

SECTION (B): DELIVERING THE AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN: HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS

Information

MANAGEMENT PLAN THEMES:-

A. Economy; Natural & Cultural Landscape

Forest of Bowland AONB / RSPB Outreach Education Project (SM)

The Forest of Bowland AONB / RSPB Outreach Education Project has worked with over 1000 school children in 27 primary schools in and around the Forest of Bowland AONB since it began in 2008.

By the end of the project, children:

- Know that the Forest of Bowland is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - a nationally protected landscape.
- Have learnt about the AONB's key habitats.
- Understand that the area is special place for wildlife, especially hen harriers, lapwings and curlews.
- Know that farmers and land managers look after the landscape.
- Are able to recognise the birds in their garden.

This project gets children on to local farms and involves schools in the big schools birdwatch.

This year (2010.11) the project is working with the following schools:

- Bleasdale CE Primary, Bleasdale
- Caton Community Primary, Caton
- Caton St Paul's CE Primary, Caton
- Hornby St Margaret's CE Primary, Hornby
- Newchurch-in-Pendle St Mary's CE Primary, Newchurch-in-Pendle
- Roughlee CE Primary, Roughlee
- Sabden Primary, Sabden
- St Joseph's RC Primary, Hurst Green
- St Mary's RC Primary, Chipping
- St Mary's RC Primary, Sabden
- Thorneyholme RC Primary, Dunsop Bridge.

Bowland wildlife bloggers (HB)

Momentum continues as green accredited accommodation providers continue to post wildlife sightings to the Bowland wildlife and Lancashire wildlife blog websites. These visitor websites have been developed by Barrie Tyrer web consultancy working with the Lancashire Green Tourism project to highlight the wildlife hotspots of this beautiful area, and most importantly to entice visitors to take a look for themselves. Visitor numbers to the website continue to grow (over 9,000 unique visitors to each site per month) and word is

spreading. Promotional postcards with images highlighting the wonderful wildlife and the website have been produced for businesses to spread the word. Visit the wildlife blog websites at www.bowlandwildlife.org.uk and www.lancashirewildlife.org.uk

B. Enjoyment; Health and Wellbeing

Festival Bowland 2011 (SM)

Festival Bowland is a year round calendar of events that celebrates the birds, landscape, wildlife and culture of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Festival Bowland events allow us to showcase the area's special qualities and share with others what makes it such a special place for people and wildlife. Events are led by local experts, landowners and businesses and provide a wealth of opportunities for people to explore the area's special qualities throughout the year.

Festival Bowland is coordinated by the Forest of Bowland AONB. The steering group includes: RSPB Birds of Bowland Project, United Utilities, Lancashire County Council, Wyre Borough Council and Bowland Arts Festival. Also supporting the festival are: Natural England, The Wildlife Trusts of Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside, Heritage Lottery Fund as well as local businesses, landowners and farmers.

A copy of the Festival Bowland calendar of events can be viewed and downloaded at www.forestofbowland.com

Website Developments (SM/HB)

Updates are continually made to the website, but the following are recent developments:

- Introduction of a feedback functionality for the walking page:
www.forestofbowland.com/walking_routes
- New arts, crafts and rural skills visitor directory:
www.forestofbowland.com/producerlist_arts
- Interactive sustainable tourism action plan linking to the interactive management plan
www.forestofbowland.com/sustainable_tourism_actionplan
- Artist and producer spotlights on the homepage to complement the popular walk of the month: www.forestofbowland.com

C. Sustainable Tourism

Bowland Tourism Environment fund (BTEF) & Bowland Experience (BEx) (MP)

- Bowland Tourism Environment fund (BTEF) was formed in 2009 and has so far raised £11,163 from visitor donations and a lottery grant to purchase the Tramper for Bowland Experience. At the present times, Ribble Valley Inns (3 fishes at Great Mitton) is running a Visitor Payback scheme to invite diners to contribute 20p each towards the Tramper scheme. The Fund continues to make small grants (maximum £500) for local community projects. In the last year this had included restoration of traditional paving in Dunsop Bridge, wildlife interpretation in the children's playground in Scorton and the RSPB primary schools outreach education project.
- Bowland Experience Limited (BEx) was formed in 2010 and now has 59 members. The company has already been involved in organising business training and publicity leaflets. It is about to launch a new "Tramper for Hire" scheme for the members to use the company's own Tramper for their visitors with limited mobility. Currently, we are looking at how the AONB and BEx should work together to provide visitor information by using websites, Smartphone "apps" etc. In its first trading year, the company made a profit of £1300 which has been donated to the Bowland Tourism Environment Fund.

