

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 10 APRIL 2014
title: FOREST OF BOWLAND AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014-2019
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is for Committee to agree the adoption of the Forest of Bowland AONB 2014-2019 Management Plan.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – The management plan makes the important connection between people and nature
- Corporate Priorities - The local planning authority has a duty to have regard to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty as defined by and appropriate management of the Forest of Bowland AONB.
- Other Considerations - None

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Forest of Bowland was formerly designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty by Government on 10 February 1964. The area was designated as a landscape of national significance due to a variety of factors including:

- Grandeur and isolation of the upland core
- Undulating lowlands
- Serenity and tranquillity of the area
- Wildlife of the area
- Historic landscape and cultural associations

2.2 The AONB is managed by a partnership of landowners, farmers, voluntary organisations, wildlife groups, recreation groups, local councils and government agencies. Representatives from these groups sit on the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC).

2.3 The AONB unit is guided by the JAC. This is a partnership organisation made up of local authorities, national environmental agencies and local representatives from landowning and recreation interest groups.

2.4 The JAC is supported by a number of themed working groups that in turn assist in the delivery of the AONB Management Plan:

- landscape and biodiversity

- landscape management
- access and recreation
- climate change
- education
- sustainable tourism.

2.5 The Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan describes the special qualities of the area that contributes to the national significance of the landscape. It identifies the major trends and opportunities for the area and presents a vision for the Forest of Bowland AONB 2014-2019.

2.6 The document provides a policy framework and identifies a five-year programme of objectives to help guide the work of the AONB partnership organisation towards achieving the purpose of the plan. The objectives identify ways of working with:

- Landscape
- Biodiversity
- Geodiversity
- Planning and development

all of the objectives are designed to conserve and enhance an unspoilt and unique landscape of the highest quality.

3 ISSUES

3.1 The key issues affecting the AONB are climate change, development pressure, pursuit of economic growth, demands for recreation and changes in agricultural practices.

3.2 The Council has a duty to cooperate with strategic partners including the Forest of Bowland AONB, elected Members and technical officers group as well as national and regional organisations and agencies, including Natural England and the RSPB for example to address these issues.

3.3 The objectives of the AONB Management Plan referred to in paragraph 2.6 are compliant with environmental protection and enhancement policies of the Council's Core Strategy and the government's NPPF planning policy documents.

4 CONCLUSION

4.1 The objectives and actions of the AONB Management Plan need to be guided by a long term goal or vision and the Management Plan demonstrates how the AONB Partnerships will continue to protect some of the finest landscapes in the northwest, cherished by residents and visitors alike.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – The Council's countryside service will continue to play a role in the delivery of objectives included in the management plan

- Technical, Environmental and Legal – No implications identified.
- Political - No implications identified.
- Reputation – The Council’s reputation for protecting and enhancing the existing environmental quality for the area will be maintained.
- Equality & Diversity – No implications identified.

6 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

6.1 Approve the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan [2014 – 2019].

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JOHN HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 (final draft) or to download the final draft AONB management plan go to:

www.forestofbowland.com/mgmtplanreview

or for further information please ask for David Hewitt, extension 4505.

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