sites across the Thames corridor by taking advantage of the neutral grassland in the western area; the floodplain grazing marsh in the southern central area and eastern areas; all connected by habitat rich corridors in the form of the River Thames and the Thames & Severn Canal.
- 4.17 The CWP area already incorporates the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Areas of Conservation (SAC); the North Meadow National Nature Reserve; and nine designated SSSIs, as well as other locally identified nature reserves and areas of wildlife interest. All of these sites need to be protected and enhanced, including the establishment of buffers to help protect the most sensitive areas from damage. In addition, there is certainly scope for other areas of the CWP to become important habitats with a specific designation (such as National Nature Reserve, RAMSAR, Special Protection Areas). In this context, the aspiration for a landscape-scale approach to biodiversity development would provide the CWP with a unique attribute that would raise the profile of the area on a national basis.
- 4.18 If this is to be achieved, conservation organisations will need to work closely with landowners, developers and communities to encourage the adoption of practices and measures to assist in the delivery of this aspiration. The Stage II part of this study demonstrated that biodiversity need not be a constraint to other development aspirations. Likewise, appropriately designed development in biodiversity can actively support other core priorities, especially tourism and the local communities and settlements, whilst it can also be complementary to others such as sport, leisure, recreation and the countryside character. Biodiversity also needs to become an integral part of the countryside and landscape development and management of the CWP. In this context, the other sectors will not just aid and assist in realising biodiversity targets, but



they will actually become key mechanisms in the delivery. On the basis of the investigations undertaken, this will include the following:

- For the set of key biodiversity principles as defined in the CWP BAP Habitat Action Plan for Sand and Gravel Quarries to be adopted and implemented during extraction activities by aggregate companies over the next 20-25 years. This defines actions that are mutually compatible; the times of greatest potential conflict; and the appropriate management techniques to be adopted to reduce damage to habitats. The adoption of this plan needs to become a formalised requirement of minerals working.
- Securing a succession of mineral developments along a proposed biodiversity corridor for strict biodiversity purposes. This would assist with the need to encourage a landscape-scale biodiversity programme through the restoration process to deliver high quality habitats matched against species priorities in relation to fen marsh, woodland and open waters.
- Encouraging the adoption and integration of environmental conservation practices in outdoor leisure, recreation and sports provision, particularly new developments, with the CWPS identifying scope for biodiversity inclusion within the Cleveland Lakes proposal; the planned regeneration of the canals as leisure facilities will also provide linear corridors that could be used to promote species movement.
- Utilising existing mechanisms for encouraging businesses to adopt green practices, particularly in the area of visitor accommodation. The Green Tourism Business Scheme and The David Bellamy Conservation Awards (holiday parks and camping and caravan sites only) are available to tourism businesses that can actively demonstrate their green credentials.
- Ensuring future development fully integrates appropriate biodiversity enhancement measures into the development and ongoing management actions of any given site, in addition to mitigating and rectifying any potential negative impacts that the development has on habitats within or surrounding the site boundary.
- Encouraging the adoption of sustainably managed agricultural practices across the living landscape corridor area. This follows the lead provided by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust as landowners and managers of Blakehill Farm in initiating techniques for wildlife conservation in agriculture.
- For the biodiversity aspirations for the CWP to be fully recognised and integrated into the planning policy concerning the CWP by the respective planning authorities. This is to ensure both existing and future aspirations for biodiversity are considered and conservation organisations engaged in the planning process.

4.19 These types of proposals will provide the necessary methods by which significant elements of the CWP's biodiversity aspirations can be achieved. However, further support will be required if the corridor concept is to be sustained and the CWP is to become one of the premier sites for nature conservation. Options for securing continuing support for biodiversity include:

- Establishing a series of signature wildlife facilities that can generate funding for wider conservation practices through visitor spend, admissions, parking fees, donations and securing additional membership. Ideally, such sites should present a collective spirit that

reflects a landscape-scale approach to biodiversity. They should also be strategically sited and interlinked via sustainable transport means in order to cover the whole of the CWP's habitat and species range.

- Encouraging local businesses to become active supporters of the CWP through joint conservation/business partnerships that can derive mutual benefits, with the recognition of business practices in environmental conservation identified through a distinctive mark that can be used in marketing and promotional literature.
- Working in partnership with local 'champions' of environmental conservation to encourage greater participation of community members in assisting in the delivery of biodiversity targets.
- Developing other flagship (in terms of status rather than scale) visitor facilities that have nature conservation at the heart of their functions. The establishment of an eco-lodge development that provides direct support to local conservation via visitor income would certainly fit with this ideal. Likewise, it could also include a fully functional 'Field Studies Centre' running residential courses on the environmental care, management of man-made ecosystems, and geodiversity. Again the course fees could be used to assist in the landscape management, whilst it may also be possible to encourage volunteering support.

### **Biodiversity Objectives**

- Via the CWP BAP, deliver a landscape-scale conservation approach that traverses the whole of the CWP area, utilising the inherent neutral grasslands, the reedbeds and the floodplain grazing marsh to ensure that the CWP becomes a premier site for conservation in the UK.
- Integrate the CWP BAP objectives and principles into the planning framework of the respective local authorities. This will eventually be translated into more specific policy statements in the proposed Area Action Plan for the CWP (see Planning section).
- Ensure that biodiversity targets and aspirations are integrated within all types of development and activities in the CWP (including agriculture, sports, leisure, recreation, tourism, mineral extraction and even settlements) as a means of delivering the BAP aspirations.
- Establish appropriate initiatives that will support the delivery of biodiversity creation and management in the long term, including visitor amenities, local community partnerships and business partnerships.
- Secure signature nature sites and reserves with public access associated with appropriate organisations (RSPB, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England and the CWPS) that will promote and authenticate the wildlife credentials of the CWP.
- Explore innovative projects that seek to capitalise on environmental conservation for mutual benefit (e.g. eco-lodges).
- Strengthen the role of the Nature Conservation Forum (NCF) in promoting the development of the area for biodiversity.

## Sports, Leisure and Recreation

**The CWP to offer a range of sports, leisure and recreation facilities of local, regional and national significance that promote public access to and enjoyment of the countryside for local residents and visitors.**

- 4.20 A significant proportion of the Vision will be achieved through the provision of sports, leisure and recreation in the CWP. In particular, the CWP has the capacity to support facilities and amenities of regional, if not national, importance.
- 4.21 The review process has identified a multitude of opportunities within the CWP for development of land-based sports, water-based sports, and for outdoor leisure and recreation. As is already evidenced through the existing provision, these opportunities can be tailored to suit the requirements of mainstream sectors – sailing, angling, walking and cycling – that represent the main activity markets. There is also scope for innovative development to appeal to niche sectors and to raise the profile of the CWP amongst other market sectors. For instance:
- Sailing, canoeing/kayaking, windsurfing, and water skiing are likely to remain important elements of the sports offer, but there is capacity to explore other activities such as diving, triathlon, wake boarding, and wake surfing.
  - Angling is the predominant sporting activity in the CWP, but this could become even more prominent through the establishment of a dedicated angling centre to host training, competitions and events.
  - There is an opportunity to expand the leisure and recreation assets base of the CWP to build on the success of the Keynes Country Park. In order to overcome the limitations of the KCP (i.e. seasonality, weather dependence and access problems), a more accessible mix of indoor and outdoor facilities needs to be provided.
  - Golf provision is already available in the CWP, but the creation of more lakes could be designed to include features such as ‘island greens’ that could be ‘signature holes’ and provide a challenge to golfers.
  - The proposed restoration of the Thames & Severn Canal, the North Wilts Canal and the Cricklade-Swindon Railway present leisure opportunities in their own right. Other recreational benefits may be possible through the establishment of marinas at key junctions, boat rides and water taxis along the navigable waterways and the provision of multi-use leisure and recreation routes along the towpaths.
- 4.22 There is also the potential to create ‘flagship’ projects, in terms of content rather than scale, that will contribute to the range of facilities in the CWP and the region, for example:
- the development of a facility or series of facilities in watersports that would enable the CWP to rival the National Watersports Centre (currently in Nottingham) as a venue for rowing, sailing, triathlon, canoeing/kayaking, and water skiing;
  - a dedicated angling centre to act both as a means of encouraging participation in angling, especially amongst the more disadvantaged sectors of the community and a widely identifiable anchor that promotes the wealth of angling opportunities in the CWP area;

- an attraction or series of attractions of small-medium scale, one or two of which could become regionally and nationally iconic in style and content. Examples include:
    - a farm-based attraction that has a significant appeal to families with young children; and/or
    - an aqua-adventure centre that educates and challenges visitors on the value and role of water, its fundamental link with life on the planet, biodiversity, settlements, transport, science, sports, fun and enjoyment.
- 4.23 These examples help to illustrate the potential of the CWP in relation to sport, leisure, education and recreation. Equity of access for different user groups must be a key principle; however, exceptions might include more favourable terms for local residents. In particular, any future amenities whether private or public should not be entirely exclusive and should incorporate ‘pay and play’ options in their offers and programmes for non-members to facilitate use by local residents and visitors.
- 4.24 As with all types of development, the location, scale and nature of these developments need to be carefully considered in the context of the countryside setting; the volume and nature of the visitors that the facility could attract; and the potential implications for local communities and biodiversity. Understanding such interrelationships with the other core priorities is fundamental to achieving ‘mutual benefits’. Likewise, the potential implications of leisure developments on aspects such as hydrology, aerodrome safeguarding, and transport and utilities also need to be robustly assessed. Each of these principal interrelationships are outlined in more detail in the ‘considerations matrix’.

### Integrated Leisure Network

- 4.25 Building upon the provision that already exists or is already in discussion (e.g. National Cycle Network Route 45, canal towpaths, public rights of way, and existing ‘quiet lanes’), an integrated leisure and recreation network is a fundamental requirement in the CWP. The majority of this network should ideally be off-road or, as a minimum, on designated ‘quiet lanes’. The integrated network requires careful and sensitive planning; good clear information systems and signposting; and good management and maintenance. The less accessible parts of the CWP can be effectively ‘opened up’ through the creation of nature trails and routes that form an integral part of the network.
- 4.26 The network needs to be designed to cater for walking, cycling and horse riding, but should also include provision in the form of trails and routes for running and health and fitness users. A single route multi-use network, however well designed, may not be appropriate and the specific requirements of users must be taken into account in planning routes and circuits. In order to ensure that all of the elements of the CWP can be fully integrated into the network, it is recommended that:
- The components of the natural and historic environment of the CWP are fully incorporated into the leisure route network, including the provision of heritage and wildlife ‘discovery’ trails that incorporates features such as the River Thames, Lower Moor Farm, and North Meadow.

- The inclusion of art, design and sculpture within the CWP can be used to create additional interest, with innovative techniques such as water features, topiary, lighting and sound to enhance the experience. These can be designed into interpretation centres/boards at key locations, resting areas, shelters and viewing points.
- Both circular and linear routes should be designed into the network, well signposted and timed to enable users to plan their routes. Identification of key locations where there are links with other modes of transport for return journeys which will enhance the experience and should be included on information boards along the routes. In addition to public transport, there are opportunities for dedicated CWP transport that could include a bus service, pony and trap, and a water taxi system on the canal network, supported by the use of the Cricklade-Swindon steam railway.
- Horse riding routes should include separated bridle paths and dedicated ‘gallop’ areas.
- The network needs to link with public transport (e.g. Kemble and Swindon stations), and with visitor parking areas, and must be connected to other activities that take place within the CWP, especially refreshments centres, toilets, supply and hire facilities. Circuits should also link with retail outlets and accommodation to encourage longer stays with resulting economic benefits.
- Where appropriate, the provision of suitable amenities such as secure cycle lock-ups and horse pens should be provided to encourage people to rest and recuperate at strategic locations including gateways, activity hubs and refreshment points.

4.27 In addition, other types of use of the leisure and recreation network should be encouraged, including use by children going to school and locally based commuting to work.

### **Sport, Leisure, Recreation Objectives**

- Establish a series of watersports facilities that collectively present the CWP as a significant destination that could be of regional, if not national, importance for sports such as rowing, sailing, triathlon, canoeing/kayaking and water skiing.
- Deliver signature developments that have a significant market fit with other sports, especially for golf, angling and diving.
- Building upon the success of KCP, promote the development of associated leisure and recreation facilities that could act as flagship projects and activities. This could conceivably include a farm-based attraction and an aqua-adventure centre.
- Fully integrate other potential projects into the CWP area for the delivery of leisure and recreation amenities, particularly in relation to the regeneration proposals for the canals and the Cricklade-Swindon Railway.
- Develop a comprehensive and integrated network of leisure and recreation routes, designed to deliver a quality experience for all types of users, including walkers and hikers, dog walkers, cyclists, horse riders, runners and general sightseers; the network is to connect all parts of the CWP area and is to be fully integrated in respect of management and transport with all other components of the CWP to meet sustainability objectives.
- Ensure that there is equity of access to sports, leisure and recreational amenities provided across the CWP.

## Tourism

**The CWP to present a quality visitor destination that draws on the unique character of the lakes, the settlements, the sports, the history and the natural environment to deliver a wide range of experiences.**

- 4.28 The investigation process for this study has confirmed that the CWP is emerging as a tourism destination that can attract overnight visitors in its own right.
- 4.29 The principal catalyst for this has been the development of large-scale tourism accommodation, which has created a new market direction for the CWP in the provision of high value accommodation and facilities as well as leisure and business tourism. These developments exploit the natural character of the CWP and its proximity to the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In the future, however, the scope and opportunities for the CWP as a tourism destination will increase through its own market appeal. This will be based on its unique countryside character consisting of upward of 147 lakes; the profile that the CWP could have by achieving its biodiversity aspirations; and the range of significant watersports facilities.
- 4.30 Future tourism development within the CWP should be considered in this context.

### Developing Appropriate Markets

- 4.31 If the aspirations as outlined for each of the other core priorities can be achieved, then the CWP has the potential to appeal to a range of markets. As defined in the Stage II assessment, these markets are:
- General Markets:
    - General interest and sightseeing, largely associated with the historic environment and outdoor leisure and recreation pursuits available. This will incorporate the leisure and recreation facilities assets base, which is forecast to grow; the main historic and heritage components, especially assets in the towns and villages; and the opportunities for retail and catering; all presenting an experience that can become synonymous with the CWP.
    - The family market, based upon a significant family-fun offer, which in the future will include further beaches on lakes; the prospect of new all-weather attractions designed to cater to the family market; a safe environment for casual outdoor recreation using off-road leisure routes; the availability of sports and watersports on a 'pay and play' basis; and the opportunity for environmental learning via visitor-orientated nature reserves.
  - Niche Markets/Experience Themes:
    - Wildlife tourism, through the increasing awareness of the landscape-scale nature conservation and the opportunities this will present for observing endangered species and habitats that are indigenous to the British Isles. The provision of visitor-orientated nature reserves and nature-based leisure routes are a precursor for this market segment. (It should be noted that the most sensitive and vulnerable habitats

will need to be secured against damage that could be inadvertently caused by visitor activity, though this should not diminish the overall experience for wildlife enthusiasts).

- Sports tourism, with the CWP able to offer a specific playground for watersports enthusiasts. Activities in the future could include rowing, wake boarding and wake surfing, as well as increasing public participation in existing popular activities such as water skiing, kayaking, sailing, triathlon and windsurfing. In addition, there is the opportunity for the inclusion of an 'island green' on a golf course and sub-aqua centre promoting diving to new audiences, both of which would represent signature features.
- Sports skills development, a highly specialised market that could be matched with facilities within the CWP, for training athletes, mainly in watersports. This could easily be extended to include other sports where cross-training is required.
- Events-based tourism, which is already a feature of the CWP through the Royal International Air Tattoo. In the future, this type of tourism could include sporting events and competitions that are of regional and national significance; and cultural events and festivals with a local emphasis that may have a local orientation but could be interesting to visitors to the CWP. These could include food fairs, markets, dragon boat racing and arts festivals.
- Other markets identified:
  - Business tourism, a sector that has been prevalent in the CWP in the provision of corporate training and team building initiatives. This has recently been bolstered by the opening of the Four Pillars Hotel as a business-orientated hotel that can provide residential support for team building, as well as having its own capacity for hosting meetings and conferences.
  - Education, building upon the inherent assets for outdoor learning of sports, earth sciences, geography, history and industry. This should build upon the existing services provided by organisations such as the South Cerney Outdoor Education Centre, the Cotswold Water Park Society and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.
  - 'Volun-tourism', a recognised market whereby voluntary activities in nature conservation, heritage conservation, and archaeology creates tourism opportunities. In this respect, the market actively seeks a stimulating and personally rewarding experience through their personal contribution to achieving specific projects. The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, the RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, Cotswold Canals Partnership and archaeological societies would be key stakeholders in this regard.
  - Potential for cultural and arts based tourism through the advent of new arts and crafts initiatives, such as wildlife and public art, the potential for an arts and crafts centre, and countryside sculptures.

4.32 These market segments are clear visitor opportunities for the CWP that have real potential in sustaining a diverse, but ultimately compatible, tourism offer. Moreover, they can be positioned to complement the countryside character, the communities and the biodiversity aspirations of the CWP.



## Tourism-specific Development

- 4.33 Most of the assets and features that will be utilised for these tourism markets will actually be delivered through the other core priorities. Therefore, the principal consideration will be to ensure that tourism development supports the visitor markets that the other core priorities are seeking to attract. In this respect, tourism-specific development should seek to draw upon and enhance the countryside character of the CWP; utilise the existing amenities and assets (pubs, shops, accommodation) wherever possible; and actively support the other core priorities in terms of the types of visitors that they attract (as outlined above).
- 4.34 In this respect, additional tourism development should only be accepted where there is a clear strategic and market rationale, and where it can compliment the rural character and sense of place of the CWP as a whole. Potential tourism-based development that could realistically fit with this approach includes:
- Broadening the accommodation mix of the CWP to encourage overnight stays from the full range of markets that will be attracted, with the main existing opportunities considered to be in relation to:
    - moderate additions to the serviced accommodation stock, consisting of good quality, budget/youth accommodation, small-scale farm-based accommodation, comprising bed and breakfast, guest house accommodation and self-catering facilities to support general sightseers and outdoor leisure and recreation users;
    - a low key eco-lodge complex blended into the landscape that could be developed in association with the biodiversity aspirations of the CWP, appealing to the wildlife tourism market and providing another means by which tourism can directly support environmental conservation;
    - additional camping and caravanning that could be used to service the outdoor activities, sports tourism, and family markets; and
    - a dedicated residential education facility to support the outdoor education market. This may also double as a youth hostel so that it can serve other users of the CWP.
  - Enhancing the existing Gateway Centre and creating additional gateways to serve and define entry points to the CWP, with:
    - Lechlade Riverside Park or the junction between the River Thames and the Thames & Severn Canal presenting an opportunity for an eastern gateway; and
    - the WWT's Lower Moor Farm presenting an opportunity to become a western gateway, albeit on a more modest scale when compared to the Gateway Centre.
  - Incorporating the main settlements of the CWP, especially Lechlade, Cricklade and Fairford, as strategic visitor hubs that can enhance the CWP experience, through the provision of information, retail and catering outlets and sightseeing. These hubs need to be incorporated into the leisure and recreation network in order to encourage sustainable movement around the CWP.



- 4.35 As identified in the previous section, the location, scale and nature of tourism developments will need to be carefully considered in the context of the countryside character of the CWP; potential implications for local communities; the management of visitors to ensure they adopt appropriate behaviours; and full integration with the leisure, recreation and sports facilities. Exploring such interrelationships between the core priorities is fundamental to achieving ‘mutual benefits’. Likewise, the potential implications of tourism developments on aspects such as hydrology, aerodrome safeguarding, and transport and utilities also need to be robustly assessed. Each of these principal interrelationships are outlined in more detail in the ‘Mutual Benefits Matrix’ which can be found in Section 5 of this report.

