



**Forest of  
Bowland  
National  
Landscape**

# **Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan**

## Habitats Regulations Assessment Report

January 2026

*A note on nomenclature: This document refers to the 'AONB' Management Plan, as that is still the legal name of both the designation and the management plan itself. Any other references to the place / designation / Partnership use the term National Landscape. Note that European Habitats and Birds Directives still apply to UK law – the term European Site is used to refer to any Natura 2000 sites such as Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation.*

## **1. Introduction**

Under the provisions of S.89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), the local authorities within whose administrative area includes part of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape are required to produce a Management Plan for the designated area and review it at intervals of not more than 5 years. The duty to produce the management plan is devolved to the Forest of Bowland National Landscape Partnership, which works with the local authorities and a wide range of partners and stakeholders to produce the Plan. The draft plan is subject to formal public consultation before being adopted by the relevant local authorities, from which time it 'formulates the policy of the authorities towards their AONB' (CRoW S.89).

There has been a delay in the production of the latest iteration of the Plan, driven by waiting for the enactment of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill in late 2023 and the provision of new Management Plan Guidance by Natural England in 2025.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report is being undertaken in relation to the Management Plan which will determine whether this new Plan will need to be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment. There is also a requirement under European and UK legislation to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment on the Plan. The Habitats Regulations Assessment is a test of the effect of the plan on the integrity of European nature conservation sites (referred to from this point on as 'European sites')<sup>1</sup>. In this sense the objectives of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process initiated by this report are simply to test whether the AONB Management Plan will have a significant effect on European Nature Conservation Sites and, if it does, if that effect can be reduced to levels that are below 'significant'.

This report sets out the methodology for undertaking the Habitats Regulations Assessment, and it also identifies which European sites will be considered in this assessment and the ways in which they may be sensitive to changes in the environment. This report also establishes whether the AONB Management Plan is likely to have a significant effect on European sites and establishes whether it is possible to reduce impacts on those Sites to non-significant levels

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<sup>1</sup> In this report the European Nature Conservation Sites, namely Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation are considered alongside international Ramsar Wetland Sites, consistent with UK Government Policy (see Section 3)

## **2. Description of Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan**

The purpose of designation as an AONB is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area (including flora, fauna, geological and landscape features); in pursuing this aim, the Forest of Bowland Management Plan also states that account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and the economic and social needs of communities (with particular regard to sustainable development). Although recreation is not an objective of designation, the Management Plan also states that the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses. Therefore, the Management Plan should take account of these features and the changing status of many of the issues currently facing the Forest of Bowland.

The AONB Management Plan may have influence on the following development issues within the Plan area, as key relevant authorities, including local authorities and National Park Authorities that may take planning decisions, have a duty, when exercising their functions, to 'seek to further the purpose of designation'<sup>2</sup>: planning control - including lessening the likelihood for intrusive development, control over domestic extensions, telecommunications, minerals exploitation and greater control over resale of council houses to help meet the needs of local residents; and action for conservation - including securing funding from Government for conservation and sustainable development principles, helping farmers, land managers and communities to make landscape and biodiversity improvements, and application of the Conditional Inheritance Tax exemption in areas of outstanding scenic value.

The Management Plan set out by the Forest of Bowland National Landscape Partnership contains a Vision, together with a series of thematic outcomes and measures for the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and for matters such as education and responsible tourism. Taken together, the plan formulates the local authority policy for the National Landscape (allied to those in local planning documents) and defines key organisations' functions in relation to it. In the Forest of Bowland, the relevant parties agreed that a sub-group of the Joint Advisory Committee should co-ordinate preparation of the Management Plan on their behalf, as has always been the case in the past. The Management Plan aims to provide a framework for partnership working with all stakeholders who have an interest or involvement in the management of the Forest of Bowland. The Plan specifically provides a focus for:

- ☐ Drawing together up-to-date information on the designated area.
- ☐ Considering conflicting pressures and issues.
- ☐ Establishing clear and practical outcomes and measures to guide integrated decision-making and progress on the ground.

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<sup>2</sup> The duty is set out in S245 of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act (2023)

### 3. Habitats Regulations Assessment

#### The Habitats Directive and the Requirement to Undertake Appropriate Assessment

The United Kingdom and its Overseas Territory of Gibraltar are subject to Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora, which is often referred to as the Habitats Directive. The principal aim of the Directive is to promote biodiversity *'by requiring Member States to take measures to maintain or restore natural habitats and wild species listed in the Annexes to the Directive at a favourable conservation status'* (JNCC, 2012a)<sup>3</sup>. Amongst the measures the Directive requires to achieve this is the creation of *'a coherent European ecological network of special areas of conservation'*. This network also includes Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds, designated under Directive 79/409/EEC ('The Birds Directive') and is termed the Natura 2000 Network.

Article 6(3) of the Directive puts in place requirements for certain plans and projects:

*"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives"* (European Commission, 1992)<sup>4</sup>.

#### The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010 (as amended)

As is normal practice, the Habitats Directive was transposed into UK law in 1994 as the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations, 1994. These Regulations were amended and consolidated on a number of occasions in the years following 1994 (2010, 2012 and most recently in 2017). Paragraph 63 'the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations, sets out the requirements for the undertaking of appropriate assessment where a plan *'is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site or a European Offshore Marine Site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects)'*.

The Regulations also provide clarity on what is meant by 'European Site' under Regulation 8. This includes both terrestrial and marine Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Sites of Community Importance (SCIs)<sup>5</sup> potential SACs (pSACs) and potential SPAs (pSPAs).

While this legislation makes significant changes to the implementation of the Birds Directive in the UK, including a requirement for competent authorities to avoid pollution or deterioration of bird habitat wherever it may occur, the protocols for undertaking Appropriate Assessment, at least in terms of the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan, remain the same.

<sup>3</sup> <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1374>.

<sup>4</sup> European Commission, 1992. Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of

natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora [<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31992L0043:EN:HTML>].

<sup>5</sup> SCIs are sites that have been adopted by the European Commission but are not yet formally designated.

by the government of the country within which the site is situated.

