



Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

**Friday, 1st March, 2019 at 2.00 pm in Dunsop Bridge Village Hall, Trough Road,
Dunsop Bridge, Clitheroe, BB7 3BG**

Agenda

- 1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests**
Members are asked to consider any Pecuniary Interests they may have to disclose to the meeting in relation to matters under consideration on the Agenda.
- 3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 October 2018** (Pages 1 - 8)
- 4. AONB Management Plan Review - final draft for consideration** (Pages 9 - 78)
- 5. Current AONB Management Plan - Delivery Updates:** (Verbal Report)
 - a) Landscape Enhancement Initiative – Quernmore and Conder Valley Project
 - b) Defra Environmental Land Management System 'Tests and Trials' – National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) proposal
- 6. Glover Review of Designated Landscapes - Update** (Pages 79 - 104)
- 7. Any Other Business**

8. 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 Chief Executive should be given advance warning of any Members' intention to raise a matter under this heading.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The dates and locations of the meeting to be held in 2019 are:

Thursday, 18 April 2019 in Wyre district, venue to be confirmed

Thursday, 24 October 2019 in Preston district, venue to be confirmed

Samantha Gorton
Democratic Services

Lancashire County Council
County Hall
Preston



Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 25th October 2018 at 2pm in Higham Village Hall, Higham Hall Road, Higham BB12 9EU

Present:

Chair

County Councillor Albert Atkinson, Lancashire County Council

Committee Members

County Councillor Shaun Turner, Lancashire County Council
Colin Price, Yorkshire Local Councils Association
Rosemary Budd, Natural England
Andrew Taylor, Bowland Land Managers Forum
David Kelly, Ramblers Association
Marilyn Pilkington, Friends of Bowland
Councillor R Boswell, Preston City Council

Officers

Cathy Hopley, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
David Porter, Lancaster City Council
Alex Shutt, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Sandra Silk, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Sam Gorton, Legal and Democratic Services, LCC
Robin Gray, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Sarah Robinson, Forest of Bowland AONB Unit
Douglas Williams, Grosvenor Estate

Apologies

County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles, Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Richard Welch, North Yorkshire County Council
Councillor Val Wilson, Wyre Borough Council
Councillor James Starkie, Pendle Borough Council
Helen Dix, Environment Agency
Blanaid Denman, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Alison Boden, Wyre Borough Council
Liz Small, North Yorkshire County Council

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

Resolved: County Councillor Albert Atkinson and County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles were appointed Chair and Vice-Chair respectively for the 2018/2019 Municipal Year.

2. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

County Councillor Albert Atkinson welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies were presented on behalf of the Committee members and officers as listed on page 1.

The Committee held a minute's silence in respect of Michael Helm who had passed away and had been a longstanding member of the Forest of Bowland. Elliott Lorimer had attended his funeral along with many from various communities such as the Parish Council and Bridleways and Access.

3. Short Films from Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership

Cathy Hopley, Scheme Manager, Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership introduced two short films. These can be found on the Pendle Hill Project [website](#) which has been developed and launched at an event at the beginning of October. Cathy reported that the videos had been well received and that the Heritage Lottery were also in attendance at the launch.

The Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership comprises 15 projects which are planned over the next four years, with funding for these coming from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

County Councillor Atkinson enquired about the availability of the films being available for a County Council 'Bitesize' briefing on the Countryside Service.

Resolved: Cathy Hopley would look to make these available for a future the bite size briefing on Countryside to be chaired by County Councillor Atkinson.

4. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosures of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

5. Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference

Resolved: The Committee approved the Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference for 2018/2019.

Elliott Lorimer, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Principal Officer, informed the Board that Bowland Experience had been replaced by the Bowland Sustainable Tourism Network and there had been a few changes of personnel also. Bowland Sustainable Tourism Network needed to be included on the Joint Advisory Committee membership.

Resolved: That JAC Secretariat amend the membership to include the Bowland Sustainable Tourism Network.

6. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 April 2018

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Planning Policy in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

David Porter, Lancaster City Council updated the Committee that following the submission of the Local Plan for Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB, they were still awaiting the planning inspectors report. The examination hearing was successful in June, however, modifications were required to the policy, which had been submitted today and now awaited the outcomes within the next six weeks. David would then write to all the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the country (including the Forest of Bowland) regarding adoption of the plan.

Resolved: That David Porter would report on the outcome and provide an update at the next Joint Advisory Committee meeting in April 2019.

Great Northern Forest

Elliott Lorimer, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Principal Officer, notified the Committee that he had sent an email of support to the proposals, however, there had not been any follow up meeting as of yet.

Resolved: That Elliott Lorimer would provide further update at the next Joint Advisory Committee in April 2019.

7. Partner Updates

To mark the 100th anniversary of the Armistice on Remembrance Sunday, there would be numerous beacon flames across the Forest of Bowland.

Marilyn Pilkington, Friends of Bowland reported that there had been three completed guided walks, 18 task days, an apple day at Ribchester Village Hall and there was one activity left. They were now compiling activities for 2019.

County Councillor Turner commented on the Pendle Hill Landscape Project and in his role as Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing was glad to see this happening and encouraging the people of Lancashire to take part. He recently attended a conference at Brockholes which was discussing how to tackle inactivity and how to make activities more accessible and this was something that could be joined up with the Pendle Hill Landscape project.

8. Revised Estimates 2018/19 and Revenue Budget 2019/20

Elliott Lorimer, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Principal Officer, presented the report on the revised estimates 2018/19 and revenue budget 2019/20.

a) Revised Estimates 2018/19

The Revised Estimates took account of the changes in comparison with the Original Estimates. The principal revision related to an estimated reduction in salary costs due to the vacancy from April to October 2018 for the Development Funding Officer.

The net effect of any changes allowed an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 'Projects' programme totalling £89,870 to be delivered in 2018/19.

Since the last reporting in April 2018, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit had been successful in obtaining £981,305 in additional funding to support delivery of projects within the area.

b) Revenue Budget 2019/20

The attention of the Committee was drawn to the gross expenditure, income, net expenditure and additional resources of the Revenue Budget 2019/20 as detailed in the report.

Resolved: That the Committee:

- i) Noted the 2018/19 Revised Estimates
- ii) Approved the 2019/20 Revenue Budget as set out in the report.
- iii) Subject to approval of (ii) above, requested the funding authorities to make appropriate provision in their Revenue Budgets.

9. AONB Unit Business Plan 2018-2021

Elliott Lorimer, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Principal Officer, presented the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Business Plan 2018-2021 to the Committee and highlighted the structure chart for the team (page 23) that was requested at the last meeting in April 2018. The plan would guide the work of the Unit from 2018-2021 and the actions within it were linked directly to the implementation of the statutory Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan and links were shown against each action. It was designed to be a rolling three year plan, which was reviewed and updated annually. It should also be recognised that this plan relied on the work of other partner organisations, communities and individuals to achieve the successful delivery of the Plan and the long-term vision for the area.

If there was any further information required or queries, then please contact the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit.

10. AONB Unit Activity Report

Sandra Silk, Projects Officer, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit presented the Team Report to the Joint Advisory Committee which was included in the agenda pack.

There had been a big focus on the Pendle Hill Landscape project, however as could be seen from the report, still continued to deliver on other projects in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

There were no issues arising from the report.

11. Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership

Cathy Hopley, Scheme Manager, Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership, tabled the Quarterly Progress Report to the Committee for July – September 2019, Year 1 Quarter 2 which was also supplied to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Cathy briefed the Committee on the projects that had and are being carried out as detailed in the report. Some of the highlights were detailed as below:

- Restoring Footpaths and Repairing Peat Land on the Summit project – return to a future meeting with more information on this.
- Sense of Place and Sustainable Tourism
- Pendle Hill Foodie Foray event
- Running a Community Grant Scheme
- Providing Supported Activity Sessions for People Dealing with Mental Health Issues and Social Isolation
- Creative Activities and a 'Radicals Trail'
- Delivering Community Archaeology Session and Related Training for Interns and Volunteers
- Outdoor Learning
- Holding The Gatherings and Annual Events to Engage New Audiences
- Coordinating Information and Publicity including the Pendle Hill project [website](#).

The Committee were shown a short film on Archaeology which can be found [here](#).

Sarah Robinson, Farming and Wildlife Officer, Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership, gave a presentation on the Pendle Hill Farmer Network and reported there were currently 98 Farmer Networks across the Country which were to encourage young farmers of the future.

Sarah Dornan, Countryside Access Officer, Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership, gave a presentation on the Summit and Path Restoration and showed a video, which can be found [here](#). The next phase of this project would be maintaining them.

12. Management Plan Review - Progress Report

Elliott Lorimer, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Principal Officer, updated the Board on the progress of the review of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management plan and outlined progress so far and the next steps in the process as detailed in the report attached to the agenda. There is a statutory requirement to review the plan every five years. An online public survey was held and over 300 responses were received on what worked well and what improvements could be made.

A draft report had been produced which would be formally consulted on and then the final report would be brought to an extra ordinary meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee in February/March 2019. Once the Committee had agreed the Management Plan it would be presented to Cabinet to approve and adopt at the end of March 2019.

Resolved: That the Committee:

- i) Noted the report and offered comments.
- ii) Approved the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Principal Officer to complete the consultation draft based on the version presented to the Committee and commence formal consultation in late November 2018.
- iii) Arrange an extra ordinary meeting to discuss the Management Plan Review for February/March 2019.

13. Review of Designated Landscapes

Elliott Lorimer, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Principal Officer, informed the Committee that the Government had formally announced the Glover Review of Designated Landscapes (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks) which commenced in spring 2018.

The Chair, Julian Glover, had convened a review panel with members drawn from countryside, land management and environmental sectors. A call for evidence was made in October 2018, with the deadline for submissions being 18th December 2018. The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (including the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership) would submit a response to this call for evidence (see attached).

In addition, the Chair, Julian Glover, had committed to review panel members making visits to all Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks during the review. It was anticipated that the review panel would make a visit to the Forest of Bowland in early 2019. Elliott would work with Defra to co-ordinate the visit if required and would contact Committee members if needed for the visit.

Resolved: That Elliott Lorimer would submit a response on behalf of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and circulate this to the Joint Advisory Committee.

14. Any Other Business

Hen Harrier Update

There had been some success with three nests with 13 chicks hatched and fledged. This was better than the previous two years, however there was still some way to go to reach the level of breeding success in Bowland of previous decades. All the nests were located on United Utilities estates. One tagged bird had gone missing in early October 2018.

Rural Crime Conference

The Rural Crime Conference would be taking place in November 2019 at which wildlife crime would be discussed.

15. Urgent Business

The Chair reported that there had been no items of urgent business received.

16. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that the next meetings would be held on:

Thursday, 18 April 2019 in Wyre District

Thursday, 24 October 2019 in Preston District

There would also be an extra-ordinary meeting scheduled February/March time to discuss the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024. Details would be forwarded as soon as a date had been confirmed.

Samantha Gorton
Democratic Services

Lancashire County Council
County Hall
Preston

FOREST OF BOWLAND AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

AONB Management Plan Review

Issue for consideration

The following report summarises progress towards the final approval and adoption of the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan (2019 – 2024).

Background

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 established the requirement for all AONBs in England and Wales to have an up-to-date Management Plan in place, and provided a timetable for the review and updating of plans. The Act also required that the local authorities are responsible for the production of the Plan and are required to establish a long-term vision for the AONB.

In October 2017, the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee agreed to carry out a review of the statutory AONB Management Plan on behalf of the partner local authorities to be complete by April 2019.

Progress update

The key stages completed since the last AONB JAC meeting in October 2018 are set out below:

1. Formal consultation on the draft revised AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024 was held from Monday 26th November – Friday 18th January 2019. The AONB Unit received 20 formal responses from local authorities, statutory agencies, NGOs, voluntary and community organisations and individuals.
2. Revision of the draft Plan during February 2019, based on formal responses and any known changes to projects/organisations etc. This involved numerous minor amendments, additions and corrections. More significant changes included:
 - i) Amendment to the Plan vision to reflect the breadth of the Plan Objectives
 - ii) Section added on Plan core principles
 - iii) Section on monitoring of the Plan
 - iv) One additional action added on Restoring Sustainable Abstractions Programme

A summary of the formal responses and revisions made to the draft Plan following consultation is available on request from the AONB Unit.

3. An initial Environmental Report was completed during February to meet statutory requirements for the review relating to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations.

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

The Environmental Report is currently out for formal consultation.

4. A Screening Report for Habitat Regulations Assessment has been completed and will be forwarded to the appropriate authority for formal consultation.

AONB Management Plan – Final Draft

(Appendix A refers)

The final draft Plan is now complete. This final draft is only likely to receive minor amendment if the formal consultation on the Environmental Report raises any issues. This outcome is not currently anticipated following the completion of the draft Environmental Report.

Should the AONB Joint Advisory Committee be minded to approve the final draft Plan, the final draft plan will be forwarded to the respective AONB partner local authorities and statutory agencies for final approvals. Lead officers for the partner authorities have been alerted and efforts are being made to ensure wherever possible that the necessary approvals can be secured as soon as possible (bearing in mind the forthcoming local elections).

Decision to be taken

The Committee is asked to:

- i) Note the report and offer comments on the review of the AONB Management Plan;
- ii) Approve the final draft of the revised Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan (2019 – 2020), to proceed for final approvals by partner funding authorities and statutory agencies.

Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019 – 2024

(Final Draft)

Prepared by the Forest of Bowland AONB Unit, March 2019

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INTRODUCTION

The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of England's finest landscapes and is internationally important area for its heather moorland, blanket bog and rare upland birds. The AONB is managed by a partnership of local councils, government agencies, landowners, farmers, local businesses and wildlife and recreation interest groups, who work to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of this special landscape.

The purpose of the AONB Management Plan is to provide a positive and pro-active management framework for the AONB Partnership; highlighting the special qualities of the designated area, the importance of the relevant landscape features and identifying those features which are vulnerable to change. The Plan also seeks to outline an integrated vision for the future of the AONB; alongside objectives and actions for delivery by the AONB Partnership, based on a high level of shared aspirations for the area.

The Forest of Bowland AONB is situated in North West England, covering 803 square kilometres of countryside in the counties of Lancashire (730 sq.km) and North Yorkshire (73 sq.km). The area is bounded to the north and south by the Rivers Lune and Ribble respectively. To the west is the Fylde plain, while the eastern side of the AONB boundary matches the Yorkshire Dales National Park for a short distance, with Ribblesdale bordering the remainder. On its south-eastern edge, Pendle Hill (557m) forms a discrete landscape feature, which is geologically linked to the rest of the AONB, but separated from the main area by the Ribble valley. The Rivers Brock, Calder, Conder, Hindburn, Hodder, Loud, Roeburn, Wenning and Wyre all originate in the upland core of the Bowland Fells. The highest point of this upland core being Ward's Stone at 561m (or 1,841ft.), alongside other notable landmarks such as Fairsnape Fell at 510m and Hawthornthwaite Fell at 479m.

The AONB lacks large settlements and has an estimated population of approximately 16,000 people. Its boundaries include parts of six district council areas, namely: Craven, Lancaster, Pendle, Preston, Ribble Valley and Wyre. The urban centres of Preston, Lancaster, Blackburn, Blackpool and Burnley are in close proximity to the AONB, with over one million people living within a 30-minute journey of the area. Furthermore, the AONB is within a 90-minute journey from the major conurbations of Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds.

To discover more about the AONB visit: <https://forestofbowland.com/Understanding>

What is an AONB?

An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a special landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them.

The 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland cover approximately 1/8th of the land surface.

The distinctive character and natural beauty of AONBs make them some of the most special and cherished places in England. AONBs are also living, working landscapes that contribute some £16bn every year to the national economy. Although home to less than half a million people (under 2% of England's population), over two thirds of England's population live within half an hour's drive of an AONB and around 150 million people visit English AONBs every year, spending in excess of £2bn.

Together with National Parks, AONBs represent our most outstanding landscapes; unique and irreplaceable national assets, each with such distinctive character and natural beauty that they are recognised internationally as part of the global Protected Areas Family (IUCN Category 5); to be managed in the interest of everyone – local residents, businesses, visitors, and the wider public - and protected for future generations.

The Legislative Framework for AONBs

AONBs exist within a legal framework which has been progressively strengthened since the first AONBs came into existence after the Second World War.

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949) first established the AONB designation, provided AONBs with protection under planning law against inappropriate development and gave local authorities permissive powers to take action for '*preserving and enhancing natural beauty*' in them. Since the first AONBs came into existence in the 1950s, the legal framework has been progressively strengthened under the following Government legislation, including the Countryside Act (1968), the Environment Act (1995), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) and the Natural Environment and Communities Act (2006).

Perhaps paramount within this legislative framework is the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000). This subsumed and strengthened the AONB provisions of the 1949 Act. It confirmed the purpose and significance of AONBs, clarified the procedure for their designation, and created a firm legislative basis for their designation, protection and management. In particular

- Section 82 reaffirmed the primary purpose of AONBs: to conserve and enhance natural beauty;
- Section 83 established the procedure for designating or revising the boundaries of an AONB, including Natural England's duty to consult with local authorities and to facilitate public engagement;
- Section 84 confirmed the powers of a local authorities to take '*all such action as appears to them expedient*' to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of an AONB, and sets consultation and advice on development planning and on public access on the same basis as National Parks in the 1949 Act;
- Section 85 placed a statutory duty on all 'relevant authorities' to '*have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty*' of AONBs when coming to any decisions or carrying out activities relating to or affecting land within these areas. 'Relevant authorities' include all public bodies (including county, borough, district, parish and community councils, joint planning boards and other statutory committees); statutory undertakers (such as energy and water utilities, licensed telecommunications companies, nationalised companies such as Network Rail and other

bodies established under statute responsible for railways, roads and canals); government ministers and civil servants. Activities and developments outside the boundaries of AONBs that have an impact within the designated area are also covered by the 'duty of regard';

- Sections 86 to 88 allows for the establishment in an AONB of a Conservation Board to which the AONB functions of the local authority (including development planning) can be transferred. Conservation Boards have the additional but secondary function of seeking to increase public understanding and enjoyment of the AONB's special qualities. They also have an obligation to '*seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities*' in co-operation with local authorities and other public bodies;
- Sections 89 and 90 create a statutory duty on all AONB partnerships (local authorities and Conservation Boards) to prepare a Management Plan '*which formulates their policy for the management of their area of outstanding natural beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it*', and thereafter to review adopted and published Plans at intervals of not more than five years. Where an AONB involves more than one local authority they are required to do this '*acting jointly*';
- Section 92 makes clear that the conservation of natural beauty includes the conservation of '*flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features*.'

The International Context

IUCN Protected Areas

English AONBs are part of the international Protected Area Family. As cultural landscapes, produced through the interaction of humans with nature over time, they have a special significance (together with UK National Parks) as being recognised by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as '*Category V - Protected Landscapes*'.

Category V Protected Landscapes are defined by IUCN as: '*A protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value: and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values.*'

European Landscape Convention

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is the first international convention to focus specifically on landscape. Created by the Council of Europe, the convention promotes landscape protection, management and planning, and European co-operation on landscape issues. The ELC came into force in the UK on 1 March 2007. It applies to all landscapes, towns and villages, as well as open countryside, the coast and inland areas, and ordinary or even degraded landscapes, as well as those that are afforded protection.

The ELC defines landscape as: *“An area as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”* (Council of Europe 2000). It highlights the importance of developing landscape policies dedicated to the protection and management of landscapes and establishing procedures for the general public and other stakeholders to participate in policy creation and implementation.