### **Tourism Objectives**

- Draw upon the existing character of the CWP and developments in the other core priorities to define the tourism offer of the CWP as a destination that can attract overnight visitors in its own right, with the primary visitor markets being sourced from the wide range of activities under consideration.
- Tailor tourism development to meet visitor demand resulting from the full range of activities under consideration and to encourage longer lengths of stay by broadening the range of activities in the CWP (e.g. General Sightseeing; Families; Wildlife Tourism; Sports Tourism; Arts and Cultural Tourism).
- Establish other gateways across the CWP at strategically defined points to complement the existing Gateway Centre.
- In consultation with community stakeholders in particular, seek to incorporate appropriate settlements (i.e. the main market towns and larger villages) as key visitor hubs within the CWP in order to make visitors feel welcome and encouraging them to utilise local facilities such as pubs, shops and accommodation.

## **Supporting Drivers**

### **Agriculture**

- 4.36 Despite a general decline, agriculture is a fundamental activity in the CWP in terms of both the landscape and the economy. To exemplify this, the CWP area contains a cattle market (Voyce Mullin in Driffield), a rare breeds farm with farm shop (Butts Farm), as well as arable farmland classified as Grade 3 (moderate to good) with some pockets of Grade 2 quality. Landowners therefore remain an essential part of the future prosperity of the CWP as the guardians and managers of most of the rural environment. Whilst the nature of agriculture is constantly changing through external pressures, the premise of integrating the agricultural community into the CWP is considered vital. Agricultural activity can engage more effectively with the aspirations of the CWP, particularly in relation to locally grown produce being used to serve tourism and leisure enterprises. In this context, there is the potential to encourage both crop and non-crop diversification that could assist other aspects of the CWP vision.
- 4.37 In relation to non-crop diversification, it is envisaged that agriculture could be utilised to help support nature conservation, tourism and leisure. This could be through:
- the development of a significant agricultural-based attraction or series of attractions;

- provision of accommodation, particularly in relation to small-scale serviced and self-catering accommodation; and
  - provision of land for leisure and recreational routes, with agricultural land required to deliver the much needed off-road route provision that covers the whole of the CWP.
- 4.38 In relation to crop diversification, green energy crops, or bio-fuel crops could be encouraged as part of a programme designed to reduce the carbon footprint of the CWP community and visitors. It is recognised that, at present, there are several constraints to biomass production. However, with increasing pressure on reducing carbon emissions it is possible that demand for appropriate bio-fuel crops may present financially viable propositions in the future. Other feasible crop diversification opportunities include:
- reedbed cultivation for use as thatch and other reed-based products;
  - grazing and farming of livestock, which can be used as a natural management technique for maintaining habitats, particularly on the floodplain; and
  - fish farming associated with the CWP lakes. Special consideration will need to be given, however, to the location of farms and the hydrology of the local river systems.
- 4.39 The potential for the grazing of livestock to assist with habitat management is already being explored by the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT). The WWT is keen to expand this practice and view the CWP floodplain favourably in this regard. An added benefit for the CWP is the meat that it would produce that could be sold as rare breed and organic produce. Although conceptual at this time, it is conceivable that such an initiative could be coupled with a 'CWP' brand to present place-distinctive products that could become synonymous with the CWP area.
- 4.40 In addition, the production of high quality, ethically sourced and environmentally sound products has a synergy with the Co-op Group, a producer and purchaser of ethically sourced produce. Similarly, Butts Farm Rare Breeds Farm Shop and Fosse Farm already have facilities to sell direct to visitors, whilst each of the market towns of the CWP have the capacity to host food or farmers markets, such as that held in Cirencester. There is, therefore, an opportunity for a CWP branded food business with products that are sold at a local and national level, along similar lines to the 'Duchy' brand. There is also the potential, on the basis of a successful business, for it to make contributions to the CWP BAP.

#### **Agriculture Objectives**

- To supplement and support the agricultural sector, encourage suitable non-crop diversification of agricultural holdings to support the core priorities for development, particularly nature conservation, tourism and leisure.
- Encourage crop diversification into green energy crops, though this must be secured in areas that will not compromise biodiversity objectives.
- Support the WWT and other stakeholders in utilising livestock grazing as a natural mechanism for habitat management, particularly within the floodplain grazing zone.
- Establish, through the production of local produce, a range of 'CWP' branded food products as a means of securing additional funding for projects within the CWP. The sales of this produce should directly and overtly be used to fund environmental conservation projects.

## Historic Environment

- 4.41 The CWP has a range of built heritage assets and features, the most prominent of which are:
- its 19 Scheduled Ancient Monuments reflecting over 6,000 years of human habitation, with sites dating back to Neolithic, Beaker, Roman and Saxon times;
  - the character of its historic towns, villages, and the wider rural environment which includes evidence of medieval field systems and ridge and furrow earthworks;
  - specific heritage features such as the River Thames, the canals of Thames & Severn and North Wilts, and the Cricklade-Swindon Steam Railway line; and
  - the lakes whose heritage value may become more relevant in the future.
- 4.42 The range of historical features in the CWP that are documented (both scheduled and unscheduled monuments) provide visible evidence of the area's 6,000 years of habitation. In this respect, the historic environment is closely linked to the landscape character of the CWP. If this can be enhanced and improved, the historic environment can present intrinsic benefits in terms of defining its sense of place, raising the area's profile, and supporting other priorities, particularly community integration and improving visitor experiences.
- 4.43 However, before this aspiration can be achieved, there is a need to conserve and enhance the historic environment, an issue that the evidence framework for this study suggests has not been evident in the past. In particular, certain developments that have occurred to date have resulted in many potential heritage features, assets and landforms being lost.
- 4.44 In order to redress this issue, there is a need for a more strategic and sustainably managed approach to ensure both existing and future heritage assets are being included in the planning and development process of the CWP. Through this process, the merits and background of the historic environment assets need to be actively emphasised to provide a deeper sense of the CWP's built heritage and to demonstrate the evolution of its landscape through the ages. The portrayal of this heritage could be achieved through the following measures:
- the use of heritage discovery as a consistent theme for the CWP supported by interpretation techniques that will appeal to different interest groups; and
  - continuing to showcase local heritage items within other facilities, with the Gateway Centre including displays of interesting finds from archaeological digs, for example.
- 4.45 Protecting and enhancing the River Thames, and its environs within the CWP is already the concern of the Upper River Thames Heritage Project. Likewise, separate restoration projects are seeking to deliver the Thames and Severn Canal, North Wilts Canal, and Cricklade-Swindon Steam Railway, with each potentially having positive implications for the CWP's core priorities in addition to bringing to life these significant heritage features. But they also have direct synergy with visitor and tourism aspirations, and could be managed to create benefits for biodiversity. In addition, on the assumption that further heritage assets may be discovered in the future, the development of a heritage centre could conceivably become a viable proposition for the CWP as the archaeological material and evidence grows.

### Historic Environment Objectives

- Ensure the sustainable management of the historic environment, and that both the requirement to improve access to and interpretation of the heritage assets and features are fully integrated into the development considerations and policy framework.
- Encourage innovative techniques designed to better incorporate and interpret both the existing fabric and future discoveries of the historic environment of the CWP for the benefit of residents and visitors.
- Continue to showcase historic artefacts found within the CWP through existing facilities such as the Gateway Centre, but with a view to potentially establishing a dedicated heritage visitor centre in the future as the number of artefacts grow to make up a more significant and coherent collection.

### Arts

- 4.46 Liminal, a consultancy specialising in public art, has produced a topic paper that explores possible methods for embracing arts in the CWP.
- 4.47 The use of arts-based projects to bring the countryside to life and to inspire is becoming apparent across the UK, particularly where there is an obvious disconnection between public places and points of access. Some of the most iconic examples include the Angel of the North in Gateshead; Anthony Gormley's 100 solid cast iron body-forms on Crosby Beach, Liverpool; and structures known as 'Panopticons', landmark works of art, at viewpoints in East Lancashire.
- 4.48 The CWP study identified several arts-based projects that could be incorporated into the CWP and these include the following:
- The creation of an artificial landscape of miniature gravel pits to highlight the nature of the industrial process and the impact it has had on the area.
  - The development of a sound observatory, 'The Auditory', as an acoustic mirror that would heighten the visitor's experience of listening to the sounds of the countryside, consistent with the growing awareness of the CWP in terms of its birdlife population.
  - The establishment of 'Song Poles', using recycled telegraph poles set into the ground and hollowed out at different heights to provide nesting sites for birds. These are equipped with a small video camera and a microphone linked to a screen and speaker at the base of the pole.
  - At the detailed level the use of natural features, landscape setting, planting, light and water can all contribute to creating identifiable landmarks within the CWP.
  - The prospect of a centre for art and crafts presenting a unique interpretation of land and ecology.
- 4.49 In addition, with the continuation of gravel extraction in the CWP for some years to come, the study considers that there are opportunities for creative lake restoration. A concept that would fit well with diving opportunities is for the floor of an extraction pit to be designed to resemble a

- submerged 'Atlantis'. This would provide an interesting underwater venue for training and inexperienced divers.
- 4.50 Overall, this demonstrates that the arts could provide a significant benefit to the CWP, bringing the countryside to life and providing a more positive relationship between the industry of mineral extraction, the countryside and the community.
- 4.51 In addition to individual arts projects, a cultural programme of festivals and events across the whole of the CWP should be sought to deliver greater enjoyment and appreciation of the area by local residents and visitors. This programme should cover significant local events such as markets, fetes and festivals. At a sub-regional level food fairs, farmers markets, music festivals and concerts, and wildlife watch programmes should be included. At a national and regional level, large scale and high profile events and activities such as the Royal International Air Tattoo have the potential to draw visitors from across the country. The inclusion of activities at all scales can contribute to the perception of the CWP and there are good opportunities to major on cultural, environmental and sports events.

#### **Arts Objectives**

- Incorporate the arts and cultural sectors into the development of the CWP with a view to bringing the countryside to life, raising its profile, and encouraging greater visitation and exploration of the area.
- Use innovative arts features that encourage greater enjoyment and appreciation of the CWP's core priority areas, including biodiversity and sports.
- Develop a CWP specific cultural programme to cover local, sub-regional, national and international events and festivals.

## **Enabling Drivers**

### **The Minerals Process**

- 4.52 Mineral extraction for sand and gravel is envisaged to be the main constant development activity within the CWP for the next 20 to 25 years. The sector is in its own right a considerable employer in the CWP, with mineral processing sites likely to continue long after extraction has ceased.
- 4.53 Mineral extraction is only a temporary landuse, yet it is largely from this activity that the opportunities for the core priorities and other drivers become possible. As such, the mineral extraction process needs to be recognised as the key enabler to achieve the Vision and aspirations for the CWP.

### **Planning for Minerals Extraction**

- 4.54 The ability of the minerals extraction process to 'enable' is governed by the programming and sequence of extraction at permitted sites. Clearly this could be designed to better serve the overall vision and interests of the CWP.

- 4.55 The ideal position is for the mineral extraction sites that are granted permission for extraction by the Mineral Planning Authorities (MPAs) to be closely aligned to the wider development priorities for biodiversity, leisure, recreation, sport, and tourism; and that this is conducted at a CWP-wide scale. This remains one of the key criticisms of the past approaches to mineral planning policy, despite active assurances by the MPAs that they have endeavoured to co-ordinate activities in more recent times.
- 4.56 It is essential for the future of the CWP to ensure that the core priorities for development become a fundamental part of the MPA's considerations. This is not only because the minerals resources are finite and will cease in the future, but also the impact the extraction process has over time. A longer-term perspective needs to be taken that has regard to the opportunities that mineral extraction creates in order to secure benefits that will lead to a more sustainable future for the CWP after extraction. It would also mean that disruption to local communities could be better managed and mitigation measures put in place to control negative impacts including noise, traffic and transportation.
- 4.57 A more integrated and strategic approach to the forward planning of mineral extraction sites is required with stakeholders, aggregate companies, the MPAs and the CWP stakeholders involved. The objective must be to agree to a set of shared principles designed to deliver mutual benefit. In this respect, these principles should seek to organise and programme mineral extraction to locations that offer the best opportunity to assist in realisation of the overall vision for the CWP. At the same time, it should still be possible to deliver viable mineral workings sites for aggregate companies that in turn match the MPA apportionment and land bank commitments.
- 4.58 The above issues are now being addressed as Gloucestershire MPA and Wiltshire and Swindon MPA produce their respective Minerals Core Strategies (MCS). In particular, the respective MCSs now specifically denote the need and desire to adopt co-operative approaches to the mineral extraction planning process in respect of the CWP/Upper Thames area. It is certainly felt that this defined recognition within the MCSs should result in a more consistent and co-ordinated approach between the MPAs.
- 4.59 As defined by the MCSs, it needs to be recognised that demand for minerals is facing its own challenges, and that these could ultimately affect production rates in the future. It is suggested that the apportionment requirements set at a regional level are themselves demanding given the fact that much of the remaining resource is sterilised by other developments (i.e. by the settlements, RAF Fairford, and land owners who want to retain their existing holdings); variability in the quality and depth to the resources; and the fact that there is now a much stronger requirement than in the past for the use of recycled aggregate products which could see less of a reliance on primary resources over time. It is important that these factors are monitored in order to determine their potential consequences for the development aspirations for the core priorities.

### Restoration and After Use

- 4.60 The second minerals related 'enabling' function that should be exploited in order to realise the CWP vision is through the planned restoration and after use of worked-out sites.

- 4.61 It is recognised that control of restoration is a statutory requirement of the minerals planning process and as a result all the worked-out sites in the CWP have and will continue to be restored to agreed criteria. The opportunity now exists for instigating a much stronger set of restoration criteria, specifically designed to deliver against the core development objectives, namely:
- establishing a more coherent CWP countryside and historic environment directed through a definitive landscape strategy that includes of preferred design and planting regimes;
  - encouraging the restoration of sites, particularly the shape and profile of lakes, to match development priorities in relation to biodiversity, sports, and tourism as appropriate;
  - securing the future of sites that are deemed to be of high public value and ensuring public access to them via agreed off-road leisure routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders after the extraction process, and potentially during should safety considerations be met;
  - encouraging biodiversity management techniques into the mineral workings through agreed and identified processes and actions as defined by the CWP BAP that have mutually beneficial outcomes; and
  - encouraging developers to consider the future use of sites at the earliest opportunity in order to secure known options for development that will influence the restoration process.
- 4.62 The recommended approach that encapsulates all these requirements is to publish a ‘good practice’ guidance, which utilises the evidence and experiences of key stakeholders, to present a document that explicitly states the fundamental factors that need to be understood in relation to mineral site restoration. This should ideally represent a CWP-specific strategic reference document to allow developers to better understand design and restoration requirements; and for planning authorities to use as an aid in the consideration of development proposals and applications. This approach would be beneficial to all stakeholders, particularly in relation to encouraging mineral operators and developers to consider the possible after-uses early in the process. In this respect, it is important to understand that the majority of aggregate companies remain primarily interested in the minerals rather than the potential of the site beyond extraction. Therefore, a principal purpose of the good practice guide will be to outline development opportunities that exist and stimulate investment in the CWP for development that is appropriate. These opportunities should be closely aligned to the core priorities and supporting drivers.
- 4.63 If the guide is to be successful, it needs to be appropriately supported by an alignment of the policies and process adopted by the respective local planning authorities. This is because of the roles that different planning authorities have in relation to the development and after-use of the site. To reiterate, the planning application process for mineral extraction, restoration and soft after uses, comprising nature conservation and informal leisure and recreation, comes under the auspices of the MPAs; whilst any proposal for hard uses, any form of structure and development, will need to be assessed under the local district/unitary authority planning system. Therefore, it is essential that the good practice guidance is the product of a shared, co-ordinated and cohesive responsibility of all planning authorities and other stakeholders, and that this is reflected in the LDF process at District, County and Unitary levels.



### Minerals Planning Objectives

- Ensure that considerations for the core priorities (countryside character, communities, settlements; biodiversity; sports, leisure, recreation; and tourism) of the CWP vision are fully integrated into the mineral planning process.
- Encourage future mineral extraction sites to become strategically integrated into the wider development objectives of the CWP as well as minerals requirements.
- Develop a good practice guide for the restoration and after use of worked-out sites in order to inform developers and planning authorities as to the most appropriate restoration strategies that should be adopted and appropriate development opportunities that exist.

### Hydrology

- 4.64 The hydrological system in the CWP is fundamental to its success and needs to be fully considered at every step of the development process, both in terms of mineral extraction and the core priorities.
- 4.65 Up to the present time, there has been a general preference in restoration strategies to allow mineral extraction sites to fill naturally with water, mainly as a result of the high water table. The analysis of the hydrological system of the CWP demonstrates, however, that it is complex and further development could have considerable implications. For example:
- The proximity of such a high number of lakes to the River Thames, the River Coln and their tributaries means that they have the capacity to interact with these natural watercourses. It has been suggested that increased evaporation losses due to the exposure of open water to the sun, in periods of dry weather, might be one of the causes of low-flow problems observed in the local rivers during summer months. Further lake creation could serve to exacerbate this problem.
  - The flooding events of January and July 2007 have served to heighten the issue of flood risk for all types of development. This has resulted in calls for a stronger approach to the consideration of flood risk at a strategic level, which in the case of the CWP, will mean examining the knock-on effect of development across the whole area and potentially further down the River Thames.
- 4.66 It is the creation of the water bodies that has led to the developments in watersports, leisure, recreation and tourism sectors. Furthermore, it is the availability of such a high volume of water inland that has established the wildlife value of the CWP, especially bird life, and subsequently the reason why the CWP has gained a significant reputation for being of national and international importance for both water and land-based habitat creation.
- 4.67 Hydrology also has a significant role to play in relation to the potential restoration of the canal systems to full navigation. However, issues concerning the sustainability of maintaining the water levels within the Thames and Severn Canal are still to be fully resolved. In this and other contexts, hydrological issues may also present a potential constraint and challenge to development aspirations, be it for mineral extraction or for other types of development.



- 4.68 It is evident that future development within the CWP cannot be allowed to unduly compromise the hydrological system, particularly in relation to the degradation of water quality; increased risk of flooding; or incidents of low river flows. Any development leading to these types of occurrences would not only contravene several legislative requirements, but it would also potentially have significant damage on the core priorities of the CWP itself. This could include physical damage to settlements through flooding; compromising enjoyment of the countryside and watercourses; restricting ability to deliver against biodiversity targets; and reducing the use of the lakes for watersports and other leisure opportunities.
- 4.69 The rainfall events experienced in January and July 2007 demonstrated the susceptibility of certain parts of the CWP to flooding. Furthermore, there is a risk that flooding could become more prevalent through climate change, with periods of short but very heavy rainfall one of the predicted consequences of altering climatic conditions. As such, the need for flood mitigation measures may become more pressing within the CWP area, which has direct connotations in relation to development. Examples of such measures in relation to mineral extraction, as identified in a recent Strategic Flood Risk Assessment conducted on behalf of Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Planning Authority, includes requirements for restoring river channels; restoring floodplains; and potentially increasing floodwater storage through mineral extraction activities. These and other opportunities for reducing the impacts of flooding of property and residents will need to be actively explored further through the development opportunities that arise.
- 4.70 It is also recommended that further investigations be conducted in respect of the influence of low river flows during dry periods, with the alleviation of such problems likely to be a key requisite of the European Union's Environment Liability Directive 2004 and the UK's Water Framework Directive 2003. Likewise, monitoring of water quality in the CWP will be integral to ensuring that water courses can provide favourable conditions for biodiversity, sport, leisure and recreation.
- 4.71 As previously mentioned, fundamental to all investigations is that they are not simply conducted on a site by site basis, but also that they assess the wider implications of development across the CWP as a whole, and potentially beyond. Thames Water, as the water abstraction company for the area and the Environment Agency, as the leading public organisation for protection and improving the environment, including river systems, are principal stakeholders in this regard.