EUROPARC Charter Partners (HB/MP)

- There are currently 35 tourism operators which have completed the Green Tourism Award and have been given the EUROPARC Charter Partner certificate. These are now included amongst about 200 similar businesses across the EUROPARC Charter Network

Lancashire Green Tourism Project (HB/MP)

Since commencement in October 2008 the main achievements of the Lancashire Green Tourism project to date are:

- 37 Green Tourism Business Scheme awards (12 Gold, 19 Silver and 6 Bronze), there are an additional 12 businesses awaiting grading.
- The project has produced 10 business case studies for those businesses achieving a gold GTBS award, these are excellent examples of good practice and are also useful for the businesses themselves for marketing their green credentials
- A total of 92 businesses have received the following support – GTBS advisory and grading visits, one to one support from Hetty Byrne and Mike Pugh and website support. 82 individuals have attended green marketing training days and have participated in a green ideas day
- Sustainable Tourism Network now had 121 members who have signed up to the principles of the EUROPARC charter. 47 of these (39%) have started in the tourism business since 2006.

D. Economy; Community; Working in Partnership

The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) (DM)

Lancashire County Council and the Forest of Bowland AONB originally initiated and sponsored the founding of the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB). Recently, the NAAONB has been raised to new prominence as central government have established a new tripartite working relationship that recognises the key role of the NAAONB alongside Defra and Natural England in forming strategic policy and overall management of AONB landscapes.

Following a series of consultations with officers and Board members the National Association for AONBs have set out a new draft strategic plan setting out their direction for the NAAONB over the next four years. A draft Business Plan translates the Strategic Plan into a detailed programme with a set of draft budgets. The consultation period ends 6 May. The Forest of Bowland AONB Manager participated in a national meeting in February to progress the text of the plans.

Both drafts and accompanying annexes can be downloaded by clicking [NAAONB Business Plan 2011-2014](#) and following the link.

A second draft will be available for comment between Friday 3rd June and Friday 8th July 2011. As part of this consultation period there will be a discussion meeting on Tuesday 5th July at the NAAONB 11th Annual Conference in Cornwall. The final draft will be available as part of the papers for approval at the NAAONB AGM on Friday 14th October 2011.

The verbal report to be given at Item 6 in today's agenda is about how the Forest of Bowland AONB Unit intend working with the FoB AONB partners to review priorities and similarly draw up a Business Plan for the coming years in accord with the new government expectations on AONBs and indicative government funding for AONBs over the coming years.

Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership Annual Report 2009.10 (SM)

Work for the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership Annual Report 2010.11 is now underway. Articles are requested to demonstrate the work of the partnership in the Forest of Bowland AONB. Please submit your articles to Susan MacDonald susan.macdonald@lancashire.gov.uk and cc to Sandra Silk sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk

Forest of Bowland AONB Interactive Management Plan (SM)

At www.forestofbowland.com you can view the action plan section of the Forest of Bowland AONB Management plan and see what progress we are making as we are making it.

Forest of Bowland AONB Boundary Signs (SM)

Six black and white painted cast aluminium signs, similar in style to traditional fingerpost signs, have been produced and will soon be ready for installation. These signs will replace existing boundary signs that are in disrepair in key locations in the main upland block of the AONB as well as the Pendle outlier.

- Copy of design of boundary signs attached
- A map of these locations will be tabled at the meeting.

Forest of Bowland AONB Printed Literature (SM)

20,000 copies of the following AONB literature have been printed and is now available through on-line distributor Brochurelink. We have some stocks at Dunsop Bridge but are unable to post out large quantities.

