



Public Consultation responses relating to the Cannock Chase SAC Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Measures (SAMMM) Detailed Implementation Plans (DIPs): Car Parking; & Site user Infrastructure, Education and Engagement

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## Summary

This report summarises the consultation responses submitted in relation to two plans that relate to future management of access at Cannock Chase. One of the plans addresses access management and monitoring and the second addresses car-parking.

A single consultation questionnaire was run to cover both plans. The questionnaire involved a series of specific questions set out in an online questionnaire hosted by the relevant local authorities. The questionnaire ran during October and November 2019 and was open to anyone to respond.

A total of 130 different responses were received. The majority (88%) of respondents were individuals (site users), but respondents also included local businesses, organisations, landowners, local residents and councillors.

The questionnaire covered various topics and parts of the plans, and respondents could choose which areas they wished to comment on. The topic with the most interest was car-park charging – with 78 respondents (60%).

Responses are summarised within the report on a topic by topic basis, mirroring the structure in the questionnaire. Key points and free text responses are highlighted. The responses reflect a wide range of divergent views and opinion.

Particular points and suggestions that are not necessarily already addressed within the plans or that may warrant further consideration include:

- Need for clear messaging on dog poo and what to do, including whether to stick and flick, and suggestions for more bins and poo bags, combined with education/enforcement;
- Wider connection of Cannock Chase to the bridleway and cycle network to allow visitors to access by different means beside cars, including provision of parking outside Cannock Chase to allow people to then cycle. With increasing availability of electric bikes and greater awareness of climate issues associated with different transport choices, this is likely to be increasingly important;
- Better education/guidance for wildlife photographers;
- Adult learning/education;
- Wildlife induction at bike hire centres;
- Free training for special interest group leaders;
- Potential for night-time closure of car-parks to reduce anti-social behaviour;
- Wording to ensure any car-park charging is implemented so as not to exclude certain sections of society less able to pay;
- Public transport and better bus options (noting previous experiences), with increasing relevance given the current climate emergency;

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- Punchbowl horse-box parking needs risk assessment and subject to checks with highways;
- Need to review access provision for disabled and those with less mobility, ensuring options retained (potential at Chase Road for example);
- Horse rider concerns that they will need to use roads to access bridleways
- Clear audit trail/transparent accounting so that visitors can see how revenue was spent
- Potential for voluntary charging at some times;
- Concessions for elderly, disabled etc.;
- Higher charges at weekends as this is when the Chase is busiest.

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## Acknowledgements

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cannock Chase AONB is designated for its special landscape qualities. Parts of the AONB are designated as being of national importance for nature conservation (as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, SSSI) and of international importance (SAC). The site also supports a number of Annex I bird species, many of which nest outside the boundaries of the SSSI and SAC. These designations and species interest bring particular responsibilities for public bodies and infer strict legal protection.
- 1.2 Cannock Chase AONB is located relatively close to a number of urban settlements including Stafford, Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Walsall. It is a popular destination for recreation, with visitors drawn by the landscape, tranquillity and recreational opportunities. The AONB is under the ownership and management of a number of different bodies. Most of the area is owned and managed by Staffordshire County Council, Forestry England (Cannock Chase Forest Estate) and the National Trust (Shugborough Park). Other owners include Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and a number of private landowners.
- 1.3 With increased housing development in the wider vicinity and a growing human population, recreational use is predicted to increase (Liley, 2012). Cannock Chase plays an important role in providing expansive greenspace for recreation, drawing people for a range of activities. The recreational use brings a range of economic and social benefits. There is a need to meet recreation demand and provide for recreation while in the long-term ensuring that the issues associated with high levels of recreation do not cause damage or lessen the experience for other users. As a result, two plans have been commissioned by the SAC partnership<sup>1</sup>, one relating to the management of car-parking (the majority of visitors arrive by car) and the other a site-user plan, addressing management of visitors once on the site.

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<sup>1</sup> The partnership is comprised of: Stafford Borough Council, Cannock Chase District Council, Lichfield District Council, South Staffordshire District Council, East Staffordshire District Council, the City of Wolverhampton Council, Staffordshire County Council, Natural England, Forestry England, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, National Trust, RSPB and Cannock Chase AONB

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- 1.4 These plans complement each other and together provide a series of measures to ensure the long-term resilience of the site and its ability to accommodate growing demands for recreation pressure.
- 1.5 The two plans were subject to an online public consultation which ran from 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The consultation was targeted to check whether there were any additional measures or options that could be included and to gather views from members of the public and interested parties. As such, the consultation involved a series of particular questions set by the SAC partnership that related to key areas of each plan. The consultation was hosted on the relevant local authority websites and reference copies of the plans were also made available at relevant council buildings. This report summarises the key findings from the consultation, providing an overview of the responses received for both plans. The questions listed as part of the consultation are all given in the appendix.

## 2. Responses

### Overview of responses received

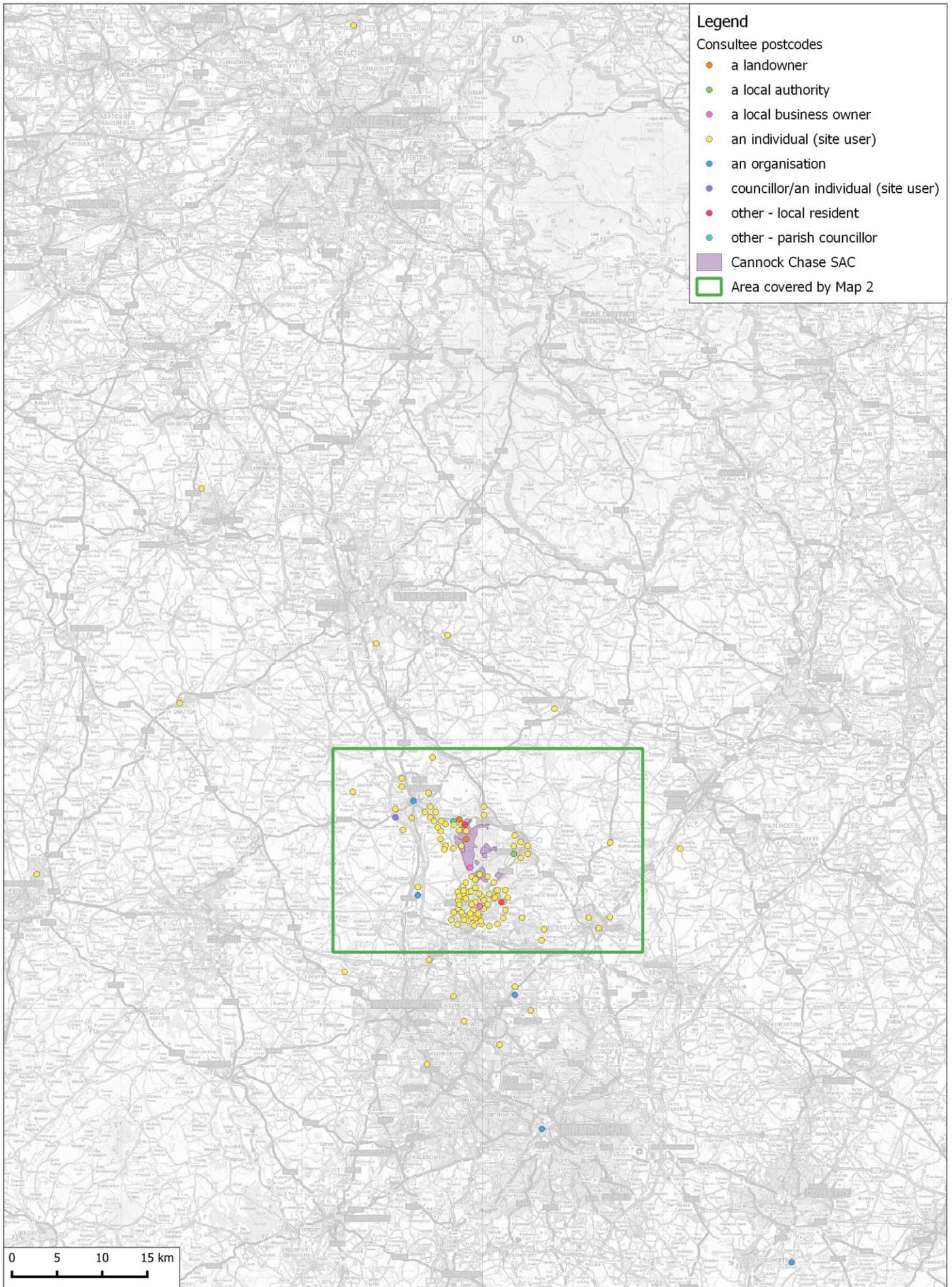
2.1 A total of 130 responses were received. The majority (88%) identified themselves as site users – see Table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of responses received.**