### What is a European Site'?

According to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, which is the public body that advises the UK Government on UK-wide and international nature conservation, European sites include:

**Special Areas of Conservation** - *'strictly protected sites designated under the EC Habitats Directive. Article 3 of the Habitats Directive requires the establishment of a European network of important high quality conservation sites that will make a significant contribution to conserving the 189 habitat types and 788 species identified in Annex 1 and II of the Directive (as amended).*

**Special Protection Areas** - *'strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive, which came into force in April 1979. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds (as listed on Annex I of the Directive), and for regularly occurring migratory species'.*

Although not designated under European legislation **Ramsar Sites** are also considered as European sites in this assessment. These are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands that was established in Iran in 1971.

Sources: JNCC, undated. Special Areas of Conservation [URL: [jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=23](http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=23)]/JNCC, undated. Special Protection Areas [URL: [jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=162](http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=162)], Wetlands International, undated. Ramsar Wetland Data Gateway [URL: [sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/ramsgdg/](http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/ramsgdg/)]

### Consideration of Ramsar Sites and Other Sites

Unlike European sites, Ramsar sites are sites of international, rather than just European, importance, designated for wetlands. In practice in the UK most Ramsar sites also receive protection as Special Protection Areas. However, paragraph 118 of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework gives Ramsar sites and proposed Ramsar sites the same protection as European sites. The NPPF also states that pSACs<sup>6</sup>, pSPAs<sup>7</sup> and 'sites identified, or required' *as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites* should be given the same protection as European sites. While the AONB Management Plan is not a planning document per se and thus not regulated by the NPPF, the NPPF is taken as reflective of wider Government policy. To address this indication of policy all Ramsar sites, where they lie in the study area (see section 4), will be considered alongside European sites, terrestrial or marine, in this assessment. At the time of writing there are no Ramsar sites in the study area, and no pSACs or pSPAs, or candidate sites.

<sup>6</sup> Possible SACs. Potential SPAs.  
<sup>7</sup>

## A Staged Approach to Appropriate Assessment: Habitats Regulations Assessment

The Habitats Regulations refer to the undertaking of 'appropriate assessment' in relation to plans and projects. However, in practice many organisations have addressed the requirement to undertake appropriate assessment via a series of steps. For instance, it is necessary to first determine the extent to which plans require appropriate assessment before the assessment can practically proceed, and to do this it is necessary to assess whether significant effects on European sites are likely and to establish what the 'appropriate assessment' itself should focus on. Following this an appropriate assessment report may be drafted that considers the effects of the plan on the integrity of European sites. In some cases, where no alternative solutions can be found, it will be necessary to undertake further work to identify the extent to which a plan should proceed because of imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

Since the appropriate assessment proper is a discreet stage of a potentially multi-staged process, to avoid confusion the process as a whole is usually referred to as Habitats Regulations Assessment.

In this assessment we have divided the full Habitats Regulations Assessment process, including appropriate assessment, into 4 key stages, as illustrated by Table 1, below. This report documents the undertaking of Stages 1 and 2 of this Habitats Regulations Assessment process.

Table 1: Habitats Regulations Assessment: Key stages

Stage 1		Progress
<b>Pre-screening</b>	1) Establish the outline methodology for undertaking the Assessment.	Undertaken in this report.
	2) Identify whether the plan is subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment.	
<b>Stage 2</b>		
<b>Scoping and initial screening for likely significant effects</b>	1) Identify international sites in and around the plan area.	Undertaken in this report.
	2) Identify the conservation objectives and threats to site integrity of European sites.	
	3) Identify potential effects on European sites and the possible ways in which this might affect conservation objectives.	
	4) Make a high-level assessment of whether significant effects can be ruled out by alone. <i>(see note 1)</i>	
	5) Examine other plans and programmes that could contribute to 'in combination' effects, where an impact alone cannot be concluded.	
	<i>If no effects are likely - report no significant effects and consult Natural England on the findings.</i>	
	<i>If effects are judged likely or any uncertainty exists - the precautionary principle applies - proceed to Stage 3.</i>	

Stage 3		
Assessment under Regulation 63 of the Habitat Regulations, 2017: Appropriate Assessment	<p>Consider how the elements of the plan identified as potentially having likely significant effects 'in combination' with other plans and projects will cause direct and indirect effects on the integrity of European sites in light of their conservation objectives (the 'Appropriate Assessment').</p> <p>1) Consider how any effects on the integrity of a site could be avoided by changes to plan and the consideration of alternatives.</p> <p>2) Develop mitigation measures (including timescale and mechanisms).</p> <p>3) Report outcomes of Appropriate Assessment including mitigation measures, consult with Natural England, the Environment Agency and wider (public) stakeholders, as necessary.</p>	This will be undertaken prior to the finalisation of the Management Plan if, and where necessary, though it is anticipated that this will not be required for a plan of this nature
	<p><i>If plan will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of European sites alone or in combination with other sites (the AEol decision<sup>8</sup>) proceed without further reference to Habitat Regulations.</i></p> <p><i>If effects or any uncertainty remains following the consideration of alternatives and development of mitigation measures proceed to Stage 4.</i></p>	
Stage 4		
Procedures where significant effect on integrity of international site remains (Derogations) <sup>9</sup>	<p>If impacts remain, a plan or programme can only proceed provided a series of 'sequential tests' (Habitat Directive's article 6 (4) derogation requirements) are satisfied. These are:</p> <p>Test 1: There must be no feasible <u>alternative solutions</u> to the plan or project which are less damaging to European Sites;</p> <p>Test 2: There must be '<u>imperative reasons of overriding public interest</u>' (IROPI) for the plan or project to proceed;</p> <p>Test 3: All necessary <u>compensatory measures</u> must be secured to ensure that the overall coherence of the network of European Sites is protected.</p>	This will be undertaken prior to adoption of the Management Plan if, and where necessary, though it is anticipated that this will not be required for a plan of this nature.

#### Note 1

<sup>4</sup>Account should be taken of the 'People over Wind' EU Court ruling - measures built into a project or possible adjustments to mitigate for potential impacts on European sites (e.g. rescheduling programmed works to avoid sensitive times of year for breeding birds) cannot be taken into consideration at the Likely Significant Effect screening stage, and the project would have to be taken forward to the Appropriate Assessment stage.

<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>The AEol decision<sup>8</sup> is used in Defra's guidance and refers to deciding whether or not the Plan will result in 'adverse effects on integrity'.

