

4. **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND THE NOTTINGHAM DECLARATION (ST/JBD)**

Proposal

1 To develop an environmental management programme, through a cross cutting team, with the aim of improving the Authority's environmental performance, including mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. A further report will be made in June 2007.

2 **RECOMMENDATION:**

That

1. **The Authority signs the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change and commits to developing an action plan based on the headpoints in paragraph 8 to implement it.**
2. **Members agree that an environmental management project plan should be pursued for phase one of the programme, targeting the collection of baseline information and the development and delivery of 'quick wins'.**
3. **A report is brought to the Authority in June 2007, setting out progress thus far, including;**
 - **an Environmental Policy for the Authority**
 - **an options analysis for taking the programme to the next stages; and**
 - **an assessment of current environmental performance based on baseline information.**

Policy/Legal Background

3 Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 successive governments have striven to protect natural resources through a range of policies, programmes and plans. Primary and secondary legislation have been a cornerstone to this (e.g. Environmental Protection Act, Strategic Environmental Assessment) as have fiscal instruments (e.g. Landfill Directive, Climate Change Levy).

4 All sectors are now expected to play their role in environmental management and the benefits accrued in; cost savings, legislative compliance and public perceptions. Local government has been identified consistently as having a key role to play in environmental management and mitigating and adapting to climate change. The Local Government White Paper reaffirms the important role that the sector plays. Local Government has a *pivotal role in mitigating and adapting to climate change* and the White Paper identifies 5 ways in which our work could support action on climate change:

- by providing strong and visible leadership in the community, such as through the National Park Management Plan and in the Local Development Framework
- leading by example, such as by installing a woodchip boiler at Losehill Hall and specifying high energy efficiency and in construction details at the Moorland Centre
- responding to local calls for actions, for example by supporting community-led initiatives through the Sustainable Development Fund

- by co-ordinating innovative partnerships, such as Moors for the Future, sustainable tourism partnerships and Peak Connections
- delivering services in ways that support sustainability, for example through ensuring each planning application considers environmental issues and by making visitor services and walks accessible to public transport.

Further detail is available on climate change and local government at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1503999>

The Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change

5 One important part of the Government's expectations of local government is that local authorities should sign the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change. This is a shared commitment by all local authorities to acknowledging and taking action. The declaration will shortly have been signed by all East Midlands authorities and many other constituent authorities and it covers:

- Acknowledgement that climate change is occurring and that it will have far-reaching effects on the UK's people and places, economy, society and environment
- Welcome that combating climate change brings social, environmental and economic benefits; emissions targets agreed by central government in the UK Climate Change Programme; the opportunity for local government to lead the response at local level; endorsement of the declaration by central government
- Commitment to work with central government to deliver the UK Climate Change Programme, the Kyoto Protocol and the target for reducing carbon dioxide by 2010; participation in local and regional support networks; develop plans with partners to address the causes of climate change according to local priorities; publicly declare this commitment to achieving reduced emissions through the authority's own activities; assess the risks of climate change for services and communities and adapt accordingly; encourage all sectors in the community to adapt to the impacts and reduce carbon emissions; and monitor and make public the results.

Further detail is available on the Nottingham Declaration at:

<http://www.est.org.uk/housingbuildings/localauthorities/NottinghamDeclaration/>

6 In addition to signing the declaration, members would expect us to both follow and exceed, where possible, best practice. Guidance is available from The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, The Improvement and Development Agency and the Local Government Association. The Energy Savings Trust, which sponsors the Nottingham Declaration expects Councils to:

- Take action on their own estates to reduce energy use and replace sources of energy by less polluting forms
- As a service provider, introduce, follow and promote green travel plans and use the influence they have in eg planning and grant aid to foster these
- Adopt a procurement strategy that integrates sustainable development and carbon-reducing measures within it

- Source from, promote and foster the development of the renewable energy sector
- Use spatial planning powers to foster low carbon patterns of economic and community development

7 The Authority is committed to a number of corporate outcomes and actions that are consistent with the Nottingham Declaration, especially A 3, C, E, G3, H3, I1, J1 and K1. The National Park Management Plan has as one of its overarching strands sustainable development and issues to address or adapt to climate change are woven through a range of its outcomes. Our purposes require us to take a long term view of the impacts of climate change scenarios on the environment and the use of the National Park by visitors. Of particular concern are:

- Changes to temperature, rainfall and other aspects of climate that impact on major habitats such as blanket bog, woodlands and grasslands
- Changing patterns of distribution of native species
- Changing patterns of land use, farming and other land management practices that have impacts on the landscape
- Changing use of the National Park or changing impacts of recreation over vegetation or the environment, such as through enhanced impacts of fire

These topics and how we adopt strategies to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change will need to be reflected in the major strategies that drive our work for biodiversity, landscape and recreation and so they are not developed further here.

