

**HOWARDIAN HILLS  
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
13 APRIL 2017**

**AONB ACTION PROGRAMME 2016/17**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To receive details of progress made on implementing the AONB Management Plan during 2016/17. The Action Programme for 2017/18, 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 summary report outlining the progress achieved on the Management Plan objectives in the previous year. The Action Programme contains full details of the progress made and 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, 5% were less than 25% achieved and 9% were not progressed at all.
- 2.3 Statistically this is a very similar performance to 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 The principal targets that we had hoped to achieve more progress on were a survey of geodiversity sites, the development of a joint PRow maintenance project with NYCC's Countryside Access Service and ironing-out layout glitches in the AONB website.

**3.0 THE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH**

- 3.1 Achievements this year included:
- Inputting to important local plans such as the Ryedale and Hambleton Local Plan Strategies and the Minerals & Waste Joint Plan, to assess conformity with the AONB Management Plan.

**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 6 SINC or SSSIs.
  - Managing a total of 13 grassland sites (all SSSI/SINC bar one).
  - Managing 45 Special Interest Road Verges.
  - Carrying out Himalayan balsam control works at Jeffrey Bog SINC, Fairy Dell SINC, Mugdale & Barker Woods SINC, River Derwent SSSI and along Wath Beck.
  - Carrying out scrub management at Terrington Carr SINC.
  - Carrying out further mechanical clearance of rhododendron on Grimston Moor SINC.

- Continuing to participate in the partnership preparing an application for a Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership focussing on the River Rye. The project aims to tackle Himalayan balsam, river quality and sedimentation on a catchment scale and received a Stage 1 pass in September 2016. The Stage 2 application will be submitted after the 2-year Development phase.
- Continuing involvement with the North Yorkshire Local Geological Sites Partnership, encouraging progress to survey and map the AONB's most important geodiversity sites. A quote to carry out a survey programme was received but held in abeyance following the emergence of a larger project that is seeking HLF funding. Late in the year it transpired that the survey element would not be eligible for HLF grant so a separate new proposal is now being formulated.
- Entering work carried out in the AONB in 2015/16 into the Government's Biodiversity Action Recording System, although it has subsequently been discontinued.
- Attending meetings of the re-invigorated North Yorkshire & York Local Nature Partnership, following the appointment of a part-time co-ordinator.

## **5.0 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT**

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

- Completing work on 21 Local Priority Sites, the most significant of which were the works on Scheduled Monuments described below. Work was also completed on 10 other sites/features.
- Successful completion of Year 2 of the Monument Management Scheme, which is principally funded by Historic England. Detailed surveys carried out on 2 SMs; Management Plans prepared for 7 SMs; bracken sprayed on 23 SMs; bramble/brash/scrub cleared on 27 SMs; water trough and feeder removed from 1 SM; 1 SM re-vegetated.
- Restoring to traditional village name signs in Crayke, Ganthorpe, Crambe, Cawton, Terrington, Yearsley, Oulston and Kirkham, with the refurbishment of 9 old signs and the casting of 6 new replicas.

## **6.0 LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

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

- Continuing involvement in the North York Moors, Coast and Hills LEADER project, following approval of the launch of the new Local Development Strategy after a moratorium imposed by Defra due to the Brexit vote.
- Involvement in the new Amotherby Ward Project.
- Community projects funded in 4 villages.
- Rural Action Yorkshire project supported with an SDF grant (see separate report for work achieved by the RAY 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 4 landscape enhancement schemes involving 1,876m of hedge planting/gapping-up.
- Monitoring emerging thoughts on the future development of agricultural support, agri-environment schemes and rural development following the Brexit vote.
- Scrutinising planning consultations for 16 new agricultural buildings or infrastructure.