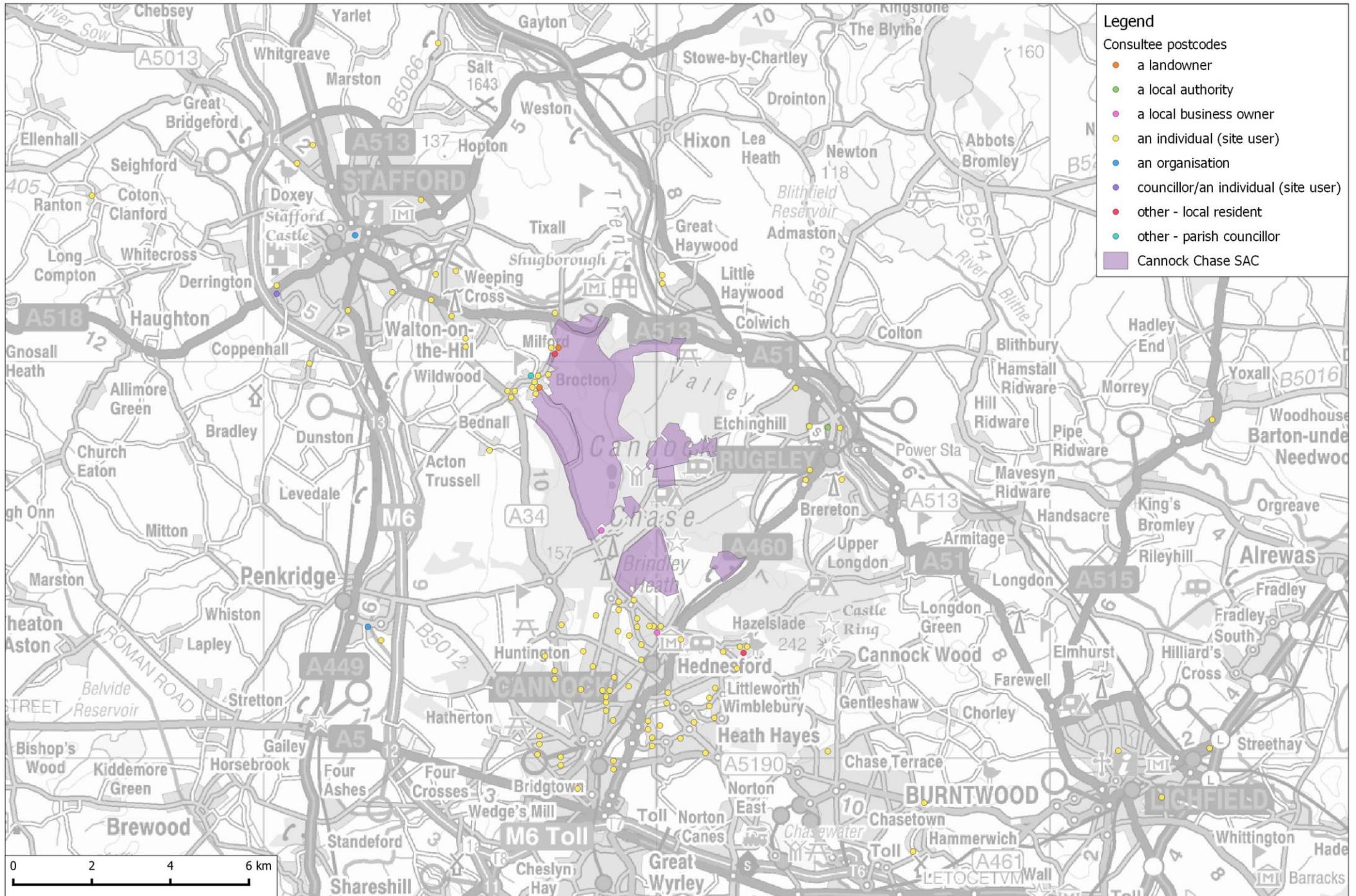
Type	Number of respondents
An individual (site user)	115
An organisation	5
A landowner	3
A local business owner	2
Other - local resident	2
A local authority	1
Councillor/An individual (site user)	1
Other - parish councillor	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>

2.2 The geographic spread of respondent's postcodes is shown in Maps 1 and 2 (with Map 1 showing all postcodes and Map 2 showing the area directly around Cannock Chase). It can be seen that most respondents came from Cannock, Hednesford, Brocton, Rugeley or Stafford. A total of 103 respondents gave postcodes within the triangle formed by the M6, M6 toll and A51 (79%).

**Map 1: Distribution of consultee postcodes by type**



Map 2: Distribution of consultee postcodes by type (excluding 19 postcodes)



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2.3 The consultation contained a series of discrete sections. Each respondent could choose to answer particular sections that were of interest/relevance and didn't have to complete all sections. The different sections provide the structure for the rest of the report and covered:

- Protecting our beautiful heathlands: 55 respondents (42%)
- Dog owners: 47 respondents (36%)
- Footpaths: 49 respondents (38%)
- Education: 42 respondents (32%)
- On-line information: 28 respondents (22%)
- Car-park growth: 61 respondents (47%)
- Car-park charging: 78 respondents (60%)
- Facilities: 33 respondents (25%)
- Generic comments: 15 respondents (12%)

2.4 In the subsequent sections the percentages reflect the respondents to the particular section rather than the overall total of 130.

### Protecting our beautiful heathlands

2.5 55 people responded to the section on protecting heathlands, the majority (93%) of these were individuals (Figure 1).

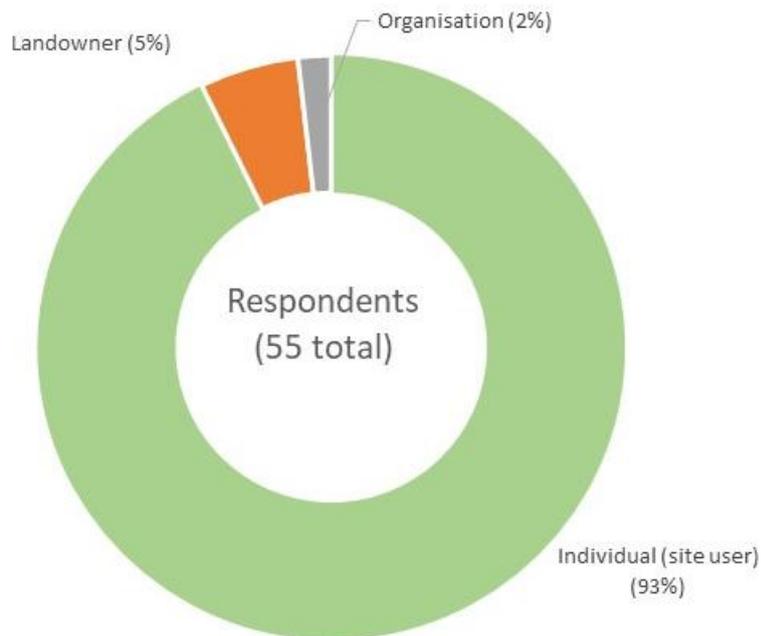


Figure 1: Types of respondent

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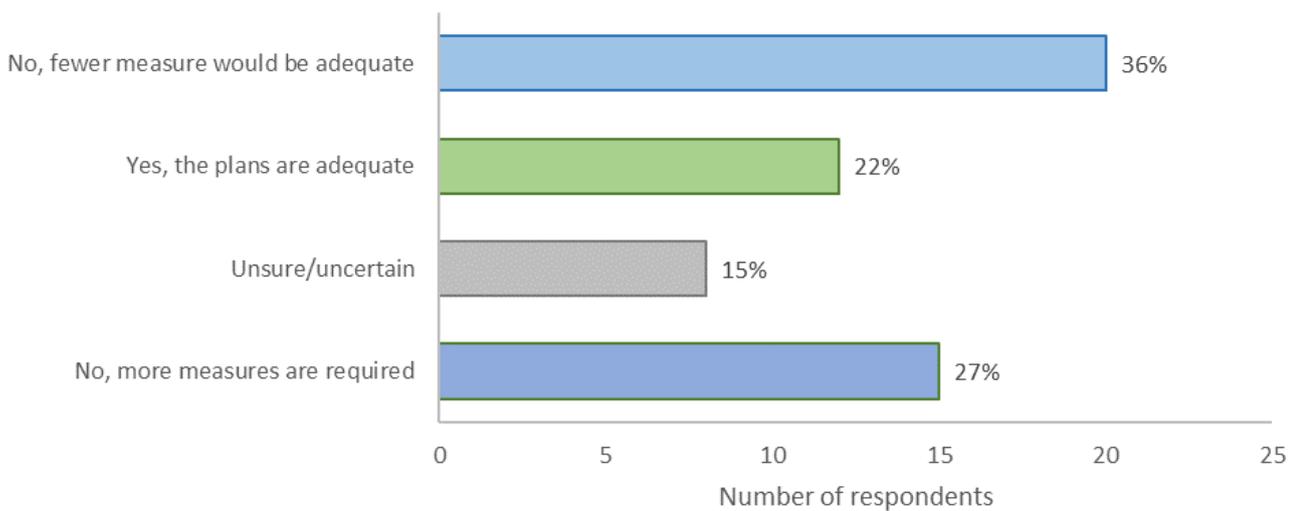
2.6 Most (84% respondents) were aware that habitats or species were legally protected (Table 2) and also (91%) that increasing numbers of visitors was one of the pressures on Cannock Chase (Table 3). Around a third (36%) of respondents believed fewer measures would be adequate while around quarter (27%) thought more measures were required. 22% of respondents suggested the plans were adequate (Figure 2).

**Table 2: Awareness of legal protection for habitats and species.**

Were you aware any of the habitats or species on Cannock Chase were legally protected?	Number of responses (%)
Yes, I was aware that both some habitats and species are protected	46 (84)
Yes, I was aware that some habitats are protected but not that any species were	5 (9)
I didn't know that any habitats or species are protected on Cannock Chase	3 (5)
Yes, I was aware that some species are protected but not that any habitats were	1 (2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>55 (100)</b>

**Table 3: Awareness of increasing visitor numbers as a pressure.**

Were you aware that increasing visitor numbers was one of the pressures on the protected heathlands of Cannock Chase?	Number of responses (%)
Yes	50 (91)
No	5 (9)
<b>Total</b>	<b>55 (100)</b>



**Figure 2: Responses to: "Do you think the recommendations in the plans are enough to protect these areas from harm in the future?"**

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*Additional ideas and suggestions:*

- 2.7 31 respondents completed the additional ideas section to provide suggestions that they felt hadn't been considered. These mostly challenged the need for the introduction of cattle grazing (which is not part of either of the plans) or challenged the use of herbicide as part of vegetation management (e.g. bracken spraying). Few responses suggested additional measures that had not been considered.
- 2.8 Two different respondents did suggest buying land in the general area to create additional space for recreation, and both suggested that these new areas could be planted with trees, providing additional environmental benefits.
- 2.9 One comment related to concern about a focus on forestry areas to support additional recreation as these areas are important for Nightjar, Goshawk, Long-eared Owls and Crossbills. The suggestion was that recreation was simply not sustainable at current levels. Another comment related to the extent of conifer plantation and the potential for creating more open habitat, extending the area of heathland and associated habitats to make more space for nature.

