

Forest of Bowland Joint Advisory Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 11th April, 2011 at 2.00 pm in Dalesbridge Centre, Austwick, Near Settle, North Yorkshire LA2 8AZ

Present:

Chair

County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles, Lancashire County Council

Committee Members

Councillor Lin Barrington, Craven District Council
Councillor John Browne, Preston City Council
Ian Grindy, United Utilities Ltd
Michael Helm, LAPT
Mr David Kelly, Ramblers Association
Councillor Colin Price, Yorkshire Local Councils Association
Mr Andrew Taylor, Bowland Landowners and Farmers Group

Officers

Steven Brereton, Lancashire County Council
Hetty Byrne, Lancashire County Council
Martin Charlesworth, Lancashire County Council
Mr David Hewitt, Ribble Valley Borough Council
Cathy Hopley, Lancashire County Council
Elliott Lorimer, Lancashire County Council
Mr Graham Megson, North Yorkshire County Council
Mr Don McKay, Lancashire County Council
Mr Nick Osborne
Mr David Padley, Lancashire County Council
Mike Pugh, Lancashire County Council
Mr Martin Putsey, Preston City Council
Mr John Rhodes, Lancashire County Council
Mr Greg Robinson, Wyre Borough Council
Sandra Silk, Lancashire County Council
Ms Tarja Wilson, Lancashire County Council

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

County Councillor Susie Charles, deputising for County Councillor Albert Atkinson welcomed all to the Committee meeting. It was noted that it was Don McKay and Martin Charlesworth's last Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee before retirement after many years working for the Forest of Bowland. The Committee formally thanked Don and Martin for their contribution to the Forest of Bowland and wished them well for the future.

Apologies for absence were presented from:

County Councillors Albert Atkinson and David Smith (Lancashire County Council)
Councillor Joyce Pritchard – Lancaster District Council
Councillor James Starkie – Pendle Borough Council
Councillor Linda Brockbank – Craven District Council
Councillor Richard Welch – North Yorkshire District Council
Councillor Roger Brooks – Wyre Borough Council
Councillor Rosie Elms – Ribble Valley Borough Council
Alison Boden – Wyre Borough Council
Sam Marsden – Natural England
Terry Norris – Peak and Northern Footpaths

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2010

It was noted in the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 October 2010 that a possible new planning applications would be submitted for a wind farm on or near Claughton Moor. Don McKay updated the Committee to say that the application had been received in December 2010 and that the Committee was consulted via email on whether to oppose the planning application (as was the case with the previous applications submitted in December 2009) or to recommend the planning application for approval.

Committee members consulted voted by majority to oppose the new planning application and an appropriate response was submitted on behalf of the Committee.

Resolved: The Committee then approved the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2010 as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

No further matters arising were noted.

4. Defra, Natural England and the NAAONB

Don McKay presented the report (circulated) regarding the new roles for Defra and Natural England and the key role of the National Association for AONBs.

In a letter written in late November 2010 to the Chief Executive of the NAAONB, Howard Davies, the Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries, Richard Benyon MP, made clear his intention that there should be an effective tripartite relationship between Defra, Natural England and the NAAONB which sees AONBs thrive and prosper, with appropriate support from central government and minimal interference.

Don added that Defra had sent a letter to AONBs advising that they would be providing the amount of money each AONB had requested.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to note the changes and commended the effectiveness of the National Association of AONBs (NAAONB) in securing government support and urge all councils with AONBs in their area to become full members of the NAAONB to ensure its continuation.

5. Budget update 2011/12 & Staff Changes

John Rhodes presented the Budget Update 2011/12 and Staffing Changes report (circulated). The report presented the revised and updated Budget and set out the arrangements for dealing with changes in the AONB staff unit resulting from staff leaving on Voluntary Redundancy and the need to ensure a strong, sustainable and effective AONB service in the coming years.

The estimated 2011/12 Out-turn budget prices were attached at Appendix 'A', John highlighted that the Grant from Natural England had been increased from £240,250 to £254,000.

Don McKay highlighted the staffing changes within the Forest of Bowland AONB team.

At the time of writing the report Don McKay and Martin Charlesworth had accepted Voluntary Redundancy (VR), with a finish date of 11 April 2011. Susan MacDonald was currently going through the consideration process for VR.

Following a restructure it was confirmed that Nick Osborne and Elliott Lorimer would be the lead contacts for the Forest of Bowland AONB team, with Elliott working 4 days a week and Nick 1 day a week.