## **8.0 FORESTRY AND WOODLAND**

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

- Scrutinising 16 Forestry Commission Countryside Stewardship Scheme consultations and 3 Woodland Management Plan consultations, including a significant 10-yr plan for the Castle Howard Estate's woodland re-structuring in response to the threat of P. ramorum.
- Continuing participation in the renewed North York Moors Native Woodland Partnership
- 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.
- Inputting to the Hambleton Local Plan Strategy Preferred Options & Easingwold Area Plan (site allocations), the Ryedale Visually Important Undeveloped Areas consultation and the final consultation on the North Yorkshire Minerals & Waste Joint Plan.
- Scrutinising a total of 126 development control consultations across all categories – full details of Development statistics for the AONB in 2016 are given in a separate Report on this agenda.
- Scrutinising 4 planning consultations related to small business development in the AONB.
- Continuing liaison with Northern Powergrid on overhead electricity cable undergrounding. Schemes were completed at Cawton and Crambe. Underground works have been completed at Nunnington (West) but the overhead lines and poles are still to be removed.
- A partial undergrounding scheme for BT overhead lines has been agreed for Nunnington (West), with BT also looking retrospectively at the Cawton and Crambe schemes to identify any potential pole removal. New liaison arrangements between BT and Northern PowerGrid should lead to much better joint working on new schemes.
- Negotiated participation in a joint study organised and funded by the NYMNPA to assess the scope for drawing down funds from the National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative.

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

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

- Scrutinising 2 development control consultations.
- Meeting the NYCC Assistant Director responsible for Highways Asset Management to agree principles on road verge management during kerbing works and adoption of best practice guidance for works within the AONB
- Repairing 1 traditional direction sign at Firby, following damage caused by a HGV.

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

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

- Scrutinising 3 development control consultations.
- Participation in a successful Local Growth Fund bid for the development of Tourism Business Networks for the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors areas (including the two AONBs).
- Implementing phase 3 of an initiative with Visit York, via Ryedale DC and Welcome to Yorkshire, with the preparation of 7 'Theme/Route itineraries'.
- Contracting iFootpath to carry out the preparation of 6 Easy Countryside Trails. These are now available on the iFootpath website and PDF versions will be uploaded to the AONB website in April.

- Progressing a new project to assist NYCC with resolving Public Rights of Way issues in the AONB. Four target Parishes were selected and the issues recorded in CAMS were re-surveyed by volunteers to check that they were still valid. The intention is to use the North York Moors National Park Apprentices Team to carry out work. 24 missing/broken roadside fingerposts were identified across the AONB and replacements have been ordered.
- Litter picking at 'hot-spots' throughout the AONB.

## **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 2015/16.
- Attending the Ryedale Show.
- Maintaining and adding to the AONB website.
- Maintaining a presence on Twitter, publicising the practical work being carried out in the AONB and re-Tweeting as appropriate.
- Holding 4 Junior Ranger Club sessions throughout the year, with 104 children attending.
- Re-designing a series of 7 new display banners to replace our old set.
- Presentations given to NYCC Hambleton and Ryedale Area Committees and the Marton Gardening Club.

## **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.
- Successful completion of Year 2 of the Monument Management Scheme, which is principally funded by Historic England.
- Continuing to participate in the partnership preparing an application for a Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership focussing on the River Rye. The Stage 2 application will be submitted after the 2-year Development phase.
- Developing a Reserves Policy and reducing the balance during 2016/17 by funding more projects. £14k of the 2015/16 £23k underspend was utilised in 2016/17. This approach was endorsed by the NYCC Assistant Director for Strategic Resources.
- Completing a Unit re-structure, which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016. Two one day per week Fixed Term Contract posts were recruited to in Sept 2016.
- Successful out-sourcing of work to: prepare Easy Access routes; scope possibilities for accessing National Grid funding to screen the impact of major power lines; prepare site management plans for Scheduled Monuments. Contracts to carry out surveys of geological sites and prepare a geodiversity leaflet were obtained but held in reserve pending the outcome of a bid for HLF funding.
- Joint working with the North York Moors National Park on a variety of projects: Native Woodland Partnership; scoping study of NP/AONB western fringe for National Grid LEI funding; development of funding bids for Turtle Doves and Cornfield Flowers; Dark Skies Week; developing the RYEvitalise project for Stage 1 HLF Landscape Partnership funding; technical help with the AONB Monument Management Scheme; article in National Park Out & About Guide.
- Achieving volunteer assistance for 27 tasks or projects, worth at least 182 days or £10,200.

## **14.0 MONITORING**

### 14.1 No work carried out this year.

## **15.0 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AONBs**

15.1 Achievements this year included:

- Attending the national AONB Forum in Shropshire.
- Attending 2 x Northern AONBs Group meetings.
- Attending the NAAONB Chairmens' 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 2016/17 be noted.