Responsibility for AONBs

The formal legal responsibility for both planning and development and for management of AONBs (including the duty to prepare an AONB Management Plan) lies with the local authorities in whose area(s) the AONB exists. In addition, the duty, for all public bodies and statutory undertakers, to ‘have regard’ places an obligation on a wide range of organisations not just to consider any detrimental impacts of their policies and activities outside as well as within the boundaries of any AONB, but to consider positively how they might benefit the AONBs special qualities.

What is ‘natural beauty’?

‘Natural Beauty’ is not just an aesthetic concept, and ‘Landscape’ means more than just ‘scenery’. The natural beauty of AONBs is partly due to nature, and is partly the product of many centuries of human modification of ‘natural’ features. Landscape encompasses everything – ‘natural’ and human – that makes an area distinctive: geology, climate, soil, plants, animals, communities, archaeology, buildings, the people who live in it, past and present, and perceptions of those who visit it.

Landscapes are a product of constant change, including those designated due to their ‘natural beauty’. The purposes of AONB designation reflect this process of change, encouraging activities that conserve and enhance the special qualities of the area and minimising activities that present a threat to the unique character of the landscape.

The term ‘natural beauty’ first gained currency in a legislative context in a 1907 Act, which gave legal status to the National Trust (‘for Places of Historic Interest and Natural Beauty’). It has been the basis for the designation of both AONBs and National Parks since the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Government confirmed that AONBs and National Parks are of equal status with regard to landscape quality and that they share the same level of protection. In the same year, the CRoW Act formally stated that natural beauty includes conservation of *‘flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features.’*

WHY IS THE FOREST OF BOWLAND AONB SPECIAL?

The Forest of Bowland was formally designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) by Government on 10th February 1964. The area was designated as a landscape of national significance, primarily, due to the following key characteristics:

- The grandeur and isolation of the upland core
- The steep escarpments of the moorland hills
- The undulating lowlands
- The serenity and tranquillity of the area
- The distinctive pattern of settlements
- The wildlife of the area
- The landscape's historic and cultural associations

Natural beauty is at the heart of what makes the Forest of Bowland AONB special: it is the reason the Bowland landscape is designated for its national and international importance; and of course, it's also a key factor in attracting visitors. This natural beauty is derived from the area's largely unspoilt countryside, combined with a number special qualities that contribute to the area's unique character or 'sense of place'. The special qualities of the Forest of Bowland AONB are numerous and varied, but in general terms they can be summarised as follows:

1. An Outstanding Landscape
2. Wild Open Spaces
3. A Special Place for Wildlife
4. A Landscape Rich in Heritage
5. A Living Landscape
6. Delicious Local Food and Drink
7. A Place to Enjoy and Keep Special

Most of these special qualities were identified as part of work undertaken in the mid-2000s exploring the AONB's 'sense of place' - that being the area's unique feel and appearance, or what constitutes the area's identity and makes it different from neighbouring areas. The headings are not intended to be exclusive or exhaustive - rather, they provide a framework by which the distinctive and special qualities of the AONB can be understood and communicated among relevant stakeholders, including visitors.

An Outstanding Landscape

The Forest of Bowland is an outstanding landscape and has been designated as an AONB due its national significance. The high quality and outstanding natural beauty of the landscape sets the AONB apart from the wider countryside and is the reason for its designation.

The area can be characterised as a complex interplay of many different landscape types, all intrinsic to its overall landscape character; from the dominant and wide open, moorland vistas of the high fells, to the more subtle, but no less important, lower-lying landscapes such as the rolling, pastoral farmland, woodlands, parkland, reservoirs, river valleys and floodplains. The area's distinctive character is determined not simply by the presence of particular natural elements or their rarity value, but also by the way in which they combine to form a mosaic of landscape types and reflect a rich history and cultural heritage.

Wild Open Spaces

Over one third of the AONB is moorland, making up the wild open spaces and remoteness that are so characteristic of the Forest of Bowland; a truly unique quality of the area and core to the AONB's identity, as well as one of the principal reasons that the Forest of Bowland was designated.

Across much of the AONB the landscape appears largely treeless, yet historically the fells were once cloaked in woodland and through a combination of changes in climate and woodland clearances by Bronze Age farmers they have become largely treeless today. The resulting open views and fells give the impression that this is a wilderness, an untouched natural landscape, but it is in fact the result of many human influences. Today, the predominant land uses for these upland areas are sheep and beef farming enterprises, alongside management of moorland for grouse shooting.

The fells are largely intact and extensive in area, crossed by only a few minor, unfenced roads. The Trough of Bowland is perhaps the most famous, following a narrow valley that once carried melting ice from the glaciers covering the fell tops.

A Special Place for Wildlife

The Forest of Bowland AONB supports many important habitats and species, which contribute significantly to the area's landscape character and 'sense of place'.

The Bowland fells support rare and endangered species associated with a very rare mosaic of upland habitats comprising over 12,500 ha. of blanket bog and almost 9,000 ha. of upland heath. At lower levels the ancient woodlands contain an array of colourful flowers; whilst the few remaining traditionally managed pastures and meadows are an oasis for wildflowers and insects. A myriad of rivers and smaller watercourses provide habitats for salmon, brown and sea trout, as well as birds such as kingfisher, dipper, grey wagtail, common sandpiper and oystercatcher. Otters are also present along several of the rivers in Bowland.

Other attractive features are more unlikely such as roadside verges and more recently formed sites, such as reservoirs and old quarries, providing new refuges for wildlife. Similarly, the quarries and rock exposures reveal important geodiversity.

Bowland is an internationally important area for conservation. Nearly one fifth of the AONB is designated as the Bowland Fells Special Protection Area (under the European Birds Directive) for hen harrier and merlin. The fells are also home to one of the country's largest colonies of lesser black-backed gulls. The Forest of Bowland also contains two Special Areas of Conservation (Calf Hill and Cragg Wood & North Pennine Dales Meadows) and 20% of the land area is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under UK legislation.

In addition, there are 456 local wildlife sites covering around 10% of the AONB, which form part of a national network of non-statutory designated sites that are recognised for their ecological value. In the Lancashire part of the AONB, they are called Biological Heritage Sites (BHS); whilst in the North Yorkshire part of the AONB they are known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

This flora and fauna of the area provide a significant attraction for visitors to the AONB – wildlife enthusiasts visit Bowland to catch a glimpse of the rare hen harrier, the area's iconic bird of prey, which breeds in only a few other places in England. Or to see the wading birds that arrive in spring to nest and rear their young on the open farmland and areas of rough grazing, such as lapwing, snipe, curlew and redshank.

A Landscape Rich in Heritage

In the Forest of Bowland AONB, the past exists very much in the present. It is the subtle interplay between the fascinating physical remains of the past, often sublime landscape patterns, and the mysteries of the essentially unknowable, that gives the AONB's archaeological and historic landscapes their much appreciated and yet often intangible special qualities.

Visually the predominant historic patterns which are readily perceived in the Bowland landscape are medieval in date, demonstrating remarkably strong continuity in landownership, community and management over the centuries. This manifests in present day land uses such as expanses of open moorland or contrasting small stone walled pastures, as well as the distribution and form of settlement, local vernacular and place names. For example, the word 'Bu' (in 'Bolland' or Bowland) is Old Norse for cattle, and 'Pen' in Pendle means hill.

There is evident contrast in the villages in Bowland – some are typical estate villages while others are more haphazard farming settlements or industrial hamlets. The large country estates had a controlling and significant influence over the nature of building and development within the AONB in the past. For example the private estates were responsible for building the distinctive villages of Slaidburn, Downham and Abbeystead, which are valued for their intactness, strong physical form and characteristic vernacular architecture.

There are notable grand halls, parks and houses at Browsholme, Leagram and Quernmore. Remains of motte and bailey castles can be found in the Lune Valley and the ruins of a Cistercian abbey are preserved at Sawley.

Overall, the area holds almost 900 listed buildings and designated heritage assets (818 Listed Buildings, 48 Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, 20 Scheduled Monuments and one Registered Park and Garden), of which none are currently on Historic England's 'Heritage at Risk' register. Collectively these historic and cultural elements of the environment serve to enrich the landscape's scenic quality, meaning and value.

A Living Landscape

The landscape of the Forest of Bowland has been managed by generations of farmers and landowners. Sheep and beef farming dominate the upland areas, while dairy farming remains a significant land use in the valleys.

In the past some land management practices have caused damage to important wildlife areas and/or landscape features – for example, the draining of moorland and meadows has caused a loss of species; and the fertilising and early harvesting of meadows has reduced the number of wildflowers. Today, however, stronger regulations are in place to help ensure that land management can improve habitats for wildlife, and management of features such as hedgerows and stone walls, rather than causing damage. Some farmers and land managers in Bowland have also become much more environmentally aware over the last 30 years and operate within agri-environment support schemes to conserve and enhance habitats for wildlife and manage important landscape features on their land. Some farmers have also adopted more sustainable and efficient farming practices, whilst remaining sympathetic to the environment; particularly through initiatives such as Natural England's Catchment Sensitive Farming.

Extensive areas of moorland are managed specifically for grouse shooting. Management can include predator control and annual heather burning to help maintain the heather moorland and red grouse populations. Much of Bowland's upland core also provides water for thousands of homes and businesses in Lancashire and the North West of England. The water utility company, United Utilities owns and manages significant landholdings within the AONB as water catchment land. In recent decades, they and other moorland estates have been working with the AONB Partnership and other conservation partners to help restore and manage important blanket bog and other moorland habitats across the Bowland Fells.

Many village communities were once reliant on manufacturing (such as cheese making), as well as local industry associated with lead mining and lime production. Nowadays, however, communities rely on a greater diversity of activities, in particular employment within the tourism sector.

Delicious Local Food and Drink

Delicious local food and drink is a special quality of the Forest of Bowland AONB - not only because it supports the economy, but also because it is an important factor in the area's unique sense of place. The traditional farming methods have helped to shape the AONB's landscape over time, including areas of rough grazing and open moorland, patterns of pastoral fields enclosed by distinctive dry stone-walls and hedgerows, farmsteads, barns and working villages. The complexity of this landscape provides for a wide variety of farm production systems. This complexity is reflected in the local food offer.

As you would expect in a sheep and beef farming area, you can find delicious local lamb and beef, as well as pork and even wild boar. The area also offers classic and modern varieties of Lancashire cheeses, milk and ice cream and supports several organic farms and market gardens. There are also several farmers' markets around Bowland where you can meet the producers and taste and buy their local produce. By supporting those farmers who

choose high nature value farming, whilst continuing to produce food, the AONB aims to help protect the Bowland landscape for this and future generations.

A Place to Enjoy and Keep Special

The purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, whilst having regard to the social and economic needs of the landowners, farmers and communities. The AONB also has a responsibility to meet the demands for recreation and tourism, but only if this is consistent with protecting the natural beauty of the area. It is for this reason that the AONB Partnership has promoted the concept of sustainable tourism within the Forest of Bowland: tourism that is dependent upon the area's environment, and which seeks to conserve and enhance that environment, not detract from it.

The AONB is a popular visitor destination for the surrounding urban settlements of Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and West Yorkshire. Its relatively 'undiscovered' character is highly valued and generates loyalty amongst local people, day visitors and increasingly staying visitors. It is the combination of open moorland, and the ever-changing geography along the lower lying river valleys that not only gives the area its very own character, but also makes it a great destination for walkers, cyclists and wildlife enthusiasts. Although walking is the main activity pursued within the area, there are opportunities to enjoy other activities such as mountain biking, horse riding, fishing, canoeing, gliding and paragliding.

Over recent years, the AONB Partnership has led the way in helping to develop sustainable tourism that takes account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts.

THE AONB PARTNERSHIP

Much of the land in the Forest of Bowland AONB is privately owned and primarily used for farming, game shooting and water supply. Nevertheless, the use of the area for recreation and tourism has become increasingly important over recent decades. The co-operation of those involved in land management, tourism and development management is therefore vital to the successful management of the AONB.

Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)

Delivery of the AONB Management Plan is encouraged through effective partnership working, rather than through enforcement. Since it was constituted in 1986, the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) has been responsible for strategic liaison and decision-making between the wide range of partner organisations and interests within the AONB.

The AONB JAC objectives are to:

- Protect, conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the Forest of Bowland AONB
- Promote the sustainable social and economic development of the area, particularly where such activity conserves and enhances the environment
- Encourage enjoyment of the area where it is consistent with the first two objectives

The current JAC membership comprises the following organisations:

- Lancashire County Council
- North Yorkshire County Council
- Craven District Council
- Lancaster City Council
- Pendle Borough Council

- Preston City Council
- Ribble Valley Borough Council
- Wyre Council
- Lancashire Association of Local Councils (*representing Parish Councils*)
- Yorkshire Local Councils Association (*representing Parish Councils*)
- Natural England
- United Utilities plc
- Environment Agency
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Ramblers Association
- Moorland Association
- Bowland Land Managers Forum
- Bowland Sustainable Tourism Network
- Champion Bowland (*A registered charity, supporting the aims and objectives of the AONB*)
- Friends of Bowland (*'Friends' group to support volunteering in the AONB*)

AONB Unit

The Forest of Bowland AONB benefits from dedicated staff, who are responsible for co-ordinating and delivering many AONB projects and activities which make a significant contribution to the delivery of the AONB Management Plan. This dedicated staff team is known collectively as the AONB Unit. The responsibility of the AONB Unit includes:

- Coordination and management of the AONB Partnership and the review of the AONB Management Plan
- Develop and manage key projects and activities to support delivery of the AONB Management Plan
- Raise funds to support the delivery of the AONB Management Plan
- Raise awareness about the importance of the AONB

- Working closely with local communities and businesses to increase involvement in the work of the AONB Partnership

The AONB Unit produces a rolling three-year business plan (agreed by the AONB Joint Advisory Committee) with detailed objectives and actions to guide the Unit's day-to-day activities.

Partnership Funders Group (PFG)

A Partnership Funders Group (PFG) primarily comprises officers from the key funding partners (local authorities, United Utilities, Natural England and the Environment Agency), which meets quarterly to help guide the work of the AONB Unit. The PFG considers key Partnership policy and budget issues, and also provides technical and professional advice and assistance to the JAC in fulfilling its obligations.

Other Partnership support

The AONB also benefits from other, additional personnel who work in support of the AONB Partnership. These include:

- Staff and volunteer rangers from both Lancashire Countryside Service and Wyre Coast and Countryside Service working in the AONB. These services focus primarily on access and visitor management in the AONB's gateways, country parks and other "honeypot" sites
- Parish Lengthsman Schemes (supported by the AONB Partnership) operate within the parishes of Barley-w-Wheatley Booth, Blacko, Bolton-by-Bowland and Gisburn Forest, Downham, Goldshaw Booth, Higham-w-West Close Booth, Lawkland, Newton-in-Bowland, Pendleton, Roughlee Booth, Sabden, Sawley and Wiswell. The parish lengthsman carry out small-scale environmental improvement and maintenance tasks on behalf of, and working with, the local community
- Other key AONB partner organisations involved in the delivery of Management Plan actions including Natural England; the Environment Agency; United Utilities; the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside; RSPB; Rivers Trusts, landowners and farmers; tourism businesses; community and voluntary groups and parish councils

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The purpose of the plan

As a nationally important landscape, the Forest of Bowland AONB experiences a variety of management pressures on its landscape, such as changing demands on agricultural land, telecommunication and energy infrastructure, tourism facilities and the need to develop a sustainable rural economy. The Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan seeks to provide a strategic context within which the problems and opportunities that these pressures present are addressed and guided in a way that safeguards the national importance of this special landscape.

The purpose of the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan is to provide a positive and pro-active management framework; highlighting the special qualities of the designated area, the importance of the relevant landscape features and identifying those features which are vulnerable to change.

The Management Plan outlines an integrated vision for future development of the AONB, based on a high level of shared aspirations for the area, taking into account relevant international, national, regional and local policies. It presents objectives specific to the AONB that will enable this vision to be pursued effectively and allocates responsibility for each objective and related actions to relevant partners.

All Management Plan objectives also have regard to the external context of the AONB - that is to say objectives are not solely 'inward looking' and wherever possible aim to take account of the relevant landscapes, communities and key issues outside of the AONB boundary.

Core principles

A number of core principles underpin the Management Plan:

Supporting sustainable land management

Farmers and land managers have played a significant role in creating the landscape as we see it today and are continuing to maintain many of its special qualities. Supporting the retention of viable and sustainable farming and active woodland management, maintaining the rural economy and retaining traditional rural skills are vital factors in keeping the area special.

Sustainable development

This means ensuring that development is sound in environmental, social and economic terms, without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. Within a nationally protected landscape such as the AONB, the landscape and special qualities must be given special consideration in order to achieve sustainable development.

Landscape change

Change in the landscape is inevitable and need not be unwelcome. In the context of AONB designation and the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, the challenge is to manage change in an integrated way, so that it can make a positive contribution both to the social and economic needs of local communities and to the natural beauty and special qualities of the landscape.

Adopting a natural capital and ecosystems approach

By bringing together the three principles of the 'ecosystems approach', we can ensure that the benefits we derive from the natural environment (ecosystem services) are safeguarded and enhanced. The principles are:

- The natural systems that operate within the AONB are complex and dynamic, and their healthy functioning should not be taken for granted
- Those that live and work in and visit the AONB benefit from services provided by the natural environment. These services underpin social and economic wellbeing and have a value – both monetary and non-monetary

- Those that benefit from the services provided by the AONB and those who are involved in the management of them should play a central role in making decisions about them.

Using the ecosystem approach is how the AONB Partnership will work to deliver ‘bigger, better and more joined up’ biodiversity, with greater ecological connectivity and enhanced landscapes that benefit wildlife and people.

Climate change adaptation and mitigation

In responding to climate change, there is a need to understand and adapt to the impacts this change is likely to have on the landscape and to seek ways in which carbon emissions can be reduced. Ensuring that adaptation and mitigation measures do not adversely affect natural beauty and maximising opportunities to improve landscape resilience, such as improving habitat condition and enhancing connectivity are a priority.

How the draft plan was produced

The first Management Plan for the AONB was published in 1995 and the first statutory plan was published in 2004. This draft revised Management Plan 2019 -2024 was published in March 2019. The draft revised Plan is the product of a series of targeted consultation exercises, together with a literature review.

Consultation

Whilst the Management Plan has been reviewed at a time of more limited resources, the AONB Partnership remains committed to offering community involvement and stakeholder engagement in the Review process.

Consultation during the Review process has been carried out both online (via public survey, emails, press releases and social media), face-to-face meetings and correspondence with key AONB partners and formal consultation. Summary reports have been produced and published on the AONB website, documenting comments received during the various stages of consultation during the Review process.

Literature review

The revised Management Plan incorporates the results of a literature review of relevant plans, strategies and policies, and has sought to integrate these

where appropriate. The literature review and subsequent review of the Management Plan was undertaken by the AONB Unit. See Appendix 1 for a list of documents included in the literature review.

The important focus of the AONB Management Plan - and what differentiates it from these other plans and strategies - is its purpose of namely to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Forest of Bowland. However, the AONB Partnership recognises that this can only be achieved by complementing other partners' plans and strategies within the context of the AONB as a whole.

Assessments

The revised Management Plan has been the subject of a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) and screening for the Habitats Regulations. An Environmental Report (for the SEA process) has been produced and consulted upon. In addition, a screening report for the Habitat Regulation Assessment has been produced in consultation with Natural England, the statutory consultee for Habitat Regulations Assessment

POLICY CONTEXT FOR THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan

In January 2018, the Government published 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Environment Plan for the Future'. The Plan sets out the Government's goals for improving the environment, within a generation, and leaving it in a better state than we found it. The Plan forms the culmination of over two years of work and consultation with environmental bodies, including close work with AONB Partnerships via the National Association for AONBs.