#### **Hydrology Objectives**

- Continually reinforce the role of hydrology both as an enabler and potential constraint on future development in the CWP.
- Integrate the evidence provided by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessments being conducted for the MPAs as to the effect and influence that mineral extraction has on flood risk within the CWP.
- Investigate with stakeholders the problems of low river flows during dry periods and to identify methods of alleviation in order to ensure continued compliance with the EU Environment Liability Directive 2004 and the UK Water Framework Directive.
- Seek to protect and enhance the river corridors throughout the CWP for leisure, recreation, and biodiversity.

## Climate Change

- 4.72 Scientific evidence suggests that the earth's temperature is rising, which in turn is having a significant impact on climate systems as they react to change. In particular, climate change is leading to more unpredictable and extreme weather conditions, including the prospect of long periods of dry and hot weather, and short, sharp and heavy downpours.
- 4.73 The consequences of climate change can be measured in terms of the following:
- the human dimension:
    - many lives and homes were severely disrupted by flooding caused by heavy rainfall in 2007;
    - there are health implications associated with long periods of hot weather, especially those who are already considered more vulnerable (i.e. the very young and very old); and
    - there is a danger that harvests will become less productive and this could affect the level of food produce available.
  - the wildlife dimension, with extreme changes in temperature known to affect individual plants, birds and animals and the food chain they rely upon.
  - the economic dimension, associated with:
    - the damage caused by flooding;
    - Increased insurance premiums, particularly in areas of high flood risk;
    - livelihoods could be affected, especially in the agriculture and food produce sectors;
    - the loss of income from lost harvests; and
    - the destruction left by hurricanes and the cost of the humanitarian efforts that follow.
- 4.74 However, although the human influences on climate change are certainly not desirable overall, the reality of climate change could ultimately present some benefits. This is certainly the case in terms of leisure and tourism, with the prospect of warmer and sunnier conditions likely to benefit coastal/water-based tourism destinations in the UK. Likewise, in an effort to reduce carbon footprints and as a consequence of increasing fuel costs, the population may start to seek more rewarding and fulfilling experiences closer to home. Although this will need careful monitoring, it is certainly conceivable that this could have potential benefits for destinations such as the CWP, particularly given the prospect of inland beaches, watersports, and wildlife watching.
- 4.75 Although the impact of climate change is certainly a concern for the CWP, as it is for other areas both in the UK and abroad, it has not been possible as part of the scope of this study to understand the implications of such weather occurrences outside the hydrological implications associated with flooding and increased evaporation as identified in the Hydrology section.

- 4.76 Nevertheless, the implications of climate change on the aims and aspirations of the CWP will need to be monitored in order to understand how the future development of the CWP can be manoeuvred to assist in tackling any further issues that it may create and manoeuvring development to take advantage of any opportunities it presents.
- 4.77 Furthermore, in practical terms, climate change is influenced by greenhouse gas emissions created by human activity such as energy consumption, travel and industrial processes. Methods to minimise the implications of consumption and to improve construction design to make development more sustainable are a fundamental premise to this Plan (this is explored in more detail in the 'Sustainability' section of this report). One of the potential achievements of initiating such sustainability measures will be to minimise the emissions footprint of all people who live, work and visit the CWP.

#### **Climate Change Objectives**

- Investigate the nature of the impacts of climate change on the CWP and the effects that these changes may have in the future.
- In association with the sustainability initiatives, ensure that the development of CWP minimise the emissions footprint of those who live, work and visit the area.

#### **Planning Policy**

- 4.78 There is currently no single document purely relating to planning policy guidance across the CWP. More significant is the different approach to development taken by each Council in Structure Plan and Local Plan policies and emerging Local Development Framework documents in relation to the CWP area. While North Wiltshire's Local Plan is very much more a policy of constraint on development in the countryside, Cotswold District's Local Plan, in accordance with the Gloucestershire Structure Plan, has been more approving of proposals for the re-use of former mineral working sites. As such the CWP within Cotswold District has experienced more development, with most of the CWP's second homes, holiday lets and leisure and tourism related development built within this section of the area.
- 4.79 North Wiltshire's Local Plan approach to constraining development in the open countryside is in contrast to the Wiltshire County Council's approach in its Structure Plan that reaffirms the important role the Cotswold Water Park Joint Committee has in acting as a catalyst to stimulate private sector development initiatives. It also states that the statutory Local Development Documents covering the area in both Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, together with the strategy prepared by the Joint Committee, will "provide a balanced framework for the development of the Water Park as a centre for sport, recreation and tourism and as an outstanding wetland habitat of national and potentially international biodiversity importance, whilst protecting the interests of those who live and work within the park." Despite the proactive approach from the County Council, North Wiltshire's Local Development Scheme for the period 2006-2009 avoids reference to future policies specifically for the Water Park. Cotswold District Council's Local Development Scheme identifies that the Generic Policies Development Plan Document will contain a Cotswold Water Park Policy. The first draft of this document is anticipated for public consultation in November 2008.

- 4.80 The current situation of controlling and/or developing the CWP, particularly for leisure and tourism, is therefore not appropriate in terms of meeting the CWP's aims and objectives. With differing opinions and policies among the local authorities, there is currently no consensus in managing development or common framework that views the CWP as a whole. Yet, this aspect is essential in relation to achieving a consistency of approach that will better enhance the CWP as a recognised entity.
- 4.81 An Area Action Plan (AAP) would address this shortcoming. AAP's provide a planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed. They focus on implementation and include clear objectives, timescales and resource allocations. In addition, AAPs are designed to be used as a tool for guiding development within large areas where there are various conflicting interests. Given the geographical and administrative boundaries of the CWP area, this type of Development Plan Document is certainly recommended as a method of delivering 'spatial planning'.
- 4.82 The preparation of such Development Plan Documents specifically requires joint working where the AAP crosses local boundaries. The CWP Joint Committee and Officers Group therefore have a significant role to play in this regard. In particular, the requirement for an AAP needs to be officially identified in the respective local development framework as a required development plan document. Similarly, there needs to be a commitment by the constituent authorities to co-operate and co-ordinate resources for the preparation of the AAP, including overseeing the detailed consultation process in accordance with PPS12. To be effective, the AAP needs to include all types of development within the area, in particular covering the extraction, restoration and after-use of mineral workings to ensure a systematic, co-ordinated and collective response from the respective local planning authorities.
- 4.83 It should be acknowledged that an AAP will take time to prepare and become adopted as official planning guidance. In the interim, and in the interest of moving forward, there is a need to secure a common commitment to the thrust of the Vision and Implementation Plan in the current LDF policy development. This is to ensure that the strategic direction and context for development proposals can be used as a material consideration for development control decision-making.

### **Planning Objectives**

- Create a single planning framework across the CWP in the form of an Area Action Plan that reflects a systematic, co-ordinated and collective approach to development control that is to be adopted by the respective local planning authorities.
- Prior to the AAP being adopted, and in the interest of moving forward, secure a common commitment to the thrust of the Vision and Implementation Plan in the current LDF policy development as the strategic direction and context for the CWP.

### **Transport and Utilities**

- 4.84 A fundamental consideration for the CWP is in relation to transport infrastructure and utilities, and especially in terms of the impacts that the proposed developments could have on these services.

## Minerals Traffic Movement

- 4.85 The minerals extraction process requires the movement of significant numbers of heavy goods vehicles (HGV) throughout the CWP. The Western Spine Road was constructed in order to accommodate the movement of HGVs in the western sections of the CWP, and the establishment of an 'eastern spine road' equivalent has been discussed in the past.
- 4.86 Apart from the A419, the local road network of the CWP generally reflects the countryside nature of the area with predominantly 'B' grade and minor roads that are often not conducive to use by HGVs on a regular basis. Thus, the requirement of HGV movement in order to transport minerals can have adverse impacts in terms of noise, air pollution, vibration, dust and a road safety hazard.
- 4.87 It is likely that the local road network will continue to be the main method of transporting sand and gravel minerals to the main markets of Swindon, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Bristol, Bath and Oxford. As such, this situation of HGV use of roads will continue whilst the aggregate resource in the CWP is being exploited. As such, management of these movements and measures to reduce potential conflict should be explored between the key stakeholders.
- 4.88 In essence, the creation of the Western Spine Road aimed to alleviate some of these pressures and conflicts. Although the road succeeded in its aspirations in terms of providing a more suitable road for HGVs to travel along that also ensures safe passage of other users an observation of other stakeholders is that it appears to have had a detrimental effect in terms of encouraging other types of development, changing the character of the western section, and allowing more traffic movements.
- 4.89 It is certainly advised that a longer-term perspective needs to be taken in relation to transport matters. Although mineral extraction is likely to continue over the course of this plan, as the resources become exhausted the number of HGVs on the road system will diminish, and the associated pressure and conflicts will become less prominent. Therefore, it will be important to ensure that the overall character of the CWP currently and in the future is not adversely affected by the legacy of traffic management measures employed. In this context, there needs to be a view towards protecting the nature and character of the road network, but associated with measures to minimise the impact of HGVs in particular along country roads and rectifying any damage that does take place. It is accepted that road improvements will be required, but the nature of the improvements should be focussed on junction improvements and moderate widening schemes where potential areas of conflict and danger are most likely to arise.
- 4.90 In addition, other innovative means of moving the minerals from sites to strategically identified loading points should be explored. This may include, in the longer term, schemes utilising canals and rivers to transport minerals. Other approaches endorsed and encouraged by the MCSs include ultra-short transfers of minerals and recyclable wastes by conveyor either within or between sites. Other opportunities for reducing HGV movements within the CWP may also become available through other developments. It is certainly encouraged that all types of developments in the CWP should seek to strategically reduce HGV movements within the CWP for the benefit of local residents and visitors.

## Visitor-Generated Traffic

- 4.91 The aspirations for the visitor sector in the CWP as identified by the core priorities has potential implications in terms of traffic and transport, particularly in relation to car borne travel.
- 4.92 It has been beyond the scope of the report to complete a full transport assessment for the CWP due to the conceptualised nature of the developments outlined. However, any facilities that could attract visitors will need to be carefully assessed in terms of strategic issues. This includes:
- assessing accessibility from major roads, which has been identified as a key issue in relation to Keynes Country Park, with large volumes of traffic observed to pass along the Western Spine Road on hot, summer days and weekends;
  - encouraging access via more sustainable modes of transport;
  - identifying the traffic capacity and potential impact upon local towns and villages created by increased visitor interest in the area as a whole; and
  - analysing the prospect of encouraging more sustainable modes of transport around the CWP, linking the primary assets together both physically and perhaps via incentives to ensure exploration by foot, on a bike or even on a horse.
- 4.93 The strategic considerations in relation to the integrated leisure and recreation network; the prospect of utilising developments of the canals (on-land and potentially on water); and greater interpretation of both the historic and natural environment; would each appear to have a distinct synergy with trying to reduce traffic around the CWP whilst also encouraging access and enjoyment of the CWP's intrinsic character. It is recommended that these aspects be encapsulated within a dedicated Transport Plan for the CWP, which includes a detailed section on a Green Infrastructure Network (GIN). The GIN aspect of the Transport Plan should identify clear routes and pathways, the strategic locations for cycle hire, and even the prospect of water taxis and electric vehicles should future developments allow this.
- 4.94 Likewise, the Transport Plan should identify the potential carriage of passengers to the CWP via the proposed restoration of the Steam Railway, defined visitor bus routes (with bike carriage facilities), and via leisure routes into the CWP from both Swindon and Cirencester all need to be linked to the identified gateways, hubs and visitor assets to encourage greater sustainability.
- 4.95 Nevertheless, despite these measures, it would be unrealistic to assume that car travel to and around the CWP will not increase given the prospects of leisure, recreation, sport and tourism development that have been identified. However, an aspiration for the CWP will be to ensure that future development will not unduly compromise the distinctive countryside character and enjoyment of the CWP by those living in, working in and visiting the area. As such, any development that could lead to increased traffic on the roads of the CWP will need to be tested thoroughly against envisaged impacts and any mitigation measures identified to reduce those impacts.

## Utilities Considerations

- 4.96 Leisure, recreation, sport and tourism developments are likely to require utilities such as energy supply, water supply, and waste disposal. The rurality of the area means that the utilities infrastructure will need to be improved and extended to accommodate this demand,
- 4.97 It has been beyond the scope of this study to examine the extent or quality of the existing utilities infrastructure, but experience suggests that the additional pressures that visitors create on utilities at a local level are rarely given full consideration, as they are effectively temporary users. However, the continued presence of visitors can have a collective impact on resource utilisation. Therefore, developments that will seek to expand the holding capacity of the CWP in relation to visitors, residents and workforce will need to give due consideration to the implications that this development could have on utilities. This could have wider implications in relation to the availability of clean water, use of fuels, waste management for example which may need to be improved and enhanced.
- 4.98 In this respect, the design of the development can actively mitigate impacts on utility resources, a factor which is becoming more important in relation to sustainability and sustainable construction. Development should now be compliant with national, regional and local policy and regulations in relation to sustainable design and consumption of utilities such as energy, water and waste. This should include structures that are constructed and maintained to a high standard, incorporating best practise in relation to using renewable energy, energy conservation, rainwater recycling, and waste recycling and management. In relation to the CWP, the Gateway Centre represents a pioneering development in terms of the sustainability measures it included. With construction and utilities technologies associated with sustainability advancing, the notion that the CWP could become an exemplar of sustainable rural living should be regarded as a collective ethos that all stakeholders, particularly developers, should contribute to. Moreover, development should seek to surpass sustainable policy guidelines in relation to design and resource utilisation.

### • **Transport and Utilities Objectives**

- In association with the MPAs, encourage sustainable transportation of minerals out of the CWP in order to limit the impact of HGV traffic on the local road network.
- Identify and devise road improvement schemes that reduce the adverse impact of HGV traffic, whilst also retaining the character of the road network for the longer term benefits of the area.
- Establish a Local Transport Plan for the CWP in order to better integrate public transport connections to the CWP and around the CWP. This should incorporate other potential initiatives that could be used by leisure visitors.
- As part of the Transport Plan, devise a Green Infrastructure Network (GIN) that compliments and integrates the values of the core components of the Vision (namely providing sustainable links throughout the CWP, encouraging local access to the countryside, and providing access to leisure routes between key assets) and reduces car borne movements on local roads.
- Ensure sufficient consideration is given to the additional pressures that could be placed on the utilities infrastructure through development (especially tourism development), including requirements to upgrade and improve the infrastructure as required.



- In the interests of sustainability and to match the wider ethos of the CWP, encourage the construction of development that surpasses sustainability policy guidelines in relation to design and resource utilisation.

## Potential Constraint

### Aerodrome Safeguarding

- 4.99 The full expanse of the CWP is covered by aerodrome safeguarding due to the proximity of RAF Fairford, RAF Brize Norton and Kemble Airfield. Each of these aerodromes is protected against heightened birdstrike risk within a statutory 13km radius, with the Ministry of Defence and Civil Aviation Authority both acting as statutory consultees on development applications.
- 4.100 Due to the large expanses of open water created by past mineral extraction there is increased exposure to birdstrike risk. Future development that could adversely affect the safety of aerodromes will be carefully scrutinised. In particular, local planning authorities are required to consider the effect that proposed developments may have in being attractants to birds, and when combined with the existing landscape features.
- 4.101 In the context of the CWP, aerodrome safeguarding could have significant implications in relation to:
- mineral extraction activities and the prospect of having restoration strategies that will involve the creation of new lakes or lead to habitats that could attract species that present the greatest birdstrike risk (i.e. large or flocking birds);
  - the biodiversity aspirations of the CWP where this may involve the creation of habitats that could be deemed to present increased birdstrike hazard. This includes reedbed, wet woodland, or wet grassland for example;
  - certain leisure and recreation aspirations (e.g. golf, angling, watersports facilities) whereby the development could attract bird species (i.e. ducks, geese, pigeons, etc) that are less averse to human interaction.
- 4.102 Overall, a key premise for development is that it should not lead to an increase birdstrike risk to air traffic, or otherwise compromise air traffic safety. At worst, aerodrome safeguarding could result in a blanket moratorium on future mineral working in the area. This consideration could easily be extended to include habitat creation that would increase large or flocking birds.
- 4.103 However, according to the consultation process this is not a position that any stakeholders are seeking. Furthermore, it is recognised that there are other occurrences that could increase bird strike risk, including the prospect of flooded waterways which could be mitigated through certain types of development, including biodiversity. Rather, there is a willingness to explore opportunities that can deliver mutual benefits, including different types of biodiversity development and habitats that can present acceptable solutions to bird strike risk. In this respect, the creation of small wetlands and reedbeds may be possible in spatially appropriate areas, whilst other areas of the CWP could equally be promoted for insects and aquatic species.

- 4.104 It should also be recognised that the biodiversity aspirations for the CWP include many species and habitats that will not come under the auspices of aerodrome safeguarding.
- 4.105 The existing CWP Birdstrike Technical Working Group has taken a lead, becoming a forum for discussing key issues as they arise, whilst the statutory planning process at a strategic and development control stage will consider development applications that come forward. Similarly, the RSPB is likely to be another significant stakeholder in relation to biodiversity development and new site creation. The RSPB has experience of managing sites of nature conservation importance within aerodrome safeguarding zones. In this respect, the RSPB has developed appropriate solutions to ensure that environmental conservation in relation to water habitats does not pose any additional adverse risk to air traffic. This knowledge and experience will be invaluable to the CWP.

#### **Aerodrome Safeguarding Objectives**

- Through careful consideration of proposals, ensure that development of the CWP will not increase birdstrike risk to air traffic or otherwise compromise air traffic safety.
- Continue to liaise with the relevant stakeholders (MoD Defence Estates Unit, Kemble Airfield, RSPB, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, MPAs, LAs) over the risks to aerodrome safeguarding posed by potential development through the existing Birdstrike Technical Working Party.

## **Sustainability and the CWP Vision**

- 4.106 The principle that has been applied in relation to the overall vision, aims and objectives for the CWP has been one of seeking to balance the various interests and potential conflicts of the various stakeholders in order to deliver a sustainable approach to future development.
- 4.107 In accordance with the definitions of a dedicated Sustainability Appraisal (SA), a mandatory requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, this has been achieved through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations. The sustainability considerations under each of these headings can be summarised as follows.

### **Social**

- 4.108 By ensuring that the communities are specified not only as a stakeholder but also a key beneficiary of the CWP in a strategic context, the requirements and aspirations of residents will become a fundamental consideration of future development proposals.
- 4.109 In this respect, future development will need to identify the potential benefits for the community that can be proffered in relation to improving the wellbeing and welfare of the local communities, enhancing the character of the settlements in which they live, and improving local access to and enjoyment of the wider countryside. Similarly, initiatives and schemes will need to be established in order to develop a stronger cultural identity for the CWP. Overall, this is to include:

- providing a more coherent countryside setting that accentuates the inherent historic, man-made and natural characteristics of the CWP to be enjoyed, explored and discovered by local residents;
  - the advent of special markets, cultural events, arts festivals and sporting competitions that draw upon the character of the CWP (e.g. rural, agricultural, lakes and characterful settlements);
  - encouraging improved health via participation in sports and leisure activities, particularly walking and cycling on the leisure network but also via improved sporting provision which could offer reduced rates for local residents; and
  - establishing a volunteering programme in the CWP which is open and accessible to local residents.
- 4.110 A key test to the success of integrating communities into the CWP is for residents, when questioned, to state that they live “within the CWP”.

