

Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

Monday, 17th October, 2011 at 1.30 pm in Main Hall - Slaidburn Village Hall

Agenda

No. Item

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- **Attendees on Coach trip to convene in Slaidburn Village Hall car park from 09:45 onwards.**
- **Coach leaves Slaidburn Village Hall at 10.00am and tours projects in Upper Hodder Valley.**
- **Coach returns to Slaidburn Village Hall for 12.15 approx for buffet lunch.**
- **Committee Meeting to commence at 1.30pm.**

Directions for venue can be found here:

<http://www.slaidburnvillagehall.co.uk>, click on 'Location'

1. Appointment of Chair / Vice Chair

The Committee are asked to nominate and approve the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Members are asked to consider any Personal / Prejudicial Interests they may have to disclose to the meeting in relation to matters under consideration on the Agenda.

4. Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference (Pages 1 - 4)

5. Proposal of appointment of new members to the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee (Pages 5 - 6)

6. Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 April 2011 (Pages 7 - 12)

7. Revised Estimates for 2011/12 and Revenue Budget for 2012/13 (Pages 13 - 18)

8. Forest of Bowland AONB Memorandum of Agreement (Pages 19 - 38)

9. Forest of Bowland AONB Business Plan 2011 - 2014 (Pages 39 - 68)

10. Presentation on Forest of Bowland 'Nature Improvement Area' Bid

Presentation to follow.

11. Forest of Bowland AONB Projects Activity Report (Pages 69 - 78)

12. Urgent Business

An item of Urgent Business may only be considered under this heading where, by reason of special circumstances to be recorded in the minutes, the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency. Wherever possible, the clerk should be given advance warning of any Members' intention to raise a matter under this heading.

13. Proposed Date of Next Meeting

It is suggested that the next meeting be held on 17 April 2012 at a venue in Lancaster (TBC).

I M Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston

Agenda Item 4

Membership and Terms of Reference of the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee 2011/12

Issue for Consideration

The Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference of the Advisory Committee for 2011/12.

Information

It is reported for the information of the Committee that the Constituent Authorities of the Advisory Committee have informed the Secretary of their representatives appointed to serve on the Committee for the year 2011/12. The Constitution and Membership of the Advisory Committee for 2011/12 is, therefore, as follows:-

Lancashire County Council

County Councillor A Atkinson
County Councillor S Charles
County Councillor D Smith

North Yorkshire County Council

County Councillor R Welch

Craven District Council

Councillor L Barrington

Lancaster City Council

Councillor J Pritchard

Wyre Borough Council

Councillor R Brooks

Ribble Valley Borough Council

Councillor Mrs R Elms

Preston City Council

Councillor J Browne

Pendle Borough Council

Councillor J Starkie

Lancashire Association of Parish and Town Councils

Mr M Helm

Yorkshire Local Councils Association

Councillor C Price

United Utilities

Mr I Grindy

Environment Agency (North West Region)

Mr D Bond

Natural England

Neil Clark

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

Andrew Gouldstone

Forest of Bowland Landowning and Farming Advisory Group

Mr A Taylor

Mr T Binns

Ramblers Association

Mr D Kelly

The Committee and its constituent bodies are playing the major role in ensuring that the Forest of Bowland Management Plan is implemented. The role of the Committee and its Terms of Reference, is as follows:-

The Joint Advisory Committee supports and encourages an active partnership between all of the agencies involved and co-ordinates management over the whole of the AONB. The aim is to:

- promote the AONB at national, regional and local level,
- ensure that the AONB is conserved and managed effectively,
- work to assist the social and economic well being of the AONB commensurate with the conservation of its special qualities,
- provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas,
- consider any issues likely to affect the area adversely and agree action,
- make recommendations for new initiatives

A range of organisations with interests in the AONB is eligible for membership. Members include local authorities and the key organisations and interests, including representatives of local people, whose involvement will assist in implementing the Management Plan. Membership is kept under review and is at the discretion of the local authorities. Ideally there should be between 10 and 20 members and, where it is not practicable to include all of the represented interests, regular consultation mechanisms should be established.

Brief for the Joint Advisory Committee

- co-ordinate the preparation and implementation of strategic plans for the AONB, including the preparation of the statutory Management Plan,
- advise local authorities preparing structure plans, local plans or other plans covering all or part of the AONB, to ensure that policies and practices (including those for development control) are co-ordinated and consistent with the statement of commitment and AONB Management Plan,
- advise local authorities and other agencies on the level of resources required for effective AONB management,
- lobby to influence organisations that are not members of the JAC in the delivery of their services and programmes in order to benefit Bowland communities, businesses and the environment,
- advise on, and co-ordinate the actions of the constituent organisations to achieve the objectives of the AONB and, in particular, ensure that the

statement of commitment and Management Plan are implemented and reviewed. This includes:

- receiving monitoring reports from the partners on progress and achievements in implementing the Management Plan, reviewing the Management Plan every five years and producing an annual report,
- agreeing an annual work programme for the AONB to be delivered by the partners and the AONB Staff Unit,
- carrying out special studies of key issues, as they arise, for example by setting up working parties or conducting research
- advising the appropriate local planning authority about any developments within or adjacent to the AONB that are likely to affect significantly the landscape character of the area,
- acting as forum for the discussion of major issues affecting the character of the AONB
- promoting other action that is necessary to further the objectives of the AONB designation

Agenda Item 5

Proposal of appointment of new members to the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee

- i. representative from Bowland Tourism Environment Fund
- ii. representative from Bowland Experience Ltd

Background

Bowland Tourism Environment Fund (BTEF)

The Bowland Tourism Environment Fund is a registered charity whose objects are to:

(a) promote, enhance, improve, protect and conserve the physical and natural environment and its natural beauty for the public benefit within the Forest of Bowland, 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB) and its environs ("the area of benefit"); and

(b) advance the education of the public in the physical and natural environment and in particular the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment.

BTEF will raise funds from the visiting public and any other appropriate sources from time to time in order to pursue these objects. The Trustees are members of the local business community: Ann Shaw (Hornby Village Institute and Parkfoot Holiday Homes), Freda Pilkington (Higher Gills Farm holiday cottages and Teeswater Wools) Jonty Collinson (Scorton Post Office and Shop and Wyresdale Wheels for All) and Colin Clifford (Cycle Yorkshire and Settle Chamber of Trade).

Bowland Experience Limited (BEx)

Bowland Experience Limited was formed as a commercial subsidiary of the BTEF charity in 2010. BEx aims to provide a "business-to-business" network for supporting and promoting the tourism businesses of the Forest of Bowland AONB area. This support includes training, advice on sustainable tourism principles, co-ordination of joint-working, activities and events.

Based on professional advice, the company was formed as a "Company Limited by Guarantee". This means that the members of the company, instead of owning shares, agree to guarantee its debts but this guarantee is limited to £1 per member. In every other respect it is just like any other limited company and has the same powers, rights and responsibilities. Any profits made by BEx will go to BTEF to support its charitable purposes. Its Directors are also local tourism operators: Jon Beavan (Dalesbridge Centre) Robert Gardner (Bleasdale Cottages) and Edwina Miller (Cobble Hey Farm and Gardens).

Decision required

The Committee is requested to:

- i. approve the appointment to the Joint Advisory Committee of Jonty Collinson (Chair of Trustees for Bowland Tourism Environment Fund) and Jon Beavan (Chair of the Board of Directors for Bowland Experience Ltd)

Agenda Item 6

Forest of Bowland Joint Advisory Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 11th April, 2011 at 2.00 pm in Dalesbridge Centre, Austwick, Near Settle, North Yorkshire LA2 8AZ

Present:

Chair

County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles, Lancashire County Council

Committee Members

Councillor Lin Barrington, Craven District Council
Councillor John Browne, Preston City Council
Ian Grindy, United Utilities Ltd
Michael Helm, LAPTIC
Mr David Kelly, Ramblers Association
Councillor Colin Price, Yorkshire Local Councils Association
Mr Andrew Taylor, Bowland Landowners and Farmers Group

Officers

Steven Brereton, Lancashire County Council
Hetty Byrne, Lancashire County Council
Martin Charlesworth, Lancashire County Council
Mr David Hewitt, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Cathy Hopley, Lancashire County Council
Elliott Lorimer, Lancashire County Council
Mr Graham Megson, North Yorkshire County Council
Mr Don McKay, Lancashire County Council
Mr Nick Osborne
Mr David Padley, Lancashire County Council
Mike Pugh, Lancashire County Council
Mr Martin Putsey, Preston City Council
Mr John Rhodes, Lancashire County Council
Mr Greg Robinson, Wyre Borough Council
Sandra Silk, Lancashire County Council
Ms Tarja Wilson, Lancashire County Council

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

County Councillor Susie Charles, deputising for County Councillor Albert Atkinson welcomed all to the Committee meeting. It was noted that it was Don McKay and Martin Charlesworth's last Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee before retirement after many years working for the Forest of Bowland. The Committee formally thanked Don and Martin for their contribution to the Forest of Bowland and wished them well for the future.

Apologies for absence were presented from:

County Councillors Albert Atkinson and David Smith (Lancashire County Council)
Councillor Joyce Pritchard – Lancaster District Council
Councillor James Starkie – Pendle Borough Council
Councillor Linda Brockbank – Craven District Council
Councillor Richard Welch – North Yorkshire District Council
Councillor Roger Brooks – Wyre Borough Council
Councillor Rosie Elms – Ribble Valley Borough Council
Alison Boden – Wyre Borough Council
Sam Marsden – Natural England
Terry Norris – Peak and Northern Footpaths

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2010

It was noted in the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 October 2010 that a possible new planning applications would be submitted for a wind farm on or near Claughton Moor. Don McKay updated the Committee to say that the application had been received in December 2010 and that the Committee was consulted via email on whether to oppose the planning application (as was the case with the previous applications submitted in December 2009) or to recommend the planning application for approval.

Committee members consulted voted by majority to oppose the new planning application and an appropriate response was submitted on behalf of the Committee.

Resolved: The Committee then approved the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2010 as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

No further matters arising were noted.

4. Defra, Natural England and the NAAONB

Don McKay presented the report (circulated) regarding the new roles for Defra and Natural England and the key role of the National Association for AONBs.

In a letter written in late November 2010 to the Chief Executive of the NAAONB, Howard Davies, the Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries, Richard Benyon MP, made clear his intention that there should be an effective tripartite relationship between Defra, Natural England and the NAAONB which sees AONBs thrive and prosper, with appropriate support from central government and minimal interference.

Don added that Defra had sent a letter to AONBs advising that they would be providing the amount of money each AONB had requested.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to note the changes and commended the effectiveness of the National Association of AONBs (NAAONB) in securing government support and urge all councils with AONBs in their area to become full members of the NAAONB to ensure its continuation.

5. Budget update 2011/12 & Staff Changes

John Rhodes presented the Budget Update 2011/12 and Staffing Changes report (circulated). The report presented the revised and updated Budget and set out the arrangements for dealing with changes in the AONB staff unit resulting from staff leaving on Voluntary Redundancy and the need to ensure a strong, sustainable and effective AONB service in the coming years.

The estimated 2011/12 Out-turn budget prices were attached at Appendix 'A', John highlighted that the Grant from Natural England had been increased from £240,250 to £254,000.

Don McKay highlighted the staffing changes within the Forest of Bowland AONB team.

At the time of writing the report Don McKay and Martin Charlesworth had accepted Voluntary Redundancy (VR), with a finish date of 11 April 2011. Susan MacDonald was currently going through the consideration process for VR.

Following a restructure it was confirmed that Nick Osborne and Elliott Lorimer would be the lead contacts for the Forest of Bowland AONB team, with Elliott working 4 days a week and Nick 1 day a week.

Following some minor revisions to the recommendations of the report, the Committee were subsequently asked to note and agree:-

1. The voluntary retirement of the AONB Manager and the Community Projects Officers and the application for VR by the Communications Officer.
2. The transfer of higher level AONB Manager responsibilities for the AONB to the LCC Site Access Manager and the transfer of lower level management responsibilities and tasks to the principal officer in the current AONB–Rural Team.
3. The AONB Sustainable Tourism & Website Development Officer post being brought wholly within AONB core funding.
4. Ask LCC to extend the former HLF Project Officer post for 6 months, during that time to review how the restructure is working and whether further changes are needed.
5. To request the funding authorities to reaffirm their commitment to the AONB Partnership by signing the updated Memorandum of Agreement to be circulated by the AONB Manager.

