

Report of the Strategic Director of Place to the meeting of Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 28th March 2017.

AD**Subject: Ilkley Moor Management Plan - update.****Summary statement:**

The Environment and Waste Management and Scrutiny Committee considered the pre-consultation draft of a Management Plan for Ilkley Moor at its meeting in June 2016. Since then, a public consultation has taken place and comments received. The Plan is currently being updated to respond to these comments. The report summarises the main comments and how the amended Plan will reflect them.

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1. SUMMARY

The Environment and Waste Management and Scrutiny Committee considered the pre-consultation draft of a Management Plan for Ilkley Moor at its meeting in June 2016. Since then, a public consultation has taken place and comments received. The Plan is currently being updated to respond to these comments. The report summarises the main comments and how the amended Plan will reflect them.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A Management Plan for Ilkley Moor has been written to update the previous plan which has been in place since 2002. This sets out the main features of the moor:- habitats and species, recreational issues and heritage/archaeology. It describes these elements and proposes approaches to managing them to achieve the overall vision for the moor, which is also set out in the plan. It also identifies the Council's key partners in managing the moor.
- 2.2 A draft of the Management Plan was presented to Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2016, with the intention of then releasing it for public consultation. The Committee made a number of helpful suggestions and sought clarification on some points to be incorporated into the draft, but overall were happy with the draft Plan and gave it their support. The Committee requested that the final post-consultation plan be brought back so they could appraise it before it is submitted to Natural England for their consent.
- 2.3 Having made some amendments to the plan in the light of the Committee's comments, the document was released for public consultation on 10th October 2016 for a period of 6 weeks, ending on 21st November 2016. The plan was made available principally via the Council's "Current Consultations" web-page and, as hard copy in libraries and Visitor Information Centres.
- 2.4 The consultation generated a limited amount of comment from "unaffiliated" members of the public, but all the key partner organisations responded. Details of who responded are set out in paragraph 2.5. A large number of comments (636) were also received from people who were opposed to the grouse shooting on the moor. These were in the form of a standard template letter, copied and submitted to the consultation web-page. Although the consultation was on the Management Plan, not the issue of grouse shooting, these responses did include comment on management practices commonly said to be associated with grouse shooting. Where those practices were relevant for Ilkley Moor and formed part of the draft plan, they have been, or will be considered in the re-drafting process.



2.5 The following organisations commented on the draft Management Plan:

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
Wharfedale Naturalists Society
Friends of Ilkley Moor
Ilkley Civic Society
Bradford Urban Wildlife Group
Ilkley Design Statement Group
Ban Bloodsports on Ilkley Moor
The Bingley Moor Partnership

In addition, 7 individuals sent in specific comments on the Plan and a further 636 sent in a copy letter relating to grouse shooting and the management practices commonly associated with it.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 There was a degree of consensus amongst most of those who commented, captured in the following:

- High levels of support for recognising the “eco-system services” that the moor provides (natural habitat/biodiversity, recreational opportunity, heritage, flood mitigation, carbon storage) and for setting out how these services will be optimised and managed.
- Particular support for seeking to maximise the flood mitigation and biodiversity opportunities that managing the blanket bog, re-wetting the moor and adopting natural flood management approaches present.
- Support for a clearer statement that the emphasis of habitat management is for a wider range of benefits, primarily but not exclusively, biodiversity (eg. allowing increased tree cover, re-wetting, less intensive bracken control, less intensive heather management with more emphasis on cutting than burning).
- The vision for the moor needed to set the above aspirations out more clearly and not try to be “all things to all people”.
- Particular praise was recorded for including sections on supporting habitat (ie. recognising the importance of areas off the moor which support bird species living on the moor) and for discussing the implications of climate change – indeed the Council was praised for showing “considerable foresight” in addressing this issue.
- In terms of recreational activity, the overall consensus was for adopting management approaches that accommodated access and public enjoyment in a sustainable manner without compromising the conservation status of



the moor and its habitats and species. More information and effort to influence visitor behaviour and understanding was recommended.

- On the specific issue of grouse shooting, apart from those who oppose it on principle, the “neutral” respondees commented that they had no real issue with it as long as it remained compatible with the overall vision for the moor as set out in the plan, and as long as the activity can be accommodated without detriment to those primary objectives.

3.2 In terms of the next steps with the Plan, it is proposed that the amendments to the draft will be completed by May 2017 so that a final draft is ready for consideration by E&WM O&S, sign-off by Natural England and adoption by the Council by late summer 2017.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

4.1 None arising from the report although the Management Plan and Action Plan include details of future funding sources and available resources

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

5.1 The Council has a legal responsibility to manage Ilkley Moor under national and international environmental legislation. Setting out how this management is to be achieved over the long term, guards against the risk of non-compliance with this legislation.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

6.1 None arising from the report

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The principle of equality of access to Bradford’s countryside and open spaces, including Ilkley Moor, lies at the heart of the Council’s management. The moor is a District-wide, regional and national resource and as such attracts a range of visitors with varying backgrounds and abilities. The Management Plan attempts to recognise this and make appropriate provision to ensure that barriers to access are minimised and that responsible enjoyment of the site is encouraged.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Management Plan sets out approaches for the sustainable management of this resource and whilst its focus is primarily environmental, it also touches on relevant social and economic aspects.



7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

The Environment & Climate Change Manager has contributed to the Management Plan most notably in setting out the effects of climate change and the moor's role in storing carbon. The plan includes proposals to maximise this and so reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None arising from the report

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None arising from the report

7.6 TRADE UNION

None arising from the report

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

The moor lies within the Ilkley Ward.

7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

N/A

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. OPTIONS

9.1 The Committee considers the consultation comments and proposed amendments to the Plan.

9.2 The Committee recommends additional or alternative amendments

9.3 Following the amendments and prior to sending to Natural England, the Committee may wish to consider the final version of the Management Plan.



10. RECOMMENDATIONS

The views of the Committee on the options set out in Section 9 are requested.

11. APPENDICES

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