### **Economic**

- 4.111 The economic requirements for the CWP will be derived from a strengthening of existing businesses within the area, whilst also encouraging some new business and investment opportunities that are appropriate in terms of scale and nature.
- 4.112 Mineral extraction and processing is already a significant economic activity within the CWP area. Although the rate of mineral extraction may decline as resources become depleted, some of the processing elements are likely to remain and thus the importance of minerals to the economy of the CWP is likely to remain.
- 4.113 However, the further development of the CWP will bring other opportunities to diversify and strengthen the local economy. It will be important to ensure that these opportunities are strategically matched to the core priorities and the supporting drivers. In particular, the aspirations and objectives as outlined should seek the following:
- Provide direct support for sports, leisure and tourism (accommodation and attraction) businesses, creating additional market opportunities to help further strengthen their own sustainability and potentially to encourage expansion and improvement programmes.
  - Provide indirect support for pubs, restaurants and shops, and other service provision including public transport services.
  - Encourage new enterprises of a scale and nature appropriate to the countryside setting. Opportunities could feasibly include:
    - new sports and leisure businesses of national and regional importance to encourage market interest in the CWP, including highly specialised athlete and sports technique development services;
    - new accommodation businesses focussed primarily upon small scale serviced establishments and camping and caravan sites to serve existing visitors, attract new visitors and promote longer stays from visitors;

- a range of new services, including expansion of the cycle and horse hire provision to encourage access to the leisure network, services associated with gateway centres (e.g. cafes), and maintenance and servicing of equipment (cycles, boats, livery); and
  - new interpretive and creative facilities, potentially including a museum/heritage centre, wildlife discovery centres, and an arts and crafts centre.
- Diversification opportunities for agricultural businesses into both crop and non-crop activities, including leisure, visitor accommodation, organic produce and potentially biomass crops if the crop choice is deemed to be viable with biodiversity aspirations.
  - Encouraging the establishment of CWP-branded, ethically produced goods to be used within the local supply chain.
- 4.114 In the main it is envisaged that the economic opportunities of the CWP will support mainly small and medium-sized enterprises. However, there could be opportunities for the CWP to form ties with significant corporations such as the Co-op who also have a vested interest in the success of the CWP area as major land owners (e.g. CWP-branded food items).

## Environmental

- 4.115 Protecting, conserving and improving the natural, historic and man-made environment of the area will be intrinsic to the success of CWP as a place in which to live, work and visit. This is echoed throughout the Plan, with the objectives being designed to have cumulative benefits from an environmental perspective.
- 4.116 First and foremost, the Plan recognises the CWP area as a countryside area, but one which faces considerable change due to industrial activity, namely mineral extraction. The nature of this activity means that it will have a long lasting (if not permanent) legacy, presently in the form of the lakes. Yet this activity is one that can be manipulated to have significant benefits for the future of the CWP both in terms of its landscape and character. On the whole, the priorities identified envisage that this will be achieved via:
- improving and enhancing the countryside and historic landscape through development, with mineral extraction in particular to be guided in terms of landscape restoration to take account of the other development opportunities that exist and the preferred planting regimes to adopt;
  - realising biodiversity objectives through development, including that associated with mineral extraction, leisure, sports and tourism in order to realise the ambition of a whole landscape approach;
  - ensuring that the design of any development not only meets but exceeds sustainable construction guidelines. This in turn will be evident in relation to the ability of the buildings to receive local, regional and national awards for sustainable construction.
- 4.117 The Plan acknowledges that the prospect for other impacts on the environment could occur through development, with both mineral extraction and developments that encourage visitors to the area potentially leading to more pollution, noise, and traffic congestion. Likewise, visitors will also have an impact on the resource utilisation in terms of energy consumption, waste

generation, and water consumption. In both respects, the Plan needs to be considered against wider requirements for minimising additional resource consumption, encouraging more sustainable modes of travel, and reducing carbon footprints. A specific objective for the CWP is to not only match any targets outlined for these requirements, but to surpass them.

#### **Sustainability Objectives**

- For the sustainability of the CWP to be acknowledged and measured in relation to the community, the economy and the environment.
- Through the community and countryside objectives, ensure that residents specify the CWP as the place in which they live.
- Through leisure, sports and tourism priorities, make sure the economy of the CWP supports a variety of small and medium sized enterprises and farm diversification opportunities that are appropriate in terms of nature and scale to the wider CWP objectives.
- Ensure that the future development of the CWP has tangible benefits for the environment through appropriate conservation of the historic and natural environment; improved landscape design; achieving biodiversity objectives; and delivering structures that not only match but surpass sustainability requirements.

## 5 Development Considerations

5.1 Achieving the CWP Vision will require further development projects within the CWP. However, a continuing principle throughout the objectives is that this development should be of a nature and scale that is appropriate to the CWP core priorities, namely that it will:

- complement and improve the countryside character of the CWP, and will contribute to the area becoming an attractive and appealing place in which to live, work and visit;
- provide a positive contribution to the biodiversity aspirations of the CWP, either directly or indirectly;
- deliver against one or more of the objectives for sport, leisure and recreation;
- improve the attractiveness of the CWP as a place to visit amongst the key target markets (as identified in Section 4); and
- deliver against the sustainability aspirations in terms of the economy, the community and the environment.

5.2 The following section identifies a series of projects and proposals, both planned and conceptual. Furthermore, it identifies how projects should be assessed in relation to the mutual benefits that could be achieved.

### Projects and Proposals

5.3 The Vision for the CWP will need to be delivered through the development of projects and proposals. The aim of this Vision and development framework is to better guide the development towards the priorities. In this context, it is worth briefly analysing certain existing and firm project proposals.

#### Existing Projects

5.4 The investigation process has identified the following projects which are currently in the planning process:

- Under construction:
  - Lower Mill Estate - 595 holiday homes currently under construction, with approximately 180 completed and occupied.
  - Claydon Pike - outline planning permission was granted in 2006 for the erection of 160 holiday cabins, a Country Park facility, a 120-bed hotel and the associated use of, and works to, lakes for leisure purposes for land at Claydon Pike. Construction began in autumn 2007 with the initial phase concerning 48 holiday homes and associated utilities and infrastructure.
  - Lake 11 - 50 holiday lodges are currently in the process of being constructed.

- Lake 10 - 40 semi-detached holiday homes are currently under construction.
- Lake 17 – a planning application has recently been approved for the construction of 104 holiday lodges, for use by members of the water skiing club only.
- Decision pending:
  - Lake 7 - a decision on 66-bed motel with car park is pending.
- Other:
  - Lakes 103, 103a, 104 - outline planning permission was refused for tourism and recreational development comprising the erection of hotel/leisure complex (including 38 suites), 57 apartments and 143 pavilions early in 2007. An appeal was lodged to the Secretary of State, but this appeal has subsequently been rejected.

5.5 Each of these projects denotes an increase in accommodation capacity. However, the focus appears to be upon continuing to create second homes and holiday homes. As highlighted in Stage II, further development in this sector should be assessed against the threshold of wider development considerations, including any impacts on the CWP communities and the character of countryside. Also, further consideration should be placed on PPS7 and the creation of new dwellings in the open countryside. If such developments are to be used as self-catering complexes, a condition to restrict occupation for a maximum of 8 weeks for each holiday let should be considered.

### **Firm Propositions**

5.6 The main proposed development projects that are being considered for the CWP area include:

- The Cricklade Country Way (CCW) that would see the restoration of the North Wilts Canal and the Cricklade-Swindon Railway. This project was recently unsuccessful in its Lottery application, but it is understood that the main elements of the project will still be completed over a longer time frame.
- The Thames & Severn Canal restoration programme has already begun in the western section of the canal, with future plans currently being explored for the eastern section (i.e. the CWP). It should be noted that the extent to which the navigation could be realised is still subject to the investigation of issues relating to hydrology, maintaining water levels and potential impacts on other watercourses. However, the towpath of the canal still represents an important resource for land-based leisure and recreation pursuits, in particular providing a potential axis route for walking and cycling across the CWP area.
- The establishment of the Cleveland Lakes Watersports Centre as a centre of regional and potentially national stature, with provision for rowing, kayaking and dragon boat racing.
- The RSPB's proposal for a significant nature reserve in the central section of the CWP is in the early stages of development.
- Discussion over a historical and wildlife centre adjacent to Lechlade and linking to the River Thames, to act as a 'gateway' to the CWP from the eastern section.



- 5.7 In addition to the above, it is understood that the Co-op Group is in the process of assessing various development options related to its land holdings in the central section of the CWP. This area contains significant deposits of sand and gravel, with the resource likely to be exploited in the forthcoming years. Although very speculative at this stage, it is understood that one option being considered is for a significant leisure development to act as a visitor asset.
- 5.8 On the basis of the discussions held with the relevant stakeholders in relation to the proposed projects, it is considered that all of these projects would add vital quality to the overall vision of the CWP.
- The canal developments would represent significant features of interest in their own right, whilst also providing multi-user connections to the CWP and through the CWP. The Thames & Severn Canal in particular would represent a fundamental mechanism for joining the east, west and central areas of the CWP, even if only in terms of the leisure and recreation network in the short term. If the issues concerning the navigation can be resolved, the Thames and Severn Canal would also promote water-based travel between the River Thames and the Stroudwater Navigation, whilst the North Wilts Canal potentially represents a gateway route into the CWP from Swindon.
  - The RSPB facility would represent a signature reserve that alone would deliver significant biodiversity targets. It will also help to authenticate the credentials of the CWP as a resource of high nature conservation value, and would raise the profile of the area to its significant membership base and a wider audience due to its distinctive branding. Once established, the facility could be utilised as a central hub for visitors interested in wildlife tourism, encompassing a high level of information on other aspects of the CWP that can be explored.
  - The Cleveland Lakes Watersports Centre, a long held aspiration for the CWP Joint Committee, would deliver a sporting complex that could host regional events, sports training and development, and local events.
  - The potential of an eastern gateway close to Lechlade would assist in drawing visitors into the CWP, introduce them to the historic and natural characteristics of the area, and encourage them to explore the CWP via more sustainable means.
  - The prospect of a leisure-based development by the Co-op Group on its holding in the central area would certainly appear to be appropriate from an access perspective. It is certainly conceivable that a development here could complement the Keynes Country Park as the current signature attraction for the CWP both in terms of style and content. It could also act as a further gateway from the A419 if tied with other leisure and recreational amenities, including the leisure and recreation network.

## Conceptual Developments and Projects

- 5.9 In addition to these projects, there is still further scope for development within the CWP in order to respond to different priorities. Some of these have already been mentioned in Stage II of the investigations, namely:



- An angling centre of regional and national repute that would raise the profile of the high level of angling provision in the CWP. This project concept has gained support during the consultation process.
  - A designated diving centre offering depths of up to 6 metres to appeal to beginners, novices and youth groups. This could feasibly include innovative features of interest for divers to explore.
  - An aqua-adventure attraction based upon presenting new and innovative ways to have fun with water that goes beyond more conventional waterslides. Water fountains, shooting water, plunge features and a sub-aqua adventure zone could all feasibly be included in this type of facility. It could also include a learning zone where visitors would be challenged in relation to their concept of water, water use, and the potential impacts of climate change.
  - Small-scale marinas at the main junctions between the Thames & Severn Canal and River Thames, and the Thames & Severn Canal and North Wilts Canal. This will be dependent upon the viability of other projects.
  - A signature golf-hole in the form of an ‘island green’, either as part of an existing golf course or within a new ‘CWP feature course’.
  - A significant farm-based attraction to match those found elsewhere in the UK, with Willows Farm in Hertfordshire for example attracting annual visitor numbers of upwards of 270,000.
  - A water taxi service to operate along the canal routes. This should include provision for cycle carriage as part of a Green Infrastructure Network.
  - Camping and caravan facilities based around the lakes, fully compliant with the highest level (gold) David Bellamy Award for Environmental Conservation.
  - An eco-lodge development that would consist of extremely low density lodges potentially surrounded in wetland habitats to offer a highly personalised experience with different wildlife species when they are at their most active – dawn and dusk.
  - Small-scale farm based accommodation to match the countryside setting.
  - A residential facility to support education programmes in the CWP, perhaps combined with youth accommodation to improve viability.
  - Development of an integrated network of cycle routes through the whole of the CWP with links to Cirencester, Swindon and Kemble would dramatically increase its capacity for day visitors.
  - Completion and promotion of the network of footpaths linking local settlements and attractions, in order to benefit local residents and visitors.
  - The development of an art gallery based on wildlife and public art would provide a significant attraction for a new type of visitor to the area.
- 5.10 Although it is accepted that these developments are theoretical in nature, they represent some further development options that could be explored over the 20-year period.

- 5.11 To reiterate, the location, scale and nature of any development needs to be carefully considered in the context of the countryside character of the CWP; potential implications for local communities, particularly in terms of increased traffic, noise pollution and littering for example; the capacity of the landscape and settlements in terms of attracting new visitors to the area. They also need to be assessed against potential impacts upon the hydrology of the area (i.e. flood risk, low river flows problems, and leaching issues) and aerodrome safeguarding (i.e. the potential additional risk of birdstrike, both in terms of individual and cumulative effects). Above all, the development needs to demonstrate that it is sustainable from the perspective of the CWP as an area, and can deliver certain mutual benefits. This latter premise also needs to be entrenched within the planning policy framework for the CWP.
- 5.12 It should also be noted that Maps S3.1 to S3.9 provided in the appendices have been designed to provide a graphical interpretation of how these developments could be knitted together within the wider CWP area. The maps are provided purely for illustrative purposes, and should not be considered in a spatially specific planning context.

## Mutual Benefits Matrix

- 5.13 In order to allow a better understanding of how projects can be developed to deliver mutual benefits, Scott Wilson has devised a Mutual Benefits Matrix (see Table 5.1).
- 5.14 The Matrix identifies the different considerations in relation to achieving mutual benefits by the types of proposals relating to the core priorities for the purpose of all stakeholders. Please note that it is not envisaged that every type of development will have a direct output or benefit for each of the core priorities. However, the aim should be to ensure that each area is considered.

Table 5.1

<b>Mutual Benefits Matrix</b>					
	<b>Community and Countryside</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>Sport, Leisure and recreation</b>	<b>Tourism</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>
<b>Mutual Benefit considerations</b>					
<b>Development Proposal</b>					
<b>Proposals relating to Countryside, Community and Settlement</b>		Does the proposal encourage biodiversity prospects in accordance with the CWP BAP?	Is the proposal integrated into the sports, leisure and recreation network in order to support and encourage participation?	Does the project lead to improved visitor experiences and enjoyment of the countryside and communities of the CWP?	Does the project not only meet but exceed sustainability requirements for the communities and the countryside?
<b>Proposals relating to Biodiversity</b>	Does the proposal encourage local access to, appreciation of, and support of the biodiversity of the CWP?		Is the proposal integrated into the leisure and recreation prospects of the CWP?	Does the proposal accord with the tourism market aspirations for the CWP, and identify mechanisms for supporting other tourism initiatives?	Does the project not only meet but exceed sustainability requirements for areas of high biodiversity value?
<b>Proposals relating to Sport, Leisure and Recreation</b>	Does the proposal actively encourage participation amongst local audiences?	Are methods or initiatives (either on site or at other sites) identified specifically designed to help meet the CWP's biodiversity aspirations?		Does the proposal accord with the tourism market aspirations for the CWP, and identify mechanisms for supporting other tourism initiatives?	Does the project not only meet but exceed sustainability requirements for sports, leisure and recreation in countryside environments?
<b>Proposals relating to Tourism</b>	Does the proposal accentuate and promote management of the countryside, environment and community characteristics within the CWP?	Will the proposal lead to direct and indirect support of the biodiversity aspirations for the CWP through visitor activities?	Does the proposal directly or indirectly benefit the provision of sport, leisure and recreation in the CWP?		Does the project not only meet but exceed sustainability requirements for tourism in countryside environments?
<b>Sustainability Considerations</b>	Does the project have direct and quantifiable benefits to the well-being of the environment, the economy and the community?	Does the project have direct and quantifiable benefits to the well-being of the environment, the economy and the community?	Does the project have direct and quantifiable benefits to the well-being of the environment, the economy and the community?	Does the project have direct and quantifiable benefits to the well-being of the environment, the economy and the community?	Does the project have direct and quantifiable benefits to the well-being of the environment, the economy and the community?

## Development Assessment Considerations

- 5.15 The previous section identifies a series of proposals and other development concepts that could materialise in the future.
- 5.16 If the overall aims and aspirations of the Vision for the CWP are to be achieved, it will be important that the development controls and planning policies adopted for the CWP reflect the principle objectives. To assist in the process, Table 5.2 identifies the types of criteria that any development proposal in the CWP should be evaluated against.

Table 5.2 <b>Development Considerations</b>	
Primary Purpose of Project / Relationship to the CWP	
<p><b>CWP Strategic Rationale</b></p> <p>Contribution to the countryside and settlement character</p> <p>Contribution to biodiversity objectives</p> <p>Contribution to sport, leisure, recreation objectives</p> <p>Contribution to tourism objectives</p> <p>Contribution towards achieving historic environment, arts and agriculture objectives</p>	<p><b>CWP Market Rationale</b></p> <p>Support to local community welfare</p> <p>Support for species targeted by BAP</p> <p>Support for sports, leisure and recreation markets</p> <p>Support for identified tourism markets</p> <p>Support for heritage, arts and agricultural concerns</p>
<p><b>Nature/Scale</b></p> <p>Appropriate to countryside and rural settlement character</p> <p>Appropriate to biodiversity concerns of the CWP</p> <p>Appropriate for encouraging sports, leisure and recreation participation</p> <p>Appropriate levels of visitors attracted to the CWP</p> <p>Appropriate to the hydrological system</p>	<p><b>Design and Style</b></p> <p>Enhances the historic and countryside characteristics of the CWP</p> <p>Enhances the profile of the CWP in relation to nature/wildlife</p> <p>Enhances the sporting and leisure profile of the CWP</p> <p>Enhances the tourism profile of the CWP</p>
<p><b>Sustainability</b></p> <p>Contribution to the wellbeing of the countryside and residents of the CWP</p> <p>Contribution to the wellbeing of the historic and natural environment</p> <p>Contribution to the use of sporting, leisure and recreational facilities and amenities</p> <p>Contribution to the provision and use of appropriate tourism facilities and amenities</p> <p>Contribution to lowering or lessening the carbon (and other greenhouse gas) footprints of residents, workers and visitors to the CWP</p>	

## 6 Management and Governance

6.1 One of the constant issues that emerged during the preparation of this review was that previous CWP strategies had given little or no consideration to the effective implementation of their proposals. Four aspects have been identified with regard to addressing this issue.

- Need for recognised status of the Strategy within the Local Development Framework:
  - There is no single planning document or consistent application of planning policy across the CWP.
  - Current LDF Programmes will conform to the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy which will replace Structure Plans, anticipated for adoption in 2008.
  - The Wiltshire LDF Programme is ongoing however the establishment of the unitary Wiltshire Council could result in delay to the programme.
  - Work on current LDF Programmes is ongoing however there will be opportunity for the outcome of this strategy review to be incorporated as part of this process.
  - The CWP meets all the criteria for an Area Action Plan, in particular the arrangements for joint working where the AAP crosses local authority boundaries.