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## Dog owners

2.10 47 people responded to the section on dog owners, the majority (91%) of these were individuals (Figure 3).

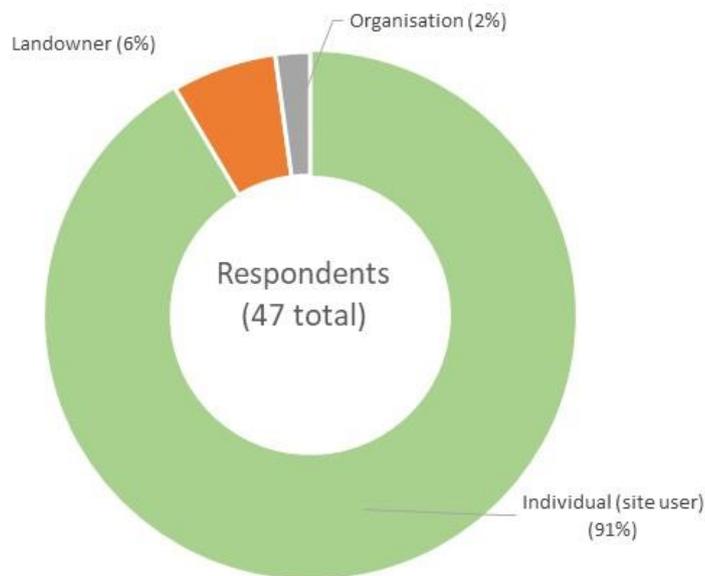


Figure 3: Types of respondent

2.11 38% of respondents suggested that more measures to deal with dog poo were required (Figure 4).

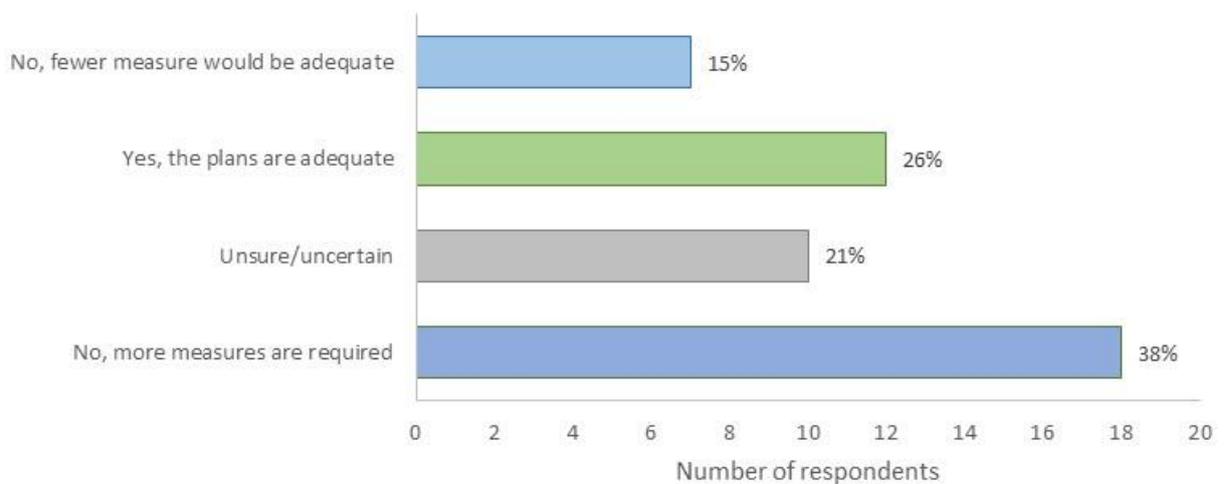


Figure 4: Responses to: "Do you agree the plans recommendations are adequate to deal with dog poo and would improve the Chase for both dog owners and wildlife?"

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*Additional ideas and suggestions:*

- 2.12 31 respondents completed the additional ideas section. These primarily related to the issues around dog poo bags being left in the vegetation and around car-parks. Suggestions related to more bins, more poo bags, combined with education (signage, awareness raising etc.) and enforcement by dog wardens/rangers. 4 respondents suggested areas should be dog free (i.e. fenced or dogs excluded) and 5 suggested dogs should be required to be on leads (with suggestions including requirement for leads within key areas for birds or across the whole site).
- 2.13 One respondent suggested giving out free 'dicky bags' (i.e. pouches to carry filled poo bags). Two respondents referred to a 'stick and flick' approach, highlighting issues relating to mixed messages as to when such an approach could be acceptable.

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## Footpaths

2.14 49 people responded to the section on footpaths, the majority (91%) of these were individuals (Figure 5).

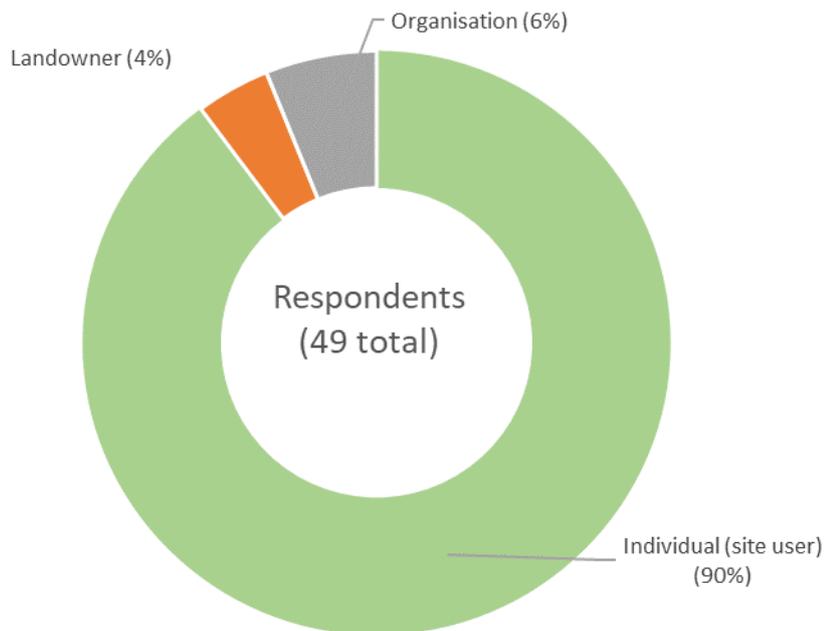


Figure 5: Types of respondent

Table 4: Adequacy of suggestions to encourage people to stay on footpaths.

Do you think the suggestions in the plans are adequate to encourage people to stay on the footpaths and not make new ones?	Number of responses (%)
No, fewer measure would be adequate	12 (24)
No, more measures are required	12 (24)
Yes, the plans are adequate	16 (33)
Unsure/uncertain	9 (18)
<b>Total</b>	<b>49 (100)</b>

### *Additional ideas and suggestions:*

2.15 28 respondents completed the additional ideas section. Suggestions included:

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- An app with GPS routes;
- Links to wider bridleway network to ensure safe routes for horse riders and cyclists, including those who do not arrive at the Chase by car;
- Areas made off limits to certain activities such as cycling;
- More routes with coloured way-markers;
- Dedicated routes for activities other than cycling – i.e. trails for walkers;
- A strong warden presence to advise and guide where to walk;
- More strimming and poo bins to direct visitors;
- Strict requirement for horse riders and mountain bikes to stay on bridleways only;
- Improved facilities outside Cannock Chase for activities such as off-road running, off-road cycling, mountain biking, horse riding and walking. Suggested locations: Churnet Valley, Hanchurch Woods, Doxey Ponds and Blithfield Reservoir.

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## Education

2.16 42 people responded to the section on education, the majority (90%) of these were individuals (Figure 6).

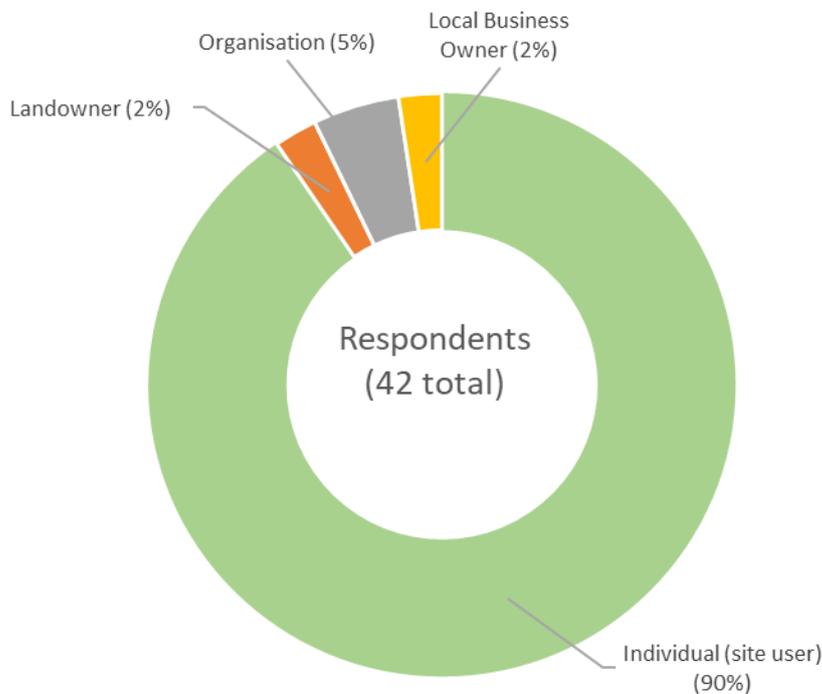
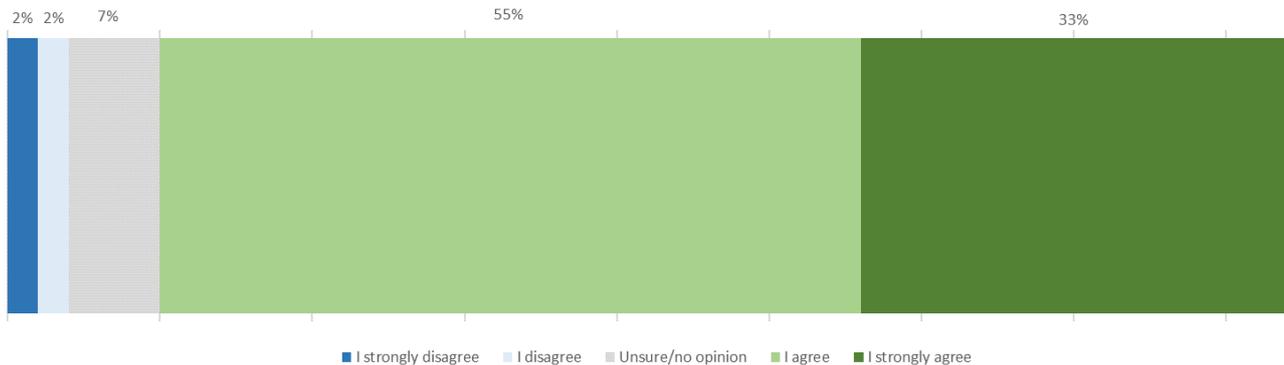