- Discovery Guide
- A Taste of Bowland
- General Information Leaflet
- Fishing Leaflet
- Birding in Bowland Leaflet
- Website Flyer

Copies of all of these will be available at the meeting.

E. Responding to Climate Change: Update (CH) (Chapter 19 of the AONB Management Plan)

With support from the climate change theme group, key activities the AONB Unit has been engaged in for the last six months are:

1. Micro Hydro Feasibility Study (CH)

19.3A Secure funding to research the potential for small-scale renewable energy (aka a 'microgeneration') production in the AONB.

£40,000 of external funding for the micro hydro feasibility study was finally secured in the autumn and a small steering group was set up to oversee the project. The steering group comprises representatives from the funders – Ribble Valley and Lancaster & District local strategic partnerships, Pendle Borough Council and LCC – plus the AONB and the Environment Agency. The consultants, Inter Hydro Technology, were appointed in September and have since carried out 36 stage 1 feasibility studies at identified sites across the AONB and within the districts of Pendle, Ribble Valley and Lancaster.

The steering group is now in the process of studying the report and meeting with site owners to decide which 5 or 6 sites should be taken forward for a more detailed stage 2 study.

A copy of the report will soon be made available on line and to all stakeholders, and a meeting will be held to inform them of the findings and to offer support and information to enable them to take their individual projects forward.

The full report, including the stage 2 studies, will be available in the summer, and a Festival Bowland event, visiting a number of the proposed sites is to be held on Saturday 16 July – enquiries and bookings to Cathy Hopley please.

2. Climate Change Adaptation Plan (CH)

19.2A Influence national policies and planning guidance to create a conducive environment for action on climate change, sustainable transport and energy including:

- Ensure the AONB makes an appropriate contribution to Climate Change Bill emission-reduction targets.
- **Support the Natural England Joint Character Area (JCA) climate change adaptation study - i.e. encourage forward thinking in habitat creation and protection.**

A climate adaptation plan is an action plan for dealing with the impacts of climate change on the landscape, biodiversity and 'ecosystem services' of the AONB. Supported by funds from Natural England and Ribble Valley borough council, we have been able to contract Atkins to undertake this study for us and it has also involved partners from the JAC climate change and natural and cultural landscapes theme groups.

The study will be published online in early April and will be disseminated to all partners. Draft reports suggest that our most vulnerable areas are blanket bogs, upland hay meadows, purple moor grass and rush pastures, wet woodlands, ponds and open water, and designed landscapes.

The hope is that most of the adaptation actions can be delivered via Higher Level Stewardship and by individual landowners and managers. Strategic actions should also be incorporated into the AONB Management Plan when it is next reviewed.

3. Renewable Energy Position Statement (CH)

19.3B Provide guidance on the siting and development of appropriate small-scale renewable energy (ie. assuming the purposes of AONB designation are not contravened).

19.2F Develop a renewable energy policy for the AONB in partnership with local authorities

Working closely with Steve Brereton, LCC's landscape specialist, and consulting with the local planning authorities, the AONB Unit has drawn up a position statement and gained support for its principles. These are that whilst small and micro scale renewable energy developments are appropriate to and acceptable within the AONB, medium and larger scale renewable energy developments are not considered appropriate within the Forest of Bowland

AONB. We are now asking for the JAC's approval of this position statement - please see item 8 on the agenda.

4. AONB Carbon Reduction Plan (CH)

19.1J Reduce the carbon emissions of the AONB Unit team in line with the Lancashire Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets.

19.3D Support businesses in adopting renewable energy sources

As part of the AONB Unit's carbon reduction plan the whole team took part in smarter driving lessons in January. These taught us the principles of more efficient driving – to reduce fuel costs and consumption, and to reduce our collective carbon footprint.

As part of the plan we also recommended the installation of photo voltaics on our office roof, and it now appears that at our suggestion the Duchy of Lancaster is now seriously investigating this as part of an estate wide sustainability plan.

Decision Required

The Committee is asked to note the report.