Resolved: The Committee noted and agreed to the revised recommendations relating to the budget and staffing changes as set out.

6. Looking forward

Elliott Lorimer gave a verbal update on the changes in the Forest of Bowland AONB Team and the changes in the funding arrangements. Elliott explained that they will perform a view of the management plan and report back to the committee at a future meeting date reviewing both objectives and actions within the plan and consult with the Joint Area Committee (JAC) members. Elliott also reported that a 3 year business plan will be developed and it is anticipated that a draft business plan will be submitted to the October 2011 Forest of Bowland JAC meeting for review.

Resolved: The Committee noted the verbal update.

7. Minor amendments to Management Plan following publication of revised and updated Strategy for Sustainable Tourism

Hetty Byrne and Cathy Hopley presented the report and detailed a number of minor changes in the detail of the text are proposed to improve, update and ensure consistency between the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan (2009 – 2014) and the Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2010 to 2015). The latter having been written after the AONB Management plan was published. The ST action plan has been developed interactively in the same way as the Management Plan on the Forest of Bowland website, and can be accessed as an annexe to the main Management Plan.

Hetty and Cathy detailed the changes to the AONB Management Plan as set out in the circulated Appendix 'C' and the updates to the Sustainable Tourism Strategy are available to view on the Forest of Bowland AONB website.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to the changes and updates to the text of the AONB Management Plan as set out at Appendix 'C' and noted that the changes to both the Management Plan and to the Sustainable Tourism Strategy are available to view on the Forest of Bowland AONB website.

8. Position Statement on Renewable Energy

Cathy Hopley and Steve Brerton presented the report (circulated) and explained that the position statement (attached at Appendix 'D') set out the suggested considerations of the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) in view of the UK Government's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and to increasing the percentage of power generated from renewable sources; and also in the light of their Planning Policy Statement on renewable energy (PPS22).

The document sets out the purposes of a position statement, and offers general guidance on renewable energy developments within the AONB. In particular that:

3.3 The Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee considers that medium to large scale renewable energy development is not appropriate within the Forest of Bowland AONB (or in locations beyond the boundary where development would affect its setting and character) as it has significant potential to adversely affect the natural beauty of the AONB and to compromise the purpose of the statutory designation.

3.4 However, the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee considers that micro and small scale renewable energy development may be appropriate within the designated area.

The document then goes on to deal with different types of renewable energy development and how micro and small scale schemes might best be sited within the AONB.

For clarity, the Committee discussed what would classify a micro and small scale scheme.

Resolved: The Committee approved the position statement on renewable energy development in the AONB, and agreed to its publication on the AONB website.

In addition the Committee agreed that the statement should be circulated to the local planning authorities within the AONB, and they should be encouraged to refer to the statement within their individual planning policies.

9. Delivering the AONB Management Plan

The Committee discussed the latest AONB Management Plan Headline Achievements including:

- The Forest of Bowland AONB / RSPB Outreach Education Project.
- Bowland Wildlife Bloggers.
- Festival Bowland 2011.
- Website Developments.
- Bowland Tourism Environment Fund (BTEF) & Bowland Experience (BEx).
- EUROPARC Charter Partners.
- Lancashire Green Tourism Project.
- The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB).
- Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership Annual Report 2009.10.
- Forest of Bowland AONB Interactive Management Plan.
- Forest of Bowland AONB Boundary Signs.
- Forest of Bowland AONB Printed Literature.
- Micro Hydro Feasibility Study.
- Climate Change Adaptation Plan.
- Renewable Energy Position Statement.
- AONB Carbon Reduction Plan.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report and the current position with each item.

10. Date of next meeting

It was proposed that the next meeting of the Committee be held on **Monday 17 October 2011**, the Committee meeting rotates to various areas of the Forest of Bowland, the next meeting is scheduled to take place in Ribble Valley.

11. Any Other Business

Nick Osborne gave a verbal update on Bailey Lane, Tosside and reported that there has been a delay in signing the Bridleways agreement, Nick was continuing to press to arrange a meeting to find a way forward and that the Forest of Bowland Joint Advisory Committee might be asked to write to the agents for the landowners if the delay continues.

Ian Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston

Agenda Item 7

Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee - Revised Estimates 2011/12 and Revenue Budget 2012/13 (Appendix 'A' refers)

Issue for consideration

- a) Revised Estimates 2011/12
- b) Revenue Budget 2012/13

Background

The budget provision for the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee is funded by eight constituent local authority partners and grant from Defra and is enhanced by additional contributions from partner organisations, e.g. United Utilities. A core team of 4.3 full time equivalent posts is established from this budget provision, to assist in the delivery of the statutory AONB Management Plan on behalf of the Joint Advisory Committee and the local authorities. The AONB Unit is now working to a 3-year business plan (2011- 2014), on which local authorities have been consulted to ensure it reflects local authority priorities for the AONB (e.g. Community Strategies and district Commissioning Plans).

a. Revised Estimates 2011/12

The costs of the Committee are managed as part of the Lancashire County Council's Environment Directorate's Devolved Financial Management scheme.

Since the Joint Advisory Committee in October 2010 approved the 2011/12 estimates and sought support to the contributions requested from funding partners. The full requested contribution was not able to be made by Craven District Council, which resulted in a shortfall in funds available of £900.

Defra advised in December 2010, that the grant offer for 2011/12 was reduced by 5.4% on the previous year with a budget figure of £254,000; a reduction of £14,500.

Officers have been successful in obtaining the following additional funding to support AONB projects during 2011/12:

Project	£	Organisation
AONB Micro-Hydro Renewable Energy Feasibility Study	15,000	Ribble Valley Borough Council
Bowland Experience Trampler Project	7,000	Three Fishes Visitor Payback Scheme
School Lane Community Archaeology Project	5,000	United Utilities
Wildflower Meadows Project	3,000	Ribble Valley Borough Council

Scorton Village Playground	700	Bowland Tourism Environment Fund (BTEF)
Bowland by Bike Leaflet Re-print	640	LCC Sustainable Travel
Family-friendly Arts Workshops	600	LCC Arts Development
AONB/RSPB Schools Outreach Project	1,750	£250 BTEF / £1500 South Ribble Borough Council

The movement of staff pay costs to Core Employees (from Non Core Employees) reflects the acceptance by Defra that the staff are undertaking activities which are eligible to be supported at the Core grant rate up to a maximum of 75%. The net effect of these changes will allow a programme of projects to be delivered in 2011/12, totalling £128,500.

The 2011/12 Revised Estimates take account of these changes (see Appendix 'A' column 3) in comparison with the Original Estimates in Column 2, against which the funding partners were asked to provide funding in 2011/12.

The core contributions advised by the constituent local authorities for 2011/12 are as follows: -

	£
Craven District Council	5,900
Lancaster City Council	6,800
Pendle Borough Council	6,800
Preston Borough Council	6,800
Ribble Valley Borough Council	6,800
Wyre Borough Council	6,800
Lancashire County Council	40,800
North Yorkshire County Council	6,800

b. Revenue Budget 2012/13

This section sets out in Appendix 'A' column 4, the costs associated with the Committee's projects and management service in 2012/13. The estimates are based on a continuation of the level of service agreed by the Committee at the October 2010 meeting, updated to 2012/13 estimated pay and price levels.

Provision reflects the core team of 4.3 FTE posts (AONB Manager [0.2FTE], Principal AONB Officer [0.8FTE], Development and Funding Officer, Sustainable Tourism and Website Development Officer, Business Development Officer [0.3FTE] and Project Officer), operational budgets for core activities and non-core projects.

Total Committee income from contributions has been included in the budget for 2012/13 based on estimated contributions from funding authorities, equivalent to maintaining the requested contribution for 2011/12, with a

continuation of the contribution from United Utilities matching the requested district council level of contribution.

Income in respect of grant support from Defra towards core costs, projects costs and sustainable development works has been included on the basis of a further 5.4% reduction in 2012/13. Advice from Defra is that the grant for 2012/13 will be one grant offer, to be used in ways which the Joint Advisory Committee considers will deliver the best performance in achieving the aims of the Management Plan, without restrictions placed on the percentage of grant to each area of supported activity.

Thus, the level of provision for projects is based on the resources estimated to be available to the Committee after providing for the staffing of the AONB Unit at Dunsop Bridge, plus related core activities costs, assuming that all partners make the requested contributions.

The attention of the Committee is drawn to the following: -

1. Gross Expenditure

It is proposed that total expenditure be £396,300 in 2012/13, which is £12,800 lower than £409,100 in 2011/12, mainly as a result of the reduction in Defra grant. This expenditure results from providing for the effect of increased pay and prices, staff increments, employers national insurance and superannuation contributions, along with general price increases, and reflecting a level of provision for projects after taking account of the estimated level of resources being sought from funding partners.

2. Income

Defra grant towards core costs, projects costs and a programme of sustainable development works of £240,284 reflects a reduction of 5.4% in the level of budgeted grant support.

A contribution of £6,800 from United Utilities has been included, on the basis that of the company seeking to maintain a level of contribution equivalent to that of the District Councils.

3. Net Expenditure

The £396,300 net cost of management services is based on maintaining the level of contributions from the funding authorities originally requested for 2011/12. It is essential that the funding authorities are notified of the approved expenditure and requested to make due provision in their own estimates.

4. Additional Resources

It should be noted that resources from local authorities/individuals/other bodies/ for projects in Forest of Bowland, are being sought during 2011/12 (e.g. Defra Nature Improvement Area competition), which are over and above the Joint Advisory Committee budget provision and this will continue in 2012/13. Furthermore, the service contributes to the generation of additional schemes and projects in liaison with services operating in the area such as the various Local Authority Countryside Services.

Decision Required

The Committee is requested to: -

- i) note the 2011/12 Revised Estimates.
- ii) approve the 2012/13 Revenue Budget as set out in the report,
- iii) subject to the approval of (ii) above, to request the funding authorities to make appropriate provision in their revenue budgets

APPENDIX 'A' AONB Budget

(1)	Estimated 2011/12 (Out-turn Prices) (2) £	Revised 2011/12 (Out-turn Prices) (3) £	Estimated 2012/13 (Out-turn Prices) (4) £	Revised 2012/13 (Out-turn Prices) (5) £
Expenditure				
Core Costs				
Salary, N.I. and Superannuation	174,600	164,200	166,000	166,000
Out-based premises	24,400	24,400	24,400	24,400
Travel and subsistence	8,900	8,900	8,900	8,900
Central, Departmental & Tech. Support	60,800	60,800	60,800	60,800
Core Activities	22,300	22,300	22,300	22,300
Sub total of Core Costs	291,000	280,600	286,300	286,300
Non Core Costs				
Employees	0	0	0	0
Travel and subsistence	0	0	0	0
Projects/Information	119,000	128,500	113,900	113,900
Sub total of Non Core Costs	119,000	128,500	113,900	113,900
Total Expenditure	410,000	409,100	396,300	396,300
Income				
Natural England Grant	0	0	0	0
Defra Grant	254,000	254,000	240,300	240,300
Contributions				
United Utilities	6,800	6,800	6,800	6,800
Other Project Contributions	0	0	0	0
County Councils				
Lancashire	40,800	40,800	40,800	40,800
North Yorkshire	6,800	6,800	6,800	6,800
District Councils				
Craven	6,800	5,900	6,800	6,800
Lancaster	6,800	6,800	6,800	6,800
Pendle	6,800	6,800	6,800	6,800
Preston	6,800	6,800	6,800	6,800
Ribble Valley	6,800	6,800	6,800	6,800
Wyre	6,800	6,800	6,800	6,800
Total Income	349,200	348,300	335,500	335,500
Contrib to support costs (LCC in kind)	60,800	60,800	60,800	60,800
	410,000	409,100	396,300	396,300

AONB Memorandum of Agreement

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Background

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 placed a duty on local authorities to act jointly to produce and review management plans for the AONBs within their administrative boundaries. By agreement with the local authorities this duty is being performed by the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee. A staff unit for each AONB carry out the work for the management partnerships and core costs are covered by the relevant local authorities and Defra. Management Plans for each AONB were adopted by the Council in 2009/10. At this time a new Memorandum of Agreement was entered into which indicated the level of funding the County Council would provide from 2008/9 - 2010/11.

