

**HOWARDIAN HILLS  
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
14 APRIL 2016**

**AONB ACTION PROGRAMME 2015/16**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To receive details of progress made on implementing the AONB Management Plan during 2015/16. The Action Programme for 2016/17, incorporating business planning requirements, is covered under a separate Report on this agenda.

**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 At each Spring meeting the JAC considers a report detailing the progress achieved on the Management Plan objectives. The Action Programme contains details of the progress made against the previous year's targets. The Action Programme covering detailed progress against 2015/16 targets has been circulated to Members by email.
- 2.2 A detailed Red/Amber/Green system is used to monitor progress against annual targets, and analysis shows that 80% of the specific targets were fully achieved, 5% were 25-75% achieved, 7% were less than 25% achieved and 8% were not progressed at all.
- 2.3 Statistically this is a very similar performance than the previous year. Targets where no action was completed were largely those that were overtaken by events, relied heavily on action from partner organisations or were/became lower relative priorities for the AONB Unit during the year.
- 2.4 Targets that we had hoped to achieve better progress on included entering details of hedges planted, etc onto a GIS database; geodiversity management and a Condition Assessment mechanism for non-statutory Natural and Historic Environment Priority Sites.

**3.0 THE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH**

- 3.1 Achievements this year included:
- Starting compilation of a matrix plotting the Special Qualities of the AONB against the ecosystem services they provide.
  - Learning more about the ecosystem approach via a North York Moors National Park workshop.
  - Monitoring information on climate change and possible impacts.

**4.0 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

- 4.1 Achievements this year included:
- Continuing to participate in the Biodiversity Action Partnership for Ryedale, Scarborough and the AONB.
  - Carrying out 11 workdays with volunteers on 9 SINC's.
  - Managing a total of 13 grassland sites (all SINC's bar one).
  - Managing 45 Special Interest Road Verges.
  - Completing clearance of rhododendron in Park Wood adjacent to Yearsley Moor Woodlands SINC. Significant clearance was carried out by the FC and landowner under a Plant Health Notice, to remove rhododendron infested with *Phytophthora ramorum*.
  - Surveying Himalayan balsam along approx. 5.8km of Wath Beck and carrying out control works at Jeffry Bog SINC, Fairy Dell SINC, Mugdale & Barker Woods SINC and River Derwent SSSI.

- Carrying out scrub management at Nunnington Cutting & Quarries SSSI, Cawton Fens SINC and Terrington Carr SINC.
- Continuing to participate in the partnership focussing on the River Rye, to develop a project to tackle Himalayan balsam, river quality and sedimentation on a catchment scale. This has now turned into an application for Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership funding.
- Continuing involvement with the North Yorkshire Local Geological Sites Partnership, encouraging progress to map the AONB's most important geodiversity sites.
- Entering work carried out in the AONB in 2013/14 and 2014/15 into the Government's Biodiversity Action Recording System.
- Assessing the management options and payments becoming available under the new Countryside Stewardship scheme.

## **5.0 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT**

### **5.1 Achievements this year included:**

- Starting a targeted programme of survey and management work for Scheduled Monuments, particularly those which are At Risk, utilising volunteers wherever possible. Funding approval received from Historic England and survey work started in May.
- Carrying out bracken and scrub control works on 8 Scheduled round barrows at Hovingham, Yearsley and Oulston (6 separate SMs).
- Completing work on 13 Local Priority Sites or other historic features. The most significant of these were the works on Scheduled Monuments described above and restoration of 4 traditional direction signs.
- Restoring the traditional village name signs in Huttons Ambo, with the refurbishment of 2 old signs and the casting of 2 replicas.

## **6.0 LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

### **6.1 Achievements this year included:**

- Continuing involvement in the North York Moors, Coast and Hills LEADER Transition phase, awaiting approval of the launch of the new Local Development Strategy.
- Community projects funded in 2 villages.
- Rural Action Yorkshire project supported with an SDF grant (see separate report for work achieved by project officer).
- Continued liaison with the principal organisations involved in community work in the AONB, via the regular Community Development Officers' meetings.

## **7.0 AGRICULTURE**

### **7.1 Achievements this year included:**

- Completing 7 landscape enhancement schemes involving 765m of hedge planting/gapping-up and 242m of field wall restoration.
- Submitting responses to planning consultations for 24 new agricultural buildings or infrastructure.

## **8.0 FORESTRY AND WOODLAND**

### **8.1 Achievements this year included:**

- Scrutinising 4 Forestry Commission Countryside Stewardship Scheme consultations and 1 Woodland Management Plan consultation.
- Monitoring the situation with tree diseases.
- Responding to consultations and requests for advice, as appropriate.

