



Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 10th February, 2014 at 11.30 am in Forest Hills, Hazelrigg Lane, Ellel, Lancaster, LA2 0PL

Present:

Chair

County Councillor Albert Atkinson

Committee Members

County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles
Councillor Roger W Brooks, Wyre Borough Council
Neil Clark, Natural England
Helen Dix, Environment Agency
James Lloyd, United Utilities plc
Michael Helm, LAPT
David Kelly, Ramblers Association
Councillor Colin Price, Yorkshire Local Councils Association
Councillor Roger Sherlock, Lancaster City Council
Councillor James Starkie, Pendle Borough Council
Mr Andrew Taylor, Bowland Land Managers Forum
Barrie Tyrer, Bowland Experience Limited

Officers

Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Nick Osborne, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Tarja Wilson, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Dave Oyston, United Utilities plc
Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council
David Porter, Lancaster City Council
Graham Jones, RSPB

Apologies

County Councillor Kevin Ellard
Councillor Lin Barrington, Craven District Council
Councillor John Browne, Preston City Council

County Councillor Richard Welch, North Yorkshire County Council
Martin Putsey, Preston City Council
Phil Johnson, Ribble Valley Borough Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

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

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were noted from County Councillor Kevin Ellard (Lancashire County Council, Councillor Lin Barrington (Craven District Council), Councillor John Browne (Preston City Council), County Councillor Richard Welch (North Yorkshire County Council), Phil Johnson (Ribble Valley Borough Council) and Martin Putsey (Preston City Council).

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

None disclosed.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 October 2013

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2013 were agreed as an accurate record.

Matters Arising

An update was provided on Hen Harriers. Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit, is arranging for someone from Natural England to attend the April meeting of the Committee to provide an update.

5. AONB Management Plan Review Update

Elliott Lorimer, presented the AONB Management Plan Review Update (circulated).

AONB Management Plan – Final Draft

Elliott highlighted the key aspects of the report and explained that since the last meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee, formal consultation on the draft AONB Management Plan 2014 – 2019 was held from Monday 4th November 2013 through to Friday 13th December 2013.

The AONB Unit received 27 formal responses from local authorities, statutory agencies, voluntary and community organisations and individuals. A summary of these responses is available on request from the AONB Unit.

Revision of the draft Plan took place during January 2014, and, were based on formal responses and any known changes to projects/organisations etc. This involved numerous minor amendments, additions and corrections. More significant changes included:

- change to the structure and ordering of the report to include section called 'Policy Context for the Management Plan'
- five additional actions on:
 - SSSI condition targets within the AONB
 - support for local actions to provide suitable conditions to re-establish hen harrier as a breeding species in the AONB
 - identification and management of designated heritage assets 'at risk'
 - raising awareness and improving understanding of the historic environment of the AONB
 - monitoring of geodiversity actions within the AONB

An initial Environmental Report (including a Sustainability Appraisal [SA]) was completed during January 2014 to meet statutory requirements for the review relating to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

The AONB Management Plan puts the environment at the heart of the plan-making process and it was agreed during the SEA/SA scoping consultation that alternatives to the draft objectives and actions would only be developed and assessed if they were identified as resulting in partial or significant negative effects on the environmental and/or sustainability objectives. None of the draft objectives and actions has been assessed as having any negative effects, so no alternative policies have needed to be developed or assessed.

The Environmental Report will be published for formal consultation shortly, concluding in early March 2014."

A Screening Report for Habitat Regulations Assessment and an Equality Impact Assessment have both been completed and forwarded to the appropriate authority (Natural England) for consultation.

Revised AONB Management Plan Review Timetable

Elliott also explained that the review timetable (attached at Appendix 'B' to the report) sets out both completed stages/milestones in the review process and also the next steps towards completion of the review.

Committee members sought assurances that policies on wind turbines, heritage and landscapes, traditional boundaries, landscape features and geomorphology were included in the Management Plan. It was confirmed that they are included in the Management Plan.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed to:

- (i) note the report and offered comments on the review of the AONB Management Plan;

- (ii) approved the final draft of the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan (2014 – 2019), to proceed for final approval by partner funding authorities and statutory agencies, as set out.

6. AONB Budget 2014/15

Elliott Lorimer presented the report (circulated).

Defra AONB Contribution 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Elliott explained that Defra advised the AONB Unit in December 2013 that the Government's contribution to the AONB Partnership budget for 2014/15 has been set at £208,143, a reduction of £16,974 (or 6.25% reduction based on 2010/11 grant funding levels). This is a slightly larger reduction than the 5.38% reduction anticipated (and outlined in the AONB Memorandum of Agreement in 2010/11).

However, the Department also advised that their contribution for 2015/16 would remain unchanged at £208,143 (no reduction). This is an excellent result, particularly given that Defra anticipate making overall departmental reductions of 9.6% in 2015/16. The National Association for AONBs and AONB Partnerships have worked very hard to achieve this outcome and should be commended for their efforts in making the case to Government of the importance of its continued support for AONBs. The net effect of this change to the AONB Revenue Budget is detailed in the item (b) below.

Defra went on to state that wherever possible they will seek to avoid further adjustments to the budget and the AONB Partnership should plan on the above numbers unless advised otherwise.

Revised Revenue Budget 2014/15

Elliott also presented the Revised Revenue Budget for 2014/15. This section sets out the costs associated with the Partnership's projects and management service in 2014/15, including estimated pay and price levels. The estimates are based on a continuation of the level of service agreed by the Committee at the October 2013 meeting.

Total Partnership income from contributions is also included, based on estimated/revised contributions from Defra, local authorities and United Utilities.

Thus, the level of provision for 'Projects' (£83,711) is based on the resources estimated to be available to the Partnership after providing for the staffing of the AONB Unit at Dunsop Bridge, plus related core activities costs (e.g. JAC meetings, communications and publicity).

Resolved:

The Committee agreed to:

- (i) note the report.
- (ii) note the 2014/15 Revised Revenue Budget as set out in Appendix A to the report.

7. Urgent Business

It was noted under Any Other Urgent Business that Councillor James Starkie was still awaiting the installation of AONB boundary signage within Pendle. Elliott explained that the signage is due for installation (to be arranged by Dave Padley at LCC) as soon as possible.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Resolved: It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on Thursday 24th April 2014 at a venue to be confirmed in North Yorkshire.

Andy Milroy
Principal Executive Support Officer

Lancashire County Council
County Hall
Preston