Defra's Commitment to AONBs

In the past Natural England was the body appointed by Government to fund AONB Partnerships alongside the relevant local authorities. In December 2010 this responsibility was moved to Defra. Defra has made clear its intention to continue to provide a 4-year indicative grant allocation to AONBs in a recently signed tripartite agreement with the National Association for AONBs and Natural England. In future Natural England will provide a specialist advisory role to support project development and delivery within the AONBs in the future.

Defra has committed to provide funding to cover 75% of the core costs of staff units that are supporting AONB Partnerships to prepare, deliver and review Management Plans. It is anticipated by Defra that local authorities will continue to provide match funding towards the remaining 25% of the core costs. Defra would like to see local authority funding to be maintained at the same levels that have previously been provided.

Memorandum of Agreement 2011 – 2015

A revised national template for AONB Memoranda of Agreement has been provided by Defra (Appendix X refers). The Agreement provides a framework for the delivery of duties and obligations arising from Part IV of the CROW Act 2000 including the operation and management of an AONB Partnership, a staff unit to act on behalf of the Partnership and the publishing, reviewing and monitoring of the Management Plan. The Agreement is intended to bind partners to give medium-term security, matching Defra's commitment to the AONB funding programme over the 4-year Comprehensive Spending Review period. The intention is for the Agreements to be approved by each Joint Advisory Committee by December 2011. In order for the AONB Partnerships to draw down Defra's funding the Memorandum of Agreement must be agreed and signed by all relevant authorities.

Defra has requested that local authorities enter into a 4-year Memorandum of Agreement that includes a commitment to funding the AONB Partnerships for the 4-year period. The term of the Agreement is for the period of four years (FY2011/12, FY2012/13, FY2013/14 and FY2014/15). It is intended for the term to run from 1st April 2011, rather than from the date they are actually signed. Although a 4-year commitment is being sought through the Memorandum of Agreement, it is worded to

enable funding for 2012/13 onwards to be subject to annual reviews for both Defra and the relevant local authorities in recognition of the current financial climate.

Decision required

The Committee is requested to:

- i. note the report and provide comments on the revised national Memorandum of Agreement template for AONBs
- ii. ask funding authorities to seek approval within their own authority to sign a new Memorandum of Agreement for Forest of Bowland AONB, based on the national template.

THIS MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT is made the
day of 2011

BETWEEN

- (1) Defra, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6NB
 - (2) [] of [] (**"Host Authority"**).
 - (3) [] of [] ("Local Authority name")
 - (4) [] of [] ("Local Authority name")
 - (5) [] of [] ("Local Authority name")
- ("the Parties")

IT IS AGREED as follows:

WHEREAS

- (A) This Agreement provides a framework for the delivery of duties and obligations arising from Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 including the operation and management of an AONB Partnership ("the Partnership"), a Staff Unit to act on behalf of the Partnership and the publishing, reviewing and monitoring of the Management Plan.
- (B) This Agreement also sets out a shared vision for and commitment to AONB management by all Parties to the Agreement. It outlines the expectations on all Parties to achieve this vision, including a local reflection of the national tri-partite agreement between Defra, Natural England and the National Association for Areas for Outstanding Natural Beauty ("NAAONB")
- (C) This Agreement is intended to bind partners to give medium term security, matching Defra's commitment to a AONB funding programme over a 4 year CSR period.

NOW IT IS AGREED as follows

1. Definitions and Interpretation

1.1 In this Agreement the following words and expressions shall have the following meanings unless the context requires otherwise:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| “AONB” | means an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
| “the Partnership” | means AONB Partnership comprising of the organisations listed in Schedule 1 |
| “Funding Partners” | means the following Local Authority Funding Partners namely [insert names] referred to in this Agreement as the “Local Authority Funding Partners” and Defra |
| “Non-Funding Partners” | means the organisations listed in Schedule 3 |
| “the Term” | means the period of four years to include years 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 |
| “Eligible Costs” | means those costs listed in clause 8 |
| “Management Plan” | means the AONB Management Plan that the local authorities have a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to produce and review in relation to any AONBs in their area |

“Annual Business Plan”	means the Partnership business plan which sets out the work to be undertaken in line with the Management Plan for the financial year(s) in question
“the Host Authority”	means the local authority responsible for the Partnership’s finances and employment of AONB staff
“the Parties”	means any Party to this Agreement individually and “Parties” refers to all of the parties to this Agreement collectively. A Party shall include all permitted assigns of the Party in question;
“Staff Unit”	means the unit established by the Host Authority employing all and any staff engaged in the work of the Partnership, including the Core Staff;
“Core Staff”	means the staff funded by the budget detailed in clause 7 for the purposes of the core functions listed in Schedule 2 but does not include or cover new posts established through externally funded projects.
“Sustainable Development Fund”	means a funding programme to aid the achievement of AONB purposes by encouraging individuals, community groups and businesses to co-operate together to develop practical and sustainable solutions to the management of their activities

- 1.2 In this Agreement where the context requires:
- 1.2.1 the masculine gender includes the feminine and the neuter and the singular includes the plural and vice versa;
 - 1.2.2 references to any statute, enactment, order, regulation or other legislative instrument include any amendment to the same by any subsequent statute, enactment, order, regulation or instrument or as contained in any subsequent re-enactment thereof;
 - 1.2.3 a reference to a person shall include a reference to any individual, company, or other legal entity;
 - 1.2.4 references to clauses and Schedules are, unless otherwise stated, references to clauses in and Schedules to this Agreement;
 - 1.2.5 headings are provided for ease of reference only and shall not be taken into account in the interpretation or construction of this Agreement.
- 1.3 Subject to clause 1.4 the Schedules form an integral part of this Agreement.
- 1.4 In the event of any conflict between the provisions of this Agreement and the provisions in the Schedules the provisions of this Agreement shall prevail and for the purposes of this clause 1.4 only the term “Agreement” shall not include the Schedules.

2. Shared Vision

Working together to ensure that the natural beauty of AONBs is conserved, enhanced and promoted for the benefit of all; valuing the contribution of each AONB and the network as a whole to the protection of our finest landscapes; supporting local action and national collaboration; recognising and meeting the challenges for the future. AONBs are seen as functioning landscapes and exemplars of coherent and resilient ecological networks which can deliver wider benefits for society.

- 2.1 The Parties to this Agreement believe that:
- 2.1.1 AONB management structures should be strongly supported by partners and relevant authorities.¹
 - 2.1.2 the statutory requirement to produce Management Plans provides an important opportunity to strengthen partnerships and achieve better outcomes.
 - 2.1.3 security of funding and flexibility of funding for AONBs will deliver better outcomes.
 - 2.1.4 there should be a “can do” culture which is not risk-averse but where lessons from novel approaches are encouraged and learnt from, in both success and failure.
 - 2.1.5 monitoring of environmental outcomes is essential and needs to be undertaken to develop a sound, spatially-relevant evidence base.
 - 2.1.6 opportunities should be taken to maximise the synergies between the outcomes of the Management Plan with the plans of other Parties, and of the wider Protected Landscape network.

3. Duration

This Agreement will run for the Term unless terminated earlier in accordance with the provisions of clause 11 or alternatively at the end of the Term the Agreement may be extended for a further Term with the written agreement of the Parties.

4. Partnership Roles, Responsibilities and Structure

4.1 The Partnership

- 4.1.1 The Partnership was formed on []
- 4.1.2 The Partnership membership, terms of reference, structure and operation is set out in Schedule 1.

4.2 The Staff Unit

- 4.2.1 The purpose and objectives of the Partnership will be assisted by the employment of a Staff Unit to act on its behalf. Part 1 of Schedule 2 shows

¹ As defined by S85 of CROW Act - relevant authority includes government departments, Natural England included, and public sector as well as statutory undertakers

Core Staff and non-Core staff. The Staff Unit will coordinate, champion, act as a focus and bring bodies together for action, and bid for funds. The Staff Unit will carry out the core functions set out in part 2 of Schedule 2.

4.2.2 The Staff Unit will work for the whole Partnership and have its own identity. Activities will be delivered under the identity of the Partnership, rather than that of the Host Authority or individual Parties.

4.2.3 A degree of independence for the Partnership from the Host Authority will be necessary, particularly when the Partnership is consulted by or is required to make comments and provide advice on schemes and activities of its constituent Local Authorities.

4.3 The Host Authority

The Host Authority will be responsible for exercising its duties in relation to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and for line managing the AONB Manager, acting as employer of the staff employed as part of the Staff Unit, providing human resources and IT support and exercising responsibility for the financial management of the Partnership in accordance with clause 8.

4.4 Local Authority Funding Partners

The Local Authority Funding Partners will be responsible for exercising their duties in relation to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and for:

4.4.1 contributing to the costs of the Partnership in accordance with clause 10.

4.4.2 working with the Host Authority, Defra and Natural England in relation to the management of the AONB.

4.4.3 providing a recognised lead officer and contact who will be involved in the management of the Staff Unit, the Management Plan process and Partnership activity; and

4.4.4 working with local government members to promote the role and value of AONBs to society and our natural environment.

4.5 Non-Funding Partners

The Non-Funding Partners will be requested to assist the Host Authority, Defra, Natural England and the Funding Partners in managing the AONB by providing

advice and guidance in their specific areas of expertise and contribute to the delivery of the Management Plan.

4.6 Defra

Defra will be responsible for exercising its duties in relation to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and for:

- 4.6.1 contributing to the costs of the Partnership in accordance with clause 9;
- 4.6.2 working to the principles set out in the tri-partite Memorandum of Understanding between Defra, Natural England and the NAAONB, a copy of which is annexed to this Agreement
- 4.6.3 supporting the work of the Partnership
- 4.6.4 working across Government and with national organisations to promote the role and value of AONBs to society and our natural environment.

5. Employment of a Staff Unit

- 5.1 An AONB Staff Unit will be established by the Host Authority. Details of the Staff Unit are more particularly described in part 1 of Schedule 2.

5.2. AONB Manager

- 5.2.1 An AONB Manager will be employed at a senior level to act as a respected advocate for, and champion of the AONB. The AONB Manager will be given authority to work with key partners at a senior level, for example Chief Executives, lead Planning Officers, key committees and Local Authority members
- 5.2.2 The line management of the AONB Manager for day to day purposes will be through the Host Authority.

5.3 Other AONB Staff

- 5.3.1 Other AONB staff, forming part of the Staff Unit, will be employed on behalf of the Partnership to take forward the Annual Business Plan and Management Plan.
- 5.3.2 AONB staff will report to the AONB Manager and will work to a programme agreed by the Partnership against which progress will be monitored.

6. Redundancy

- 6.1 Any redundancy payments legally due to AONB Core Staff under Part XI of the Employment Rights Act 1996 or other relevant legislation on termination of employment will be met by the Parties according to the following principles:
- 6.1.1 Subject to sub-clauses 6.1.2 – 6.1.5 below, Defra shall indemnify and keep indemnified the Host Authority against any redundancy payments that the Host Authority makes to AONB Core Staff provided:
- (i) the post holder's entitlement to the said payment arises as a result of termination or cessation of this Agreement and the withdrawal of funding by Defra, except where the termination or cessation is as a result of the Host Authority's default under this Agreement; and
 - (ii) that the Host Authority has used its best endeavours to redeploy the post holder internally and to the extent that is legally able to do so with other Local Authority Funding Partners prior to making them redundant;
- 6.1.2 If a redundancy is caused by a Party other than Defra withdrawing from this Agreement, that Party will be liable for the full costs of redundancy.
- 6.1.3 If a redundancy is a consequence of a unanimous decision by the Parties then all Parties will be liable for the redundancy costs with the costs being split pro rata each Parties contribution.
- 6.1.4 For the avoidance of doubt the Parties acknowledge that a reduction in funds is not the equivalent of, and does not amount to, a withdrawal of funds for the purposes of this Agreement.
- 6.1.5 Provided always that Defra's liabilities in respect of redundancy costs shall be limited as follows to an overall cap which will be no more than the total grant monies paid to the Host Authority in the previous grant year.

7. Financial and Administrative arrangements.

- 7.1 The income and expenditure of the Partnership will be met in the first instance by the Host Authority which will be responsible for the exercise of proper financial control and for collecting contributions from Defra and the Local Authority Funding Partners as detailed in clauses 9 and 10.

7.2 The details of the budget will be agreed annually by the Partnership's Funding Partners and an appropriate grant application submitted to Defra.

7.3 The Host Authority will be responsible for submitting the annual AONB financial contribution application to Defra in accordance with any guidance issued by Defra by 31st December in any year.

7.4 Defra's contribution shall be paid in arrears to the Host Authority on receipt of an agreed claim and in accordance with guidance issued by Defra.

7.5 The Local Authority Funding Partners will:

7.5.1 make annual contributions in accordance with the provisions of clause 10

7.5.2 commit to providing 4 year funding as set out in clause 10.

7.6 Defra will:

7.6.1 make annual financial contributions to support the work of the Partnership to be made in line with the single pot contribution set out in clause 9

7.6.2 commit to providing 4 year funding as set out in clause 9.

8. Eligible Costs for core functions

8.1 Eligible Costs shall include:

- i) staff salaries, employers' national insurance, superannuation contributions and payments in respect of absence through sickness in accordance with Host Authority conditions of service;
- ii) accommodation (office rents and rates), IT, office equipment, insurance, health and safety;
- iii) office support services to include but not limited to financial and legal support, IT support and property services;
- iv) pay awards and inflationary increases;
- v) maternity pay;
- vi) training;
- vii) travel and subsistence expenses;
- (viii) any redundancy payment due to a post holder employed by the Host Authority exclusively for the purposes of the Partnership and where the

post holder's entitlement to the said payment arises in circumstances envisaged in clause 6;

- (ix) a partnership budget to be used for external costs, for example, for specialist advice, research, public relations, publications, events;
- (x) costs of establishing and running the AONB partnership;
- (xi) costs associated with the production of the Management Plan;
- (xii) advertising for vacant posts and travel and subsistence costs incurred by interview candidates and other recruitment costs;
- (xiii) other project and activities necessary to deliver the core functions listed in part 2 of Schedule 2

9. Defra Funding

- 9.1 Defra will make a contribution to the Partnership as set out in sub-clauses 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4. For years 2 - 4 (2012/13 – 2014/15) the figures are indicative allocations which are provided now in order to assist with long-term financial planning and will be confirmed as soon as possible. This is because experience from previous spending reviews suggests that these allocations can change over the spending review period, especially given the current tight financial circumstances.
- 9.2 The total grant allocation for the first year of the Term from Defra is [£]
- 9.3 The indicative total grant allocation for the second year of the Term from Defra is [£]
- 9.4 The indicative total grant allocation for the third year of the Term from Defra is [£]
- 9.5 The indicative total grant allocation for the fourth year of the Term from Defra is [£]
- 9.6 This four year settlement will be based on the current AONB funding formula. However the formula will be reviewed and may be subject to change during this Term.
- 9.7 This grant will be used towards Eligible Costs listed in sub clause 8.1, the provision of a Sustainable Development Fund and project activity in the context of a single pot [Schedule x] to achieve the outcomes set out in the Management Plan and the Annual Business Plan.

10 The Local Authority Funding Partners' Funding

10.1 The Local Authority Funding Partners will contribute to the Eligible Costs as set in the table below (years 2012/13 – 2014/15 are indicative):

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>FY 2011/12</u>	<u>FY 2012/13</u>	<u>FY 2013/14</u>	<u>FY 2014/15</u>
The Host Authority	£	£	£	£
Funding Partner (1)	£	£	£	£
Funding Partner (2)	£	£	£	£
Funding Partner (3)	£	£	£	£

10.2 The Local Authority Funding Partners contribution (including Host Authority) will equal at least 25% of Eligible Costs for core functions listed in sub clause 8.1 in any one year. The contribution will be paid to the Host Authority on the [insert date] in each year.

11 Termination

11.1 Without prejudice to the obligations of the other Parties to each other under this Agreement, which unless otherwise agreed continue, a Party may, by giving not less than one year's written notice, terminate its participation in this Agreement setting out the reasons for termination. A review of the viability of the continuation of the Partnership will be carried out by the remaining Parties.

11.2 If a Party withdraws from the Agreement in accordance with clause 11.1 the remaining Parties will not be required to take on the responsibility or financial liability of the withdrawing Party. However should the remaining Parties choose to increase their contribution, financial or otherwise, then this will be reflected in an addendum to the Agreement, signed by all the remaining Parties.

For the avoidance of doubt, the withdrawing Party will not be entitled to a return of any contribution made in accordance with clause 9 or 10 for the financial year in which they serve notice of their withdrawal.

- 11.3 The Local Authority Funding Partners and Defra will pay contributions in respect of inescapable contractual commitments (apart from redundancy payments that are subject to clause 6 above) entered into in good faith prior to any party giving notice of termination whether or not such commitments involve expenditure after the date of termination. However, for the avoidance of doubt, the said contractual commitments shall not include contract(s) of employment or an agreement(s) to retain the services of a worker or consultant in relation to the Partnership.
- 11.4 On termination of the Agreement, a statement shall be drawn up of the remaining funds held by the Host Authority pursuant to this Agreement, together with any outstanding liability and once such statement has been agreed between the Parties, the Host Authority shall reimburse the remaining monies to the contributing Parties, pro rata to their initial contributions.

12. Communication

- 12.1 For the purposes of this Agreement the following are lead contacts for each of the Parties contactable at the address given:
- 12.1.1 Defra []
 - 12.1.2 Host Authority []
 - 12.1.3 [Local Authority name] []
 - 12.1.4 [Local Authority name] []
 - 12.1.5 [Local Authority name] []

13. Jurisdiction

- 13.1 All disputes or claims arising out of or in connection with the activities of the parties under this Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the law of England.

14. Reconciliation of Disagreement

- 14.1 Any disagreements will normally be resolved amicably at working level. In the event of failure to reach consensus between the Parties then such failure shall be handled in the following manner:
- 14.1.1 The dispute shall in the first instance be referred to the relevant Parties' Project Executive officer or manager in the organisation of similar standing for resolution at a meeting to be arranged as soon as practicable after the failure to reach consensus arises, but in any event within ten business days;
- 14.2 If the dispute cannot be resolved in accordance with 14.1.1 above within ten business days after such referral, or within any other period agreed between the Parties then the dispute shall be referred to the relevant Parties' Legal Advisors for resolution at a meeting to be arranged as soon as practicable after such referral, but in any event within ten business days;
- 14.3 If the dispute has not been resolved following a referral in accordance with 14.1.2 the Parties shall settle the dispute by mediation in accordance with the Centre for Dispute Resolution (CEDR) Model Mediation Procedure. Unless otherwise agreed between the Parties, the mediator will be nominated by CEDR.

15. Information

- 15.1 The Parties are subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA") and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR") and they shall assist and co-operate with the other Parties as necessary to comply with these requirements.
- 15.2 In responding to a request for information, including information in connection with the Partnership, a Party will use reasonable endeavours to consult with the other Parties. Notwithstanding this the Parties acknowledge that they may be required to disclose information without consultation, or following consultation with the Parties having taken their views into account.
- 15.3 The Parties shall ensure that all information produced in the course of the Partnership or relating to the Agreement is retained for disclosure and shall provide all necessary assistance as reasonably requested to enable a Party to respond to a request for information within the time for compliance and

shall permit the Parties to inspect such records as requested from time to time

- 15.4 All Parties acknowledge that any statutory and other constraints on the exchange of information will be fully respected, including the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

16. Variation and Waiver

- 16.1 Any variation of this Agreement shall be in writing and signed by or on behalf of each of the Parties.
- 16.2 No delay by any Party in exercising any provision of this Agreement constitutes a waiver of such provision or shall prevent any future exercise in whole or in part.

17. Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999

- 17.1 The Parties do not intend that any term of this Agreement shall be enforceable by virtue of the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 by any person that is not a party to it.

Defra

Signed

Date

Position on behalf of the

HOST AUTHORITY

Signed

Date

Position on behalf of

FUNDING PARTNER (1)

Signed

Date

Position on behalf of

FUNDING PARTNER (2)

Signed

Date

Position on behalf of

FUNDING PARTNER (3)

Signed

Date

Position on behalf of

SCHEDULE 1
PARTNERSHIP MEMBERSHIP, TERMS OF REFERENCE, STRUCTURE AND
OPERATION

SCHEDULE 2
PART 1 - STAFF UNIT STRUCTURE

CORE STAFF

xxxxxxxxxx

NON-CORE STAFF

yyyyyyyyyy

PART 2 - STAFF UNIT CORE FUNCTIONS

1. MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 1.1 Developing reviewing, preparing and publishing the AONB vision and the Management Plan
- 1.2 Promoting the AONB vision and Management Plan to help distinguish the AONB from adjacent countryside
- 1.3 Advising upon, facilitating and co-ordinating implementation by others of the Management Plan
- 1.4 Accessing resources for management activities
- 1.5 Developing an involvement by the community in the management of the AONB
- 1.6 Providing a management role to co-ordinate AONB protection through the actions of the AONB unit, the AONB Partnership and other partners at a local and strategic level
- 1.7 Problem solving with the unit acting as co-ordinator and facilitators

2. ADVISORY / ADVOCACY

- 2.1 Advising Local Authorities and other partners on their activities within AONBs, to encourage them to attain the highest possible standards in AONBs
- 2.2 Working with and contributing to the NAAONB activities, sharing advice and best practice nationally and regionally.
- 2.3 Providing landscape related planning advice (to local planning authorities and in conjunction with Natural England as appropriate in line with, and underpinned by protocols)
- 2.4 Financial support for NAAONB
- 2.5 Contribution and support to activity between AONBs and protected landscapes to strengthen the status of the AONBs individually and collectively.

3. MONITORING

- 3.1 To monitor and report on progress against Management Plans and Annual Business Plans to the Partnership.
- 3.2 To provide monitoring and reporting information to Defra in accordance with any guidance issued by Defra

**SCHEDULE 3
NON-FUNDING PARTNERS**

ZZZZZZZZZZZZ

ANNEX 1

**TRI-PARTITE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN DEFRA, NATURAL
ENGLAND AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AONBS**

Forest of Bowland AONB Business Plan 2011 – 2014

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Background

At the Joint Advisory Committee meeting in April 2011, the AONB Officer outlined the intention to draft an AONB Unit business plan to guide the work of the Unit; particularly in light of the reduced partnership budget and staffing arrangements.

This commenced in April 2011, with all members of the team and LCC Countryside Officers taking part in review to prioritise key objective and actions of the AONB Management Plan to be delivered over the next three years. This prioritisation process formed the basis for the business plan.

In addition, the AONB Officer consulted with officers from AONB funding partners on the draft business plan, receiving comments and suggestions on how the plan can best reflect local authority priorities for the AONB over the next three years.

The Business Plan

The plan sets out how the AONB Unit will contribute to the work of the Partnership in achieving the long-term vision for the AONB:

'...the Forest of Bowland retains its sense of local distinctiveness, notably the large-scale open moorland character of the Bowland Fells, traditional buildings and settlement patterns of villages, hamlets and farmsteads. Natural and cultural resources are sympathetically managed and contribute to a sustainable and vibrant local economy. The management of the Forest of Bowland AONB has improved the quality of the landscape for all stakeholders.'

The AONB Unit is working towards four key outcomes:

1. An outstanding landscape of natural and cultural heritage
2. Resilient and sustainable communities
3. A strong connection between people and the landscape
4. A dynamic and effective AONB partnership

This plan will guide the work of the AONB Unit from 2011 to 2014. The actions within it link directly to the implementation of the statutory AONB Management Plan and links are shown against each action. It is designed to be a rolling 3-year plan, which will be reviewed and updated annually.

Implications for the delivery of the AONB Management Plan 2009 – 2014

As will be apparent, some AONB Management Plan objectives and actions have been given a lower priority for the work of the Unit and are therefore not included in the business plan. The Unit will work with all AONB partner organisations to update monitoring of the delivery of the Management Plan; helping to identify gaps. Working groups are likely to be formed or re-established to investigate ways in which the wider partnership can help address these gaps in delivery in the remaining plan period.

Decision Required

The Committee is requested to:

- i. note the report, provide comments and, if minded, approve the AONB Business Plan 2011 – 2014
- ii. approve the suggested approach to address gaps in delivery of the AONB Management Plan 2009 – 2014



AONB Unit Business Plan 2011 - 2014

FOREST OF BOWLAND

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

AONB Unit Business Plan 2011-2014

Introduction

The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of England's finest landscapes and is internationally important for its heather moorland, blanket bog and rare birds. The special qualities of the area which contribute to its distinctive 'sense of place' can be summarised as:

Wild open spaces

A special place for wildlife

A landscape rich in heritage

A living landscape

Delicious local food and drink

A place to enjoy and keep special

The AONB designation means that the area should not only be conserved and enhanced, but also that recreation and sustainable development should be promoted to help to sustain the landscape and its communities.

