

FOREST OF BOWLAND AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

AONB Budget 2014/15

(Appendix 'C' refers)

Issue for consideration

- a) Update on Defra AONB Contribution 2014/15 and 2015/16
- b) Revised Revenue Budget 2014/15

Background

The budget provision for the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee is funded by eight constituent local authority partners and contribution from Defra and is further enhanced by additional contributions from partner organisations e.g. United Utilities.

A core team of 4.4 full time equivalent posts is established from this budget provision, to assist in the delivery of the statutory AONB Management Plan on behalf of the Partnership and the local authorities.

a. Defra AONB Contribution 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Defra advised the AONB Unit in December 2013 that the Government's contribution to the AONB Partnership budget for 2014/15 has been set at £208,143, a reduction of £16,974 (or 6.25% reduction based on 2010/11 grant funding levels). This is a slightly larger reduction than the 5.38% reduction anticipated (and outlined in the AONB Memorandum of Agreement in 2010/11).

However, the Department also advised that their contribution for 2015/16 would remain unchanged at £208,143 (no reduction). This is an excellent result, particularly given that Defra anticipate making overall departmental reductions of 9.6% in 2015/16. The National Association for AONBs and AONB Partnerships have worked very hard to achieve this outcome and should be commended for their efforts in making the case to Government of the importance of its continued support for AONBs. The net effect of this change to the AONB Revenue Budget is detailed in the item (b) below.

Defra went on to state that wherever possible they will seek to avoid further adjustments to the budget and the AONB Partnership should plan on the above numbers unless advised otherwise.

b. Revised Revenue Budget 2014/15 (Appendix A refers)

This section sets out in Appendix 'A' column 3, the costs associated with the Partnership's projects and management service in 2014/15, including estimated pay and price levels. The estimates are based on a continuation of the level of service agreed by the Committee at the October 2013 meeting.

Total Partnership income from contributions is also included, based on estimated/revised contributions from Defra, local authorities and United Utilities.

Thus, the level of provision for 'Projects' (£83,711) is based on the resources estimated to be available to the Partnership after providing for the staffing of the AONB Unit at Dunsop Bridge, plus related core activities costs (e.g. JAC meetings, communications and publicity).

Decision Required

The Committee is requested to:

- i) note the report and offer comments.
- ii) note the 2014/15 Revised Revenue Budget as set out in Appendix A.