### LDF Requirement

- The CWP's local authority partners should press for the early inclusion of an Area Action Plan for the CWP, within their respective LDF Programmes.
- Secure a common commitment to the thrust of the Vision and Implementation Plan in the current LDF policy development and in relation to development control decision-making.

- Raising the Profile of the CWP:
  - This review has established that the designation as a National Park is not appropriate for the CWP, in that it is an area under considerable change, rather than a landscape that needs protection, and that its management would move out of local control.
  - Similarly to follow other initiatives such as the National Forest or Lea Valley Regional Park would mean a loss of local control and no compensatory additional funding.
  - No alternative role model would meet the criteria of increasing the capacity of the CWP to raise money, strengthen its ability to implement the new vision, or retain political control at the local level.
  - An alternative is to build up the profile of the CWP through raising standards of development and management through the strengthening of the existing mechanisms in the form of a new partnership comprising the Joint Committee and the Water Park Society together with relevant regional agencies and the private sector.
  - The Cotswold Water Park Society has already been restructured in order to allow it to work with partners such as the regional agencies, other stakeholder organisations and the private sector, on a more commercial basis.

- The CWP Joint Committee can therefore focus on the political task of building up the profile of the CWP in order to raise it as a priority regionally and within the local authorities and to ensure that it matches the competing calls on their time and resources.

### **Profile Requirement**

- The CWP should build up its own distinct regional status, while seeking recognition of its national significance through its current structure of a Joint Committee providing local political guidance and a renewed CWP Society. The effort should focus on linking the aspirations of the CWP into the various work programmes of national and regional agencies and the resources of the private sector.

- Developing its own Destination Management Plans:
  - Newly established Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) are the vehicles for delivering national and regional tourism policies and resources.
  - Destination Management Plans (DMPs) are being prepared for the two relevant county based DMOs (the Wiltshire DMO and the Cotswold and Forest of Dean DMO).
  - These DMPs will determine the profile given to the CWP in future tourism marketing and development campaigns.

### **Destination Requirement**

- The CWP should, in time, prepare its own Destination Management Plan as a contribution to the work of its respective DMOs, in order that it receives appropriate recognition and status, and access to future tourism resources and support. In the interim, it may be more appropriate to raise awareness through association with the Cotswold AONB.

- Need for relevant CWP boundaries:
  - The boundaries of the CWP need to relate to the activities and facilities that are encompassed by the Park, both now and in the future, in order to assure they are consistent with political, planning and visitor aspirations and understanding.
  - There are several anomalies that have existed since the establishment of the CWP, such as the exclusion of Marston Maisey Parish in the centre of the area, and the use of the River Thames as a boundary rather than an integral part of the CWP.
  - Mineral extraction and lake formation has now extended beyond the original boundaries, and they do not allow for future growth.



### **Boundary Requirement**

- It is advised that the boundaries of the CWP should be extended to cover additional Parishes:
  - In the south west, to reflect the importance of the upper Thames and the associated conservation/recreation interest at sites such as Clattinger Farm,
    - Minety, Oaksey, Poole Keynes and Leigh Parishes.
  - In the north west, to reflect the likely impact of future mineral extraction e.g., on the former Point to Point Course,
    - the Parish of Siddington and the rest of South Cerney Parish.
  - In the north, to reflect the significance of the A417 as a northern boundary,
    - all of Driffield, Ampney St Mary, Poulton and Ampney St Peter Parishes.
  - In the north east, to reflect the presence of lakes north of Lechlade and future expansion into Oxfordshire,
    - all of Lechlade and Little Farringdon Parishes.
  - In the south east, to reflect the significance of the River Thames and its associated Thames Path as a link between eastern and western sections of the park,
    - Marston Maisey, Inglesham, Hannington, Castle Eaton and Blunsdon St Andrew Parishes.
- The change of boundary lines should be consulted upon with the relevant stakeholders, including residents and parish councils.
- Any boundary changes to the CWP will need to be completed as part of the LDF/AAP process

## 7 Implementation Plan

- 7.1 The following Implementation Plan is the key output of this Strategic Review in that it:
- sets out a co-ordinated work programme for the next five years;
  - identifies the priorities and timetable for action within that period; and
  - identifies the agencies that will be involved in implementing specific actions, whether in a lead or supporting role.
- 7.2 In addition to the main sectors of activity there is a focus on the organisational implications, with special attention given to issues such as:
- the adoption of the strategy within the existing Local Development Framework programmes;
  - the opportunity to develop an Area Action Plan (AAP);
  - the relevance of the emerging Destination Management Plans (DMPs) within tourism;
  - the need for a new system of governance to secure a special status for the CWP; and
  - recommendations for adjustments to the CWP boundaries.
- 7.3 Together, they aim to provide the focus for the implementation and a deliverable Vision that was the task set for this strategic review of the CWP.
- 7.4 The wide range of tasks identified in this Implementation Plan raise the fundamental issue of the availability of the resources needed to carry them out. Some just involve the commitment of existing manpower, or the continuation of existing financial support, but others require the allocation of additional resources. This will only come about from a fundamental recommitment to the principles and objectives of the CWP, and the recognition that a non-involvement option will be to the inevitable detriment of the local residents and the environment.
- 7.5 Finally, the nature of this new vision for the CWP is not the same as previous plans, in that it should undergo continuous review and updating. It is a process rather than a fixed development plan, and the allocation of resources to monitor progress with implementation of the tasks needs to be matched with a regular review of the forces facing the key drivers identified as changing the face of the CWP. This is recognised in the Implementation Plan that follows.

<b>IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY</b>									
No.	Task	Critical Path/ Associations	Timeline				Lead Role	Other Partners	Comments
			Immediate	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term			
			0-6 months	Year 1	Year 2 Years 3-4	Year 5 and beyond			
<b>Adopting the CWP Vision and Implementation Plan</b>									
<b>IS1</b>	Secure adoption of the CWP Vision and Implementation Plan as a strategic document to guide the activities of partner authorities and other stakeholders, with the aspirations and objectives of the CWP to be reflected in relevant strategic and planning documents.	-					CWPJC	CWPS, LCs, MPAs, NE, EA, SWRDA, SWT, SE-SW, PCs, DEU	
<b>Establishing a CWP Planning Policy Framework</b>									
<b>IS2</b>	Secure a common commitment to the thrust of Vision and Implementation Plan in the current LDF policy development and in relation to development control decision-making.	IS1					CWPJC	CWPS, LCs, MPAs	The principles of the Vision and Implementation Plan need to be incorporated into the emerging Local Development Framework structure. In this respect, the aims and objectives should become a material consideration for planning applications.
<b>IS3</b>	Establish a Planning Policy Framework that views the CWP as a whole (the recommended approach is through the establishment of an Area Action Plan (AAP)) to be integrated with the relevant Local Development Frameworks.	IS1					CWPJC	CWPS, LCs, MPAs	In the longer term, the Vision and Implementation Plan needs to be translated into an Area Action Plan (AAP) that identifies shared principles between the administrative authorities in relation to all types of development.
<b>IS4</b>	Establish the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) framework that will be adopted to review the wider environmental effects of the plan.	IS3					CWPOG	LCs, CCs, MPAs, NE, EA, SWRDA	An SEA framework is required to ensure that the environmental considerations of development are taken on a CWP-wide basis.

Strengthening Governance										
<b>IS5</b>	Review the strength of the existing stakeholders, structures and bodies in terms of the roles and responsibilities in order to lead, deliver, and assist in the delivery of the actions as appropriate.	-							LCs, CCs, MPAs, NE, EA, SWRDA, SWT, SE-SW, WTs, RSPB	The list of stakeholders with a vested interest in the CWP is considerable. Each organisation has a role to play in the delivery of the Implementation Plan. The nature of the roles and responsibilities of these organisations should be reviewed.
<b>IS6</b>	Identify funding requirements, potential sources of funding and inward investment across all sectors of activity.	IS5							LCs, CCs, MPAs, NE, EA, SWRDA, SWT, SE-SW, WTs, RSPB	Associated with stakeholder review (IS5), it should be possible to undertake a scoping report for resource support and funding channels for the CWP.
<b>IS7</b>	Establish a series of appropriate working groups designed to discuss, evaluate and monitor the core priorities, enabling drivers and potential constraints.	IS5							NE EA, SWRDA, SWT, SE-SW, WTs, RSPB, NFU, DEU	The CWP Nature Conservation forum (NCF) and Birdstrike Technical Working Party already exist as discussion forums. Further groups should be established in relation to other core activities, including a Tourism and Leisure Working Group (T&LWG) and Agricultural Working Group (AWG).
<b>IS8</b>	Review and initiate changes to the current boundary of Cotswold Water Park.	-							LCs, CCs, PCs	The recommended changes to the technical boundary should be enacted upon so that the CWP encapsulates the full extent of its area of direct influence. To date, this has been defined by the "functional boundary" of CWP.
<b>IS9</b>	Examine the current branding and imagery of the CWP with a view to renaming, re-branding and subsequent promotion of the CWP.	IS7							LCs, CCs, PCs, DMOs	The name of the CWP has been identified as a priority for further investigation. The name has been identified as misleading, with previous investigations into this aspect identifying the Cotswold Lakes as a preferred alternative. This should be explored further.

Timeline Key	
	Ongoing tasks
	Task concerns one-off studies/investigations
*****	Task of reviewing progress

**CORE PRIORITIES**

No.	Task	Critical Path/ Associations	Timeline				Lead Role	Other Partners	Comments
			Immediate	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term			
			0-6 months	Year 1	Year 2	Year 5 and beyond			
<b>Countryside, Community and Settlements</b>									
<b>CP1</b>	Develop programmes that support the integration, both physical and psychological, of settlements and their communities.	IS1					CWPS	LCs, CCs, PCs, CoC,	The physical and psychological linkages between the settlements and the countryside need to be accentuated to encourage greater use of the CWP by local residents from their doorsteps.
<b>CP2</b>	Convert the Landscape Character Assessment into a Landscape Strategy for the CWP, identifying the principles for strengthening the countryside character of the CWP, opening up lakelands, drawing together the natural heritage assets, and enhancing other features of interest.	IS1					CWPOG	LCs, CCs, MPAs	It is understood that the conversion of the Landscape Character Assessment into a more defined Landscape Strategy will take place once the Vision and Implementation Plan is adopted.
<b>CP3</b>	Establish a Green Infrastructure Network for the whole of the CWP, identifying opportunities for green movement to and around the CWP area.	IS2					CWPOG	LCs, CCs, Transport Operators, CCW, CCP, NE	Transportation has been identified as a key issue in relation to future development. The impact development has on transportation and road infrastructure needs to be evaluated. This should form part of a more strategic approach to transportation e.g. a Green Infrastructure Network.
<b>CP4</b>	Investigate schemes that will encourage local business and other organisations to actively support CWP-wide initiatives, either directly or indirectly from their own activities.	-					CWPS	PCs, CoC, Business Operators, Landlords	Examples of collaborative working should be explored, with a view to adopting a scheme for the CWP. One such example could be to establish a 'rural' Business Improvement District (BID). BID schemes are proving successful in urban areas, with businesses contributing (via a levy) to certain local schemes and initiatives. The principles for adopting such a scheme should be explored for the CWP.

<b>Biodiversity</b>										
<b>CP5</b>	Adopt the CWP BAP as the principal document providing guidance to all other stakeholders on habitat and species protection and enhancement across the CWP area, but particularly focusing on the biodiversity corridor.	IS1						CWP NCF	LCs, MPAs, EA, SWRDA, DEU	The CWP BAP already exists as the guiding document for developing the biodiversity and habitats of the area. The Vision and Implementation Plan seeks to incorporate, reflect and articulate further the principal aims of the BAP.
<b>CP6</b>	In association with the CWP BAP, establish a coherent strategy for the creation of 'whole landscape' project for biodiversity creation within the CWP, including the identification of further strategically important conservation zones.	CP5						CWP NCF	LCs, MPAs, EA, SWRDA, DEU	The development of an appropriate strategy for realising the whole landscape approach, particularly in relation to identifying strategically important assets and new nature reserve areas, would assist in identifying priority areas for discussion with other stakeholders, developers and landowners.
<b>CP7</b>	Engage with key stakeholders at a national and regional level to strengthen regional status for CWP's conservation significance.	CP5						CWP NCF	EA, SWRDA	The CWP is already identified on the SW Nature Map, but this needs reinforcing amongst other organisations responsible for the delivery of conservation and habitat creation.
<b>CP8</b>	Ensure biodiversity considerations are included in all other types of development in the CWP that go beyond the PPS9 guidelines.	IS2						CWPS	LCs, MPAs, DEU	In accordance with current planning policy guidance (PPS9), all development should have greater consideration for its impacts, implications and potential benefits for biodiversity. If the CWP is to achieve its aspiration to become a premier site for nature conservation, development should seek to go beyond these guidelines.
<b>CP9</b>	Investigate the potential to develop new visitor-orientated wildlife sites in order to raise awareness of the increasing biodiversity importance of the area.	CP6						CWPS	WTs, RSPB, NE, Developers	Projects are already in the pipeline that will raise the profile of the CWP in relation to biodiversity. By establishing these developments as visitor hubs, it should be possible for the more sensitive areas to be protected against inappropriate behaviours.

Cotswold Water Park  
Stage III Report – Vision and Implementation Plan

CP10	Promote greater public awareness, appreciation and access to CWP's biodiversity habitats.	CP5 CP6						CWPS	CWP NCF	The purpose of the promotion of the CWP's importance for biodiversity is to support the growing reputation of the CWP as a premier site for nature conservation. This reputation will gradually develop over time as the sites of biodiversity importance grow and develop. As this reputation grows, it is likely that improved management, especially visitor management, will become a necessity.
<b>Sport</b>										
CP11	Establish priorities for sport amenity development with specific 'pay and play' and access for all functions, and delivery against 'Community Participation' for the wider sub-regional area.	IS7						CWPS	Sports Providers, SE-SW, LCs, CCs, CoC, Business Links	The Vision identifies the potential for a variety of additional sporting amenities both to support existing provision (angling, sailing, waterskiing, golf), and creating new provision (rowing, dragon boat racing). These and other suggestions should be explored in accordance with increasing participation in sports amongst the wider community.
CP12	Engage with existing membership-based sports providers to assess the scope for utilising existing facilities to deliver more 'pay and play' and access for all provision.	CP11						CWPS	Sports Providers, SE-SW, LCs, CCs	The CWP already supports a number of voluntary and membership sporting clubs (sailing, angling, etc). It may be possible, in some cases, to encourage these clubs to become more open and accessible to general members of the public. Advice and assistance may be required for those organisations wishing to undertake these additional obligations.
CP13	Identify and investigate investment priorities for new medium-large scale sporting facilities where there is a strategic need in relation to sporting type, public access, and access for all.	CP11						CWPS	Sports Providers, SE-SW, LCs, CCs, Developers	Examples of projects to be considered include Cleveland Lakes Watersports Centre; National Angling Centre; Sub-aqua Training / Introduction Centre. The investment priorities should also be aligned to the 'Community Participation' requirements for sport at a local, regional and national level.



Leisure and Recreation										
<b>CP14</b>	Establish an action-based strategy for developing an integrated leisure and recreation network for the CWP using a network of footpaths, cycle paths and bridle paths and support facilities. This is to form an integral part of the Green Infrastructure Network (GIN)	IS7 ED3						CWPS/ T&LWP	LCs, CCs, PCs, NE, EA, CCW, CCP, Leisure Operators / Businesses	Establishing a leisure and recreation network is considered a priority for the CWP. The main/axis routes should be aligned to the canals and rivers, with the canal towpath routes to be secured for leisure and recreation purposes.
<b>CP15</b>	Establish investment priorities in leisure amenity development based upon the principle of utilising the unique attributes (lakelands) of the CWP's countryside environment.	CP14						CWPS/ T&LWP	LCs, CCs, PCs, Leisure Operators / Businesses, Developers	Potential projects identified in the plan include a farm-based attraction, an aqua-adventure park, further country parks, and an art gallery based upon wildlife and public art. In addition, the utilisation, development and restoration of the two canals and Cricklade-Swindon Steam railway need to be included as important projects that have a wider (leisure, transportation, and biodiversity) significance for the CWP as a whole.
Tourism										
<b>CP16</b>	Utilise the envisaged growth in the other core priorities (biodiversity, sports, leisure, and recreation) to enhance the CWP's reputation as a tourism destination.	CP8 CP9 CP10 CP11 CP14 CP15						CWPS/ T&LWP	SWT, PCs, NE, EA, CCW, CCP, Leisure Operators / Businesses, CWP NCF	For the CWP to become established as a visitor destination, it will need to draw upon the unique character of the lakes, settlements, sports, history and the natural environment (i.e. biodiversity importance) to deliver defined visitor experiences. Any development designed to support the visitor needs to be placed in this wider context.
<b>CP17</b>	Identify and investigate investment priorities for tourism amenity development to compliment and support the identified key markets, particularly in relation to new accommodation (caravan and camping sites, youth hostels and farm accommodation).	CP16						CWPS/ T&LWP	SWT, PCs, NE, EA, CCW, CCP, Leisure Operators / Businesses, CWP NCF	Tourism development should be geared towards providing greater opportunities to attract one or more of the identified markets, namely general interest, the family market, wildlife enthusiasts, sports enthusiasts, special events, education, volun-tourism and business tourism.

Cotswold Water Park  
Stage III Report – Vision and Implementation Plan

<b>CP18</b>	Promote development of new visitor hubs or gateways to serve visitors to the central and eastern sections of CWP, utilising larger settlements where possible.	CP1 CP3 CP4								CWPS/ T&LWP	SWT, PCs, CoC, Other Local Businesses	'Hubs' or 'gateways' act as focal points to attract, engage with and disperse visitors. It is noted that the CWP already has a designated 'Gateway Centre' that provides a focal point for visitors. It may be possible for other similar centres to become established. However, it is recommended that the towns are utilised as hubs in order to encourage more economic exchange.
<b>CP19</b>	Encourage the growth and continued professionalism of educational service providers (South Cerney Outdoor Education Centre, CWPS/WWT) to ensure that the area realises its potential.	CP16 CP17								CWPS/ T&LWP	SWT, LEAs, SCOEC, WTs, Heritage Organis- ations	The CWP has the capacity to cover a number of curriculum programmes, particularly outdoor education and sciences. The strengthening of the education market should be seen as a priority, particularly as education groups operate at different periods to leisure visitors. Scope for an educational residential centre should be evaluated in the longer term.
<b>CP20</b>	Secure the Vision and Implementation objectives for tourism within the emerging network of Destination Management Plans. (Notes attached).	CP16								CWPS/ T&LWP	SWT	The visitor opportunities need to be heightened, especially as the product offering grows. Initially it may be appropriate for the CWP to associate itself with the products of the existing DMOs, though as the offer improves the CWP will start to become recognised as a destination in its own right. At such a time, a DMO (or at least a separate Destination Plan) for the CWP should be established.