The AONB Partnership and Unit

The AONB is managed by a partnership of landowners, farmers, voluntary organisations, wildlife groups, recreation groups, local councils and government agencies, who work to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of this special area.

The AONB Unit is the staff team, who are employed on behalf of the AONB Partnership, to prepare and implement the statutory AONB Management Plan. The team currently comprises six members (4.3 full-time equivalents), with additional support from two LCC Environmental Project Officers (formerly Countryside Officers).

A Plan for the Future

This business plan sets out how the AONB Unit will contribute to the work of the Partnership in achieving the long-term vision for the AONB:

'...the Forest of Bowland retains its sense of local distinctiveness, notably the large-scale open moorland character of the Bowland Fells, traditional buildings and settlement patterns of villages, hamlets and farmsteads. Natural and cultural resources are sympathetically managed and contribute to a sustainable and vibrant local economy. The management of the Forest of Bowland AONB has improved the quality of the landscape for all stakeholders.'

The AONB Unit is working towards four key outcomes:

1. An outstanding landscape of natural and cultural heritage
2. Resilient and sustainable communities
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4. A dynamic and effective AONB partnership

The Business Plan

This plan will guide the work of the AONB Unit from 2011 - 2014. The actions within it link directly to the implementation of the statutory AONB Management Plan and links are shown against each action. It is designed to be a rolling 3-year plan, which will be reviewed and updated annually.

The AONB Unit aims to work with the following values at the core of its operation:

We are knowledgeable and passionate about the AONB - its landscape, biodiversity and culture

We care about the environment and sustainability

We work together with others to achieve success

We value people and are approachable and responsive

We communicate clearly and effectively

It should also be recognised that this plan relies on the work of other partner organisations, communities and individuals to achieve the successful delivery of the AONB Management Plan and the long-term vision for the area.

Strategic Priorities 2011 - 2014

An outstanding landscape of natural and cultural heritage	Resilient and sustainable rural communities	A strong connection between people and the landscape	A dynamic and effective AONB Partnership
<p>OL1 Provide advice, training and support to promote sustainable land management practices; helping to safeguard the natural and cultural landscape of the AONB.</p> <p>OL2 Continue a strategic programme of restoration and re-establishment of traditional boundaries (e.g. hedgerows, dry stone walls, railing fences); allied to provision of training opportunities to promote skills associated with these traditional boundaries.</p> <p>OL3 Work in partnership to facilitate and promote the management and restoration of priority habitats within the AONB; in particular those habitats identified as more vulnerable within the AONB Climate Change Adaptation Plan.</p> <p>OL4 Work with others, in particular local authorities, to establish development management and other policies/strategies, which result in positive outcomes for the landscape quality of the AONB.</p>	<p>SC1 Continue to support and develop local parish lengthsmen schemes within the AONB to assist in the management and maintenance of key community assets.</p> <p>SC2 Support and promote local businesses and products to maintain their viability.</p> <p>SC3 Continue to promote and manage the Sustainable Development Fund; whilst also responding to local community requests for advice on funding, project management and volunteering.</p> <p>SC4 Continue to develop, support and promote local tourism businesses; building on the AONB's reputation as an internationally-recognised destination for sustainable tourism.</p>	<p>PL1 Develop, improve, and promote access and recreational opportunities for a diverse range of people.</p> <p>PL2 Provide high quality information, communications and events to enable people to enjoy and understand the landscape of the AONB and the work of the AONB Partnership.</p> <p>PL3 Support local communities and visitors to conserve, restore, enjoy and learn about the heritage of the AONB, and develop programmes of activity which provide opportunities to engage people with the landscape.</p>	<p>AP1 Work with others to maximise the successful delivery of the AONB Management Plan and effectively monitor progress.</p> <p>AP2 Achieve excellence in the governance and management of the AONB Partnership and Unit, its people and resources; and helping to identify sustainable future funding to support these.</p>

AONB Unit - Staff Leads

CH – Cathy Hopley, Development and Funding Officer
 EL – Elliott Lorimer, Principal AONB Officer
 HB – Hetty Byrne, Sustainable Tourism & Web Development Officer
 MP – Mike Pugh, Business Development Officer
 NO – Nick Osborne, Site Access & AONB Manager
 SS – Sandra Silk, Project Officer

Lancashire County Council Environmental Projects - Staff Leads

DP – Dave Padley, Environmental Projects Officer (Area East)
 TW – Tarja Wilson, Environmental Projects Officer (Area North)

An outstanding landscape of natural and cultural heritage (OL)

OLI Provide advice, training and support to promote sustainable land management practices; helping to safeguard the natural and cultural landscape of the AONB					
We will:	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	AONB Mgmt. Plan Links	Staff lead(s)
OLI.1 Provide advice and guidance to land managers on appropriate woodland management and planting within the AONB landscape	On-going	On-going	On-going	4.1B, 4.3A	DP/TW
OLI.2 Support traditional woodland management skills		1 traditional woodland management skills course held	1 traditional woodland management skills course held	4.1B, 4.3A	DP/TW
OLI.3 Encourage and support woodland extension, creation and management		England Woodland Grant Scheme training held	England Woodland Grant Scheme training held	3.2E, 4.1B, 4.1D, 4.2A, 4.3A	DP/TW
OLI.4 Encourage the return of semi-improved rough pasture to grass moorland and upland heath	Regular meetings with NE HLS Advisors	Regular meetings with NE HLS Advisors	Regular meetings with NE HLS Advisors	2.2B	DP/TW
OLI.5 Encourage the conservation and enhancement of wet flushes, mires and wet acid grassland	Regular meetings with NE HLS advisors	Regular meetings with NE HLS advisors	Regular meetings with NE HLS advisors	2.2C	DP/TW
OLI.6 Develop design guidance notes for riverside and moorland fencing		Draft guidance notes developed	Guidance notes published	2.3B, 2.3E	DP/EL

OL1.7 Strengthen working relationships with key stakeholders for river catchment management (e.g. Environment Agency, United Utilities and River and Catchment Trusts) to encourage sensitive management of riverbank habitats for biodiversity and landscape.	Initial liaison meeting established	Regular liaison meetings held	Regular liaison meetings held	5.1A, 5.2A	EL/DP
OL2 Continue a strategic programme of restoration and re-establishment of traditional boundaries (e.g. hedgerows, dry stone walls, railing fences); allied to provision training opportunities to promote skills associated with these traditional boundaries.					
We will:	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	AONB Mgmt. Plan Links	Staff lead(s)
OL2.1 Deliver an annual programme of traditional boundaries projects	6 projects delivered	6 projects delivered	6 projects delivered	1.2H, 1.4J, 2.4B, 3.2C, 4.1A	DP/TW
OL2.2 Promote training opportunities in hedge-laying and walling (including schools and vocational training)	2 training opportunities promoted	2 training opportunities promoted	2 training opportunities promoted	13.1B	DP/TW
OL2.3 Develop and promote hedge-laying and walling competitions	1 event held	1 event held	1 event held	13.1B	DP/TW
OL2.4 Respond to community desire to restore roadside railings	As requests are received	As requests are received	As requests are received	14.2A	DP/TW

OL3 Work in partnership to facilitate and promote the management and restoration of priority habitats within the AONB; in particular those habitats identified as more vulnerable in the AONB Climate Adaptation Plan					
We will:	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	AONB Mgmt. Plan Links	Staff lead(s)
OL3.1 Carry out research and mapping to identify the extent of peat and blanket bog in the AONB, and the location/extent of restoration projects	Attend Lancashire Peat Partnership (LPP) meetings Work with LPP to develop AONB plan for conserving and enhancing blanket bog, including collection of monitoring data	Attend LPP meetings Monitor and update data	Attend LPP meetings Monitor and update data	2.1A	CH/TW
OL3.2 Encourage the restoration of areas of exposed and eroded peat and the conservation and restoration of blanket bog and mosaic of moorland dwarf shrub species	Regular meetings with NE HLS advisors and landowners	Regular meetings with NE HLS advisors and landowners	Regular meetings with NE HLS advisors and landowners	2.2A, 2.1C, 2.1D	DP/TW
OL3.3 Encourage good practice in upland heather burning and alternatives; helping to develop a fire prevention strategy and fire plans for the area	Farmer and landowner group discussion held	If required, establish an AONB-wide fire operations group		2.2B, 2.2H	NO/DP/TW
OL3.4 Co-ordinate volunteer and professional surveys to identify and monitor species-rich grassland within the AONB	Volunteers identified and survey method established	Volunteers trained and carrying out surveys	Volunteers trained and carrying out surveys	3.1A	CH

OL3.5 Identify potential project sites for species-rich grassland creation and enhancement; leading to the development of projects to conserve and enhance this priority habitat, alongside community engagement and education activities	Meeting with key partners held and potential project sites identified	1 project delivered	2 projects delivered	3.1A	CH
OL4 Work with others, in particular the local authorities, to establish development management and other policies/strategies, which result in positive outcomes for the landscape quality of the AONB					
We will:	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	AONB Mgmt. Plan Links	Staff lead(s)
OL4.1 Provide appropriate advice, support and formal responses to development proposals and consultations on policies/strategies that will affect the AONB and its setting (in particular planning applications, LDF consultations and other local, regional and national strategies)	Appropriate responses provided	Appropriate responses provided	Appropriate responses provided	1.1A, 1.1F, 2.3D, 5.3C, 12.3A, 12.3C, 12.3D, 12.4A, 12.4D, 19.3B	EL
OL4.2 Continue a programme of undergrounding of power lines in the AONB with Electricity Northwest	Priority projects list drawn up and projects developed	1 project delivered	1 project delivered	12.3D	EL/DP/TW
OL 4.3 Develop an AONB design guide (based on the Landscape Character Assessment) to ensure development is in keeping with and conserves or enhances landscape character (i.e. in terms of appropriate materials, form, setting, scale etc)	Research best practice Establish working group	Outline design guide produced Partner consultation held	AONB design guide published Awareness- raising event(s) held	1.4K, 3.2G, 8.1F, 9.5A, 12.1A, 12.1D	EL/CH

OL4.4 Liaise with local authority planning officers on relevant AONB planning concerns (landscape character, wind energy, tourism business development)	Periodic meetings held	Periodic meetings held	Periodic meetings held	I2.3B, I2.4C	EL
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Resilient and sustainable rural communities (SC)

SC1 Continue to support and develop local parish lengthsmen schemes within the AONB to assist in the management and maintenance of key community assets					
We will:	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	AONB Mgmt. Plan Links	Staff lead(s)
SC1.1 Support Parish Councils to continue to fund and manage existing lengthsmen schemes	AONB policy on future of PL schemes agreed	AONB service level agreements developed and agreed with Parish Councils		8.1E, 10.1C, 16.1C	TW/DP
SC1.2 Prepare an evaluation report on existing parish lengthsmen schemes in the AONB	Evaluation completed		Evaluation completed	8.1E, 10.1C, 16.1C	TW
SC1.3 Work with Parish Councils to develop best practice (e.g. record-keeping) to help demonstrate best value	Timesheet template developed and distributed to PL schemes			8.1E, 10.1C, 16.1C	TW/DP
SC1.4 Contribute to the development of new pilot schemes being created by Lancashire County Council	Attend meetings and respond to pilot evaluation, where appropriate			8.1E, 10.1C, 16.1C	TW/DP

SC2 Support and promote local businesses and products to maintain their viability					
We will:	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	AONB Mgmt. Plan Links	Staff lead(s)
SC2.1 Support local businesses, via provision of advice, signposting, training (e.g. access for all, business skills, sense of place), networking opportunities and events	<p>One-to-one advice provided</p> <p>2 training events provided</p> <p>2 business-led events held</p>	<p>One-to-one advice provided</p> <p>2 training events provided</p> <p>2 business-led events held</p>	<p>One-to-one advice provided</p> <p>2 training events provided</p> <p>2 business-led events held</p>	6.2D, 10.1B, 10.2A, 11.2A, 11.2B, 17.1A, 19.3D	MP
SC2.2 Continue to provide support for Bowland Experience Ltd. (BEx)	<p>BEx board meetings held</p> <p>Provision of information- sharing opportunities for BEx members</p> <p>BEx promotional items developed</p> <p>Secure place on AONB JAC for BEx</p>	<p>BEx board meetings held</p> <p>Provision of information- sharing opportunities for BEx members</p>	<p>BEx board meetings held</p> <p>Provision of information- sharing opportunities for BEx members</p>	7.6E	MP

