1. Scope of the evidence base
Given that the botanical survey was commissioned to examine flora affected by people and associated activity around car parks, expressly excluded non-botanical species, and was carried out in August 2024, on what basis is it being treated as sufficient evidence for major and potentially irreversible access changes across the Chase?

i.e. I'm not asking whether the survey is useful in part - I'm asking why a partial survey is being treated as sufficient for major change.

The landowners have a legal responsibility to maintain the SSSI and SAC designated habitats in good condition, it is the responsibility of the SAC Partnership to deliver mitigation under the Habitat Regulations.

The survey in question is not the sole piece of work that demonstrates that there are ongoing impacts on the protected landscape from a dispersed pattern of access facilitated from unrestricted vehicle movement and parking along Chase Road, however it is the most recent, published document.

Natural England has classified the SSSIs and SAC areas of the Sherbrook and Oldacre Valleys as 'unfavourable (recovering)' and supports the SAC Partnership's work in addressing this.

The impacts of recreation on the protected landscape have been monitored and are documented in SAC Publications since 2011 which can be found on our website https://cannockchase.org.uk/published-reports/

2. Seasonal and ecological completeness
How has the project accounted for the absence of a fuller multi-season or multi-year picture of flora, fauna and soil condition, given that the current survey is only a single seasonal snapshot?
i.e. What year-round or multi-season evidence, beyond the August 2024 snapshot, has actually been used?

The impacts of recreation on the protected landscape have been monitored and are documented in SAC Publications since 2011 which can be found on our website https://cannockchase.org.uk/published-reports/

3. Methodology and current standards
Can you confirm exactly which survey methodology, ecological guidance and standards were used by the consultant, and whether these represented the most up-to-date methods available at the time? If not, why not?

i.e. I'm asking for the method, the guidance relied on, and whether it was current - not just a general assurance that the consultants were competent.

In relation to the botanical survey carried out in 2024, the survey methods and the expertise of the botanist are clearly laid out in the report Cannock-Chase-botanical-survey_C_Arvensis-Ecology_2025.pdf.

4. Wider ecological pressures
Has any wider ecological assessment been undertaken to include fauna and other biological pressures on the Chase, including deer, adders, heathland birds, grey squirrels, foxes, crows and wider species interactions? If not, why not?

i.e. Were those wider fauna pressures assessed as part of the current options appraisal, yes or no?

It is not clear if this question refers to the pressures caused by the species mentioned or on the species mentioned.

5. Weight being placed on one survey

Is it accepted that one narrow survey may be sufficient to identify a localised verge-parking and path-edge issue, but not sufficient on its own to justify remaking access arrangements across a sensitive and heavily used protected landscape?

i.e. I'm asking for a yes-or-no answer to that point of principle.

No, the impacts of recreation on the protected landscape have been monitored and are documented in SAC Publications since 2011 which can be found on our website https://cannockchase.org.uk/published-reports/.

6. Brocton / Camp Road contradiction
How has the project assessed the obvious risk that closing the Brocton-end car parks would simply shift footfall to Camp Road, forcing visitors across the SAC heathland and Oldacre Valley to reach Coppice Hill, thereby increasing pressure on the very habitat the proposal claims to protect?

i.e. What evidence do you have that people will not simply redistribute from Brocton to Camp Road?

Whilst this consultation is specifically about the management of vehicles on Chase Road it fits within a wider set of plans for improving the visitor experience across the National Landscape and managing the impact on the SAC. The plans to improve car parks across the Chase published in 2019 and the current work taking place planning to improve the visitor offer at Cannock Chase Visitor Centre are two of several projects looking at whole Chase scenarios.

7. Accessibility in practice
If the Brocton-end parking is removed, will Coppice Hill not in practice become accessible mainly to cyclists, horse riders and the physically fit, while disabled, less mobile, older and ordinary visitors are effectively excluded by distance?

i.e. I'm not asking whether access technically remains possible - I'm asking whether it remains realistically usable in practice.