## **9.0 DEVELOPMENT & THE RURAL ECONOMY**

### **9.1 Achievements this year included:**

- Monitoring and inputting as necessary to national policy consultations received by the NAAONB, and taking the lead on a national response to proposed regulations covering hydraulic fracturing (fracking).
- Scrutinising a total of 134 development control consultations across all categories – full details of Development statistics for the AONB in 2015 are given in a separate Report on this agenda.
- Scrutinising 13 planning consultations related to small business development in the AONB.
- Continuing liaison with Northern Powergrid on overhead electricity cable undergrounding, with the surveying and submission of 11 potential schemes for funding under the next 8-year programme. Seven of these schemes have been taken forward, which will use the full allowance for the RIIO-ED1 period.
- Continuing to explore options to support jobs, skills and sustainable economic growth locally, as part of the joint Protected Landscapes Growth Plan submitted to the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Participating in the partnership set up to run the Dales & Moors Farmer Innovation Project, with at least 1 farmer from the AONB participating.

## **10.0 ROADS, TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

### **10.1 Achievements this year included:**

- Input made to the preparation of NYCC's Local Transport Plan 4.
- Scrutinising 7 development control consultations.
- Renovating 4 traditional direction signs in the East Ness, Low Hutton, Terrington and Barton Hill areas.

## **11.0 RECREATION, ACCESS AND TOURISM**

### **11.1 Achievements this year included:**

- Scrutinising 5 development control consultations.
- Developing a new mechanism to assist NYCC with resolving Public Rights of Way issues in the AONB.
- Developing phase two of an initiative with Visit York, via Ryedale DC and Welcome to Yorkshire.
- Finalising negotiations on a package of improvements in PRow routing on the Castle Howard Estate, to be implemented in summer 2016.
- Continuing input into the 'Moors and More' local distinctiveness project and other similar tourism business initiatives with Ryedale DC, Welcome to Yorkshire and Visit York.
- Litter picking at 'hot-spots' throughout the AONB.
- Preparing an off-road cycling route leaflet for the Coneysthorpe area in pdf format.
- Digitising the remaining 3 walks routes around Terrington, to make a uniform package of 12 electronic leaflets for the whole AONB, now hosted on the AONB website.
- Beginning preparation of some Easy Access walks, for less able users.

## **12.0 AWARENESS AND PROMOTION**

### **12.1 Achievements this year included:**

- Maintaining a neat appearance around the AONB gateway signs.
- Publishing AONB News and our Annual Report for 2014/15.
- Attending the Ryedale Show.
- Distributing AONB literature to outlets in the AONB.
- Maintaining the AONB website – 25,694 Page Views by 7,947 Users.

- Delivering a new low-cost refresh of the AONB website, focussed on providing information to visitors, residents, etc, as well as a platform for guided route leaflets, grant application forms, Information Notes, etc.
- Maintaining a presence on Twitter, issuing information and re-Tweeting as appropriate.
- Holding 4 Junior Ranger Club sessions throughout the year, with 68 children attending.

## **13.0 IMPLEMENTATION**

### 13.1 Achievements this year included:

- Utilising the Defra Single Pot funding arrangements to ensure maximum leverage of funds into the AONB.
- Continuing involvement in the North York Moors, Coast and Hills LEADER Transition phase, awaiting approval of the launch of the new Local Development Strategy.
- Starting a targeted programme of survey and management work for Scheduled Monuments, particularly those which are At Risk, utilising volunteers wherever possible. Funding approval received from Historic England and survey work started in May.
- Continuing to participate in the partnership focussing on the River Rye, to develop a project to tackle Himalayan balsam, river quality and sedimentation on a catchment scale. This has now turned into an application for Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership funding.
- Continuing to balance our Reserves position against new information being received on likely future levels of Government and local authority funding, so as to utilise our resources most efficiently in delivering Management Plan Objectives and practical conservation projects.
- Reviewing the AONB grant processes in order to maintain effectiveness and efficiency.
- Continuing to explore options to support jobs, skills and sustainable economic growth locally, as part of the joint Protected Landscapes Growth Plan submitted to the Local Enterprise Partnership. Dales & Moors Farmer Innovation Project established.
- Achieving volunteer assistance for 25 tasks or projects, worth at least 136 days or £8,425.

## **14.0 MONITORING**

### 14.1 Achievements this year included:

- Completing the fixed-point photography monitoring project by compiling a map of the sampling points.

## **15.0 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AONBs**

### 15.1 Achievements this year included:

- Attending the national AONB Forum in Winchester.
- Attending 1 x Northern AONBs Group meetings.
- Attending the NAAONB Chairmen's seminar and AGM event.
- Participating in peer-to-peer and on-line collaborative working initiatives, to share and receive knowledge around the AONB Family.

## **16.0 RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the achievements against Targets for 2015/16 be noted.