SC2.3 Support the transfer of member of the Sustainable Tourism Network (STN) to BEx	Transfer of members commenced Closure of the STN			10.2A	MP
SC2.4 Continue to support the development, management and promotion of the Bowland Tourism Environment Fund (BTEF)	Investigate feasibility of 'Gift Aid' for BTEF	Develop 'Gift Aid' for BTEF		16.2B	MP
SC2.5 Support business 'cluster' development within the AONB (as part of Lancashire Green Tourism Project)	2 business clusters supported			7.1B	MP
SC3 Continue to promote and manage the Sustainable Development Fund; whilst also responding to local community requests for advice on funding, project management and volunteering					
We will:	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	AONB Mgmt. Plan Links	Staff lead(s)
SC3.1 Manage the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) to support appropriate, small-scale projects within the AONB, aiming to increase 'match-funding' from external sources; whilst seeking to promote the fund and individual projects and good practice.	SDF panel meetings held All SDF funds committed Funded projects complete and return monitoring information, as required	SDF panel meetings held All SDF funds committed Funded projects complete and return monitoring information, as required	SDF panel meetings held All SDF funds committed Funded projects complete and return monitoring information, as required	14.2D, 19.1G	CH

	SDF Annual Report produced	SDF Annual Report produced	SDF Annual Report produced		
SC3.2 Provide support to communities seeking project development and funding advice and assistance (e.g. projects to improve provision of rural services, renewable energy projects and local community events)	10 community groups advised/supported	10 community groups advised/supported	10 community groups advised/supported	11.1A, 11.3A, 14.4A, 16.2C, 19.3C	SS/CH
SC4 Continue to develop, support and promote local tourism businesses; building on the AONB's reputation as an internationally-recognised destination for sustainable tourism					
We will:	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	AONB Mgmt. Plan Links	Staff lead(s)
SC4.1 Promote the strong 'brand identity' for AONB visitors, working closely with tourism organisations, visitor information centres, businesses and gateway towns	Sense of Place materials used in variety of formats (e.g. website, exhibition panels, pop-up banners)	Sense of Place materials used in variety of formats (e.g. website, exhibition panels, pop-up banners)	Sense of Place materials used in variety of formats (e.g. website, exhibition panels, pop-up banners)	6.2D, 6.3B, 18.4J	HB
SC4.2 Complete the Lancashire Green Tourism Project and continue to support GTBS with tourism businesses in the AONB	Project completed on time and budget Project evaluation report produced (including mapping)	Business advisory visits made 6 GTBS accreditations achieved within AONB and 2km buffer	Business advisory visits made 6 GTBS accreditations achieved within AONB and 2km buffer	3.1F, 19.3D	HB

	2 routes downloads from GTBS businesses produced	2 route downloads from GTBS businesses produced	2 route downloads from GTBS businesses produced		
SC4.3 Continue to support and develop appropriate elements of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, including support to Charter partners, the Sustainable Tourism Forum, networking within Europarc (particularly within the Atlantic Isles section)	Produce ST partner logo and usage guide Attend EAI/Europarc meetings, as appropriate	ST Forum held Attend EAI/Europarc meetings, as appropriate	ST Forum held Attend EAI/Europarc meetings, as appropriate	7.6B, 7.6I	HB/MP
SC4.4 Carry out evaluation and monitoring of visitor and tourism enterprise information, in particular visitor pressure, patterns and future markets (including occupancy and satisfaction data)	Visitor survey carried out Business enterprise survey carried out	Business enterprise survey carried out	Visitor survey carried out Business enterprise survey carried out Profile of future tourism markets completed	8.3B, 8.3C, 18.3B, 18.3C, 18.3D	HB
SC4.5 Deliver familiarisation visits and study tours for tourism businesses and organisations	GTBS familiarisation visit held	'Access for all' familiarisation visit held	One familiarisation visit held	19.1D	HB
SC4.6 Promote and share good practice of the AONB, as a lead partnership in supporting sustainable tourism within	Plan EUROPARC Atlantic Isles Seminar	Hold EUROPARC Atlantic Isles Seminar		9.6D, 18.4B, 18.4C, 18.4G,	CH/HB

Europe's protected areas	on Sustainable Tourism	on Sustainable Tourism		18.4J	
		Plan Sustainable Tourism Study Tour with EUROPARC partners	Hold Sustainable Tourism Study Tour		
SC4.7 Continue to promote local produce and farming	Manage and update local produce database Support and attend Clitheroe Food Festival	Manage and update local produce database Review AONB future involvement in local food festivals	Manage and update local produce database	6.6D, 6.9D, 10.2C	HB



A strong connection between people and the landscape (PL)

PL1 Develop, improve and promote access and recreational opportunities for a diverse range of people					
We will:	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	AONB Mgmt. Plan Links	Staff lead(s)
PL1.1 Work in partnership with key stakeholders to improve access in the wider countryside of the AONB; including support for implementation of PRow Improvement Plans	Regular meetings of Access and Recreation Working Group held	Regular meetings of Access and Recreation Working Group held	Regular meetings of Access and Recreation Working Group held	8.1B, 8.1C, 8.1N, 8.1D, 8.1P, 8.2A, 8.3A	NO/TW/DP
PL1.2 Carry out a review of existing AONB promoted routes	Review and completed and acted upon (e.g. some routes no longer promoted)	Review and completed and acted upon	Review and completed and acted upon	6.6G, 8.1J	NO/TW/DP
PL1.3 Develop new promoted routes at Barley and Halton gateway		Routes developed at each gateway		7.1G, 8.1H, 8.1L	TW/DP
PL1.4 Develop bridleway links between Gisburn Forest and Settle (Pennine Bridleway National Trail), for North Lancs Bridleway Phase 2 sections and Whitendale bridleway network	Commence landowner negotiations	Development of route and funding strategy	Commence construction of first sections of bridleway	8.1L	TW/DP
PL1.5 Develop 'tramper' access projects	2 projects delivered	2 projects delivered	2 projects delivered	8.1H, 8.2A	TW/DP

PL1.6 Co-ordinate delivery of Fiendsdale erosion control project	Project commenced	Project completed		2.1B, 2.1C, 2.1D	TW
PL1.7 Review effectiveness and data from pedestrian counters on PRow		Review completed and acted upon		8.1A, 8.1C	TW/DP
PL1.8 Ensure use of appropriate PRow signposts in the AONB	Discussions held with LCC & PBC PRow teams	Guidance note and agreement in place		8.1F, 8.1P	NO/TW/DP
PL2 Provide high quality information, communications and events to enable people to enjoy and understand the landscape of the AONB and the work of the AONB partnership					
We will:	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	AONB Mgmt. Plan Links	Staff lead(s)
PL2.1 Co-ordinate and review Festival Bowland (FB)	Co-ordinate FB Steering Group Evaluation of customer feedback completed (via incentivised postcard scheme) Annual review of aims and content of FB completed and acted	Co-ordinate FB Steering Group Evaluation of customer feedback completed (via incentivised postcard scheme) Annual review of aims and content of FB completed and acted	Co-ordinate FB Steering Group Evaluation of customer feedback completed (via incentivised postcard scheme) Annual review of aims and content of FB completed and acted	7.1A	SS

	upon	upon	upon		
PL2.2 Publicise Festival Bowland effectively	<p>FB brochure produced</p> <p>Monthly FB events posters produced and distributed</p> <p>6 press releases/year produced to promote FB events</p> <p>Create Google calendar for FB events</p>	<p>FB brochure produced</p> <p>Monthly FB events posters produced and distributed</p> <p>6 press releases/year produced to promote FB events</p> <p>Update Google calendar with FB events</p>	<p>FB brochure produced</p> <p>Monthly FB events posters produced and distributed</p> <p>6 press releases/year produced to promote FB events</p> <p>Update Google calendar with FB events</p>	6.5A	SS
PL2.3 Support and promote external events that help to deliver AONB objectives	Maintain LOIS database for partner-led events	Maintain LOIS database for partner-led events	Maintain LOIS database for partner-led events	6.5B	HB
PL2.4 Management and implementation of the Forest of Bowland AONB brand and graphic standards	<p>Branding guidelines and templates for promotional materials produced</p> <p>Annual review of leaflet stock completed, with option</p>	<p>Training on branding guidelines for partner organisations and businesses (e.g BEx)</p> <p>Annual review of leaflet stock completed, with option</p>	<p>Annual review of leaflet stock completed, with option to update and print,</p>	6.1A, 6.1B, 6.2A, 6.4A, 6.4D, 6.8B, 14.2E	HB/SS

	to update and print, where appropriate Periodic review of AONB promotional materials against environmental standards Photography competition held to update stock of AONB images	to update and print, where appropriate Periodic review of AONB promotional materials against environmental standards	where appropriate Periodic review of AONB promotional materials against environmental standards		
PL2.5 Encourage display of AONB website and information in Tourist Information Centres (TICs) and other public venues		Suitable TICs with touch-screen facilities identified	AONB information included on touch-screen facilities	6.7B	HB/SS
PL2.6 Update and replace AONB boundary signs at key visitor 'gateways' to the AONB	6 boundary signs replaced	4 boundary signs replaced	4 boundary signs replaced	16.1C	DP/EL
PL2.7 Maintain Brochurelink service	Periodic review of Brochurelink reports carried out	Periodic review of Brochurelink reports carried out	Periodic review of Brochurelink reports carried out	6.3C	HB
PL2.8 Regularly review and update the content of AONB	Periodic review and	Periodic review and	Periodic review and	6.4C, 6.6A,	HB

<p>website, in line with AONB Management Plan objectives and actions</p>	<p>update of route downloads completed</p> <p>3 educational farm profiles developed</p> <p>Protocol for inclusion of private enterprises on the AONB website written</p> <p>Website data analysis completed and disseminated</p> <p>Update of website maps completed</p>	<p>update of route downloads completed</p> <p>3 educational farm profiles developed</p> <p>Family activities webpage produced</p> <p>Website data analysis completed and disseminated</p>	<p>update of route downloads completed</p> <p>Website data analysis completed and disseminated</p>	<p>6.6B, 6.6C, 6.6H</p>	
<p>PL2.9 Review design of AONB website</p>		<p>Web design support contracted</p> <p>New web designs completed</p>		<p>6.4C, 6.6A, 6.6B, 6.6C, 6.6H</p>	<p>HB</p>
<p>PL2.10 Research good practice in use of emerging technology to help interpret and promote the AONB</p>	<p>Investigate use of social media, podcasting, mobile apps and geo-</p>	<p>GPS downloads generated for 10 walking routes</p>	<p>GPS downloads generated for all walking routes</p>	<p>6.7A</p>	<p>HB</p>

	<p>catching to promote AONB information and events</p>	<p>Investigate the potential to introduce audio trails for promoted routes</p>	<p>Audio trails produced for promoted routes</p>		
<p>PL2.11 Source and promote newsworthy stories that promote the AONB and work of the partnership</p>	<p>Quarterly e-bulletin produced and promoted</p> <p>Contacts maintained within local, regional and national media</p> <p>4 AONB press releases per year produced</p>	<p>Quarterly e-bulletin produced and promoted</p> <p>Contacts maintained within local, regional and national media</p> <p>4 AONB press releases per year produced</p>	<p>Quarterly e-bulletin produced and promoted</p> <p>Contacts maintained within local, regional and national media</p> <p>4 AONB press releases per year produced</p>	<p>6.10C, 14.1C, 18.4A, 18.4F</p>	<p>HB/SS</p>

PL3 Support local communities and visitors to conserve, restore, enjoy and learn about the heritage of the AONB; and develop programmes of activity which provide opportunities to engage people with the landscape

We will:	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	AONB Mgmt. Plan Links	Staff lead(s)
PL3.1 Support communities in developing cultural heritage projects of particular local importance or distinctiveness	4 projects delivered	4 projects delivered	4 projects delivered	1.4, 14.2A, 13.1B, 14.2B	CH/SS
PL3.2 Identify funds and partners to help deliver AONB-wide programmes of activity to research, conserve, enhance and interpret the landscape heritage of the AONB	<p>Develop an HLF bid for 'Deerparks' (in conjunction with LCC Designed Landscape Project)</p> <p>Develop young person's arts programme</p>	<p>Delivery of 'Deerparks' project</p> <p>Deliver young person's arts programme</p> <p>Develop HLF bid for AONB 50th anniversary project</p>	<p>Delivery of 'Deerparks' project</p> <p>Commence delivery of AONB 50th anniversary project</p>	1.4, 2.4D, 6.9A, 7.11, 13.1B	CH/SS



A dynamic and effective AONB partnership (AP)

API Work with others to maximise the successful delivery of the AONB Management Plan and effectively monitor progress					
We will:	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	AONB Mgmt. Plan Links	Staff lead(s)
API.1 Participate in a range of fora and networks to represent AONB interests	On-going	On-going	On-going	2.2L, 6.9C, 10.2B, 14.1C, 17.1E	All
API.2 Review the AONB Management Plan, in accordance with national guidance		Review and consultation commenced	Consultation held SEA/AA completed Review completed		EL
API.3 Ensure effective and inclusive consultation is carried out on all major AONB strategies and activity	On-going	On-going	On-going	14.1A, 15.1	EL
API.4 Manage and promote the interactive management plan (IMP) to ensure regular updating by partners	IMP updated by Unit and partners	IMP updated by Unit and partners	IMP updated by Unit and partners	17.1E, 18.1B	HB
API.5 Produce a clear and concise AONB Annual Report	Annual Report produced	Annual Report produced	Annual Report produced	18.4H	SS
API.6 Produce quarterly progress reports on business plan delivery	Quarterly reports produced	Quarterly reports produced	Quarterly reports produced	17.1C	EL

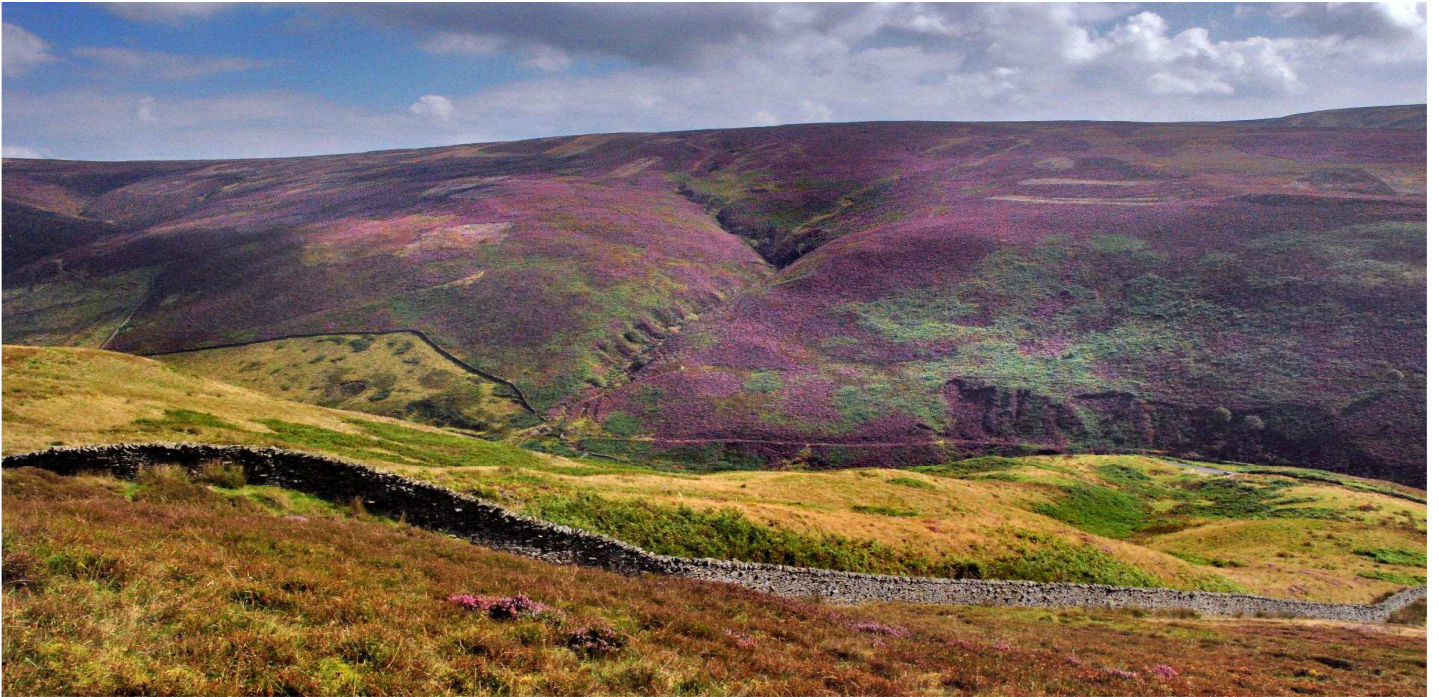
API.7 Work with, and support National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) and other protected areas to share best practice and strengthen the status of AONBs locally and nationally	NAAONB events attended Responses made to information and consultation requests, where appropriate	NAAONB events attended Responses made to information and consultation requests, where appropriate	NAAONB events attended Responses made to information and consultation requests, where appropriate	18.4B	All
API.8 Support and maintain co-ordinated delivery of services and projects in the AONB in partnership with local authority countryside and environmental projects teams	LCC Env Projects staff attend AONB team meetings, where appropriate Periodic meetings held with local authority and United Utilities countryside staff	LCC Env Projects staff attend AONB team meetings, where appropriate Periodic meetings held with local authority and United Utilities countryside staff	LCC Env Projects staff attend AONB team meetings, where appropriate Periodic meetings held with local authority and United Utilities countryside staff	14.2C, 15.1, 17.1G	EL/NO
AP2 Achieve excellence in governance and management of the AONB Partnership and Unit, its people and resources; and helping to identify sustainable future funding to support these.					
We will:	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	AONB Mgmt. Plan Links	Staff lead(s)
AP2.1 Ensure effective and productive functioning of AONB Joint Advisory Committee and its working groups, with agreed terms of reference	2 JAC meetings, 3 to 4 funders group and regular working group meetings held	2 JAC meetings, 3 to 4 funders group and regular working group meetings held	2 JAC meetings, 3 to 4 funders group and regular working group meetings held	15.1A, 15.1B, 15.1D	EL

AP2.2 Hold regular meetings and correspondence with AONB funding partners to ensure AONB Partnership and Unit are delivering against partners' key corporate objectives	Funders group meeting re-established	Regular funders group meetings held	Regular funders group meetings held	16.1F	EL
AP2.3 Continue to support and work with NAAONB (as part of the tri-partite agreement with Defra and Natural England) to lobby for retention of secure, long-term funding arrangements for AONBs	NAAONB meetings, seminars and conferences attended, where appropriate	NAAONB meetings, seminars and conferences attended, where appropriate	NAAONB meetings, seminars and conferences attended, where appropriate	16.1A	EL/NO
AP2.4 Ensure that a formal 'Memorandum of Agreement' (MoA) is in place between Defra and AONB partners	4-year MoA signed and adopted by all AONB partners			16.1F	NO/EL
AP2.5 Review audit of potential future funding opportunities for the AONB (commenced in late 2010/11)	Audit reviewed and acted upon			16.1B	CH/EL
AP2.6 Develop a fund-raising strategy for the AONB partnership, investigating closer working with neighbouring protected areas (e.g Arnside and Silverdale AONB) on strategic funding bids	Investigate alternative forms of governance to assist in fund-raising (Friends of, Trusts etc) Discussions held with neighbouring protected	Review AONB governance structure held Fund-raising strategy action plan completed and commenced Joint AONB funding bids developed, if	Fund-raising strategy and action plan delivered	15.1A, 16.2A	CH/EL

	areas	appropriate			
AP2.7 Aim for excellence in management of the AONB Unit	Productive fortnightly team meetings, 1:1 meetings, employee PDRs and team building activities carried out	Productive fortnightly team meetings, 1:1 meetings, employee PDRs and team building activities carried out	Productive fortnightly team meetings, 1:1 meetings, employee PDRs and team building activities carried out	15.2A	NO/EL
AP2.8 Provide structured training opportunities to AONB Unit and representatives	Staff training identified and attended	Staff training identified and attended	Staff training identified and attended	15.2C	NO/EL
AP2.9 Annually review and update three-year AONB Unit business plan	Annual review and update completed	Annual review and update completed	Annual review and update completed	15.2B, 17.1C	EL
AP2.10 Promote good practice in project management (incorporating best value, monitoring and evaluation, sustainability and involving volunteers)	Staff training identified and attended. Project management guidelines developed, where appropriate	Staff training identified and attended. Project management guidelines developed, where appropriate	Staff training identified and attended. Project management guidelines developed, where appropriate	17.1F, 18.1C, 18.1D	NO/EL
AP2.11 Implement AONB Unit environmental policy and action plan	Carbon reduction targets met	Carbon reduction targets met Solar PV installed at AONB office	Carbon reduction targets met	19.1J	CH



AONB Report to JAC: October 2011



FOREST OF BOWLAND

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

An outstanding landscape of natural and cultural heritage

Nature Improvement Area

The Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) Programme with funding of £7.5 million has been established by Defra as announced in the Natural Environment White Paper (2011). Nature Improvement Areas are large, discrete areas that will deliver a step change in nature conservation, restoring and creating wildlife habitats, connecting local sites and joining up local action.

We have recently established a working group to develop and deliver a bid to the NIA Programme on behalf of the Forest of Bowland AONB. Focussing on those habitats identified as being most vulnerable to climate change, through our study earlier this year, we have identified a potential nature improvement area covering 300 km² of the AONB. The aim will be to ensure the best management of important sites (SSSIs and BHSs) and to enlarge, buffer and connect these by creating, enhancing and restoring other sites in between to create more resilient networks of habitats.

The NIA bid is for £655,000 of Defra monies, which will be matched 50:50 by contributions from the various partners in officer time, HLS grant and a small amount of AONB project funds: totalling £1.3m over the period April 2012-March 2015.

However, be aware that this national programme is likely to be very competitive, with only 20 applicants entering the second round of bids in November, and only 12 being awarded funds in February 2012 – so please keep your fingers crossed and we will let you know if we progress!

Electricity Undergrounding

Two proposed schemes in Bolton by Bowland and Hyles moor have been evaluated by Electricity North-west and at the present time, due to cost implications and recent investment on the lines, will not be considered for undergrounding.

A number of other proposals have now been submitted for lines in Gisburn Forest and Roeburndale with some additional schemes being proposed for Slaidburn, Tosside and the Craven section of the AONB.

The scheme on Waddington Fell has been so successful that you wouldn't even know there had been an overhead line running over the fell as you drive over the fell road.

Traditional Boundaries: Diploma students build up their drystone walling skills

15 students on a Diploma course in land based & horticulture Skills at Garstang Academy spent four days stripping down and rebuilding 30 metres of drystone wall under the expert tuition of master craftsman Mike Rushton from Tamarack Outdoors Ltd. This is the second year that the Forest of Bowland AONB has supported the practical and field visit elements of this course based at Cobble Hey Farm & Gardens. The students also build up skills in fencing, hedgelaying, flagging and a range of horticultural skills, as well as spending time out in the field or on the fell with local farmers, gamekeepers and countryside staff.

Resilient and sustainable rural communities

Lancashire Green Tourism Project

The Lancashire Green Tourism Project is due to complete at the end of September 2011. Over the 3 years the businesses have achieved some excellent results - 55 businesses achieving Green Tourism Business Scheme accreditation since 2007, and many businesses improving their grading levels from Year 1 of the project to Year 3. During 2011, through their ongoing commitment, nine businesses progressed from bronze and silver awards to silver and gold awards. A further 10 businesses are currently awaiting grading which will bring the total to 65.

Other project achievements include:

Two new visitor leaflets – Tea Shop guide and Gisburn Forest Mountain Bike Trails

Development of car free itineraries for Lancashire - in partnership with the Lancashire & Blackpool Tourist Board.

Two self catering providers were short-listed for Gold Star GTBS awards; they have been highlighted amongst the 40 top GTBS accredited businesses in the country.

12 best practice case studies have been produced for GTBS gold accredited businesses.

100 businesses have received one-to-one support and guidance, web support and GTBS advisory or grading visits and 82 individuals have attended work-based training related to sustainable tourism.

Production of downloadable walking routes linking GTBS accredited businesses

Wildlife blogging websites developed by Barrie Tyrer web consultancy working with the Lancashire Green Tourism project to highlight the wildlife hotspots of this beautiful area, and most importantly, to entice visitors to take a look for themselves www.bowlandwildlife.org.uk and www.lancashirewildlife.org.uk

A final piece of work for the project will be an online green guide to the Forest of Bowland AONB and Lancashire – to encourage visitors to holiday in a wonderful, green destination.