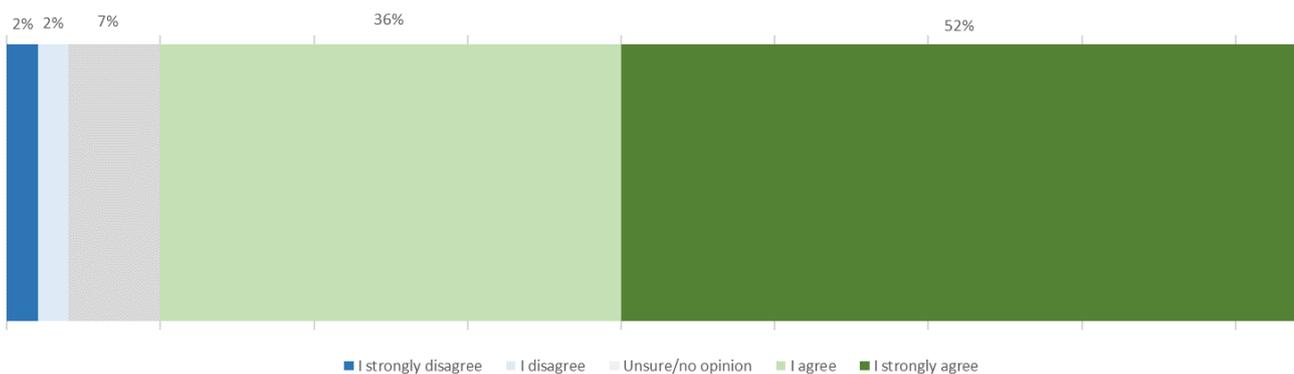
Figure 6: Types of respondent

2.17 Around 88% of respondents agreed that environmental/historical information will encourage people to look after the Chase (Figure 7) and a similar percentage agreed that more face-to face engagement with the public about wildlife and history is important (Figure 8).

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**Figure 7: Responses to: "Do you agree that more access to free environmental/historical education will encourage people to look after the Chase?"**



**Figure 8: Responses to: "Do you agree that more face-to face engagement with the public about wildlife and history is important?"**

*Additional ideas and suggestions:*

2.18 23 respondents completed the additional ideas section. Suggestions included:

- Augmented apps so children can see history and wildlife information through phones when in particular areas or when the phone is pointed at particular things;
- Educational walking tours;
- Charts/lists for children to record wildlife they've seen;
- More face-face interaction and on-site learning rather than focus on the hubs;
- Volunteer wardens;

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- Adult learning, short courses, workshops on ecology;
- Centre for learning at Marquis Drive that incorporates green technology;
- A dedicated and knowledgeable Cannock Chase team of rangers with time to spend with visitors;
- Guided walks to show heathland management and ecology;
- Better education/guidance for wildlife photographers;
- Free training for special interest group leaders;
- Wildlife education induction at bike hire centres.

## On-line information

2.19 28 people responded to the section on on-line information, the majority (93%) of these were individuals (Figure 9).

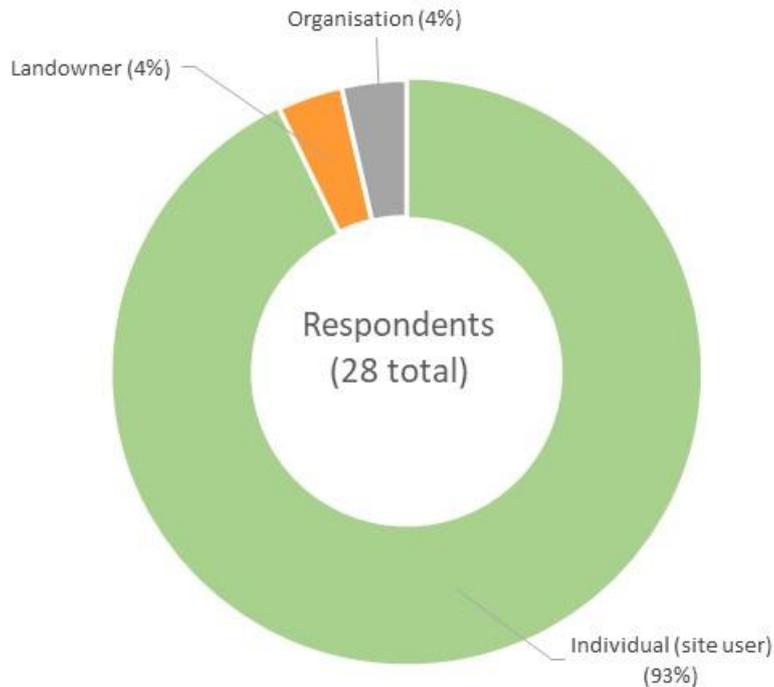
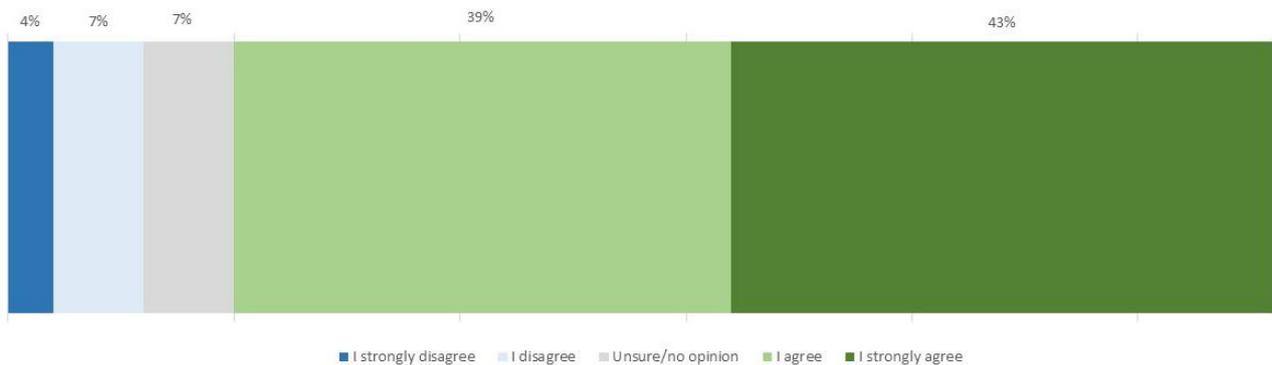


Figure 9: Types of respondent

2.20 Most of those that answered (23 respondents, 82%) agreed that more online resources should be provided to help people plan their visits to Cannock Chase (Figure 10). 15 respondents (54%) also indicated that if there were better online resources to help plan their day out on Cannock Chase, they would use them. A further 4 respondents (14%) were unsure/had no opinion while 9 respondents (32%) stated they would not use them.

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**Figure 10: Responses to: “Do you agree that we should provide more online resources specifically to help people plan their visits to Cannock Chase?”**

### *Additional ideas & suggestions*

- 2.21 2 respondents stated that it was important that any material was regularly updated to be useful. Comments stated that material should be relevant, accurate and easy to use.
- 2.22 In terms of content, suggestions included:
- The locations of car-parks and toilets;
  - Downloadable maps and walking trails;
  - Citizen science to report sightings of species;
  - Environmental impact of rubbish.
- 2.23 1 respondent gave the example of the New Forest and the national park’s walking app<sup>2</sup> as an app they thought worked well and was good.
- 2.24 1 respondent raised concerns that if additional on-line resources were provided it would lead to more footfall, which they did not want to see. Another highlighted that signage was also important – particularly for ‘live’ or dynamic information such as works taking place - as not all visitors would check websites each time they visit.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/news/new-forest-walking-app-launches/>

## Car-park growth

2.25 61 people responded to the section on car-park growth, the majority (93%) of these were individuals (Figure 6).

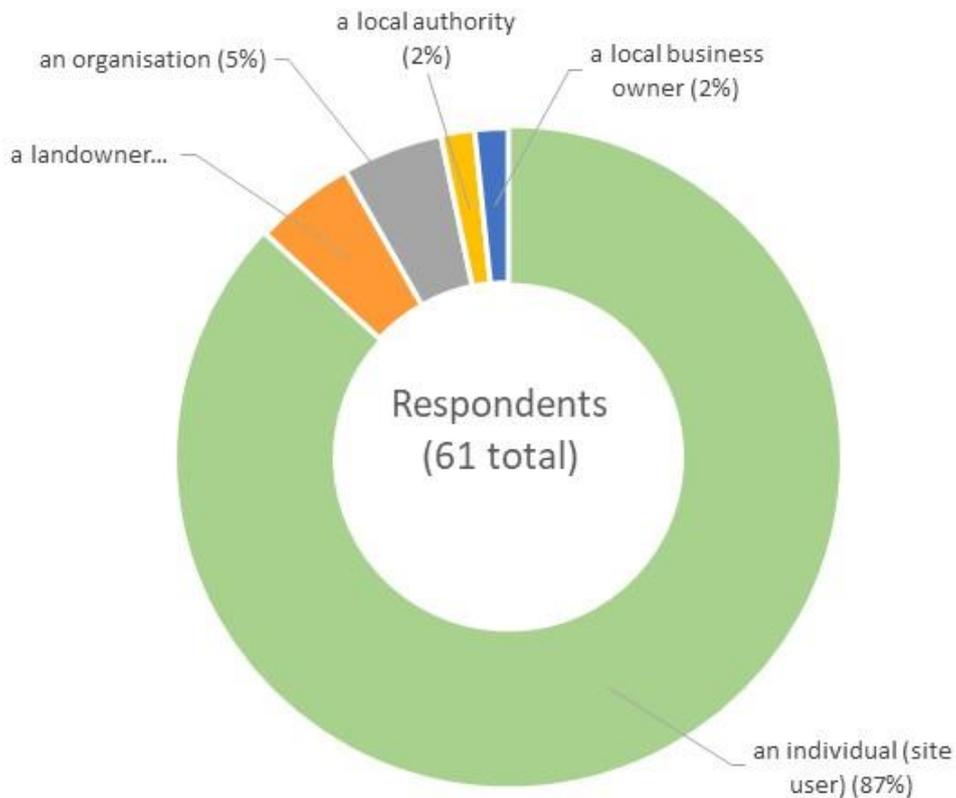


Figure 11: Types of respondent

2.26 Around two-thirds (66%) of respondents agreed that SAC partnership should improve the quality of the car-parks on Cannock Chase (Figure 12). There was almost an even split in the views on whether the number of car-park spaces should be increased (Figure 13). 40% agreed that the total number of car-parking spaces should be increased, while 39% disagreed. Around a quarter of respondents (28%) indicated that the plans improved the right car-parks (Figure 14). There was a greater level of disagreement regarding car-park closures, with 39% indicating that they felt no car-parks should be closed and a further 23% indicating that fewer car-parks should be closed.

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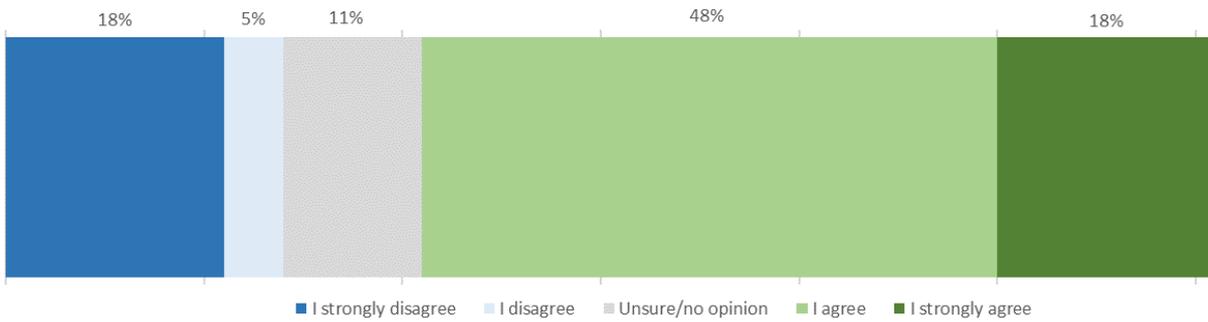


Figure 12: Responses to : "Do you agree we should improve the quality of car-parks on Cannock Chase?"

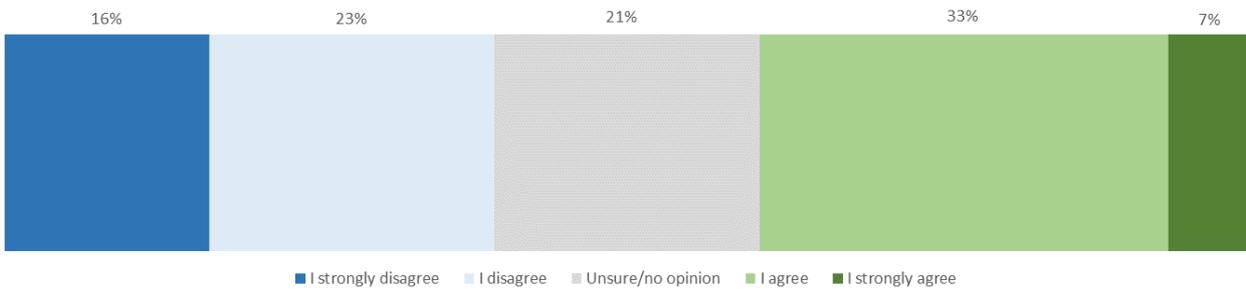


Figure 13: Responses to: "Should we be increasing the total number of car parking spaces?"

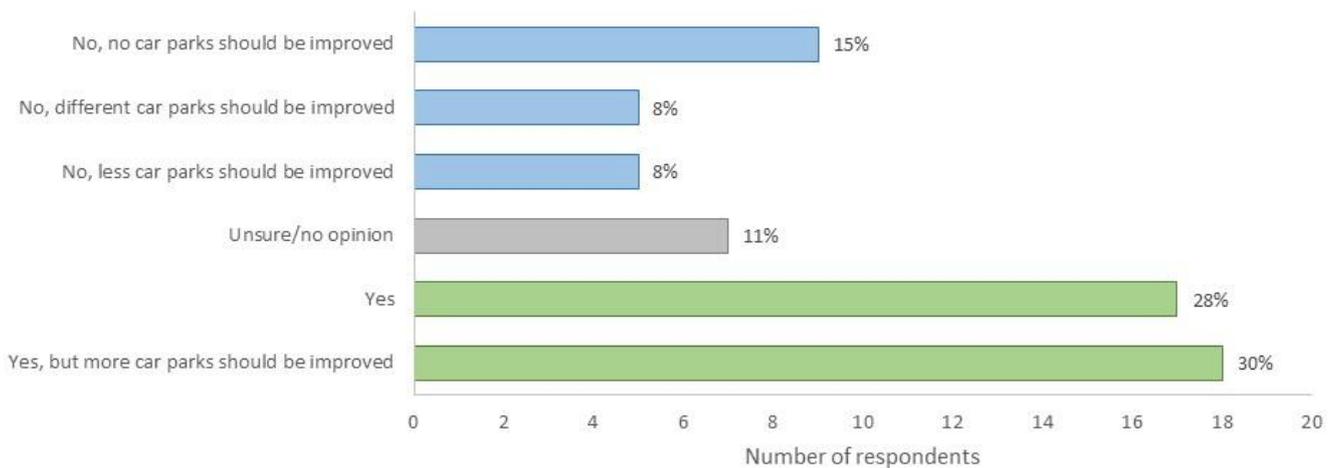
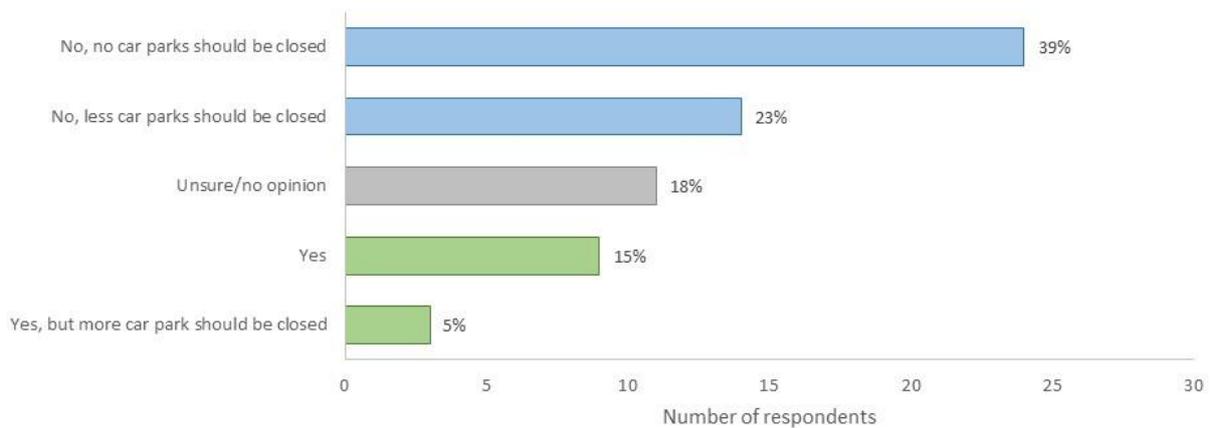


Figure 14: Responses to: Do you think the plans improve the right car-parks?

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**Figure 15: Responses to “Do you think the plans close the right car parks?”**

### *Additional ideas & suggestions*

- 2.27 There were a range of comments, with many respondents concerned about not being able to park at their preferred locations. Clearly there are a range of people who select the quieter car-parks in order to avoid the busy locations and who therefore feel they would lose out following closures.
- 2.28 Many respondents raised concerns about the closures deflecting parking to other areas, particularly road verges. Comments suggested that the closures would be pointless unless verge parking etc. could be prevented.
- 2.29 Additional suggestions/ideas identified by respondents in this section included:
- Linking car-parks to bridleways and disabled facilities;
  - Improvements to roads required as well as car-parks;
  - Better facilities for horse boxes;
  - Better facilities for disabled people;
  - 30mph speed limit and traffic calming to reduce vehicle levels overall;
  - Request for more toilets in car-parks;
  - Provision of children’s play facilities (e.g. at Milford);
  - Automatic number-plate recognition to help address anti-social behaviour;
  - CCTV to address fly-tipping, littering and other anti-social behaviour;
  - Need for analysis of impacts in relation to climate change and well-being;
  - Permit system for horsebox parking at selected locations;

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- Further review for Chase Road;
- Promotion of public transport as an alternative to car-use (5 respondents), with 2 respondents suggesting a dedicated bus service;
- Better links to access Cannock Chase by bicycle, potentially putting car-parks in locations where people can park and then cycle on to the Chase;
- Night-time closures of car-parks to reduce anti-social behaviour (3 respondents).

2.30 Car-parks about which there were particular concerns, or were identified individually included car park No 76 which was identified as the only parking available for the bridleway there, and a risk that horse riders would then have to use the road, creating a potential risk. Another respondent identified Flint's Field, Campfield Pond and Chase Road as locations that were easily accessible for the elderly and disabled, with the suggestion that these users would be particularly penalised by the closures.

2.31 4 respondents specifically suggested there should be more horse-box parking. Of these, 1 respondent welcomed the proposals for dedicated parking for horse boxes at Punchbowl, Seven Springs and Startley Lane but was keen for such facilities at other car-parks too. Another respondent highlighted Rifle Range and Penkrige Bank as key sites where they thought horse box parking should be provided. Two respondents suggested Punchbowl was unsafe due to the bend in the road and both felt more dedicated parking for horse-boxes should be provided elsewhere. In addition, 1 respondent suggested there should be less provision for horse riders due to the particular impacts associated with this activity.

## Car-park charging

2.32 78 people responded to the section on car-park charging, the majority (92%) of these were individuals (Figure 16).

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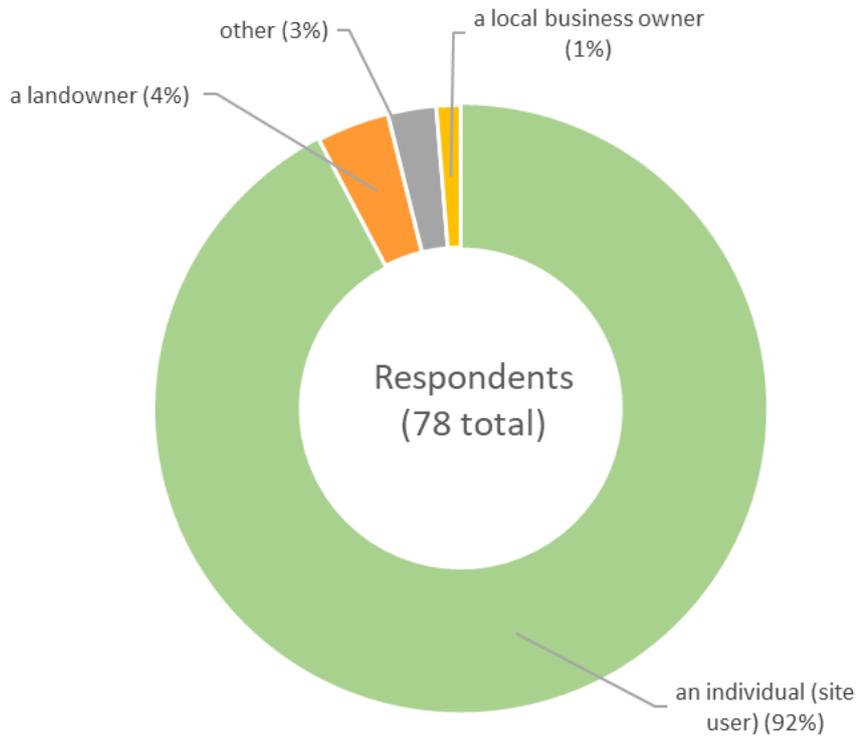


Figure 16: Types of respondent

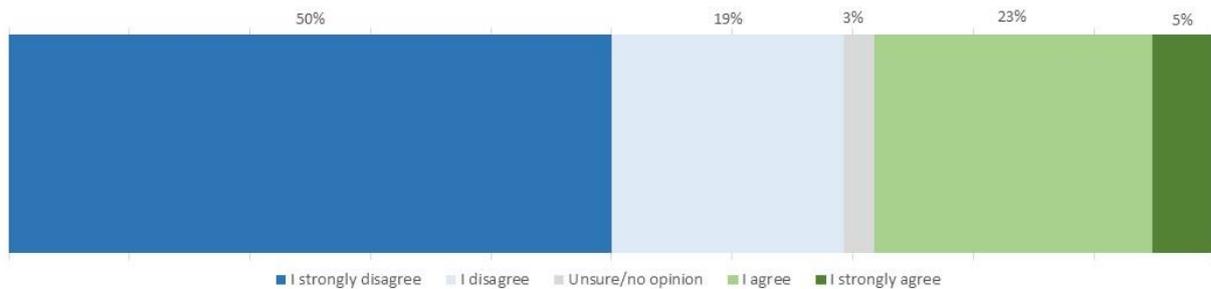


Figure 17: Responses to: "Would you support car park charging in more locations if all funds raised were used to pay for the costs of keeping the car parks opened and to pay for staff?"

2.33 Nearly a third (31%) of respondents suggested that charges should be the same across all of Cannock Chase, while slightly fewer (23%) believed different car-parks should be charged at different rates (Figure 18). Around a third (33%) indicated 'other', mostly those who believed that there should be no parking charges at any car-parks.

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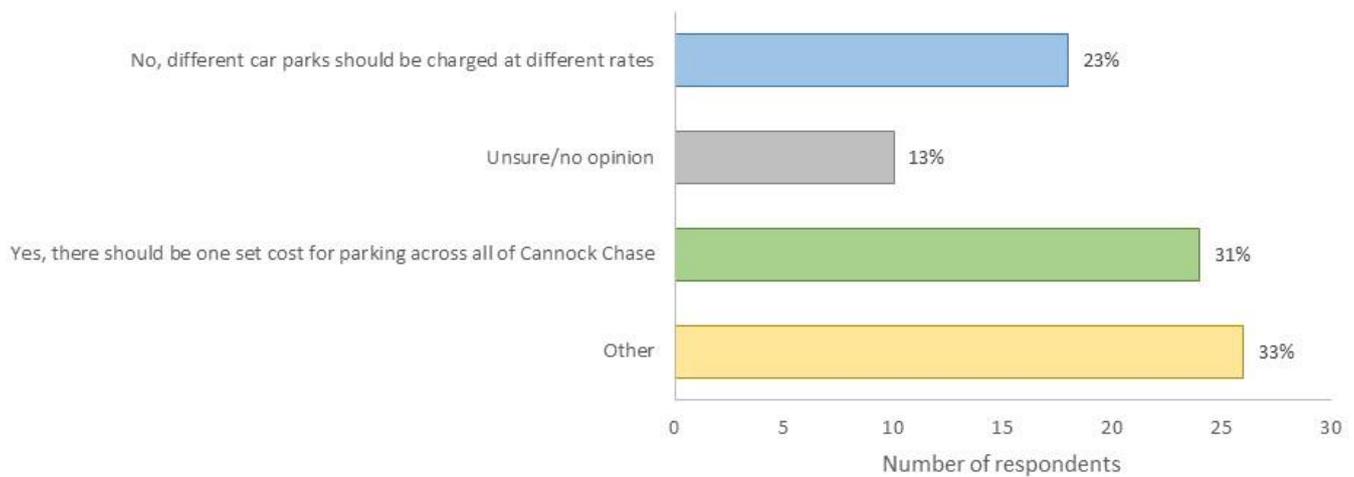


Figure 18: Responses to: “Should car parking charges across Cannock Chase be at a standard rate?”

2.34 Most respondents (64%) thought that there should be reduced cost yearly parking permits (Figure 19).



Figure 19: Responses to: Should there be reduced cost yearly parking permits for Cannock Chase?

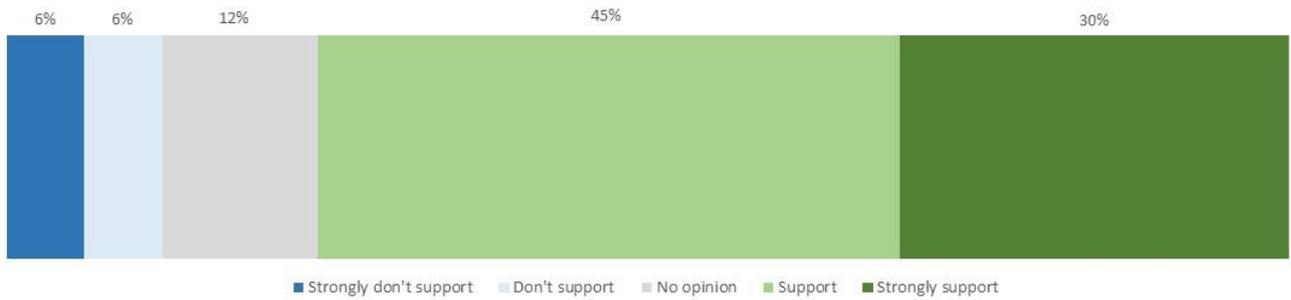
### *Additional ideas & suggestions*

- 2.36 Many comments related to the costs making access unaffordable, for example for those people who visit daily or twice daily. Many comments highlighted the important role of countryside access in terms of well-being and other benefits to society. Clearly many people felt that charging would unfairly restrict access for those least able to pay. Many were keen to see free parking or reduced fees for local residents and some respondents clearly felt the current charges at the main hubs such as Birches Valley were too expensive. Many respondents stated that any charging should be linked to the presence of facilities – i.e. toilets.
- 2.37 As with the previous section there were also multiple comments relating to displacement, with concerns that visitors will avoid charging by parking on verges etc.
- 2.38 Particular recommendations included:
- Better public transport as an alternative (2 respondents);
  - Free parking for volunteers (2 respondents);
  - The need for payment to be able to include card, cash and phone;
  - Clear audit trail/transparent accounting so that visitors could see how revenue was spent
  - Parking charges voluntary;
  - Concessions for elderly;
  - Higher charges at weekends as this is when the Chase is busiest (2 respondents)
- 2.39 One respondent in a previous section identified that there were already revenues collected from parking and yet many trails were in poor condition, with the implication that money raised had not been spent effectively or enough raised.