<sup>9</sup>Derogation is a provision that allows part or all of a legal measure to be applied differently or not at all. In the case of the habitat's directive the satisfaction of the three tests (outlined in Table 1) enable plans or projects to be adopted despite a likely effect on the European Sites.

## **Source - Pathway - Receptor Approach**

While Table 1 sets out the broad steps that will be undertaken in this assessment, an underlying principle of the assessment is that a '*source - pathway - receptor*' approach will be followed to establish whether significant effects will occur or are likely.

A 'source-pathway-receptor' approach is often used in environmental risk management. It is a way of developing a conceptual understanding of how environmental harm can occur.

It stands to reason that if environmental or any other form of hazard is to occur it must come from somewhere. For instance, a water pollution incident would not occur unless there is some source or causal agent for that pollution (e.g., agricultural run off or an industrial facility). This is the **source**.

Environmental hazards would not present any problems unless there were a **receptor**, or a place that would be vulnerable to damage, that would be damaged when exposed to whatever hazard originates from the source. So, an already sterile water body would be unlikely to be significantly affected by a pollution incident, whereas a freshwater ecosystem that relies on high water quality may be significantly affected by water pollution. However, there may also be secondary environmental effects if the water body drains to a location which is sensitive to pollution. In this assessment receptors are the European sites themselves or features (such as species) that may be functionally linked with those sites.

If, however, a sump or interceptor collected the pollution before it entered the water body receptor then significant effects on any ecosystem would be unlikely to occur. This is because there is no **pathway** by which the hazard (in this case pollution) can reach the receptor (the freshwater ecosystem).

Where the European sites are considered vulnerable to certain impacts those impacts can only be considered possible where there is a source for that impact and a pathway to the receptor.



#### 4. Stage 1: Task 2. Identification of whether the plan is subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment

The Habitats Regulations give information on the types of plans that should be subject to Appropriate Assessment by stating:

*"A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission, or other authorisation for, a plan or project which:*

- (a) Is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and;*
- (b) Is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site,*

*must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives"*<sup>10</sup>.

While the definition of what constitutes a plan is not made clear under the Habitats Directive or the Regulations, the term 'plan' is considered to have a 'broad meaning'<sup>11</sup> Here it is considered that, as the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan influences the strategic direction for future project work, including land management and the advocacy position taken on future development proposals (which could have an environmental effect) it meets the definition of a plan consistent with the guidance.

A second consideration required by the regulations is whether or not the 'plan' is 'directly connected with or necessary to the management of [a European Site]'. As the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan is concerned with sustainable development within the designated area as a whole, rather than being necessary to the management nature conservation sites, it can be considered to be subject to the Regulations.

In addition, guidance<sup>12</sup> states that AONB Management Plans which may have significant effects on sites covered by the Habitats Regulations must be assessed for these effects. The decision as to whether the Plan should then be subject to Appropriate Assessment will depend on the identification of any significant effects throughout this screening process.

It is not possible to determine whether the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan is 'likely to have a significant effect on a European Site' without first examining both the objectives and measures of the Plan alongside the conservation objectives of European sites in the Plan area. This is the purpose of stage 2 of this Habitats Regulations Assessment methodology. So, the conclusion of Stage 1, Task 2 - the identification of whether the plan is subject to Habitats

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<sup>10</sup>  
Legislation.gov.uk, 2017. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 [URL: [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/490/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/490/contents/made)].

<sup>11</sup>  
See Levett - Therivel et al, 2006. Appropriate Assessment of Plans [URL: [www.levett-therivel.co.uk/index\\_files/AA.pdf](http://www.levett-therivel.co.uk/index_files/AA.pdf)], also Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), 2002. The Habitats Regulations: A guide for competent authorities [URL: [www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/habitat\\_regs\\_guidance\\_notes.pdf](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/habitat_regs_guidance_notes.pdf)].

<sup>12</sup>  
Natural England, Landscapes for Life, The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Defra, 2012. Advice Note to AONB Partnerships, the Conservation Boards and Relevant Authorities on Management Plan Reviews. [URL: <http://www.aonb.org.uk/wba/naaonb/naaonbpreview.nsf/bde8521bf448d64080256ceb004a1670/4be30845>]

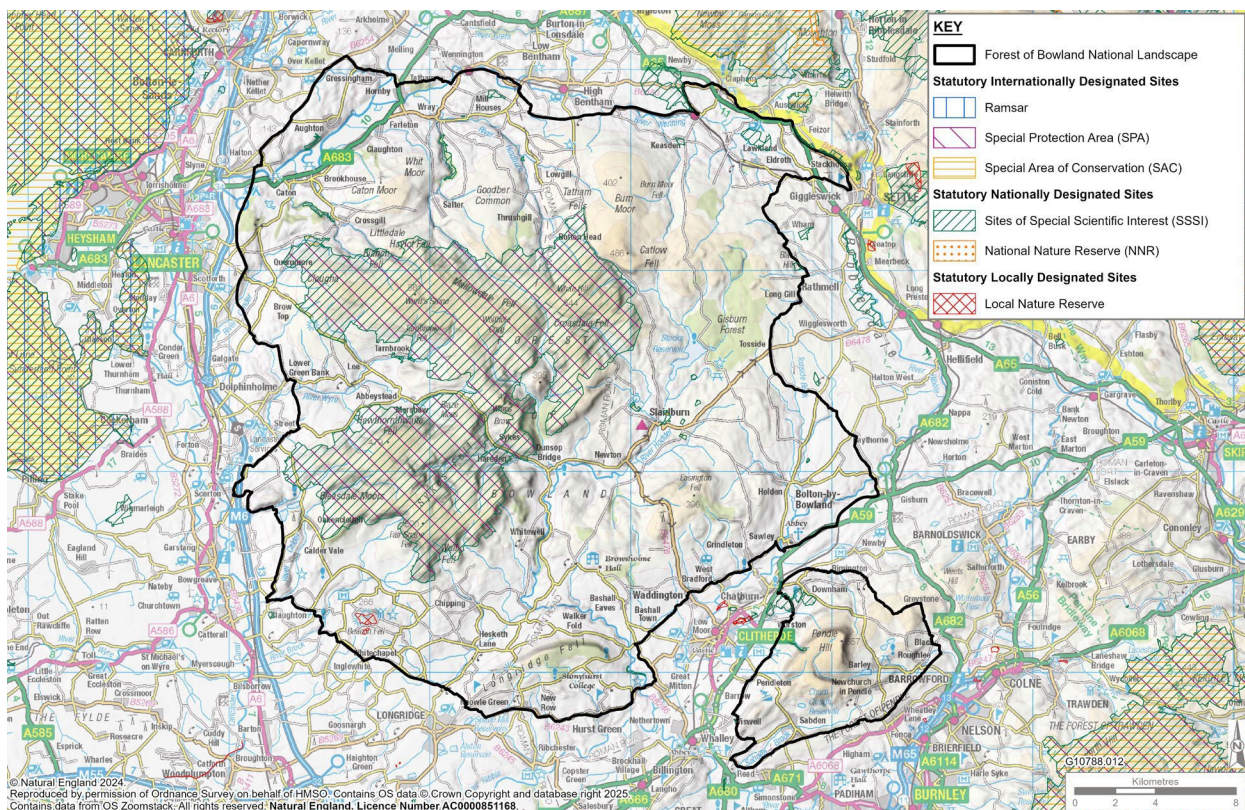
Regulations Assessment' - is that such assessment is necessary for the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan, and that the assessment methodology should proceed until it can demonstrate that no significant effects are likely to result from the Plan, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

