

Revised Estimates 2020/21 and Revenue Budget 2021/22

(Appendix A refers)

Issue for consideration

- a) Revised Estimates 2020/21
- b) Revenue Budget 2021/22

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, which is also enhanced by an additional contribution from United Utilities.

A core team 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.

a. Revised Estimates 2019/20

The costs of the Partnership are managed as part of the Lancashire County Council's 'Devolved Financial Management' scheme. Since Committee approval of the 2020/21 estimates in October 2019 and support for the contributions requested from funding partners, it is understood the full requested contributions will be met.

Defra advised that the grant offer for 2020/21 was £225,957

The contributions advised by the constituent local authorities for 2020/21 are as follows: -

	£
Craven District Council	6,800
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	5,340

The revised estimates take account of any changes (see Appendix A, Column 3) in comparison with the Original Estimates in Column 2. The principal revision relates to an anticipated reduction in travel and subsistence costs for the AONB Unit staff due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The net effect of this change allows an AONB 'Projects' programme totalling £68,879 to be delivered in 2020/21.

In addition, it is anticipated the AONB Unit will be in receipt of £720,700 in additional funding (as detailed below) to support delivery of the AONB Management Plan:

Programme / Project	£	Organisation(s)
Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership	506,500	National Lottery Heritage Fund Lancashire Environmental Fund
Pendle Hill Farmers Network	24,000	Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund
NAAONB 'Farming for the Nation' Environmental Land Management System Test	60,700	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
Northern England Peat Project, Lee and Dunkershaw Fell	67,000	Defra Peatland Fund
Tarnbrook Fells Peatland Restoration	60,500	Defra Nature for Climate Fund
AONB Discovery Guide	2,000	Business adverts taken by local tourism businesses in AONB Discovery Guide
Total	£720,700	

b. Revenue Budget 2021/22

This section sets out in Appendix 'A' column 4, the costs associated with the Partnership's projects and management service in 2021/22, including estimated pay and price levels.

Provision reflects the core team, operational budgets for core activities and projects:

- AONB Manager (1 FTE)
- Development and Funding Officer (1 FTE)
- Projects Officer (1 FTE)
- Sustainable Tourism Officer (0.9 FTE)
- Countryside Access Officer (0.5FTE)
- Farming and Wildlife Officer (0.4FTE)

Estimated total Partnership income from contributions has been included in the budget for 2021/22, based on estimated contributions from funding authorities, equivalent to maintaining the requested contribution for the previous year (£6,800). In addition, this estimate is also based on a continuation of a contribution from United Utilities, matching the level requested district/borough councils.

Income in respect of grant support from Defra towards core costs and projects costs has been included based on maintaining the existing funding settlement for 2020/21, which includes a small inflationary increase.

It is also assumed that the Defra grant for 2020/21 will continue to be a single grant offer to be used in ways which the AONB Partnership considers will deliver the best

performance in terms of achieving delivery of the Management Plan, without significant restrictions placed on the percentage of grant to each area of supported activity.

Therefore, the level of provision for 'Projects' is based on the resources available to the Partnership after providing for the staffing of the AONB Unit at the existing office base, plus related core activities costs.

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

1. Expenditure

It is proposed that total cash expenditure will be £399,469 in 2021/22. The total expenditure results from providing for the effect of increased pay and prices, staff increments (where applicable), employer's national insurance and superannuation contributions, host authority support costs and reflecting a level of provision for 'Projects'.

2. Income

Defra grant for 2021/22 towards core costs and projects costs is estimated at £229,130 (based on an inflationary increase on grant offer for 2020/21).

The estimated contribution from each district/borough councils is equivalent to maintaining the requested contribution for the previous year (£6,800).

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

3. Additional Resources

It should also be noted that, as has become customary, resources from other external funding bodies for projects in AONB will be sought during 2020/21, which are over and above the Partnership budget provision and this will continue into 2021/22.

Furthermore, the AONB Unit contributes to the generation of additional schemes and projects in liaison with partner organisations operating in the area e.g. local authority countryside services, Rivers Trusts, the Wildlife Trusts and others.

Decision Required

The Committee is requested to:

- i) note the 2020/21 Revised Estimates
- ii) approve the proposed 2021/22 Revenue Budget as set out in the report
- iii) subject to the approval of (ii) above, to request the funding authorities to make appropriate provision in their revenue budgets for FY2021/22