The Plan refers specifically to AONBs in Chapter 2 under 'Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes', in which it states:

"...the creation of designated landscapes – which also include Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty AONBs – has been among the outstanding environmental achievements of the past 100 years. They provide a patchwork of stunning, and protected, landscapes. In England, a quarter of our landscape is designated in this way, around 10% as National Parks and 15% as AONBs. We will make sure they continue to be conserved and enhanced, while recognising that they are living landscapes that support rural communities."

Under Section 2 'Conserving and enhancing natural beauty', the Plan also states that:

"Over the next 25 years we want to make sure they [AONBs and National Parks] are not only conserved but enhanced. Many of the policies set out in the rest of the Plan will contribute to making all areas more beautiful..."

Furthermore, the Plan then outlines two specific actions the Government wishes to undertake in relation to AONBs and National Parks, firstly to commission a '21st Century Hobhouse' Review of AONBs and National Parks and secondly, to work with and AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards and National Park Authorities to deliver environmental enhancement, including through demonstrator projects, and engaging with communities through their statutory management plans.

The UK's National Parks and AONBs were created by an Act of Parliament in 1949, following the government's 1947 Hobhouse Report, which remains the basis for most protected landscape designation in England today. Now, 70 years on, the Government has commissioned a review for the 21st Century. The Review, which will complete in autumn 2019, considers coverage of designations, how designated areas deliver their responsibilities, how designated areas are financed, and whether there is scope for expansion. It will also consider opportunities to enhance the environment in existing designations, and expand on the existing plans to connect more people with the natural environment.

Various other actions outlined in the Plan to improve the environment and people's connection with nature are also particularly relevant to AONBs, which include: designing and delivering a new Environmental Land Management Scheme; expanding the use of natural flood management solutions; developing a 'Nature Recovery Network' and connecting people with the environment to improve health and well-being. The objectives and actions outlined in the Management Plan will aim to contribute towards the delivery of these actions.

Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

Natural capital assets are the elements of the natural world from which flow a series of services (or benefits) to society. For example, woodland, species rich grassland, wetlands, peatland and other soils are all aspects of natural capital, whilst carbon storage, clean air and water and opportunities for recreation are some of the ecosystem services which flow from them. These services are also influenced by financial and social capital, but at their root is the natural capital that makes their delivery possible.

The special qualities and natural capital assets of the Forest of Bowland AONB landscape provide a wide range of ecosystem services:

- The AONB supports significant wild species diversity, most notably its blanket bog, species-rich meadows, wet grassland, ancient woodlands and hedgerows. This complex mosaic of habitats provide a rich ecological network. The area is important for breeding birds, especially upland species including hen harrier, peregrine, merlin and ring ouzel; and waders such as lapwing, curlew, redshank and snipe.
- AONB farmers produce predominantly extensive beef and sheep on the fells with more intensive beef, sheep and dairy farming within the valleys and lowland fringes. Hill farming systems concentrate on the production of suckler beef and store lambs. In addition, the western fringes of the AONB also support a number of other enterprises including pig, poultry and horticulture.
- Timber is produced from forestry operations and woodfuel and wood products through small-scale woodland management.

- Upland river catchments of the AONB provide water for thousands of homes and businesses in Lancashire and the North West of England. The sustainable management of catchment land by the water utility company, United Utilities, helps to improve water quality; reducing the need for more costly 'end-of-pipe' water treatment.
- Healthy, functioning blanket bog on the tops of the fells acts as a carbon store and work to restore and re-wet areas of blanket bog will help boost carbon sequestration. In addition, these blanket bogs are also important in helping to mitigate downstream flood risk for communities, both inside and out of the AONB.
- The extensive rights of way network and access land areas within many areas of the AONB, offering access to important wildlife sites and places of historical interest, provides excellent recreational opportunities and supports the health and well-being of both residents and visitors.
- Other benefits provided by the AONB landscape include the dispersal and cycling of nutrients, pollination and, with the appropriate technology in the correct location, a source of renewable energy (such as micro-hydro, small-scale wind, solar and biomass). It is also a source of clean air, tranquillity and freedom from noise and light pollution.

Some products like timber have a known financial value, but in other cases, such as the role of bees in pollinating crops or the storage of carbon in woodland and wetlands, we are only just beginning to fully understand their role and value to society and the economy. A better understanding of the natural capital assets and wide range of public benefits provided by the special landscape such as the AONB; and also their value both in monetary and non-monetary terms, can help us design and plan appropriate management activity to ensure that our natural resources and systems are more effectively supported in the future.

Many of the objectives within the Management Plan will influence the management of land and ecosystems in the AONB, and ensure that effective management is helping to sustain and improve the range and quality of ecosystem services that are provided. A brief analysis of natural capital and ecosystem services provided by the AONB landscape can be found in Appendix 2 to the Plan.

Planning and development in AONBs

Development within and close to AONBs is expected to conform to a high standard of design, to be in keeping with local distinctiveness and, fundamentally, seeks to conserve and enhance the AONB's natural beauty.

AONBs enjoy the same levels of protection in planning terms as those of UK National Parks. Responsibility for planning policy and decision-making in AONBs lies with the relevant local authority (whereas in National Parks it lies with the Park Authority). This means that whilst AONB Management Plans themselves do not form part of any local development plan, they are, nevertheless, vitally important documents in the planning system. They are the basis for identifying those aspects of the AONB which are critical in contributing to its natural beauty and potentially influential in the development of planning policy and a 'material consideration' in the determination of individual planning applications and appeals.

The AONB Partnership (and Unit) is not a statutory consultee for planning applications or the formulation of Local and Neighbourhood Plans. Nevertheless, the AONB Unit does provide advice and guidance for local planning authorities on landscape planning matters on behalf of the AONB Partnership. Natural England is the statutory consultee for landscape-related planning matters (alongside its broader land use planning remit for protection and conservation of the natural environment). The AONB Unit liaises with the Natural England's Land Use Planning team on these and other related matters.

National Planning Policy Framework

In 2018, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the Government's current planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The Framework states that:

'The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' and

'...at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development'

The Framework goes on to outline how this can be achieved, within the context of the planning system, through the application of three objectives, namely economic, social and environmental:

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

The Framework confirms that local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for their areas within Local Plans and accordingly deliver the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. It also provides specific planning guidance for development planning and decision-making in relation to AONBs, under Paragraph 172:

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited.'

The 'great weight test' is significant and it is one of the most stringent legal tests that can be applied under planning law. In specific relation to major development, the Framework goes to state that:

'Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;

- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.'*

The Framework also confirms that allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value (counting the AONB as high value), that local planning authorities should set evidence and criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting landscape areas will be judged (development affecting AONBs includes impact on their setting) and that planning should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Landscape Characterisation

Landscape character is defined as “a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse” (Landscape Character Network). Put simply, landscape character is that which makes an area unique or different from neighbouring areas (in much the same way as we use the word “character” to describe differences between people).

National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. Their boundaries follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision making framework for the natural environment. The AONB is largely contained within two NCAs, 'Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill' (NCA 33) and 'Bowland Fells' (NCA 34). A small area of Pendle Hill also falls within 'Lancashire Valleys' (NCA35). For more useful information on National Character Areas, including Area Profiles and Statements of Environmental Opportunity visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles>

In addition national landscape character assessment, a number of local landscape character studies have been undertaken to better understand and describe the character of the Forest of Bowland landscape. The most recent and comprehensive of these is the Forest of Bowland AONB Landscape Character Assessment:

Forest of Bowland AONB Landscape Character Assessment

In 2009, the AONB commissioned a detailed landscape character assessment of the AONB. The overall study consists of two principal sections dealing with landscape classification and managing landscape change respectively. In general, the key characteristics of the AONB landscape, as identified by this landscape character assessment, are as follows:

- Grandeur and isolation of the upland core
- Open expanses of moorland
- Cultural landscape of upland farming
- Historic landscape management as royal hunting forest and more recently as sporting estates
- Rural landscape of dry stone-wall enclosed pastures, stone built farms and villages
- Wooded pastoral scenery and parkland
- Steep scarps, deeply incised cloughs and wooded valleys
- Broad river valleys
- Contrasting gritstone/limestone geology

The landscape character assessment also provides analysis on the landscape sensitivity and its capacity to accommodate change, alongside guidelines for planners, developers, land managers and others on managing landscape change, within each of the landscape character types of the AONB. A copy of the AONB Landscape Character Assessment (2009) is available at: <https://forestofbowland.com/Landscape-Character-Assessment>

DELIVERING THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Vision

The delivery of the AONB Management Plan is guided by the following long-term vision of how the AONB will look in the future:

'The Forest of Bowland landscape retains its sense of local distinctiveness, notably the wide open moorland character of the Bowland Fells, undulating lowland farmland, clough woodlands, traditional buildings and the settlement patterns of its villages, hamlets and farmsteads.

It is a landscape valued for the range of services and benefits it provides for society, with a functioning, diverse natural heritage where land management practices allow opportunity for natural processes to develop and flourish; and where partnership-working between land managers, conservation bodies, communities and businesses is focused on delivering more for nature together.

The rich cultural heritage of the area is also better understood and managed; and both the nature and culture of the area help to support a resilient and sustainable local economy.

The Forest of Bowland is a truly outstanding landscape, where it can clearly be demonstrated that the management of the AONB has conserved and enhanced the quality, understanding and enjoyment of the landscape for all.'

Action Plan

The following action plan section of the Management Plan is organised under three themes:

1. An Outstanding Landscape for Natural and Cultural Heritage
2. Resilient and Sustainable Communities
3. A Strong Connection between People and the Landscape

The action plan outlines information on:

Key issues and forces for change

The key issues affecting the AONB are driven by a number of factors including the profound implications of climate change, uncertainty over the impact of Brexit, development pressure, pursuit of economic growth, demands for recreation and changes in agriculture and the broader economy. These key issues or 'forces for change' outlined are likely to continue to affect the AONB throughout the next plan period. Sections detailing these precede each themed set of objectives and actions. It should be emphasised that they do not discuss these issues at length, but seek to provide an overview and a context within which the Plan will need to operate.

AONB 'Ways of working'

The concept of collaboration and working together with others to achieve success underscores all AONB Partnership work. Most AONB Management Plan delivery needs to be done by encouragement through effective partnership working and not enforcement. Under each outcome, AONB 'ways of working' are detailed; outlining how the AONB Partnership and Unit aims to carry out its day-to-day work.

AONB objectives and actions

AONB Partnership objectives and actions to be delivered during the Plan period are laid out in tabular form and allocate responsibility for these to key partners, alongside the role for the AONB Unit.

1. An Outstanding Landscape of Natural and Cultural Heritage

1.1 Landscape

Apply the guiding principles of the European Landscape Convention, using landscape characterisation as the basis for policy- and decision-making for land and development management, to conserve and enhance natural beauty of the landscape.

Outcome: The landscape is conserved and enhanced, whilst ensuring essential development takes place

1.2 Habitats and Species

Conserve, enhance and restore the AONB's characteristic mosaic of habitats by improving their connectivity, extent and condition; whilst taking targeted action to conserve key species and improving understanding of the biodiversity of the AONB.

Outcome: More and bigger areas of habitat are connected and better managed, with key species conserved

1.3 Historic Environment

Support the conservation, restoration and management of the historic environment and wider cultural landscape.

Outcome: Built and other cultural heritage assets are better understood, conserved and managed

1.4 Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

Seek to better understand and promote the value of the natural capital of the AONB landscape and the public benefits derived from these assets; helping to manage landscape change which conserves and enhances natural beauty.

Outcome: The natural capital of the AONB and the public goods derived from these assets are better understood, valued and promoted

Key Issues and Forces for Change

- International conventions and obligations such as the European Landscape Convention, the Convention on Biodiversity and Climate Change Agreements
- New agricultural policy and support (e.g. 'public money for public goods'), as a result of the UK's exit from the European Union
- New environmental policy and regulatory structures, as a result of the UK's exit from the European Union
- Government ambitions to improve the environment, expressed in 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Environment Plan for the Future', including the development of a 'Nature Recovery Network'
- Increased awareness and recognition of the value of natural capital and the associated ecosystem services that flow from these assets, such as carbon storage and sequestration, water quality, flood alleviation, recreation and people's health and well-being
- Continued persecution and disturbance affecting birds of prey populations
- Limited breeding success of the Hen harrier within the Bowland Fells Special Protection Area
- Continued declines in key species within UK and Ireland (e.g. Curlew)
- Invasive alien species damaging ecosystems (e.g. Signal crayfish in rivers; Himalayan balsam threatening bluebell woodland)
- Lack of woodland management affecting biodiversity, particularly semi-natural clough woodland
- Woodland cover still well below national average (currently covering 8.3% of the AONB), with continued low levels of new woodland creation
- Small, fragmented patches of habitat are vulnerable to loss of biodiversity due isolation and climate changes
- Roadside verge management regimes adversely affecting verges with special biodiversity interest
- Agricultural specialisation, intensification and farm amalgamation is resulting in a loss of semi-natural habitats and historic features, poor soil management and loss of traditional boundaries
- Diffuse and point-source pollution of watercourses from both agricultural and non-agricultural sources
- Intensive fertiliser use and diffuse pollution continues in some areas leading to loss of biodiversity both on and off agricultural land (e.g. roadside verges), as well as affecting water quality
- Potential change to cropping patterns and types of crops, in response to climate change, altering the character of the landscape
- Potential for more hot, dry summers leading to reduced ground water and drying out of moorland habitats, increasing fire risk and release carbon into the atmosphere

- Potential for more intense rainfall events causing flooding within- and downstream of the AONB
- Natural flood management within river catchments increasingly seen as a tool for mitigation of flood risk for downstream communities
- Changes to the planning system, following the publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework e.g. more major development proposals in the AONB
- Pressure for new development and building conversion in open or exposed landscapes, which can be more visually intrusive
- Increased demand for locally, affordable homes
- Traditional agricultural buildings becoming redundant and replaced with large, modern buildings
- Construction of new tracks in open countryside for farming, forestry and moorland management purposes
- Potential development of unconventional gas exploitation (i.e. hydraulic fracturing or 'fracking') infrastructure within the AONB setting
- Small-scale, cumulative development (e.g. building extensions, residential boundary treatment, roadside concrete curbing and signage) resulting in erosion of integrity and quality of the landscape
- Increasing role of neighbourhood planning
- Development, traffic and lighting within- and beyond the boundary of the AONB increasingly affecting its tranquility
- Lack of awareness of geodiversity value of the AONB
- Loss of traditional skills reducing the ability to effectively manage the traditional landscape features and buildings of the AONB

AONB 'Ways of Working'

Landscape

- Participate in a range of fora and networks to represent landscape interests and encourage the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB

Habitats and Species

- Encourage habitat creation, restoration and the buffering of existing habitats in line with 25 Year Environment Plan objectives (and appropriate to landscape character), aiming to create more, bigger and more connected habitats
- Commitment to applying a 'Natural Capital and Ecosystems Approach' to management of the AONB landscape

- Collaborate with Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and other national, sub-regional and local environmental organisations and interests through a range of fora, to co-ordinate actions for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity within the AONB
- Promote, encourage and facilitate 'High Nature Value' farming through provision of advice and guidance to land managers on the new Environmental Land Management System, post-Brexit
- Maintain regular communications with Defra and Natural England regarding development of the new Environment Land Management System

AN OUTSTANDING LANDSCAPE OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE			
OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	KEY PARTNER(S)	AONB Unit
[1.1] Landscape Apply the guiding principles of the European Landscape Convention, using landscape characterisation as the basis for policy- and decision-making for land and development management, to conserve and enhance natural beauty of the landscape.	[1.1A] Provide landscape planning advice and guidance for local planning authorities, highway authorities, government agencies, local communities and developers based on the Forest of Bowland AONB Landscape Character Assessment 2009.	Local planning authorities Highway authorities Natural England Environment Agency Forestry Commission Utility companies	Lead & Advise
	[1.1B] Influence planning and development policy-making at a local, county and national level by responding to consultations for relevant plans and strategies, e.g. neighbourhood plans, local plans and national planning policy guidance.	Local planning authorities Parish Councils Neighbourhood planning groups Natural England Environment Agency	Lead & Encourage
	[1.1C] Carry out a 'refresh' of the AONB Landscape Character Assessment, focusing on new and emerging forces for change affecting the AONB.	Natural England Local planning authorities	Lead
	[1.1D] Develop and review bespoke policy statements and guidance on current landscape planning issues affecting the AONB landscape, including statements on AONB development principles, renewable energy, lighting and design guidance notes (e.g. building design, moorland tracks, fencing).	Natural England Local planning authorities	Lead & Support
	[1.1E] Develop an AONB Woodland Strategy to conserve and enhance existing woodlands, promote the creation of new native and mixed woodlands and address the impact of tree health issues.	Woodland owners Forestry Commission Woodland Trust Rivers Trusts YDMT	Lead

	[1.1F] Continue to deliver 'Traditional Boundaries' programmes (via both the AONB and Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership), supporting training and competitions to help manage traditional boundaries and promote traditional rural skills.	Lancashire and Westmorland Hedgelaying Association Drystone Walling Association Farmers and landowners Natural England	Lead & Support
	[1.1G] Continue to work with Electricity North West Limited (ENWL) on the 'Undergrounding for Visual Amenity' programme to remove overhead powerlines in 'landscape-sensitive' locations within and close to the AONB.	ENWL OFGEM RII0-ED1 Parish Councils	Support & Advise
	[1.1H] Develop and deliver a 'landscape enhancement' project (focusing on management of traditional boundaries and woodland creation) to address the impacts of National Grid's high-voltage, overhead power lines in the AONB and its setting, with a view to submitting a bid to National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative.	Local authorities Rivers Trusts Parish Councils Farmers and landowners Local flood forums Lancashire and Westmorland Hedgelaying Association Drystone Walling Association	Lead & Support
	[1.1I] Work with geodiversity partnerships to increase awareness and understanding of importance of geodiversity in the AONB landscape, seeking to build it into AONB Partnership activity or projects, wherever relevant.	GeoLancashire North Yorkshire Geodiversity Partnerships Quarrying companies	Support & Encourage
[1.2] Habitats and Species Conserve, enhance and restore the AONB's characteristic mosaic of habitats by improving their connectivity, extent and condition; whilst taking targeted action to conserve key species and improving	[1.2A] Support farmers and landowners to conserve, enhance and restore land in nationally and internationally important wildlife sites, ensuring that at least 95% of SSSIs in the AONB are in favourable or recovering condition and at least 50% in favourable condition by 2024.	Farmers and landowners Natural England	Support, Advise & Encourage
	[1.2B] Support farmers and landowners to conserve, enhance and restore priority habitats outside SSSIs, focusing on local wildlife sites.	Farmers and landowners LERN NEYEDC Rivers Trusts	Support, Advise & Encourage
	[1.2C] Develop a pilot nature recovery area within the AONB, as part of the Government's proposals for 'Nature Recovery Network', outlined in its '25 Year Environment Plan'.	Defra Natural England	Lead & Support

understanding of the biodiversity of the AONB.		Environment Agency Forestry Commission Rivers Trusts NUC LNP	
	[1.2D] Work with moorland owners to develop long-term moorland management plans in the AONB, with a focus on features of the Bowland Fells SSSI being on a path to favourable condition (see 1.2A).	Moorland owners Natural England	Support, Advise & Encourage
	[1.2E] Work with moorland owners to deliver landscape-scale projects to restore and re-wet at least 250 ha. of blanket bog habitat, including: Pennine Peat LIFE Project; Northern England Peat Project, Ribble Life and United Utilities PR19.	Moorland owners Defra Lancashire Peat Partnership Natural England Environment Agency United Utilities Rivers Trusts LWT	Lead & Support
	[1.2F] Work with farmers, landowners and local communities to deliver projects to conserve, enhance and restore at least 15ha. of species-rich grassland habitat; including Bowland Haytime & Bee Together.	Farmers and landowners Local community groups Smallholders Natural England YDMT	Support, Advise & Encourage
	[1.2G] Support the creation and establishment of at least 200 ha. of new native and mixed woodland that enhances the AONB landscape, with priority given to projects that conserve and enhance existing key habitats and species, increase carbon storage, keep rivers cool and help reduce flooding.	Farmers and landowners Woodland agents Forestry Commission Natural England Woodland Trust YDMT Rivers Trusts	Support, Advise & Encourage
	[1.2H] Support woodland owners to actively manage existing woodlands to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity, whilst identifying opportunities for sustainable timber production and woodland products.	Woodland owners & agents Forestry Commission	Support, Advise & Encourage
	[1.2I] Influence, test and trial the development of the Government's proposed 'Environmental Land Management System' to offer support for farmers and landowners to conserve, enhance and restore priority habitats in the AONB, including species-rich grassland, wet grassland, peatland and woodland.	Defra Natural England Environment Agency RSPB Rivers Trusts	Lead, Support & Advise

