

West Pennine Moors Area Management Committee

Task and finish group on future governance and activity

The last meeting of the Area Management Committee established a task and finish group to look at how the Committee's work could be progressed with the resources currently available.

The task group met once, and additional discussion took place by email. Attendees at the meeting were

Cllr Gordon France	Chorley Borough Council
Cllr Kim Snape	Chorley Borough Council
Tim Mitcham	Lancashire Wildlife Trust
Neville Kidd	United Utilities
Andy Grundy	Bolton Council
Fiona Cruchley	Lancashire County Council

Key concerns identified

It is recognised that joining up activity around the West Pennine Moors is crucially important, building on a long history of cooperation. It was felt that despite limited resources available to local authorities at present that the group needs to continue meeting and look at creative ways to maintain activity and ensure that the broad range of interest in the area was represented effectively.

The various groups linked to WPM were considered, and the need to strengthen links between them identified.

There is concern about the level of maintenance of the existing assets that had been developed in WPM over the years (particularly access routes). Grant funding is not usually available to maintain these assets long term, therefore it was important to find a sustainable way to achieve this.

Priorities identified

- Getting WPM designated – as soon as possible as SSSI.
- Strengthen links between officer working group and area management committee
- Strengthen links between local advisory groups and area management committee
- Recognition of the role of volunteers in managing the area – and potential for a project to encourage better coordination of this
- Ensuring relevant partners are represented on Area Management Committee – current membership is strong from local authorities and conservation organisations but more limited from access and recreation groups

Things to do now

- Write to Natural England re delays to SSSI process
- Ensure that officer working group feeds into area management committee – e.g. by requesting strategic input on key issues
- Invite the chairs (or a representative) of the local advisory groups to sit on the AMC

Things to do over next 6-12 months

- Investigate the potential for a project to join up the volunteering opportunities and good practise in the area – including how they can support maintenance of access routes. Review which organisation could best host this project, and which groups currently make significant contributions to the area – this could include Friends of Healey Nab (maintaining trails), Lancashire Wildlife Trust (managing their sites and monitoring wildlife) and parish councils. Identify potential sources of funding to support this work, and lead organisations for delivering this.
- Identify additional interest groups that should be invited to join the AMC.