## 5. Stage 2: Scoping and initial screening for likely significant effects

### 5.1 Stage 2, Task 1: Identification of international sites in and around the plan area

The **Plan Area** of the Forest of Bowland AONB/National Landscape is shown at Figure 1. This map also shows European and Ramsar Sites<sup>13</sup> in the area.

**Figure 1: The area of coverage of the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan**



### Relevant sites

The following European sites (both within the National Landscape and adjacent sites which are potential receptors) were identified as relevant to this assessment:

European Site	Location
Calf Hill and Cragg Wood SAC	Wholly within the National Landscape
Ingleborough Complex SAC	Not in the National Landscape, but adjoining western boundary
Morecambe Bay SAC	Not in the National Landscape, but upper river catchments of Lune, Ribble and Wyre rise and/or pass through the NL
North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC	Partially within the National Landscape, with majority in North Pennines NL and Yorkshire Dales NP
Bowland Fells SPA	Wholly within the National Landscape
Morecambe Bay & Duddon Estuary SPA	Not in the National Landscape, but upper river catchments of Lune, Ribble and Wyre rise and/or pass through the NL
Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA	Not in the National Landscape, but upper river catchments of Lune, Ribble and Wyre rise and/or pass through the NL
Morecambe Bay Ramsar Site	Not in the National Landscape, but upper river catchments of Lune, Ribble and Wyre rise and/or pass through the NL
Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar Site	Not in the National Landscape, but upper river catchments of Lune, Ribble and Wyre rise and/or pass through the NL

## 5.2 Stage 2: Task 2: Identifying the Conservation Objectives and Threats to the Integrity of European/Ramsar Sites

Conservation objectives are broad objectives that define the key aims of the designated status (SPA/SAC/Ramsar) of a Site. While additional conservation objectives may exist to support other designations at the site, the Habitats Regulations Assessment is concerned with implications on the European/Ramsar status of the site and whether the features of interest that contribute to that status are likely to be maintained in favourable condition. Therefore, conservation objectives are listed as those pertaining to sites' European/international status<sup>15</sup>. It may, however, be necessary to gather additional information from SSSI conservation objectives, for example, where they contribute to the achievement of the broad SAC/SPA/Ramsar conservation objectives.

This report lists the European and Ramsar Sites identified as being within the Forest of Bowland

National Landscape and the 15 km buffer around it. While many threats to site integrity are linked to a likely category of source of impacts - for instance inappropriate grazing or housing development - it is important for this assessment to consider that threats to integrity may also result from other operations that may not be listed. For instance, if inappropriate grazing levels may lead to colonisation of a grassland by scrub, causing loss of habitat, other unforeseen operations could cause a similar effect (for example deliberate planting of trees). It is possible to begin to identify the sorts of impacts for which each individual site could be a potential receptor. So, if a site is vulnerable to hydrological change, for example, it could be inferred that flood management processes that have the potential to affect hydrology could be a potential source for an impact to occur. However, whether or not that impact can occur will depend on whether a pathway exists over which the source of hydrological change can project significant impacts to a European Site vulnerable to hydrological change (the receptor) (see Section 1 part 4 for a description of the 'source -pathway- receptor approach used in this assessment).

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Conservation objectives in this Habitats Regulations Assessment report have been mainly drawn from those produced as a result of Defra's Report of the Habitats and Wild Birds Directive Implementation Review, as published on Natural England's website (See Natural England, undated. Conservation

Objectives [URL:<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designations/sac/conservationobjectives.aspx>].

## Conservation Objectives for European Designated Sites considered

Type	Name of Site	Conservation Objectives and Qualifying Features
SAC	Calf Hill and Cragg Wood	<p>With regard to the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated ("the Qualifying Features" listed below):</p> <p><b>Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.</b></p> <p>Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>➤ The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>➤ The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>➤ The populations of qualifying species;</li> <li>➤ The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualifying Features:</b>  H91A0. Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles; Western acidic oak woodland  H91E0. Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>); Alder woodland on floodplains</p>
SAC	Ingleborough Complex	<p>With regard to the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated ("the Qualifying Features" listed below):</p> <p><b>Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.</b></p> <p>Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>➤ The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>➤ The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>➤ The populations of qualifying species;</li> <li>➤ The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualifying Features:</b>  H5130. <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands; Juniper on heaths or calcareous grasslands  H6210. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone</p>