8 The purpose of this report is to set out the broader range of actions that the Authority will take across all of its activities to make its contribution to mitigating the effects of climate change. Broadly, our response will be based on the following elements that we will develop as an action plan to be integrated into a wider Environmental Policy and action plan:

- Developing and promoting a clear vision that we will reduce our own climate change impact and that of all activities within the whole National Park
- Commit the Chief Executive to personally champion and lead the work needed to see this through by enthusing, influencing and ensuring all of our policies and practices are consistent with our vision
- Agreeing an action plan to reduce carbon emissions both in our own actions and via our policies to the major sectors operating in the National Park, especially tourism, farming, moorland interests, minerals, water and services. Such a plan will be based on audit, strategy, action and review. It will build on existing good practice such as our work with the minerals and waste industry, tourism, transport and the New Environmental Economy scheme, including our own pilot eco-label the Environmental Quality Mark.
- Proactively encouraging renewable energy production and use in the National Park in new developments and refurbishments and within communities
- Using our planning powers to promote developments that are to at least best practice energy efficiency best practice and that integrate low carbon or renewable resources, including promoting our Supplementary Planning Guidance on Renewable Energy

- Working with housing authorities and others to encourage energy efficiency in domestic buildings and with economic and social development agencies to support energy efficiency in other sectors
- Reducing energy use in all of the Authority's buildings and facilities employing good practice and energy saving measures where feasible
- Reducing emissions from Authority-related travel by adopting low carbon alternatives, reducing mileage and selecting clean vehicles where operationally suitable
- Promoting sustainable energy, energy-saving measures and the Authority's green policies in the National Park and wider communities, for example by using *Park Life* for residents and visitor information to visitors

Detail on this will be included in a further report to the Authority in June 2007

Environmental Management Programme

- 9 The Authority's corporate outcomes include in K that *we provide quality, customer focused, sustainable services and ensure continuous improvements in the way that these are delivered*. This includes a key corporate action K1 *to ensure value for money and sustainability in the way that the Authority delivers its services*. This report sets out how the Authority intends to ensure that the environmental implications of its operations and activities are fully considered and measures taken to secure improvements in environmental performance. Until now there has only been a limited degree of co-ordination of internal environmental management procedures of the Authority. This paper set out the first phase in addressing this.
- 10 The first part of the process was an initial scoping exercise undertaken by key staff, including Management Team. The results of this scoping exercise were then presented and discussed in more detail with a wider group of interested staff drawn voluntarily from across the organisation at all levels. As a result of this a series of smaller groups was established to address particular issues namely;
- workplace management (energy, waste, water),
 - property management (design, maintenance, refurbishment),
 - transport (work travel, home-working),
 - procurement (as part of the Authority's Procurement strategy)
 - external influence, policy and funding
 - communications

In looking at these issues the sub-groups have been asked to undertake two key roles;

- i) To identify and take responsibility for delivering a series of 'quick wins'
- ii) To identify and collate key baseline data to help give a clearer understanding of environmental performance.

- 11 An Environmental Management Co-ordination Group was then established Championed by the Chief Executive and led by the Head of Policy, Research and Partnerships with significant expertise from experienced and knowledgeable staff elsewhere across the Authority in conservation, planning, environmental education, access and recreation, sustainable tourism and corporate resources (good to illustrate spread of interest/expertise and involvement). The purpose of this group is to oversee the process and to give strategic direction to the programme at an officer level,

including supporting the work of the sub-groups. This work is also being done in a way that involves as many staff as possible. This is desirable both because it is consistent with the preferred leadership style adopted in the Authority and also because it will generate real commitment and understanding by staff as soon as possible.

