

FOREST OF BOWLAND AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Revised Estimates 2012/13 and Revenue Budget 2013/14

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Issue for consideration

- a) Revised Estimates 2012/13
- b) Revenue Budget 2013/14

Background

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

a. Revised Estimates 2012/13

The costs of the Partnership are managed as part of the Lancashire County Council's Environment Directorate's Devolved Financial Management scheme. Since the Joint Advisory Committee in October 2011 approved the 2012/13 estimates and sought support to the contributions requested from funding partners. The full requested contribution was not able to be made by Craven District Council, which resulted in a small shortfall in funds available of £900.

Defra advised in December 2011, that the grant offer for 2012/13 was £239,562 a reduction of £14,446 (or 5.38% reduction based on 2010/11 grant funding levels).

The net effect of these changes will allow a programme of projects to be delivered in 2012/13, totalling £113,561. In addition, to date during this year, the AONB unit has been successful in obtaining the following additional funding to support delivery of projects within the area:

Project	£	Organisation
Bowland Haytime Project	40,000	Lancashire Environment Fund
Bowland Symposium	5,900	Sponsors and delegates
Bowland Experience Tourism Business Training Programme	2,000	Myerscough College (RDPE Greater Manchester and Lancashire Skills Programme)

Gisburn Forest Mountain Bike Trail Leaflet	1,000	Forestry Commission
Sense of Place Training Workshops	750	Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust
Bowland Teashops Leaflets	500	Local businesses
Lowgill Traditional Signpost	500	Lancashire County Council

The 2012/13 Revised Estimates take account of these changes (see Appendix 'A' Column 3) in comparison with the Original Estimates in Column 2, against which the funding partners were asked to provide funding in October 2011.

The core contributions advised by the constituent local authorities for 2012/13 are as follows: -

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

b. Revenue Budget 2013/14

This section sets out in Appendix 'A' column 4, the costs associated with the Committee's projects and management service in 2013/14. The estimates are based on a continuation of the level of service agreed by the Committee at the October 2011 meeting, updated to 2012/13 estimated pay and price levels.

Provision reflects the core team of 4.4 full-time equivalent posts, operational budgets for core activities and projects. This includes a slight increase of 0.1 FTE to the Business Development Officer post:

- AONB Manager [0.2FTE]
- Principal AONB Officer [0.8FTE]
- Development and Funding Officer
- Sustainable Tourism and Website Development Officer
- Projects and Events Officer
- Business Development Officer [0.4FTE]

Total Committee income from contributions has been included in the budget for 2013/14 based on estimated contributions from funding authorities, equivalent to maintaining the requested contribution for 2012/13, with a continuation of the contribution from United Utilities matching the requested district/borough council level of contribution.

Income in respect of grant support from Defra towards core costs, projects costs and sustainable development works has been included on the basis of a further 5.38% reduction in 2013/14. Advice from Defra is that the grant for 2013/14 will be one grant offer, to be used in ways which the Joint Advisory Committee considers will deliver the best performance in achieving the aims of the Management Plan, without restrictions placed on the percentage of grant to each area of supported activity.

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

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

1. Gross Expenditure

It is proposed that total expenditure be £381,116 in 2013/14, which is £13,546 lower than £394,662 in 2012/13 mainly as a result of the reduction in Defra grant. This expenditure results from providing for the effect of increased pay and prices, staff increments, employers national insurance and superannuation contributions, along with general price increases, and reflecting a level of provision for projects after taking account of the estimated level of resources being sought from funding partners.

2. Income

Defra grant towards core costs, projects costs and a programme of sustainable development works of £225,116 reflects a further reduction of 5.38% based on 2010/11 grant funding levels.

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

3. Net Expenditure

The £381,116 net cost of management services is based on maintaining the level of contributions from the funding authorities originally requested for 2012/13. It is essential that the funding authorities are notified of the approved expenditure and requested to make due provision in their own estimates.

4. Additional Resources

It should be noted that resources from local authorities/individuals/other bodies for projects in AONB will be sought during 2012/13 (e.g. Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council and Lancashire Environment Fund), which are over and above the Joint Advisory Committee budget provision and this will

continue in 2013/14. Furthermore, the service contributes to the generation of additional schemes and projects in liaison with services operating in the area such as the various local authority Countryside Services.

Decision Required

The Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee is requested to:

- i) note the 2012/13 Revised Estimates,
- ii) approve the 2013/14 Revenue Budget as set out in the report, and;
- iii) subject to the approval of (ii) above, to request the funding authorities to make appropriate provision in their revenue budgets.