



Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 9th October, 2013 at 2.00 pm in
Goosnargh Village Hall, Church Lane, Goosnargh, Nr Preston, PR3 2BH**

Present:

Chair

County Councillor Albert Atkinson

Committee Members

County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles
County Councillor Kevin Ellard
Councillor Lin Barrington, Craven District Council
Councillor Roger W Brooks, Wyre Borough Council
Councillor John Browne, Preston City Council
Neil Clark, Natural England
Helen Dix, Environment Agency
Councillor Mrs Rosemary Elms, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Caroline Holden, United Utilities plc
Michael Helm, LAPT
David Kelly, Ramblers Association
Geoff Morries, Friends of Bowland
Jeremy Sutton, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Councillor Roger Sherlock, Lancaster City Council
Councillor James Starkie, Pendle Borough Council
Mr Andrew Taylor, Bowland Land Managers Forum

Officers

Hetty Byrne, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Cathy Hopley, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Nick Osborne, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Sandra Silk, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Tarja Wilson, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Martin Putsey, Preston City Council
Phil Johnson, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council

Mike Williams, Pendle Borough Council

Apologies

Councillor Colin Price, Yorkshire Local Councils Association
Barrie Tyrer, Bowland Experience Limited
County Councillor Richard Welch, North Yorkshire County Council
David Padley, Lancashire County Council
Mike Pugh, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Graham Megson, North Yorkshire County Council
Greg Robinson, Wyre Borough Council

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Nominations were received prior to the meeting for County Councillor Albert Atkinson to be appointed as Chair and for County Councillor Susie Charles to be appointed as Vice-Chair for the 2013/14 municipal year. No further nominations were received at the meeting and upon being put to the Committee, the Committee resolved to appoint County Councillor Albert Atkinson as Chair and County Councillor Susie Charles as Vice Chair for the 2013/14 municipal year.

County Councillor Albert Atkinson assumed the role of Chair from this point forward.

2. Welcome, introductions and Apologies for Absence

County Councillor Albert Atkinson welcomed all to the meeting, round table introductions were made.

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

None

4. Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference

Resolved: The Committee approved the Consitution, Membership and Terms of Reference for 2013/14 subject to the correction of an error regarding the Lancaster City Council representative. The Lancaster City Council representative should be Councillor Roger Sherlock, not Councillor J Pritchard.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday 26 April 2013

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 26th April 2013 were agreed as an accurate record.

6. Matters Arising

A member of the public (Mrs Lord) attended to discuss the views of the Committee on fracking. The Chair invited Mrs Lord to put her views forward under matters arising.

Mrs Lord highlighted the environmental issues relating to hydraulic fracturing (or fracking) of shales for gas and also her concerns about the possibility of it taking place within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Elliott Lorimer explained that as far as he was aware no applications for exploratory wells had been made or consented in the AONB. If planning consent was sought for exploration, this would require approval from the County Council, along with other interested parties (listed below). The AONB Partnership would be consulted on any application for planning consent.

County Councillor Kevin Ellard explained that he is the chair of the County Council's Development Control Committee, and that any planning application for exploration for shale gas would have to be considered and approved by four bodies, namely:

- Lancashire County Council
- Department for Energy and Climate Change
- Environment Agency
- Health and Safety Executive

The Chair, thanked Mrs Lord for attending and bringing her concerns to the attention of the Committee, and asked that the concerns be noted.

7. AONB Partner Updates

Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council, provided an update and explained that a Green Infrastructure Plan consultation is taking place at the moment, and feedback from the AONB partners is welcomed. One of the major tasks of the consultation is to raise awareness of the AONB.

Helen Dix, Environment Agency, provided an update and explained that the Environment Agency and DEFRA want to review water management and create a new Catchment Partnerships to lead this new approach

Geoff Morries, Friends of Bowland, was invited to introduce Friends of Bowland to the Committee. Geoff explained that Friends of Bowland is a new organisation (in operation for approximately 12 months) that is primarily focused on volunteering in the Forest of Bowland, either with public bodies or individuals.

