

## Policy Committee – 17<sup>th</sup> June 2014



## FOREST OF BOWLAND AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014 - 2019

Report of Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration

Ward(s) affected: Bentham, Ingleton and Clapham, Settle and Ribble Banks

1. **Purpose of Report** –

To agree the adoption of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan for the period 2014 – 2019.

2. **Recommendations** –

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014 -2019 and refer the document for adoption to Council.

3. **Report** –

**Background:**

- 3.1 The Forest of Bowland is a nationally protected landscape and is internationally important for its heather moorland and blanket bog which sustain rare species such as the hen harrier and marlin and provide a stronghold for brown hares and lapwings. The AONB holds a European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.
- 3.2 The AONB was first designated in 1964 and extends to 803 square kilometres, of which 73 square kilometres falls within Craven District. The Forest of Bowland covers communities living within the parishes of Bentham, Clapham-cum-Newby, Austwick, Lawkland, Giggleswick, Rathmell and Wiggleswick. A map showing the Forest of Bowland AONB is attached at Appendix A for information.
- 3.3 The AONB is managed by a statutory partnership of local authorities, landowners, farmers, voluntary organisations, parish councils and government agencies, who work to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area. The partnership takes the form of a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), which is responsible for making strategic decisions and liaising between the range of organisations and interests within the AONB. The Council is represented on the JAC by Councillor Barrington.

A dedicated AONB Unit takes the lead on servicing the JAC, and on preparing and implementing the Management Plan.

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## Review of the Management Plan:

- 3.4 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000 places a statutory duty on local authorities to prepare, and regularly review, a management plan for AONB's in their administrative area. It was agreed that the JAC would undertake the review on behalf of the eight constituent authorities – Ribble Valley, Preston, Wyre, Lancaster, Pendle and Craven and the counties of Lancashire and North Yorkshire.
- 3.5 It was agreed by the partnership that the preparation of the new Management Plan for the period 2014 – 2019 should take the form of a “light touch” review of the previous Management Plan covering the period 2009 - 2014. A series of workshops and meetings was held with stakeholders and the public during the summer of 2013 to review the previous plan and discuss new issues and objectives. A draft document was then produced and circulated to AONB partners, landowners, farmers, local businesses, residents, visitors and organisations with an interest in the future management of the Forest of Bowland AONB. In addition, a review of relevant plans, strategies and policies was carried out to ensure that they were reflected in the new Management Plan.
- 3.6 The Forest of Bowland AONB JAC endorsed the Management Plan on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2014, and has referred the document for adoption by the constituent local authorities.
- 3.7 The role of the Management Plan is to provide a framework for the partners to work within for the delivery of the aims and objectives of the AONB. The Plan describes the special qualities of the area, the importance of the relevant landscape features and identifying those features which are vulnerable to change. As a nationally important landscape, the Forest of Bowland AONB experiences a variety of management pressures such as changing demands on agricultural land, a variety of environmental factors, telecommunication and energy infrastructure, tourism facilities and the need to develop a sustainable rural economy.
- 3.8 The Management Plan sets out the following vision for the Forest of Bowland for all partners to work towards:
- “The Forest of Bowland retains its sense of local distinctiveness, notably the large scale open moorland character of the Bowland Fells, traditional buildings and settlement patterns of villages, hamlets and farmsteads. Natural and cultural heritage is sympathetically managed and contributes to a sustainable and vibrant local economy. The management of the AONB has improved the quality of the landscape for all”.*
- 3.9 To achieve this vision, the following four outcomes have been adopted to provide a framework for the Management Plan:
- An outstanding landscape of natural and cultural heritage
  - Resilient and sustainable communities
  - A strong connection between people and the landscape
  - Working in partnership

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- 3.10 Under each outcome, “ways of working” are detailed outlining how the AONB partnership and the AONB Unit aim to carry out their day-to-day work. Each outcome has a long-term vision under which key issues are identified. This is followed by a table which contains objectives for the Partnership and actions to be delivered during the Plan period. Responsibility for these actions is allocated to a relevant lead and key partners with details of targets and timescales for each action. Those objectives and actions that relate specifically or generically to Craven District Council are attached at Appendix B.
- 3.11 The Management Plan is a comprehensive document extending to over 80 pages. A copy of the Management Plan for the period 2014 – 2019 can be viewed at [http://www.forestofbowland.com/cons\\_managementplan](http://www.forestofbowland.com/cons_managementplan)

## 4. **Implications**

### 4.1 **Financial Implications –**

There are no further financial implications arising (over and above the Council’s agreed annual contribution of £6,800).

The Forest of Bowland AONB secures its main funding from DEFRA for its core costs and seeks additional funding for key projects. There are opportunities for communities within the District to apply for Sustainable Development Funding from the AONB to enable sustainable development to take place. The partnership, through its joint working, can also apply for other funds such as the Heritage Lottery Fund.

### 4.2 **Legal Implications –**

Agreeing to adopt the Management Plan satisfies the statutory duty placed on the Council by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000 to prepare, and regularly review, a management plan for that part of the Forest of Bowland AONB that is in its administrative area.

### 4.3 **Contribution to Corporate Priorities –**

The Management Plan has no immediate impact; however, the content of the document should be taken into account when the Council is considering its other policies, programmes and strategies, such as the Craven Local Development Plan.

### 4.4 **Risk Management –**

Adoption of the Management Plan will enable to Council to comply with its statutory obligations. Any breaches of compliance could subject the Council to investigation and the possibility of action being taken against it.

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5. **Consultations with Others** –

Planning Policy  
Legal Services

6. **Access to Information: Background Documents** –

- Forest of Bowland AONB Annual Reports – from 2005/2006 to 2012/2013
- Forest of Bowland AONB Landscape Character Assessment

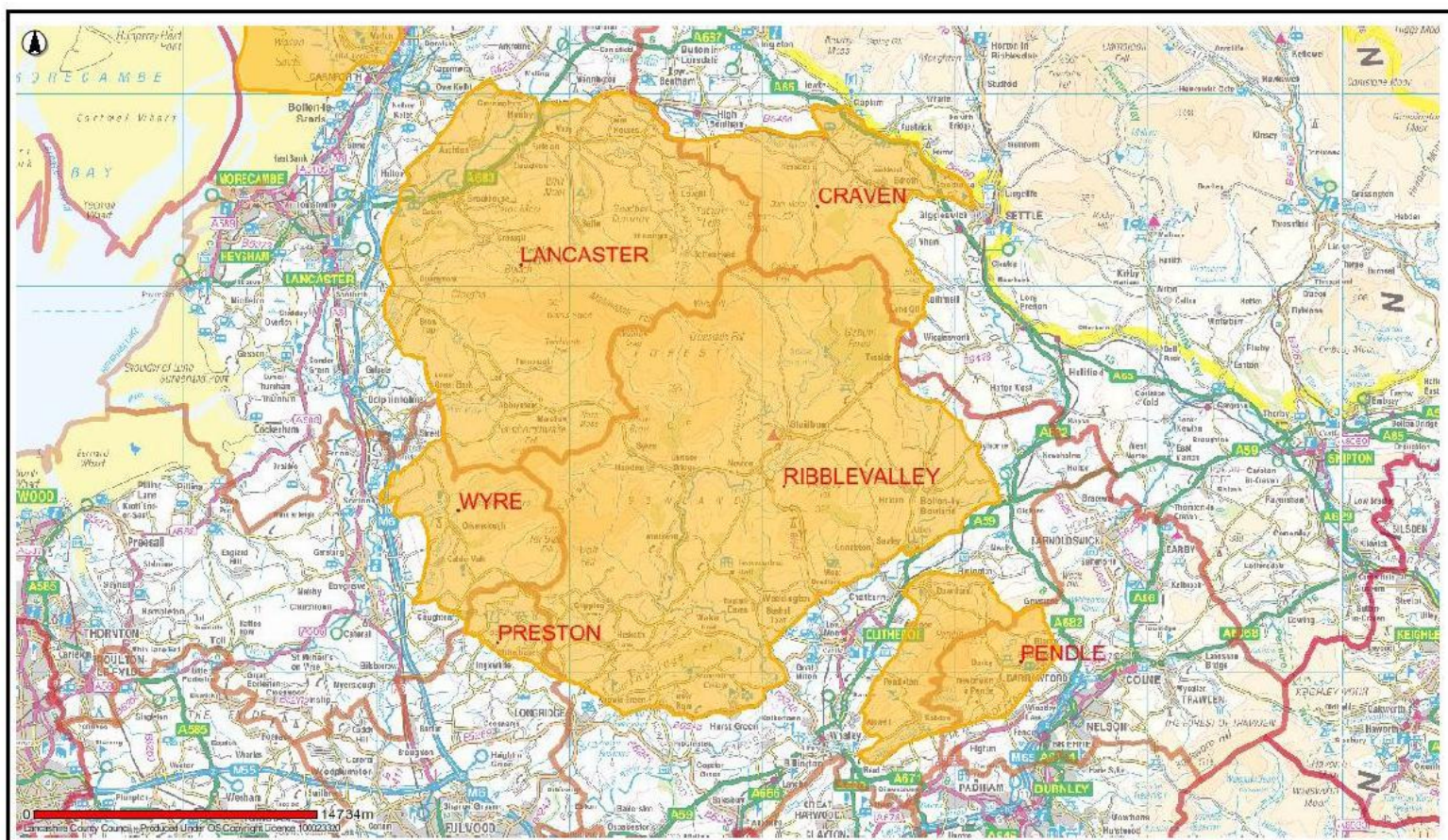
These documents can be viewed at [http://www.forestofbowland.com/publ\\_plans](http://www.forestofbowland.com/publ_plans)

7. **Author of the Report** –

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8. **Appendices -**

Appendix A – Map of Forest of Bowland AONB showing the six Districts  
Appendix B – Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan 2014 – 2019: Actions for Delivering the Management Plan



FOREST OF BOWLAND AONB SHOWING THE SIX DISTRICTS



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