		<p>H6410. <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>); Purple moor-grass meadows</p> <p>H7130. Blanket bogs</p> <p>H7220. Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>); Hard-water springs depositing lime*</p> <p>H7230. Alkaline fens; Calcium-rich springwater-fed fens</p> <p>H8210. Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation; Plants in crevices in base-rich rocks</p> <p>H8240. Limestone pavements</p> <p>H9180. <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines; Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes</p>
SAC	Morecambe Bay	<p>With regard to the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the Qualifying Features" listed below);</p> <p><b>Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.</b></p> <p>Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>➤ The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>➤ The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>➤ The populations of qualifying species;</li> <li>➤ The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualifying Features:</b></p> <p>H1110. Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time; Subtidal sandbanks</p> <p>H1130. Estuaries</p> <p>H1140. Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; Intertidal mudflats and sandflats</p> <p>H1150. Coastal lagoons</p> <p>H1160. Large shallow inlets and bays</p> <p>H1170. Reefs</p> <p>H1220. Perennial vegetation of stony banks; Coastal shingle vegetation outside the reach of waves</p> <p>H1310. <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand; Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand</p> <p>H1330. Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)</p> <p>H2110. Embryonic shifting dunes</p> <p>H2120. Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ("white dunes"); Shifting dunes with marram</p> <p>H2130. Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes"); Dune grassland</p> <p>H2150. Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (<i>Calluno-Ulicetea</i>); Coastal dune heathland</p> <p>H2170. Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>); Dunes with creeping willow</p> <p>H2190. Humid dune slacks</p> <p>S1166. <i>Triturus cristatus</i>; Great crested newt</p>
Ramsar	Morecambe Bay	<p>With regard to the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated ("the Qualifying Features" listed below):</p>

		<p><b>The site is subjected to a wide range of pressures such as reclamation for agriculture, over-grazing, dredging, over-fishing, industrial uses and unspecified pollution. However, overall, the site is relatively robust and many of those pressures have only slight to local effects and are being addressed through Management Plans. The breeding tern interest is very vulnerable, and the colony has recently moved to the adjacent Duddon Estuary. Positive management is being secured through management plans for non-governmental organisation reserves, English Nature Management Statements, European Marine Site Management Scheme, and the Morecambe Bay Partnership.</b></p> <p><b>Qualifying features:</b></p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 4</b> – The site is a staging area for migratory waterfowl including internationally important number of passage Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i></p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 5</b> – Internationally important waterfowl assemblage (greater than 20,000 birds)</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 6</b> – Over winter the site regularly supports internationally important populations of: Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>, Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>, Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>, Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>, Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>, Eurasian oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>, Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>, Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>, Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>, Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>.</p>
SAC	North Pennine Dales Meadows	<p>With regard to the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated ("the Qualifying Features" listed below):</p> <p><b>Avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species, and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.</b></p> <p>Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>➤ The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>➤ The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>➤ The populations of qualifying species;</li> <li>➤ The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualifying Features:</b>  H6410. <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>); Purple moor-grass meadows  H6520. Mountain hay meadows</p>
SPA	Bowland Fells	<p>With regard to the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified ("the Qualifying Features" listed below):</p>

		<p><b>Avoid the deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying features, and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive.</b></p> <p>Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:  The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;  The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;  The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;  The populations of the qualifying features;  The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</p> <p><b>Qualifying Features:</b>  A082 <i>Circus cyaneus</i>; Hen harrier (Breeding)  A098 <i>Falco columbarius</i>; Merlin (Breeding)</p> <p><b>Additional Qualifying Features Identified by the 2001 UK SPA Review:</b>  A183 <i>Larus fuscus</i>; Lesser black-backed gull (Breeding)</p>
SPA	Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary	<p>With regard to the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified ("the Qualifying Features" listed below):</p> <p><b>Avoid the deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying features, and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive.</b></p> <p>Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;</li> <li>➤ The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;</li> <li>➤ The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;</li> <li>➤ The populations of the qualifying features;</li> <li>➤ The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualifying Features:</b>  A040 <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>; Pink-footed goose (Non-breeding)  A048 <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>; Common shelduck (Non-breeding)  A054 <i>Anas acuta</i>; Northern pintail (Non-breeding)  A063 <i>Somateria mollissima</i>; Common eider (Breeding)  A130 <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>; Eurasian oystercatcher (Non-breeding)  A137 <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>; Ringed plover (Non-breeding)  A140 <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>; European golden plover (Non-breeding)  A141 <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>; Grey plover (Non-breeding)  A143 <i>Calidris canutus</i>; Red knot (Non-breeding)  A149 <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>; Dunlin (Non-breeding)  A157 <i>Limosa lapponica</i>; Bar-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)  A160 <i>Numenius arquata</i>; Eurasian curlew (Non-breeding)  A162 <i>Tringa totanus</i>; Common redshank (Non-breeding)  A169 <i>Arenaria interpres</i>; Ruddy turnstone (Non-breeding)  A183 <i>Larus fuscus</i>; Lesser black-backed gull (Breeding)  A184 <i>Larus argentatus</i>; Herring gull (Breeding)  A191 <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>; Sandwich tern (Breeding)  A193 <i>Sterna hirundo</i>; Common tern (Breeding)  A195 <i>Sterna albifrons</i>; Little tern (Breeding)</p>



		<p>Waterbird assemblage</p> <p><b>Additional Qualifying Features Identified by the 2001 UK SPA Review:</b>  A144 <i>Calidris alba</i>; Sanderling (Non-breeding)  Seabird assemblage</p>
SPA	Ribble and Alt Estuaries	<p>With regard to the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified ("the Qualifying Features" listed below):</p> <p><b>Avoid the deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying features, and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive.</b></p> <p>Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;</li> <li>➤ The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;</li> <li>➤ The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;</li> <li>➤ The populations of the qualifying features;</li> <li>➤ The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualifying Features:</b>  A037 <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>; Bewick's swan (Non-breeding)  A038 <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>; Whooper swan (Non-breeding)  A040 <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>; Pink-footed goose (Non-breeding)  A048 <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>; Common shelduck (Non-breeding)  A050 <i>Anas penelope</i>; Eurasian wigeon (Non-breeding)  A052 <i>Anas crecca</i>; Eurasian teal (Non-breeding)  A054 <i>Anas acuta</i>; Northern pintail (Non-breeding)  A130 <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>; Eurasian oystercatcher (Non-breeding)  A137 <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>; Ringed plover (Non-breeding)  A140 <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>; European golden plover (Non-breeding)  A141 <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>; Grey plover (Non-breeding)  A143 <i>Calidris canutus</i>; Red knot (Non-breeding)  A144 <i>Calidris alba</i>; Sanderling (Non-breeding)  A149 <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>; Dunlin (Non-breeding)  A151 <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>; Ruff (Breeding)  A156 <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>; Black-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)  A157 <i>Limosa lapponica</i>; Bar-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)  A162 <i>Tringa totanus</i>; Common redshank (Non-breeding)  A183 <i>Larus fuscus</i>; Lesser black-backed gull (Breeding)  A193 <i>Sterna hirundo</i>; Common tern (Breeding)  Waterbird assemblage  Seabird assemblage</p>
Ramsar	Ribble and Alt Estuaries	<p>With regard to the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified ("the Qualifying Features" listed below):</p> <p><b>Coastal erosion is a factor with an estimated loss of 4 m per year. It is a concern because pine woodland on the sand dunes is causing coastal squeeze and therefore preventing sand dune habitats from rolling back; as such dune slack habitats for Natterjack toads are declining or being lost. English Nature have made efforts to restore dune habitat; an EIA has been carried out with a view to submitting a felling licence application in February 2005.</b></p>