Resolved: The Committee noted all the AONB Partner Updates.

8. Budget Update

Nick Osborne, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit, presented the report (circulated). Nick explained that there are no changes in the outturn position from the previous report submitted to the Committee. The next stage is to set out the budget for the next financial year. Nick highlighted some of the significant potential future changes regarding income and expenditure.

Resolved: The Committee resolved to:

- i) Note the 2013/14 Revised Estimates,
- ii) Approve the 2014/15 Revenue Budget as set out in the report, and;
- iii) Request the funding authorities to make appropriate provision in their revenue budgets.

9. AONB Unit Report

Hetty Byrne, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit, presented the report (circulate) which provided updates on all the projects and activities currently taking place in the AONB.

In addition to the report regarding project activity, Hetty explained that calendars have been produced to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the AONB and that Committee Members would be provided with a complimentary copy. Other copies can be purchased for £8.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to note the AONB Unit Report as set out.

10. AONB Management Plan Review Update

Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit, presented the report and explained that in January 2013, the Joint Advisory Committee agreed to carry out a review of the statutory AONB Management Plan. The report and appendices presented summarise progress made towards delivery of the business plan, alongside plans for the coming year.

Key stages completed to date include:

- Confirmation of agreement from local authorities to progress with the review under the auspices of the Joint Advisory Committee
- Four community consultation workshops held (with the assistance S Robinson Consulting) in June 2013 Downham, Dunsop Bridge, Hornby and Tosside, with almost 40 attendees across the four workshops. A summary report of the consultation is available.
- Four thematic or topic consultation workshops (meeting notes are available) held in July 2013 involving members of relevant organisations and interest groups to on:
 - Landscape and Biodiversity
 - Access, Recreation, Information and Events
 - Planning and Development
 - Farming and Land Management (through meetings of the Bowland Land Managers Forum)
- Working draft Plan tabled at Management Plan Review Group for discussion at meeting on 5th September 2013
- Scoping report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment sent on 11th September to statutory agencies (English Heritage, Environment Agency and Natural England) for comment.

a) AONB Management Plan – Outcomes, Visions and Objectives

(Agenda Item 10a refers)

Elliott explained that this report summarises the AONB Management Plan Outcomes, Visions and Objectives. It provides the framework for the AONB delivery or action plan and is currently nearing completion.

A full draft Plan, containing background, context and actions for the Plan, will be made available to the Committee in late October 2013, when formal consultation commences.

b) Revised AONB Management Plan Review Timetable

(Agenda Item 10b refers)

This timetable sets out both completed and remaining stages/milestones of the review process and estimated dates of completion for each stage.

Elliott explained that there would be opportunity for all to contribute when the Management Plan is sent out for consultation.

Resolved: The Committee resolved to:

- i) note the report and offered comments on AONB Management Plan review.
- ii) provide formal comments on the full draft plan when made publicly available in late October 2013.

11. Landscape Partnership Scheme - Scoping Report

Elliott Lorimer tabled a report regarding the Landscape Partnership Scheme providing some background and scope to the proposed scheme.

Elliott explained that at the April 2013 meeting of the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) the committee agreed that the AONB Unit should put the 2013 Fundraising Strategy into action, in order to seek external funding for the Partnership.

A key element of this strategy is to bid for large scale funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS).

The LPS is for schemes led by partnerships which aim to conserve areas of distinctive landscape character, aiming to create a holistic programme of work at a landscape-scale, over a five year period and with significant grant aid of up to £3m and up to a 90% intervention rate. Match funding does need to be committed (and ideally secured) in advance and this typically makes up 20-30% of total programme costs. This is going to be a challenge to generate in our current economic climate.

The application process is competitive, with normally just one application per region being successful each year. The process is also lengthy, taking on average 2-3 years from starting bidding to the start of a delivery phase.