		LWT	
	[1.2J] Support a catchment-based approach to the delivery of projects to conserve, enhance and restore riparian habitat; including Ribble Life Together, Pendle WINNS.	Catchment Partnerships Rivers Trusts Environment Agency Natural England	Support & Advise
	[1.2K] Work with farmers and landowners to improve the condition of the Lune, Ribble and Wyre, so that at least 90% of all rivers achieve 'good ecological status' by 2027.	Farmers and landowners Catchment Partnerships Rivers Trusts Environment Agency Natural England	Support & Encourage
	[1.2L] Support 'Restoring Sustainable Abstraction' (RSA) Programme being delivered by the relevant authorities and United Utilities on Wyre and Calder (Wyre) catchments	Environment Agency United Utilities Rivers Trusts	Support & Encourage
	[1.2M] Devise and deliver local species recovery plans for threatened or priority species either locally or nationally; ensuring synergy with national species recovery plans, where these exist or are under development; including curlew, hen harrier, black grouse and threatened or locally important plant species.	Farmers and landowners Natural England RSPB GWCT NUC LNP	Lead, Advise, Encourage
	[1.2N] Work with moorland managers and other key partners to implement a local approach to combat and eradicate illegal persecution of raptors, including survey work, satellite tagging and monitoring, co-ordinated hen harrier nest protection and winter roost site monitoring.	Moorland managers Defra Natural England Raptor Persecution Priority Deliver Group Police RSPB Moorland Association	Lead, Support & Encourage
	[1.2O] Support key partners to address invasive non-native species (INNS) where these impact on the AONB, including coordination of surveying, volunteer tasks days and specialist work via contractors	Local authorities LWT Rivers Trusts EA Forestry Commission Friends of Bowland Pendle Hill Volunteer Group	Lead, Support & Encourage
	[1.2P] Support research and monitoring of habitat extent/condition and priority species (both S41 and local priority species) for the AONB, including blanket bog, species-rich grassland, birds of prey, waders, aquatic species, pollinators.	Natural England LWT Rivers Trusts YDMT	Lead, Support & Advise

		LERN NEYEDC NUC LNP	
[1.3] Historic Environment Support the conservation, restoration and management of the historic environment and wider cultural landscape	[1.3A] Work with statutory agencies to monitor, manage and conserve designated heritage assets; identifying any which become 'at risk' and developing management plans to remove assets from the 'Heritage at Risk' register (HAR).	Historic England Natural England Lancashire Archaeological Advisory Service Local history groups	Support & Advise
	[1.3B] Develop and deliver landscape-scale projects and activity which celebrate, conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape, cultural heritage and special qualities of the AONB; including Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership and Ribble Life Together.	Local authorities Parish Councils Pendle Hill LP Local history groups Friends of Bowland Ribble Rivers Trust Tourism businesses UCLan Archaeology Champion Bowland Heritage Lottery Fund Arts organisations	Lead, Support & Encourage
	[1.3C] Support community-based projects to conserve, enhance and restore historic landscape features; to help increase access to- and understanding of the historic environment and cultural heritage.	Pendle Hill LP Historic England Friends of Bowland Local history groups Slaidburn Archive Champion Bowland Heritage Lottery Fund UCLan Archaeology Arts organisations	Support & Advise
	[1.3D] Develop and improve information to raise awareness and understanding of the wider historic environment of the AONB, using print and digital media and appropriate on-site interpretation.	Pendle Hill LP English Heritage Local history groups Slaidburn Archive Champion Bowland Ribble Rivers Trust Historic Houses Association Tourism businesses	Lead, Support & Advise
[1.4] Natural Capital and Ecosystems Services	[1.4A] Carry out research into the value of natural capital and ecosystems services provided by the natural environment of the AONB and disseminate to a wider audience;	Natural England Environment Agency Pendle Hill LP	Lead & Support

Seek to better understand and promote the value of the natural capital of the landscape and the public benefits derived from these assets; guiding land and development management decision-making to increase the natural capital of the AONB.	including Pendle Hill LP's 'What's A Hill Worth' and Upper River Wyre Natural Flood Management scoping research.	Rivers Trusts Ecosystems Knowledge Network	
	[1.4B] Develop a more detailed local evidence base on the natural capital assets and ecosystem services for the AONB; using GIS to map these assets and services.	Environment Agency Natural England Rivers Trusts LWT LERN NEYEDC NUC LNP	Lead & Support
	[1.4C] Carry out a more in-depth 'Ecosystems Approach' self-assessment of the AONB Partnership and its activities, helping to deliver outcomes outlined in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan	Natural England NAAONB	Lead
	[1.4D] Use the developing evidence base on natural capital and ecosystems services to influence and shape local delivery of the Government's proposed 'Environmental Land Management System', which prioritises support for the supply of public goods such as biodiversity, carbon, natural flood management, water quality and access to the countryside.	Defra Environment Agency Natural England Farmer and landowners Rivers Trusts LWT LERN NEYEDC NUC LNP	Lead & Support
	[1.4E] Investigate and trial local delivery of potential mechanisms for investment in natural capital, such as Peatland Code, Woodland Carbon Code and Net Gain for Nature.	Local planning authorities NUC LNP Rivers Trusts IUCN Peatland Programme Forestry Commission	Lead, Support & Encourage

2. Resilient and Sustainable Communities

2.1 Farming and Land Management

Encourage, promote and support farming and land management practices that help to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

Outcome: The farming and land management of the AONB delivers more for nature, farmers, land managers, and the public

2.2 Sustainable Tourism

Develop, co-ordinate and promote sustainable tourism activity within and close to the AONB.

Outcome: The local economy benefits from the promotion and development of sustainable tourism in the AONB

2.3 Local Economy and Rural Services

Promote and support rural services and the socio-economic development of the area, particularly where such activity helps to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

Outcome: The AONB is not disadvantaged due to its rurality, in particular access to services and utilities, business support, training and skills

2.4 Community Engagement and Volunteering

Support local communities and businesses to become more involved in activities and projects to conserve, enhance and celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of the AONB.

Outcome: Local communities and businesses are supported to become involved in activities and projects to conserve, enhance and celebrate nature, culture and landscape

Key Issues and forces for change

- New trade agreements, agricultural policy and support for farmers due to the UK leaving the EU, creating uncertainty and increased pressures on livestock farming.
- Centralisation of processing facilities has reduced the ability of producers to supply local markets
- Potential impact on the rural economy of the UK leaving the EU, including uncertainty around future of rural development funding from Government
- Increasing competition from other countryside destinations and the need to retain tourism market share
- Lack of public transport and reliance on the private car
- Loss of services in rural settlements due to economies of scale, changes in Government policy and reduced funding for public services, and changing purchasing habits leading to reduction in rural sustainability and negative impacts on those without a car
- Limited access to full time jobs locally
- Lack of affordable housing for people working in the AONB
- Roll-out of superfast broadband is patchy and has still not reached the more remote areas of the AONB
- Reduced opportunities for rural businesses to capitalise on latest information and communication technology (ICT) due to inconsistent broadband coverage
- Increased risk and frequency of flooding in lowland areas/river valleys where most settlements are situated
- Ageing farm workforce with fewer younger farmers to replace those that are retiring. This can lead to: i) fewer people to look after the land; ii) conversion of farm units into small gentrified hamlets; iii) increased commuting into neighbouring towns, resulting in more traffic on minor roads
- Ageing population in general, leading to fewer young families and younger people living in the AONB, this in turn could result in a loss of skills, knowledge and engagement with the AONB landscape

AONB 'Ways of Working'

Farming and Land Management

- Work closely with farmers, landowners and land managers (via farmer networks and groups) to liaise with- and involve the land management sector in AONB projects and activity
- Work closely with farmers, landowners and land managers to ensure effective communications within the AONB Partnership and with government agencies relating to land management decisions affecting the area
- AONB partners and government agencies to engage, consult and respond to the reasonable concerns of land owners, managers and farmers prior to making decisions which affect their interests, rights and responsibilities

Sustainable Tourism

- Support and encourage tourism businesses to sign up to AONB Sustainable Tourism Charter and adopt environmentally and landscape sensitive practices e.g. energy efficiency and use, waste management, lighting, etc.
- Actively recruit and support sustainable tourism partners and green tourism accredited businesses to the Bowland Sustainable Tourism Network
- Encourage businesses and partners to support and promote AONB publications and leaflets
- Collaborate with Marketing Lancashire, Welcome to Yorkshire and local authority tourism officers to promote the AONB as a sustainable tourism destination
- Ensure consistent use of AONB and Pendle Hill LP branding on website, print, communications, mobile apps and social media

Local Economy and Rural Services

- Support housing and workspace proposals within the area, where the development meets local housing, employment and business needs and where it will also conserve and enhances the natural beauty of the AONB landscape
- Review and remain up-to-date with current rural growth and development funding mechanisms, raising awareness as appropriate
- Wherever possible, support and promote local businesses, products and services in the delivery of AONB projects and activity

Community Engagement and Volunteering

- Work with local communities throughout the AONB
- Ensure local communities are fully informed, consulted and involved with regard to AONB planning and activities, wherever possible seeking to include a diverse range of people (e.g. age, ethnicity, ability and interests)

- Support communities in identifying and celebrating their local distinctiveness
- Continue to work alongside Champion Bowland, as a local registered charity with its aim to support the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB
- Incorporate volunteering into the delivery of AONB projects, wherever possible.
- Seek to remove barriers to participation when developing AONB projects and activities

RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES			
OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	KEY PARTNER(S)	AONB Unit
[2.1] Farming and Land Management Encourage, promote and support farming and land management practices that help to conserve and enhance natural beauty.	[2.1A] Promote and provide advice on land management practices which to help conserve and enhance the landscape, based on within the Forest of Bowland AONB Landscape Character Assessment, e.g. woodland management plans, felling licence applications, agri-environment scheme agreements.	Farmers and landowners Natural England Environment Agency Forestry Commission Rivers Trusts Moorland Association	Advise & Encourage
	[2.1B] Develop and support farmer networks and forums within the AONB, to help advocate for- and promote 'high nature value' (HNV) farming in the uplands, at both a local and national level.	Pendle Hill Farmers Network Loud Catchment Farmers Group Long Preston Floodplain Farmers Group Abbeystead Farmers Group Bowland Land Managers Forum Northern Hill Farmers Panel NUC LNP	Lead, Support & Advise
	[2.1C] Co-ordinate and provide training and knowledge transfer opportunities to promote good practice in HNV farming, e.g. catchment sensitive farming, rush management, natural flood management measures, soil health and farming for waders.	Pendle Hill Farmers Network Loud Catchment Farmers Group Long Preston Floodplain Farmers Group Abbeystead Farmers Group Rivers Trusts YDMT RSPB Yorkshire Dales National Park	Lead, Support & Advise

	[2.1D] Influence, test and trial new approaches to the Government's proposed Environmental Land Management System, using the AONB Management Plan as the basis for the priorities of new schemes in the AONB and proposing the area as a testbed, where appropriate and when opportunity arises.	Pendle Hill Farmers Network Loud Catchment Farmers Group Long Preston Floodplain Farmers Group Abbeystead Farmers Group Bowland Land Managers Forum Northern Hill Farmers Panel NUC LNP Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority	Lead, Support & Advise
	[2.1E] Pilot the Foundation for Common Land's 'Hill Farmer Training Scheme' in the AONB, to allow environmental and countryside advisors and practitioners the opportunity to gain an understanding of the unique challenges, benefits and opportunities of farming in the uplands.	Farmers and landowners Foundation for Common Land NUC LNP Northern Hill Farmers Panel Northumberland National Park Authority	Support, Advise & Encourage
	[2.1F] Provide opportunities for both employers and trainees to benefit from apprenticeships in countryside and land management and traditional rural skills; including Upskilling Lancashire, Pendle Hill LP and Green Futures.	Myerscough College Other FE Colleges Ribble Rivers Trust YDMT Young Farmers Groups	Lead & Support
	[2.1G] Support the development of a local woodland economy linked to more active woodland management, identifying opportunities for sustainable timber production and woodland products.	Woodland owners and agents Forestry Commission Woodland Trust Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB	Lead, Advise & Encourage
[2.2] Sustainable Tourism Develop, co-ordinate and promote sustainable tourism activity within and close to the AONB.	[2.2A] Continue to support the Bowland Sustainable Tourism Network (BSTN), working with a network steering group drawn from the business members to lead new sustainable tourism activity in the AONB.	BSTN members BSTN steering group Local authority tourism officers Marketing Lancashire Welcome to Yorkshire	Lead, Support & Encourage
	[2.2B] Provide advice, support, networking and business mentoring opportunities for sustainable tourism businesses in the AONB	BSTN members BSTN steering group	Lead & support

	[2.2C] Work with BSTN steering group to establish new 'Sustainable Tourism Partner' criteria linked to positive actions by the participating businesses.	BSTN members BSTN steering group	Lead, Support & Advise
	[2.2D] Develop and promote an AONB 'Sustainable Tourism Partner' branding similar to the Pendle LP locator logos.	BSTN steering group Pendle Hill LP Local authority tourism officers Marketing Lancashire Welcome to Yorkshire	Lead & Encourage
	[2.2E] Support and advise tourism businesses, helping to identify and promote 'year-round', sustainable tourism opportunities in the AONB e.g. seasonal activities, local produce, easy access trails, environmental activity-based breaks, visiting via public transport and car-free itineraries and an electric car charging network.	BSTN members New tourism businesses	Lead & Support
	[2.2F] Co-ordinate and promote training opportunities for tourism businesses to help conserve, enhance and celebrate the AONB landscape, e.g. 'Know Your AONB' and Sense of Place, green accreditation and dark skies tourism.	BSTN members BSTN steering group Local authority tourism officers	Lead & Support
	[2.2G] Refresh the AONB Sense of Place Toolkit for use by businesses to promote the special qualities of the AONB, alongside the development of a new 'Discover Pendle Hill' Toolkit.	BSTN members BSTN steering group Pendle Hill LP Local authority tourism officers Marketing Lancashire Welcome to Yorkshire	Lead & Support
	[2.2H] Develop opportunities for 'visitor-giving' linked with tourism businesses e.g. the 'Landmark Trees' scheme supporting establishment of new trees outside woodlands	Champion Bowland BSTN members BSTN steering group Tourism businesses	Lead, Support & Advise
[2.3] Local Economy and Rural Services Promote and support rural services and the socio-	[2.3A] Work with local authorities and service providers to retain access to services (e.g. health centres, post offices, schools, shops, public transport, public toilets and parking) within local communities of the AONB and resist developments which would result in their loss	Local authorities Parish Councils NHS service providers	Support & Advise

economic development of the area, particularly where such activity helps to conserve and enhance natural beauty.	[2.3B] Work with key partners and service providers to support the delivery of 'landscape-sensitive' delivery of super and hyper-fast broadband and mobile telecommunication networks throughout the AONB.	Local authorities Parish Councils Telecommunications service providers Broadband UK	Advise & Encourage
	[2.3C] Support and liaise with key partners seeking to develop initiatives to address issues of rural crime, e.g. theft of livestock and plant machinery, wildlife crime, sheep worrying and fly-tipping.	Police Local authorities Lancashire Partners Against Crime Farmers and landowners Pendle Hill Farmers Network	Support & Encourage
	[2.3D] Continue to support parish lengthsman schemes within the AONB to assist in conserving and enhancing the local environment of AONB parishes.	Parish Councils	Support & Advise
	[2.3E] Advise and encourage local communities and businesses to engage with- and access future rural growth and development funding programmes	Local authorities Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Defra Bowland Sustainable Tourism Network Bowland Land Managers Forum	Advise & Encourage
	[2.3F] Provide opportunities for both employers and trainees to benefit from apprenticeships in the wider rural economy (e.g. tourism sector and creative industries)	FE Colleges and Universities Bowland Sustainable Tourism Network Tourism businesses Arts organisations	Lead & Support
	[2.3G] Work with estate landowners and local planning authorities to pilot the development of estate-wide masterplans, to address local housing needs and maintain or enhance the vitality of the local community.	Local planning authorities Landowners Parish Councils	Encourage & Advise
	[2.4A] Coordinate activities to raise awareness of the AONB designation and the work of the AONB Partnership within local communities.	AONB Joint Advisory Committee Members AONB partner organisations	Lead & Encourage

[2.4] Community Engagement and Volunteering Support local communities and businesses to become more involved in activities and projects to conserve, enhance and celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of the AONB.	[2.4B] Provide support and advice for community-based projects and activities, which help to conserve, enhance and celebrate the nature, culture and landscape of the AONB.	AONB partner organisations	Lead & Advise
	[2.4C] Support Champion Bowland to continue to offer small grants for community-based projects and activities which conserve, enhance and celebrate the nature, culture and landscape of the AONB.	Champion Bowland	Support
	[2.4D] Deliver and support community engagement through the arts and other creative industries, particularly via Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership, which includes the Gatherings, Pendle Radicals and Pendlefolk.	Pendle Hill LP In Situ Mid Pennine Arts Pendlefolk volunteer group	Lead & Support
	[2.4E] Support and promote volunteering activities, involving a diverse range of people, which help deliver the AONB Management Plan objectives and conserve, enhance and celebrate the nature, culture and landscape of the AONB.	Friends of Bowland Other site-based 'Friends' Groups Pendle Hill Volunteers Wyre Coast and Countryside Service Ribble Rivers Trust	Lead, Support & Encourage
	[2.4F] Support volunteer groups involved in the management of countryside sites, recreational facilities in and around the AONB, e.g. Bowland Visitor Centre at Beacon Fell, Spring Wood, Crook o' Lune & Hermitage Field and Gisburn Forest and Stocks.	Lancashire County Council Countryside Service Wyre Council Coast and Countryside Service Other local authority countryside staff Friends of Bowland United Utilities Forestry Commission	Lead, Support & Advise

3. A Strong Connection between People and the Landscape

3.1 Countryside Access

Maintain and improve access to the countryside in a sustainable way for a diverse range of people and that promotes responsible, safe and quiet enjoyment.

Outcome: Access to the countryside is maintained and improved for more- and a wider range of people

3.2 Visitor Management and Information

Provide high quality visitor facilities, information, events and activities to enable people to enjoy, understand and celebrate the AONB's special qualities.

