

AGENDA ITEM No. 8

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETING

23 MAY 2008

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PART A

1. PERFORMANCE AND BUSINESS PLAN 2008- 09 (A197/WA)

Proposal

- 1 To approve the contents of the draft Performance and Business Plan 2008-09, as a reflection of our achievements over the past twelve months and our focus of activity for the year ahead, prior to publication of the Plan by the statutory deadline of 30 June 2008. Also, to give support to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) draft new 'Deal' agreement.

RECOMMENDATION:

2 That

1. **The draft Performance and Business Plan 2008 – 09 be approved with the completion of details delegated to the Chief Executive for publication by 30 June 2008.**
2. **The proposed amendment to the Key Corporate Action B3 to 'Managing the reduction of quarrying in the National Park' be approved.**
3. **Members agree that, in principle, support for the Deal can be given by the Chair of the Authority at the forthcoming ENPAA Chairs meeting to agreeing the Deal.**

Policy/Legal Background

3. Annex 1 contains a new high-level document issued in draft by Defra that tries to encapsulate the relationship between National Park Authorities (NPAs) and Defra. There are two reasons why Defra has taken this initiative. Firstly, one of the recommendations of the Defra 'Capability Review' (the review of performance all government departments go through) was that Defra should understand better and manage more pro-actively the relationship with all of its delivery bodies. Secondly, following high level discussion with the Chairs of all of the Defra agencies (including Tony Hams who represented the Authority and other NPAs) in May of 2007, it was agreed that Defra would produce a high level principles document describing the relationship between Defra and agencies. The basic template was discussed at a meeting of Defra's agency Chief Executives in October 2007 and then each sponsor department has prepared a bespoke 'Deal' for each agency.

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- 4 In the case of National Park Authorities, the Deal is between Defra's National Parks sponsorship Division and all English National Park Authorities. This needs to be seen in context with other more detailed pieces of guidance that are issued which include:
- All legislation in force applying to National Park Authorities
 - The National Parks Circular which gives detailed guidance on the interpretation of legislation
 - The Grant Memorandum which has recently been reviewed and provides detailed guidance to Chief Finance Officers on the administration of Defra grant
 - The annual 'expectations of National Park Authorities' note which is included in the Performance and Business Plan and which gives annual expression to the relationship between National Park Authority Business Plans and Defra's own objectives
 - Regular meetings between Ministers, senior Defra officials and NPAs, including the combined annual finance meeting and 'tri-lateral' meetings of Defra, Natural England and the NPA
- 5 The specific framework for the Performance and Business Plan is laid down in the Defra Grant Memorandum, April 2008. This document states that: "every National Park Authority is required to publish a business plan" and "the Secretary of State requires each National Park Authority to submit to him as soon as possible after the end of the financial year, an annual report on the exercise and performance of its functions ... and shall also prepare annually accounts for the main functional heads. These should be signed ... and submitted to the auditor appointed by the Audit Commission not later than 30 June following the end of the financial year."
- 6 This document represents a combination of the business plan and the annual report for the purposes laid down by Defra and replaces the Best Value Performance Plans produced annually between 2000 and 2007.
- 7 It also clearly states that the National Park Management Plan "is the overarching strategic document for the Park to which all other park plans and strategies should relate in setting the vision, objectives and frame for all policy and activity pursued by the Authority".
- 8 The functions of National Park Authorities on which we are required to report to Defra are as follows:
- Conservation of the Natural Environment
 - Conservation of the Cultural Heritage
 - Recreation Management and Transport, Rangers Estates and Volunteers
 - Promoting Understanding
 - Development Control, Forward Planning and Communities
 - Corporate and Democratic Core, Administrative Support Services, Training and Development
- 9 "Best Value Performance Indicators" guidance is produced annually by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) – now Department for Communities and Local government (DCLG). A new set of National Indicators is being introduced by DCLG but we are required to report out some Best Value Performance Indicators for 2007/08.
- 10 Additionally, a new set of corporate performance indicators have been developed and approved by Audit and Performance Committee (April 2008, minute ...) to monitor our performance against our Key Corporate Actions.

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- 11 These indicators are supplemented by a set of National Park 'family' indicators such that cross-Park comparisons may be made. Analysis of the data across parks was not available at the time of preparation of this document but will be inserted prior to publication. These family indicators are being reviewed in 2008/09.
- 12 In developing and consulting on the indicators for Key Corporate Action B3 a view has been expressed that the words of the action could be misinterpreted inappropriately as a Planning Authority. It is proposed that this should be changed from:
"Managing the reduction of large-scale quarrying in the National Park whilst taking local needs into account"
to:
"Managing the reduction of quarrying in the National Park".

Key Issues

- 13 The structure of the Performance and Business Plan differs from previous years but still follows the structure laid down by the Grant Memorandum. The Introduction gives an overview of the work of the Authority and how this fits into the National Park Management Plan and the work of our partners. Subsequent sections cover each of Defra's functional headings, and relates these to both our National Park Management Plan outcomes and our Corporate Outcomes.
- 14 Some information is not available at present and will be inserted into the Plan prior to publication:
- Annex 12 – the overall financial statement
 - Financial details for each of the functional headings requested by Defra (and shown in each section) for current and future years
 - Comparison of performance on National Park family indicators between ourselves and other National Park Authorities
- 15 There is a period of 1 week following the Authority meeting to allow for members to provide comments on detail to the Performance Officer.
- 16 The statutory deadline for publication of the document is 30 June and it will be available on the Authority's website by that date. Paper copies will be made available and summaries also distributed. A wide range of key stakeholders will be informed of publication. The content of a summary of some of the key information will be agreed with the Head of Communications and published at a later date.

APPENDIX

Background

- 1 See Policy and Legal Background section.

Resources

- 2 The proposals reflect the budget for 2008/09 that was approved by the Authority in February (Minute 5/08 refers).

Risk Management

- 3 The risk to the Authority of not having an approved plan in place to comply with our statutory duty and to drive performance improvement forward is mitigated by having a timetable in place for service and corporate planning and a project plan to secure publication of this document by the due date.

Human Rights, Equalities, Health & Safety

- 4 There are no human rights and health and safety issues to raise. Specific action relating to Equalities is in the plan where appropriate.

Consultees

- 5 This report was sent to Directors and Heads of Service and has taken into account their views.

Enclosures

- 6 Annex 1 – the draft Deal
Annex 2 – the draft Performance and Business Plan 2008/09.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

- 7 None

Report Author

- 8 Wendy Amis, Performance Officer – Human Resources and Performance

Publication date

- 9 15 May 2008