LPS schemes have to deliver against HLF 'outcomes' and make a significant difference to the heritage (natural and cultural), communities and people in the project area. The outcomes are as follows:

Outcomes for heritage

Heritage will be:

- Better managed
- In better condition
- Identified/recorded

Outcomes for people

People will have:

- Developed skills
- Learnt about heritage
- Volunteered time

Outcomes for communities

- Environmental impacts will be reduced
- More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage
- Your local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit.

In essence, LPS programmes seek to make significant improvement in a defined area.

One further issue is that this defined area should be a maximum of 200 sq kilometres, and in an AONB the size of Bowland (800 sq km) this means we have to select the most appropriate and distinctive area which:

- has significant needs and issues
- can demonstrate a level of improvement over 5 years
- meets both HLF and AONB Partnership priorities

The AONB Unit originally identified 4 potential areas for a LPS bid, and this has now been reduced to 3, with two areas in the north of the AONB merging into one larger landscape unit. Over the summer a scoping study has taken place to assess the potential for each of these areas to make a bid to HLF. The results of this study are set out below and will be presented to the AONB JAC in October 2013 to make a decision on which area we will develop a bid for.

The AONB Unit would like to stress that all three areas hold massive potential for action, and the level of interest in pursuing a bid in all areas is high. We would therefore like to propose that the two areas NOT selected for a bid will become a focus for activity by the Partnership, and a number of pilot schemes and funded activity will be delivered there whilst HLF resources are focussed on the successful LPS scheme elsewhere in Bowland.

Next Steps

Once the JAC has decided which area should be developed as a Landscape Partnership Scheme the timetable could be as follows:

October 2013 to May 2014

A partnership board will be created to guide development of a stage 1 bid External advice will be brought in to assist with the bid preparation, although this will largely be done within the AONB Unit.

May 2014

Stage 1 bid to be submitted.

October 2014

HLF Board decision on phase 1 bid, if successful a Development Grant (up to £100,000) will be available to further develop the bid.

January – December 2015

Development stage, putting together a stage 2 bid, with support from a dedicated project officer.

Spring 2015

Submission of stage 2 bid with a decision later that year.

2016

Programme to start delivering.

The Committee considered the 'Three Candidate Areas', consisting of the 'Northern Arc', the 'Western Edge' and 'Pendle'.

After considering all the information presented in the report and additional information provided by officers, the Committee selected 'Pendle' as its preferred option.

Resolved: After consideration of all relevant information presented, the Committee resolved to select 'Pendle' as the area for the AONB Partnership to progress an LPS bid and instructed officers to commence the next steps in the project planning and development process.

12. 50th Anniversary Update

Elliott Lorimer gave an update on the 50th anniversary events planned for 2014. The 50th anniversary will officially launch on Monday 10th February 2014. Members discussed the 50th anniversary and agreed it would be beneficial to hold an additional Committee meeting in the circumstances in February 2014. Date to be arranged.

Resolved: The Committee noted the update on the 50th anniversary and requested that an additional Committee meeting be arranged for February 2014 to discuss plans for the anniversary events.

13. Any Other Urgent Business

13a. Europarc Charter for Sustainable Tourism Update

Nick Osborne gave a verbal update on the Europarc Charter for Sustainable Tourism. Nick explained that there is a cost of 5000 euros to pay for assessment and re-accreditation for this award. The Committee was asked to consider if it felt it still wanted to continue paying for the assessment and accreditation. A decision would need to be taken early in 2014 whether or not to proceed with the application.

Resolved: It was agreed to make a final decision on whether or not to proceed with the application for the Europarc Charter for Sustainable Tourism at the additional meeting to be arranged in February 2014.

13b. National Association for AONBs - Value of AONBs Partnership report

The Value of AONBs Partnerships report was circulated under Any Other Business.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report.

14. Date of Next Meetings

It was agreed that an additional meeting be arranged for February 2014. The next scheduled meeting to be held after this will be 24 April 2014.

Andy Milroy
Principal Executive Support Officer

Lancashire County Council
County Hall
Preston