		<p><b>Qualifying features:</b></p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 2</b> – The site supports up to 40% of the Great Britain population of Natterjack toads <i>Bufo calamita</i>. As plant species: <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Conservation status: European Red List: Vulnerable: EC Habitats Directive: Annex II)</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 5</b> – Internationally important waterfowl assemblage (greater than 20,000 birds)</p> <p><b>Ramsar criterion 6</b> – During the breeding season the site regularly support international important populations of: Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>, Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>, Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>, Red Knot <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i>, Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>, Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>.</p> <p>Over winter the site regularly supports internationally important populations of: Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>, Eurasian oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>, Eurasian Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>, Eurasian Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i> Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>, Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>, Tundra swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>, Whooper swan <i>Cygnus Cygnus</i>.</p>
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### 5.3 Stage 2: Tasks 3-5. Screening for Likely Significant Effects in Combination with other Plans and Programmes

#### Potential Sources of Impacts from the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan

The Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan sets the strategic framework across the designated area through the setting of Outcomes and Measures for the future land and development management. The Management Plan, including the Outcomes and Measures, will be screened for likely significant impacts on European sites in this Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Because the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan is a strategic document in many cases it will not exhibit specific direct impacts on individual European and Ramsar Sites as it will not show the specific type of intervention that would or would not occur at a specific location.

However, there still exists the potential for these more strategic AONB Management Plan measures to steer local interventions in a direction that may result in the conservation objectives of European/Ramsar sites being compromised. Tyldesley, 2009<sup>17</sup> describes some of the ways in which impacts on European sites may arise at the strategic plan making stage. Table 2, below summarises the observations made by Tyldesley and makes observations of potential relevance to an AONB Management Plan.

Table 2: Strategic-level impacts on European Sites (categories of impact and some source material for the mechanisms by which effects may occur are adapted from text in Tyldesley, D. 2009<sup>18</sup>)

Category of impact that could arise from a Strategic change	How such impacts might occur
Type of change	Theoretically a specific type of change might be proposed in an AONB management plan that may have a significant effect on one or more European sites regardless of the quantum of change or the location of that change. For instance, an objective that proposes that tourism should be focused towards European sites rather than the designated area as a whole may have implications for European sites if they are sensitive to recreational pressure.
Quantity of change	In some cases, a significant effect may occur as a result of the quantum of change that is likely to occur due to a specific objective. For instance, if a strategy would result in an increase in the quantity of farmers employing alternative management practices for farmland, designated habitats adjacent to farmland may be impacted by the change in management of large areas of land.

<sup>17</sup> Tyldesley, D. 2009. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Development Documents Revised, Draft Guidance for Natural England. Natural England, Sheffield.

<sup>18</sup> Tyldesley, D. 2009. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Development Documents Revised Draft Guidance for Natural England. Natural England, Sheffield.

Location of change	There may be a strategic need to focus on, for example, traffic routing problems in a specific area. In such cases the necessary interventions may take place close to a European Site and exhibit direct effects or may indirectly steer other forms of development to a location so that they exhibit an effect. In the outcomes of the Management Plan locations are not referred to; the strategic nature of the plan means that measures recommended are also not directly place-specific.
Blocking of other proposals or approaches	Future alternative approaches may be blocked by policies in a strategy. For instance, a non-damaging policy approach may no longer be an option if the strategy commits an area to a specific approach that may in the longer term be damaging.
Justifying damaging development	Inclusion within a strategy may give justification to interventions that would have otherwise been considered on their merits alone. This may form part of a case to justify 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' that would allow certain development or actions to go ahead under various regulatory controls, whereas were a project considered in its own right a different case may need to be made. It is therefore important to ensure that only interventions that are consistent with the Habitats Regulations' requirements are included in the Management Plan.
Combined/cumulative effects	Where on its own the Management Plan may not be likely to have significant effects, certain outcomes or measures may work in combination with other plans and projects in such a way that a significant effect may occur.

## **In Combination Impacts: Consideration of other Plans and Projects in this Assessment**

It is recognised that the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan will be implemented in the context of changing spatial patterns and housing growth, as directed by other local spatial strategies, such as Local Plans. Many of the plans that will be reviewed during in combination assessment will have had Habitats Regulations Assessments carried out for them. These HRA documents will be useful in ascertaining the extent to which those plans are expected to impact on European sites. The Habitats Directive requires that all significant effects of plans and projects, whether they are alone or in combination with other plans and projects, be assessed in view of European Sites' conservation objectives. This means that, even where an effect of the plan is deemed not to be significant on its own, it could be significant when added to the effects of one or more other plans and projects.

It is important that in-combination assessment remains a manageable exercise. Therefore, the focus of in-combination assessment in this HRA will be on plans that direct future land management or development as these plans are considered to be the key sources of potential impacts. The following plans might be considered for possible 'in-combination effects':

### **1) Local Nature Recovery Strategies (Statutory – Environment Act 2021)**

#### **Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)**

- **Final Strategy published / ready for publication:** 16 January 2026 (approved by Lancashire County Council Cabinet 27 Nov 2025).
- This LNRS identifies priorities for nature recovery, biodiversity opportunity mapping and habitat creation measures across Lancashire, including parts of the Forest of Bowland area. It sets a framework for collaborative action to protect, enhance and connect nature. The plan makers consider this to be complementary to the Forest of Bowland Management Plan

#### **North Yorkshire & York Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

- As the responsible authority, **North Yorkshire Council** is leading its LNRS covering habitats, priorities for restoration and strategic nature actions across the county (including parts of the Bowland area within North Yorkshire). The plan makers consider this to be complementary to the Forest of Bowland Management Plan

*Note:* LNRS are statutory portfolios under the **Environment Act 2021** and must include a **statement of biodiversity priorities and a habitat map** to target nature recovery action.

