

**COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL  
COTSWOLD BEECHWOODS SAC  
SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE NATURAL GREENSPACES FUND  
Implementing the Recreation Mitigation Strategy**

**Guidance note for submitting an expression of interest form – CDC  
Cotswold Beechwoods SAC Suitable Alternative Natural  
Greenspace Fund**

## 1. Introduction

The CDC Cotswold Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Fund is available to projects which encourage new and existing residents and visitors to visit other greenspace sites, rather than the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC. This should ensure that recreational pressures and ecological damage are minimised at the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC.

## 2. Background

Residents and visitors of new developments within the District have the potential to impact on internationally important biodiversity sites, in particular the [Cotswold Beechwoods SAC](#). The SAC has been designated because it supports wildlife that is valuable on an international scale. Unfortunately the site is being damaged by the very people that go there to enjoy it – walking, biking, exercising their dogs etc. and that damage will increase as more houses and holiday accommodation are built, leading to more visitors.

Cotswold District Council, as a “competent authority”, is legally obliged under the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) (as amended) to consider whether a project or proposal, including planning applications would affect the biodiversity of any SAC. This consideration is undertaken by a process called [Habitats Regulations Assessment](#) (HRA).

To assist planning applicants to progress their applications and to ensure that there is a strategic approach to delivering mitigation for recreational impacts at the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC the Local Authorities in the area and Natural England have worked together to prepare a recreation mitigation strategy for the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC (Footprint 2022) [ADD LINK](#). This strategy details mitigation measures along with costings for these measures. A calculation has then been made to assess what level of financial mitigation contribution is required from planning applicants within the Zone of Influence of the Cotswold Beechwoods.

The financial mitigation contributions will be used to fund -

- on-site measures, e.g. rangers, signage and
- off-site measures – the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs).

To enable effective delivery of SANGS through a wide range of partners, Cotswold District Council has set up the CDC Cotswold Beechwoods SAC Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces Fund. This Fund, made up of the SANG component of the financial mitigation contributions from planning applicants, is available to support projects that meet the relevant criteria.

It is important that the Fund delivers SANGs and other infrastructure that provide realistic alternatives which new residents and visitors are likely to use in preference to the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC, i.e. that will reduce recreational pressures on the biodiversity of the SAC . These SANGs are likely to be within the District, but could potentially also be within other nearby Districts. The Council is working in partnership with other neighbouring Councils and Natural England and will consult them on project proposals.

The type of projects that might be eligible for this Fund include provision of –

- a new country park or similar
- large scale dog walking sites
- dedicated cycle routes or linking up existing cycle routes
- dedicated cycling facilities, particularly for mountain bikes
- dedicated walking routes or linking up of existing walking routes, particularly if these attract walkers away from footpaths (including the Cotswold Way) within the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC
- or improvements to existing parks and other green infrastructure, such as footpaths (including changes to parking, signposts, promotion of existing greenspace sites etc. ) that would decrease usage of the Cotswold Beechwoods.

### 3. Who Can Apply To The Fund?

The fund is not open to private individuals or organisations/companies operating for profit. The types of organisation that would be eligible include –

- Charities
- Not for profit organisations
- Parish and Town Councils
- Voluntary and Community Organisations
- Cotswold District Council
- Other Local Authorities

Any organisation applying must have a constitution or equivalent and been in existence for at least 6 months prior to the application and to have a good track record in delivering ecologically based projects

### 4. Criteria For Applications

Applications should be for bids of £5,000 to £50,000

All applications should meet all or most of the following criteria and demonstrate how. There is some overlap between these criteria.

All bids received will be scored against the criteria set out in this guidance note. Bids that score over 75 will be taken to Cabinet to make a final decision, a scoring matrix for the relevant funds can be found in the criteria tables in this guidance. Please note that depending on the amount involved, approval from Full Council might also be required.

<b>Essential Criteria</b>	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>How to demonstrate?</b>
<p>bids that score 0 for any of the essential criteria will be rejected regardless of their total score</p>	
<p>Lead bid partner must have a constitution or equivalent; been in existence for at least 6 months prior to the application; have a good track record of delivering relevant projects.</p> <p>Maximum score: 10</p>	<p>Provide information on constitution of lead partner and examples of previous successful projects.</p>
<p>The project must be deliverable within the submitted time frame.</p> <p>Maximum score: 10</p>	<p>Set out the time frame for your project and provide evidence your project is deliverable within this time frame. Demonstrate your project has a clear delivery programme and is financially viable.</p>
<p>Deliver the requirements of the Cotswold Beechwoods Recreation Mitigation Strategy (Footprint 2022) Appendix 3.</p> <p>Maximum score 30</p>	<p>Provide information on how the project delivers the mitigation strategy, including data on predicted visitor number increases at your site</p>
<p>Lead to a reduction in the number of visitors to the Cotswold Beechwoods, particularly those visitors that originate from within the 15.4km Zol.</p> <p>Maximum score 30</p>	<p>Data on existing and predicted visitor numbers at your site. Analysis of types of visitor and their point of origin</p>
<b>Desirable Criteria</b>	
(Maximum score 25 overall)	
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>How to demonstrate?</b>
<p>Deliver on the actions in the Council's <a href="#">Ecological Emergency Action Plan</a></p> <p>Maximum score 10</p>	<p>Provide information on how the project would meet all or some of the actions</p>
<p>Support and contribute to the <a href="#">Gloucestershire Nature Recovery Network</a> (in Cotswold District) and any adopted or emerging local nature recovery strategy</p>	<p>Illustrate what habitats are going to be created and where and how that fits in with the NRN opportunity mapping and other Local Nature Recovery Strategy targets and aims.</p>

Maximum score 10	
<p>Deliver the <a href="#">Cotswold National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan</a> and/or <a href="#">Cotswold Water Park Nature Recovery Plan</a>, where projects are located within the CWP or National Landscape</p> <p>Maximum score 5</p>	Provide information on how the project would meet all or some of the actions in the plans
<p>Deliver other benefits – for example ecosystems services or natural capital benefits; climate change adaptation and mitigation benefits; community benefits.</p> <p>Maximum score 5</p>	Describe the multiple benefits that your project would bring to the wider environment and to the community.
<p>Deliver the <a href="#">Cotswold District Green Infrastructure Strategy</a> and the <a href="#">Strategic Framework for Green Infrastructure in Gloucestershire</a></p> <p>Maximum score 5</p>	Describe how your project would help deliver these strategies
<p>Secure match funding to increase potential outputs from the project</p> <p>Maximum score 10</p>	Provide evidence of match funding and whether it is dependent on a successful bid to this Fund.