The designation of bridleway on Chase Road gives legal protection to access for powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters. There are no plans to change the surface of the road there for providing an even walking/wheeling, traffic free route (the extent and duration reliant on the outcome of the consultation).

The SAC Partnership support the National Landscape Partnership and landowners in the improvement of Easy Access opportunities across the Chase by providing information to allow visitors to make informed choices regarding where on the Chase is suitable for their access needs https://cannockchase.org.uk/access/ .

8. Equality implications
What assessment has been made of the equality implications for disabled and less mobile users if direct parking access is reduced or removed, and will that assessment be published in full?

i.e. Where is that equality assessment published for Brocton Coppice, or has it not yet been published?

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out for the chosen option after the consultation.

9. Lone-user safety
How have personal safety concerns for lone users, particularly women, been considered where proposals may require longer and more isolated walks back to parked vehicles? If that assessment exists, where is it published?

i.e. Has that safety impact for lone walkers, in light of anti social activity, been assessed and published, yes or no?

There is no indication that there is more risk to personal safety in the Chase Road area than anywhere else on the Chase.

10. Cars versus actual pressure
If the documented impacts are mainly trampling, path-edge disturbance and vegetation pressure, why is the proposed response framed so heavily around restricting vehicle access rather than directly managing the behaviours actually causing the damage? Cars themselves do not trample heather, create desire paths, browse vegetation or prey on nests.

i.e. I understand cars bring people to a site - my question is why the response is not more tightly aligned to the actual damage mechanisms identified.

The presence of cars within the protected landscape brings the impact of noise, pollution and compaction of roadsides right into the heart of sensitive habitats. They also detract from the tranquillity of the landscape and generate visual intrusion in a landscape where nature takes precedence. The management of cars in the Chase Road area will restore a traffic free walking, riding, wheeling route (the duration and extent of which will be decided after the consultation).

11. Wider fauna pressures
Where in the evidence base have wider fauna pressures been assessed, including deer impacts on habitat condition, grey squirrel damage to trees, and predation pressures on ground-nesting birds from species such as crows and foxes?

i.e. Please point to the actual assessment, or confirm that it does not presently exist.

Impacts of deer are assessed across the Chase and a Deer Management Framework has been published by the National Landscape Partnership. There is also monitoring of grey squirrel impacts. However, the widest impact on ground nesting birds is the unintentional disturbance from dogs.

The SAC Partnership has been running a public awareness campaign for the last 3 years and employs Wardens to encourage compliance with the legal requirement for dogs to be on leads between the 1st March & 31st July on Open Access Land https://cannockchase.org.uk/dogs/ .

12. Self-defeating biological effects
Has the project considered whether removing cars and reducing human presence in certain areas may simply leave those areas more open to prolonged deer use, deer trampling and predator activity, thereby replacing one set of pressures with another? If so, where has that been assessed?

i.e. Has the possibility of replacing one ecological pressure with another actually been modelled or assessed, yes or no?

Removing or reducing the movement of public motor vehicles along Chase Road is not expected to have a negative impact on the protected landscape in anyway due to the impacts mentioned in response to question 10.

13. Displacement and surrounding communities
What assessment has been made of likely displacement effects on Brocton, nearby residential roads, verges, lay-bys and local businesses, including the Brocton nursery, if parking and access patterns are changed?

i.e. Please identify the published displacement assessment, or confirm if this is being left to be monitored later.

The SAC partnership has been monitoring parking habits and trends across Cannock Chase since 2017 and will continue to do so.

14. Transfer of impact
If the practical result is simply to move parking and traffic from one place to another, how is that an environmental improvement rather than a transfer of impact?

i.e. If Brocton improves but Camp Road or nearby roads worsen, will that count as success or failure?

Post implementation monitoring will take place.

15. Overnight illegal activity / antisocial behaviour
If a significant part of the concern relates to illegal overnight activity, poaching, industrial scale fungi foraging or antisocial behaviour, why are the options focused so heavily on wider daytime access change rather than on direct control of out-of-hours misuse?

i.e. Why target ordinary daytime users before targeted control of unlawful out-of-hours activity?