Following some minor revisions to the recommendations of the report, the Committee were subsequently asked to note and agree:-

1. The voluntary retirement of the AONB Manager and the Community Projects Officers and the application for VR by the Communications Officer.
2. The transfer of higher level AONB Manager responsibilities for the AONB to the LCC Site Access Manager and the transfer of lower level management responsibilities and tasks to the principal officer in the current AONB–Rural Team.
3. The AONB Sustainable Tourism & Website Development Officer post being brought wholly within AONB core funding.
4. Ask LCC to extend the former HLF Project Officer post for 6 months, during that time to review how the restructure is working and whether further changes are needed.
5. To request the funding authorities to reaffirm their commitment to the AONB Partnership by signing the updated Memorandum of Agreement to be circulated by the AONB Manager.

Resolved: The Committee noted and agreed to the revised recommendations relating to the budget and staffing changes as set out.

6. Looking forward

Elliott Lorimer gave a verbal update on the changes in the Forest of Bowland AONB Team and the changes in the funding arrangements. Elliott explained that they will perform a view of the management plan and report back to the committee at a future meeting date reviewing both objectives and actions within the plan and consult with the Joint Area Committee (JAC) members. Elliott also reported that a 3 year business plan will be developed and it is anticipated that a draft business plan will be submitted to the October 2011 Forest of Bowland JAC meeting for review.

Resolved: The Committee noted the verbal update.

7. Minor amendments to Management Plan following publication of revised and updated Strategy for Sustainable Tourism

Hetty Byrne and Cathy Hopley presented the report and detailed a number of minor changes in the detail of the text are proposed to improve, update and ensure consistency between the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan (2009 – 2014) and the Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2010 to 2015). The latter having been written after the AONB Management plan was published. The ST action plan has been developed interactively in the same way as the Management Plan on the Forest of Bowland website, and can be accessed as an annexe to the main Management Plan.

Hetty and Cathy detailed the changes to the AONB Management Plan as set out in the circulated Appendix 'C' and the updates to the Sustainable Tourism Strategy are available to view on the Forest of Bowland AONB website.

Resolved: The Committee agreed to the changes and updates to the text of the AONB Management Plan as set out at Appendix 'C' and noted that the changes to both the Management Plan and to the Sustainable Tourism Strategy are available to view on the Forest of Bowland AONB website.

8. Position Statement on Renewable Energy

Cathy Hopley and Steve Brerton presented the report (circulated) and explained that the position statement (attached at Appendix 'D') set out the suggested considerations of the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) in view of the UK Government's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and to increasing the percentage of power generated from renewable sources; and also in the light of their Planning Policy Statement on renewable energy (PPS22).

The document sets out the purposes of a position statement, and offers general guidance on renewable energy developments within the AONB. In particular that:

3.3 The Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee considers that medium to large scale renewable energy development is not appropriate within the Forest of Bowland AONB (or in locations beyond the boundary where development would affect its setting and character) as it has significant potential to adversely affect the natural beauty of the AONB and to compromise the purpose of the statutory designation.

3.4 However, the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee considers that micro and small scale renewable energy development may be appropriate within the designated area.

The document then goes on to deal with different types of renewable energy development and how micro and small scale schemes might best be sited within the AONB.

For clarity, the Committee discussed what would classify a micro and small scale scheme.

Resolved: The Committee approved the position statement on renewable energy development in the AONB, and agreed to its publication on the AONB website.

In addition the Committee agreed that the statement should be circulated to the local planning authorities within the AONB, and they should be encouraged to refer to the statement within their individual planning policies.

9. Delivering the AONB Management Plan

The Committee discussed the latest AONB Management Plan Headline Achievements including:

- The Forest of Bowland AONB / RSPB Outreach Education Project.
- Bowland Wildlife Bloggers.
- Festival Bowland 2011.
- Website Developments.
- Bowland Tourism Environment Fund (BTEF) & Bowland Experience (BEx).
- EUROPARC Charter Partners.
- Lancashire Green Tourism Project.
- The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB).
- Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership Annual Report 2009.10.
- Forest of Bowland AONB Interactive Management Plan.
- Forest of Bowland AONB Boundary Signs.
- Forest of Bowland AONB Printed Literature.
- Micro Hydro Feasibility Study.
- Climate Change Adaptation Plan.
- Renewable Energy Position Statement.
- AONB Carbon Reduction Plan.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report and the current position with each item.

10. Date of next meeting

It was proposed that the next meeting of the Committee be held on **Monday 17 October 2011**, the Committee meeting rotates to various areas of the Forest of Bowland, the next meeting is scheduled to take place in Ribble Valley.

11. Any Other Business

Nick Osborne gave a verbal update on Bailey Lane, Tosside and reported that there has been a delay in signing the Bridleways agreement, Nick was continuing to press to arrange a meeting to find a way forward and that the Forest of Bowland Joint Advisory Committee might be asked to write to the agents for the landowners if the delay continues.

Ian Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston