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D. PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING

Scope of this Function and Introduction

This function includes:

- Our Environmental Education Service and Losehill Hall, the Authority's Environmental Learning and Conference Centre
- Educational work of the Rangers
- Sustainable Tourism- including the Peak District Interpretation Project
- Communications

The work of this function contributes mainly to the following 2007-2012 corporate outcomes:

- G: Understanding of the National Park and its special qualities has increased so that people recognise its value, and have the opportunity to make a personal contribution to its sustainable management
- H: Promote sustainable tourism to improve the economic viability of the Peak District whilst ensuring a positive environmental and social impact

Our Performance in 2006/07

Overview:

The publication of the Working with People and Communities Strategy (replacing our Promoting Understanding Strategy) provided clarity of focus for our Promoting Understanding services. The Children and Young People's Action Plan is the first of a number of audience-led action plans being developed to implement the strategy.

During the year there was a move away from 'remote' communications – such as news releases – to direct engagement with people through forums, public meetings, roadshows and drop-in advice sessions as a means of better informing others about our work, particularly on issues of most interest and concern to communities, including quarrying and planning, transport and recreational activities. This resulted in fewer news releases being issued, although the Authority continued to provide an effective, proactive and responsive media service, for example, 100% of media enquiries were resolved within the journalists' deadlines.

Services to visitors have improved through new systems and on-line services, through the new Moorland Centre and by encouraging more tourism providers to engage in a range of sustainable tourism initiatives.

The review of Losehill Hall and its services further focused operational actions geared to National Park Management Plan and corporate outcomes.

Environmental Education (including Rangers):

- Action plans to address the Working with People and Communities Strategy are being developed – the Young People's Action Plan was approved, giving clearer priorities and actions for the Authority's services
- An Authority based work experience programme was implemented, attracting eleven year 10 children from local schools. This will be repeated during 2007/08 with a focus on attracting urban area schools
- We worked through the Mosaic Partnership to appoint 20 community champions for the Peak District from black, minority and ethnic groups in surrounding urban areas who then participated in feedback forums during the year
- New services are being developed, in partnership, to respond to the Young People's Action Plan, for example, developing partnership with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to work with schools in Stoke and developing closer links with target area schools
- Capacity building programmes for teachers and youth leaders in priority target areas in and

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around the Peak District are being developed with a teacher In Service Training Day in Manchester and a community leader event in Sheffield

- A business plan for a Youth Ranger Programme was produced and the Authority successfully bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to support its implementation
- Numbers of visitors to Losehill Hall were adversely affected by its review. However, it will move forward with a new business strategy as an Environmental Learning and Conference Centre. Work continues on partnership and external funding opportunities as a way to improve efficiency and effectiveness
- We have not progressed building infrastructure for biomass heating due to market forces and the increasing competitiveness of other technologies such as ground source heat pumps
- New events were introduced to improve access to the Centre, for example a wildlife open day, a local heritage initiative, community events and farmers markets
- We delivered a pilot project of the John Muir Trust Award with 5 primary schools in the National Park and 3 special needs groups from Glossop, Matlock and Sheffield
- The Rangers provided 12 guided walks as part of the Peak District Walking Festival
- All 42 primary schools in the Peak District have been contacted with a view to promote understanding of the National Park and this work will continue in the future
- Over 2,800 children and young people from Manchester, Tameside and Stockport took part in education activities at the Longdendale Environmental Centre. Programmes included delivery of the John Muir Award and development of an A628 bypass discussion role-play for local schools
- Over 900 children and young people from Sheffield and the Longshaw area took part in the Moorland Discovery programme. Programmes included scientific studies of the moorland, debates on access/moorland issues and artwork and plays on moorland themes
- Over 1,700 children and young people living in or close to the National Park were engaged in debate and decision-making processes about National Park issues and policy
- 34 professional training courses were run attracting 535 participants

Sustainable Tourism:

- We secured commitments from several Destination Management Partnerships covering the Peak District to continue the Visit Peak District guides and website, and to support a joint Peak District Tourism team that will assist sustainable tourism initiatives and industry engagement
- We opened the new Moorland Centre at Edale in conjunction with Moors for the Future. The aim is to increase visitor awareness of the unique fragile habitats of the Peak District moorlands and their increasing international importance as carbon sinks
- Systems at Visitor Centres were upgraded to improve information on Peak District products and offers to visitors. We are now able to support on-line booking and up-to-date room availability
- We developed and launched seven Peak Experience Trails through new leaflets and the www.peak-experience.org.uk website
- We engaged with increased numbers of tourism businesses in a range of sustainable tourism initiatives including: Peak Experience, Peak Connections, Business and the Environment/ Small Scale Tourism and Foods in the Peak District

Communications:

- 317 print and broadcast stories were generated, short of our target, but this was in response to changing priorities as communications focused more on community engagement. This trend will continue into 2007/8, as the media officer post has been reduced from a full to part

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time role. The targets for print and broadcast stories have been amended accordingly

- A corporate style guide was finalised during the year, which is helping to make sure that the Authority produces clear and consistent publications, written in plain English
- Improvements to the Authority's website included a new section dedicated to quarrying. The website became more interactive – for example, a searchable database of ranger guided walks was added, enabling people to select walks by date, length, difficulty level and area
- A range of publications were produced and distributed, including a newsletter for parishes and two editions of the Parklife community newsletter. In response to requests from members of the public, a new ranger guided walks booklet was produced. The publication – one of the first in the UK to be available as a 'podcast' to play on mobile phones and MP3 players – was shortlisted for a national award. An audio CD version of the newsletter was produced for visually impaired people
- An email news alert system was also set up to provide local communities with regular, instant updates on high profile issues such as quarrying. The Authority has identified additional resources to ensure that this initiative will continue throughout 2007

Trends in Our Performance During 2005 – 2007

We have moved towards increasing visitor knowledge of the links between the National Park and wider environmental issues such as global warming, with an emphasis on the impacts of how they visit and the effect it can have on the fabric of the Park itself.

In line with this, our directly delivered education and learning has been focused on key target audiences such as young people from the surrounding urban areas. At Losehill Hall there is an increasing emphasis on attracting participants from constituent and neighbouring Authorities as well as regional and national environmental organisations.

We continue to receive high ratings for the quality of services at Visitor Centres. We are working with partners on marketing and events programmes that will attract staying visits and encourage the spread of day visits throughout the year.

We are continuing to explore new ways to help the Authority communicate more effectively with local communities including public meetings about high controversial quarrying issues, roadshows and information events.

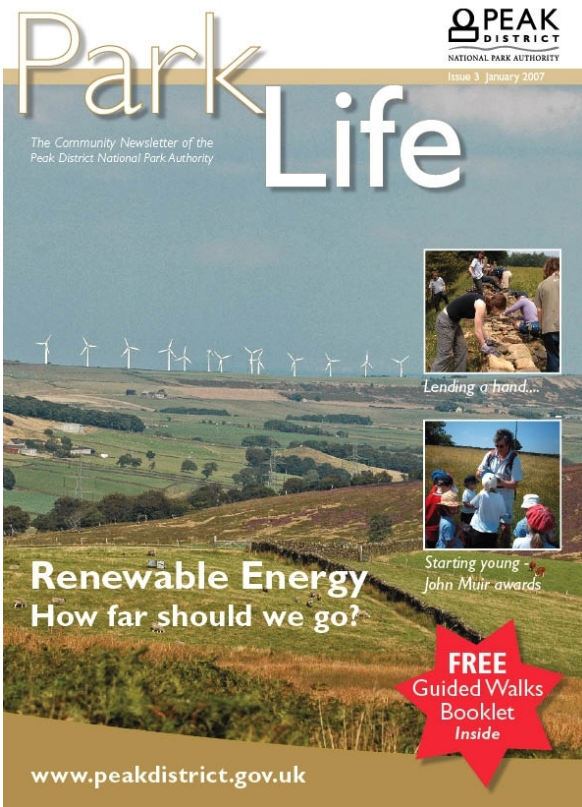


Learning and experience in the National Park

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Learning about pollution and the environment at Longendale



Parklife community newsletter delivered to all households in the National Park

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Our Priority Activities and Targets 2007/08

Priority level 1

- Deliver the agreed outputs of the young people and communities strategy to all primary schools and community groups in the National Park (Key Corporate Action G1)
- Through visitor centres, the website and cycle hire centres, enhance National Park messages, encourage sustainable tourism and improve services, especially for target groups (Key Corporate Action G1)
- Deliver the new interpretation media of the Peak Experience Trails and identify improvement needs of Authority owned interpretation assets (Key Corporate Action G1)
- Provide learning opportunities with increasing focus on key audiences (Key Corporate Action G1)

Priority level 2

- Encourage tourism businesses' participation in the Peak Experience Scheme to promote the Peak District and the National Park landscape (Key Corporate Action H1)
- In delivering the Peak district sustainable Tourism Strategy, contribute to the Destination Management Partnership programmes and promote regional support for priority initiatives (Key Corporate Action H2)
- Provide support to build capacity in the local community for Local Heritage Initiative funded projects (Key Corporate Action F1)
- Provide information to local communities on quarrying and the other work of the Authority and build confidence in the Authority's actions (Key Corporate Action B3)
- Project strong corporate image to stakeholders through high quality design of documents (Key Corporate Action K2)

Priority level 3

- Develop a visitor action plan for enhancing learning opportunities as part of the Working with People and communities Strategy (Key Corporate Action G2)
- Develop a strategic approach to delivering and facilitating learning by children and young people about the National Park through key partners (Key Corporate Action G2)
- Develop an Authority-wide pricing policy for learning services (K1)
- Provide environmental learning opportunities through both the current and a modernised business plan for Losehill Hall (K1)

Financial Summary

Promoting Understanding				
£,000	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Direct revenue expenditure	1,354	1,329		
Capital charges / depreciation	291	295		
Employee costs	1,624	1,610		
Recharged support costs	357	489		
Total Gross Expenditure	3,626	3,724		
Income: Sales Fees and Charges	(1,142)	(1,179)		
Income: Other external funding	(727)	(657)		
Net Expenditure	1,757	1,887		

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D. Promoting Understanding

NPA COMPARISON					ACHIEVED				TARGET		
2006/07	Top 25%	Range	Ref	Indicator	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	Target Met	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
			PU1	National Park Visitor Centre effectiveness rating	n/a	89.7%	n/a	-	None - biennial survey	90%	None - biennial survey
			Formerly PU2(1)	Number of visitors to Visitor Centres for which the Authority contributes 50% or more of the operating costs	502,397	455,389	425,000	Red	460,000	460,000	440,000
			Formerly PU2(2)	Number of visitors to Losehill Hall	11,484	14,490	12,545	Green	11,500	12,825	13,225
			PULPI2	Average level of customer satisfaction with services for promoting understanding	92%	92%	89%	Red	93%	90%	90%
			PULPI3	Average level of customer awareness of National Parks	National survey started 2005/06	82%	68%	Red	93%	75%	80%
			LD9	Number of media releases	153	149	101*	Red	140	80	85
			LD10	Number of positive articles/programmes generated by the Authority	567	560	317*	Red	565	250	250

FOOTNOTES:

* The focus on priority planning & quarrying issues resulted in fewer news releases than planned; targets for 2007/8 have been reduced due to staff reduction.