

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 11 SEPTEMBER 2008
title: AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) – REVIEW OF THE
MANAGEMENT PLAN
submitted by: STEWART BAILEY- DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
principal author: DIANE CAFFERTY- SENIOR PLANNING POLICY OFFICER

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To consider the draft of the revised management plan for the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Council Ambitions –To protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area.
- Community Objectives – To conserve our countryside, the natural beauty of the area and enhance our built environment.
- Corporate Priorities – That create and environment that people feel is healthier and cleaner.
- Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) continues to be important in terms of the significant size of the area of Ribble Valley that it covers. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act (2000) a statutory duty was placed upon local authorities to prepare a management plan for AONBs in their area. This duty has been carried out under the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) arrangements of which this authority is one of 18 members. The main aims of the JAC are to protect, conserve, enhance and promote social, economic and environmental sustainability.

3 MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

3.1 The current Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan which covers the period April 2004 to March 2009 was initially designed to identify major trends and opportunities for the area and present a vision for the AONB in 2014 (the 50th year of its formal designation). This plan is now being reviewed to cover the period 2009-2014 and seeks to promote a strategic context within which problems and opportunities can be addressed. The role of the plan is to provide positive and pro-active management that is inline with the government's sustainable Development Strategy.

3.2 As mentioned, the management plan provides a policy framework and identifies a five year programme of actions to help guide the work of the AONB partnership in its role of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Forest of Bowland landscape. It sets out a series of key issues, which are included in appendix one. It also sets out considerations on the following themes:

- Natural and Cultural Landscape
- Enjoyment, Health and Well-being
- Economy
- Community

- Working in Partnership
- Responding to Climate Change

- 3.3 These topic areas are set out as a series of over 70 objectives, each with a long-term vision. The vision for each is set out in appendix two. Within these there are also targets and actions that the plan aims to address over the five-year implementation period. The issues identified are relevant to the management of the AONB and it is important that actions are identified to help manage them. Similarly the visions set out in the plan are supported as objectives for the area.
- 3.4 The AONB unit, based within the County Council provides the policy and management expertise through which the existing arrangements for managing the AONB and meeting the statutory requirements for the local authority partners are met. This is still seen as the most appropriate means for providing a co-ordinated management approach and the continued role of the unit in carrying out the review should be supported.
- 3.5 Joint working with other key partners on the actions and targets is set out in the plan. The section that sets out the objectives on Planning and Built Development is enclosed in appendix three for reference. Member's attention is drawn to the issue of promoting affordable housing, which is outlined in paragraph 12.2 in this section. In some cases joint working on policy formulation and implementation is set out and whilst it is acknowledged that joint working should be supported, careful monitoring of this approach will take place to ensure that the interests of Ribble Valley Borough Council are protected.
- 3.6 The draft management plan 2009-2014 is available to view on the AONB website at www.forestofbowland.com and it is possible to submit comments on the draft plan to bowland@lancashire.gov.uk. Printed copies are also available for reference at Level D (Planning) reception.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – None.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – The Council has a duty to ensure an up to date and effective management plan is in place.
- Political – None.
- Reputation – None.

5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

5.1 Instruct the Director of Development Services to respond to the consultation in line with the comments outlined in section 3.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Forest of Bowland AONB Draft Management Plan – 2004 – 2014.
- 2 AONB correspondence files.

For further information please ask for Diane Cafferty, ext 4551.

LONG TERM VISIONS

1. An unspoilt landscape of the highest quality; richness and diversity of cultural and natural features; a landscape where tranquillity can be found.
2. Wide ranging opportunities for sustainable tourism, recreation and access for all, respecting the natural beauty of the AONB.
3. Sustainable management of the land supported by the necessary skills and expertise; a buoyant local economy supported by environmentally-responsible businesses; innovative planning and development that conserves or enhances natural beauty.
4. Sustainable communities that are strongly linked to their localities and actively involved in AONB projects and management.
5. A well-organised and inclusive partnership taking active responsibility for the delivery and on-going maintenance of high quality services.
6. Unpolluted air, soil and water to allow the landscape and wildlife of the AONB to be sustained, reduced CO2 emissions that exceed Government targets; the Forest of Bowland AONB is recognised as a place of 'best practise; in responding to climate change.

APPENDIX 3