Outcome: Visitor information and interpretation engages a wide audience and supports the visitor economy

3.3 Discovering and Learning

Provide opportunities to discover and learn about the special qualities of the AONB by connecting people with nature, culture and the landscape

Outcome: More and a wider range of people benefit from opportunities to discover, learn about and engage with the natural and cultural heritage of the AONB and the work of those who look after it

3.4 Health and Well-being

Provide opportunities for people to improve their health and wellbeing by connecting with nature, culture and the landscape

Outcome: The natural and cultural heritage of the AONB provides opportunities to improve people's health and well-being

Key Issues and forces for change

- Pressure on popular 'honeypot' destinations resulting in erosion and potential loss of habitat, tranquillity, damage to archaeological sites and diminished visitor experience
- Management and maintenance of Public Rights of Way (and AONB 'Promoted Routes') when public services remain under significant budgetary pressure
- Significant reductions in countryside service staff 'on the ground' at key countryside sites (e.g. Bowland Visitor Centre and Beacon Fell Country Park)
- Existing bridleway network remains fragmented
- Low density of footpaths in some areas of the AONB (e.g. Lune valley)
- Illegal use of motorcycles and 4x4 vehicles on public rights of way, access land and designated conservation sites
- Rising visitor numbers increasing the use of private cars to popular visitor sites, thus detracting from the visitor experience
- Increased incidence of inconsiderate, road-side parking, particularly at and adjacent to popular visitor sites
- Localised problems of litter and fly-tipping
- Increased risk of moorland fires in upland areas, started either accidentally or deliberately
- Increased demand for organised recreational events within the AONB (including through SSSI land) which have the potential to damage habitats or disturb wildlife
- Lower public awareness and understanding of the AONB designation (in comparison to National Parks)
- Increased awareness of the benefits accessing the natural environment to improve people's health and well-being
- Low participation in AONB and Festival Bowland events by younger people, low-income families and BAME communities
- Managing the competing demand for both traditional print media and on-line, digital media when creating interpretation and publicity

AONB 'Ways of Working'

Countryside Access

- Consider and address the landscape impacts of access improvements, particularly on moorland and fells and seek to improve well used routes on Access Land, where possible
- Consider opportunities to facilitate discussions with landowners about dedication of land for public access (including public rights of way), where appropriate
- Promote and encourage the use of high quality materials for PRoW 'furniture' that are in keeping with the local landscape (e.g. wooden footpath signs), wherever possible
- Continue to work closely with Natural England, Local Access Forums and landowners in relation to management of access land, particularly to assist with any planned review of Access Land maps

Visitor Management and Information

- Promote attractions away from 'honeypot' sites in order to attract visitors to less visited parts of the AONB
- Continue to work closely with local authority countryside services to help maintain effective management of countryside sites (e.g. country parks, picnic sites, car parks and lay-bys) in the AONB
- Encourage sustainable development and management of new visitor destinations in the AONB (e.g. Stephen Park in Gisburn Forest)
- Regularly review AONB print media to update and reprint where cost effective.
- Continue to work with and support tourism businesses to promote the area's recreational, wildlife and cultural heritage offer in a sustainable way
- Maintain the AONB and Pendle Hill LP websites as hubs for visitor information and resources for partner organisations
- Make regular use of social media to communicate with AONB partners, visitors and communities

Health and Well-being

- Share research and best practice in the role of landscape and the natural environment to improve people's health and well-being at a local and national level

A STRONG CONNECTION BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THE LANDSCAPE			
OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	KEY PARTNER(S)	AONB Unit
[3.1] Countryside Access Maintain and improve access to the countryside in a sustainable way for a diverse range of people and that promotes responsible, safe and quiet enjoyment.	[3.1A] Maintain and improve the Public Rights of Way network and signage, making necessary repairs and improvements to AONB 'Promoted Routes' and strategic routes/links in and around the AONB.	Lancashire County Council PRow North Yorkshire County Council PRow Farmers and landowners Promoted Routes Volunteers Lancashire Local Access Forum Ramblers Association British Horse Society Bridleways Groups	Lead & Support
	[3.1B] Develop and promote countryside access opportunities for all, seeking to meet the needs of a diverse range of users; considering use of least restrictive access furniture, appropriate surfacing and special signage.	Pendle Hill LP Farmers and landowners Forestry Commission Disabled Ramblers Bentham Community Rail Partnership British Horse Society Bridleways Groups	Lead & Support
	[3.1C] Support the development and delivery of new multi-use, strategic routes, particularly those linking visitor gateways and communities to the wider PRow network in and around the AONB, e.g. Pendle Hill LP 'Access for All' and Settle to Gisburn Forest off-road link..	Lancashire County Council North Yorkshire County Council Farmers and landowners YDMT Lancashire Local Access Forum Ramblers Association British Horse Society Bridleways Groups	Lead & Support
	[3.1D] Support volunteers to help survey and maintain the PRow network, particularly focusing on AONB 'Promoted Routes'.	'Promoted Routes' volunteers Wyre Council Coast and Countryside Service	Lead & Support

	[3.1E] Work with landowners to assist with management of 'Access Land', in particular dissemination of information on restrictions or closures for land management purposes or wildfire risk.	Farmers and landowners Commons Associations & Graziers Groups Lancashire County Council North Yorkshire County Council Lancashire Fire Operations Group	Support & Advise
	[3.1F] Review and renew signage and information boards at important and well-used access points to 'Access Land' in the AONB, using the Pendle Hill LP 'Access for All' project to pilot this review and renewal.	Farmers and landowners Commons Associations & Graziers Groups Lancashire County Council North Yorkshire County Council Pendle Hill LP Ramblers Association Lancashire Local Access Forum	Lead
	[3.1G] Maintain concessionary routes and countryside access created via agri-environment schemes, where these are important or valued links in the wider countryside access network.	Farmers and landowners Lancashire County Council North Yorkshire County Council Ramblers Association Lancashire Local Access Forum	Support & Advise
	[3.1H] Investigate the potential for creation of new countryside access via the Government's proposed new Environmental Land Management Schemes	Defra Natural England	Lead
[3.2] Visitor Management and Information Provide high quality visitor facilities and information to enable people to understand	[3.2A] Facilitate meetings/fora between key partners on access and visitor management issues for popular visitor sites and hubs e.g. Pendle Hill, Gisburn Forest and Stocks and Beacon Fell Country Park.	Lancashire County Council Countryside Service Wyre Council Coast and Countryside Service Local authorities United Utilities Forestry Commission Pendle Hill Advisory Group	Lead & Support

and enjoy the special qualities of the AONB	[3.2B] Promote responsible and safe access for visitors to the countryside (e.g. Countryside Code and advice on walking with dogs) via all media channels and on-site information and signage.	Farmers and landowners Local authorities Pendle Hill LP	Lead & Encourage
	[3.2C] Work with Lancashire County Council Countryside Service to develop plans for sustainable, future management arrangements for key LCC countryside sites in the AONB, e.g. Beacon Fell Country Park & Bowland Visitor Centre, Carwags Picnic Site, Spring Wood and Crook o' Lune.	Lancashire County Council Friends Groups	Support & Advise
	[3.2D] Play an active role in the Lancashire Fire Operations Group (FOG), helping to maintain up-to-date fire plans for moorland areas and raise awareness of the risk and impacts of wildfire in the AONB.	Moorland owners Moorland Association Lancashire Fire Service Natural England Local authorities	Support, Advise & Encourage
	[3.2E] Manage, improve and, where appropriate, create new visitor interpretation and information, using both print and digital media to raise awareness of the special qualities of the AONB landscape, e.g. Pendle Hill LP 'Access for All' project.	Pendle Hill LP AONB partner organisations	Lead, Support & Advise
	[3.2F] Produce an annual AONB Discovery Guide, including event listings for Festival Bowland.	AONB partner organisations Tourism businesses Festival Bowland steering group	Lead
	[3.2G] Review and rationalise AONB visitor leaflets, and where resources allow, re-print existing- and produce new leaflets.	Tourism businesses Local authority tourism officers Marketing Lancashire	Lead
	[3.2H] Work with Community Rail Partnerships to promote the AONB to rail users via visitor information at stations, promotions and other AONB-related project activity	Community Rail Partnerships Northern Rail Tourism businesses	Support & Encourage
	[3.2I] Re-instate, replace or renovate AONB boundary signs on key routes into the AONB, as required and where funding allows.	Parish Councils	Lead

[3.3] Discovering and Learning Provide opportunities to discover and learn about the special qualities of the AONB by connecting people with nature, culture and the landscape	[3.3A] Organise, support and promote an annual Festival Bowland programme of AONB and partner-led events for both visitors and local communities	AONB partner organisations Festival Bowland steering group Marketing Lancashire	Lead & Support
	[3.3B] Support and promote other externally-organised events that raise awareness of the special qualities of the AONB	Communities and businesses Marketing Lancashire	Support
	[3.3C] Work with Ernest Cook Trust to develop and deliver outdoor learning opportunities alongside the Pendle Hill LP for the LP area and surrounding communities, e.g. 'Little Saplings' pre-school groups, family activities, school visits.	Ernest Cook Trust Pendle Hill LP LWT Ribble Rivers Trust Schools Colleges Pre-school groups Youth groups Scouts Young farmers	Lead & Support
	[3.3D] Investigate and develop opportunities to extend outdoor learning to other areas of the AONB	Ernest Cook Trust LWT Rivers Trusts Burnley FC in the Community (Whitehough Education Centre) Schools Colleges Pre-school groups Youth groups Scouts Young farmers	Lead & Support
	[3.3E] Work with Champion Bowland to support the 'AONB Farm Visit Transport Fund' for farms with educational access in the AONB, whilst investigating the opportunities to extend the scope of the Fund to include other countryside and outdoor learning venues.	Champion Bowland Ernest Cook Trust Schools Colleges Pre-school groups Youth groups Scouts Young farmers	Lead & Support

	[3.3F] Deliver 'outreach' activities to encourage a more diverse range of people to learn about, engage with- and visit the AONB, particularly through Pendle Hill LP projects and activity.	Pendle Hill LP In Situ Mid Pennine Arts Burnley FC in the Community (Whitehough Education Centre) YDMT	Lead & Support
[3.4] Health and Well-being Provide opportunities for people to improve their health and wellbeing by connecting with nature, culture and the landscape	[3.4A] Develop and strengthen links within the health sector to promote the importance of landscape and the natural environment in improving people's health and well-being.	Lancashire County Council Lancashire Health and Well-being Board Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust Clinical Commissioning Groups	Lead & Encourage
	[3.4B] Deliver projects and activities in the AONB that deliver health and well-being outcomes, including the 'People Enjoying Nature' project, easy access trails, dementia-friendly trails and activities, active volunteering and inclusive events.	Pendle Hill LP Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust Burnley FC in the Community (Whitehough Education Centre) Bentham Community Rail Partnership Disabled Ramblers AONB partner organisations	Lead & Support
	[3.4C] Carry out research to assess the importance and value of landscape and the natural environment in improving people's health and wellbeing, via the Pendle Hill LP project 'What's A Hill Worth'.	Pendle Hill LP Natural England Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust	Lead

Monitoring

The Management Plan is not an end in itself. Monitoring is required in order to identify whether or not the Plan is achieving the purpose of designation – to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB.

Monitoring has been undertaken in the form of State of the AONB Reports (in 2016 and 2018). These provide some of the evidence on which this Management Plan is based and forms a baseline for monitoring over the next 5 years. The next State of the AONB Report will be produced in 2020.

Future monitoring will take two forms:

- Monitoring performance: to establish how well the AONB Partnership is progressing in delivering the Plan's objectives and actions; and
- Monitoring condition: to establish whether the special qualities/features of the AONB are in favourable condition, potentially showing improvements, no change or deterioration and hence whether the aim of conserving and enhancing the AONB is being achieved.

Monitoring performance will involve collecting data (where this available) from partners to demonstrate delivery. Performance will also be monitored by reviewing progress on actions in the AONB Unit Business Plan. An AONB Annual Report will also be produced detailing progress with implementation of the Plan and summarising achievements of the AONB Partnership.

Monitoring condition will make the best use of data collected by a range of organisations and interest groups. It is important that changes in condition are monitored against a baseline set of evidence, and a number of indicators for which data is readily and easily available are used for this process. As new issues present themselves, new indicators may be needed and an initial baseline will need to be established.

APPENDIX 1 - LITERATURE REVIEW

Directive, plan, strategy
INTERNATIONAL
Agenda 21 (1992)
Convention on Biodiversity (1993)
The Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2016)
Convention on Biodiversity, Aichi Targets (2010)
UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972)
EUROPEAN
European Landscape Convention (2000, with UK adoption 2007)
The Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), (1979)
The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), (1992)
Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020, European Commission, 2011
The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)
The Waste Framework Directive, (2008/98/EC)
The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC)
EC Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information, (2003)
The European Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Valetta Convention)
The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada Convention)
The Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC)
NATIONAL
Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended), (1981)
Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW), (2000)
Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)
Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)
Sustainable Energy Act (2003)
Secure and Sustainable Buildings Act (2004)
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, (1979)

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act, (1990)
Climate Change Act (2008)
Localism Act (2011)
Growth and Infrastructure Act (2013)
Water Act (2014)
Energy Act (2016)
Neighbourhood Planning Act (2017)
'The Natural Choice', the Natural Environment White Paper (Defra, 2012)
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (HM Government 2018)
Water for Life, the Water White Paper (Defra, 2011)
Local Transport White Paper 2011
Revised National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2018)
The Agriculture Bill (2018)
Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (Defra 2011)
Natural England Designations Strategy, July 2012
The Great Britain Invasive Non Native Species Strategy, Defra, Scottish & Welsh Governments (2015)
Natural Capital Committee's State of Natural Capital Report (2017)
State of the Nature Report (2016)
UK Geodiversity Action Plan (2009)
Historic England Corporate Plan 2018 -2021
Conservation Principle, Policy and Guidance, English Heritage (2008)
The UK Industrial Strategy (2016)
UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009)
Securing the Future – Delivering the UK Sustainable Development Strategy (Defra, 2011)
Safeguarding our Soils – A Strategy for England (Defra 2011)
Draft Clean Air Strategy (HM Government 2018)
Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement (Forestry Commission 2013)
A Tourism Action Plan (DCMS 2016)
Public Health England Strategic Plan (2016)
A Sporting Future – A New Strategy for a Sporting Nation (DCMS 2015)

LOCAL
Craven District Council Local Plan (adopted 1999)
Craven Local Plan (Submission Draft, 2018)
Lancaster District Local Plan (adopted 2004)
Lancaster District Core Strategy (adopted 2008)
Replacement Pendle Local Plan 2001 – 2016 (adopted 2001)
Pendle Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (adopted 2015)
Preston Local Plan 2012 – 2026 (adopted 2015)
Central Lancashire Core Strategy for Preston, South Ribble and Chorley (adopted 2012)
Central Lancashire Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2012)
Central Lancashire Design Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2012)
Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan (adopted 1998)
Ribble Valley Core Strategy (adopted 2014)
Wyre Local Plan (Submission Draft 2018)
Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Development Framework (2009)
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan for North Yorkshire, North York Moors National Park and City of York (Submission Draft, 2017)
A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire, Lancashire County Council Environment Directorate, 2000
Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill National Character Area 33 Profile (2012)
Bowland Fells National Character Area 34 Profile (2012)
Lancashire GAP 2010, GeoLancashire
Lancashire Historic Landscape Characterisation Programme (2000)
Planning guidance for renewable energy – Lancashire (2011)
Lancashire Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2015 - 2025
North Yorkshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2015 - 2025
Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Strategy (Lancashire County Council/NHS)
Lancashire Visitor Economy Strategy and Destination Management Plan 2016 - 2020
Welcome to Yorkshire, Our five year strategy for the Yorkshire Brand 2012 - 2017
Lancashire's Strategic Economic Plan 2015 -2025
York, North Yorkshire and the East Riding Strategic Economic Plan 2015 - 2021
North West River Basin Management Plan 2015

North West River Basin District Flood Risk Management Plan 2015 - 2021
Lune & Wyre catchment abstraction management strategy (2013)
Ribble, Douglas & Crossens catchment abstraction management strategy (2013)
Local Transport Plan 2011- 2021 - A Strategy for Lancashire
North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan, 2016 - 2045
Lune Catchment Flood Management Plan, Summary Report December 2009
Ribble Catchment Flood Management Plan, Summary Report December 2009
Wyre Catchment Flood Management Plan, Summary Report December 2009
Lancashire Climate Change Strategy 2009-2020,

APPENDIX 2 – ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN THE FOREST OF BOWLAND AONB

Ecosystem Services are the benefits which the environment provides to society. In the Forest of Bowland the obvious benefits are the natural resources such as food, fuel and water; however there are many others too, see the table below. The aim behind identifying ecosystem services is to attempt to attach a value to these services provided by the landscape, in order to assess its importance to society. Services are divided into four categories:

Provisioning Services: natural resources provided by the landscape, for example via farming and forestry: food, wood, water and fuel are included

Regulating Services: systems within the landscape which regulate the wider environment, for example via the water cycle and pollination: these include clean air and water, fertile and stable soils and climate regulation

Cultural Services: non-material opportunities created by the landscape to enable people to enjoy and benefit from the environment: these include recreation, a sense of place and heritage, tranquillity, education and tourism

Supporting Services: these are the basic services which make up the infrastructure of the environment, the wildlife and habitats, geodiversity, soil development, and water and nutrient cycling

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN THE FOREST OF BOWLAND AONB		
Provisioning Services	RELEVANT OBJECTIVES	MP
Food: farmers produce predominantly extensive beef and sheep on the fells with more intensive beef, sheep and dairy farming within the valleys and lowland fringes. Hill farming systems concentrate on the production of suckler beef and store lambs. In addition, the western fringes of the AONB also support a number of other enterprises including pig, poultry and horticulture. Locally produced meat and dairy products contribute to the area's economy and this also contributes to the attraction of tourists to the area. The area also produces game (red grouse, pheasant and partridge) and is a rich fishing ground (notably for salmon and trout) on both still-waters and on the rivers	1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3	
Water: Bowland is a water gathering area. United Utilities owns approximately one third of the upland core as catchment, but nearly all of the upland core is used as a source for drinking water, as well as some of the fringing farmland. UU abstract both from streams on the moorland, on the edge of the moorland, as well as from some of the lower stretches on rivers such as the Wyre and Lune. Some of this water goes direct to WTW at Lancaster and	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.1	

Garstang, in other places water is stored in reservoirs at places such as Stocks, Barnacre, Barley, Longridge and Blackburn. Populations across North Lancashire, Bowland, Fylde, Preston and the Ribble Valley areas receive their water supply either wholly, or in part, from the Bowland Fells.	
Timber: there are a number of coniferous plantations in the AONB which are managed sustainably for timber production, notably at Gisburn Forest. There are also good opportunities for increased extraction of timber from broadleaved woodlands: providing fuel and timber for local use	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.1
Energy: the AONB offers a significant resource for the production of renewable energy generation, particularly small-scale wind, solar and hydro, woodfuel and biomass	1.1, 1.4, 2.1
Rock and minerals: Historically, the AONB has seen lime extraction industries up until late 19 th century and lead mining operations also in the 19 th century. Today, there are a number of active quarries within the AONB providing various stone, aggregate and clay brick products	1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 2.3
Supporting Services	
Wildlife habitats and species: The AONB contains over 16,000 ha of nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (covering 20% of the AONB), much of it being blanket bog and heather moorland, covering the high fells – but also notable upland hay meadows and ancient woodlands. The complex mosaic of habitats including grasslands, woodland, hedgerows and moorland provide a rich ecological network. The area is important for breeding birds especially upland species including hen harrier, peregrine, merlin and ring ouzel; and waders such as lapwing, curlew, redshank and snipe. This international importance for birds is recognised by the designation of the Bowland Fells (approx. 16,000 ha) as a Special Protection Area (SPA). In addition, numerous rivers and watercourses provide habitats for salmon, brown and sea trout, as well as birds such as kingfisher, dipper, grey wagtail, common sandpiper and oystercatcher. Otters are also present along rivers on the northern side of the Bowland Fells. This biodiversity is vital to sustaining the ecosystems and to providing an attractive natural environment for people to enjoy	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4
Geodiversity: underlying limestones, gritstones and shales create the AONB's basic landforms. These were modified by glaciations and the resulting wide river valleys, meltwater troughs and moraines add to the area's character. River erosion and deposition also create important features such as fans and channel erosion; and a number of quarries exist for small and large scale extraction of building stone and aggregates, and for cement production. There are both nationally and locally important sites designated for their geological importance within the AONB	1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.3, 3.4
Nutrient cycling: plants and animals are responsible for cycling and re-cycling nutrients within natural systems, e.g. for breaking down of decayed matter and for enabling natural fertilisers to enrich the farmland. If inputs are increased artificially to this system then it can be thrown off balance and result in over enriched soils and eutrophication of water bodies	1.2, 1.4, 2.1
Cultural Services	
Sense of place: the Forest of Bowland AONB has a distinctive sense of place drawn from its contrasting and complementary landscapes: with a mixture of pastures, parkland and hedgerows in the lowlands and large expanses of moorland used for sheep grazing and grouse shooting on the higher fells. Settlements are small and dotted around the foothills, river valleys are often steep and wooded. This distinctive character lends a feeling of 'a step back in time' to the area and adds to its attraction for visitors	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1
Heritage: the area holds almost 900 listed buildings and designated heritage assets (818 Listed Buildings, 48 Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, 20 Scheduled Monuments and one Registered Park and Garden), ranging from Bronze Age and Roman through medieval and Tudor. The area's distinctive dry stone walls reflect the parliamentary enclosure acts of the 18 th and 19 th centuries, and the former hunting Forests date from Norman times. Village and farm	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1

settlements illustrate the influence of Norse invaders right through to small scale 18 th and 19 th century industries. The area's history adds to its tourism and education offer	
Tranquillity: whilst over 99% of the Bowland Fells can be classed as undisturbed, this falls to 76% in the fringe area due to the impact of traffic noise in the M6/A6 corridor and along other main roads and around the larger settlements outside the AONB boundaries. The Bowland Fells also offer some of the darkest skies in England with low levels of pollution. Tranquillity and 'dark skies' can add to the tourism offer of the area as well as to residents' health and well-being.	1.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2
Recreation: the Forest of Bowland has a very good network of public rights of way in many parts and over 25,000 ha of open access land. This attracts a large number of walkers and increasing participation by horse riders and cyclists, both on and off-road. There are also good opportunities for less mobile country-lovers with a network of easy access trails; and for birdwatchers, anglers and shooting parties. The area's food and drink offer is of a very high quality and attractive pubs and tearooms provide a clear link between locally produced food and drink and the visiting public. Beacon Fell country park is managed by Lancashire County Council and attracts approximately 200,000 visits a year	2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4
Tourism: The AONB was awarded the European Charter for sustainable tourism in protected areas in both 2005 and 2010. It co-ordinates and encourages tourism businesses in the area to trade in a sustainable and sympathetic manner, promoting the AONB as a 'green tourism' destination. The landscape and natural beauty of the area, together with its wildlife and history, is seen as the key draw for visitors: and therefore contributes directly to the local economy	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2
Knowledge and education: The AONB partnership offers a large number of opportunities for both formal and informal education – including school visits to farms, arts workshops and performances, bird watching safari's, field studies for students; and opportunities for volunteering in traditional countryside skills. The Festival Bowland programme regularly offers over 120 events and attracts in excess of 1200 participants	2.1, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4
Health & wellbeing: Visits to the countryside provide excellent opportunities for gentle walking and relaxing days out. These can contribute to individual's health and wellbeing, at a minimal cost	2.3, 3.4
Regulating Services	
Regulating climate change: carbon dioxide is absorbed by farmland and woodland and perhaps most importantly by blanket bog. Restoring blanket bog and eroding peat so that it can become an active carbon store is a vital contribution to mitigating against climate change. Adapting to climate change can also be achieved through the AONB environment, especially when considering flood management (see below)	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3
Regulating soil erosion: the risk of soil erosion in the AONB is high; due to the high peat content, steep slopes and high rainfall of the area. Increasing drought may also lead to soil erosion. Improving vegetation cover, reducing over grazing, and controlling burning and recreational pressures can all help to reduce soil erosion in a sustainable manner	1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2
Regulating soil quality: soil compaction and loss of organic matter can be reduced if soil is managed sustainably by reducing stock and human pressure; and by reducing the impact of flash flooding	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.1
Regulating water quality: reducing water colouration by managing the uplands in a sustainable manner has already shown, via the United Utilities SCaMP programme in Bowland, that land management can have economic benefits. Likewise water quality can be improved using natural processes, such as filtering and decomposition. Water quality tends to be good in the headwaters of the AONB, falling to moderate downstream	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.1

Flood control: re-wetting of the moorlands to store carbon also helps the blanket bog habitat to retain heavy rain downpours and to reduce flash flooding, run off, erosion and the flooding of downstream communities, particularly larger urban populations outside the AONB. Additional works such as enabling floodplains to absorb high river levels and floodwater (as at Long Preston on the Ribble), can also help to reduce flood risk in downstream areas	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.1
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APPENDIX 3 - LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BHS	Biological Heritage Site
BLMF	Bowland Land Managers Forum
CPRE	Campaign for the Protection of Rural England
CRoW	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
CSF	Catchment Sensitive Farming
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EA	Environment Agency
ELC	European Landscape Convention
ENWL	Electricity North West Limited
FOG	Fire Operations Group
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
AONB JAC	AONB Joint Advisory Committee
LAF	Local Access Forum
LCC	Lancashire County Council
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
LERN	Lancashire Environmental Records Network
NUC LNP	Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LWT	The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Greater Manchester and North Merseyside
NAAONB	National Association for AONBs
NE	Natural England
NERC	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
NEYEDC	North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NYCC	North Yorkshire County Council

Ofgem	Office of Gas and Electricity Markets
Pendle WINNS	Pendle Woodland and Invasive Non-Native Species Project
PFG	AONB Partnership Funders Group
PR19	Ofwat (Water Services Regulation Authority) Price Review 19
PRoW	Public Rights of Way
RIIO-ED1	Revenue = Incentive + Innovations + Outputs Electricity Distribution Round 1
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SINC	Site of Interest for Nature Conservation
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TIC	Tourist Information Centre
UCLan	University of Central Lancashire
UVA	Undergrounding for Visual Amenity
YDMT	Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust

CONTACTS AND INFORMATION

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Email: pendlehill.lp@lancashire.gov.uk

Web: <https://pendlehillproject.com/>

Response ID ANON-MW92-FHYV-C

Submitted to **Landscapes Review: Call for Evidence**

Submitted on **2018-12-18 09:56:37**

About you

1 Are you replying as a member of the public or on behalf of an organisation?

Organisation

2 If you are replying as a member of the public

What is your name?:

If you enter your email address then you will automatically receive an acknowledgement email when you submit your response. We may also use this to contact you further.:

3 If you are replying on behalf of an organisation or organisations

Which organisation(s)?:

Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership

What is your name and position?:

Elliott Lorimer, Forest of Bowland AONB Manager

If you enter your email address then you will automatically receive an acknowledgement email when you submit your response. We may also use this to contact you further.:

elliott.lorimer@lancashire.gov.uk

4 We would like to be able to use extracts from submissions in our final report. If you would not like them, potentially, to be made public, please tell us here.

Yes, I am content for you to use extracts of my response in the final report

5 We have obligations under freedom of information laws and there is more information below. For the purposes of these laws, would you like your response to be confidential?

No

If you have answered yes, please give your reason:

Before anything else

6 We would love to know what makes National Parks and AONBs special to you

Upload :

001 graham cooper.jpg was uploaded

Yes, you can use my photo online or in the report

Part 1 - Opening thoughts

7 What do you think works overall about the present system of National Parks and AONBs in England? Add any points that apply specifically to only National Parks or AONBs

Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response, and would like to emphasise the following points with regard to AONBs:

- AONB Partnerships are trusted and work in collaboration across sectors to help deliver the statutory purposes
- AONB Partnerships are locally accountable and work closely with the communities and businesses
- AONBs foster an approach which welcomes innovation and new ways of working, which can then be rolled out elsewhere

8 What do you think does not work overall about the system and might be changed? Add any points that apply specifically to National Parks or AONBs

Please write your answer here:

Whilst the original purposes of AONBs are still vital in the 21st century and AONB Partnerships continue to affect change locally to further these purposes, the pressures upon AONBs have changed and intensified over time. These changes, in many cases, come as a result of national policies and incentives (e.g.

intensification of land management practices or inappropriate development) and have resulted in the slow, 'drip-drip' degradation of these special landscapes. The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response, and would like to emphasise the following points with regard to AONBs:

- The statutory purposes should be aligned with National Parks, specifically to include wildlife and cultural heritage into the first purpose, and adding as a subsidiary purpose the promotion and understanding of the area's special qualities.
- The weaker 'duty of regard' should be replaced with a 'duty of due regard' which would provide all relevant bodies with a clear framework within which to operate.
- Giving AONB staff teams the capacity to play a leading role in the local delivery of agri-environment and new environmental land management schemes and to deliver action for climate change adaptation and mitigation can be implemented at the policy level.
- Governance models and resourcing should be reviewed to meet local needs and opportunities. All AONBs are under-resourced to meet local needs and deliver on national priorities.

Part 2 - Views

9 What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in nature conservation and biodiversity?

Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the NAAONB response.

Landscapes are integral to nature conservation and biodiversity enhancement. Landscape quality is underpinned by significant extents of semi-natural habitats with consequent benefits to species conservation. Forest of Bowland AONB is nationally and internationally important for its blanket bog and heather moorland habitats and its upland bird species, in particular the threatened hen harrier.

The AONB Partnership supports wildlife conservation by brokering collaboration and securing significant external funds for wildlife conservation from Heritage Lottery, Defra, Natural England, Environment Agency, European Union, Landfill Tax, visitor giving and local delivery partner contributions. This work encompasses:

- Direct land interventions by contractors, partner staff and volunteers e.g. upland hay meadow or blanket bog restoration
- Adviser time to broker land management or agri-environment agreements e.g. Bowland Haytime and Pendle Hill Farmer Network
- Brokering and convening partnerships between conservation organisations and landowning / land managing representatives and individuals, such as peatland restoration initiatives such as Pennine Peat LIFE Project and Northern England Peat Project.

Could they do more to enhance our wildlife and support the recovery of our natural habitats?:

Yes, undoubtedly. Adequately resourced AONBs and National Parks are ideally places to deliver positive action to enhance our wildlife and biodiversity on a landscape-scale.

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response, but would like to emphasise that the Designated Landscapes are ready to play a central role in supporting the creation of a Nature Recovery Network.

10 What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in shaping landscape and beauty, or protecting cultural heritage?

Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response, and would like to emphasise that AONBs and National Parks play a central and leading role in the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty in this country, contributing to the nation's wellbeing and sense of identity.

The Forest of Bowland AONB holds almost 900 listed buildings and designated heritage assets (including 818 listed buildings, 48 Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, 20 Scheduled Monuments and one Registered Park and Garden). In addition, the area is also known for its wealth of cultural traditions and expressions connected with the landscape. Collectively, these historic and cultural elements of the environment serve to enrich the landscape's meaning, value and natural beauty.

The Forest of Bowland AONB has been pivotal in attracting funding from HLF and Arts Council to support a range of projects to conserve, enhance, restore and celebrate the area's heritage, from Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership celebrating this Lancashire landmark to Bowland Revealed placing temporary artworks in the AONB.

This role can be strengthened by

- changing the 'duty of regard' to a 'duty of due regard'
- placing a duty for the relevant authorities to support the delivery of the management plans they are required to develop
- statutory consultee status for AONB units

11 What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in working with farmers and land managers and how might this change as the current system of farm payments is reformed?

Please write your answer here:

AONBs and National Parks play a key role in working with farmers and landowners. Few (if any) AONBs own or control land, therefore it is critical that they work closely with land managers to conserve, enhance and restore landscape, nature and heritage. The Forest of Bowland AONB Unit has significant experience in working with farmers and landowners and has developed a level of trust with land managers to the point where they readily participate in development and delivery of new initiatives in the AONB.

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response, and would like to emphasise that:

- AONB Management Plans can act as the basis for the targeting and priorities for public investment in public goods through the new ELMS
- AONB Partnerships should be given the capacity to play a leading role in the local delivery of agri-environment schemes

12 What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in supporting and managing access and recreation?

Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response.

AONBs and National Parks play an important role in managing access and recreation. The AONB encompasses approximately 1400km of public rights of way and 25,000ha. of access land.

However for AONBs, key improvements and enhancements to access made over recent decades are increasingly being eroded away whilst local authorities struggle to manage and maintain good countryside access as they cope with continued budget cuts. The AONB Unit is employed through Lancashire County Council, and in the absence of well-resourced local authority services is increasingly called upon to act as the main interface between the local authority, land managers and recreational user groups, despite not having any statutory duty in this regard.

13 What views do you have about the way National Park and AONB authorities affect people who live and work in their areas?

Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response.

Many AONB Partnerships play a key role in initiating and animating rural growth and development within their communities. The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership has done this over the last two decades with a particular focus on supporting farm diversification, sustainable tourism, creative industries and the land management sector.

The Forest of Bowland AONB was the first Protected Area in England to receive the EUROPARC Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas in 2005 (and re-awarded in 2010), recognising how the AONB Partnership worked with local tourism and visitor economy businesses. The AONB Unit continues to support the Bowland Sustainable Tourism Network, working with over 120 businesses across the area.

In 2013, the AONB Partnership commissioned an analysis of the economic profile of the area to help the AONB partners and businesses to influence and become engaged in the rural growth agenda (e.g. LEADER, EAFRD, ESF, Superfast Rural Broadband). For example, with encouragement from the AONB Unit, businesses, farmers and landowners have been engaged in- and become representatives on LEADER LAGs.

In 2018, the AONB has partnered with local tertiary education providers (including Myerscough College) in the 'Upskilling Lancashire' project (supported by ESF) to raise awareness and prepare businesses to take on apprentices. The project will work across sectors from land management businesses to the tourism and the creative industries.

Are they properly supporting them and what could be done differently?:

The AONB Sustainable Development Fund granted almost £600,000 (with over £1.1m in matched funds) until its closure was agreed by the AONB Partnership in 2017. The SDF provided an excellent mechanism for engaging with- and supporting local community priorities. A new, enhanced SDF would help to AONB Partnerships to better support communities to become more resilient and sustainable.

14 What views do you have on the role National Park and AONB authorities play on housing and transport in their areas?

Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response.

However, the continued budget cuts affecting provision of local public transport services by local authorities impacts heavily on AONBs and National Parks ability to promote and include sustainable transport options for local people and visitors.

Where services do still exist the AONB Unit works hard to ensure all visitor information included public transport information. The AONB Partnership has worked closely with Bentham Line Community Rail Partnership to develop visitor information and onward transport connections for visitors to the AONB.

Part 3 - Current ways of working

15 What views do you have on the way they are governed individually at the moment? Is it effective or does it need to change, if so, how?

Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response, and would like to emphasise that:

- There is no statutory duty on AONB partnerships or, more importantly, local authorities to implement their management plan. This should be addressed as a fundamental in strengthening current governance arrangements.

- AONB Partnerships could be strengthened if all relevant authorities being given a duty of 'due regard' and a statutory adviser to government appointed with responsibility to ensure that this duty is carried out.

- Flexibility of governance models for AONBs which reflect local circumstances is an advantage and should be retained.

16 What views do you have on whether they work collectively at the moment, for instance to share goals, encourage interest and involvement by the public and other organisations?

Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response.

Working collaboratively is seen as essential to delivering the AONB Management Plan, involving many sectors, organisations and individuals.

The Forest of Bowland AONB Unit is also an active participant in collaborative activity between and across Designated Landscapes, in particular through the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership (involving North Pennines and Nidderdale AONBs and Northumberland and Yorkshire Dales National Parks), the Northern AONB Group and nationally through the NAAONB.

17 What views do you have on their efforts to involve people from all parts of society, to encourage volunteering and improve health and well-being?

Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response. This response highlights some of the more recent examples of where AONB Partnerships have been developing activity to improve people's health and well-being by re-establishing people's connections with landscape, nature and heritage. However, it should be noted that proceedings and reports that led to the 1949 Act recognised the importance of landscapes and natural beauty for not only people's physical health, but their 'spiritual wellbeing and inspiration'.

The Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership (supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund) was established in 2017 and is led by the AONB Partnership and Unit. The LP has been developing new activity to help reconnect people with landscape, nature and heritage:

- The 'People Enjoying Nature' Project is offering people with mental health and social isolation issues supported activities and volunteering in the natural environment

- Working partnership with the Ernest Cook Trust, the Pendle Hill LP is developing outdoor learning from toddlers to young adults

- Volunteering opportunities throughout the Pendle LP area, from environmental tasks to archiving and community archaeology

The AONB Unit has also worked with Bentham Line Community Rail Partnership to provide dementia friendly trails and supported visits for people suffering from dementia and their carers to the countryside using public transport.

18 What views do you have on the way they are funded and how this might change?

Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response and would like to highlight the key issues experienced locally:

- The vulnerabilities arising from local authority hosting and match funding for core AONB work, given the continued budget cuts in local government (averaging 50% since 2010). The Review panel may wish to consider how local authority commitments to delivering on their statutory duties in relation to AONBs can be strengthened.

- The reduction in- and increased competition for funding available to manage Designated Landscapes (e.g. HLF, EU, Landfill Tax, Rural Growth). The review panel may wish to consider how sustainable AONB Partnerships are in this current funding climate and how this might be addressed.

- The stability and predictability of Government funding for Designated Landscape.

We would recommend that funding agreements should mirror 5-year Management Plan periods

- The disparity in funds provided by Government for AONB management in comparison to those for National Park management

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership welcomes the Review as an opportunity to explore new funding models and new ways of delivery, but fundamentally it and other Designated Landscapes still need Government support to form a base from which to carry these new models forward.

19 What views do you have on the process of designation - which means the way boundaries are defined and changed?

Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response.

20 What views do you have on whether areas should be given new designations? For instance, the creation of new National Parks or AONBs, or new types of designations for marine areas, urban landscapes or those near built-up areas.

Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response.

21 Are there lessons that might be learnt from the way designated landscapes work in other parts of the United Kingdom, or abroad?

Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response.

Part 4 - Closing thoughts

22 Do you think the terms currently used are the right ones? Would you suggest an alternative title for AONBs, for instance and if so what?

Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response, which cautiously suggests that some change of term for AONBs may be desirable.

Perhaps the term 'National Landscapes' could be used when referring to both National Parks and AONBs collectively? 'Designated' or 'Protected' Landscapes are technical terms that likely fail to resonate with the public.

23 The review has been asked to consider how designated landscapes work with other designations such as National Trails, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Special Protected Areas (SPAs). Do you have any thoughts on how these relationships work and whether they could be improved?

Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership endorses the National Association for AONBs response.

Almost 20% of the AONB is designated as SSSI, which includes over 16,000ha designated as an SPA for its upland bird assemblages and two SACs including parts of the North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC. In addition to the cultural heritage designations mentioned in our response to Q10, each designation has a specific purpose and contributes to the conservation of the AONB.

