

## **Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership**

(Appendix B refers)

### **Issue for consideration**

- a) Progress update on Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership
- b) Implications for AONB Unit staffing and delivery

### **Background**

In November 2016, the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme awarded a Stage 1 pass to the Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership to develop and deliver the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership (PHLP). The proposed £2.7m scheme (of which £2.02m is now 'earmarked' by HLF) comprises a programme of activity to re-connect people from both urban and rural communities with their landscape and their past, to help safeguard the area's wildlife and heritage and to improve people's access to this popular countryside area.

The AONB Partnership has been successful at Stage 1 application and HLF has now made an initial grant offer of £156,000 towards the costs of an 18 month 'Development Phase'. This will support the AONB Partnership to employ a PHLP Development Officer, offer a Graduate placement and also contract consultancy support to work up full details for the Stage 2 application (see Appendix B).

The Stage 2 application requires more precise information to be provided in the form of a Landscape Conservation Action Plan (including detailed project plans, cost estimates, a signed partnership agreement and security of match-funding for Year 1 of the Delivery Phase). Submission of the Stage 2 application is planned for summer 2017 and if successful would release subsequent funds for the Delivery Phase (£1.86m over 4 years) from HLF.

The development phase is fully funded by HLF, with additional 'cash' match-funding secured from the AONB Partnership, the Pendle Hill Fund, the Arts Council and 'in-kind' support services from the County Council as the accountable body.

#### **a. Progress update on Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership**

The Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Board met on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2016 to agree next steps following the award of the Stage 1 pass. In future, the Partnership Board will report to the AONB Joint Advisory Committee on scheme progress, via JAC Members on the Board and also the Landscape Partnership Development Officer.

The AONB Unit received a grant notification letter from HLF in late November 2016, outlining the Development grant offer and details of the funding earmarked for the Delivery Phase. AONB Unit staff have since met with the HLF case officer and an appointed project mentor to discuss the documentation required to allow HLF to issue a formal 'Permission to Start' letter (including accountable body information, project management structures/procedures and a proposed recruitment process for the Development Officer and Graduate placement).

The AONB Unit staff have also begun reviewing and preparing various briefs for contracting consultancy services for the surveying and planning work outlined for the Development Phase. This is to allow this work to be advertised as soon as permission to start is given by HLF. In particular, the Phase 1 Habitat Survey needs to begin in early spring 2016 to meet approved timescales.

#### **b. Implications for AONB Unit staffing and delivery**

##### Employment of the PHLP Development Officer

The Principal AONB Officer has submitted a 'Recruitment Business Case' to the accountable body, Lancashire County Council.

It is proposed to recruit the PHLP Development Officer (Grade 9) via the secondment of the Development and Funding Officer (Grade 8) from within the existing AONB Unit. This officer has been instrumental in the successful Stage 1 application and therefore will offer continuity, knowledge, understanding and experience of the scheme and the area. This secondment will allow the Development Phase to progress quickly towards the submission of the Stage 2 application within the prescribed timeframe outlined above. HLF Development Phase funds will be used to pay the costs of the Development Officer.

HLF will allow the secondment of an existing member of staff on the basis that the position vacated is temporarily 'back-filled'. Therefore, it is proposed that this 'back-filled' position will be a temporary Grade 8 position with fixed-term contract for up to 18 months or pending the return of the substantive post holder, whichever is the sooner. This position would be recruited via the normal County Council recruitment process and the AONB Revenue Budget will be used to pay these costs.

##### Other AONB Unit input

In addition, the PHLP 'in-kind' officer time will be offered by other AONB Unit Staff, namely:

- Principal AONB Officer to liaise with accountable body and PHLP Board
- Sustainable Tourism Officer to manage the development of a communications strategy and 'sense of place' consultation for PHLP (This will take place alongside a similar review of the AONB Partnership's overall communications strategy)

#### **Decision Required**

The Committee is requested to:

- i) note the progress report and offer comments on the development of the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership.