

## **7. MOORS FOR THE FUTURE PARTNERSHIP OPERATIONAL PLAN 2017 - 2018, (SLD / CD)**

### **1. Purpose of the report**

This report puts before Committee the fifth Operational Plan from the Moors for the Future Partnership. This plan is for the commitments in the financial year 2017/18, but includes a look back at achievements in the current year (to end October) and a look forward, both at commitments for the following year (2018/19) and the expectations of business development during and beyond this time frame. The Operational Plan is an appendix to this report.

#### **Key issues**

During the year of this 2017/18 Operational Plan the Moors for the Future Partnership has so far raised and committed funds of £6m. The value of projects in the pipeline (subject to approval) is an additional £1.6m. This is supported by £90,000 contribution from this Authority and a further £129,500 direct core funding from partners, with an anticipated £52,000 additional core funding from projects.

The Authority's Resource Management Team and this Committee receive business cases for new projects from Moors for the Future Partnership as appropriate within Standing Orders.

The implementation of these business cases bring significant investment into the moorland landscape of the Peak District and South Pennines and all have then been successfully out-turned over the past 14 years. Over £30m has been secured and invested by the Partnership's team over this period.

This plan sets out our programme delivery plan and helps the approvals process better understand how new projects fit into the bigger vision of delivering both the National Park Management Plan and key activities of the 2016-2019 Corporate Strategy - whilst taking into account the requirements of the Moors for the Future Partnership partner organisations.

An integral part of the Programme Management approach is the production of this annual Operational Plan which adds to the transparency of the whole programme and allow the approvals process to scrutinise new proposals more effectively in terms of benefits realisation.

The projects within the Operational Plan are funded by, and involve, a number of important partners. This will give the Authority good engagement opportunities with major partners who have significant influence over the management of the moorland landscape.

There are typically around 20 projects being delivered at any one time, delivering three objectives:

#### **Science and Monitoring**

Through MoorLIFE 2020, we will set up monitoring sites on heather, purple moor grass and cotton-grass dominated blanket bog investigate changes to peak flow and runoff as a result of sphagnum inoculation and continue monitoring the impact of bare peat stabilisation originally set up in the 'Making Space for Water project'. We will use the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle to capture baseline aerial photography of the monitoring sites.

We will continue to monitor the impact of harvesting sphagnum on donor sites and the impact of broadleaf woodland establishment on water quality and flows at Burbage. We will also continue to monitor sites from projects that have ended, such as MoorLIFE, to get a long term view of the effects of our work, as well as seeking resources to continue to monitor the sites we have set up in the Upper Derwent Catchment and Natural Flood risk Management monitoring and evaluation within the Glossop catchment.

We aim to facilitate research by supporting one student placement and 20 student projects, collaborating on 10 new research projects, and setting up two new PhDs, including one funded through MoorLIFE 2020, to look at effectiveness and efficiency of blocking peat pipes.

We will work with the Environment Agency to develop a Natural Flood Risk Management scheme across the whole of the upper catchment of Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire.

### **Conservation and Land Management**

Through our Private Lands Portfolio we will deliver a number of Higher Level Stewardship projects delivering conservation works including reintroduction of sphagnum, bracken control, bridleway repair and species diversification work including sphagnum application.

We will undertake works including gully blocking and grip blocking, application of brash, lime, seed and fertiliser and stock proof fencing.

Under MoorLIFE 2020 early 2017 sees bare peat work on eight moors and gully blocking on six. We'll be cutting at four sites and applying sphagnum to one. A detailed schedule of works on 20 moors in late 2017 and early 2018 has been drawn up.

Work will continue to engage with land managers on the benefits of woodland creation, including undertaking the Forestry Commission's Woodlands for Water Advisor role within Yorkshire and the North East. We will work with the Clough Woodland Project Board members and other stakeholders to set the strategic direction and define future goals of the project.

### **Engagement and Communications**

The Community science project will continue to engage new and existing volunteers in the three levels of moorland monitoring. This year we will launch new opportunistic and targeted surveys and install three new environmental monitoring sites. We will finalise our volunteer strategy and legacy planning documents.

As part of the MoorLIFE 2020 Project we will develop a Bogtastic experience incorporating static interpretation and a van to take the moors to the people at a series of events and visits for the duration of the project and beyond. The communications team will be co-ordinating the media profile of the partnership and holding the MoorLIFE 2020 national conference in September to be held in partnership with the IUCN UK Peatland Programme.