24 Do you have any other points you would like to make that are not covered above?

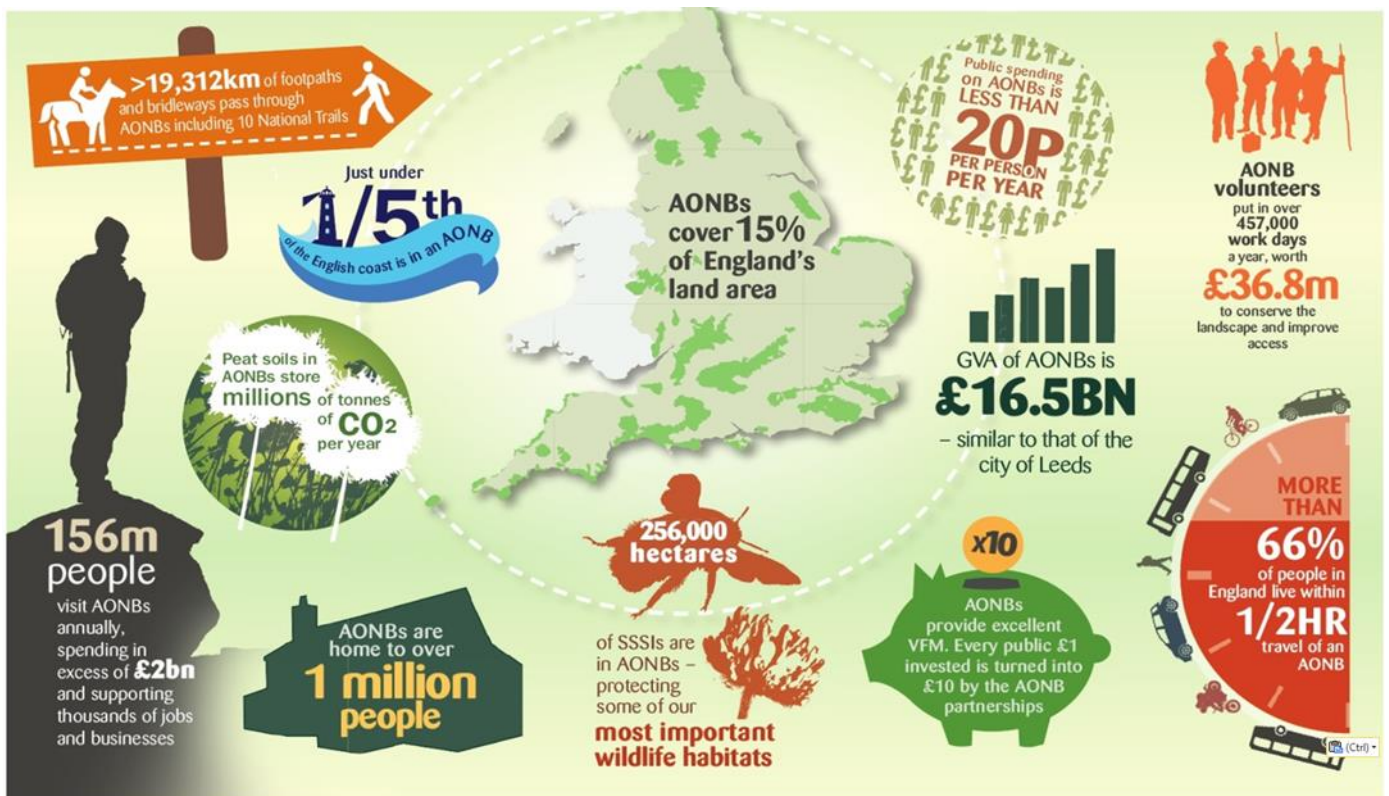
Please write your answer here:

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership is pleased to have had the opportunity to contribute evidence to the Review, which is a 'once-in-a-lifetime' chance to affect positive change for not only Designated Landscapes, but also the nature, heritage and people that make these places so special.

The AONB Partnership wishes the Review Panel well and looks forward to receiving a visit to the Forest of Bowland in 2019.

‘Outstanding!’

The AONB Family’s evidence to the Review of England’s National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty



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Introduction

Part 1 - Opening thoughts

AONBs are treasured national assets and deliver benefits beyond their boundaries

Q 6. *We would love to know what makes National Parks and AONBs special to you*

England's 34 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty cover 15% of the land surface. They comprise some of our most beautiful and cherished landscapes. They are rightly regarded as treasured natural assets and are valued throughout the world. They produce immense benefits beyond their boundaries:

- They are places with strong, individual identities based on recognisable and distinct character.
- They have great environmental, social, and cultural importance with values derived largely from the interaction of people and nature over time.
- They are all accessible and are visited annually by over 150 million people who appreciate them as places for their recreational and health benefits and their rich [natural and cultural values](#).
- Their natural and semi-natural ecosystems are relatively rich in wildlife and play an important role in maintaining environmental quality; their trees and woodlands recirculate atmospheric gases; their upland peats and lowland wetlands are a vital storehouse of carbon, retain rain and help to ensure a supply of water for homes and industry.
- Their farms and rural industries are an important source of [food and other agricultural products, timber, craft products and firewood](#).
- They are an integral part of England's diverse, and dynamic, cultural identity. They have inspired generations of [writers, artists, poets, film makers](#), and [composers](#) and form the cultural backcloth to many people's lives – residents and visitors.
- They are home to around a million people who live in the thriving communities of their small market towns, villages and hamlets. They provide a livelihood for those who work in or around them.
- These benefits come at a very low cost to the taxpayer – less than 20p per person per year.

AONBs optimise the potential of England's finest landscapes

7. What do you think works overall about the present system of National Parks and AONBs in England? Add any points that apply specifically to only National Parks or AONBs.

AONBs are part of a global network of protected areas and have served the nation well since their creation by the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. They have withstood the test of time, are trusted, locally and nationally, have proved themselves capable of adapting to changed circumstances and acting as the focus for innovation.

Key elements in the present effectiveness and success include:

- The AONB partnership structure, in particular the mix of locally accountable elected members representing all relevant local authorities, with officers from national agencies and local interest groups. This provides an effective and democratic structure for deciding local priorities and co-ordinating shared programmes of action.
- The relevance of AONB partnerships' work to national and local policy objectives. Sustainable development, the ecosystems approach and the environment as an economic driver and determinant of health and wellbeing are all core tenets of the AONB purpose and have widespread acceptance in national and local policy.
- AONBs have long been recognised by Government as potential 'test beds' for new ways of working that can subsequently be applied outside AONBs.
- Access to external project funding including Lottery monies together with the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) has meant that AONB partnerships/Conservation Boards have a track record in pioneering innovative projects to support sustainable tourism, healthy communities and take forward landscape scale ecological restoration in the light of pressures such as climate change.
- New ways of working with the private and voluntary sectors (such as through community interest companies, charitable trusts and friends' groups) take advantage of the different mix of skills and resources that these institutional models can offer and have potential to fill some of the spaces left by a smaller public sector.
- Dedicated AONB staff teams whether based on Local Authority structures or in Conservation Boards provide AONB partnerships with delivery capacity, long term credibility and local expertise; they provide flexibility, the ability to react quickly to opportunities and enable partnerships to 'punch above their weight'.
In all the above, collaboration and learning are key. The great range of experience and variety of approaches within and between AONBs is facilitated by the National Association which coordinates their lead officers and staff to ensure that the benefits of cooperation and collaboration are widely shared and result in behavioural change within and beyond individual AONB partnerships.
- National Park Authorities and the two AONB Conservation Boards have a second purpose to increase the understanding and enjoyment by the public of the special qualities of the area. This gives formal legitimacy to the need to address issues of public engagement and manage recreation opportunities.
- All National Park Authorities in England are the statutory local planning authority for land within their boundary, responsible for all aspects of planning, including all development management. The ability to create their own local development plans to

frame their planning policy ensures they are better able to align development planning decisions and the delivery of their purposes.

AONBs could do even better with relatively simple changes

Q 8. What do you think does not work overall about the system and might be changed?

Despite the successes of AONBs, individually and as a family, public awareness remains low and the designation is little understood, often being seen primarily as a descriptive term.

- Wildlife and cultural heritage are not explicit targets of AONB management
- AONBs are vulnerable to development and other pressures.
- Access, recreation and public enjoyment and well-being are not formal purposes of AONBs, so efforts to address the needs of under-represented or excluded groups are *ad hoc* and uncoordinated.
- Social and economic benefits for communities within and beyond AONBs are dependent mainly on individual initiatives of AONB staff teams.

Moreover, high-quality landscapes, and their increased desirability as places to live, can result in social divisions and exclusion, as evidenced by differentials in house prices which can make it difficult for individuals in 'lower' socioeconomic groups to secure homes and, in areas adjacent to major towns, can result in them becoming part of a commuter belt.

Some of these issues should be addressed by aligning the purposes of England's AONBs and National Parks with each other and with the principles of government's [25 Year Environment Plan](#) (25YEP).

AONBs could work better for all the people of the UK their value should be taken more seriously by decision-makers, and their ability to connect not just nature, but people could be more effectively realised. This will, however, require a more effective cross departmental approach to policy making at a local and national government level.

A number of proposals are made in what follows to 'future proof' England's designated landscapes, in particular AONBs, with respect to wildlife, ecosystem processes and cultural heritage, to recreation and access, to farming and land management and to the wider economy, including housing and transport.

Some of these should be more firmly embedded in adjustments to the AONB statutory purpose specifically to include '*wildlife and cultural heritage*' and to add the promotion of understanding and enjoyment of their area's special qualities as a subsidiary purpose.

AONBs should also be given a more explicit societal function in relation to social and economic well-being.

In addition, the weak 'duty of regard' should be replaced with a 'duty of due regard' which would provide all relevant bodies with a clear framework within which to operate.

Other changes, such as giving AONB staff teams the capacity to play a leading role in the local delivery of agri-environment and new environmental land management schemes and

to deliver action for climate change adaptation and mitigation can be implemented at the policy level.

Most importantly, AONB partnerships and the National Association for AONBs are critically under-resourced. Adequate funding is required to provide the capacity that their individual and collective potential deserves.

The AONB Family's perspective

Part 2 - Views

AONBs could do more for wildlife and ecosystem processes

Q 9. What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in nature conservation and biodiversity?

AONBs comprise biologically rich and complex landscapes. They are an integral part of England's ecological network, providing strongholds for some of the nation's most important and threatened wildlife sites and habitats. AONB partnerships - acting together and with others - play a vital role in the conservation of biodiversity, enhancing the coherence and resilience of natural and semi-natural habitats.

AONBs in England encompass: 25% of England's SSSIs, 24% of England's most important wildlife habitats 20%) of England's total woodland cover and 30% of England's Ancient Woodlands. They include important areas of upland peatlands and lowland wetlands which in addition to their biological richness have a critical role in carbon sequestration and water management. AONBs are vital to the delivery of many of the UK's ecosystem services, and have a central role in engaging people in decisions on the distribution of their benefits.

The primary purpose of the AONB designation as provided for in the 1949 Wildlife and Countryside Act is to '*conserve and enhance natural beauty.*' A series of legal decisions and policy statements since this date have made it clear that the phrase 'natural beauty' is not just scenery but includes landform and geology, plants and animals, the historic environment and cultural heritage.

However efforts to conserve and enhance these material aspects of the landscape are weakened in AONBs by comparison with National Parks whose first purpose is to '*to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage*'; the '*wildlife and cultural heritage*' does not currently explicitly apply to the AONB purpose. Legislation should be enacted to align the first purpose of AONBs with that of National Parks, so that the objective of conserving natural beauty and wildlife applies equally to both AONBs and National Parks.

In addition, the central role of AONB and National Park management plans in the restoration of nature and ecosystem services should be ensured through development and support for the role AONB teams will play in delivering on Outcome 1c of Biodiversity 2020 and their crucial role in supporting any emerging Nature Recovery Network, mandatory requirements for Net Environmental Gain and other outcomes included in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan..

In this way the conservation management role of designated landscapes will also deliver on climate change adaptation and mitigation, for example, through promoting and supporting the enhancement of green infrastructure and providing targeted support for projects designed to restore key ecosystems including wetlands and upland peats.

Finally, consideration should be given to better enabling designated landscapes to engage where appropriate with offshore management of the marine environment, giving them a role in achieving the co-ordinated management of the coastal and marine environment.

Protecting and valuing cultural heritage is a vital part of the work of AONB partnerships

Q 10. What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in shaping landscape and beauty, or protecting cultural heritage?

AONBs are pre-eminently cultural landscapes and they include some of the nation's most important historic heritage. For example, 23% of England's Scheduled Monuments and 27% of England's Protected Wreck sites lie within AONBs. The AONB Family works hard to conserve and enhance this heritage for the enjoyment of current and future generations. Examples range from the work of the [Chilterns AONB partnership on Bronze and Iron Age hillforts](#) (one of the densest concentrations in the country) to [Nidderdale AONB's centenary study of First World War history in the Yorkshire Dales](#).

Research, protection and education about the historic and cultural heritage features in all AONB management plans and a number of AONBs have worked to produce design guidance that supports the continuation of local vernacular architecture in a contemporary context.

Importantly, many AONBs have been able to go beyond a relatively limited view of 'culture' to a more inclusive interpretation which extends from vernacular buildings to the more dynamic and sometimes ephemeral contemporary cultural forms – ranging from oral history to music and sports which are so important in community life and amongst young people.

In order to remain relevant to future generations, more work must be done to ensure contemporary cultural values are reflected in AONB management plan objectives. However, the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage – a key element of the first purpose of England's National Parks does not currently apply to AONBs. This omission should be addressed by aligning the first purpose of AONBs with that of National Parks by adding: 'to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage'. AONB partnerships should then optimise the benefits of their proximity to towns and cities to become more representative of society. Increased participation and better representation will result in greater legitimacy and help strengthen links between identity and place.

As suggested in the National Association's response to other questions, the protection of landscape, nature and the cultural heritage within AONBs should also be strengthened by:

- The replacement of relevant bodies' Duty of Regard with a Duty of Due Regard.
- Placing a duty on relevant authorities to support the delivery of the AONB management plan.
- Giving AONB partnerships statutory consultee status for Town and Country planning matters.

- Encouraging, where appropriate, the production of dedicated Development Plan documents for AONBs which share the same vision and objectives of the Management Plan.

Working with farmers and land managers is central to AONB purpose and practice

Q 11. *What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in working with farmers and land managers and how might this change as the current system of farm payments is reformed?*

From the open moorlands of the North Pennines, Nidderdale, and the Forest of Bowland, through the undulating grasslands of the Chilterns and Cotswolds, to the more intimate wooded landscapes of the High Weald and Kent Downs, each AONB is the product of farming practice, and their value to the whole nation is largely dependent on sympathetic future land management.

AONB partnerships have worked collaboratively with farmers since their creation. Through projects such as the [Cranborne Chase Farmland Conservation Project](#) and the [North Pennines Hay Time](#), AONB teams have continued to build on the quality of this relationship and maintain close and practical working partnerships with farmers.

AONB partnerships should be given the capacity to play a leading role in the local delivery of agri-environment schemes.

Building on the trust and experience that already exists, [the AONB Family have proposed](#) that AONB management plans should provide the framework for the development of a post Brexit environmental land management scheme in and around AONBs. The integrated nature of these plans ensures that agricultural policy is cross referenced to wider environmental, social, and economic outcomes, and integrated delivery at the local level will improve opportunities for simpler, cheaper, more effective delivery.

In regions that have high coverage of designated landscapes, schemes could include more than one AONB or National Park working in partnership. In some AONBs, schemes could be trialled in small parts of the designated area.

AONBs offer access and recreational opportunity for all

Q 12. *What views do you have about the role National Parks and AONBs play in supporting and managing access and recreation?*

The proximity of many AONBs to large conurbations means that they generally offer easier access for more people both in terms of distance and transport links than National Parks. They also have extensive, though variable, networks of footpaths and bridleways, are traversed by 10 National Trails and feature significant areas of Open Country, Registered Common Land or Section 16 Dedicated Land, (around twice the proportion of the English countryside in general).

As a consequence, AONBs today attract 156 million visitors each year compared to around 90m visitors for National Parks. Despite this, without a formal recreational purpose, AONB

teams only have a weak basis for managing access and recreation, which will continue to be driven by significant but *ad hoc* initiatives to build links with underrepresented or excluded groups in adjacent urban areas. Participation will continue to be driven by wider social forces including advertising (mountain bikes, outdoor clothing) designed to grow the outdoor recreation market and will remain significantly skewed in social and economic terms.

AONB partnerships would be keen to do more to facilitate the use of the landscape for recreational purposes by currently excluded groups. Additionally the National Association would be keen to explore how the collective governance of AONB Family strategic priorities and the opportunities afforded by National Trails could be better integrated.

At present, the policy basis of provision in this area is based on the remit of relevant local authorities and codified in the (then) Countryside Commission's 1991 Policy Statement on AONBs and rehearsed in its 1992 publication [AONB Management Plans: Advice on their Format and Content](#) (CCP 352): *'Recreation is not an objective of the designation, but the demand for recreation should be met insofar as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.'* The statement is repeated in the (then) Countryside Agency's [2001 Guidance on AONB management planning](#) (CA23) issued following the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

CA23 at least has statutory status but is no longer a 'live' document and a reaffirmation of the access and recreational significance of AONBs is urgently needed. The current supplementary purpose of meeting the demand for recreation should be formalised (and aligned with that of National Parks) through the addition of a statutory AONB purpose of actively promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of areas of outstanding natural beauty by the public.

This would provide formal recognition of the fact that all AONB partnerships already play a major role in delivering opportunities for outdoor understanding, enjoyment and recreation in England and indeed operate as if this was a formal purpose of designation. The purpose should be expressed in a way common to both designated landscape classifications.

AONBs are living, working landscapes

Q 13. What views do you have about the way National Park and AONB authorities affect people who live and work in their areas?

The AONB designation and the work of AONB partnerships yield major benefits for many of those who live and work in their areas, but more can be done

The [AONB Family's evidence to the Rural Economy Growth Review](#) emphasised the way that, working with local communities and businesses, and by valuing their skills, knowledge and energy, AONB partnerships 'make things happen'. Translating vision and national policy into local action they have developed innovative and collaborative approaches to promoting a sustainable rural economy that conserves and enhances the natural environment for the benefit of all.

AONBs provide value for money by securing additional funding, resources and project partners and they [contribute significantly to the local economy of their areas and beyond](#). The 156 million AONB visitors annually spend in excess of £2 billion and support thousands

of jobs and businesses. In 2014, the GVA of AONBs was £16.5 billion – similar to that of the city of Leeds.

AONB partnerships have achieved significant success in fostering local initiatives including those related to community engagement and the development of small businesses. Examples include local branding of foodstuffs and other produce such as furniture and other timber products and woodchip production providing an economic incentive for the regeneration of local coppice.

However, more needs to be done, in particular to address issues of equality of opportunity and environmental justice. Even within the present statutory framework this could be strengthened, for example, through the provision of a hypothecated Sustainable Development Fund for both AONBs and National Parks. This would enable AONB teams to better support community and business activity allied to the purpose of designation.

As in the case of access and recreation, the policy basis of AONB units' role in social and economic development is based on the remit of their relevant local authorities as codified in the (then) Countryside Commission's 1991 Policy Statement on AONBs and given a quasi-statutory basis in the (then) Countryside Agency's [2001 Guidance on AONB management planning](#) (CA23): *'In pursuing the primary purpose of the designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.'*

The ease by which most AONBs can be accessed creates opportunities for AONB partnerships to support skill development programmes and apprenticeships, provides meaningful opportunities for volunteering, and through social prescribing could help the national become healthier. Development in this area requires investment.

We would also like to see a formal duty in respect of sustainable social and economic development for all AONBs (as is presently the case with National Parks and Conservation Board AONBs) to *'Seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities...'* This would ensure that the needs of all sections of society are considered in decision making, not least in the exercise of a Duty of Due Regard.