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### **2) Local Planning & Development Strategy Documents**

#### **Wyre Local Plan 2011–2031**

- **Adopted:** 26 January 2023 (incorporating partial update to 2022).
- This is the statutory development plan for Wyre district, setting out policies for land use, environment, conservation and sustainable development. The Forest of Bowland Management Plan is considered to be complementary to the Local Plan and to set out measures which would address potential negative impacts

#### **Central Lancashire Local Plan (2023–2041)**

- **Adopted / current strategic plan** covering Preston, Chorley and South Ribble districts (published version 2025).
- Provides up-to-date spatial planning policy on housing, environment, green infrastructure and natural assets across central Lancashire. The Forest of Bowland Management Plan is considered to be complementary to the Local Plan and to set out measures which would address potential negative impacts

#### **Ribble Valley Local Development Framework**

- **Core Strategy adopted:** December 2014; **Housing & Economic Development DPD:** November 2019; **new Local Plan in preparation** (review ongoing).
- These documents still provide the strategic framework for land use planning, habitat protection and sustainable development in Ribble Valley. The Forest of Bowland Management Plan is considered to be complementary to the Local Plan and to set out measures which would address potential negative impacts

#### Lancaster District Local Plan Series

- Local Plan documents are being updated with timelines set out in the *Local Development Scheme* published in late 2024/2025.
- These plans include strategic growth policies, landscape character, green infrastructure and environmental constraints. The Forest of Bowland Management Plan is considered to be complementary to the Local Plan and to set out measures which would address potential negative impacts. *(Other district/local plans across Pendle, Preston etc. are in similar cycles of adoption or review, forming the current development plan framework.)*

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### 3) Rights of Way / Access Strategic Frameworks

#### Rights of Way Improvement Plan Duties

- Under the **Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000**, every highway authority must maintain and **review its Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) at least every 10 years** as a statutory access strategy for walkers, cyclists, riders and mobility-impaired users. **North Yorkshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan**
- Current plan continues in force, and the **next review is due by 2027** (as outlined in council briefing January 2025).
- This strategic plan assesses network provision and potential improvements across the county's rights of way network.

*(Lancashire's RoWIP is also under review, aligning with statutory duties and fresh priorities for rights of way and broader access networks.)*

The Forest of Bowland Management Plan is considered to be complementary to the ROWIP and to set out measures which would address potential negative impacts

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### 4) Environmental & Climate Strategy Documents

#### Lancashire Environment & Climate Strategy 2023–2025

- Outlines strategic priorities for **nature-based solutions, biodiversity, carbon capture, water quality and ecosystem services** across Lancashire County.
- Although framed as an environmental/climate strategy, it informs strategic nature recovery and landscape priorities that link to landscape and development planning.
- The Forest of Bowland Management Plan is considered to be complementary to the local climate adaptation plans. It will also be accompanied by a Forest of Bowland NL Climate Adaptation Plan by 2028, which will in part draw on existing plans and strategies for climate adaptation, and the AONB Management Plan, and would address potential negative impacts alone or in combination.

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### 5) Forestry England Strategic Forest Plans (Local Landscape/Nature)

These are not statutory planning documents but are significant **land management plans** that influence habitat management, access and woodland restoration within the landscape:

#### Gisburn Forest Plan

- Covers strategic woodland and open land management, public access and habitat diversity within the Forest of Bowland area.

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*The Forest of Bowland Management Plan is considered to be complementary to these plans, which promote sustainable woodland management on existing sites.*

Table 3: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects (alone and in-combination) from the AONB Management Plan in relation to European Sites

**The table that follows provides an overview assessment of plan outcomes against European Sites' conservation objectives.**

**The accompanying spreadsheet separate file (Appendix A) addresses each measure individually**



Potential Effects on Site Integrity						
Outcome	Possible impact of outcome on European Site (sources/pathways)	Which European Sites could be affected (receptors)	Are the effects significant?	Other plans and projects which might act in combination	Risk of a significant in combination effect	References/notes
<b>1 Landscape</b> The distinctive landscape character of the Forest of Bowland is conserved and enhanced	Objective relates to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape. The measures detailed under the outcomes are consistent with the objectives of the European designated sites.	Calf Hill and Cragg Woods SAC, North Pennine Dales Meadows SAC, Bowland Fells SPA	No likely significant effect	Local Plans Local Minerals and Waste Plans LNRS	No likely significant effect	European designated sites within the AONB are generally remote and isolated and less likely to be subject to significant development pressures.  In addition, responsibility for consent for development lies with local planning authorities, with advice and guidance on landscape-related matters provided by the National Landscape Partnership. The Management Plan may be a material consideration in determining any such consent, but it has no legal powers to override or otherwise influence the relevant planning authority.
<b>2 Peatland</b> All Bowland's remaining unrestored	Outcome seeks to conserve and restore peatlands.	Bowland Fells SPA	No likely significant effect.	LNRSs, Catchment Management Plans	No likely significant effect	In particular, conservation and

peatlands are brought under restoration						<p>restoration activity is planned for blanket bog</p> <p>This work will be consistent with the conservation objectives outlined for the European designated peatland sites within the AONB.</p> <p>Wider benefits of peatland restoration will accrue to the landscape and communities</p>
<p><b>3 Woodland</b></p> <p>Woodlands are in good ecological condition, supporting a diversity and abundance of key species. Tree and scrub cover is expanding to support nature and enhance the landscape</p>	<p>This outcome and associated measures seek to conserve, expand, enhance and connect woodlands, tree and scrub cover in the National Landscape</p>	All	No likely significant effect	LNRSs	No likely significant effect	<p>This work will be consistent with the conservation objectives outlined for the European designated woodland sites within the AONB.</p> <p>Wider benefits of woodland expansion and restoration will accrue to the landscape and communities.</p> <p>The plan core principle of not delivering one benefit at the unconscious expense of another requires project developers to consider unintended consequences when developing projects (e.g.,</p>