### **Facilities**

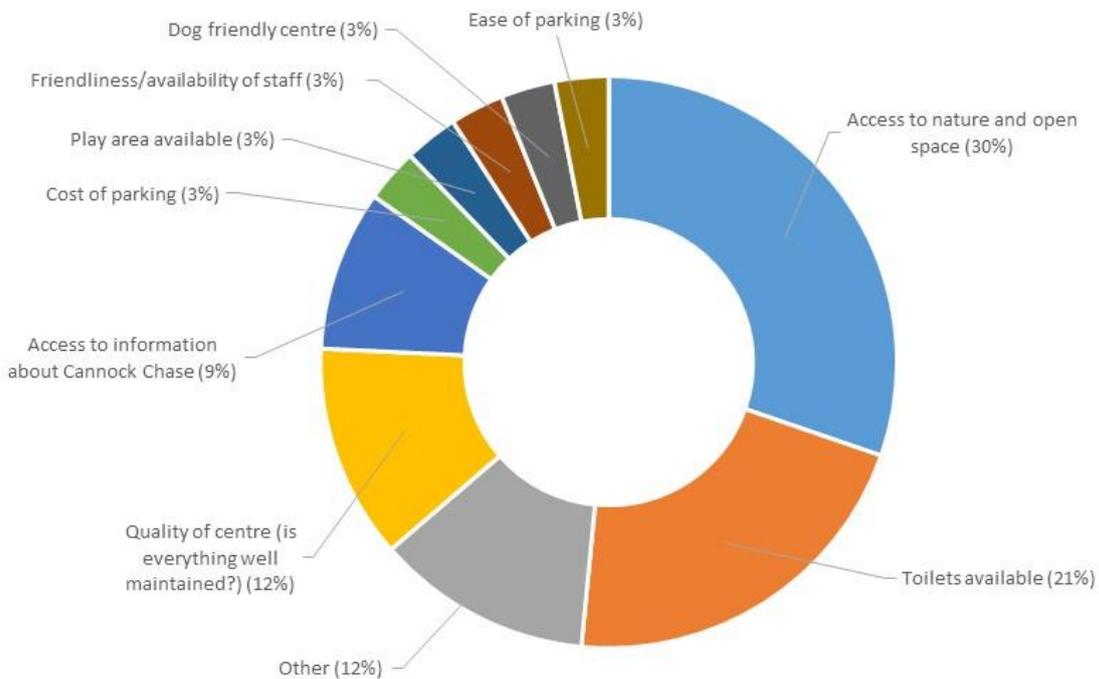
- 2.40 33 people responded to the section on facilities, virtually all (94%) were individuals (site users) with the exception of 2 respondents that were landowners.

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**Figure 20: Responses to “Do you support us providing funding to help improve the visitor centres on and around Cannock Chase?”**

2.41 Access to nature and open space was the most commonly given factor influencing which visitor centre to go to (Figure 21), though it was clear from the comments that some respondents struggled with the question as they felt multiple factors influenced their choice – and the factors also varied according to who they were visiting with and why. 4 respondents cited ‘Other’ factors, for one this was “rounded planning policy”, while another struggled to give one factor as several factors influenced their choice. The remaining two did not go to visit centres, instead actively choosing to avoid them and go to quieter parts of Cannock Chase.



**Figure 21: Responses to: “What is the most important factor you consider when choosing which visitor centre to go to? Please pick one.”**

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*Additional ideas & suggestions*

2.42 Two respondents suggested that good visitor centres would work to generate income and another highlighted the importance of the need to generate sufficient revenue to pay for management.

2.43 Additional suggestions and ideas included:

- Staff at the centres should have knowledge of the whole AONB areas regardless of organisation;
- Close the visitor centres to reduce demand and cost;
- Centres should run a programme of walks and events;
- Centres should provide BBQ facilities and benches;
- Toddler groups run at otherwise quiet times;
- Potential to link the different visitor centres and coordinate the offer, promoting each centre for different specialisms.

## Generic comments

2.44 15 respondents added generic comments, all providing some general commentary or views on the plans as a whole. These 15 respondents included 10 individuals (site users), 4 organisations and a resident.

2.45 Points raised here included:

- Concern that following changes, emergency services would have limited access;
- Likelihood that horse riders will be forced onto roads to access certain bridleways;
- Implications for heritage need to be fully considered;
- Developer contributions should provide a potential source of funding to implement the works;
- Amphitheatre area near Marquis Drive could provide parking in an area where less disturbance risks for wildlife;
- Questions on the costs and affordability of the plans (2 respondents);
- Restrictions necessary on development to limit amount of new housing around the Chase;
- Suggestion that more positive engagement necessary with local groups who wish to run events on the Chase;
- Concern from a local resident in Brocton regarding the car-park closures in the area, with the worry that cars will park on grass verges, blocking entrances to property and endangering visitors, children and pets;
- Concern that the implication of parking charges and car-park closures will mean some people can no longer afford to visit the Chase;
- Concern that closure of Chase Road will mean a community asset is lost;
- Suggestion that visitor centres/hubs should be closed to reduce visitor numbers overall;
- Biodiversity and conservation should be at the heart of Cannock Chase and should take precedence over needs of hobby interest groups;
- One respondent was keen to see grazing on the heath and areas fenced to allow grazing.

### 3. Discussion

- 3.1 This report was commissioned to document the comments submitted as part of the consultation run by the SAC partnership. The report is not a record of how the comments have been dealt with and we have not responded to comments.
- 3.2 It is clear there are some strong feelings regarding the future management of Cannock Chase and these come from a range of people and organisations. However, opinions were often split, with little in the way of consensus. For example, for the footpaths section there were responses from 49 out of the 130 overall number of respondents, indicating that only around 38% of all those who responded had particular views on footpaths. Within that group, 33% thought the plans for footpaths were adequate, while an equal percentage (24%) advocated more measures as advocated less measures.
- 3.3 The consultation raises a number of points and has gathered a wide range of views. However, there are some particular limitations that should be recognised which bring into question the robustness of the data in drawing conclusions:
- The number of respondents overall (130) was relatively low and for some individual questions was very low.
  - The respondents appear to be reasonably local, but we do not know how these individuals use Cannock Chase, for example how often they visit. While it is clear many respondents do visit regularly or have a long affinity with the site, the views are not necessarily those of a random selection of visitors.
  - The consultation involved responses to an online form, and therefore the views (e.g. relating to provision of on-line resources) may not reflect the overall population.
  - The consultation involved particular questions prepared by the SAC partnership involving particular aspects of the plans.
- 3.4 Particular, consistent general concerns included:
- Concerns that there would be more tarmac and more of an urbanised feel;
  - Concerns that opportunities for access will be restricted to busy, main car-parks with visitor centres, denying visitors the chance to get away from crowds and visit the quieter, informal parts of Cannock Chase;

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- Concerns that parking charges would be high and deter visitors, for example if the parking charges at Birches Valley were to apply across all locations;
- Concern that parking would be displaced to verges and roadsides;
- Concerns about grazing.

3.5 These are addressed in the plans or are not directly relevant (grazing). Car-park improvements will be undertaken sensitively to ensure no urbanisation or unsightly changes to the AONB and a range of car-parks will remain open that provide access to quiet parts of Cannock Chase. Verges and roadside parking will be restricted and this will be fundamental to implementation.

3.6 The consultation has generated a range of ideas, suggestions and comments which will help improve the plans and subsequent iterations of the documents will be produced. Comments and ideas will also be of wider relevance to the SAC partnership in addressing the long term issues with increasing recreation use.

3.7 Particular points and suggestions that are not necessarily already addressed within the plans or that may warrant further consideration include:

- Need for clear messaging on dog poo and what to do, including whether to stick and flick;
- Wider connection of Cannock Chase to the bridleway and cycle network to allow visitors to access by different means beside cars, including provision of parking outside Cannock Chase to allow people to then cycle. With increasing availability of electric bikes and greater awareness of climate issues associated with different transport choices, this is likely to be increasingly important;
- Better education/guidance for wildlife photographers;
- Adult learning/education;
- Wildlife induction at bike hire centres;
- Free training for special interest group leaders;
- Potential for night-time closure of car-parks to reduce anti-social behaviour;
- Wording to ensure any car-park charging is implemented so as not to exclude certain sections of society;
- Public transport and better bus options, with increasing relevance given the current climate emergency;
- Punchbowl horse-box parking needs risk assessment and subject to checks with highways;
- Need to review access provision for disabled and those with less mobility, ensuring options retained (potential at Chase Road for example);

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- Horse rider concerns that they will need to use roads to access  
bridleways
- Clear audit trail/transparent accounting so that visitors can see  
how revenue was spent
- Potential for voluntary charging at some times;
- Concessions for elderly, disabled etc.;
- Higher charges at weekends as this is when the Chase is busiest.

## Appendix 1: Consultation questions (as set by the SAC partnership and hosted on-line)

### Questions for the Public Consultation on:

#### **Cannock Chase SAC Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Measures (SAMMM) Detailed Implementation Plans (DIPs): Car Parking; & Site user Infrastructure, Education and Engagement**

#### **1. Protecting Our Beautiful Heathlands**

1.1. The wide open heathland landscapes on Cannock Chase are its most vulnerable habitats, providing homes for many rare and protected species of animals, plants and invertebrates. These habitats are designated Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). They are so sensitive that even people visiting is accidentally causing harm. This is an increasing problem for the protected plants and animals which call the heathland their home as more people are coming each year. To safeguard the future of Cannock Chase for everyone we need to improve the car parks, footpaths and visitor centres etc. as soon as possible so we can continue to enjoy the Chase without harming its nature. We also wish to provide free environmental education and improve awareness so visitors better understand what is causing harm and the vital role they can play in protecting the Chase and keeping it special.

1.1.1. Were you aware any of the habitats or species on Cannock Chase were legally protected?

1.1.1.1. [Yes, I was aware that both some habitats and species are protected]

1.1.1.2. [yes, I was aware that some habitats are protected but not that any species were]

1.1.1.3. [yes, I was aware that some species are protected but not that any habitats were]

1.1.1.4. [I didn't know that any habitats or species are protected on Cannock Chase]

1.1.2. Were you aware that increasing visitor numbers was one of the pressures on the protected Heathlands of Cannock Chase?