Housing and transport are critical issues for AONBs

Q 14. What views do you have on the role National Park and AONB authorities play on housing and transport in their areas?

A major difference between National Park authorities and AONB partnerships is that the former are the statutory planning authorities for their areas whilst in AONBs, planning duties rest with the relevant local authorities. This remains an appropriate arrangement, however support for appropriate (and protection from inappropriate) development should be significantly strengthened for all designated landscapes by:

- Utilising the opportunities afforded by an Environment Act, replace the current Duty of Regard by a Duty of Due Regard.
- Government to support a consistent cross-departmental policy approach to sustainable development in designated landscapes.

- Government monitoring of Planning Authorities' performance in respect of AONB purposes and associated accountability with incentives for Planning Authorities' performance.

And in the case of AONBs:

- Legislation should place a duty on relevant authorities to support the delivery of the AONB management plan.
- Using the provision set out in Article 18, Schedule 4 of the 2015 Development Management Procedure Order (DMPO), AONB partnerships should be given statutory consultee status for Town and Country planning matters.
- The production of dedicated Development Plan documents for AONBs should be encouraged where appropriate.
- Consider developing a dedicated group of Planning Inspectors trained specifically on, and called to preside over cases in or affecting designated landscapes.

Adequate public transport facilities to and within all designated landscapes is a key requirement if they are to fulfil their potential both for residents and visitors, particularly those from under-represented or excluded groups (including those without cars). A number of initiatives taken by AONB partnerships and National Park Authorities have shown what can be achieved through creative and relatively inexpensive initiatives. Government support for further initiatives would enhance social inclusion and increase the accessibility of AONBs to all sectors of society

Protecting our national landscapes

Part 3 - Current ways of working

AONB governance structures are only partially effective and must be strengthened

Q 15. What views do you have on the way they are governed individually at the moment? Is it effective or does it need to change, if so, how?

A strength of AONBs is that their governance models are adapted to suit to local circumstances and achieve wide local 'ownership'. Two AONBs – the Cotswolds and the Chilterns – have statutory Conservation Boards. In all other cases, AONB partnerships are non-statutory. Current legislation provides only that their relevant local authorities should 'have regard' for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of that part of the AONB that falls within their area, for which they must produce a management plan and review this every five years. This latter function may be delegated to an AONB partnership (particularly where several local authorities are responsible for an AONB) but the means whereby this is to be achieved is not prescribed.

This has significant advantages in permitting AONB governance models, and the mechanism by which the designation's purposes are delivered, to reflect local requirements and we believe that this flexibility should be retained. However, it sometimes means that the AONB may not be a high priority for its partnership organisations in consequence of which the

partnership may lack sufficient authority to address key governance issues including performance.

Additionally, and as a consequence of its local focus, its status as a nationally important landscape is often overlooked in decision-making, and the role of guardianship on behalf of the nation often not considered.

Most importantly, there is no statutory duty on AONB partnerships or local authorities to implement their management plans and delivery is currently largely undertaken by the AONB teams with individual partnerships in many cases being reduced to stakeholder fora.

Strengthened governance and accountability for all AONBs would be achieved by:

- AONB partnerships being granted a legal status and a statutory duty to implement management plans with associated scrutiny and accountability.
- All relevant authorities being given a duty of 'due regard' and a statutory adviser to government appointed with the responsibility to ensure that this duty is carried out.
- Government giving more weight and emphasis to statutory designated landscape management plans as a local delivery vehicle. This should be embedded in the emerging Environment Act.
- Enhanced status through improved terms of reference and training for members and the use of national appointees.

AONBs require sustainable governance structures in place that reflect both local and national interests that are appropriate to deliver the desired outcomes.

The creation of new AONB Conservation Boards or National Park Authorities should be considered in the light of local circumstances and national interest and, in particular, the degree to which delivery may be currently limited by the category of designation. In the great majority of cases relatively minor legislative and policy changes to all AONBs will secure the outcomes required but where there is compelling evidence to support the need for organisational change, the National Association would support this.

AONBs work in partnership with stakeholders and the public and with each other

Q 16. What views do you have on whether they work collectively at the moment, for instance to share goals, encourage interest and involvement by the public and other organisations?

The partnership nature of AONB governance places a premium on collective working with all stakeholders. This is manifest in practice through a host of delivery activities involving local communities, businesses, farmers and other landowners and volunteers. Delivery is primarily by proxy and based on the understanding and commitment of others.

That practice is also reflected within each AONB at a policy level. Since 2001, [statutory guidance for production of AONB management plans](#) emphasises the need to 'include active participation of stakeholders from the very beginning' and 'determine a set of mutually agreed objectives and priorities – by consensus.'

Each AONB partnership is autonomous within the statutory responsibilities of the relevant local authorities responsible for each AONB and the specific delivery mechanisms and activities vary according to local circumstances.

AONB partnerships work together— informally and through the National Association for AONBs. The National Association provides leadership on strategic, national matters, facilitates shared learning, organises an annual [Landscapes for Life Conference](#) and other national events, and provides advice and training to the AONB Family which it represents at a national level, through its single voice to governments. Recent policy documents and position statements include a collective [response to the government on the draft National Planning Policy Framework](#), [Evidence to House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee inquiry on The Future of the Natural Environment after the EU Referendum](#) and evidence to Defra on [the role of AONBs as test beds for any new post-Brexit environmental land management scheme](#).

Through the National Association, the AONB Family has agreed four common objectives. These are collectively furthered through the sharing of information, data, and ideas, in particular using the National Association’s dedicated on-line forum ‘Basecamp’. Additionally, the National Association makes available examples of good practice and other resources. AONB staff regularly work with the National Association on behalf of the collective. The charity also works closely with many other organisations including National Parks England to foster collaborative working across multiple organisations.

The potential for collaborative working across AONBs and National Parks is huge. This is already being achieved at a local, regional, and national level but more could be done. However, it is essential that both forms of designated landscapes achieve parity of status, influence, and resourcing before true collaboration can further develop.

To address issues of coherency, direction, and status Government should issue a single remit letter to AONBs and NPs (and the National Association), signed by the Prime Minister, linked to their Defra grant. This would provide a unifying steer on priority issues. This is the process by which the French PNR Charters are enacted and would give cross Cabinet support for something that then carries weight and creates great cohesion across landscapes and organisations.

The National Association’s HLF Resilient Heritage funded [Future Landscapes Project](#) includes a review of the National Association’s sustainability and governance and ‘Taking the Lead’, a professional and personal development programme engaging a cohort of AONB staff to help develop greater collaborative working across the AONB Family.

AONBs benefit health and well-being; they are diverse, inclusive and participatory and volunteers are central

Q 17. What views do you have on their efforts to involve people from all parts of society, to encourage volunteering and improve health and well-being?

AONBs are a vital resource for active leisure, provide the opportunity for getting outside, and offer mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing for people of all ages and backgrounds. Evidence clearly suggests that an emotional connection with nature is more beneficial than

contact alone and ultimately leads to pro-environmental behaviour. Meaningful connection to nature delivers enormous individual and social benefits. AONBs are accessible to a large proportion of the population; more than 66% of people in England live within ½ hr travel of an AONB. This accessibility offers multiple opportunities.

Examples of AONB partnership initiatives to encourage volunteering, improve health and well-being and to involve underrepresented groups include Blackdown Hills AONB's [Nature and Wellbeing](#); Dorset AONB's [Stepping into Nature](#); Wye Valley AONB's [Mindscape](#); Norfolk Coast AONB's [Coast Alive Health Walks](#) and the joint Blackdown Mendip and Quantock Hills AONB's [Let Nature Nurture](#). AONB teams, often with the support of the National Association, have been particularly successful at working with arts-based organisations to improve people's engagement with nature. Examples of this innovative approach to connecting people with their landscapes include the [Lifecycles and Landscapes Project](#) and the [Wye Valley River Festival](#)

Cumulatively these have been outstandingly successful, so that, for example, volunteers put in over 457,000 work days a year, worth £36.8 million to conserve the landscape and improve access.

Yet a good deal more could be done. Addition of a formal second AONB purpose of furthering the understanding and enjoyment by the public of their special qualities, a formal duty in respect of sustainable social and economic development, coupled with adequate core funding of AONB partnership delivery teams would provide a stable base for extending the reach and inclusivity of AONB partnership efforts in this area.

The benefits of AONBs should be adequately resourced

Q 18. *What views do you have on the way that they are funded and how this might change?*

All designated landscapes need to be adequately resourced to support the delivery of their statutory purposes. The funding allocated to just one National Park - the South Downs National Park – is more than the funding for all 34 English AONBs put together. The latter – an annual total of just c. £6m (amounting to around 20p per head) compares with an annual turnover of around £14m per annum, reflecting the remarkable success of AONBs in securing additional funding from other sources. Lottery sources in particular have contributed a total of some £80 million over the past twenty years, however the termination of HLF's Landscape Partnership programme means that future lottery funding for AONBs is in jeopardy.

AONB delivery is likely to continue to depend on a business model involving a mix of public, private and voluntary-sector resources, however secure core funding is essential to safeguard the future of these national assets, and should be aligned with the effective delivery of revised statutory purposes (including recreation and enjoyment, together with a social duty), and mechanisms need to be reinstated to address the issue of vulnerability arising from the relationship with host Local Authorities whose total budgets will have been [cut by an average of 50% since 2010](#).

In addition, there needs to be adequate funding of Town and Country planning activity to allow designated AONB unit planning officers to effectively manage major planning applications and a new statutory consultee responsibility.

A dedicated Sustainable Development Fund for both AONBs and National Parks would enable AONB teams to better support community and business activity allied to the purpose of designation.

Finally, there is a clear need for Natural England to be adequately resourced to function as a national statutory advocate for landscape, championing the role of AONBs across government.

AONB designation engages all stakeholders – but could be simpler and better communicated

Q 19. What views do you have on the process of designation - which means the way boundaries are defined and changed?

The existing process of designation of AONBs under section 82 of the CROW Act is broadly satisfactory. However, it is poorly communicated to stakeholders and consequently perceived as a barrier to designation rather than a process to confirm landscape quality.

The criteria for designation must continue to link clearly and robustly to the purpose of designation, and the process of designation must be participatory and engage stakeholders. This means that the sufficiency of natural beauty must be paramount.

It is important that the weight attributed to the first stage of designation – the confirmation of ‘sufficiency’ of natural beauty remains greater than that attributed to the second stage – the ‘desirability to designate’. It is vitally important, therefore, that Natural England as the statutory adviser on landscape is resourced to provide this technical advice, and that decisions are capable of robust defence.

The effective communication of the process is vital, not only with designated landscape staff and stakeholders, but also with other interested parties who may pursue AONB or National Park designation.

Engagement of stakeholders is important but can be time-consuming. The participatory principle of AONB partnerships would suggest that in any proposal for a boundary variation, local communities might be assisted in preparing evidence together with the AONB team. Local knowledge, data, and energy would help speed up the process.

Extension of the area of designated landscapes is needed in appropriate circumstances and could include modification of the designation procedure

Q 20. What views do you have on whether areas should be given new designations?

Several areas presently outside the AONB Family have long been considered of AONB quality. The Forest of Dean became England’s first National Forest Park in 1938 and was included in post-War proposals for AONBs but not included in the 1971 designation of the

Wye Valley AONB because of its distinctive landscape and because it was deemed that the Forestry Commission had adequate powers for meeting demand for amenity and recreation under the 1968 Countryside Act. The Norfolk Brecks and the South Pennines have long harboured ambitions for AONB status, and other such areas are also emerging, such, as the Sandstone Ridge in Cheshire.

The National Association would support the request of local stakeholders and other bodies [such as the CPRE](#) for a review of these and other areas for which a compelling case could be made for designation as AONB or National Park.

An expansion of the area and of the geographical spread of AONBs would enhance their primary function of conserving and enhancing England's natural beauty (defined specifically to include wildlife and cultural heritage) and their *de facto* role (which should be recognised in statute as a second purpose) of promoting opportunities for understanding and enjoyment.

In relation to the possibility of existing AONBs becoming National Parks or securing Conservation Board status, form should follow function; a change in designation should be considered in those limited cases where this will clearly serve to improve the delivery of the purpose of designation.

In regard to the creation of new types of designation - for marine areas, urban landscapes, or those near built-up areas, form should follow function and there would seem to be little purpose in adding to the wide range of existing designations. Instead, priority should be given to strengthening the role, purpose, statutory protection and resourcing afforded to existing categories of designation and reviewing those areas to which they might be applied.

AONBs are learning landscapes and centres of innovation and creativity

Q 21. Are there lessons that might be learnt from the way designated landscapes work in other parts of the United Kingdom, or abroad?

A common observation regarding designated landscapes from observers outside the United Kingdom is that UK National Parks represent permanence and authority in contrast to AONB traditions of partnership working and experimentation. While this probably overstates the differences which arise from their respective statutory purposes and functions – particularly in relation to spatial planning – the ability of AONBs to adapt proactively to local circumstances and challenges is important.

The statutory requirement since 2001 for the relevant local authorities for English and Welsh AONBs to produce management plans for their AONB areas has greatly strengthened the partnership working and effective management of AONBs in comparison to AONBs in Northern Ireland and National Scenic Areas in Scotland where no such formal requirement exists.

Internationally, UK National Parks and AONBs, once the 'poor relations' of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature family (IUCN) have secured a new prominence as 'Category V' cultural 'protected landscapes'. However they could achieve much more. For example in addition to protection of biological diversity, ecosystem processes and natural resources, [French Regional Parks](#) (Parcs Naturels Régionaux or PNR) are also explicitly

charged with enhancing and invigorating their cultural heritage, contributing to development planning, fostering economic and social development (including regional foods, agricultural and other produce), providing education and information and encouraging experimentation. Much of this takes place in English AONBs – but informally, dependant on individual voluntary initiative and has been hampered by cuts to local authority incomes and to core funding.

As proposed in responses to other questions, there are a number of ways in which AONB protection and management could be strengthened, particularly through a greater alignment with key features of British National Parks, for example by:

- Including the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage with that of natural beauty as a first purpose.
- Adding the understanding and enjoyment by the public of their special qualities as a second purpose and adding a social function in relation to sustainable development.
- Formalising the role of AONB partnerships in relation to their relevant local authorities and strengthening the role of the AONB management plan.

A future vision for our national landscapes

Part 4 - Closing thoughts

AONBs are England's vital and treasured national landscapes

Q 22. Do you think the terms currently used are the right ones? Would you suggest an alternative title for AONBs, for instance and if so what?

The title AONB is well respected and understood amongst professionals. However despite promotional effort at local and AONB Family level, public awareness remains low especially in comparison to National Parks. 'AONB' is often seen as a primarily descriptive term; the (technical) meaning of 'natural beauty' is not widely understood and understanding and acceptance of the high level of protection is not widespread.

In general and despite the efforts of AONB teams and partnerships, AONBs are still under-delivering on their ambition, legislation and policies. Any rebranding of AONBs (for example as 'National Landscapes'), whether statutory or primarily promotional, should be matched by future proofing with a focus on enhancement and alignment with the principles of the government's 25 YEP. This should include a reaffirmation that both AONBs and National Parks have the highest status of protection together with a strengthening of the Section 85 duty of the CRow Act to include a duty of 'due regard' accompanied by an obligation on all partnership members to support the objectives of the AONB management plan.

It is the view of the National Association that the AONB designation would benefit from rebranding, and that this can take place without legislative change. The National Association is well placed to co-ordinate the professional advice required to maximise the positive impact of a rebrand and host a major public consultation in this regard.

Other designations are vital to delivery of AONB purposes

Q 23. *The review has been asked to consider how designated landscapes work with other designations [...] Do you have any thoughts on how these relationships work and whether they could be improved?*

AONBs are multipurpose cultural landscapes accommodating wildlife, heritage, recreational opportunity as well as productive activities and they offer benefits beyond boundaries.

As suggested in the answer to Q20, we see no utility in the creation of new categories of designation although the number and/or area of AONBs might be increased in appropriate areas. However, the regulatory and policy framework of designated sites should be reviewed particularly in the context of a Britain outside the European Union.

Other designations are critical to the delivery of AONB purposes and AONBs support their management and delivery within a landscape context. The protection afforded to conservation sites (especially SSSI) is vital to enhance resilience and coherence of wildlife habitats and ecosystem processes in line with the 'more, bigger, better and joined' of the [Lawton Report](#).

Within AONBs the objectives of EU Birds and Habitats Directives designations (SPAs and SACs – the Natura 2000 network) are largely achieved through the protection afforded to terrestrial SSSIs. However SSSIs are limited to the jurisdictional limit of local authorities, generally Mean Low Water (MLW) although SSSI designation may in certain cases extend below this. AONBs need to be appropriately resourced in order to work at a spatial scale appropriate to specific needs.

Protection of archaeological and architectural heritage is critical to conservation of the special features of AONBs and the AONB Family supports any proposals from English Heritage for strengthening the protection afforded to Scheduled Monuments. The role of AONB partnerships in statutory development control and in local listing should be strengthened (see our response to Q14 above).

Recreational access is a *de facto* (and as proposed in the response to Q12 above should be a statutory) purpose of AONBs. Over 19,312 km of footpaths and bridleways pass through AONBs including 10 National Trails covering 1584 km. 2,940 km² of AONB land is Combined Open Country, Registered Common Land or Section 16 Dedicated Land – some 28.9% of the English total. These are vital elements in facilitating such access and should be kept under review and properly resourced alongside provision of good information to landowners, residents and visitors.

Proposals for posterity

Q 24. *Do you have any other points you would like to make that are not covered above?*

There is today a broad national consensus, reflected in the 25 year Environment Plan, around priorities for a healthy environment, landscape, culture and community life. The Designated Landscapes Review is timely and appropriate and the AONB Family is keen to play a central role in forging an England fit for the future. Since the end of the Second

World War, AONBs have served England well. With relatively simple legislative and policy changes they could do even better.

On behalf of the AONB Family the National Association's key proposals for AONBs are:

- The alignment of the purposes of England's designated landscapes to include:
 - the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage as a first purpose;
 - the understanding and enjoyment by the public of their special qualities as a second purpose.
- A formal duty in respect of sustainable social and economic development for all AONBs.
- A single remit letter to AONBs and NPs (and the National Association), signed by the Prime Minister, linked to the Defra grant.
- Acceptance of a diversity of local AONB governance models to reflect individual circumstances, with enhanced status through improved terms of reference and training for members and the use of national appointees.
- AONB staff teams should be given the capacity to play a leading role in the local delivery of agri-environment and new environmental land management schemes and to deliver action for climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- The National Association should be supported to explore the opportunities afforded by integrating the strategic activity of AONBs with that of the National Trails.
- Consider legislation that places a duty on relevant authorities to support the delivery of the AONB management plan.
- Accountability of AONB staff to their partnerships whilst retaining the existing local authority employer/ employee relationship.
- Adequate core funding and national support for individual AONB partnerships and delivery teams in particular to address vulnerabilities that arise through ongoing cuts to local authority budgets.
- Adequate core funding and national support for the National Association to build further collaboration across the designated landscape network and establish a data-based intelligence led landscape network.
- A hypothecated Sustainable Development Fund would enable AONB teams to better support community and business activity allied to the purpose of designation.
- A new statutory consultee status for Town and Country planning matters and encouragement of the production of dedicated Development Plan documents for AONBs where appropriate. Adequate funding of Town and Country planning activity so that designated planning officers can effectively manage major planning applications and fulfil their new statutory role.
- Retain the statutory designation of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but consider the informal rebranding of AONBs for marketing and awareness purposes.

And, for National Parks as well as AONBs:

- Strengthen the existing Duty of Regard through its replacement with a Duty of Due Regard.

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