						the potential impact of tree planting on waders).
<b>4 Grasslands</b> Grasslands are species-rich, safeguarded, extended, and support wider biodiversity	This outcome and associated measures seek to conserve, expand, enhance and connect the special grasslands of the National Landscape	All	No likely significant effect	LNRs	No likely significant effect	The plan core principle of not delivering one benefit at the unconscious expense of another (or in a damaging fashion), requires project developers to consider unintended consequences when developing projects (e.g., restoring a hay meadow with non-locally sourced seed source).
<b>5 Rivers and Watercourses</b> Rivers and watercourses are healthy and functioning naturally. New wetland habitats are created, and these and existing wetlands are well-managed: all supporting a greater abundance and diversity of key species	This outcome and associated measures seek to conserve and enhance the water environment of the National Landscape	All	No likely significant effect	LNRs, Catchment Management Plans	No likely significant effect	The plan core principle of not delivering one benefit at the unconscious expense of another requires project developers to consider unintended consequences when developing projects (e.g., the potential impact on grasslands of reconnecting a river to its floodplain).
<b>6. Champion Species</b> Champion Species are increasing in range and abundance	This outcome seeks to support key species conservation.	All	No likely significant effect	LNRs	No likely significant effect	The associated measures promote action for champion species whilst the plan core principle of not delivering one benefit at the unconscious expense of another requires project developers to consider

						unintended consequences when developing projects (e.g., the potential impact of tree planting on waders).
<b>7. Access</b> The provision of high-quality access infrastructure, facilities and information, means that the Forest of Bowland National Landscape is a welcoming place for everyone	This outcome relates to extending countryside access to a wider range of people and management and maintenances of the public rights of way network.  Route upgrades are not generally within European designated sites and where they are permissions would be sought from Natural England.  Maintenance of the PROW network will include small-scale projects that are likely to prevent wider environmental damage through erosion and disturbance.	All	No likely significant effect	ROWIPs LNRSs Local Transport Plans	No likely significant effect	
<b>8. Enjoying, understanding, celebrating</b> More people can enjoy, understand and celebrate the National Landscape's natural beauty and special qualities through the provision of high-	This outcome and measures aim to increase people's knowledge about how to enjoy Bowland in ways which respect conservation and land management, and help	None	No likely significant effect	None	No likely significant effect	

quality information, events and activities which inspire them to engage with the area .	people to discover and explore the area					
<b>9 Learning and skills</b> More people are learning about Bowland and its natural beauty, and practicing the skills that help to conserve and enhance its characteristic features	This outcome and its measures will enable more people to become more engaged in work to protect the landscape and natural environment of the AONB,	None	No likely significant effect	None	No likely significant effect	
<b>10. Health and well-being.</b> More people are enjoying the health and well-being benefits that come from a greater connection with Bowland's nature, culture and landscape	This outcome and measures focus mainly on the provision of knowledge about and opportunities for existing sustainable access to nature for the benefits it brings	None	No likely significant effect	ROWIPs	No likely significant effect	
<b>11. Historic environment and cultural heritage</b> The historic environment and cultural heritage of the Forest of Bowland is better understood, conserved, enhanced and celebrated.	Outcome is about conserving and enhancing historic and cultural assets and is likely to have little or no effect on European designated sites.	None	No likely significant effect	None	No likely significant effect	Outcome is about conserving and enhancing historic assets and is likely to have little or no effect on European designated sites.
<b>12. Regenerative tourism</b> Bowland is a showcase for regenerative tourism, emphasising the connections between nature, society and culture, while ensuring financial benefits stay within the local community	Outcome relates to actions for sustainable management of popular visitor sites and provision of visitor information, of which none have any significant effect on European designated sites. It also relates to ensuring that tourism business and activities in Bowland make a positive contribution to nature and heritage	None	No likely significant effect	Local Plans, Local Transport Plans	No likely significant effect	Principal 'honey pots' are: Beacon Fell County Park; Pendle Hill; Stocks and Gisburn Forest. All are outside European designated sites
<b>13. Community</b> Thriving local communities have access to key services and are actively engaged in activities and	The associated measures promote sustainable communities. Facilities and services are not likely to	None	No likely significant effect	Local Plans, Local Transport Plans	No likely significant effect	

projects that conserve, enhance and celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of the National Landscape.	proposed on European sites and would require their own HRA					
<b>Can the outcomes be changed to avoid significant effects? Do residual effects remain?</b>	Not applicable as no likely significant effects identified					
<b>Is an appropriate assessment required?</b>	No					

## Recording the Results of the Screening Assessment

All outcomes and thematic measures have been screened for their likely impacts alone or in combination with European Sites. This is tabulated in the spreadsheet which forms **appendix A**. Potential effects from all outcomes and measures will also be categorised as follows, following Tyldesley, 2009:

-No negative effect: these are element of the plan that would have no negative effect on any European Site;

-No significant negative effect: these are elements of the plan that could have an effect, but the likelihood is there would be no significant negative effect on a European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This category of effects includes trivial and 'de minimus' impacts;

-Likely significant effect alone: these elements of the plan will require full appropriate assessment unless the plan can be modified in a way that reduces the effect to no significant negative effect or no negative effect;

-Likely to have a significant effect in combination: as with the above category, elements of the strategy categorised in this way will be subject to appropriate assessment unless the effect made by the strategy alone can be reduced to no significant negative effect or no negative effect.

Uncertain: this is where it is not possible to make a judgement on the likelihood of significant effects occurring. These impacts will require further investigation via an appropriate assessment.

*Where actions promoted by the plan would themselves require an individual HRA were they to go ahead, this is clearly identified.*

*See Spreadsheet Appendix A: Assessment of Likely Significant effects from the AONB Management Plan: In common with the approach taken the SEA screening report, this assessment highlights the individual outcomes and measures in the plan and their likely impacts. Where suggested measures (should they be brought forward), would be likely to require their own appropriate assessment before being carried out, this is highlighted.*

## 6. Conclusions

**This assessment has concluded that there are no likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites (SPAs and SACs) alone or in combination with other plans and projects.**

However, the precautionary text "individual proposals flowing from the management plan that may themselves be considered to be projects for the purposes of the Habitats Regulations will need to be permitted in accordance with those Regulations in order to be compliant with the Plan", will be included in the finalised version of the AONB Management Plan as an extra measure in line with the 'Core Principles' section.

## **7. Consultation**

The statutory body for the purposes of HRA screening is Natural England. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report has also been submitted to Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England (statutory bodies for SEA) and the area's local authorities. In addition, this report will be placed on the Forest of Bowland National Landscape website.

An HRA screening statement will be published to show the conclusions of the screening exercise.