

**HOWARDIAN HILLS
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
19 APRIL 2018**

AONB BUSINESS PLAN AND ACTION PROGRAMME 2018/19

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree details of proposed activity to implement the AONB Management Plan during 2018/19.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The AONB Management Plan contains a detailed Action Programme that lists each Objective and Action and identifies a suggested lead agency and partner organisations for implementation.
- 2.2 In addition to setting targets for 2018/19 this report also details some of the mechanisms for achieving the proposed targets, as well as indications of some of the individual projects that may be implemented.
- 2.3 The Action Programme and Targets for 2018/19, together with an indicative timetabling of tasks, has been circulated to Members by email.

3.0 THE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

- 3.1 Principal activities for the year include:
- Compiling a matrix of the AONB's Natural Capital assets and associated ecosystem services, as part of the Management Plan review process. This will replace Objective ES1 of the current Management Plan.

4.0 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 The proposed budget for landscape and biodiversity works is £25,000, although there would also be further additional funds available from Reserves if necessary. Projects to be funded include:
- Completing the comprehensive project to identify, survey, map and record features of geodiversity interest in the AONB, including commissioning the North & East Yorkshire Datacentre to digitise the site boundaries of Potential Local Geological Sites.
 - Hedge restoration schemes (subject to integration with grants available from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme).
 - Continuing control of Himalayan balsam along Wath Beck and at Jeffry Bog, Fairy Dell and Mugdale & Barker Woods SINCs. This is a particularly suitable task for the AONB Volunteers.
 - Continuing financial contributions to the Development phase of the Ryevitalise project, and then contributing to Stage 2 should the bid be successful.
 - Continuing financial contributions to the partnerships concentrating on turtle doves and cornfield flowers, and to the Local Nature Partnership.
- 4.2 Other activities for the year include:
- Participating via the NAAONB in work to develop and possibly pilot new models for supporting rural conservation work post-Brexit.

- Supporting a survey of turtle doves being conducted in the AONB in Spring 2018.
- Continuing to work with Ryedale DC, Scarborough BC and Hambleton DC in a Biodiversity Action Partnership for the joint area.
- Arranging for the Special Interest Road Verges dataset to be uploaded to the National Street Gazetteer.
- Continuing our programmes of Exmoor pony grazing, SINC management and Special Interest Road Verge management.
- Carrying out targeted control of Himalayan balsam, rhododendron and bracken on various SINC and other sites.
- Promoting the Countryside Stewardship Scheme to farmers and land managers and identifying new opportunities and methods for assisting them with conservation works.
- Continuing our participation in the River Derwent and particularly River Rye partnerships, inputting to the Development Phase of the Heritage Lottery Funded Ryevitalise project and then the Implementation phase should the phase 2 grant be approved.
- Completing the survey of geodiversity sites within the AONB, seeking ratification of the best sites as Local Geological Sites and incorporating the information into the revised Management Plan.
- Continuing to participate in the North Yorkshire & York Local Nature Partnership (LNP).
- Responding to planning applications potentially affecting important wildlife sites, as appropriate.

5.0 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

- 5.1 The proposed budget for works to conserve and enhance historic environment features is currently £20,000, although there would also be further additional funds available from Reserves if necessary. Potential projects to be funded include:
- Carrying out management works on Scheduled Monuments. This may take more or less of the budget, which may also be increased from its current proposed level dependent upon the amount of work proposed for this year of the Monument Management Scheme.
 - Restoration of the Top Pond at Gilling Castle.
 - Continuing our programme of village name sign restoration by restoring signs along the B1257.
 - Repairs to a Listed Building at Risk near Oulston.
- 5.2 Other activities for the year include:
- Delivering the fourth year of the Monument Management Scheme, funded by Historic England, utilising volunteers wherever possible but also engaging contractors and external assistance in order to maximise draw-down of Historic England grant. Completing work originally scheduled for Year 3 but postponed due to poor weather.
 - Participating via the NAAONB in work to develop new models for supporting rural conservation work post-Brexit.
 - Promoting the Countryside Stewardship Scheme to farmers and land managers and identifying new opportunities and methods for assisting them with conservation works.
 - Responding to planning applications potentially affecting important heritage sites, as appropriate.