We will develop guidance materials to enable us to engage with land managers, and work with a greater number of land managers to instigate the delivery of conservation works in new areas as part of MoorLIFE 2020.

We will continue to develop relationships with new partners and will use the methods

agreed in the Partnership's Business Plan to achieve a balanced budget.

We are actively managing the core funding deficit - exploring additional projects with partners is one of the programme managers' core activities, responding to calls for potential work and proactively seeking financial resources with current and future partners, including maximising match funding opportunities. We have a high level of confidence that we will achieve this funding during the year.

### **Recommendation**

2. **That the Audit Resources and Performance Committee supports this Operational Plan and recommends it to the Moors for the Future Partnership's Strategic Management Group.**

### **How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?**

3. The successful delivery of our projects will contribute to the four directional shifts of the Corporate Strategy and directly input into the indicators of success. We will continue to deliver conservation land management on a landscape scale, contributing to inspiring visitor experiences and connecting people by direct engagement and obtaining and reporting scientific evidence to audiences as appropriate.

PDNPA Management Plan contribution – There is an opportunity (during this planning period, within the new Management Plan for the National Park) to promote and link the activities of the Partnership into the outcomes of the National Park Management Plan and in so doing form a much stronger Management Plan and a clear delivery role for the Partnership.

The strategic fit of the Operational Plan is relevant to the Peak District National Park Management Plan strategic themes and covers many aspects which will support the delivery of the National Park Management Plan. More specifically:

#### **DL1**

- Deliver conservation on a landscape scale through a diverse range of models, in keeping with the Landscape Character Assessment and supporting adaptation to climate change
- Ensure that the conservation of landscape character areas extends beyond the national park boundaries

#### **DL3**

- Conserve and enhance geo and bio-diversity by continued action for priority habitats, sites and species within the national park in line with the Biodiversity Action Plan
- Focus on the natural environment, ecosystem services and the part we play in these systems through integrated action and fostering greater understanding.
- Manage river water quality and supply within the National Park
- Respond appropriately and adequately to new animal and plant health risks and invasive species

#### **DL4**

- Develop a better understanding of carbon use in the national park

#### **ES1**

- Enable more farmers and land managers to access advice and reward payments

#### **WI4**

- Work together to minimise damage and disturbance on unsealed routes

- Enhance recreational opportunities and management at key sites through joint partner approaches

## Background

4. This Operational Plan is a practical manifestation of the current (2014-2020) Business Plan.

At the time that the 2016/17 Operational Plan (currently in delivery) was approved by this Committee the team intended to complete the suite of revised management tools, with a new future strategy and an annual reporting process to fully celebrate the work the Partnership is delivering. Due to the amount of resource required to respond to questions on the MoorLIFE Project final claim (which was paid in July 2016), the work to produce a new forward strategy and a new reporting process will now be progressed during 2017/18. An application will be made to HLF Resilient Heritage fund to support this work.

The Resource Management Team meeting on 31 January 2017 endorsed this Operational Plan.

## Proposals

5. The intention (agreed at ARP in January 2013) is to have an on-going Moors for the Future Operational Plan which will be reviewed once a year, bringing the next financial year version to an appropriate committee. The annual reporting to committee will follow the programme below with some flexibility to fit around large projects in order for the reporting to encompass work in a meaningful way. Individual reports will continue to be brought to Committee as necessary to gain authority for new initiatives as required, to meet Standing Orders.
6. The reporting structure is:
  - **RMT Meeting in January** The draft Operational Plan for the following year will be presented for comments.
  - **Moors for the Future Partnership Strategic Management Group in February**  
Comment on the draft Operational Plan for the upcoming financial year.
  - **Audit Resources and Performance Committee in March**  
Final version of Operational Plan put to Committee for approval; Committee then to recommend the final version (after any changes required by Committee) to Moors for the Future Partnership Strategic Management Group.
  - **Moors for the Future Partnership Strategic Management Group in May**  
Accept the Operational Plan for the upcoming financial year.

## Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

7. **Financial:** The resources available to produce the Operational Plan each year are those of the existing staff team with welcome advice from senior officers. No additional resources are available.
8. **Risk Management:** Risks, Issues and Dependencies of the programme of projects are monitored and reviewed quarterly alongside the Programme Progress Log.

The Head of Partnership will continue to pay close attention to partner advocacy during the 2017/18 delivery year in order to maximise any available resources.

9. **Background papers** (not previously published) – None

**Appendices –**

1. The Moors for the Future Operational Plan 2017/2018

**Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date**

Sharon Davison, Programme Office Manager, Moors for the Future Partnership, 23 February 2017.