

**HOWARDIAN HILLS
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
11 APRIL 2019**

AONB BUSINESS PLAN AND ACTION PROGRAMME 2019/20

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree details of proposed activity to implement the AONB Management Plan during 2019/20.

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 2019/20 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 2019/20, together with an indicative timetabling of tasks, has been circulated to Members by email.

3.0 NATURAL CAPITAL & ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

- 3.1 Principal activities for the year include:
- Participating in the NE/NAAONB programme of webinars and workshops, to learn more about the resources and support available.
 - Using the knowledge gained from the workshops and webinars to begin developing an 'opportunity map' showing areas where land management might be altered to help with biodiversity recovery of climate change adaptation.
 - Inputting to the design of the new Environmental Land Management System where appropriate.

4.0 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 The proposed budget for landscape and biodiversity works is £27,500, although there would also be further additional funds available from Reserves if necessary. Projects to be funded include:
- 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.
 - Grant funding for community wildlife projects in Crayke village and at Autism Plus at Gilling.
 - Notifying the landowners of the newly identified Local Geological Sites and then carrying out management works to clear obscuring vegetation.
 - A financial contribution to the delivery of the Ryevitalise project, should Stage 2 approval be confirmed.
 - Continuing financial contributions to the partnerships concentrating on turtle doves and cornfield flowers.

- 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 the survey of turtle doves being conducted in the AONB in Spring 2019.
 - 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.
 - Visiting a number of important grassland sites that we haven't seen for a number of years, to assess their current condition and any management work needed.
 - 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.
 - 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 £15,500, 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 taken forward in this last full year of the Monument Management Scheme.
 - Repairs to Listed Buildings at Risk at Coulton and Wiganthorpe.
 - Continuing our programme of village name sign restoration by restoring signs along the B1363 at Gilling and Grimstone.
 - Continuing our programme of traditional direction sign restoration by restoring fingerposts in the Oulston area.
- 5.2 Other activities for the year include:
- Delivering the fifth 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. Work will include bracken crushing and scrub clearance.
 - Re-visiting lime kiln sites at Ness, Hovingham and Scackleton to assess their current condition and current condition and any management work needed.
 - 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 £17,000 earmarked for projects supporting Sustainable Development and the Rural Economy. Potential projects to be funded include:

- Wildlife interpretation boards at Slingsby Church.
- Equipment for the kitchen extension at Oswaldkirk village hall.
- Recording and communications equipment for the Helmsley Mobile Rural Watch Scheme.
- Delivery of sustainability sessions and the construction of a bike shelter out of recycled materials at Amotherby School.
- A community wildlife project in Crayke.

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.

7.0 AGRICULTURE

7.1 The proposed combined budget for both landscape and biodiversity works is £27,500, 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. Up to 25 free half-day advice packages to be provided to farmers and land managers.
- 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 2019/20 are Oswaldkirk and Grimstone Top.
- 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 LEADER and YNY&ER LEP initiatives as applicable, in particular the GROW Yorkshire initiative.

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 and traditional direction signs datasets to be uploaded to the National Street Gazetteer.
- Progressing the restoration of one traditional direction sign.
- Monitoring progress of initiatives to dual the remaining section of the A64 within the AONB.

11.0 RECREATION, ACCESS AND TOURISM

11.1 The budget for recreation and access works is included within the £17,000 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.
- Continuing work with Autism Plus at Gilling, to enable students to interact with the natural environment in the horticulture and wildlife areas of the site. Also exploring options for Autism Plus students to work off-site with AONB and National Park Volunteers and Moorswork.
- 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 new roadside fingerposts due to be erected as part of the third phase of sign replacements in 2019.

- Using volunteers to record destination/distance information for all fingerposts specifically mentioned in AONB self-guided route leaflets, to assist with subsequent future maintenance.
- Analysis of the Public Rights of Way route creation/diversion package proposed for Castle Howard, to identify individual elements that might be funded fully by NYCC/AONB. Routes at Slingsby Quarry and on the Centenary Way at Wath Wood are likely to be high priorities.
- 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 £17,000 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.
- Publishing our 2018/19 Annual Report and AONB News 2019.
- 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 the Ryevitalise Project, should Stage 2 approval be confirmed.

13.0 IMPLEMENTATION

13.1 Principal initiatives this year include:

- Participating in work needed to promote the importance of AONB management and ensure the continuation/maximisation of grant support from Defra, in particular via the Glover Review of Protected Landscapes.
- 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 fifth year of the Monument Management Scheme, funded by Historic England.
- Continuing our participation in the River Derwent and particularly River Rye partnerships. Also contributing to the 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 LEADER and YNY&ER LEP initiatives as applicable, in particular the GROW Yorkshire initiative.
- Continuing participation in the North York Moors Native Woodland Partnership, to make best use of 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:

- Using new Natural England methodologies on favourable conservation status to assess the condition of non-designated biodiversity Priority Sites.
- Using the new NAAONB/Defra Key Performance Indicators to record work completed by the AONB Team.

15.0 AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN

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

- Updating the State of the AONB Report to include work carried out or funded by the JAC in 2018/19.
- Publishing the full 'designed' version of the Management Plan and associated documents.

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 2019/20, as contained in the separately circulated Action Programme, be approved.