

**CABINET**

**Urgent Business Report  
Arnside/Silverdale AONB Management Plan Review**

**Report of Head of Planning Services**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The City Council and its partner Authorities are required to review the Management Plan for the Arnside/Silverdale AONB, and to submit it to the Secretary of State by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. The Management Plan has been reviewed by the AONB Unit on behalf of the Local Authorities and subjected to statutory consultation. Cabinet is now asked to adopt the revised Management Plan so that it can be submitted to the Secretary of State.

Key Decision

Non-Key Decision

X

Referral from Cabinet Member

Date Included in Forward Plan

N/A

This report is public

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) That the City Council adopts the revised Arnside and Silverdale AONB Management Plan.
- (2) That the City Council, in co-operation with the partner Authorities and guided by the AONB Executive Committee, take the necessary steps to implement the Plan.
- (3) That a request be made that the call in be waived in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 17 to allow immediate implementation.

**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a duty on Local Authorities to prepare and implement Management Plans for any parts of their administrative area which are designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. About two thirds of the administrative area of Lancaster District is covered by AONB designation in two distinct areas; Arnside and Silverdale AONB and The Forest of Bowland AONB.

1.2 In both cases there are AONB Partnerships between the various Local Authorities, both County and District Councils, across which the designation lies. In the case of the Forest of Bowland, Lancashire County Council acts as the lead Authority which manages the AONB Unit. For Arnside/Silverdale it is the City Council who acts as

lead Authority. The AONB Unit prepares and reviews the AONB Management Plans on behalf of the Local Authorities in the partnership. Funding for the process comes largely from direct grant from Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency).

## **2.0 Proposal Details**

- 2.1 The first AONB Management Plan for Arnside and Silverdale was prepared in 2004 under the statutory requirement arising from the CRoW Act 2000. An AONB Management Plan covers a variety of aspects and is intended to describe the reasons which the area is designated as an AONB, the factors which need to be addressed to keep it special, and the actions that various organisations operating in the area need to address to avoid harming it. Management Plans will also pay special attention to the pressures being placed on the landscape and socio-economic climate in the AONBs, in order to formulate Action Plans to react to those pressures.
- 2.2 The Management Plan Review has examined the most current issues impacting on the management of this sensitive environment, and the communities which live within it. The review has successfully considered the following impacts :-
- a) Conservation and enhancement of the protected landscape.
  - b) The social and economic well being of the people living in the AONB.
  - c) The sustainable needs of agriculture and forestry.
  - d) Increasing public understanding and enjoyment of the AONB.
  - e) Addressing recreational needs in the AONB.
  - f) Sustainability and renewable energy.
  - g) The seascape and coastal management.
- 2.3 An Action Plan has been prepared from the review and this will be implemented by the members of the partnership of organisations represented on the AONB Executive Committee, and by the AONB Unit, which for this AONB is managed by Lancaster City Council.
- 2.4 The revised Management Plan is found to contain a sound approach to taking forward the effective management of Arnside and Silverdale. It will be effective in guiding the Local Authorities on the special considerations they must have regard to when providing services which relate to this area. In addition the Plan sits appropriately with the aspirations of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the adopted Lancaster District Local Development Framework.

## **3.0 Details of Consultation**

- 3.1 The review of the Management Plan has been subjected to extensive consultation with the community, statutory bodies, and partnership organisations in accordance with the requirements of the CRoW Act.

## **4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)**

### **Option 1**

To adopt the Management Plan review and to then work in partnership to implement its Action Plan. This will enable it to comply with its statutory obligations. Adoption by all the Local Authorities will also mean that the partnership will secure core funding from Natural England to operate the AONB Unit and its Sustainable Development Fund.

## **Option 2**

Not to adopt the Management Plan review. This would mean that the deadline for submitting the review to the Secretary of State would be missed and could prejudice the future operation of the AONB Unit.

### **5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)**

5.1 The Officer preferred option is option 1 to adopt the Management Plan review.

### **6.0 Conclusion**

6.1 The review of the AONB Management Plan has been successful and will ensure continuity in the continuing management of the Arnside and Silverdale AONB in accordance with national guidelines. Adoption of the revised Management Plan by Cabinet is now urgent in order to meet the deadline for submission to the Secretary of State by 31 March 2009.

#### **RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The appropriate management of the District's AONBs is a requirement of Regional Spatial Strategy and the Local Development Framework. Maintaining a high quality of environment and landscape also accords with the objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Corporate Strategy.

#### **CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

Managing the rural economy through change and conservation is an effective way of ensuring that rural communities can become sustainable and that traditional skills can be retained for the benefit of those who live there, and those who visit for tourism and recreation.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The receipt of core funding from Natural England (NE), and funding for giving grants under the Sustainable Development fund scheme, is dependant on the adoption and ongoing review of an AONB Management Plan.

In 2008/9 core funding for the AONB unit activities amounted to £163,400. (NE grant offer £119,200 and the remainder coming from partner authorities) of which Lancaster City Council contributed £13,700 per annum (uplifted by £4,000 in 2008/09 to assist with the Management Plan review.) In addition the City Council provides managerial, financial management, property and IS services as its contribution to the operation of this Unit.

There are no further financial implications arising (over and above the Council's agreed annual contribution) as a result of the City Council adopting the reviewed AONB Management Plan

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Local Authorities are required by the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to adopt a Management Plan for AONBs within their areas and to have regard to the purpose of designation in making decisions relating to matters affecting those areas. Legal Services have been consulted.

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Forest of Bowland AONB  
Management Plan Review 2009

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