<b>Timeline Key</b>	
	Ongoing tasks
	Task concerns one-off studies/investigations
*****	Task of reviewing progress

**SUPPORTING DRIVERS**

No.	Task	Critical Path/ Associations	Timeline				Lead Role	Other Partners	Comments
			Immediate	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term			
			0-6 months	Year 1	Years 3-4	Year 5 and beyond			
<b>Agriculture</b>									
<b>SD1</b>	Identify mechanisms by which other landowners could be encouraged to adopt principles and activities that benefit the aims and aspirations of the CWP.	IS7					CWPS/ AWP	CCs, CWP NCF, T&LWP, EA	Agriculture has a significant role to play in the aspirations of the CWP with the potential to support leisure, recreation, tourism and biodiversity, as well as being integral to the local food supply chain. The agricultural sector could also be a key driver behind the ability for the CWP to become more self-sufficient in terms of produce and energy (bio-fuels) through diversification activities.
<b>SD2</b>	Investigate the scope of developing a CWP brand for locally produced farm produce.	SD1					CWPS/ AWP	Produce Retail Outlets, Catering Outlets, Tourism Operators	The production and sale of organic produce in the CWP would have benefits on a number of levels - assist in self-sufficiency at a local level, raise awareness of the CWP through 'CWP'-branded items, strengthen the local supply chain, and therefore reduce carbon production.
<b>Historic Environment</b>									
<b>SD3</b>	Incorporate the interpretation of the historic environment into the development of the CWP, including through trails, interpretation boards and events, and potentially leading to the feasibility of a dedicated CWP heritage centre.	-					CWPS	LCs, CCs, UTHP, Heritage Bodies, Local Heritage Groups	Heritage and history is an important function in relation to defining and creating a sense of place for both residents and visitors alike. Interpretation of both existing and future key heritage sites and features should be included within leisure and recreation routes.

Cotswold Water Park  
 Stage III Report – Vision and Implementation Plan

<b>SD4</b>	Seek to incorporate the arts and cultural programmes into the core priorities for the CWP where there is a recognisable benefit.	<b>Arts</b>					LCs, CCs	CWPS	The Arts has the potential to play an important role in encouraging people to access the countryside, and also in relation to promoting greater enjoyment of the countryside. Therefore, the benefits of the arts and culture should be considered in relation to the continuing development of the CWP.

<b>Timeline Key</b>	
	Ongoing tasks
	Task concerns one-off studies/investigations
	Task of reviewing progress

<b>ENABLING DRIVERS</b>									
No.	Task	Critical Path/ Associations	Timeline				Lead Role	Other Partners	Comments
			Immediate	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term			
			0-6 months	Year 1	Year 2	Years 3-4			
<b>Utilising Minerals Extraction</b>									
<b>ED1</b>	Support and seek to further integrate the CWP objectives into the emerging Minerals Local Plans for Gloucestershire and Wiltshire and Swindon in order to provide a more coordinated approach to extraction, restoration and after use.	IS1					CWPOG	LCs, MPA's, SWRDA	The co-operative working and decision making between the planning authorities of the MPAs and the LAs in relation to minerals working, restoration and after use considerations need to be recognized as a key priority in relation to the delivery of the CWP Vision and Implementation Plan.
<b>ED2</b>	Prepare Good Practice Guidelines for site restoration (including landscape design guidance) and options for after use development.	ED2					CWPOG	LCs, MPA's, SWRDA, Aggregates	The purpose of the Good Practice Guidance is to provide all stakeholders involved in the mineral extraction process with a consistent series of recommendations for the preparation and assessment of mineral planning applications. This needs to be developed in conjunction with the AAP to ensure that the Guidance is clearly set against the planning policy framework.
<b>ED3</b>	Establish a Local Transport Plan for the CWP, including a Green Infrastructure Network (GIN).	CP14 CP18					CWPOG	LCs, CCs, PCs, MPA's, SWRDA, Aggregates, TOs	The requirement for a Local Transport Plan has been identified to encourage more sustainable access to and movement around the CWP area.

Strengthening knowledge of the Upper Thames Hydrological System												
ED4	Investigate the complexity of the hydrological system of the CWP as a whole and its sensitivity to development pressures from both mineral extraction and after use development.	-				<p>The hydrology of the CWP area is complex. With development likely to continue, it is imperative that continued study and monitoring of the hydrological area is conducted and impact assessments undertaken to understand the impacts (both positive and negative) of changes to the natural hydrology of the area. This investigation needs to view the hydrology of the CWP area as a whole.</p>						
							CWPOG	EA, LCs, CCs, Aggregates				
									Climate Change	<p>Climate change is now recognised as a significant occurrence that will influence future activity in terms of development, agriculture and consumption. The Vision has identified certain measures that could be initiated to assist in the CWP achieving a reduced carbon footprint and increase self-sufficiency. However, changes in climate and the consequences that arise will need to be continually monitored, especially in relation to hydrology.</p>		
											CWPOG	EA, LCs, CCs, SWRDA
ED5	Continuously monitor the impacts and implications of climate change in relation to achieving the aspirations of the core priorities.	-				<p>Climate change is now recognised as a significant occurrence that will influence future activity in terms of development, agriculture and consumption. The Vision has identified certain measures that could be initiated to assist in the CWP achieving a reduced carbon footprint and increase self-sufficiency. However, changes in climate and the consequences that arise will need to be continually monitored, especially in relation to hydrology.</p>						
							CWPOG	EA, LCs, CCs, SWRDA				
									Climate Change	<p>Climate change is now recognised as a significant occurrence that will influence future activity in terms of development, agriculture and consumption. The Vision has identified certain measures that could be initiated to assist in the CWP achieving a reduced carbon footprint and increase self-sufficiency. However, changes in climate and the consequences that arise will need to be continually monitored, especially in relation to hydrology.</p>		
											CWPOG	EA, LCs, CCs, SWRDA

Timeline Key	
	Ongoing tasks
	Task concerns one-off studies/investigations
*****	Task of reviewing progress

<b>CONSTRAINTS</b>									
No.	Task	Critical Path/ Associations	Timeline				Lead Role	Other Partners	Comments
			Immediate	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term			
			0-6 months	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3-4			
CTS1	Continue to liaise with key stakeholders in relation to assessing the risks of increased birdstrike from development and the measures that could be introduced to reduce this risk.	IS4					BSTWP	MPAs, LCs, CCs, Aggregates	Aerodrome safeguarding is to be recognised as a potential constraint for realising the aspirations of the Vision and Implementation Plan for the CWP. The need for aerodrome safeguarding does not necessarily dictate against further development, including biodiversity. However, there will be a requirement to ensure that the development will not result in increased risk of danger by attracting large or flocking bird species. This generally relates to the creation of open water, but will be equally relevant to reedbeds, other wetland habitats and woodlands where potential for attracting such bird types is identified.

<b>Timeline Key</b>	
	Ongoing tasks
	Task concerns one-off studies/investigations
*****	Task of reviewing progress



**MONITORING**

No.	Task	Critical Path/ Associations	Timeline				Lead Role	Other Partners	Comments
			Immediate 0-6 months	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term			
				Year 1	Year 2	Years 3-4			
<b>M1</b>	Establish the benchmarks by which progress of the Vision and Implementation Plan can be monitored.						LCs, CCs, MPAs, NE, EA, SWRDA, SWT, SE-SW, WTs, RSPB	Benchmarks need to be established in order to review the position of the CWP over time. This will allow for the monitoring of progress, successes, and significant barriers to success over time. General monitoring will be required on an annual basis, with the first full review and update of the Vision scheduled for Year 5 of the work programme.	
<b>M2</b>	Adopt and operate a Geographical Information System (GIS) for spatially defining conservation activities to assist in appropriate decision making.						LCs, CCs, MPAs, NE, EA, SWRDA	A GIS has already been established as part of the initial investigation work conducted to inform the Vision and Implementation Plan. This needs to be continually reviewed and updated in order to ensure that information on the CWP is accurate and relevant.	

Timeline Key
Ongoing tasks
Task concerns one-off studies/investigations
***** Task of reviewing progress

## Stakeholder Abbreviations

<b>CWPJC</b>	<b>Cotswold Water Park Joint Committee</b>
<b>CWPS</b>	<b>Cotswold Water Park Society</b>
<b>CWPOG</b>	<b>Cotswold Water Park Officers Group</b>
<b>LCs</b>	<b>Local Councils</b>
<b>MPAs</b>	<b>Mineral Planning Authorities</b>
<b>CCs</b>	<b>County Councils/Unitary Authorities</b>
<b>NE</b>	<b>Natural England</b>
<b>EA</b>	<b>Environment Agency</b>
<b>SWRDA</b>	<b>South West Regional Development Agency</b>
<b>SWT</b>	<b>South West Tourism</b>
<b>SE-SW</b>	<b>Sport England - South West</b>
<b>DEU</b>	<b>Ministry of Defence, Defence Estates Unit</b>
<b>PCs</b>	<b>Parish Councils</b>
<b>WTs</b>	<b>Wildlife Trusts</b>
<b>RSPB</b>	<b>Royal Society for the Protection of Birds</b>
<b>NFU</b>	<b>National Farmers Union - Local and Regional Representatives</b>
<b>Aggregates</b>	<b>Aggregate companies operating in the CWP</b>
<b>DMOs</b>	<b>Destination Management Organisations (Wiltshire and Cotswold &amp; Forest of Dean DMOs)</b>
<b>CCW</b>	<b>Cricklade Country Way Project</b>
<b>CCP</b>	<b>Cotswold Canal Partnership</b>
<b>CWP NCF</b>	<b>Nature Conservation Forum for the CWP, consisting of CWPS, RSPB, WTs</b>
<b>BSTWP</b>	<b>Bird Strike Technical Working Party for the CWP, consisting of NCF members and DEU</b>
<b>LEAs</b>	<b>Local Education Authorities</b>
<b>CoC</b>	<b>Local Chambers of Commerce</b>
<b>UTHP</b>	<b>Upper Thames Heritage Project</b>
<b>T&amp;LWP</b>	<b>Tourism and Leisure Working Party for the CWP area (proposed), to incorporate DMOs, LA Officers (Tourism &amp; Leisure), Tourism Businesses</b>
<b>AWP</b>	<b>Agriculture Working Party for the CWP area (proposed), to include CC Officers (agriculture) NFU representatives, local landowners, NE</b>
<b>TOs</b>	<b>Transport Operators</b>
<b>LAs</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>

## Notes

### NOTES to Implementation Plan

#### Monitoring

##### Background

It is vital for any Development Plan to be considered in terms of how successfully it has been implemented and for there to be a statement of the indicators that are to be monitored. If this strategy for the Cotswold Water Park is to be converted into an Area Action Plan within the Local Development Framework, this will become a requirement for its adoption. Guidance can be obtained from PPS12: Local Development Frameworks (2004) and the 'Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide (2005).

As identified in PPS12, it is a requirement that Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR) should cover:

- whether the policies and related targets in local development documents have been met or progress is being made towards meeting them or, where they are not being met or not on track to being achieved, the reasons why;
- what impact the policies are having in respect of national and regional targets and any other targets identified in local development documents;
- what significant effects implementation of the policies is having on the social, environmental and economic objectives by which sustainability is defined and whether these effects are as intended;
- whether the policies in the local development document need adjusting or replacing because they are not working as intended;
- whether the policies need changing to reflect changes in national or regional policy;
- the extent to which any local development order, where adopted, or simplified planning zone is achieving its purposes and if not whether it needs adjusting or replacing; and
- if policies or proposals (including the local development order or simplified planning zone scheme) need changing, the actions needed to achieve this.

In this respect a structured AMR is needed, to include an explanatory memorandum to indicate how the monitoring will be carried out, emphasising the contextual characteristics, issues, challenges and opportunities in the area. It is important that this process is more than just the collection of raw data, but that it also involves in-depth analysis and evaluation of policy performance and effects, focussing on the achievement of sustainable development. It should be a continuous activity used to determine the changes that are taking place and whether these vary from the intended position.

## NOTES to Implementation Plan

### Monitoring

#### Issues

A variety of different organisations and agencies can be jointly responsible for implementing various aspects of this plan, and therefore their role in its monitoring can be readily identified. The task will be made easier if they are monitoring their own plans with the same indicators.

Although the local development frameworks become adopted and imbedded for the respective local authorities, these roles and responsibilities for monitoring the development of the CWP will need to be identified. However, the following recommendations make maximum use of data that will largely be collected for other purposes.

#### Recommendations

Topic	Source of Information	Example of Indicator
Planning	Site Specific Allocations Adopted Proposals Map Communities Strategies	Mineral Site After use Community well-being indicators New development proposals
Minerals	Minerals Core Strategies (Periodic review of Mineral sites, development Control enforcement, and planning decisions).	Sales and Reserves by mineral type Number of mineral working sites New development (extensions or new sites) Restorations
Environment	Biodiversity Action Plan Development Control and Appeal Decisions	Achievement of Biodiversity targets Development which affects protected sites
Recreation	Development Control and Appeal Decisions	Amount of public Rights of Way Number of recreational or sports sites with public access
Tourism	DMO databases and DMPs Development Control and Appeal Decisions	Number of tourists per annum Attendance at visitor attractions Number and type of new tourist accommodation
Transport	Local Transport Plans	Accident rates Road traffic volumes Provision of public/sustainable modes
Water	Local Environment Agency Plans	Groundwater levels and river flows Assessment of flood damage and areas at risk of flooding

## NOTES to Implementation Plan

### Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Notes

#### Background

As identified by PPS12, local planning authorities must comply with European Union Directive 2001/42/EC which requires formal strategic environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. This requirement is to be translated in a Sustainability Appraisal, which incorporates the requirements of a Strategic Environmental Appraisal (SEA).

An SEA should be able to show:

- the extent to which indirect or ‘hidden’ policy effects need to be considered;
- how policies perform, both in isolation and together;
- where environmentally positive policies may conflict;
- areas where the information base is inadequate; and
- how policies may be better integrated.

#### Relevance to the CWP

The use of SEAs has undoubtedly helped in showing the likely environmental effects of strategic land use decisions. Since this CWP review is based on the application of sustainable principles the SEA should help in demonstrating the positive benefits that the development of the area is producing.

It would be sensible to assume the Sustainability Appraisal structure adopted by one of the relevant Local Development Plans, since as well as providing a wider context and possible source for the necessary benchmarking data, it will show how the CWP can assist in such wider policy objectives.

#### Recommendations

As with the monitoring of the implementation of the plan it would be sensible to tie in with a similar exercise being undertaken by another authority and to utilise the same SEA structure. The following structure is adopted from the Gloucestershire Structure Plan and has been used as the SEA framework during the preparation of the strategy and should form the basis of subsequent reviews.

<b>I. Global Sustainability</b>	
1. Transport Energy Efficiency	Reducing trip length Reducing the number of motorised trips Increasing Public Transport Share Increasing attraction of walking and cycling
2. Built Environment Energy Efficiency	Reducing heat loss from buildings Reducing or replacing capital energy requirements
3. Renewable Energy Potential	Safeguarding and utilising wind, water, solar and biomass potential
4. Wildlife Habitats	Safeguarding designated sites e.g. SSSIs Increasing general wildlife potential e.g. corridors

## NOTES to Implementation Plan

### Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Notes

<b>II. Natural Resources</b>	
5. Air Quality	Reducing levels of pollutants
6. Water Conservation and Quality	Maintaining ground water and river levels Safeguarding water quality
7. Land and Soil Quality	Safeguarding soil quality and retention Reducing contamination and dereliction Safeguarding good quality agricultural land
8. Mineral Conservation	Reducing consumption of fossil fuels and minerals Increase reuse and recycling of materials
<b>III. Local Environmental Quality</b>	
9. Landscape and Open Land	Enhancing general landscape quality Retaining countryside/open land
10. Urban Environment Liveability	Enhancing townscape quality
11. Cultural Heritage	Safeguarding listed buildings and cultural assets Safeguarding archaeological/geological assets
12. Public Access Open Space	Increasing/maintaining quality and availability in urban and rural areas



NOTES to Implementation Plan	Cotswold Water Park - Relevant Local Development Scheme (as identified in the Local Development Scheme Documents)																							
	08				09				10				11				12							
	J	F	M	A	J	F	M	A	J	F	M	A	J	F	M	A	J	F	M	A	J	F	M	A
Cotswold DC Core Strategy			e				E																	
North Wilts DC Core Strategy*			S				E																	
Gloucestershire Structure Plan (Adopted Nov 1999)																								
Wiltshire & Swindon Structure Plan (Adopted Jan/Feb 2006)																								
Gloucestershire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (Minerals Core Strategy)			P								S													
Wiltshire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (Minerals Core Strategy)																								

**Key**  
 P = Public participation  
 S = Submission to SoS/6 weeks public consultation  
 e = Pre-Examination Study  
 E = Commence Public Examination  
 A = Options/Publication of document  
 Ad = Adoption  
 S = Site Allocations

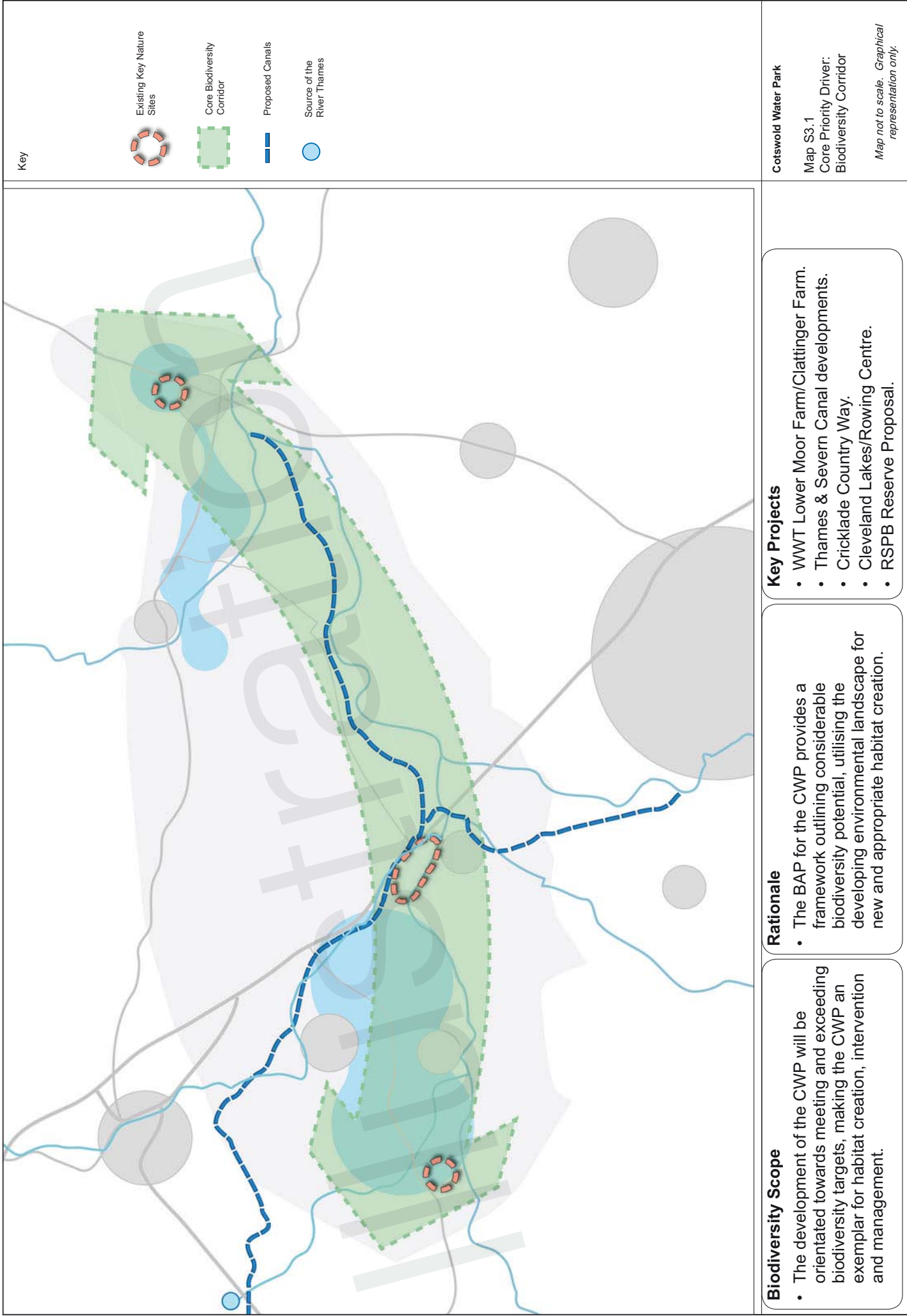
*\* It is unclear whether the merger of Wiltshire authorities to Wiltshire Unitary Authority may affect progress on relevant LDSs*







## APPENDIX A: MAPS







Key

-  Existing Key Nature Sites
-  Core Biodiversity Corridor
-  Proposed Canals
-  Source of the River Thames

**Biodiversity Scope**

- The development of the CWP will be orientated towards meeting and exceeding biodiversity targets, making the CWP an exemplar for habitat creation, intervention and management.

