

Revised Estimates 2016/17 and Revenue Budget 2017/18 (Appendix A refers)

Issue for consideration

- a) Revised Estimates 2016/17
- b) Revenue Budget 2017/18

Background

The budget provision for the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee is funded by eight constituent local authority partners and grant from Defra, which is also enhanced by additional and contribution from United Utilities.

A core team is established from this budget provision, to assist in the delivery of the statutory AONB Management Plan on behalf of the Joint Advisory Committee and the local authorities. The AONB Unit continues to work to a 3-year business plan (2016 - 2019), on which partners are consulted to ensure it reflects local priorities for the AONB.

a. Revised Estimates 2016/17

The costs of the Partnership are managed as part of the Lancashire County Council's 'Devolved Financial Management' scheme. Since Committee approval of the 2016/17 estimates in October 2015 and support for the contributions requested from funding partners, it is understood the full requested contributions will be met.

Defra advised in January 2016, that the grant offer for 2016/17 was £211,723.

The contributions advised by the constituent local authorities for 2016/17 were as follows: -

	£
Craven District Council	6,800
Lancaster City Council	6,800
Pendle Borough Council	6,800
Preston Borough Council	6,800
Ribble Valley Borough Council	6,800
Wyre Borough Council	6,800
Lancashire County Council	40,800
North Yorkshire County Council	6,800

The net effect of any changes allows an AONB Projects programme totalling £96,412 to be delivered in 2016/17.

The revised estimates take account of any changes (see Appendix A, Column 3) in comparison with the Original Estimates in Column 2. The principal revision relates to an estimated reduction in salary costs due to the secondment of the Development and Funding Officer to the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This saving the AONB Unit to contract support services to temporarily 'backfill' the Development and Funding Officer post and provide limited maternity cover for Sustainable Tourism Officer.

In addition, since last reported in October 2015, the AONB Unit has been successful in obtaining the following additional funding to support delivery of projects within the area:

Project	£	Organisation
Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership	102,500	Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England
Peatland habitat restoration and facilitation and support for LPP, incl. Pennine Peat LIFE funding bid re-submission	65,000	Environment Agency
Wildflowers for the Meadows	20,000	Lancashire Environmental Fund
AONB Discovery Guide	3,500	Business adverts taken by members of Bowland Experience Ltd.
Total	191,000	

b. Revenue Budget 2017/18

Revenue Budget 2017/18

This section sets out in Appendix 'A' column 4, the costs associated with the Partnership's projects and management service in 2017/18, including estimated pay and price levels.

Provision reflects the new core team of 4 full-time equivalent posts, operational budgets for core activities and projects:

- Principal AONB Officer
- Development and Funding Officer (incl. contract support service costs up to September 2017)
- Sustainable Tourism and Communications Officer
- Projects and Events Officer

Total Partnership income from contributions has been included in the budget for 2017/18 based on estimated contributions from funding authorities, equivalent to maintaining the requested contribution for 2016/17. In addition, it is also based on a continuation of a contribution from United Utilities, matching the level requested district/borough councils.

Income in respect of grant support from Defra towards core costs and projects costs has been included on the basis of a further inflationary increase on 2016/17 grant offer.

It is also assumed that the Defra grant for 2017/18 will continue to be a single grant offer to be used in ways which the AONB Partnership considers will deliver the best performance in terms of achieving delivery of the Management Plan, without restrictions placed on the percentage of grant to each area of supported activity.

Therefore, the level of provision for 'Projects' is based on the resources estimated to be available to the Partnership after providing for the staffing of the AONB Unit at the existing office base, plus related core activities costs.

The attention of the Committee is drawn to the following:

1. Gross Expenditure

It is proposed that total expenditure be £360,903 in 2017/18. The total expenditure results from providing for the effect of increased pay and prices, staff increments (where applicable), employers national insurance and superannuation contributions, host authority support costs and reflecting a level of provision for 'Projects'.

2. Income

Defra grant for 2017/18 towards core costs and projects costs of £215,364 reflects an inflationary increase on grant offer for 2016/17.

A contribution of £6,800 from United Utilities has been included, on the basis that the company will maintain a level of contribution equivalent to that of the district/borough councils.

3. Net Expenditure

The £310,564 net cost of management services is based on maintaining the level of contributions from the funding authorities requested for 2016/17. It is essential that the funding authorities are notified of the planned AONB Partnership expenditure and requested to make due provision in their own estimates.

4. Additional Resources

It should also be noted that, as normal, resources from other funding bodies for projects in AONB will be sought during 2016/17 (e.g. Lottery funds, European Union, Government Agencies, Lancashire Environment Fund), which are over and above the Partnership budget provision and this will continue into 2017/18.

Furthermore, the AONB Unit contributes to the generation of additional schemes and projects in liaison with organisations operating in the area e.g. local authority countryside services or rivers trusts.

Decision Required

The Committee is requested to:

- i) note the 2016/17 Revised Estimates
- ii) approve the 2017/18 Revenue Budget as set out in the report
- iii) subject to the approval of (ii) above, to request the funding authorities to make appropriate provision in their revenue budgets