

## **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 26<sup>th</sup> November – Friday 18<sup>th</sup> 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.