6.0 LOCAL COMMUNITIES

6.1 The budget for small-scale works in local villages is included within the £20,000 earmarked for projects supporting Sustainable Development and the Rural Economy.

6.2 Other activities for the year include:

- Continued participation in the Ryedale Ward mapping/planning project, and rolling this out to further Wards if applicable.
- Continued liaison with the principal organisations involved in community work in the AONB, via the regular Community Development Officers' meetings.
- Input to the Derwent Villages Natural Flood Management Project, to reduce flooding impact on Gilling and Hovingham villages.
- Convening a public meeting to facilitate the potential formation of a Rural Watch initiative for the Howardian Hills, to be led by North Yorkshire Police and local communities.

7.0 AGRICULTURE

7.1 The proposed combined budget for both landscape and biodiversity works is £25,000, although there would also be further additional funds available from Reserves if necessary. See paragraph 4.1 above for current project ideas.

7.2 Other activities for the year include:

- Participating via the NAAONB in work to develop new models for agricultural and rural support post-Brexit.
- Continuing dialogue with the North York Moors National Park Authority on potential joint working opportunities, e.g. Farmer Clusters, environmental land management scheme design & delivery, etc.
- Promoting the Countryside Stewardship Scheme to farmers and land managers and identifying new opportunities and methods for assisting them with conservation works.
- Responding to consultations and requests for advice, as appropriate.

8.0 FORESTRY AND WOODLAND

8.1 Principal activities for the year include:

- Promoting the Countryside Stewardship Scheme to farmers and land managers and identifying new opportunities and methods for assisting them with conservation works.
- Participating via the NAAONB in work to develop new models for supporting forestry and woodland management post-Brexit.
- Monitoring the incidence of Ash Dieback Disease and other plant health issues.
- Continuing participation in the North York Moors Native Woodland Partnership.
- Continuing to provide advice and, where appropriate, financial assistance to woodland managers.
- Responding to consultations and requests for advice, as appropriate.

9.0 DEVELOPMENT & THE RURAL ECONOMY

9.1 Principal activities for the year include:

- Monitoring and inputting as necessary to national policy consultations received by the NAAONB.
- Responding to consultations received from the Local Planning Authorities and other bodies on development proposals. The amount of work arising from

planning consultations is impossible to predict, as our input is entirely reactive, but this is an important area of work and is a high priority.

- Inputting to the continuing development of the Ryedale and Hambleton Local Plan Strategies, as applicable.
- Inputting to the continuing development of the North Yorkshire Minerals & Waste Joint Plan, as applicable.
- Continuing liaison with Northern Powergrid on overhead electricity cable undergrounding, to ensure continued sustained progress during the RIIO-ED1 period. Villages/schemes where work should start in 2018/19 include Oswaldkirk and Low Easthorpe.
- Monitoring the progress of activity relating to hydraulic fracturing, both at Kirby Misperton and in the southern half of the AONB in relation to potential seismic surveying.
- Continuing to take opportunities to support jobs, skills and sustainable economic growth locally, as part of the joint Protected Landscapes Growth Plan submitted to the Local Enterprise Partnership.

10.0 ROADS, TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

10.1 Principal activities for the year include:

- Responding to consultations received from the Highway Authority on works within the carriageway that might have biodiversity, historic environment or landscape implications.
- Arranging for the Special Interest Road Verges dataset to be uploaded to the National Street Gazetteer.
- Promoting the removal of redundant brown tourism signs relating to Farming Flashback near Ampleforth.
- Monitoring progress of initiatives to dual the remaining section of the A64 within the AONB, including agreeing wording for an updated Objective for the 2019-2024 AONB Management Plan.

11.0 RECREATION, ACCESS AND TOURISM

11.1 The budget for recreation and access works is included within the £20,000 earmarked for projects supporting Sustainable Development and the Rural Economy.

