

## Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 16 May 2019

### Report of the Head of Service - Planning and Environment

#### Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:  
Lancaster Rural East;  
Lancaster Rural North;  
Longridge with Bowland;  
Pendle Hill; Pendle Rural;  
Preston Rural; Ribble Valley  
North East; Ribble Valley  
South West; Wyre Rural East;

### **Revised Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans for Forest of Bowland and Arnside and Silverdale Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

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#### **Executive Summary**

The Council, along with other relevant local authorities, has a duty as set out in Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to jointly prepare and review Management Plans for Areas of Outstanding Beauty that are located within Lancashire. This work is delivered on the council's behalf by the relevant Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnerships and associated staff units.

The Management Plans for both the Forest of Bowland and Arnside & Silverdale have recently been reviewed and revised to guide the management of these designated landscapes for the period 2019 – 2024. The council needs to formally adopt Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans to continue to meet its statutory duties.

This report summarises the scope and content of the Management Plans, the public consultations carried out and the 'strategic fit' between the Plans' objectives and the Council's Corporate Strategy.

#### **Recommendation**

Cabinet is asked to approve and adopt the revised Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan and the Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan.

## **Background and Advice**

1. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are statutory landscape designations made under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The primary purpose of designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.
2. In pursuing the primary purpose, the following secondary purposes should also be taken into account:
  - i) the sustainable social and economic development of the area (where such activity is consistent with the primary purpose)
  - ii) recreation and enjoyment of the area, where it is consistent with the first two purposes.
3. The County Council is jointly responsible for two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which lie partly within its administrative boundaries – the Forest of Bowland and Arnsdale & Silverdale.
4. Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a duty on local authorities to act jointly to produce and review, on a five yearly basis, management plans for the area within their administrative boundaries. In Lancashire this duty is performed by the two Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnerships – the Forest of Bowland's Joint Advisory Committee and Arnsdale & Silverdale's Executive Committee. The county council is represented by nominated County Councillors on each of these bodies.
5. A staff unit for each Partnership consists of a small team of officers employed by the host local authority (the County Council for the Forest of Bowland and Lancaster City Council for Arnsdale & Silverdale) to co-ordinate and implement the delivery of the Management Plans for these Partnerships. Each Partnership also has an Officers' Group which is attended by local authority officers to support the delivery of the Management Plan and the work of the staff unit. Core funding is received from the relevant local authorities and the Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs to support these staff units and implement the Management Plans.
6. The first statutory Management Plans for Arnsdale & Silverdale and the Forest of Bowland were published in 2004 and have been reviewed and revised in 2009 and 2014, covering the period up to 2019.
7. Council officers have been involved in the review and preparation of the draft Management Plans through attendance of the Officers' Groups from January 2018 to date. County Councillors have contributed through attendance of the Joint Advisory Committee or Executive Committee meetings where progress of the review was reported and draft plans circulated.
8. The revised Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan was agreed at its Joint Advisory Committee meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019. The Revised Arnsdale & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Management Plan was agreed at its Executive Committee meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

9. Both Management Plans are similar in their approach in setting objectives for fulfilling the requirement to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the respective areas. The Management Plans provide a framework all partners and stakeholders and the respective staff units to refer to when planning their own work within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. They set out a range of objectives, desired outcomes and requirements for land management and project delivery within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to achieve these outcomes. Some of the actions would be led by the staff unit and included in their own team plans. Others would be led by other partner organisations and stakeholders, including the County Council, with support from the staff unit where required.

### ***Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan***

10. Full details of the pre-adoption version of the Management Plan can be found at: <https://www.forestofbowland.com/review-forest-bowland-aonb-management-plan>

The Plan sets out a long term vision for the area with three key outcomes: 'an outstanding landscape rich in natural and cultural heritage'; 'resilient and sustainable communities'; and 'a strong connection between people and the landscape'. To achieve this a range of objectives, actions and outcomes are outlined in the delivery plan section of the Management Plan.

### ***Arnsdale & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan***

11. Full details of the pre-adoption version of the Management Plan is available at: <https://www.arnsidesilverdaleaonb.org.uk/what-we-do/the-management-plan/> and is set out at Appendix 'B'.

The Plan sets out a long term vision for the area with three key outcomes: 'an outstanding landscape rich in natural and cultural heritage'; 'vibrant and sustainable communities'; and 'a strong connection between people and the landscape'. To achieve this a range of objectives, outcomes and requirements for land management and project delivery are detailed in the Plan. These are set out in the summary table that accompanies the draft Management Plan.

### ***Strategic Fit with the County Council Corporate Strategy***

12. Both Management Plans contribute to all five of the Council's corporate objectives for Lancashire.
  - i. ***Lancashire will be the place to live:*** management and maintenance of public rights of way and countryside sites, provision of outdoor learning opportunities; encouraging recreation in- and engagement with the natural environment and landscape; volunteering, events and activities to engage

diverse communities, including black and minority ethnic communities, people with mental health and social isolation issues and dementia-sufferers and their carers.

- ii. ***Lancashire will be the place to work:*** supporting and funding local employers to take on apprentices and graduate trainees, developing careers in the natural environment, heritage and land management sectors.
- iii. ***Lancashire will be the place to prosper:*** supporting the rural economy by providing advice, guidance and support for business in the visitor economy to grow sustainably; whilst working closely with the farming and land management sector to help it to prosper.
- iv. ***Lancashire will be the place to visit:*** conserving and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage of the County's most outstanding landscapes, whilst also promoting and supporting sustainable tourism businesses and activities in the area
- v. ***Lancashire will be the place everyone acts responsibly:*** working in close partnership to ensure stewardship of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and that important natural heritage and landscape assets are conserved and enhanced.

## Consultations

13. An initial public survey was carried out in April/May 2018 to gather ideas, thoughts and comments on what people most valued about the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and also what they would like to see improved.
14. A public consultation on the draft Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan was held between from 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and 18<sup>th</sup> January 2019.
15. Following this consultation, amendments were made which included:
  - Amendment to the Plan vision to reflect the breadth of the Plan Objectives
  - Additional section added on the Partnership's 'core principles'
  - Additional section on monitoring of the Plan
16. The public consultation on the draft Arnsdale & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan was held between from 22<sup>nd</sup> October and 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018. A final amended version was produced incorporating amendments. More significant changes made included:
  - Emphasis on the importance of farming and land management in conserving and enhancing natural beauty
  - Emphasis on the need for collaboration and co-operation to help sustain the area's landscape

- Additional information on how objectives were derived and issues and challenges identified

### **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

#### ***Financial***

The Council makes an annual contribution to the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership of £40,800 and to the Arnsdale and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership of £8,275. Provision for these contributions is currently made from the Council's Planning and Environment service budget.

The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnerships receive grant from Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for up to 75% of costs. This funding is contingent on the Partnerships receiving at least 25% in matched funds from local authority partners. The current Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs grant settlement runs until the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. Beyond this date, the Partnerships are awaiting details from the Department of the new funding settlement for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which will follow Government's Comprehensive Spending Review later in 2019.

#### ***Legal***

The Council has a statutory duty under Section 89 (5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to review the Management Plans before the end of the period of 5 years, beginning with the date on which the initial Management Plan was first published and then, after the first Review, at intervals of not more than 5 years.

#### **Risk management**

A decision not to adopt the Management Plans would mean the Council would fail in its statutory duty to jointly prepare and review Management Plans for the areas within its administrative boundaries.

#### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A