12 The Authority faces a particular challenge of integrating environmental management into estate and property management. The Authority owns a large and diverse property portfolio and many of its sites are in remote locations or are unusual or historically important, often listed. Where investments have been made in recent years, these have usually been focused on achieving National Park purposes, rather than high standards of environmental performance. For major new developments and rebuilds, high environmental performance has often been specified, such as at Fieldhead, but this has not always been the case, especially where cost has been a factor. Of our major complex sites, Losehill Hall has already achieved eco-centre status and there is much we can learn from there. Aldern House has recently been redeveloped with some environmental features integrated, but with a more concerted environmental plan proposed for a phase 2 programme.

13 On our major conservation and recreation estates we are faced with particular challenges as we are always constrained for resources and there is very limited scope currently for investment for refurbishment. As we develop the environmental policy, we will need to focus especially on our rural estates drawing on best practice from our own current estate management and elsewhere. A helpful guide to rural estate sustainability has been published by Forum for the Future. This emphasises the importance of taking a long view and engaging interests and communities alongside practical actions such as energy saving investment and land management.

http://www.forumforthefuture.org.uk/publications/ruralestatesustainability_page419.aspx

14 The project has the following aim and objectives drawn from the Project Management Plan:

Aim: To deliver environmental improvements within the Authority and the National Park

Objectives:

- collate baseline environmental information
- develop a culture of good environmental practice
- improve the organisation's environmental performance
- improve the organisations' environmental image
- deliver cost savings and improvements through environmental efficiencies

15 It is intended that the programme is split into 2 distinct phases. Phase One will identify and implement a series of 'quick wins' across the Authority as well as to produce appropriate baseline information for assessing the Authority's environmental performance, including benchmarking against best practice of other similar organisations. At the end of Phase One it is proposed that a report be presented to the Authority in June 2007 setting out work on the 'quick wins', baseline information and performance. In addition an Environmental Policy will be presented for approval along with a set of options for taking the programme into Phase Two, including:

- Integration of the environmental policy into all parts of the Authority
- The standards, including external accreditation, that we will work to
- Potential partners, sources of expertise and resources that we will seek
- Timetables with milestones for major actions

- Permanent arrangements for providing focus, resource and expertise in the Authority
- Methods of review, accountability and performance improvement

16 The project will, necessarily rely on achieving change through links and delivery through other parts of the Authority's work, with the major interdependencies being with:

- Major topic strategies, such as those for Biodiversity, Cultural Heritage and People and Communities
- Performance Improvement Plan 2007/08 outcomes
- Procurement Strategy
- Transport Strategy Group
- Fleet Management Working Group
- Green Travel Plan launch (March 2007)
- Asset Management Plan and individual site management plans
- Phase 2 of Aldern House Project focusing on Greening

17 Whilst our challenges are significant, in many organisational ways our situation is similar to that of many other public bodies. We can learn much from others. Several National Park Authorities have adopted environmental statements and most local authorities have begun to consider environmental management in a structured way. Of our constituent councils, several have adopted environmental policies (we have Derbyshire's, Staffordshire's and Sheffield's). High Peak Borough Council was one of the first councils to have achieved EMAS (Eco Management and Audit Scheme) and as a beacon council for sustainable energy provides a mentoring system for councils that we will explore. In practical terms, we may be able to share expertise and resources. We do not need to reinvent wheels.

APPENDIX

Resources

1. There are no additional resources required for delivering Phase 1 of the programme as existing staff and programmes will be used to coordinate and deliver the work. It is expected that many, if not all, the quick wins, will be delivered by ensuring that existing working practices and projects can be modified at no extra cost. However, the implications of Phase 2 will create somewhat greater implications both for cost saving and, as necessary, investments. There are, in particular, significant potential implications for business travel, trading activities, such as in Visitor Centres, for the management of estates and improvement of properties (already subject to a backlog of investments), in our work with partners (eg Moors for the Future), and in addressing properly the integration of environmental management and climate change into our externally facing grants, advice and policies. Inasmuch as these issues can be addressed, they will be considered in the June Authority report.

Risk Management

2. Environmental risks.

Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, Health & Safety

3. A wide group of staff have been involved in putting Phase 1 together and will continue to be involved in its implementation. The draft environmental policy will be subject to an Equality Impact and Needs Assessment.

Consultees

4. Management Team, staff members of the Environmental Management (Green) Group
There will be wide consultation over the Environmental Policy as and when drafted

Enclosures

5. None

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

6. None

Report Author

7. Steve Turner/Jim Dixon

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8. 1 February 2007