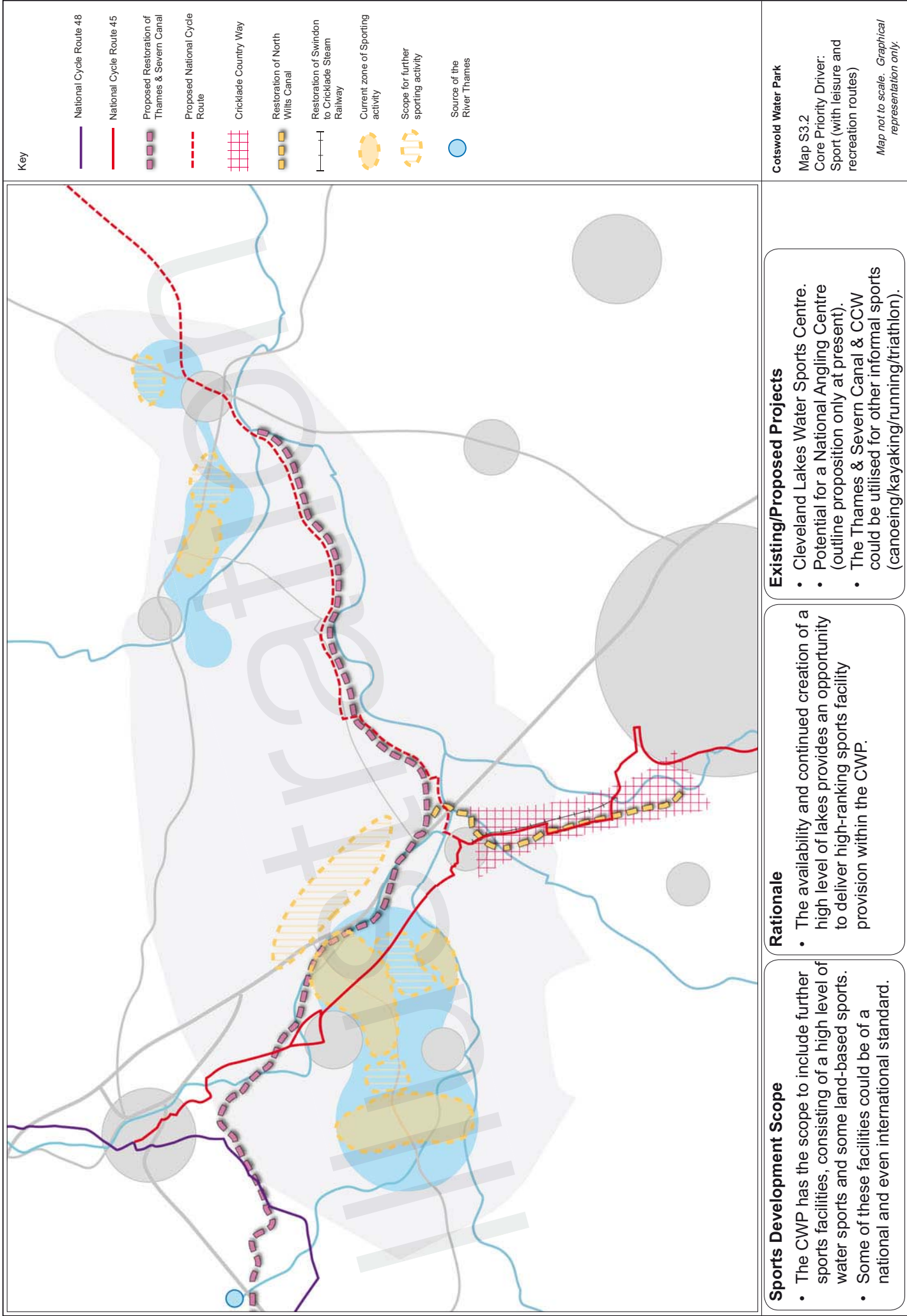
**Rationale**

- The BAP for the CWP provides a framework outlining considerable biodiversity potential, utilising the developing environmental landscape for new and appropriate habitat creation.

**Key Projects**

- WWT Lower Moor Farm/Clattinger Farm.
- Thames & Severn Canal developments.
- Cricklade Country Way.
- Cleveland Lakes/Rowing Centre.
- RSPB Reserve Proposal.

**Cotswold Water Park**  
 Map S3.1  
 Core Priority Driver:  
 Biodiversity Corridor  
*Map not to scale. Graphical representation only.*



**Existing/Proposed Projects**

- Cleveland Lakes Water Sports Centre.
- Potential for a National Angling Centre (outline proposition only at present).
- The Thames & Severn Canal & CCW could be utilised for other informal sports (canoeing/kayaking/running/triathlon).

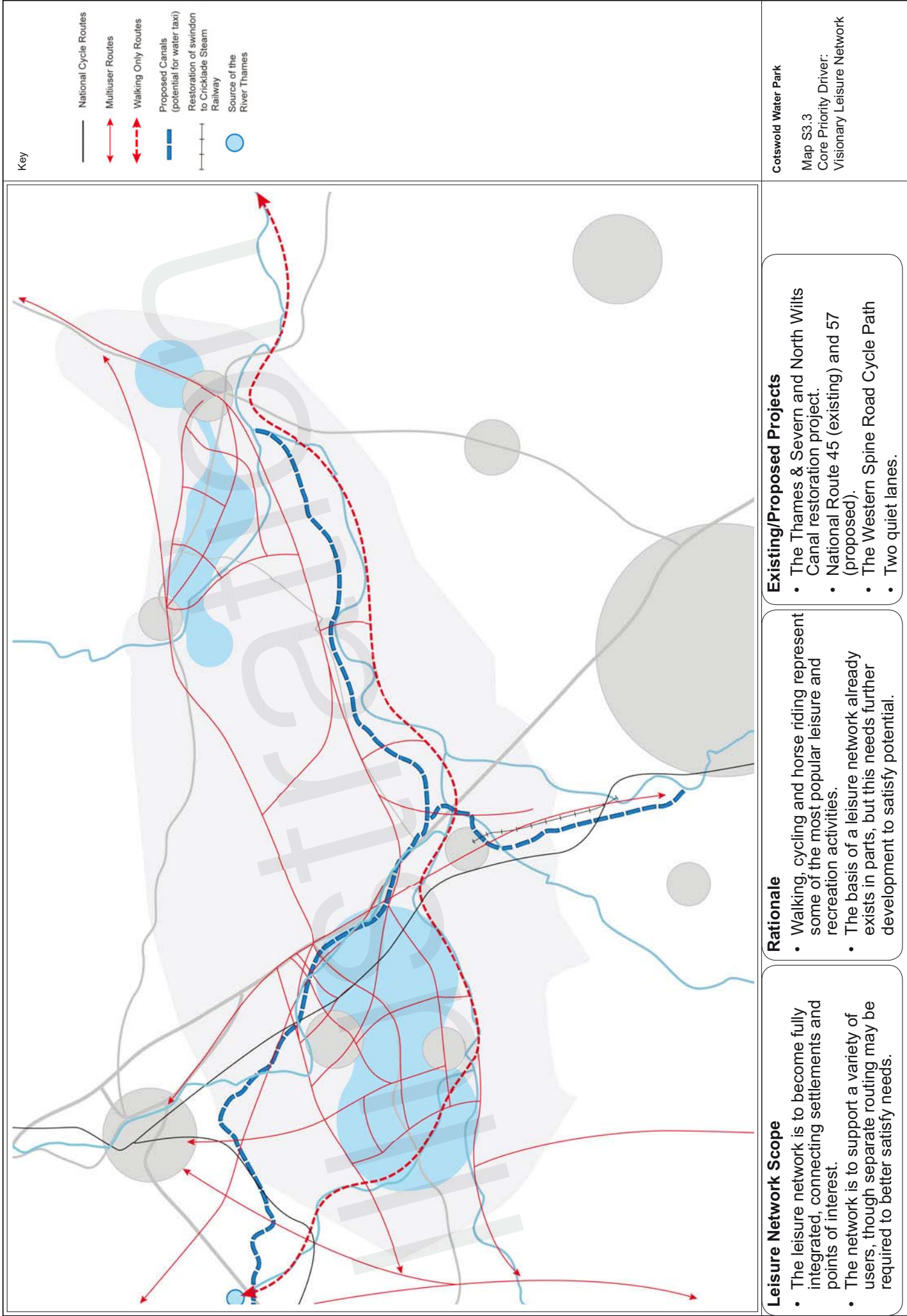
**Rationale**

- The availability and continued creation of a high level of lakes provides an opportunity to deliver high-ranking sports facility provision within the CWP.

**Sports Development Scope**

- The CWP has the scope to include further sports facilities, consisting of a high level of water sports and some land-based sports.
- Some of these facilities could be of a national and even international standard.

**Cotswold Water Park**  
 Map S3.2  
 Core Priority Driver:  
 Sport (with leisure and recreation routes)  
*Map not to scale. Graphical representation only.*



Key

- National Cycle Routes
- ↔ Multiuser Routes
- - - Walking Only Routes
- - - Proposed Canals (potential for water taxi)
- - - Restoration of swindon to Cricklade Steam Railway
- Source of the River Thames

**Existing/Proposed Projects**

- The Thames & Severn and North Wilts Canal restoration project.
- National Route 45 (existing) and 57 (proposed).
- The Western Spine Road Cycle Path
- Two quiet lanes.

**Rationale**

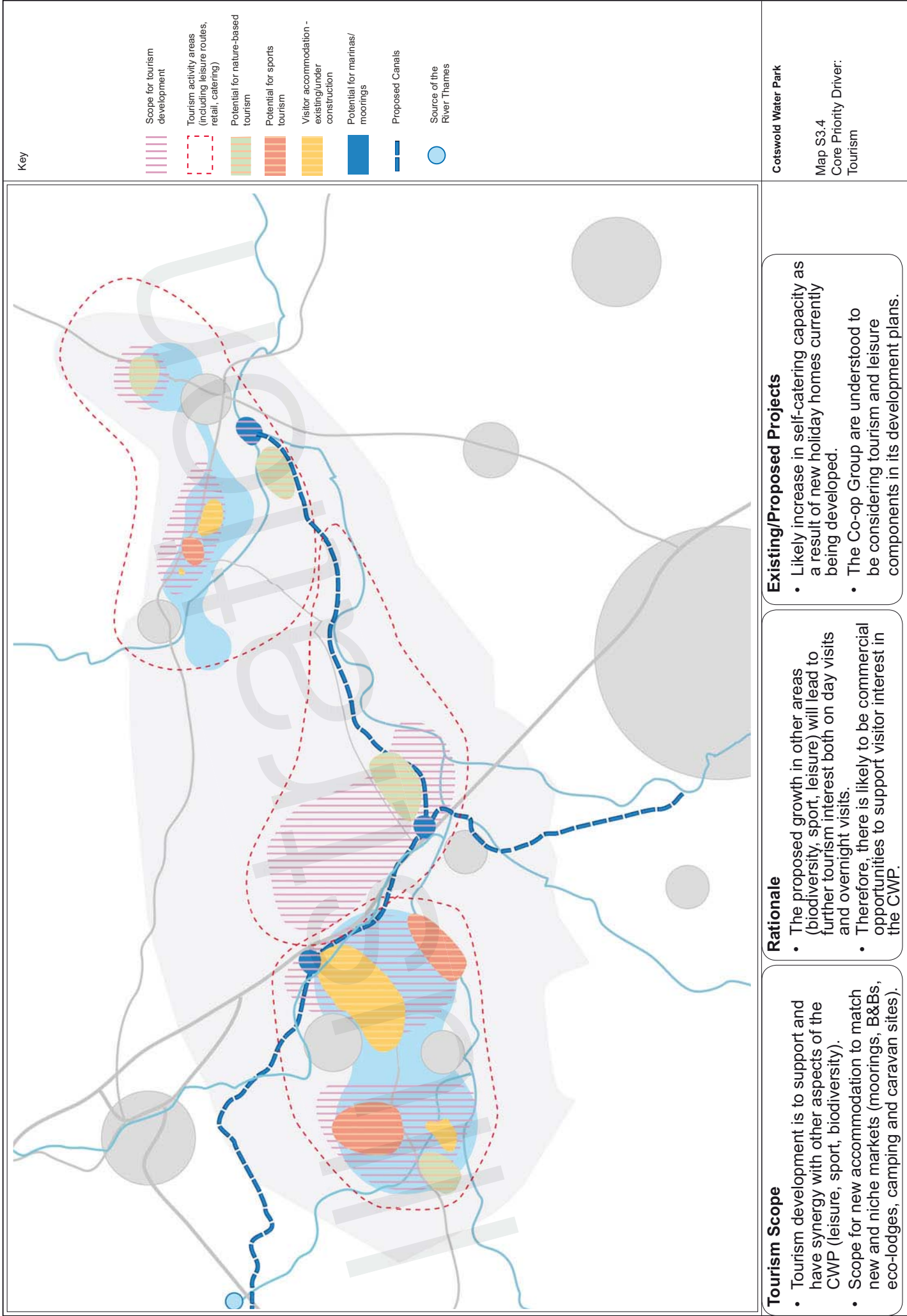
- Walking, cycling and horse riding represent some of the most popular leisure and recreation activities.
- The basis of a leisure network already exists in parts, but this needs further development to satisfy potential.

**Leisure Network Scope**

- The leisure network is to become fully integrated, connecting settlements and points of interest.
- The network is to support a variety of users, though separate routing may be required to better satisfy needs.

Cotswold Water Park  
 Map S3.3  
 Core Priority Driver:  
 Visionary Leisure Network





Key

- Scope for tourism development
- Tourism activity areas (including leisure routes, retail, catering)
- Potential for nature-based tourism
- Potential for sports tourism
- Visitor accommodation - existing/under construction
- Potential for marinas/moorings
- Proposed Canals
- Source of the River Thames

**Existing/Proposed Projects**

- Likely increase in self-catering capacity as a result of new holiday homes currently being developed.
- The Co-op Group are understood to be considering tourism and leisure components in its development plans.

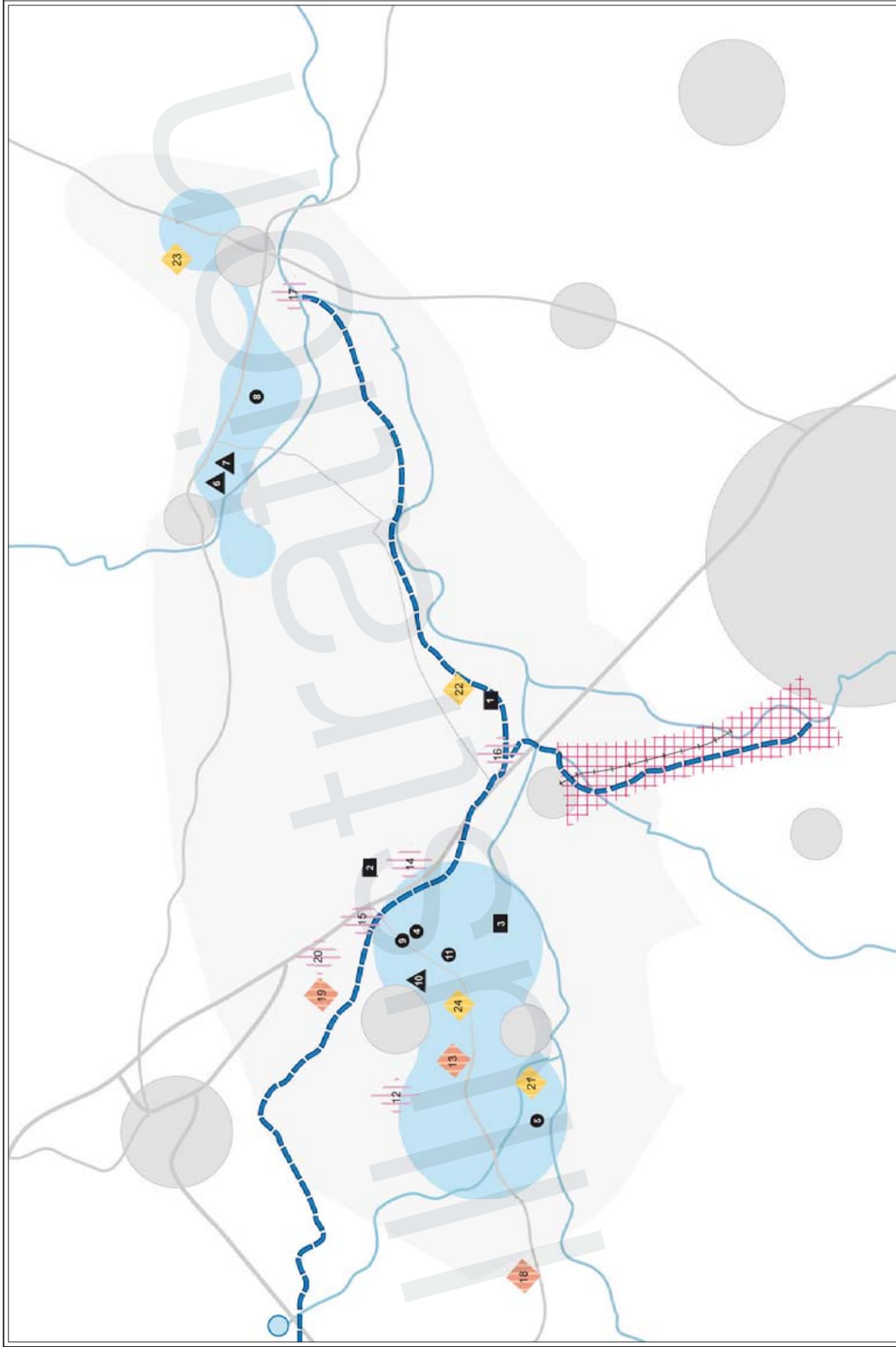
**Rationale**

- The proposed growth in other areas (biodiversity, sport, leisure) will lead to further tourism interest both on day visits and overnight visits.
- Therefore, there is likely to be commercial opportunities to support visitor interest in the CWP.

**Tourism Scope**

- Tourism development is to support and have synergy with other aspects of the CWP (leisure, sport, biodiversity).
- Scope for new accommodation to match new and niche markets (moorings, B&Bs, eco-lodges, camping and caravan sites).