11.2 Principal activities for the year include:

- Continuing to work in partnership with the other Protected Landscapes in North Yorkshire to deliver projects that access Local Enterprise Partnership funding for recreational/tourism projects, including input to the Destination Partnerships project.
- Scoping the option obtaining STEAM tourism visitor data cut to the AONB's boundaries, to help assess the impact of promotional activity and assist with Management Plan review.
- Continued delivery of a joint project with NYCC Countryside Access Service and the NYMNP Modern Apprentices Team to blitz path furniture repairs in targeted Parishes.
- Recording destination/distance information for all the new roadside fingerposts erected last year and in 2018/19.
- Implementation of Public Rights of Way route creation/diversion packages at Castle Howard and Howsham.
- Continuing to maintain selected informal car parking areas, control litter at 'hot-spots' and report fly-tipping incidents.

12.0 AWARENESS & PROMOTION

12.1 The budget for awareness and promotion work is included within the £20,000 earmarked for projects supporting Sustainable Development and the Rural Economy.

12.2 Principal activities for the year include:

- Ensuring that the gateway signs are maintained and that outlets are supplied with copies of our leaflets when requested. Re-supply outlets in March 2018, as necessary.
- Publishing our 2017/18 Annual Report and AONB News 2018.
- Maintaining our website, attending Ryedale Show and distributing information/promoting the AONB via Twitter.
- Holding at least 3 Junior Ranger Club days, using mechanisms for delivery that maintain standards but minimise the input required from AONB Unit staff.
- Incorporating new education activities within the AONB into Phase 2 of the Ryevitalise Project.

13.0 IMPLEMENTATION

13.1 Principal initiatives this year include:

- Participating in any work needed to promote the importance of AONB management and ensure the continuation/maximisation of grant support from Defra.
- Participating via the NAAONB in work to develop new models for agricultural, conservation and rural support post-Brexit.
- Taking in-year opportunities where appropriate to obtain small amounts of grant support for specific projects.
- Delivering the fourth year of the Monument Management Scheme, funded by Historic England.
- Continuing our participation in the River Derwent and particularly River Rye partnerships, inputting to the Development Phase of the Heritage Lottery Funded Ryevitalise project and then the Implementation phase should the phase 2 grant be approved. Also contributing to new partnerships concentrating on turtle doves and cornfield flowers.
- Continuing to work in partnership with the other Protected Landscapes in North Yorkshire to deliver projects that access Local Enterprise Partnership funding for recreational/tourism projects, including input to the Destination Partnerships project.
- Utilising Reserves appropriately, to supplement the annual projects budget and maintain an AONB Unit resource commensurate with future work priorities and income.
- Continuing to take opportunities to support jobs, skills and sustainable economic growth locally, as part of the joint Protected Landscapes Growth Plan submitted to the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Continuing participation in the North York Moors Native Woodland Partnership, to make best use of new opportunities presented in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, LEADER Local Development Strategy, etc.
- Using volunteers to help deliver AONB Management Plan Objectives wherever possible and appropriate.
- Keeping delivery mechanisms under review and making changes/improvements where applicable.

14.0 MONITORING

14.1 Principal activities for the year include:

- Evaluating options to develop a robust mechanism for assessing the Condition of non-designated Priority Sites, to feed into Management Plan review.
- Updating the Condition Indicators as part of the AONB Management Plan review process.
- Compiling a new 'State of the AONB' report as part of the AONB Management Plan review process.

15.0 AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN

15.1 Activity planned for this year, as the steps in the full review of the Management Plan, involves:

- Reviewing and updating the Management Plan text.
- Convening up to 7 Topic Groups, either as physical meetings or electronically
- Reviewing and updating the 'State of the AONB' report.
- Reviewing and updating the SEA and Habitats Regulations Assessments.
- Carrying out public consultation on the draft revised Management Plan.
- Evaluating responses and incorporating into final Management Plan as appropriate.
- Providing final Management Plan text to Local Authorities for Adoption.
- Sending Adopted Management Plan text to Defra.

16.0 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AONBs

16.1 Principal activities for the year include:

- Continuing to represent the conservation interests of the Howardian Hills AONB and participating in peer-to-peer learning projects, sharing of information, etc.
- Attending seminars, Northern Group meetings, AONB technical events, etc.

17.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Targets for 2018/19, as contained in the Action Programme, be approved.