Many thanks to the project funders Lancashire County Council (LCDL) and the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board (LBTB); Barrie Tyrer web consultancy for his ongoing support to businesses in developing their online green marketing messages and all the businesses who have been involved.

Bowland Experience Ltd.

BEx continues to grow and now has 77 members, 40% of which whom have set up in the tourism business since 2006. The role of the company and its relationship with the AONB has been defined as to:

Manage and promote the BEx website as "business-to-business" support network

Organise training courses for BEx members (e.g. AONB 'Sense of Place' training)

Initiate business-led cluster projects to promote sustainable tourism in the AONB, and if producing visitor information to utilise the AONB branding guidelines/template

Co-ordinate periodic network meetings for members to share ideas and good practice

Encourage members (and others) to support BTEF fund raising.

The website www.bowlandexperience.com has been developed to reflect these roles whilst the AONB team's responsibility is recognised as to manage and promote the AONB-branded website and printed materials as the primary source of visitor information for the area.

The Bowland Experience 'Tramper for Hire' scheme has been launched with funding support from The Three Fishes "Visitor Pay-back" donations and an Awards for All grant. Seven new Tramper trails are being set up across the AONB. The company has provided training courses for members and others on Customer Care, Visitor Information, First Aid at Work and Sense of Place.

The company achieved Revenue of £14,434 and made a Trading Profit of £2,555 in the year to July 2011. This amount will be donated to BTEF.

Bowland Tourism Environment Fund

The fund has continued to raise donations from visitors and others. It had a total income of £7,665 in the year to July 2011. It has been recognised as a 'charitable company' by HMRC which means it is exempt from corporation tax.

By coincidence, recent grants have been related to children's causes – support for Scorton village Playground, a contribution towards the RSPB-delivered Schools Outreach project and a grant for Dunsop Village School to provide a Hay Meadow Theatre Workshop.

The Three Fishes donation (referred to in the BEx report) is managed by BTEF and will be set aside to support the Tramper project.

The Trustees have written to all the Parish Councils in the AONB to publicise the grant scheme and are waiting to receive applications. For more information, see www.bowlandtefund.org

Parish Lengthsmen Project

The County Council is in the process of starting to review the pilot scheme on Lengthsmen that has been running this year with regard to how the countywide scheme will be supported in the future.

The officers within the AONB will be continuing to support and guide the existing parishes with longstanding schemes through this period of transition to continue the beneficial local delivery that has been so well received by the local communities.

A wide range of project work continues to be delivered across a large section of the AONB through the existing schemes.

A strong connection between people and the landscape

Communications & Branding

Online developments continue which in turn are attracting increasing traffic to the website. There were 9,252 visits to the website in May 2011, which included 76% new visitors. A consistently high number visit the website for walking and cycling information and downloads, general information on villages and visitor attractions and increasingly to search for accommodation and events. Highlights for 2011 include the launch of the 'Beautiful Bowland' photo competition with excellent prizes donated by tourism businesses in the network, a new online leaflet wizard to encourage tourism businesses to work in partnership with the AONB team to produce branded visitor information and a Festival Bowland online events calendar generated in Google which can be integrated into partner as well as tourism business websites.

Other communication activity includes re-prints of Bowland by Bike and Gisburn Forest Bike Trails leaflets, production of a new Marvellous Meadows leaflet (thanks to Martin Charlesworth, Jon Hickling and Geoff Morries) and new Sense of Place interpretation boards.

Education Commission

For the last four years we have supported RSPB to deliver an education outreach programme to primary schools within the AONB, via SDF and AONB project funds. As all our schools (27 schools and over 1000 children) have now participated in this programme we have decided to take a new approach to our education work from 2011/12 and are commissioning a project to be delivered by an environmental education specialist on behalf of the AONB. The project is currently out to tender and a consultant will be appointed in late October, to work for us from November to the end of March 2012.

Our aim is to provide a growing resource of on-line educational resources for schools, using the landscape of the Forest of Bowland as an outdoor classroom and inspiration. The project will identify what, and how, teachers want to study in the environment, and in our initial year, we will also talk to farmers who have 'educational access' to identify how we could best assist them with learning resources for their farms. Using this information, the project will make available a number of existing resources from the AONB website, and from other educational projects, and will also create new resources. For more information and to read the project brief in full go to

<http://www.forestofbowland.com/environmentaleducation>

Festival Bowland 2011

The chance to watch Whimbrel as they stop off at Barnacre on their epic journey from Africa to Iceland; a late night, torch-light quest to spot the bats in Brungerley Park and the opportunity to uncover the mysteries of the shave-horse on a green woodworking taster day – Festival Bowland 2011 offered all this and more !

This year's programme included over 160 events designed to celebrate the birds, wildlife, landscape and culture of the Forest of Bowland AONB and was supported by a range of partners including Lancashire County Council, Wyre Borough Council, RSPB, Bowland Arts Festival, United Utilities, Natural England, the Wildlife Trusts of Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside and a range of local businesses, landowners and farmers.

2011 also saw the introduction of an incentivised evaluation postcard scheme. Designed to collect feedback from event participants, the postcard was available from early summer. The intention is to run the scheme again next year, with distribution earlier in the calendar in order to catch the bulk of events during spring. Event proposal forms for the 2012 programme are now available and should be completed and returned by **12 noon on Monday 21st November**.

For further information contact Sandra Silk on 01200 448000 or email sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk

Don't forget that this year's festival programme runs right through to December, so there is still chance to get involved and perhaps discover something new about Bowland!

Royal Visitor to Bowland

As part of Festival Bowland a Royal visitor engaged a small group at Sawley Abbey to explain why he left the abbey in a ruinous state. This event was the first time we have engaged a character actor to deliver an event and also the first time we have used one of our few scheduled ancient monuments in the AONB as a venue for an event. The format was well received and we are looking at how we can broaden this style of event for next year's programme.

Uncovering Bowland's Past

United Utilities, Slaidburn Archive and the Forest of Bowland AONB are working on an exciting new project to uncover a piece of Bowland's heritage – and getting valuable help from volunteers and members of the local community.

The project focuses on the site of the original St. James' Church, Stocks-in-Bowland, between the villages of Tosside and Slaidburn. Consecrated in 1852, the church was demolished during the construction of Stocks Reservoir in the 1920's and early 1930's and eventually rebuilt on its present site at Dalehead.

The site of the original church became part of School Lane car park on the edge of Gisburn Forest and recent plans to improve the layout of this popular car park also provided the opportunity to safeguard the footprint of this valued local building.

Following a successful launch of the project at Tosside Community Hall, which attracted over 50 people, work recently started on the ground under the professional eye of experts from Lancaster-based Oxford Archaeology North. Initial survey work allowed the outline of the building to be located and excavation of the foundations of the church has now begun. The ultimate aim of the project is to reinstate these foundations in order to provide a visible reminder of the community living at Dalehead before the construction of the reservoir.

Phase one of the project, which is being funded by United Utilities with additional funding from the AONB, will run through October, finishing early in November, with plans for a second phase in spring next year.

For further information contact Sandra Silk on 01200 448000 or email sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk

Tramping across Bowland and Beyond

On the west side of Bowland, the self-guided Trampler Trails linking rural tourism businesses who make up the Wyresdale Wheels partnership have become so popular that the demand for similar trails elsewhere in Bowland has grown. So much so that extra help is being provided through a consultant who will work with the Environmental Projects officers to develop seven more trails. Ribble Valley Inns (Bowland Experience Ltd member) through their dedication and support in raising monies through visitor payback for the Bowland Tourism Environment Fund are helping to finance this work.

In July, for the sixth successive year, Lancashire hosted the Disabled Ramblers for four days in Bowland and Arnsdale Silverdale AONBs and also provided the opportunity for local Lancashire residents to join the treks using one of the 11 Trampers loaned by Lancashire County Council, Wyre Borough Council, Wyresdale Wheels and Bowland Experience Ltd. More than 30 local Trampler users, plus friends and family, explored the delights that the area has to offer ranging from the limestone pavement, flower rich grassland and mosses of Silverdale through to the woodlands of Grizedale valley and wilder expanses of Caton Moor.

Footnote: A Trampler is a specially designed all-terrain electric buggy, which can be used off-road and on rough ground, mud and grasses. It enables people who have difficulty walking, who are less able, or who may be disabled to experience the countryside, woodlands and lakesides and to accompany friends and family when out walking.

Evaluating the Parish Lengthsman Scheme and Taking it Forward

Since the Parish Lengthsman Scheme was first piloted in 1997/8 this partnership way of working between the Forest of Bowland AONB, Lancashire County Council Countryside Services, local district councils and parish councils has continued to operate and evolve successfully both within and beyond Bowland. An evaluation of the Forest of Bowland AONB schemes was carried out in 2002 and several recommendations made at the time. Currently a new evaluation is being carried out focusing on the six schemes which operate in 18 parishes in North Lancashire. The Forest of Bowland AONB is also reviewing the way in which it will continue to support parish councils to fund and manage the existing Parish Lengthsman Schemes - (11 Parish Lengthsman schemes working with 26 parishes across the Forest of Bowland AONB).

At the same time Lancashire County Council is currently reviewing its involvement and support of Parish Lengthsmen schemes and carrying out pilot work on new ways of working with parishes on Public Rights of Way maintenance.

A dynamic and effective AONB partnership

National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) and Joint-working

Three members of the AONB Unit attended the NAAONB Annual Conference in Penryn, Cornwall during July 2011. The team were able to hear from, and visit, local AONBs (Cornwall, Isles of Scilly and Tamar Valley), learning about projects on sustainable tourism, local food growing, community rail developments and habitat restoration. The Conference programme included a video address from HRH Prince of Wales in which he displayed his knowledge of - and great enthusiasm and support for - the work AONBs do across England, Northern Ireland and Wales. The NAAONB also presented a new business plan at the Conference, which aims to give the Association a sustainable future in a period of increasing funding uncertainty - moving their funding model away from reliance on direct Defra grant. This will result in an increased membership fee of £1200 in 2012/13.

In addition, the AONB Unit has contributed to a range of consultation responses to government made by the NAAONB on rural economic development, renewable energy, ecosystem services and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Finally, Elliott Lorimer (Principal AONB Officer) has been in discussion with Lucy Barron (AONB Manager for Arnside and Silverdale AONB) about ways in which the AONB Units can work jointly (e.g. towards the development of an AONB Design Guide) and share resources, particularly given the future planned reductions in Defra funding for AONBs.

EUROPARC Charter Award

The Forest of Bowland was commended by the EUROPARC Charter award in 2010 - "The Committee felt that the Forest of Bowland is leading the way on implementing Charter part II, and promoting good practice in working with businesses."

As a measure of this recognition of 'best practice' in Bowland, members of the AONB team have been invited to speak at the following events during 2011:

Nature Tourism Conference, Riga, Latvia

Tourism Operators' Seminar, Olot, Spain

National Park Management Conference, Steenwijk, Netherlands

Sustainable Tourism Conference, Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust, Ballymena, N.I.

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles Seminar, Oxford

Galloway Biosphere Reserve Conference, Dumfries & Galloway

In addition, two of our key GTBS businesses, Clough Bottom Farm and Ribby Hall, also spoke at, and represented the AONB at, the EUROPARC Charter Park Seminar in Serbia in June, and the EUROPARC Conference held in Germany in September.

The team has also been approached and/or visited for advice on how to implement the EUROPARC Charter by the Cotswolds AONB, Nidderdale AONB, Peak District National Park and Yorkshire Dales National Park and is represented on the EUROPARC's Sustainable Tourism Working Party.

For April 2012, the annual AONB conference will be extended to invite practitioners from other protected areas in the UK to attend a workshop on Sustainable Tourism and Bowland will host the EUROPARC Atlantic Isles Charter Network meeting.

Forest of Bowland AONB Annual Report 2010/11

The 2010/11 Annual Report for the Forest of Bowland AONB is now available on the AONB website and can be accessed by following this link <http://www.forestofbowland.com/files/uploads/pdfs/annualreport1011.pdf>

The Annual Report is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the range of projects carried out by partners, both on the ground and behind-the-scenes, and reflects the hard work which takes place throughout the year. It is a valuable means of informing a wider audience of our work, celebrating our achievements and encouraging people to get involved. Many thanks to everyone for their contributions this year and don't forget to start thinking about projects for next year's report!