Much of the impacts on the protected landscape take place during the day as this is when there are peak vehicle movements and high levels of dispersed access as discussed in previous responses.

16. Dusk-to-dawn controls
Why are stronger dusk-to-dawn measures not being prioritised first - for example gated closure, controlled barriers, ANPR-supported access control, patrol wardens or rangers, and surveillance or monitoring focused on the hours when legitimate use is lowest and reported misuse is most likely?

i.e. Which of those measures have actually been trialled, and which have not?

In the early stages of the appraisal, options for other models of access were considered and assessed on whether they would meet the requirements regarding deliverability and reducing impact on the protected landscape. As these options did not meet the need to reduce the impact on the protected landscape and or were not possible to implement, they were disregarded.

17. Patrol wardens / rangers
Has the project assessed regular patrol wardens, ranger presence, or targeted dusk-to-dawn enforcement as a more proportionate starting point than broad closure or reduced access? If so, where is that assessment?

i.e. Please point to the comparison between patrol/enforcement options and closure options.

The SAC Partnership has employed seasonal Engagement Wardens since 2024 to interact with visitors across the Chase, raising awareness about biodiversity and encouraging appropriate visitor behaviour. However, none of the organisations who manage the Chase have the right to enforce laws – illegal activity is a police matter.

18. Concerts / filming / forestry operations
How is the project taking account of disturbance from other authorised activities on the Chase - including concerts, filming crews, event infrastructure, logging, grabbers and large forestry machinery - particularly where these may coincide with bird nesting season, Welsh Clearwing

Moth silver birch habitat removal or other sensitive wildlife periods as has happen in the June 2026 /past month?

i.e. I'm asking about consistency: how are those disturbances being assessed alongside ordinary public access?

The activities described above take place on the Forestry estate which is not designated a SSSI or SAC. However as with all landowners with land close to the SAC they are responsible for ensuring their activities do not negatively impact on the protected landscape which is assessed through the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

Welsh Clearwing moths pupate in the bark of old birch trees on the edges of woodlands. Surveys have been carried out to identify both existing and potential host trees and management is planned around these. Birch management is required in the management of heathlands in the absence of large grazing herbivores and in the management of the ancient woodland to prolong the health of ancient and veteran trees.

19. Consistency of approach
If ordinary public access is said to be too disturbing, on what basis are other potentially high-disturbance activities - such as concerts, filming activity and forestry operations - considered acceptable or manageable? Is the principle that all significant disturbance is a problem, or only some kinds of disturbance?

i.e. Is the principle ecological consistency, or selective strictness?

Please see the response to question 18

20. Why not targeted measures first?
If the real problems are verge parking, Risk of fires - which is BIGGEST HUGH THREAT, littering, off-path use, poachers, disturbance and antisocial behaviour, why are more targeted and proportionate measures not being trialled first - for example stones/posts to prevent verge parking, stronger enforcement, gated night access, Fire watch, wardens 24/7, ANPR-supported controls and patrols?

i.e. Please point to the evidence showing those targeted options were properly trialled or ruled out on a comparative basis.

There is a broad programme of education, communication and initiatives from a range of organisations that operate on or have an interest in the biodiversity on the Chase, this will continue. The impact of public motor vehicles, detailed in previous responses, along Chase Road is one element of Chase wide issues that requires addressing for the protection of the finite habitat.

21. Sequencing and proportionality
Why is a broad road-access intervention being considered ahead of smaller, incremental measures that could be trialled, monitored and audited first?

i.e. Why start with the broad option before proving the narrower ones are insufficient?

This question has been answered in previous responses.

22. Alternatives appraisal
Will the full appraisal of alternatives be published, Question and survey responses, alternative targeted enforcement, verge protection, night-time controls, equality impacts, displacement risks, and the reasons for rejecting those less intrusive options?

i.e. Will that full appraisal be published, yes or no?