1.1.2.1. [Yes]

1.1.2.2. [No]

1.1.3. Do you think the recommendations in the plans are adequate to protect these areas from harm in the future?

1.1.3.1. [Yes, the plans are adequate]

1.1.3.2. [No, more measures are required]

1.1.3.3. [No, fewer measure would be adequate]

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1.1.3.4. [unsure/uncertain]

1.1.4. Do you have any ideas which we haven't considered?

[open text box]

## **2. Better Facilities and Engagement with Dog Owners**

2.1. Did you know that as well as being messy, dog poo enriches the soil by adding more nutrients which slowly kills the rare and sensitive plants on our heathlands? During the months of March through till August, dogs that run and explore unsupervised through the heather can disturb rare ground nesting birds, meaning that they cannot protect their eggs and young and if frequently disturbed may abandon their nests. The plans suggest a number of ways we could tackle these problems including more, regularly emptied, dog bins in the main car parking locations, better education and engagement with dog groups.

2.1.1. Do you agree the plans recommendations are adequate to deal with dog poo and would improve the Chase for both dog owners and wildlife?

2.1.1.1. [Yes, the plans are adequate]

2.1.1.2. [No, more measures are required]

2.1.1.3. [No, fewer measure would be adequate]

2.1.1.4. [unsure/uncertain]

2.1.2. Do you have any ideas which we haven't considered?

[open text box]

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**3. Improving our Footpath Network**

3.1. We have looked at our footpaths and bridleways across Cannock Chases Heathlands and the existing rights of way are getting wider, and more informal paths are being created all the time. This means we are losing the wild landscapes of Cannock Chase and there are less and less undisturbed places for our most endangered species to live and raise their young. We need to encourage visitors to stay on the paths and not make new paths, this will help to protect the heathland and the other precious habitats. We hope to do this in a number of ways such as: repairing and improving our existing footpaths so they don't get muddy or erode; installing better signage so people don't get lost; better environmental education; better marked circular routes from the main car parking locations, rationalising the footpath network to reduce the number of informal paths.

3.1.1. Do you think the suggestions in the plans are adequate to encourage people to stay on the footpaths and not make new ones?

3.1.1.1. [Yes, the plans are adequate]

3.1.1.2. [No, more measures are required]

3.1.1.3. [No, fewer measure would be adequate]

3.1.1.4. [unsure/uncertain]

3.1.2. Do you have any ideas which we haven't considered?

[open text box]

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**4. Educating people about the Wildlife and History of Cannock Chase**

4.1. Environmental education and resources to tell people about the fascinating history and archaeology could be much better on Cannock Chase. We hope that if people visiting the Chase were told more about the rare plants, animals around them and the history beneath their feet they would want to help us look after it all. To do this we are planning to deliver a lot of free education and information in the near future. This will include more resources for local schools; paying for school trips to the Wildlife Trust's new Learning Hub; new information panels at all the key car parks; more face-to-face engagement; much more educational information available online and a whole bunch of other programmes, big and small.

4.1.1. Do you agree that more access to free environmental/historical education will encourage people to look after the Chase?

4.1.1.1. [I strongly don't agree]

4.1.1.2. [I don't agree]

4.1.1.3. [unsure/no opinion]

4.1.1.4. [I agree]

4.1.1.5. [I strongly agree]

4.1.2. Do you agree that more face-to face engagement with the public about wildlife and history is important?

4.1.2.1. [I strongly don't agree]

4.1.2.2. [I don't agree]

4.1.2.3. [unsure/no opinion]

4.1.2.4. [I agree]

4.1.2.5. [I strongly agree]

4.1.3. Do you have any ideas which we haven't considered in the plans?

[open text box]

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**5. Providing More Online Information**

5.1. The internet is a great resource. Our recent visitor survey showed that increasingly people go online to help plan their day out; this is especially true of people who had never visited Cannock Chase before. However, currently there isn't even a website to provide visitors an overview of what's on offer across the whole Chase. We've just finished creating a Hub website (<https://cannockchase.org.uk/>) to help everyone find out where to go and what they can do on Cannock Chase and we plan to make more and more information available online in the future.

5.1.1. Do you agree that we should provide more online resources specifically to help people plan their visits to Cannock Chase?

5.1.1.1. [I strongly don't agree]

5.1.1.2. [I don't agree]

5.1.1.3. [unsure/no opinion]

5.1.1.4. [I agree]

5.1.1.5. [I strongly agree]

5.1.2. If there were better online resources to help plan your day out on Cannock Chase would you use them?

5.1.2.1. [Yes]

5.1.2.2. [No]

5.1.2.3. [Unsure/no opinion]

5.1.3. Do you have any ideas which we haven't considered in the plans?

[open text box]

## **6. Improving Car Parking to Grow with the Future**

6.1. We have a lot of car parks and lay-bys on Cannock Chase, over 120 separate locations! Some of these are big and have good existing facilities but most are small and in a poor state of disrepair. Some have regular anti-social behaviour and fly tipping problems and some were accidentally built in our most sensitive places for wildlife and archology. We want to improve the quality of the most used car parking locations across Cannock Chase; resurfacing them, giving them better signage, information panels to suggest good walking routes from each car park, more provisions for horse riders, more disabled priority parking, increasing the number car park spaces available and making it harder for anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping to happen. Once that is done we would reduce the number of small run-down car parks and lay-bys scattered across Cannock Chase but we would ensure the total amount of car parking spaces on the Chase would be greater than it is now.

6.1.1. Do you agree we should improve the quality of the Car parks on Cannock Chase?

- 6.1.1.1. [I strongly don't agree]
- 6.1.1.2. [I don't agree]
- 6.1.1.3. [unsure/no opinion]
- 6.1.1.4. [I agree]
- 6.1.1.5. [I strongly agree]

6.1.2. Should we be increasing the total number of Car Parking spaces?

- 6.1.2.1. [I strongly don't agree]
- 6.1.2.2. [I don't agree]
- 6.1.2.3. [unsure/no opinion]
- 6.1.2.4. [I agree]
- 6.1.2.5. [I strongly agree]

6.1.3. Do you think the plans improve the right car parks?

- 6.1.3.1. [Yes]
- 6.1.3.2. [Yes, but more car park should be improved]
- 6.1.3.3. [No, different car parks should be improved]
- 6.1.3.4. [No, less car parks should be improved]
- 6.1.3.5. [No, no car parks should be improved]
- 6.1.3.6. [Unsure/no opinion]

6.1.4. Do you think the plans close the right car parks?

- 6.1.4.1. [Yes]
- 6.1.4.2. [Yes, but more car park should be closed]
- 6.1.4.3. [No, different car parks should be closed]
- 6.1.4.4. [No, less car parks should be closed]
- 6.1.4.5. [No, no car parks should be closed]
- 6.1.4.6. [Unsure/no opinion]

6.1.5. Do you have any ideas which we haven't considered?

[open text box]

## **7. Charging to Park in Certain Places**

7.1. Some of the big car parks on the Chase already charge for car parking, (about 45% of all current parking spaces are pay to park). After there have been significant repairs and improvements to the most used car-parks and reduced the number of run down lay-bys, car park charging may be extended some further parking locations (an increase in new charging locations of about 9% from present) . These charges are to help pay for the costs of maintaining all the car parks and paying for the staff and rangers who work on and patrol Cannock Chase to keep it a clean, beautiful and safe place we can all enjoy.

7.1.1. Would you support Car Park Charging in more locations if all funds raised were used to pay for the costs of keeping the car parks opened and to pay for staff?

7.1.1.1. [I strongly don't support]

7.1.1.2. [I don't support]

7.1.1.3. [no opinion]

7.1.1.4. [I support]

7.1.1.5. [I strongly support]

7.1.2. Should car parking charges across Cannock Chase be at a standard rate?

7.1.2.1. [Yes, there should be one set cost for parking across all of Cannock Chase]

7.1.2.2. [No, different car parks should be charged at different rates]

7.1.2.3. [Unsure/ no opinion]

7.1.2.4. [Other]

7.1.2.4.1. [if 'Other' then text box should appear]

7.1.3. Should there be reduced cost yearly parking permits for Cannock Chase?

7.1.3.1. [yes]

7.1.3.2. [no]

7.1.3.3. [unsure/no opinion]

7.1.4. Do you have any ideas which we haven't considered?

[open text box]

## **8. Better Facilities at our Visitor Centres**

8.1. Our visitor centres are the heart of most people's days out on the Chase and we want to see people use them even more in the future. However, some of our visitor centres are a bit run-down and all of them will need more investment to meet the needs of the growing number of visitors we know the future will bring. Our plans recommend improving our visitor centres in a number of ways including improving their car parks, footpaths and educational resources and helping to plan long-term for their growth by paying for new masterplans and feasibility studies.

8.1.1. Do you support us providing funding to help improve the visitor centres on and around Cannock Chase?

- 8.1.1.1. [I strongly don't support]
- 8.1.1.2. [I don't support]
- 8.1.1.3. [no opinion]
- 8.1.1.4. [I support]
- 8.1.1.5. [I strongly support]

8.1.2. What is the most important factor you consider when choosing which visitor centre to go to? Please pick one:

- 8.1.2.1. [Do they have refreshments]
- 8.1.2.2. [Cost of Parking]
- 8.1.2.3. [Do they have Toilets]
- 8.1.2.4. [Quality of centre (is everything well maintained)]
- 8.1.2.5. [How easy it is to park]
- 8.1.2.6. [Range of walks available]
- 8.1.2.7. [Access to Mountain Bike Trails]
- 8.1.2.8. [Is the centre dog friendly]
- 8.1.2.9. [Is there a play area]
- 8.1.2.10. [BBQ facilities/Picnic Benches]
- 8.1.2.11. [Good disabled access]
- 8.1.2.12. [Access to nature & open space]
- 8.1.2.13. [Friendliness/availability of staff]
- 8.1.2.14. [Access to information about Cannock Chase]
- 8.1.2.15. [Other]
  - 8.1.2.15.1. [if 'Other' then text box should appear]

8.1.3. Do you have any ideas which we haven't considered?  
[open text box]

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**9. Specific Plan Feedback**

9.1. What plan would you like to comment on?

9.1.1. Car Parking Plan

9.1.2. Site user, education and engagement plan

9.2. Paragraph number/page number/table/map reference, etc.?

9.3. Detailed comments

[open text box]