**Cotswold Water Park**  
 Map S3.4  
 Core Priority Driver: Tourism



**Key**

- Conceptual development - leisure based
- Conceptual development - sport
- Conceptual development - tourism accommodation
- Proposed Canals (potential for water tax)  
Cricklade Country Way (to include Cricklade to Swindon steam railway)
- Existing projects/consents
- Proposals
- Subject to Planning Approval/Appeal
- Source of the River Thames

**Proposals**

- 1 RSPB Site (biodiversity)
- 2 Co-op Group (potential to include leisure elements)
- 3 Cleveland Lakes (mixed water sports and biodiversity)
- Existing projects/consents**
- 4 Lake 11 (Holiday Homes)
- 5 Lower Mill Estate (Holiday Homes)
- 8 Claydon Pike (Holiday Homes, Hotel, Country Park)
- 9 Lake 7 (Hotel)
- 11 Lake 10 (Holiday Homes)
- Subject to Planning Enquiry/Appeal**
- 6, 7 Lake 103, 103a, 104 (Holiday Homes & Hotel)
- Subject to Planning Permission**
- 10 Lake 17 (Holiday Homes)

**Conceptual Developments**

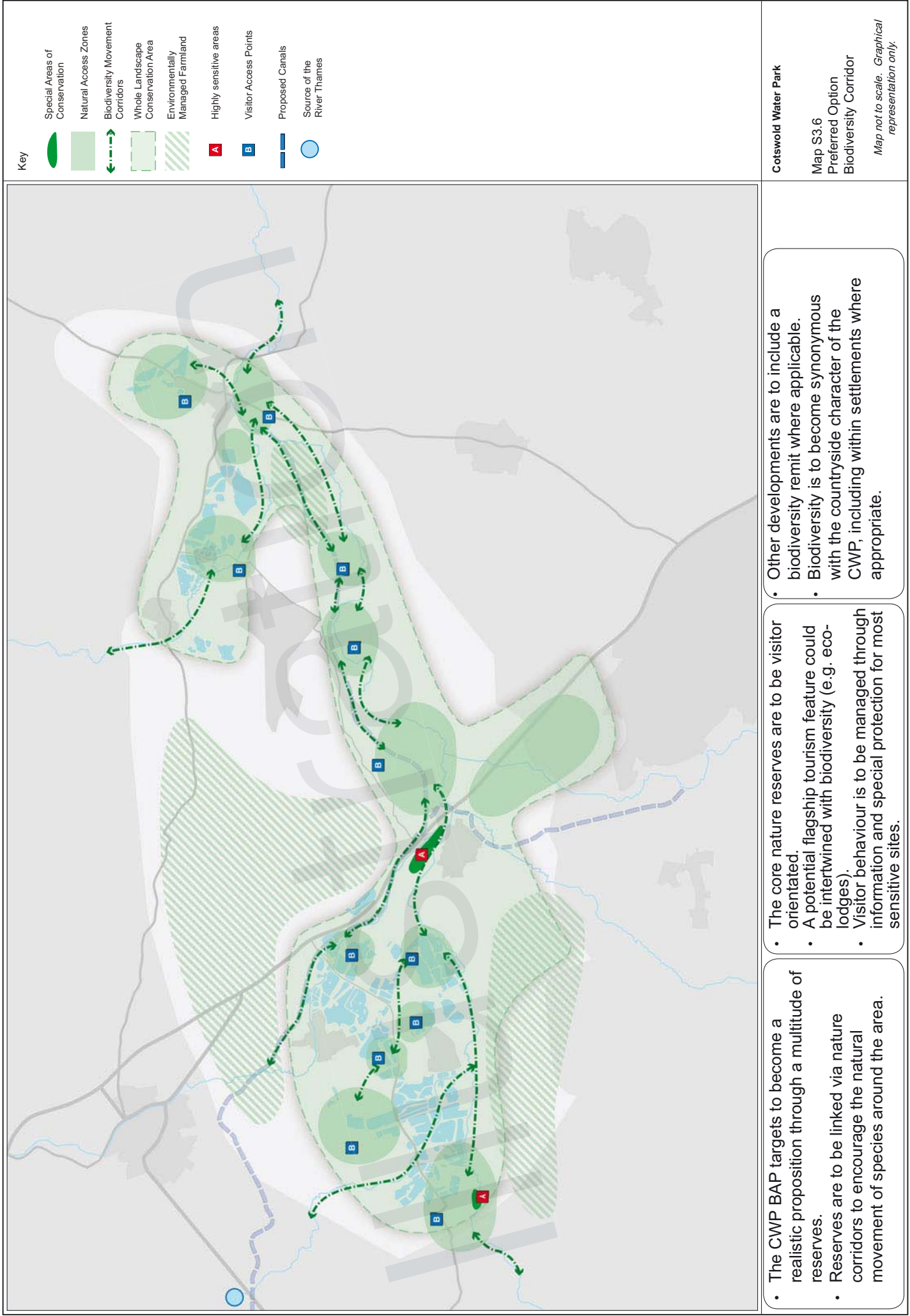
- 12 An Angling Centre
- 13 A designated Diving Centre
- 14 An Aqua-adventure Centre
- 15, 16, 17 Marinas/moorings
- 18, 19 Golf courses with 'island green' features
- 20 Sizeable Farm-based attraction
- 21, 23 Accommodation Development (preferred for camping and caravan sites)
- 22 Eco-lodge development
- 24 Youth/Residential/Education facility

Please note, the conceptual developments are included to provide an indication of the nature of the developments that could be included. The spatial placing of these concept developments is purely for graphical representation only, and are based upon an assumed strategic fit. **This should not be treated as a defined spatial plan for development.**

**Cotswold Water Park**

Map S3.5  
Proposals and Propositions





• The CWP BAP targets to become a realistic proposition through a multitude of reserves.

• Reserves are to be linked via nature corridors to encourage the natural movement of species around the area.

• The core nature reserves are to be visitor orientated.

• A potential flagship tourism feature could be intertwined with biodiversity (e.g. eco-lodges).

• Visitor behaviour is to be managed through information and special protection for most sensitive sites.

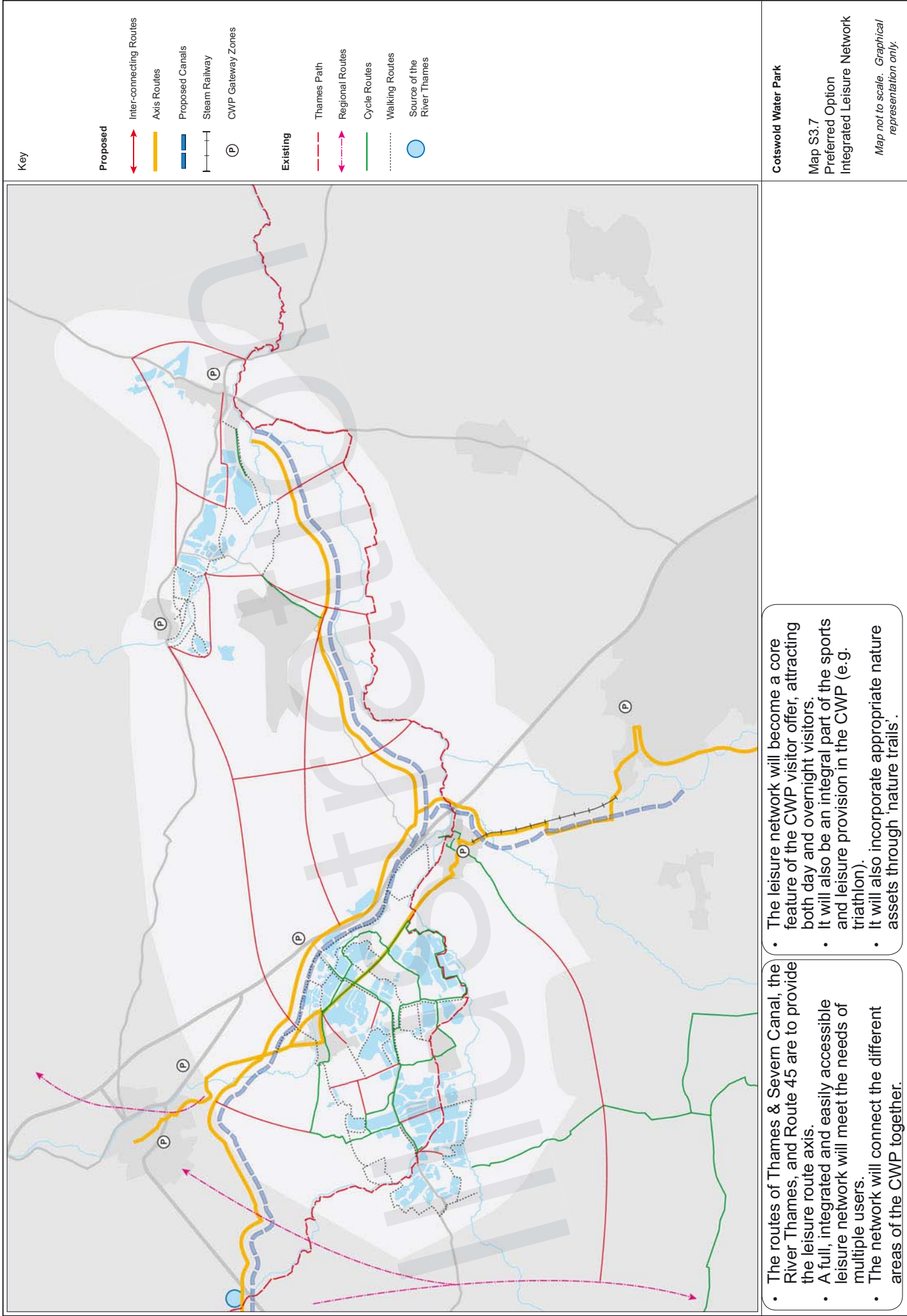
• Other developments are to include a biodiversity remit where applicable.

• Biodiversity is to become synonymous with the countryside character of the CWP, including within settlements where appropriate.

**Cotswold Water Park**

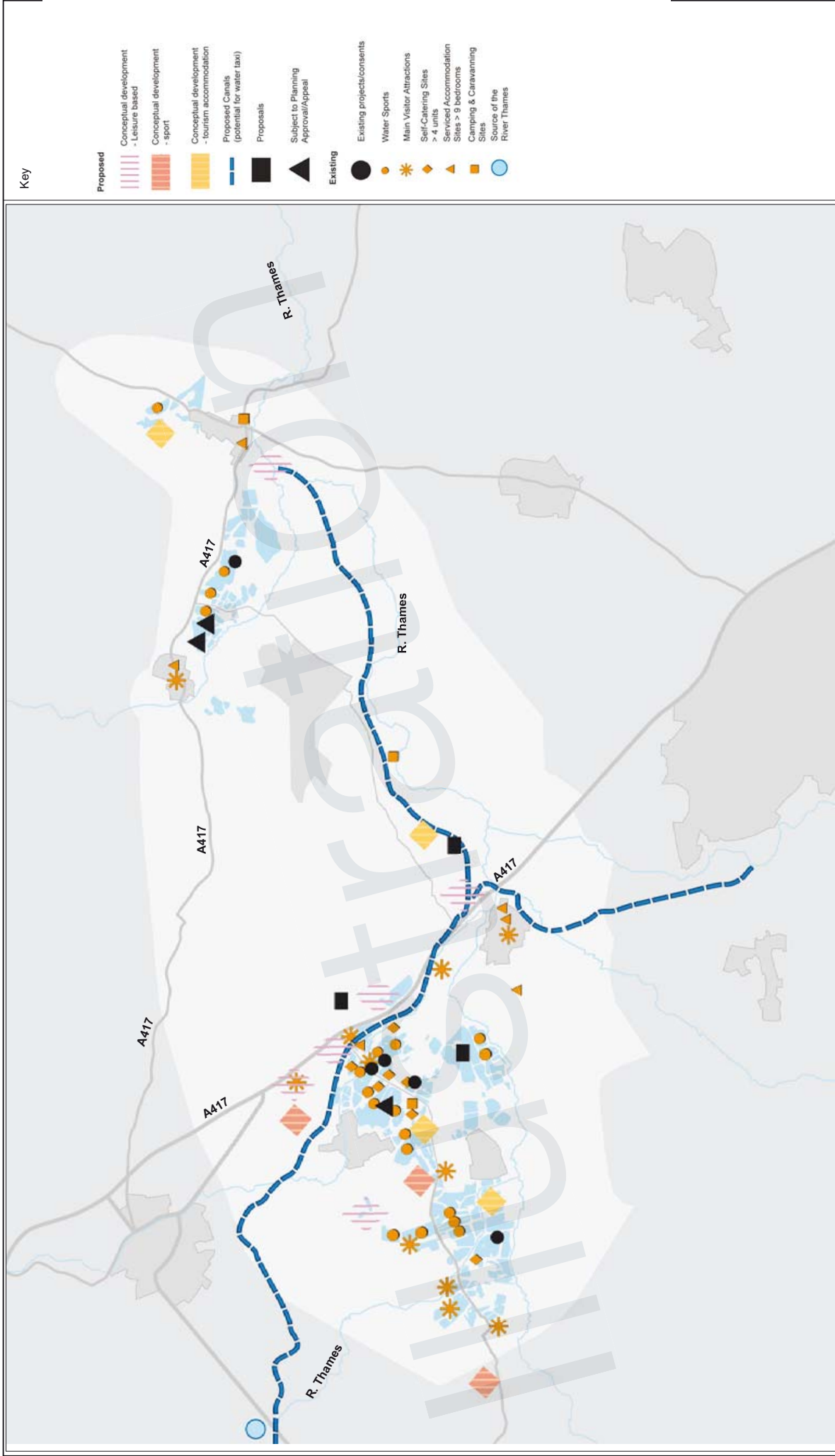
Map S3.6  
Preferred Option  
Biodiversity Corridor

*Map not to scale. Graphical representation only.*



- The leisure network will become a core feature of the CWP visitor offer, attracting both day and overnight visitors.
- It will also be an integral part of the sports and leisure provision in the CWP (e.g. triathlon).
- It will also incorporate appropriate nature assets through 'nature trails'.

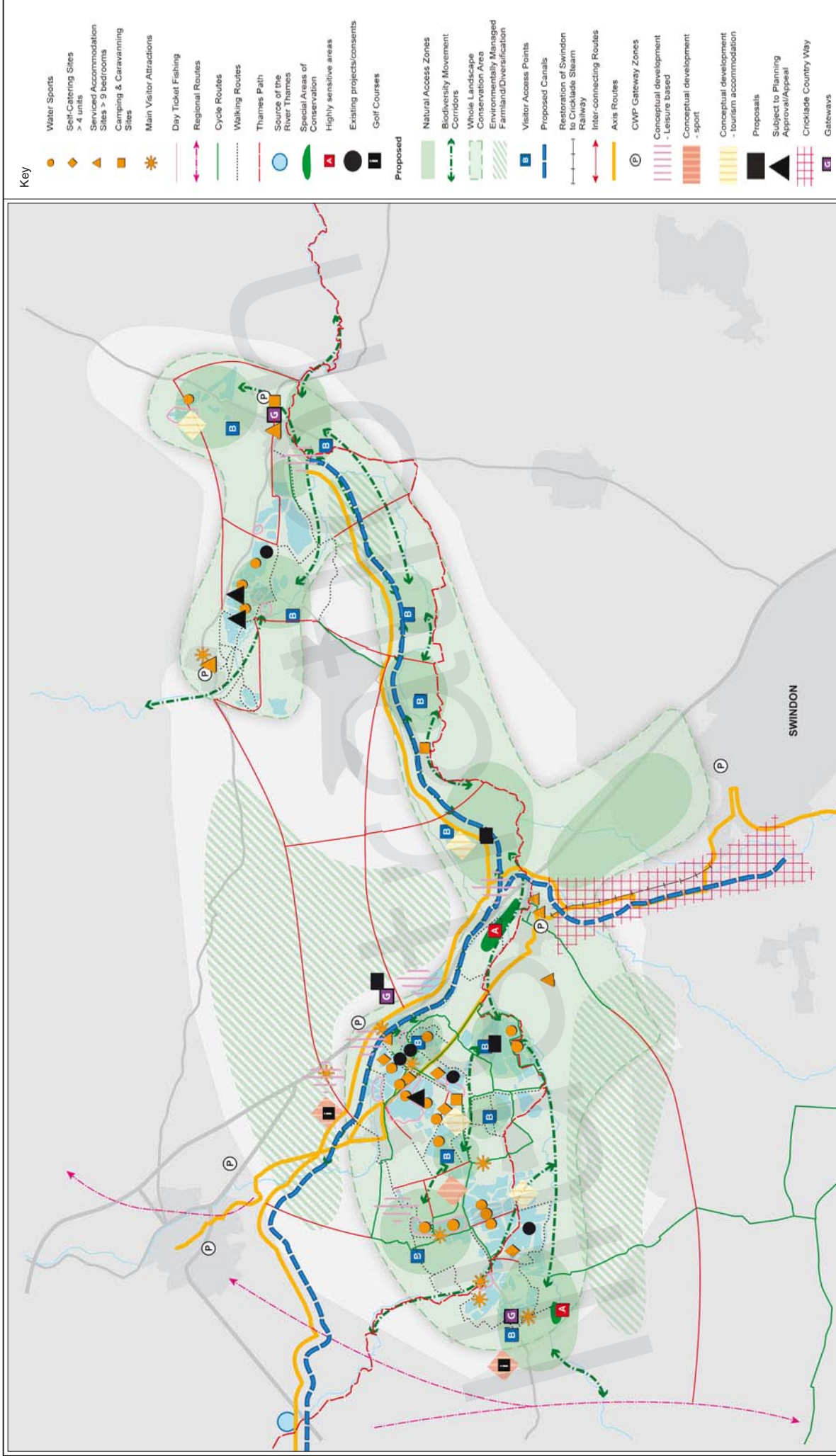
- The routes of Thames & Severn Canal, the River Thames, and Route 45 are to provide the leisure route axis.
- A full, integrated and easily accessible leisure network will meet the needs of multiple users.
- The network will connect the different areas of the CWP together.



- The leisure, sporting and biodiversity facilities of the CWP will be innovative and of a high quality.
- As a result, the CWP becomes established as a tourism destination in its own right.

**Cotswold Water Park**  
 Map S3.8  
 Preferred Option  
 Tourism, Leisure & Sports  
 Facilities





**Cotswold Water Park**

Map 3.9  
The Vision

**VISION:**

By harnessing the resources and economic activity in the Cotswold Water Park, the area will become a distinctive and sustainable countryside of high environmental value for the benefit of local residents and people working in and visiting the area.

*This Map shows how the preferred options for biodiversity, tourism, leisure and sports integrate with the existing context of the CWP.*

## APPENDIX B: VISION IMAGES



*Please note, the following images should be seen as graphic representation of the aspirations of the Vision.*



*An integrated leisure network suitable for walking, cycling, horse riding and even commuting will be designed that links communities, the countryside, sports facilities and leisure amenities.*



*The CWP will fulfil its potential as a regionally and nationally important area for nature conservation, being home to vulnerable and endangered species native to the UK.*



*New standards in eco-tourism associated with the nature conservation will be set within the CWP, with nature lodges integrated with reedbeds and grazing marsh to provide a unique experience for wildlife enthusiasts and novices alike.*





*Water sports will be open and accessible to local residents, visitors and athletes for leisure, training and competition.*



*Sports will be integrated within the CWP that are innovative, incorporating unique features and aspects of the CWP to provide a distinctive experience, e.g. an island green as part of a golf course.*





*The CWP will include innovative leisure development featuring aqua-adventure attractions such as water fountains, shooting water, plunge pools and a sub-aqua adventure zone.*



*The CWP will have a sustainable transport network utilising proposed canal developments to support a water taxi system and the extension of the Cricklade-Swindon Steam Railway to encourage sustainable entry to the CWP for walking, cycling and general sightseeing.*



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**Top Right:** © iStockphoto.com/jimpruitt  
**Bottom:** © iStockphoto.com/Charleyknox







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