

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 :

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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.