Yes, the full appraisal will be published on www.cannockchase.org.uk when the process is completed.

23. Transparency and mapping
Will you publish a map or plan showing current versus future parking/access places, yes or no?
i.e. Without that drawing, how are consultees meant to understand the practical effect of the options rather than simply imagine one?

Maps have been supplied alongside the options on the consultation hub and will be available at the drop-in consultation sessions.

24. Current versus future numbers
How many parking/access places are there now along this route, and how many would remain under each shortlisted option? Please answer with actual numbers rather than general descriptions.

i.e. Please give the figures rather than the narrative.

There are currently approximately 103 parking spaces along Chase Road although one quarter of these are where visitors are parking directly onto the protected landscape and not in official car parks.

25. Final practical question
In short: why should consultees accept that closing or reducing access is the right answer, when the current evidence appears to point more strongly towards a localised access-edge management problem, incomplete ecological scope, inconsistent treatment of disturbance, and a serious risk of displacement rather than genuine reduction in harm?

i.e. I'm not asking for reassurance - I'm asking for the evidence and logic for that conclusion.

Please refer to the responses to the previous questions

Given that Cannock Chase receives about 2.5 million visits a year, and that your 2020 consultation (**The Car Parking and Access Management Consultation (SAC Partnership)** drew only 130 responses - which your own reports described as low - will you commit not to proceed unless and until you can show that this consultation is statistically meaningful, genuinely representative, and accessible in practice to the full range of affected users and communities, rather than simply reflecting the views of those who happened to hear about it and were able to take part?

i.e. If the response this time is again below a level *benchmarked by regional public policy as relevant or robust, will you commit, yes or no, to undertaking broader and fairer engagement by other methods before proceeding, in order to avoid subsequent legal challenges?
The * "Fair" Consultation Number : *For a regional public policy issue on the Chase to carry political weight and democratic legitimacy, local authorities generally look for a turnout of* ***1,000 to 2,500+ responses****. A four-figure turnout ensures that a wide variety of demographics (dog walkers, families, mountain bikers, and conservationists) are all represented in the data*

The responses to the consultation have already exceeded the numbers from 2020, we are doing all that we can to encourage participation. We are not looking for a minimum number of responses to carry this project forwards.

Please can you explain why there isn't an option to leave Chase Road open to traffic at all times?

The appraisal considered maintaining the current arrangements as part of the assessment process and uses this as the baseline against which all other options have been compared. However, evidence gathered

through ecological surveys, visitor monitoring, parking surveys and site assessments indicates that existing patterns of public motor vehicle access, parking and visitor movement are contributing to habitat disturbance, fragmentation and pressure on sensitive wildlife in the Chase Road area.

While maintaining the current arrangements was considered, it was concluded that it would not adequately address the issues identified or support the long-term protection of the Special Area of Conservation. For this reason, it was not taken forward as a viable management option for detailed appraisal.

How soon would the chosen option be implemented if it's taken forward, and will there be further consultation once there is more details available?

It is hoped that implementation will start in early 2027. There will not be a further consultation however the plans will be published once finalised.

All options seem to result in a loss of car parking. Where would this be replaced?

The restoration and improvements of 9 car parks across the Chase as part of the plans published in 2019 and the improvement of the Cannock Chase Visitor Centre at Marquis Drive will provide additional car parking capacity to what is currently available.

Should Option 1 (no access along the entire length of the route) be decided upon, the aspiration is to build a new car park at the Camp Road end of the route to accommodate the loss of parking within the protected landscape. This is subject to further investigations and planning permissions.

Explain how visitors that wish to enjoy the delights that Chase Road offers bring can do so if they are unable to walk from a car park that could be some distance away.

The designation of bridleway on Chase Road gives legal protection to access for powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters. There are no plans to change the surface of the road there for providing an even walking/wheeling, traffic free route (the extent and duration reliant on the outcome of the consultation).

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